

Wayaskarani waltz



SPORTS REPORTER

Young fast bowler Wayaskarani Palash became a revelation on debut after destroying Sylhet with a six-wicket haul as Chittagong stormed to an innings and 64-run victory with a day to spare in their second match of the National Cricket League (NCL) yesterday.

Already under pressure after conceding a 155-run first-innings lead, Sylhet were shot out for 91 in their second innings at the Chittagong Divisional Stadium to hand the hosts full six points.

In the other two matches, Dhaka took a handsome first-innings lead at home against Barisal while Khulna were fighting to stay in the game against visiting Rajshahi.

CHITTAGONG-SYLHET

Nazimuddin was dismissed after facing just four balls on the third morning without adding to his overnight 204 as Chittagong finished their first innings on 371.

Left-arm spinner Nabil Samad

was the pick of the Sylhet attack with 5-66.

Chittagong's pacers breathed fire. Gazi Alamgir removed Sylhet opener Golam Rahman Himel for a duck with his third ball before his new-ball partner Wayaskarani -- playing his maiden first-class match joined the party.

Wayaskarani, who came to prominence after the GrameenPhone Pacer Hunt programme, had earned his place in this game after impressive performances in the two NCL one dayers where he took seven wickets including a five-for.

The right-arm quick took the opportunity with both hands and blew away the Sylhet batting with 6-52 from 13 overs. He finished with eight wickets for 121 runs in the match. Chittagong's rookie wicketkeeper Golam Rabbi also had a memorable debut, taking eight catches.

Chittagong, who drew their first round match against Rajshahi and collected only two points from that game after conceding first-innings lead, improved their tally to eight points while Sylhet remained stuck on two.

DHAKA-BARISAL

Defending champions Dhaka might have to pay the price for slow batting on Day One as they face a race against time to force a result against Barisal who were all out for 263 in their first innings on Day Three at the Fatullah Cricket Stadium.

Dhaka, who made 355 in their first innings were 25 without loss at stumps stretching the overall lead to 117.

Barisal, who were 57-1 overnight, ran into deep trouble when they lost four wickets in the space of nine runs, crashing to 76-5. Three batsmen were dismissed on 76.

Pacer Mahbubul Alam Robin captured three of the wickets but Mosharraf Hossain Rubel's stubborn 79 rescued Barisal. The all-rounder, who hit 16 boundaries in 139 balls, added 93 runs for the sixth wicket with Nasiruddin Faruk.

Robin finally trapped Mosharraf lbw to finish with 4-46. Dhaka captain Khaled Mahmud took two quick wickets (3-59) to end Barisal's resistance.

KHULNA-RAJSHAH

At the Khulna Divisional Stadium, Rajshahi looked set to earn atleast four points after taking a 19-run lead

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PHOTO: STAR

Chittagong's lively paceman Wayaskarani Palash in action during his six-wicket burst against Sylhet on the third day of their NCL match at Chittagong.

Pakistan's tour on



AFP, Lahore

Pakistan has agreed to play a one-day international in the riot-hit Indian city of Ahmedabad, ending a row over venues that threatened the team's first cricket tour of India in six years, an official said Friday.

"We have agreed to play an additional one-day match in Ahmedabad and the proposed Test in Ahmedabad will now be played in Calcutta," Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) chairman Shahryar Khan told AFP.

"The tour may get delayed by three to four days," he added.

The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) on Thursday accepted its Pakistani counterpart's request not to play a Test in Ahmedabad, where religious riots three years ago left 2,000 mainly Muslim people dead.

However it had proposed that the western city should host an unscheduled extra one-day international to appease local politicians and cricket officials.

"We hope a final itinerary will be announced by the BCCI later Friday.

We are in constant touch with them so we can agree on the dates for the tour to start because they have a lot of work to do," said Khan.

"I am happy that the matter is resolved and the tour will get on smoothly."

Pakistan are due to leave on February 25 for the seven-week tour, which will now include three Tests and six one-day internationals.

Khan said the PCB's recently appointed director of cricket operations, the former Pakistan fast bowler Salim Altaf, would be the manager of the team which will be announced on Saturday.

Pakistan's manager on their tour of Australia, Haroon Rasheed, was not considered for the job although his contract lasts until July this year.

The PCB had said its reluctance to play in Ahmedabad was based on security fears and the recent history of the city.

Mohali and Bangalore will host the other two Tests while Cochin, Vishakapatnam, Jamshedpur, Kanpur and Delhi are to host the other one-day matches.

India's main opposition party, the Bharatiya Janata Party, last week urged the government to cancel the tour if Pakistan declined to play in

Ahmedabad.

India refused to play Tests in volatile Karachi, Pakistan's biggest city, and in the northwestern border town of Peshawar and instead played one-day matches in the two cities on their tour of Pakistan last year.

Aus, NZ get serious today

BBC ONLINE, Wellington

After the light-hearted nature of the Twenty20 opener, the serious business in the New Zealand v Australia series begins on Saturday.

The first one-day international at Wellington, finishing under floodlights, will be seen as the resumption of uncompleted business.

The Chappell-Hadlee Trophy on Australian soil late last year ended 1-1 with the decider lost to the rain.

The forecast this time is for sunny weather and light winds in Wellington.

