



Did U Know?

FIFA 2006 World Cup will be held in Germany. It will be Germany's second time to host the World Cup after 1974.



Khaled Mahmud
(Former Bangladesh cricket captain)
"I was a little bit shy on the first day, but everybody appreciated me. Actually it was totally a new experience for me. I am especially excited because I can remain involved with the series as a commentator."
On his debut as a TV commenta-



ESPN
South Africa vs Australia
3rd ODI
Live at 2:00 pm
STAR Sports
English Premier Football League
Man City vs Sunderland
Live at 7:25 pm
Tottenham Hotspur vs Blackburn Rovers
Live at 9:55 pm
DD National
India vs England
First Test, Day Five
Live at 10:30 am



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

Mauresmo in Qatar Open final

AP, Doha

Top-seeded Amelie Mauresmo of France defeated Martina Hingis 6-2, 6-2 Friday and will play second-seeded Nadia Petrova of Russia in the final of the Qatar Open.

Petrova topped Ai Sugiyama of Japan 6-1, 7-6 (2) in the earlier semifinal.

"In the final tomorrow, my serve is likely to play a big role," Mauresmo said. "It will be a tough match."

Mauresmo, who has won three titles this season, beat the Swiss former No. 1 and 2001 inaugural Qatar champion for the fifth time in six meetings.

The Australian Open champion broke Hingis twice in the first set and four times in the second.

Mauresmo is pleased with her consistency on the court.

"I think all aspects of my game are OK at the moment," Mauresmo said. "I am being consistent with my play. Being consistent is a very important part of my game."

Petrova, a quarterfinalist at the Australian Open, broke Sugiyama's serve in the second and fourth games of the first set. In the second, Sugiyama fought back from 4-0 down and won five consecutive games to force a tiebreaker.

Petrova then played a baseline game with deep forehands and crosscourt shots to win the match.

Runs rain on Day Two



SPORTS REPORTER

Captain Ehsanul Haque converted his overnight half-century to a hundred as Chittagong tightened their grip on table-toppers Sylhet at the end second day's play of the Ispahani Seventh National Cricket League at the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium yesterday.

The discarded national right-hander hammered 138 as Chittagong amassed a massive 579. Ehsanul was the third Chittagong batsman to score hundred in the first innings after Tamim Iqbal (113) and Gazi Salahuddin (115).

Yasin Arafat then picked up five wickets to send Sylhet reeling for 196-8 at stumps.

The day also saw the bat dominating the ball at other venues with young opener Nazmus Sadat smashing an unbeaten 117 as Khulna fought back gallantly in their second innings against hosts Rajshahi.

Away at the Barisal Divisional Stadium, Mehrab Hossain Junior missed out a first double hundred this season just for four runs but his effort and a diligent 88 by Sajjad Kadir helped Dhaka to post a fighting first innings total of 395.

SYLHET-CHITTAGONG

Chittagong sent Sylhet on leather hunt for the second successive day as they added another 162 runs in quick time after resuming on 417-7.

Ehsanul took his overnight score of 73 to 138. During his more than four hours stay at the wicket he smote 17 boundaries and a six.

Golam Rahman and Imtiaz Hossain made a bold start for Sylhet but the leaders lost their way once left-arm spinner Yasin Arafat broke the 84-run opening stand by removing Rahman (43).

Imtiaz also fell victim of Arafat for 43 and Sylhet, who were looking good at 95-2, suffered a stunning collapse despite a tough resilience from one-down Ijaz Ahmed, who stood in the ruins with an unbeaten 76 off 115 after five batsmen returned to pavilion without troubling the scorer.

Yasin was the most successful Chittagong bowler with 5-50 while Elias Sunny picked up 3-56.

RAJSHAHI-KHULNA

Rajshahi took a worthy first innings lead of 231 but Khulna rode on a 166-run second wicket partnership between Nazmus Sadat and Shamsur Rahman to stage a fightback in their second essay.

Resuming the day on 221-4, Rajshahi were all out for 353 in reply to Khulna's paltry 122.

Anisur Rahman, who started the

day on 68, top-scored with 95 off 140 balls that contained 14 fours and a six while Mushfigur Rahman, who rattled Khulna's first innings claiming five wickets, contributed a 95-ball 57.

With a huge first innings deficit, Khulna started disastrously losing opener Sajjadul Hasan for a duck. But Sadat and Shamsur were not ready to die without a fight.

Sadat's unbeaten 117 off 141 balls featured 14 fours and a six while Shamsur scored 70 with the help of seven hits to the fence.

