

U-17 CRICKET FINAL It's Dhaka v Rajshahi

SPORTS REPORTER

Dhaka Division will take on Rajshahi Division in the final of the Age-group Cricket Development Tournament (Under-17) as the teams won their respective semifinals (two-day match) by virtue of first-innings leads yesterday.

Dhaka, who scored 220 in their first innings, shot out Barisal for 125 at the Jagannath Hall ground with Rocky winning the man of the match award for a fine all-round display for Dhaka (72 and four wickets for 21).

At the Uttara Friends Club ground, Himel's 86 led Rajshahi to 267 before they booked Sylhet to 178. Rajshahi looked set for an outright win but Sylhet saved the game by reaching 40-7 at stumps.

India to form panel to pick cricket coach

PTI, New Delhi

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"We will constitute a committee in the next 48 hours which will decide on the next coach for the Indian team," BCCI president Ranbir Singh Mahendra told reporters here.

Mahendra said the committee will shortlist the candidates and recommend the name of the coach and a final decision will be taken by the BCCI's Working Committee which is likely to meet later this month.

Wright, who coached the team for over four years, relinquished the job immediately after the series against Pakistan.

Mahendra said that the committee will be entrusted with the task of carrying out the entire procedure for appointing a new coach but did not specify how many members it would have.

Asked whether the next coach will be an Indian or a foreigner, the BCCI chief said, "It's a decision that will be taken by the committee."

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I ALSO AGREE WITH YOU: Bangladesh coach Dav Whatmore talks to captain Habibur Bashar during a press conference on Thursday.

PHOTO: AFP

Websites hear Shaheen's plea

SPORTS REPORTER

While the country's cricket authorities preferred to remain silent, members of fan sites dedicated to the Bangladesh team and other independent contributors have come forward to help ailing cricket scorer Mahbub Ul-Haque Shaheen.

Shaheen, a grade two scorer, is surviving with one functioning kidney and is in need of immediate transplant. He has been told by doctors in India to undergo the transplantation without delay. But the cost of the treatment, estimated at over five lakh taka is impossible to bear for the 30-year-old.

Daily Star Sport carried a news item on Shaheen's plight on April 21 titled 'Cricket scorer fighting for life' following which banglacricket.com, a popular and thriving website with

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INDEPENDENCE DAY SOCCER

Army, Sheikh Russel replay today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

The Independence Day football tournament opener between Sheikh Russel Krira Chakra and Bangladesh Army was abandoned due to inclement weather and electricity failure here yesterday.

The match ended in a 1-1 draw in regulation time but the extra time could get started due to heavy rain and lack of electric supply. Ripon put Army ahead after eight minutes but an early second half strike by midfielder Hanif levelled the scores for Dhaka Premier League runners-up Sheikh Russel.

The match will be replayed today at 2.30 pm.

Milan survive PSV punch

REUTERS, Eindhoven

AC Milan reached the Champions League final for the second time in three seasons on Wednesday as a late header by Massimo Ambrosini broke PSV Eindhoven hearts in a stirring semi-final second leg.

Milan, despite losing 3-1 in the Philips Stadium, went through on the away goals rule after a 2-0 win in last week's first leg at San Siro.

Dutch champions PSV ran the six-time winners ragged and looked to have forced extra time with goals from South Korean Park Ji-Sung and Philip Cocu.

But midfielder Ambrosini glanced in Kaka's cross in the last minute and despite a third goal from Cocu in stoppage time PSV bowed out.

Milan will meet four-time winners Liverpool in a mouthwatering final in Istanbul on May 25.

"It's disappointing because when you've played two games better than Milan you deserve to win, but they scored an away goal and that's the most important thing," said PSV captain Mark van Bommel.

Milan coach Carlo Ancelotti said

His toughest Test

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

Dav Whatmore believes that the Tigers' first full series in England would be the toughest test for him as Bangladesh coach since his first assignment against Australia two years ago.

"It is going to be testing. I can understand expectations are high because of a very, very good series against Zimbabwe in the January. But I also know that a lot of people in Bangladesh are mindful of the opposition and the degree of difficulty that is ahead of us," said the Sri Lankan-born Australian at a press conference yesterday.

Bangladesh, led by Habibur Bashar, set off for England today to play two Tests followed by a gruelling triangular one-day series that also involves world champions Australia.

The 50-year-old Whatmore, who recently renewed his contract for another two years, was obviously undeterred by the fact that his young side would be up against the second best team in Test cricket. Rather, the shrewd tactician focused on small individual successes than the result that many believe is a forgone conclusion.