Australia captain Ricky Ponting, who hit 30 runs off one Daryl Tuffey over on Thursday night, said: "It's just nice to get out and spend a bit of time in the middle to get used to the

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BD A v ZIM A Second Test from today

SPORTS REPORTER

The visiting Bangladesh A team will face their Zimbabwean counterparts in the second Test starting in Bulawayo today.

The second-string national side is leading the three-match series 1-0 after a 50-run victory over the home side in the first Test.

The first match was highlighted by some outstanding individual performances from the Bangladeshi youngsters.

Young batsman Raqib Al Hasan hit his maiden first-class century in the four-dayer while star left-arm spinner and captain Enamul Haque was the wrecker-in-chief in the first innings, capturing seven wickets.

But it was fast bowler Shahadat Hossain Rajib who stole the show on the final day, finishing the job with a five-wicket haul.

'Take your time Tendulkar'



AFP, New Delhi

Prolific Indian batsman Sachin Tendulkar should skip the upcoming high-profile cricket series against Pakistan if he is not fully fit, according to legendary England opener Geoff Boycott.

"My opinion is he should not be in a hurry," Boycott told the Bombay-based 'Mid-day' newspaper on Friday.

"Take your time Sachin, till you are fully fit is what I would tell him."

Tendulkar, 31, has been in and out of the team since August due to a tennis elbow injury. He missed one-day tournaments in the Netherlands and England before returning for the last two home Tests against Australia in October.

The master batsman appeared to have aggravated the injury after playing four more Tests -- two each against South Africa and Bangladesh.

He scored a double-century in Bangladesh to equal compatriot Sunil Gavaskar's world mark of 34 Test hundreds. He has also made a record 37 centuries in one-dayers.

"Had Sachin not played against Bangladesh he would not have felt pain now. Tennis elbow is painful," said Boycott.

Tendulkar, who has not picked up a bat since the Bangladesh tour in December, is planning to return to competitive cricket at a four-day domestic match starting in Hyderabad on February 22.

But Boycott said Tendulkar should take more rest before he resumes playing.

"Perhaps he is eager to play against Pakistan and wants to prepare himself by playing a domestic match. But I feel he should take more rest and resume playing only after he has recovered completely," said Boycott.

"Sachin is sensible enough to



SACHIN TENDULKAR

take such a decision.

"I know India-Pakistan clashes are big in India, but injuries have no relations with people's sentiment. And it's hard to isolate yourself from a such a mega event if you are Sachin Tendulkar.

"But it will be worse if he aggravates the injury. My opinion is he should not be in a hurry."

Boycott said he did not believe the heavy bat used by Tendulkar in the past had caused the injury.

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Shoaib blow

AFP, Lahore

Fast bowler Shoaib Akhtar pulled out of Pakistan's upcoming tour of India on Friday saying it would take him at least a month to recover from a hamstring injury.

"I am disappointed to say that I have pulled out of the tour of India because my hamstring injury would take another four to five weeks and I don't want to play half fit," Akhtar said.

His pullout will further weaken a depleted Pakistan bowling attack with two other frontline pacemen, Shabbir Ahmed and Umar Gul, already ruled out of Pakistan's first tour of India in six years.

He denied the decision was linked to a 500-US-dollar fine handed down by the Pakistan Cricket Board on Thursday for a disco outing during the recent tour of Australia and three other counts of indiscipline.

"No, I have nothing to say on the penalties, I don't want to have breakdowns on the tour," said Akhtar, who broke down during the

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Ashraful relishing captaincy



SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh batting sensation Mohammad Ashraful is looking forward to his first stint as captain at any level when he leads a Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) Eleven in the Duleep Trophy in India.

A 14-member strong Bangladesh selection led by the gifted middle order batsman will leave today to take part in India's first-class competition for the first time.

"I did not expect the job (captaincy) to come my way so early but I'm ready to accept the challenge. I've never captained any side at any level in my career but I'm lucky that I'm going to lead a very strong side in an important tournament," said 20-year-old Ashraful after the squad's final training session at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

For Ashraful, performance is key to becoming a good captain besides having good knowledge of the game.

"It is my opinion that you have to lead the team from the front in order to become an able leader. I'm aware that I haven't made scores consistently enough and got out at wrong times. So, my first challenge will be to concentrate on my own batting," said the young player, who admires New Zealand's Stephen Fleming's style of leadership.

Ashraful, one of the senior members of the Bangladesh team, however, said that he was very optimistic about the upcoming trip.

"We'll face a tough challenge in the tournament but I think our team is confident to face it. Actually, the recent performance against Zimbabwe on home soil has changed the whole scenario. You see the visiting Bangladesh A team was also boosted by the success. I learnt a valuable lesson from that series and was having the belief that w e

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PHOTO: STAR

TIME TO HONE THE LEG-BREAKS: Mohammad Ashraful bowls in the nets while coach Dav Whatmore watches yesterday.

What to WATCH

ESPN

New Zealand vs Australia

First ODI

Live at 7:00 am

FA Cup

Southampton vs Brentford

Live at 9:00 pm

STAR Sports

FA Cup

Arsenal vs Sheffield United

Live at 6:30 pm

Bolton vs Fulham

Live at 9:00 pm

Everton vs Man United

Live at 11:30 pm