DHAKA-BARISAL

Left-arm spinner Nadif Chowdhury took a return catch to dash Mehrab Hossain's hopes of making the first double hundred.

The left-hander was on 196 when he drove the ball in the air only to see Nadif breaking his heart.

But resuming the day on 133, the talented batsman played the sheet anchor role in guiding Dhaka to a commanding 395. The under-19 batsman hit 30 fours in his marathon 378-ball essay while wicketkeeper Sajjad scored a 202-ball 88.

Pacer Anwar Hossain Munir then picked up two wickets for 43 runs as Barisal ended the day on 128-3. Nasiruddin Faruque was batting on 31 with Nadif (17).

SCORES IN BRIEF

CHITTAGONG: First innings 579 all out

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PHOTO: STAR

Bangladesh cricketers cool off at the Sonargaon Hotel swimming pool in the city on Saturday.

Zia shares 2nd position

SPORTS REPORTER

Grand Master Ziaur Rahman shared the second position along with International Master Reefat Bin Sattar and Abdullah Al-Rakib in the ONGC Cup International Grand Master Chess Tournament after the ninth round in Hyderabad yesterday.

Zia beat Himanshu while Rakib beat IM P Kongue and Reefat drew with GM Parvin Thipsay to raise their collection to seven points.

GM Surya Shekhar Ganguly, IM Deepan Chakkrabarty and GM Pavel Kotsur secured 7.5 points each to share the lead in the meet.

Another Bangladeshi Grand Master Niaz Murshed and International Master Enamul Hossain Rajib bagged 6.5 points each.

Zim ride on Rinke

AFP, Harare

A battling 72 from opener Piet Rinke helped Zimbabwe to beat Kenya by 109 runs on Friday and level their five-match one-day series at 2-2.

Zimbabwe, currently suspended from all Test cricket and having to struggle on with one-dayers, made 231 for 9 in a game reduced to 44-overs-a-side by heavy overnight rain.

The home side's total proved more than enough as Kenya were bowled out for 122, with Ryan Higgins grabbing 4 for 21.

Only opener Kennedy Otieno showed any resistance for Kenya as he hit 69.

The fifth and final match takes place here on Saturday.

Ntini sends Aussie crashing



AFP, Cape Town

Makhaya Ntini took the best figures by a South African in one-day international cricket as South Africa crushed Australia by 196 runs in the second one-day international at Newlands Friday.

The win put South Africa 2-0 up in a five-match series.

Ntini took four wickets in a devastating opening spell and finished with six for 22 as Australia were bowled out for 93, their fourth-lowest all-time total.

"It's like a dream come true," said Ntini of his rapid return to top form, a week after his first match in two months following a knee injury.

Herschelle Gibbs and Justin Kemp hit aggressive but contrasting half-centuries as South Africa posted an imposing total of 289 for seven on a slow pitch.

Gibbs made an elegant 66 and Kemp bludgeoned an unbeaten 51.

Any hopes Australia had of making a contest of it were blasted away by Ntini, who took two wickets in his first over and had figures of four for four after five overs.

His final figures were better than the six for 23 by Allan Donald against Kenya in Nairobi in 1996/97.

Captain Graeme Smith said the margin of victory was unexpected but said his team knew all along they had the ability to beat Australia, despite a poor recent tour of the country.

"We knew what we were capable of," said the skipper.

"This is basically the team that went 20 games unbeaten to get us to the number two ranking in the

world. We have tried one or two different combinations and tonight's performance was superb."

Both Smith and stand-in Australian captain Adam Gilchrist said the game turned in the last ten overs of South Africa's innings when Kemp and Shaun Pollock went on the rampage with a stand of 62 off 45 balls.

But they paid tribute to Ntini, whose third victim, Damien Martyn,

as happened in the one-day series in Australia."

It was the biggest victory by a margin of runs in one-day matches between the two countries.

South Africa beat Australia by 109 runs in Bloemfontein in 1996/97.

Gilchrist admitted it would be tough for Australia to come back and win the remaining three matches of the series, starting with the third encounter in Port Elizabeth Sunday.

"It's going to be very difficult with only one day between games but there is a great belief in this side."

Australia were again without injured captain Ricky Ponting (abdominal strain) and all-rounder Andrew Symonds (hip-flexor muscle) and have less than 36 hours to get the two key men fit ahead of what could be the deciding match of the series.

Ntini struck with his first ball when Gilchrist was caught behind by Mark Boucher off an inside edge for one.

Four balls later Phil Jaques, who arrived in South Africa Wednesday as cover for Ponting, was caught at second slip for nought.

