

Tigers rest for a day

OUR CORRESPONDENT

The national cricketers enjoyed a rest day in Bogra yesterday in their preparation for the two one-day internationals against Sri Lanka.

With the opening match deferred for one day, the Tigers only attended gym in the morning and later watched cricket on TV.

However, skipper Habibul Bashar and Javed Omar visited the historic Mahasthan Garh and Behula Bashar with their families.

A few enjoyed boat rides in the afternoon at the lake in the team hotel complex.

Training will resume today in the afternoon.

Meanwhile, cricket fans from other north-Bengal districts flocked in Bogra to watch the two ODIs on February 20 and 22. However, fans were frustrated after

SEE PAGE 17 COL 5

Eva still atop

SPORTS REPORTER

Nazrana Khan Eva stayed on top of the table after the seventh round of the Camellia 27th national Women's Chess Championship yesterday.

Eva raised her collection to 5.5 points after sharing points with Shabana Parveen Nipa at the BCF hall-room. She was followed by IWM Rani Hamid and holder Sharmin Akhter Liza who are level on five points.

In the day's other matches, Rani Hamid beat Tanima, Liza beat Masuda, Moni beat Zakia, Shirin beat Kishwara and Mahmuda drew with Shimmi.



Did U Know?

The longest tandem or "bicycle built for two" ever made was actually for thirty-five. It is almost 67 feet long and weighs about as much as a Volkswagen.



Curtly Ambrose

(West Indies fast bowling great) "They need to train much more, train harder and train the proper way."

On why West Indies are not producing enough quickies any more.



ESPN
Sportscenter India
Sports News
Live at 10:30 pm
New Zealand vs West Indies
First one-day international
Live at 6:58 am (Saturday)

STAR Sports
India vs Pakistan
First Hockey Test
Live at 6:30 pm



7th Nat'l Cricket League
Four-Day Matches (Day Two)
Dhaka vs Rajshahi
Venue: Rajshahi Divisional Stadium
Khulna vs Sylhet
Venue: Khulna Divisional Stadium
Barisal vs Chittagong
Venue: Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium



BCB's commercial committee chairman Aziz Al Kaiser Tito (C) talks to reporters during a press conference at a city hotel on Thursday. Also seen are BCB's media committee chairman Reazuddin Al Mamun and GrameenPhone's acting marketing director Rubaba Dowla Matin.

Sri Lanka arrive today

GP to give Tk 65 lakh to BCB as series sponsors

SPORTS REPORTER

GrameenPhone will provide Tk 65 lakh to the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) as sponsors of the Bangladesh-Sri Lanka cricket series which will now start from February 20 with a day-night one-day international at Bogra.

Sri Lanka will arrive here today on schedule but the fixtures have been revised on request from the visitors. The islanders, led by Mahela Jayawardene, will leave for Bogra by road straight from the airport for the first two one-dayers to be held on February 20 and 22, according to the news schedule.

It was confirmed by the BCB joint-secretary and media committee chairman Reazuddin Al Mamun yesterday at a press conference at a local hotel.

BCB vice-president and chair-

man of commercial committee Aziz Al Kaiser Tito, GrameenPhone's acting marketing director Rubaba Dowla Matin, additional general manager Ghalib Ahmed Ansari and media manager Moeen Tariq were also present.

Tito informed that GrameenPhone, the leading cellular phone operator in the country, will give Tk 54,40,000 as title sponsors and the remaining amount for the man-of-the-match and man-of-the-series awards.

GrameenPhone, also the official sponsors of the national team, will have the branding rights on sightscreens, field mats and

stumps as well.

Meanwhile, accommodation could be a big problem for outsiders in Bogra as the north-Bengal town's only reputed hotel, where the two teams will stay, has already been booked. The journalists who will travel from Dhaka to cover the matches would be facing major problems, especially during the Test match, as they have yet to find suitable accommodation.

