



Did U Know?

The 'Miracle on Ice' is the popular nickname for the ice hockey competition in the 1980 Olympic Winter Games, in which a team of amateur and collegiate players from the United States, improbably captured the gold medal defeating the then Soviet Union. It also inspired the making of a film by the same title.



Home teams start well



SPORTS REPORTER

Senior players led the way as defending champions Dhaka Division got off to a reasonable start on Day One of their match against a depleted Sylhet as the Ispahani Mirzapore Tea Sixth National Cricket League got underway at three venues across the country yesterday.

Two other home teams had a bright first day. Khulna bowled out Barisal under 200 while Rajshahi closed on 286-7 against Chittagong.

DHAKA-SYLHET

Test opener Javed Omar made 79 while veterans Halim Shah (48) and skipper Khaled Mahmud (45) kept the score moving as Dhaka reached 261-6 in at stumps at the Bangabandhu National Stadium.

Visiting Sylhet, who had expressed their displeasure with the players enforced on them by the national selectors, found themselves in a peculiar situation as none of the guest players turning up leaving them with just eleven eligible squad members.

With Rajin Saleh and captain Parvez Ahmed out injured and star left-arm spinner Enamul Haque on way to Zimbabwe, Sylhet had no

choice but to field four seamers on a flat wicket and struggled throughout the day.

Tapash Baisya led an under-strength side that still managed to restrict the opposition scoring below three runs per over thanks to Nabil Samad.

The young left-arm spinner took three wickets conceding 46 runs from his 23 overs.

Openers Javed and Mehrab Hossain Jr put on 42. Javed then went on to feature in two half-century partnerships with Mohammad Ashraf and Halim.

Javed, in a typically watchful 148-ball knock hit a dozen boundaries before dragging on a delivery by Nabil on to his stumps while trying to cut shortly before tea.

Ashraf (27) missed out on a big score after appearing well set when he edged Nabil to wicketkeeper Golam Mabud after hitting four boundaries. Halim's innings ended when Hasibul Hossain got one to go through his defences. Halim struck seven fours in his 142-ball knock.

Skipper Mahmud hit seven sweetly-struck boundaries. Wicket-keeper Anwar Hossain was giving him good support in an unbroken seventh-wicket stand of 30.

With the wicket already producing turn on the opening day, Mahmud felt that they already had the foundation to put Sylhet under pressure.

"As (Mohammad) Rafique is playing, we have a strong spin

attack. Our pacers Munir and Talha who will swing the ball inwards, will also get some advantage on this track.

"The wicket is difficult for stroke playing and I feel 270 is a good first innings total," said Mahmud.

KHULNA-BARISAL

Bangladesh duo Mashrafe-Bin-Mortuza and Manzarul Islam Rana shared six wickets between them as Khulna dismissed Barisal for 194 at the Khulna Divisional Stadium.

At close of play, the home team had reached 15 without loss.

On a green-top wicket, fast bowler Mashrafe removed the Barisal openers with just 33 on the board after the tourists had opted to bat. He finished with 3-31 while left-arm spinner Manzarul grabbed 3-41. Left-arm pacer Manjurul Islam, the stand-in captain, chipped in with 2-34.

The only resistance came from Barisal wicketkeeper Shahin Hossain who made 63 with seven fours from 151 balls.

RAJSHAHI-CHITTAGONG

Forhad Reza fell just one short of a hundred but his effort along with fifties from Jahurul Islam and Hasanzaman Rosel helped Rajshahi survive some initial jitters at the Shaheed Chandu Stadium in Bogra.

The home side were tottering at

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Dhaka Division's top scorer Javed Omar sweeps against Sylhet on Day One of their National Cricket League match at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

Bob Woolmer

(Pakistan cricket coach)

"It went 29-5 against us... umpires are not cheats. I would never accuse them of that. But I do believe they are influenced by the way teams appeal and by the crowds."



What to WATCH

- TEN Sports**
International Football Friendly
Brazil v Hong Kong
Live at 3 pm
- ESPN**
English Premier League
Norwich v West Brom
Taped version at 10.30 am
South Africa v England
Fifth one-day international
Live at 6.30 pm
Sportscentre
Live at 10 pm
- STAR Sports**
Asian 2006 WC Qualifier
Japan v N Korea
Live at 4.25 pm
Sportsline
Live at 8 pm
International Football Friendly
England v Holland
Live at 1.30 am (Thursday)



- Ispahani 6th Nat'l Cricket League**
(Day 2)
Dhaka v Sylhet
Venue: BNS
Rajshahi v Chittagong
Venue: Bogra
Khulna v Barisal
Venue: KDS
Div I Hockey
Farashganj SC v Bachelors SC
(1.30 pm)
Victoria SC v Mukta Bihanga (3.30 pm)
Venue: Maulana Bhasani
National Stadium

Ziaur Rahman cricket starts today

DU CORRESPONDENT

The President Ziaur Rahman Gold Cup Cricket Tournament, organised by the Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD), the student wing of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), begins today at the Jagannath Hall playground of Dhaka University.