In his only previous one-day international the Australian left-hander made 94 against South Africa in Melbourne in January.

Damien Martyn was caught at fine leg and Michael Clarke caught behind as Australia crashed to a scarcely credible seven for four off

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MAKHAYA NTINI... 6 for 22

was his 200th wicket in 126 one-day internationals.

He was the third South African to achieve the feat behind Donald and Pollock.

"He's a treasure to have in their side," said Gilchrist.

"You notice when he's not there

Debutant grabs the glory



BBC ONLINE, London

Alastair Cook was in jubilant mood after becoming just the 16th England Test batsman to hit a century on debut.

The Essex opener's patient knock took almost six hours and he said: "It is unbelievable. I know it is a cliché but it really is a dream come true."

Cook took a backseat while Kevin Pietersen (87) cut loose but said he enjoyed batting with the Hampshire man.

"Give him one then sit back and enjoy the fireworks. He took the pressure off me and I could just bat," he said.

"He can do things that I would never be able to do so I've just got to play my own game and watch from the other end."

But Cook, who faced 243 balls, admitted he had changed his approach slightly as the end of the day, and a likely declaration, approached.

"There was a little bit of a change of attitude," he said.

"A case of 'right, here I go, I've got 10 overs'. I didn't change too much, I tried a couple of little heave-hos and looked for singles a bit more but it was the same kind of thing

really."

Cook faces a long fifth day in the field but admitted he would find the time to celebrate his achievement.

"I'm not quite sure where to go but I think I might have a glass of champagne, if there is any in Nagpur, and just enjoy the moment," he said.

Pietersen was full of praise for Cook's innings, but admitted he is not about to adapt his own big-hitting approach.

The 25-year-old has attracted criticism for some cheap dismissals in Pakistan and the first innings in Nagpur, but responded with a crucial 87 as England took the game away from India.

"At the start I was really apprehensive in terms of not getting myself out and being a lot more patient and trying to apply myself," he revealed.

"But I got to about 30 or 40 and I decided I could be a lot more positive and that's the way I play, I'm a positive player."

"Cooky though showed patience and application and that's what's needed on this wicket."

However Pietersen admitted he was a bit lucky to bat for so long after surviving a caught-and-bowled appeal against Anil Kumble.

The third umpire took a long

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PHOTO: AFP

CRICKET DIPLOMACY: US President George W. Bush tosses the ball in the air during a cricket demonstration at the US Embassy in Islamabad on Saturday.

West Indies duck whitewash



AFP, Auckland

The West Indies got a much-needed confidence boost before their Test series against New Zealand after pulling off an unlikely three-wicket win Saturday to avoid a whitewash in the one-day series.

New Zealand had comprehensively won the first four limited-overs games and their 233 in the fifth and final match could have been another winning score.

The visitors began their run chase at a painful crawl to be one for 10 after 10 overs.

But once Daren Ganga and Runako Morton had seen off the new ball attack, the West Indies batsmen gradually reclaimed an air of authority. One-day specialist Wavell Hinds hit the winning run with two balls to spare.

It was a much-needed victory for the West Indies, who have not won a

one-day match since last August, before the first of three Tests starts here on Thursday.

Going into the final 10 overs, the West Indies still needed 71 runs to win. When captain Shivnarine Chanderpaul fell for 41 in the 43rd over, leaving them 175 for six, they were still staring at a whitewash.

But after Hinds and Denesh Ramdin took the attack to Kyle Mills and Nathan Astle, 17 runs were needed from the final 18 balls, and then three from the last over.

On the third ball Shane Bond had Ramdin caught for 38 with the scores tied, but he could not stop Hinds hitting the winning run off the next delivery to finish unbeaten on 40.

Dwayne Smith had earlier produced a man-of-the-match performance with the ball, taking five for 45 as he ripped through the middle order and tail to restrict the New Zealand total.

Scott Styris overcame a shaky start to provide the backbone of the home innings with 90 after Stephen

Fleming won the toss and chose to bat. Fleming contributed 32 and Ross Taylor 31.

Taylor, in only his second international, hit seven quick boundaries before being bowled by Ian Bradshaw. His dismissal reduced New Zealand to 59 for three in the 11th over and brought Styris to the crease.

After a cautious start, which involved a near runoff with Fleming and being dropped by Chris Gayle, Styris stubbornly stayed at the crease.

His timing was not perfect but his concentration and determination to stay in the middle was evident as wickets fell around him.

Styris eventually went in Smith's last over, leaving the bowler sitting on a hatrick which Kyle Mills avoided.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard of the fifth and final one-day international between

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