

Kolkata Test from today

Pakistan look to history; India's morale not down

AFP, Kolkata



Pakistan will seek inspiration from events six years ago when they return to their happy hunting ground for the second Test against India starting at the Eden Gardens here on Wednesday.

Pakistan posted a stunning victory at this venue in the opening match of the Asian Test Championship in 1999 after losing six wickets for 26 runs on the first morning.

"My boys plan to watch that Test on video this evening," said Pakistan captain Inzamamul Haq on Tuesday. "It will certainly inspire the whole team."

"We have also not forgotten that we have never lost a Test at the Eden Gardens. It is a lucky venue for us."

Pakistan, who have drawn four Tests and won one here, continued their good run at the celebrated 90,000-capacity stadium when they chased a 290-plus total to beat the hosts in a one-day international in November.

But Inzamam warned his team against being complacent.

"We still have to work hard to win this Test," he said.

"The opening Test has given us confidence. We now know we can produce better results if we continue to play like this."

Pakistan drew the first match of the three-Test series from a losing position at Mohali last Saturday, denying India victory with their determined lower-order batting.

Inzamam indicated there could be a couple of changes from the team which played at Mohali.

Seamer Navedul Hasan, suffering from a shoulder injury, is likely to be replaced by left-arm fast bowler Mohammad Khalil who has figured in just one Test.

All-rounder Shahid Afridi may also be included in place of left-handed opener Salman Butt, who failed in both the innings at Mohali.

"I think changes are required at the top order and in bowling," the Pakistani captain said.

India skipper Sourav Ganguly, meanwhile, stressed the draw at Mohali did not affect his team's morale.

"We are disappointed not to have won there, but now we have to come back strongly to win this match," Ganguly said ahead of the Test on his home ground.

"I don't think pressure will be only on us. I think pressure will be on both the teams to win here."

India have yet to decide whether to go into the match with three seamers and one spinner or two pacemen and as many spinners.

"There's a chance of playing three seamers as there's grass on the wicket. We'll see how it looks on Wednesday morning," said Ganguly.

But there are indications that off-spinner Harbhajan Singh will be named in the playing eleven after being dropped at Mohali to make way for a third seamer.

Harbhajan rose to international fame at this venue in 2001 when, against Steve Waugh's Australia, he became the only Indian to grab a Test hat-trick.

TEAMS

INDIA (from): Sourav Ganguly (captain), Virender Sehwag, Gautam Gambhir, Rahul Dravid, S a c h i n

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PHOTO: AFP

WILL HE BE THERE? Indian off-spinner Harbhajan Singh bowls in the nets during the final training session at the Eden Gardens in Kolkata yesterday.

Manik expecting tough outing

Muktis face Al Faisaly today

SPORTS REPORTER



Chakra coach Shafiqul Islam Manik wants his charges to take that confidence into today's AFC (Asian Football Confederation) Cup clash

with Jordanian Al Faisaly FC at home.

The match between the two Group A teams, who are totally unknown to each other, will kick off at 4pm at the Bangabandhu National Stadium (BNS).

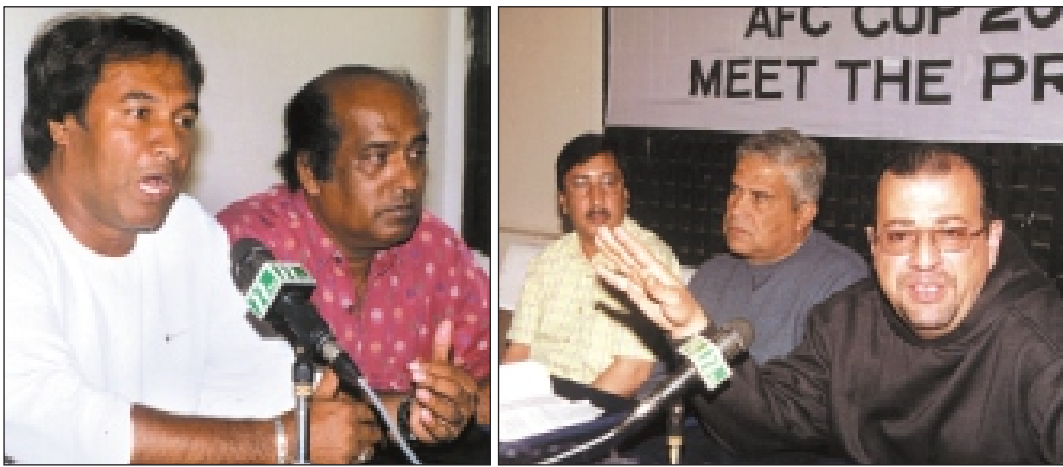
"As far as we know, they are a better side than East Bengal. That's why we will need more than hundred per cent effort in the field tomorrow. But I am confident that we are going to be competitive. The goalless draw against East Bengal was really inspiring for us," said Manik during a