Admitting the fact, Reazuddin Al Mamun said that there are not enough resources there to handle the situation.

There are a very few standard hotels in Bogra. But we are more concerned about accommodation of the two teams and foreign guests. If we wanted to solve all the problems, we could not have started international cricket in Bogra now," conceded Mamun when asked why the board had not thought about this beforehand.

"It is a new venue and we have to establish it first," he added.

REVISED ITINERARY

Feb 20: 1st ODI at Bogra (D/N)
Feb 22: 2nd ODI at Bogra (D/N)
Feb 25: 3rd ODI at Chittagong
Feb 28-Mar 4: 1st Test at Chittagong
Mar 8-12: 2nd Test at Bogra

Pressure mounts on Dhaka

ISPAHANI
MIRZAPORE TEA
7th National Cricket League

SPORTS REPORTER

Rajshahi and Chittagong consolidated their positions on the opening day of their home matches but visiting Sylhet took command away in Khulna in the fifth round of the Ispahani Seventh National Cricket League yesterday.

In a battle for the top spot, second-placed Rajshahi were all out for 283 in their first innings, the lowest total on the day, but they reduced touring Dhaka to 21-2 by close of play in the four-day match. An outright win will help Rajshahi join Dhaka on top of the table.

Dhaka cricket fans protest

SPORTS REPORTER

Cricket fans of the capital yesterday protested the decision to not hold any match during the coming Bangladesh-Sri Lanka series in Dhaka.

Hundreds of fans, under the banner of Cricket Family and Dhakabashi (Citizens of Dhaka), gathered at the Bangabandhu National Stadium on Thursday noon carrying placards reading "Why no match in Dhaka?" and "We want cricket in Dhaka".

Former national captain Naimur Rahman, BCB vice-president Gazi Golam Dastagir, former cricket board directors Dewan Shafiqul Arifin Tutul, Ahmed Sajjadul Alam Boby and a number of cricketers were also present.

National cricketers preparing for the home series also conveyed their support to the protesters over phone.

Speakers at the rally welcomed introduction of new venues but heavily criticised exclusion of Dhaka as a venue for the series.

"We can't even think that Dhaka is not among the venues for the series. It is the Mecca of our cricket and we have a lot of fond memories playing in the capital," Naimur.

"Venues like Rajshahi, Sylhet, Comilla, Mymensingh and Khulna which serve the purpose of the nation by producing cricketers

A century by Imtiaz Hossain took Sylhet to 326-8 at stumps while Chittagong, playing their scheduled home match in Dhaka, looked to pile the pressure on Barisal when they stormed to 315-5 at close.

DHAKA-RAJSHAHI
After being put into bat at the Rajshahi Divisional Stadium, the hosts were spearheaded by a 97-run opening stand between in-form Jahurul Islam and Junaid Siddique.

Jahurul, whose 71 helped Rajshahi end Dhaka's unbeaten run in the one-day competition on the previous day, topscored 51 off 109 balls with ten boundaries while his partner hit nine fours to contribute 43 off 73 deliveries.

Things, however, went awry for

Rajshahi as Dhaka part-timers Uttam Sarkar (3-24 from 13 overs) and Mahmudullah Riyad (4-64 from 17 overs) shared seven wickets between them.

The day was saved for the home side as Anisur Rahman Sanchay (32) and wicketkeeper Shamimul Haque (25) put on 55 runs for the sixth wicket before a dogged rearguard action by Kamrul Hassan and Shafaq Al Jabir who shared 40 runs for the last wicket.

Kamrul Hasan with three and Mokhelesur Rahman, yet to score, were batting for Dhaka after they lost both their openers.

SYLHET-KHULNA
Opener Imtiaz Hossain struck 114

SEE PAGE 17 COL 5



PHOTO: STAR

Former Bangladesh cricket captain Naimur Rahman sits along with other protesters during a demonstration outside the Bangabandhu National Stadium on Thursday.