"The expectation is to improve because of our recent performance but one must understand that it is going to be a lot tougher. To measure the success of the tour by merely a scoreline would be unrealistic."

"A tour like this is totally different, being asked to play top level cricket in the month of May and June in England against an opposition that is currently ranked second in Test match cricket. We will have enough problems in the climatic conditions,"

said Whatmore while reflecting on the seaming English conditions.

But the inspirational Bangladesh coach was happy to have three warm-up games before the first Test starting at Lord's on May 26.

"We have three practice matches before the first Test at Lord's and I hope to get all of those nine days of play in order to give our boys enough time to get a little bit of form and experience to the condition they would be asked to play under", he said.

Whatmore also had his homework and used the 'Duke' ball during the two-week training at Chittagong.

"It's a totally different cricket ball to what we play normally in most countries. So, we have been practising with the 'Duke' balls that behave differently both off the surface of the wicket and also in the atmospheric condition in the air," told Whatmore.

He, however, put up a brave face against all odds and did not rule out the possibility of a surprise that his captain Habibur Bashar promised the day before.

"There is always a chance for a team as we are to pull off surprises. I agree with the captain that there might be a surprise or two and we all will feel better for that."

But Whatmore was cautious that to be competitive across five days of play they would require contributions from across the board.

"It would be unfair to put extra pressure on individuals by naming one or two in particular."

Whatmore has three new faces in the team in left-handed opener Shahriar Nafees, fast bowler Shahadat Hossain Rajib and wicketkeeper Mushfiqur Rahim and the coach is optimistic to give one or two debuts.

"In some ways making a debut outside your country is easier because of the expectations when you play at

home. I think two out of three will be given every opportunity to press claims for Test match selection."

"The wicketkeeper is potentially a very good player but I see him more as an understudy. The other two, the left-handed opener and the fast bowler, will be given opportunities to really give the selectors a difficult but nice problem to make their debut in England."

Whatmore was also less bothered by the English media's ignorance of the Bangladesh series as they only focused on the Ashes in June.

"It is not surprising that we have been reading a few articles that way. But I am pretty sure that players themselves won't take us lightly. One or two might say something to write us off but what really counts is what happens on the field and we will be as focussed as we can be to be competitive," said Whatmore.

When asked whether the Tigers were unlucky to get Test venues like Lord's and Chester-le-Street where life could be difficult for batsmen, Whatmore said he was not concerned about it.

"When I was at the Lord's last time in May 2001, Sri Lanka scored 500 runs on a wicket that looked perfect for batting. It's not always the movement, it depends on what sort of weather we get."

SQUAD

Habibur Bashar (captain), Khaled Mashud, Javed Omar, Nafees Iqbal, Shahriar Nafees, Aftab Ahmed, Mohammad Ashraf, Rajin Saleh, Mohammad Rafique, Mashrafe Bin Mortaza, Tapash Baisya, Enamul Haque, Talha Jubair, Anwar Munir, Shahadat Hossain Rajib, Mushfiqur Rahim.
Coach: Dav Whatmore, manager: MA Latif.

Kallis gets back No. 1 position

CRICINFO, undated

South Africa's Jacques Kallis has ended Brian Lara's one-week return to the top of the International Cricket Council (ICC) Test rankings after moving back to number one position with his 147 at Antigua.

The top four batsmen have been regularly shuffled this season, and with only 23 points between Kallis, Lara, Rahul Dravid and Ricky Ponting the jostling will continue.

Chris Gayle's triple-century catapulted him to a career-high 24th place, while Graeme Smith, who made 126 as South Africa posted 588 for 6 declared in the first innings, jumped two spots to re-enter the top ten.

On the bowling front, Shaun Pollock slipped below the 800-point mark for the first time in seven years, but held on to third place. Makhaya Ntini and Andre Nel are closing in on their teammate as they registered personal bests of fifth and eighth places.

TEAMS TABLE

Pos	Country	Pts
1	Australia	132
2	England	110
3	India	107
4	Pakistan	102
5	Sri Lanka	100
6	South Africa	100
7	New Zealand	97
8	West Indies	93
9	Zimbabwe	41
10	Bangladesh	6

Inzy believes they can beat WI now

Cricket

CRICINFO, undated

After a successful tour of India, Inzamamul Haq has expressed confidence in his side's ability to beat West Indies in the Caribbean.