A total of 12 dormitories will take part in the tournament, which will be inaugurated by Bangladesh captain Habibul Bashar informed the JCD leaders during a press conference yesterday at the Teacher Student Centre (TSC) cafeteria.

Addressing the briefing, JCD general secretary Shafiq Bari Babu said all matches would be held on knockout basis and to make it interesting there will be coloured o u f i t s

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LET'S GET A MOVE ON: Bangladesh Cricket Board president Ali Asghar (R), the Board's development committee chairman Arafat Rahman and advisor Shafiqur Rahman Munna officially inaugurating the renovation work of the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur by digging the pitch yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

Gazi Tank take solo lead

SPORTS REPORTER

Gazi Tank and Dhaka Wanderers earned comfortable wins in the First Division Cricket League at different venues yesterday.

Gazi Tank's eleventh victory in 14 matches enabled them to take a solo lead when they defeated Surjo Tarun Club by six wickets in the low-scoring match at the BKSP in Savar. Sumon Barua and Raihan Ferdous shared six wickets to dismiss Surjo Tarun for 105 in 32.1 overs.

In reply, Gazi Tank reached the target in 18.1 overs. Al Mamun made 46 off 42 balls and Shahriar Habib was not out on 45.

Surjo Tarun remain on eight points.

At the Fatullah Cricket Stadium, Dhaka Wanderers registered their

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Tendulkar boost



AFP, Bombay

Sachin Tendulkar is recovering well from a tennis elbow injury and should be fit to play in next month's Test series against Pakistan, Indian coach John Wright said on Tuesday.

Tendulkar, the most prolific batsman in modern cricket with 34 Test and 37 one-day centuries, has not touched a bat since ending a tour of Bangladesh in December.

The 31-year-old, who sustained the injury last August, appeared to have aggravated the pain in his left elbow after returning for the last two Tests against Australia in October.

Tendulkar later played in two Tests against South Africa and toured Bangladesh for two Tests, where he scored a double century to

equal former Indian captain Sunil Gavaskar's world record of 34 Test centuries.

Tendulkar missed the ongoing domestic Challenger one-day series here featuring the country's top 36 cricketers, but Wright was hopeful the star batsman was well on the road to recovery.

"I spoke to Sachin today and he sounded very good and very optimistic," said Wright. "He has begun to exercise and his progress will be monitored by the Indian team's new physiotherapist John Glover."

"Sachin has had good rest over the last six weeks and I am certain he will be raring to go against Pakistan," said Wright.

The Indian coach added that Tendulkar had targeted a four-day domestic match starting on February 22 for his comeback.

UAE break BD A streak

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh A team failed to sweep the four-match one-day series against hosts United Arab Emirates, who pulled off a consolation three-wicket victory in the fourth and final game at the Sharjah Cricket Stadium on Monday.

The brittle batting caused the defeat as the second string Bangladesh side, which confirmed the series winning first three games, were dismissed for 142 in 39.1 overs after deciding to bat first.

Sanwar Hossain was the top-scorer with run-a-ball 33 that included five boundaries while Dhiman Gosh and Raquib Al Hasan had a good start but could only managed 22 runs respectively.

The home team used five bowlers and all finished with two-wicket hauls. In reply, the UAE recovered from a shaky start to reach 148-7 in 45.2 overs thanks to Fahad Usman who made a patient 49 off 90 balls.

Right-arm paceman Shafaq Al Jabir was the most successful Bangladesh A bowler with three wickets for 43 in eight overs while Syed Russel, Mohammad Sharif, Sqib Al Hasan and Mahmudullah Riyad took one wicket each.

The team will leave Dubai today for Zimbabwe to play three Tests (4-day) and five one-day matches against their southern African counterparts.

Captain Enamul Haque left Dhaka yesterday to join the team in Dubai. The left-arm spinner, who was the hero in the home series against Zimbabwe, missed the UAE trip.

Div I hockey

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Sporting Club and Dhaka Wanderers Club made winning starts when the Green Delta First Division Hockey League began at the Maulana Bhashani National Stadium yesterday.

Bangladesh Sporting blanked Combined Sporting Club 2-0 in the first match. Mohammad Nayan and Mohammad Sumon scored one field goal each in the first session.

