

## Mukles ton goes awry

SPORTS REPORTER

Seven matches were held across the country on the opening day of the Dhaka Bank Under-19 National Youth cricket tournament yesterday.

This is the 26th edition of the competition and it is taking place after a three-year break.

Mukles hit the first century of the tournament but it went in vain as Natore lost to Rajshahi by two wickets at Bogra. Mukles hit a patient 103 off 151 balls as Natore scored 203. But Rajshahi chased down the target with Arif scoring 65.

In nearby Natore, Naogaon sneaked past Bogra by a single wicket.

Munshiganj defeated Dhaka by three wickets, even though Dhaka leg-spinner Shakil took six for 29 at the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium. But Riad's 45 was enough to take Munshiganj past the lowly Dhaka total of 156.

Gazipur also had tensed moments before they won by three wickets against Mymensingh at Faridpur.

Barisal won comfortably by seven wickets against Bholia at Barguna, while Bandarban beat Khagrachari by five wickets at the Chittagong Divisional Stadium.

Our Correspondent adds: Moulvibazar defeated Habiganj by 22 runs at the Habiganj Stadium.

Moulvibazar batted first and scored 205 runs, with Rahul scoring 57.

Habiganj were then bowled out for 159.

## Pathan not interested in ranking

PTI, New Delhi

Irfan Pathan on Wednesday said if he had reached the top of all-rounders' rankings it was because he never bothered to be there.

"I am the number three all-rounder in the world now. If it has happened, it's because I never thought about it," the Indian pace spearhead said.

"I don't believe in rankings and that has helped me perform well. So, I am going to continue that way. I don't want to think about the rankings." Pathan is third in the ODI all-rounders' list, behind Shaun Pollock and Andrew Flintoff, and fourth after Flintoff, Jacques Kallis and Pollock in Tests in the ICC Players' rankings.

Pathan, here on a promotional visit, said he had a similar approach about talks of being the best all-rounder India has ever produced.

"I started as a bowler but even when I was playing first-class cricket and junior cricket, I have always enjoyed my batting. But I always say to myself, consider myself as a bowler (first)," said the 21-year-old Bardsa player.

## Whatmore

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selectors sufficiently over the next few months during Academy matches and A team matches to earn their promotion into the top flight. And those players that do earn the promotion will certainly be able to strengthen the team because they will be multi-skilled players," he said.

"So in many ways this is an exciting period for Bangladesh cricket and particularly in the one-day form with which we will be only involved with in the next 12 months leading up to the World Cup," Whatmore continued.

He also argued that it is not case for the present side that they are beaten before start the match.

"I've read in a recent English newspaper article that there's a person who feels that the team is beaten before we start. Well that may have been the case some time ago but that's certainly not the case now. Our team has played against some good opposition over the last couple of years and have pushed and on certain occasions have beaten them. We honestly feel now when we take the field that we have an equal chance of upsetting the opposition and win matches," he explained.

## Lagerback pulls

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(Heerenveen), Teddy Lucic (BK Hacken), Olof Mellberg (Aston Villa), Karl Svensson (IFK Gothenburg), Mikael Nilsson (Panathinaikos), Fredrik Stenman (Bayer Leverkusen).

**Midfielders:** Daniel Andersson (Malmo), Niclas Alexandersson (IFK Gothenburg), Kim Kallstrom (Stade Rennes), Tobias Linderoth (FC Copenhagen), Christian Wilhelmsson (Anderlecht), Anders Svensson (Elfsborg), Fredrik Ljungberg (Arsenal).

**Forwards:** Marcus Allback (FC Copenhagen), Johan Elmander (Brondby), Zlatan Ibrahimovic (Juventus), Mattias Jonson (Djurgarden), Henrik Larsson (Barcelona), Markus Rosenberg (Ajax Amsterdam).



## BCCI denies Sehwag gag

BBC ONLINE, undated

India's cricket board has denied giving opening batsman Virender Sehwag a rap across the knuckles for making public comments about the team.

Earlier this week, Sehwag said he hoped former captain Sourav Ganguly would regain his place in the national squad.

"It's not as sensational as it's being made out to be."

"It was not a warning, just our advice to him. There is no question of taking action against Sehwag," said Niranjana Shah, secretary of the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI).

"Sehwag called me to seek permission to take his wife on the West Indies tour and I agreed. I also told him not to speak to the media on selection and policy matters."

Ganguly was dropped from the Test and one-day squads earlier this year following a public dispute with national team coach Greg Chappell.

His continued omission continues to divide opinion among pundits and fans.

Former Test players Chetan Chauhan and Erapalli Prasanna have criticised the BCCI for trying to gag Sehwag.

But ex-captain Gundappa Viswanath said contentious issues should not be discussed in the media.

"These matters have to be settled directly between the players and the board."

The selectors, meanwhile, will name the squad for four Tests which follow next month after the third one-dayer on May 23.

## Nadal keeps moving

### Tennis

AFP, Rome

Second seed Rafael Nadal began the defence of his Rome Masters title with a hard-fought 6-1, 2-6, 6-2 first round win over fellow Spaniard and practice partner Carlos Moya here on Tuesday.

Victory for Nadal, the reigning French Open champion, took his head-to-head score with Moya to 3-2 and kept him on course to break the all-time record for consecutive claycourt victories, currently held by

Guillermo Vilas.

World number two Nadal now has 48 straight wins on his preferred surface, five less than Argentine Vilas whose record was set in 1977.

If he retains the title here, Nadal will equal Vilas' record.

Last beaten on clay in April, 2005 when he lost to Igor Andreev in the Valencia quarterfinals, Nadal next faces Italian Filippo Volandri, who defeated British number one Andy Murray 6-4, 6-4.

Nadal admitted Moya, the 2004 Rome champion, was a very awkward opponent.

"The first set was easier than I thought, but the second set was



PHOTO: AFP

World No.2 Rafael Nadal makes a forehand return against fellow Spaniard Carlos Moya during the first round match of the Rome Masters on Tuesday.

## Sanath set for Test return

### Cricket

CRICINFO, undated

Sanath Jayasuriya met with Ashantha de Mel, Sri Lanka's new chairman of selectors, on Wednesday morning to discuss his possible return to Test cricket during the current tour of England which starts on Thursday at Lord's.

The 36-year-old is now poised for a recall, possibly in time for the second Test at Edgbaston starting on May 24.

Duleep Mendis, Sri Lanka Cricket's chief executive, denied a report appearing in the Daily Mirror that claimed the decision to send Jayasuriya to England had already been made, saying that he first needed a letter confirming that Jayasuriya had reconsidered his decision to retire.

"At this stage I have not

received a letter," Mendis said. "When I do, the selection committee will have to meet to confirm and then his selection would have to be ratified with the sports ministry. Only then could arrangements be made for him to join the England

tour."

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But de Mel, appointed last week, made it clear that he wanted Jayasuriya to reconsider his decision to retire: "When the selectors knew that Marvan (Atapattu) is not going to make it to England with his back problem they should have continued with Jayasuriya. He just played a county season in England last year and is the only Sri Lankan to have scored a double hundred in England. What more credentials do you want?"

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