Pakistan, who have never won a series there, last toured in 1999-



INZAMAMUL HAQ

2000, when West Indies won the Tests series 1-0.

"We've never won a Test or one-day series in the West Indies and I'm

fully confident that this time we'll beat them," Inzamam was quoted as saying by APP.

"The Caribbean tour will be another test of the young team and if I'm not wrong it's going to be a tough venture, but I believe the players are fully prepared to take on a challenge bravely."

Pakistan are scheduled to play two Tests and three one-day internationals this time. Out of the 19 Tests played between the two teams in the Caribbean, Pakistan have lost nine and won only three.

However, Inzamam played down their dismal record against West Indies.

"The way the team fought in the Test and one-day games in India it highly speaks its abilities and to do the same against the other teams and the fighting trend it showed will serve as a big motivation in the West Indies also."

Speaking about the team selection, Inzamam stressed on the fact that his young players were performing up to the required level.

"Their performance is gradually getting better and they'll also be learning a lot in the West Indies which will help them prepare for the home series against England in October."

Star cast for Lord's game

Cricket

BBC ONLINE, undated

Star-studded line-ups will compete in the 50-overs-per-side charity tsunami match at Lord's on June 14.

Sachin Tendulkar and Brian Lara will captain the Marylebone Cricket Club (MCC) and World XI teams respectively and play alongside the likes of Stephen Fleming, Shane Warne and Rahul Dravid.

MCC president Tom Graveney said: "I am delighted we have been able to name such strong teams."

Eight of the ten Test nations are represented -- England and Bangladesh will be involved in the NatWest Series -- with six of the top ten batsmen and three of the top five bowlers taking part.

The match is to raise money for

the tsunami disaster which happened on Boxing Day last year.

At least 173,000 people were killed in a dozen countries in Asia and Africa and another 50,000 are missing.

Graveney added: "We are indebted to the players for agreeing to participate in what will be a very special game."

"It will be a unique opportunity of seeing some of the world's leading cricketers testing their skills against their national team mates."

MCC includes Chris Gayle, following his triple-century against South Africa in Antigua. Muttiah Muralitharan and Shoaib Akhtar form part of a formidable bowling attack.

The Lara-led international XI will line up current West Indies captain Shivnarine Chanderpaul. Warne is Australia's sole representative in the match -- his teammates will also be competing in the NatWest Series -- while Virender Sehwag, Sanath Jayasuriya and Dravid form a thrilling top order.

Andy Flower, the former Zimbabwe captain, is the only player who is not on the international circuit. He continues his association with MCC, following his appearance in the first match of the season against Warwickshire and in the same fixture at the start of the 2004 season.

TEAMS

MCC: Sachin Tendulkar (India, captain), Chris Gayle (West Indies), Stephen Fleming (New Zealand), Ramnaresh Sarwan (West Indies), Jacques Kallis (South Africa), Andy Flower (Zimbabwe), Kumar Sangakkara (Sri Lanka), Shaun Pollock (South Africa), Anil Kumble (India), Muttiah Muralitharan (Sri Lanka), Shoaib Akhtar (Pakistan).

INTERNATIONAL XI: Brian Lara (West Indies, captain), Virender Sehwag (India), Sanath Jayasuriya (Sri Lanka), Graeme Smith (South Africa), Rahul Dravid (India), Shivnarine Chanderpaul (West Indies), Chris Cairns (New Zealand), Shane Warne (Australia), Chaminda Vaas (Sri Lanka), Mohammad Sami (Pakistan), Makhaya Ntini (South Africa).

Mendis back to work

AFP, Colombo

Sri Lanka Cricket (SLC) chief executive Duleep Mendis resumed work on Thursday, a week after submitting his resignation amid a bitter row for control of the country's richest

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Ridley Jacobs
(Just-retired West Indies wicket-keeper)

"A captain has to be able to motivate his team. He can't afford to be selfish. With this captain, it is not for the love of the game anymore, it's for him."

While slamming Brian Lara of being selfish.

What to WATCH

- ESPN**
Cricket Gold
3:00 pm
Sportscenter
Live at 8:30 pm
- STAR Sports**
ATP Masters Series
Live from 7:00 pm
Sportsline
Live at 8:00 pm
- TEN Sports**
Italian Serie A



END OF A DUTCH DREAM: AC Milan's Ambrosini heading in the goal that knocked PSV Eindhoven out of the Champions League during the second semifinal at the Philips Stadium in Eindhoven.

PHOTO: AFP

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