On the other hand Wanderers handed Shantinarag Sporting Club a 5-0 thrashing after dominating the first half 3-0.

Russel Islam put the winners ahead while Shabbir Hossain struck twice before the break. After the breather Sheikh Sumon Ali and Imran Haider increased the margin.

Symonds fit for NZ tour

AFP, Sydney

All-rounder Andrew Symonds was cleared for possible inclusion in the limited overs section of Australia's cricket tour of New Zealand Tuesday after overcoming an Achilles tendon injury.

Symonds, who was recently named Australian one-day player of the year, was in doubt for the New Zealand tour after the tendon injury forced him out of Sunday's tri-series victory over Pakistan in Sydney.

But diagnostic scans in Brisbane indicated the injury was not serious.

"The scans indicate that the

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Strauss not giving up

Fifth Eng-SA ODI today



BBC ONLINE, undated

England batsman Andrew Strauss has vowed to bounce back from a lean spell and prove himself in the one-day game.

He has had a meteoric rise as a Test opener but has not found runs as easy to come by in his role at number four in the limited overs side.

"I am trying to become as consistent as possible but these things do not happen overnight," said Strauss.

"I have got myself in a couple of times, then got myself out really pushing on."

Strauss made a one-day century against West Indies at Lord's last summer but has only managed 69 runs in four innings during the current one-day series in South Africa.

And he has not passed 50 since his unbeaten 52 off 42 balls saw England home in last September's ICC Champions Trophy semifinal against Australia.

"I feel I am hitting the ball as well as I did in the Test series. It's frustrating not to get a score both personally and for the team because I play quite an important role in the middle order."

"It is a learning curve for me - it is a role I can play, I enjoy it and hopefully I can be as successful as I have been in Test cricket," Strauss added.

"There is no point putting pres-

sure on yourself by saying 'I need a hundred tomorrow'. I am certainly not losing any sleep at night."

South Africa lead the series 2-1 with three to play after ending a dismal run of only one win in 14 matches.

"They have got that monkey off their back, but we have a side that can beat them," said Strauss.

"If we play to our potential, we have shown snippets in this series of some excellent one-day cricket."

"This is a big series for us. If we want to develop leading to World Cup 2007, we need to make use of every series to improve and it is just as important to have a strong England one-day side as a Test side."

Queen of the seas



Record-breaking British yachtswoman Ellen MacArthur.

PHOTO: AFP

REUTERS, Falmouth

Ellen MacArthur is heading home to a hero's welcome after breaking the record for sailing solo round the world.

"I'm elated and absolutely drained," a tearful MacArthur said by radio after crossing the finishing line in just over 71 days and 14 hours on Monday to smash the record set last year.

Garlanded with congratulations from the Queen and Prime Minister Tony Blair, the diminutive 28-year-old said: "It's been a very difficult trip, the whole of the south Atlantic has been terrible."

When asked how she was at the end of her gruelling ordeal, she confessed: "I felt like collapsing in the cockpit and falling asleep."

"It has been an absolutely unbelievable voyage, both physically and mentally," the exhausted sailor said from her trimaran after crossing the finishing line off north-western France. "It will take some time to recover."

Her time of 71 days, 14 hours,

18 minutes and 33 seconds shaved more than 32 hours off the previous world record set by Frenchman Francis Joyon, who smashed the previous mark by 21 days in what had been described as the perfect sail.

Paying tribute to MacArthur, Joyon said: "I always said that Ellen was a serious contender and I can see today that she has decided to prove me right."

MacArthur's supporters, who had gathered outside her team headquarters in Falmouth throughout the day, cheered and chanted as they watched her cross the line around 10:30 p.m. British time on Monday night.

For her triumphal entry into Falmouth on Tuesday, she is to be accompanied by a Royal Navy warship and a flotilla of small boats tooting their welcome.

Thousands of people have travelled from across the country to welcome her home.

MacArthur shot to fame in 2001 when she finished second in the Vendee Globe round-the-world

race, becoming the youngest person to sail round the world solo and the fastest woman.

She has battled hurricanes, dodged icebergs and whales and endured endless sleepless nights en route through some of the world's most notorious weather spots - past the Cape of Good Hope in South Africa and round Cape Horn in South America.

Throughout the 26,000 mile (42,000 km) challenge, MacArthur's backup team stayed in touch from their base on the Isle of Wight. Weather centres in Germany and the United States advised her how to handle approaching weather fronts in the multi-million pound operation.

MacArthur reached Cape Horn five days ahead of time, but a serious gale knocked her back and she entered the Atlantic a day off the record.

Although a fast run up the Atlantic clawed back her advantage, dead winds around the Azores islands threatened to kill off her challenge right at the end.