

Questions aplenty

Cricket

AL MUSABBIR SADI from Colombo

Success is like cement because it holds everything together. But when a team fails, all the cracks begin to open up.

And likewise, people here are questioning how a team that had done so well in the trying conditions of England could bat so meekly in the first two games and then does the exact opposite and perform hara-kiri in the last in conditions more familiar to that of home.

After Bangladesh's pathetic batting in the third and final one-day on Sunday one of the theories on why they had fielded first after winning tosses in the first two games was that they did not want to face Chaminda Vaas and Co in the morning.

The wicket at Sinhalese Sports Club ground usually favours fast bowling in the early hours while the Premadasa Stadium pitch for the second ODI, a bit slower, had enough juice left from overnight rain.

Those were perhaps the fear factors but that did not stop the experienced Sri Lankans from posting huge totals, 269-9 and 295-5.

When Bangladesh were put in by

Mahela Jayawardene after the groundsmen managed to dry up the wet ground following sporadic rain for over 24 hours, it seemed that the stand-in Lankan skipper has given Bangladesh what they wanted especially with no Vaas around.

Javed Omar and Shahriar Nafees found life easy against the second string attack also without Muttiah Muralitharan. However as soon as Javed was trapped lbw in Dilhara Fernando's first over sheer madness followed.

From 47 without loss, the Tigers crashed to 54-6 in no time as first-change Fernando and Farveez Maharoof shared six wickets in the span of seven runs and 27 deliveries.

Ironically the good start proved there was no ghost in the Premadasa pitch and it also proved something more worrying; Bangladesh were back to their old destructive habits after a rather nice run in ODIs since December.

Having won at least one match in the previous three series', against India and Zimbabwe at home and the tri-series in England where world champions Australia were also involved, everybody expected Bangladesh to be at least competitive.

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WINNER TAKES IT ALL: Sri Lanka captain Marvan Atapattu shows off the ODI series trophy after his side beat Bangladesh in the third ODI on Sunday.

PHOTO: AFP

Aysha breaks new ground

SPORTS REPORTER

Aysha Akhter made history by becoming the country's first female referee when she conducted the match between Government Laboratory and Post Office High in the Pran-Cola school football tournament at the Dhanmondi Club ground yesterday.

Laboratory School won 3-1 to reach into the group semifinals while the game between West End High and Rayerbazar High ended in a 1-1 draw at the same venue.

Residential Model School, Shaheed Nabi High and Motijheel Government High (Morning) also confirmed their semifinal berths.

Residential Model thrashed Dr. Mohammad Shahidullah Biddya-pith 7-0 at the Mirpur National Bangla High School ground while Shaheed Nabi High defeated Sunshine Pre-cadet 5-1 and Motijheel Government blanked Nawabpur Government High School 6-0 at the Birshreshtha Shaheed Mostafa Kamal Stadium in Kamalapur.

Arambagh hold Russel

SPORTS REPORTER

Sheikh Russel Krira Chakra dropped points in their penultimate round game in the Premier Bank Premier Division Football League when they drew 2-2 with Arambagh Krira Sangha at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

Striker Majibur Rahman Ritu capitalised on a Russel Ansari left-flank cross with a fine back header on the stroke of the final whistle as Arambagh came from two goals down to share points.

Russel, who pushed their collection to 24 points to stay in fifth position, went ahead in the 31st minute when midfielder Nayan unleashed a powerful left-footer after receiving the ball inside the box from Moroccan Rachid's pass.

Rachid doubled the lead in the 61st minute with a left-footed grounder from the top of the box that oomped home before kissing the side bar.

With a two-goal cushion, Russel took their foot off the accelerator and that allowed their opponents to launch a series of counter attacks. Arambagh's efforts were rewarded when Abu Morshed reduced the margin after six minutes with a placing shot.

Ritu's last minute strike helped Arambagh, who lost their first-leg game against the same opponents by 2-0 goals, to increase their tally to 19 points.

The final round of the 10-team fray will start today with Muktiyoddha taking on Dhaka Wanderers but all eyes will be on Friday's title-deciding last match between defending champions Brothers Union and Mohammedan Sporting Club.

McGrath declares himself fit for 5th Test

AFP, London



KHALED MAHMUD

fourth Test victory at Johannesburg.

But Anderson was included in the squad revealed by chairman of selectors David Graveney as cover for Glamorgan seamer Simon Jones, who injured his right ankle during last week's fourth Test victory at Trent Bridge and remains doubtful.

Collingwood has also been added to the squad but Hampshire seamer Tremlett has been overlooked despite being included in all four previous squads without ever breaking his way into the starting line-up.

Neither Collingwood nor Anderson

are expected to play should Jones, who has been receiving treatment in an oxygen chamber this week in an effort to speed up his recover, come through practice successfully in the build-up to the Test.

Should Jones make it and start the match it would be the first time the same XI started all the Ashes tests since the 1884-85 series.