press briefing at the BNS yesterday.

"They have good number of national booters and you know Jordan were one of the semifinalists in the last Asia Cup. So they should be a pretty good side. But we don't want to concentrate on probable strengths on paper. We want to taste our first victory in our sixth attempt in this competition," said the former national defender.

Muktijoddha will be boosted by the return of the country's number one goalkeeper Aminul Haque, who

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PHOTOS: STAR

THE TALKING GAME: Muktijoddha coach Shafiqul Islam Manik (L) makes a point to the reporters while the views of his Al Faisaly counterpart (2nd from R) Mohammad Naser Hussein Alodali being interpreted by a team official at the Bangabandhu National Stadium Conference Room yesterday.

Tuffey fined for sex offence

AFP, Wellington

Dumped New Zealand opening bowler Daryl Tuffey has been fined for serious misconduct after being filmed by two English tourists in a sexual act with a woman, New Zealand Cricket (NZC) said Tuesday.

Tuffey was fined 1,000 New Zealand dollars (740 US) for breaching New Zealand Cricket's code of conduct in the November incident in Christchurch following an inquiry by lawyer Hugh Rennie.

Tuffey had engaged in conduct "with a sexual element" but not sexual intercourse with an unnamed woman at a home in Christchurch before realising they had been filmed with a digital camera for 20 to 30 seconds.

Rennie's report did not identify the people who made the recording but media reports have identified them as two young male British tourists who have since left New Zealand.

Reports have said the video clip was shown to a number of people in Christchurch.

Early this year Tuffey encountered the British pair, was shown the video clip on the camera and deleted it himself, Rennie said.

Tuffey told Rennie the pair had not made a copy of the clip and there was no evidence of any copies. The incident came to NZC's notice this month.

Reds' foolish denial

SPORTS REPORTER

Muktijoddha Sangsad officials took a stubborn stance and tried to shift the blame on others regarding their goalkeeper Aminul Haque's one-match suspension in the AFC Cup following a red card last year.

The Reds went to Kolkata to play their first match in this year's competition against East Bengal including Aminul on the roster. But the country's number one goalkeeper was not allowed to play as tournament officials said that the one-match suspension due to his red card against Lebanese club Nijmeh in the last game of the previous season, naturally makes him ineligible for the next match. This is an obvious ruling in any competition which the Muktijoddha team management somehow failed to understand. Instead, they became an embarrassment for the country by taking Aminul to India with them.

When the issue was raised d u r i n g

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Massive UNDP boost for CHT sports

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangamati

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has allocated a handsome US dollars 4,24,110 (BDT 2,54,46,600) for promotion of sports in the post-conflict Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) under a four-year programme.

CHT Regional Sports Association (RSA) officials disclosed this yesterday.

The RSA, UNDP's official partner, will carry out the programme under direct supervision of the UNDP-CHTDF (Chittagong Hill Tracts Development Facility) while the three district sports associations of the region (Rangamati, Bandar-ban and Khagrachari) will provide assistance, informed RSA vice president Ushaton Talukder at a press conference.

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Mashrafee ton saves Khulna



SPORTS REPORTER

Rajshahi defeated Barisal by five wickets for their first outright win in the Ispahani Sixth National Cricket League but Sylhet were denied a similar success mainly because of a magnificent maiden first-class century by Mashrafee-Bin-Mortuza.

National star Mashrafee, who smashed 70 in the first innings, hit a blazing 132 as Khulna pulled off a dramatic draw after following-on on the final day of the four-day match at the Khulna Divisional Stadium.