Cruciani's boys to warm up against Navy

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh national football team will play a warm-up match against Bangladesh Navy today as part of their preparation for the Asian Cup qualifier against Uzbekistan. The match will kick off at the Bangabandhu National Stadium at 4pm.

Bangladesh will leave Dhaka tomorrow for the Group F clash in Uzbek capital Tashkent on February 22. Bangladesh play Hong Kong at home on March 1.

Argentine coach Diego Cruciani will announce his final 18 also after the match. Out of the 22-member squad, Sony and Rintu will not make the trip.

Jayawardene SL skipper in Bangladesh

AFF, Colombo

Mahela Jayawardene will captain Sri Lanka on the upcoming tour of Bangladesh after the selectors rested regular skipper Marvan Atapattu and his deputy Chaminda Vaas, Sri Lanka Cricket said on Thursday.

Wicketkeeper Kumar Sangakkara will be vice-captain for the three-week tour which starts on Sunday with the first of three one-day internationals followed by two Tests.

Dammika Prasad, a 22-year-old fast bowler, is the only new face in the Test and one-day squads -- which were picked even before the Sri Lankan team returned from a tour of Australia late Wednesday.

Veteran opener Sanath Jayasuriya has been picked only for the one-dayers, while middle-order batsman Russel Arnold does not find a place in either squad.

Seasoned spinner Muttiah Muralitharan has been selected only for the Test matches.

"The players have been playing non-stop cricket since November and we are concerned about their workload and so decided to rest some seniors," chairman of selectors Lalith Kaluperuma told AFP.

"It helps them to take a break and recharge their batteries before two important series against Pakistan and England and also allows us to take a look at some of the young prospects."

Bangladesh are the weakest

SEE PAGE 17 COL 2

Now Gul out of fifth ODI

REUTERS, Multan

Pakistan will be without fast bowler Umar Gul for the fifth and final one-day international against India.

Gul, who missed the fourth match on Thursday due to a hip injury, has been sent back to Lahore for treatment and rehabilitation.

Pakistan had also lost fast bowler Shoaib Akhtar and all-rounder Shahid Afridi due to fitness problems in the series.

The 21-year old Gul played in the first three one-dayers against India and has appeared in five Tests and 18 one-dayers.

Shoaib was due to see a specialist on Thursday to find out how long he needs to recover from a stress fracture of his ankle.

Dhoni in top ten

PTI, Dubai

Sensational Indian wicketkeeper batsman Mahendra Singh Dhoni has broken into top ten of world one-day batting ratings after his whirlwind 46-ball 72 in the Lahore one-dayer against Pakistan on Monday.

The Jharkhand player, who has collected 1,000 runs from 33 one-dayers at an average of nearly 50, has jumped to eighth in the LG ICC ODI ratings which also saw Sachin Tendulkar and Yuvraj Singh make big moves on the charts.

While Tendulkar has climbed 11 places to reclaim tenth spot, Yuvraj, like Dhoni, has reached a new personal best rating, climbing 10 places to 15th.

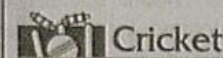
For the first time in the history of the rankings, four players from one country -- Australia -- occupy the top four slots.

This Australian quartet is led by Adam Gilchrist (813 points) with skipper Ricky Ponting in second, Andrew Symonds third and Michael Clarke fourth.

Both Symonds and Clarke have their highest ever ratings and the

SEE PAGE 17 COL 4

India trounce Pakistan to take one-day series



AFF, Multan

Rahul Dravid hit a patient half-century and paceman Rudra Pratap Singh grabbed four wickets as India trounced Pakistan by five wickets in the fourth one-day match on Thursday.

Dravid scored 59 as India overtook Pakistan's modest 162-run

target with 17.3 overs to spare at Multan Cricket Stadium, giving the tourists an unbeatable 3-1 lead in the five-match series.