"Simon is continuing to make progress in his recovery from injury and we will give him as much time as he needs in order to prove his fitness," confirmed chairman of selectors

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Beyond explanation

Cricket

AL MUSABBIR SADI from Colombo

Captain Habibul Bashar was at a loss for words to explain Bangladesh's wretched batting collapse that saw the side suffer their third one-day international defeat in a row in Sri Lanka.

The Tigers lost the third and final one-day by six wickets here on Sunday to lose the series 3-0.

"Recently, we have not faced anything like this. I have no idea why it happened," said Bashar at the Premadasa Stadium after the game.

He will fly home on Monday to see his ailing mother and is expected to be back in the Sri Lankan capital before the Tests series.

Expectations were high after Bangladesh's tremendous form towards the end of the tri-series in England where they stunned world champions Australia and were competitive against the hosts also.

"I am not happy because we had a good start in this match. I won't blame the wicket but we really played badly."

Bashar admitted that the team lacked big hitters who could have used the conditions.

"The wickets in England were good for strokeplay. Our players are not strong on the back-foot. In England, the ball came onto the bat nicely and all the front-foot players enjoyed batting there. Here the ball comes slowly and you have to hit the ball hard like Sanath Jayasuriya or Aviska (Gunawardene). We don't have players like them so we struggled."

"I gambled by sending Mohammad Rafique like the previous match to make the most of the powerplay. He is not doing well down the order and we needed a big hitter there."

When asked whether he had any regrets for not taking advantage of a relatively weak Sri Lankan side missing four key players, Bashar thought they had a chance to put the home side under pressure had they scored 220-230.

"We feel guilty for not rising to the task. Obviously it would have been nice if we had won one game. But Sri Lanka is a very tough place. I won't say that we are inconsistent until we do as bad in the two Tests as well."

Bangladesh bowled well in the first match, batted better in the second and fielding looked sharper in the last one. Bashar crossed his fingers all three departments would click together before the first Test starting on September 12.

"We did not achieve many positives in the one-dayers. Most of the batsmen are not among the runs but I am happy that Shahriar Nafees showed consistency while pace bowler Syed Rasel had a good series and Tapash Baisya looked like he was regaining his rhythm."

"I hope our poor performance in the one-dayers does not affect us in the Tests. We have to work out many things in the three-day practice match (September 7-9), which is very important for us."

"We just need to play like we can. If we do that, then we can beat any team. We have proven that by beating a full strength Australia. Here, our performance has been frustrating to say the least."

In reply to a question whether the team was afraid to bat first in the previous two matches, Bashar said that they had to consider conditions before taking the decision.

"At both venues, the ball moves in the morning. They have two swing bowlers in Vaas and Maharoof against whom batting in the morning is tough. Also, rain and wet ground played on our mind. They could use these conditions like they did against India in the recent series. That's why we fielded, but we had decided to bat today anyway because we fielded first twice," he added.

India win easily in the end

Cricket

BBC/CRICINFO, Harare

India overcame a difficult start to their reply before overhauling Zimbabwe's score of 250 with 11 balls to spare in Harare on Sunday.

It was the final round robin match of Zimbabwe's home triangular one-day series - India and New Zealand will contest Tuesday's final.

At one stage India were 36-4 with a mounting required run rate.

But Yuvraj Singh (120) and Mahendra Dhoni (67 not out) righted the ship and Zimbabwe were denied at the end.

When they had batted, the hosts were guilty of collapsing from 227-4 in the 45th over after Charles Coventry (74) and Tatenda Taibu (71) had set up a good platform.

Ajit Agarkar finished with 3-34 while debutant Rudra Pratap Singh, who opened the bowling, had figures of 2-44.

India rested left-arm seamers Irfan Pathan and Ashish Nehra.

Zimbabwe are without ex-captain Heath Streak, who is out for up to 10 days after ankle surgery.

And batsman Stuart Carlisle was dropped after his contract was cancelled by Zimbabwe Cricket.

Blessing Mahwire had the wickets of Virender Sehwag and Rahul Dravid as India lost wickets regularly at the top of the order.

With skipper Sourav Ganguly and Mohammad Kaif also failing India were in trouble but Yuvraj held his nerve and Dhoni proved the perfect partner to see India home.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard of the Videocon Cup tri-series one-day international between India and Zimbabwe at the Harare Sports Club ground on Sunday:

| | | |
|--------------------------------|----|--|
| ZIMBABWE | | |
| Sibanda lbw b Rudra Pratap | 1 | |
| Taylor run out (Yuvraj) | 26 | |
| Masakadza c and b Rudra Pratap | 0 | |
| Taibu b Yadav | 71 | |
| Coventry c Kartik b Agarkar | 74 | |

| | | | | | |
|---|-----|--|--|--|--|
| Blignaut st Dhoni b Harbhajan | 41 | | | | |
| Williams run out (Agarkar/Dhoni) | 8 | | | | |
| Ewing lbw b Kartik | 7 | | | | |
| Mahwire b Agarkar | 2 | | | | |
| Utseya b Agarkar | 0 | | | | |
| Ireland not out | 1 | | | | |
| Extras: (lb-13, w-4, nb-2) | 19 | | | | |
| Total: (all out in 50 overs) | 250 | | | | |
| Fall of wickets: 1-4, 2-4, 3-50, 4-166, 5-227, 6-232, 7-246, 8-248, 9-249 | | | | | |
| Zimbabwe full substitute: Dabengwa (Taylor, India innings, 19.0 ov) | | | | | |

| | | | | | |
|-----------------------------|----|--|--|--|--|
| INDIA | | | | | |
| Sehwag b Mahwire | 12 | | | | |
| Ganguly c Sibanda b Ireland | 2 | | | | |
| Kaif lbw b Blignaut | 8 | | | | |
| Dravid b Mahwire | 6 | | | | |