Rajshahi's victory placed them in the second position with Chittagong in the six-team table that holders Dhaka lead with 24 points after five rounds. Both Chittagong and Rajshahi have 18 points each.

Sylhet, who bagged four points by virtue of their first-innings lead, were still trailing Khulna (12) by two points with Barisal at the bottom on eight.

KHULNA-SYLHET

Mashrafee continued with his batting exploits for the second successive day to save Khulna's blushes at home. Batting at number four, the emerging all-rounder of the country steered his side to 279-9 in the second innings after following on.



MASHRAFEE... m-o-m

The pace bowler might have failed to take a single wicket in the

match but entertained the home crowd with the bat during his 140-ball undefeated knock.

The Narail sensation smashed 13 fours and five sixes in just over three hours and shared a match saving 103 runs for the fifth wicket with stand-in captain Manzarul Islam. The right-hander, who took 119 deliveries to complete his maiden century at any level, was also adjudged man-of-the-match.

Manzarul played his part with a fine 41 on the back of an undefeated 73 not out in the first innings. The southpaw resumed the day on 49 and scored all the 24 runs Khulna added in the morning before both of his partners were dismissed by Sylhet paceman Tapash Baisya without scoring.

Khulna, overnight 218-8, needed a further 54 runs to avoid the follow-on but were bowled out for 242, giving Sylhet a first-innings lead of 179 runs.

RAJSHAHI-BARISAL

Set to score 166 on the final day, Rajshahi rode on a 78-run opening stand to reach 169-5 just before tea

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Everyone's Eden Gardens



CRICINFO, undated

Eden Gardens has been a Test venue for the last 71 years, and has hosted 33 Test matches. India has won seven of those matches, while the opposing teams have prevailed eight times; the other 18 matches have been drawn.

While the first five Tests here were all drawn, of late, Eden Gardens has become a more result-oriented venue: six of the last seven Tests have produced a decisive result, with India winning four of them -- twice against Australia, and once each against England and South Africa.

Pakistan have an excellent record here -- they've won one Test

and drawn four, and have beaten India all three times in ODIs. In fact, Pakistan have won four out of five one-dayers here -- the only time they lost was when Sri Lanka trumped them in the second final of the Independence Cup in 1997.

There have been reports suggesting that the pitch might favour the seamers this time, but if past record is any indication, the decision at the toss should be a no-brainer -- the captain winning it should bat. Only five times in 33 matches has a team chosen to field after winning the toss. The last time it happened was nine matches back, in 1986-87, when Imran Khan put India in to bat. India ended up making 403 in their first innings, and the match was drawn.

Teams have usually opted to bat after winning the toss, but the average first-innings total isn't a huge

one -- in the last five Tests here, going back to 1997-98, teams average 30.32 per wicket in the first innings, 43 in the second, 41.04 in the third and 25.64 in the fourth. This suggests the pitch offers something to the bowlers early on, then settles down into an excellent batting track, and then aids the bowlers again on the final day.

In the last five Tests, each team chose to bat after winning the toss, but the average score at the end of the first day was only a modest 247 for 8. In fact, the decision backfired rather badly on two occasions -- in 1997-98, Australia were bowled out for 233, while Pakistan were reduced to 26 for 6 a year later, though they recovered to score 185 and ended up winning the match.

Anil Kumble, Harbhajan Singh,

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What to WATCH

- DD Sports & TEN Sports**
India vs Pakistan
Second Test, Day One
Live at 10:00 am
- ESPN**
English Premier Football League
Chelsea vs West Bromwich
Same Day Delay at 7:30 am
Sportscentre
Live at 8:30 pm
English Premier Football League
Charlton Athletic vs Tottenham Hotspur
Live at 1:55 am (Thursday)
- STAR Sports**
Sportsline
Live at 8:00 pm
English Premier Football League
Liverpool vs Blackburn Rovers
Live at 1:55 am (Thursday)
Indian Wells Tennis Masters Series
Fourth Round
Live at 4:00 am (Thursday)

DAY'S
EVENT

AFC Cup
Muktijoddha vs Al Faisaly (4:00 pm)
Venue: Bangabandhu National Stadium