The inconsequential fifth and final match will be played in Karachi on Sunday.

Dravid fortified India with an 85-run third wicket stand with Yuvraj Singh (37) after India lost Sachin Tendulkar (nought) and Gautam Gambhir (21) to come-back paceman Mohammad Sami

by the sixth over.

Pakistan did raise some hopes when Yuvraj fell to Navedul Hasan and Mohammad Kaif (nought) to Abdul Razzaq in the space of just one run and then Dravid in the 28th over to leg-before off Sami. But it proved too little too late.

With 29 needed for win, Suresh Raina (35 not out) and Mahendra Dhoni (two) achieved the target in the 33rd over to seal yet another comfortable Indian win.

Earlier, left-arm pacemen Rudra Pratap grabbed 4-40 and Irfan Pathan took 3-26 to bundle Pakistan out for 161 in 41.5 overs after India won the toss and asked the home team to take first strike.

Pakistan skipper Inzamamul Haq, playing in his home town, top-scored with a painstaking 49 off 63 balls featuring seven boundaries as the home team's batting failed under seamer-friendly conditions before a capacity crowd.

Pathan started Pakistan's slide when he sent opener Kamran Akmal (three) back in the seventh over while his new-ball partner Sri Sreesanth made it 27-2 when he had Salman Butt (13) caught behind.

Rudra Pratap, who came in as first change, removed in-form Shoaib Malik (nine) with his fourth ball and the next ball had Younis Khan leg-before for 0 to leave Pakistan in tatters.

India were then made to wait till the 26th over for their next success as Inzamam and Mohammad Yousuf (25) staged a fighting stand of 68 for the fifth wicket.

But just when both looked set to guide the home team to a respectable total, Yousuf edged paceman Ajit Agarkar to wicketkeeper Dhoni.

Rudra Pratap returned for his second spell to dismiss super-sub Imran Farhat (14) and Abdul Razzaq (1) in one over before Sachin Tendulkar took the prized wicket of Inzamam, trapping him leg-before in the 40th over.