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PHOTO: AFP

Man-of-the-match: India's Yuvraj Singh, who scored a match-winning century, here defends one during their tri-series match against Zimbabwe in Harare on Sunday.



Did U Know?

That in 1937, the then superstar of English football, Sir Stanley Matthews, earned just £8 a week.



Jose Mourinho

(Chelsea manager)

"We are not yet one of the big clubs in the world and we want to be. Now I have a five-year contract, (the aim) is to make Chelsea dominant in England, so we need to win more titles."



Premier Football League
Muktijoddha vs Dhaka Wanderers
(5:00 pm)
Venue: Bangabandhu National Stadium

Metro open TT

SPORTS REPORTER

Mehdi became champion in the unseeded group of the men's single in the Metro Group open table tennis tournament beating Arif 4-0 at the Wooden Floor Gymnasium yesterday.

President of the Women Entrepreneurs Association Rokeya Afzal Rahman inaugurated the tournament, organised by Bangladesh Table Tennis Players' Association.

In the boys' group, Narail beat New Colony 3-0, Dinajpur outplayed Gaibandha 3-0 and Jagorony defeated Patuakhali 3-0. Biman beat Magura 3-0, Habiganj outplayed Khulna 3-2 and Barna TT Club defeated Rajshahi 3-0.

In the girls' event, Abahani beat Eleven Star Club 3-0, Narail outplayed Rajshahi 3-0 and Patuakhali defeated Jessore 3-1.

Cute handball

SPORTS REPORTER

Narinda Pragoti Boys Club came from behind to earn a hard fought 22-20 victory over Bangladesh Police in the Cute Premier Division handball league at the outer stadium handball court yesterday.

The winners trailed the first half 11-12.

England recall C'wood, Anderson for last Test

Cricket

AFP, London

Paul Collingwood and James Anderson have been named in England's 13-man squad for the fifth Ashes Test against Australia at The Oval starting on Thursday but Chris Tremlett was omitted.

The 23-year-old Anderson has not featured in England's plans since last winter, when his lack of cricket during the tour told and he bowled inconsistently during the

BD-SL SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard of the third and final one-day international between Bangladesh and Sri Lanka at the R Premadasa Stadium in Colombo on Sunday:

| | | | | | | |
|--|-----|----|----|---|----|---|
| BANGLADESH | | R | M | B | 4 | 6 |
| Javed Omar lbw b Dilhara Fernando | 18 | 43 | 26 | 3 | 0 | |
| Shahriar Nafees c Upul Tharanga b Farveez Maharoof | 21 | 55 | 32 | 3 | 0 | |
| Mohammad Rafique c Dilhara Lokuhettige b Farveez Maharoof | 21 | 1 | 8 | 8 | 00 | |
| Aftab Ahmed lbw b Farveez Maharoof | 1 | 15 | 9 | 0 | 0 | |
| Mohammad Ashraf lbw b Dilhara Fernando | 0 | 6 | 3 | 0 | 0 | |
| Habibul Bashar c Kumar Sangakkara b Dilhara Fernando | 1 | 10 | 2 | 0 | 0 | |
| Tushar Imran c and b Tillakaratne Dilshan | 13 | 45 | 34 | 2 | 0 | |
| Khaled Mashud c Thilan Samaraweera b Upul Chandana | 6 | 34 | 25 | 0 | 0 | |
| Manjarul Islam c Upul Tharanga b Upul Chandana | 17 | 55 | 51 | 1 | 0 | |
| Syed Rasel c Upul Chandana b Tillakaratne Dilshan | 2 | 9 | 10 | 0 | 0 | |
| Tapash Baisya not out | 11 | 39 | 40 | 1 | 0 | |
| Extras: (lb-2, w-5, nb-10) | 17 | | | | | |
| Total: (All out in 38.2 overs) | 108 | | | | | |
| Fall of wickets: 1-47 (Omar, 8.4 ov), 2-51 (Rafique, 9.4 ov), 3-51 (Nafees, 9.6 ov), 4-52 (Ashraf, 10.6 ov), 5-52 (Aftab, 11.6 ov), 6-54 (Bashar, 12.5 ov), 7-71 (Mashud, 20.5 ov), 8-77 (Imran, 21.6 ov), 9-83 (Rasel, 25.2 ov), 10-108 (Manjarul, 38.2 ov) | | | | | | |

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