Pathan removed Mohammad

SEE PAGE 17 COL 3

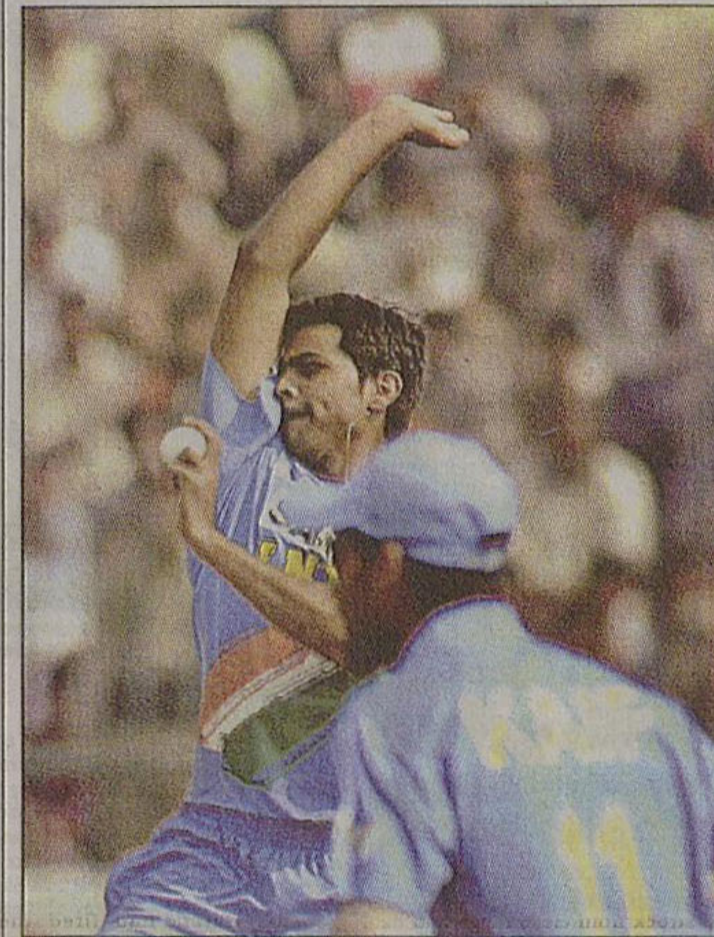


PHOTO: AFP

RIPPING THROUGH PAKISTAN: India seamer Rudra Pratap Singh, who took 4-40, in his delivery stride during the fourth ODI against Pakistan at Multan on Thursday. He was later adjudged man-of-the-match.

'Bowl-off' win for Kiwis



AFF, Auckland

New Zealand beat the West Indies 3-0 in international cricket's first ever bowl-off after their series opener Twenty20 match ended with the scores tied at 126 each here Thursday.

In a match which never lived up to the big-hitting spectacular that cricket's latest innovation is supposed to produce, New Zealand were in control for three-quarters of regulation play before a dramatic batting collapse led to the bizarre finish.

After losing the toss and being sent into bat, the West Indies had struggled in their debut Twenty20 international, losing wickets regularly as they tried to increase their scoring rate, and their 126 looked an easy target.

With Lou Vincent striking boundaries at will, New Zealand raced to 73 for two in the 10th over when Dwayne Bravo ignited the Calypso Kings' purple patch which saw five wickets fall in eight overs for 28 runs.

Bravo, hailed as cricket's rising star, watched Scott Styris hit his first ball for six and then clean

bowled the New Zealand batsman and added insult to injury by ruining the farewell appearance of champion all-rounder Chris Cairns.

While the home crowd urged Cairns to produce his trade mark sixes for one final time, Bravo used a touch of Cairns himself with a deft change of pace that sent the New Zealander back to the pavilion for two.

In the end, New Zealand needed 16 off the last over and it came down to a four by Shane Bond off the last ball to save the day for the home side and bring about a bowl-off, cricket's equivalent of football's penalty shootout.

Bowling two balls each, the first three of five bowlers from both sides all missed the stumps before Bond hit twice.

Ian Bradshaw followed for the West Indies and failed to connect leaving a wicket from Styris on his first ball to give New Zealand an unbeatable 3-0 lead.

Cairns was unable to take a wicket in his cricket finale but he pulled off a sensational run out of Dwayne Smith with a backhand flick when following through a delivery in his first over, and took a running catch off Bond in the last over of the West Indies innings.

Apart from the bowling domination in the final 10 overs, the West Indies seemed to struggle with the Twenty20 format.

Daren Ganga and captain Shivnarine Chanderpaul top scored with 26 each, but the team score of 126 for seven seemed to be too small to be competitive.

Apart from Vincent's 42 off 37 balls, including five fours and a six, and 19 off 16 from Styris, New Zealand's batting performance showed little solidity, leaving neither side confident going into Saturday's first of five one-day internationals.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard in the Twenty20 cricket international between New Zealand and the West Indies on Thursday:

WEST INDIES	
Gayle c Aistle b Bond	10
Ganga c Franklin b Styris	26
Morton lbw b Styris	4
Smith run out (Cairns)	8
Hinds run out (Marshall/Patel)	14
Chanderpaul c Marshall b Patel	26
Bravo not out	19
Ramdin c Cairns b Bond	9
Bradshaw not out	0
Extras: (b-1, lb-5, w-2, nb-2)	10
Total: (For 7 wks in 20 overs)	126
Fall of wickets: 1-14, 2-28, 3-42, 4-52, 6-79, 6-110, 7-124	

SEE PAGE 17 COL 1



PHOTO: AFP

NOT A CAIRNS SWANSONG: New Zealand all-rounder Chris Cairns, who scored only two in his final international appearance, thanks the Auckland crowd during the Twenty20 match against West Indies on Thursday.