

Second win for U-17s

BDNEWS, Dhaka

Bangladesh registered their second victory in the Golden Hope International Under-17 Cricket Challenge competition when they handed a massive eight-wicket defeat on hosts Malaysia in the third match yesterday.

Malaysia scored 91 runs for nine in 44 overs which Bangladesh overhauled in just 10 overs losing two wickets.

Earlier, Bangladesh youth team lost their second match in the tournament to Sri Lanka by 34 runs after making a flying start with a massive 140-run victory over Singapore.

PFL transfer delayed

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) postponed the July 15-August 15 players' transfer for the first-ever Professional Football League (PFL).

The inter-club booters' transfer has been deferred as BFF has yet to get the confirmation about possession of the Bangabandhu National Stadium, the venue of the 12-team Pro-League.

BFF's executive committee will take a decision about new dates in its July 19 meeting.

Azzurri celebrate

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The Italian heroes are to be decorated with one of the state's highest honours, the Order of Merit of the Republic, by President Giorgio Napolitano in recognition of their victory.

With banner headlines like "Champions" and "The World Belongs to Us", the triumphant Italian press hailed the team as legends, saying their victory over France in Sunday's final had deservedly delivered the nation and themselves proper acclaim.

"We are champions because we are Italian," Corriere della Sera, Italy's biggest-selling newspaper, said in an editorial.

From now on "everywhere on Planet Earth, the white, red and green passport of Italy will be stamped with admiration."

Zidane the winner

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Most populous Muslim nation where millions, including President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, followed the televised matches despite the time difference.

"What happened to Zidane?" asked daily Pikiran Rakyat while Rakyat Merdeka likened him to a charging bull.

Meanwhile, the strongest sign of a rereading of the master's dramatic final act on a football field was to be found in Russia.

Daily Novye Izvestia suggested the Italians connived to have Zidane banished from the arena while Sovietskii Sport deemed that "Materazzi's provocation" had tainted his country's victory.

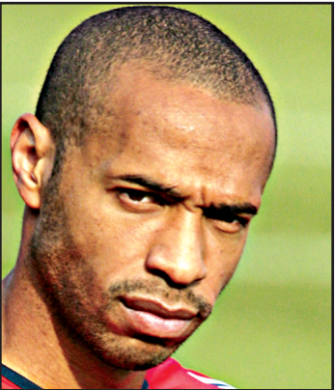
"If anyone had any doubts about the fact that Zidane was one of the best players in the history of football, they wouldn't after the final," said popular daily Komsomolskaya Pravda.

"Only an epic hero, a Titan, a Hercules could leave like that."



Did U Know?

Despite going through the first round group phase unbeaten and claiming a 2-1 win over West Germany, Algeria were eliminated on goal difference from the 1982 World Cup.



Thierry Henry

(France star player)

"I'm very proud. We won together and we lost together, that's what we've got to remember." After losing the World Cup final against Italy.

Rahul hails Sachin return



AFP, London

Indian captain Rahul Dravid welcomed Sachin Tendulkar's return to fitness after watching him make an unbeaten half-century in a charity match in London.

Tendulkar, who is recovering from shoulder surgery, made 50 not out for an International XI against Pakistan at the Oval in a Twenty20 Earthquake Relief match that raised funds for the victims of last October's destruction in Pakistan.

Tendulkar opened with Brian Lara, putting on 72 for the first wicket, faced 26 balls, hitting eight fours and a six and showing little discomfort from his injury.

The surgery in March forced Tendulkar to miss India's recent series in the Caribbean but he looked to have made a good recovery

as he top-scored in the International XI's 123 from ten overs after the start had been delayed by rain.

Dravid, captaining the International side, said: "It was great to see him bat like that, good to see him bat with Lara and to see him hitting the ball again.

"He was striking it really well and there was never any doubt that he would be back."

Tendulkar could play in the triangular one-day tournament in Sri Lanka in August before the ICC Champions' Trophy that takes place in India in October.

Dravid added: "Batting was never going to be a problem for him and I don't know what the doctor will say but we still have a month to go.

"When the time comes I am sure that Sachin and the doctor will take the best decision for the Indian side.

"The ICC Champions Trophy is

going to be a big event and the people in India will follow it very closely and get behind it."

Tendulkar's innings was slightly overshadowed by Shahid Afridi, the Pakistani allrounder who helped his side to a six wicket win by smashing 41 from 12 balls with five sixes.

Afridi hit his first four balls, from Zaheer Khan, for three sixes and a four and greeted Scott Styris by hitting his first two balls into the crowd before holing out to a good catch by Lara at short fine leg.

Inzamamul Haq finished the job off with 36 not out as Pakistan warmed up for Thursday's first Test by successfully chasing 123.

"I really enjoyed it," said Dravid. "It was great to be given the opportunity to play here. We don't have Twenty20 in Indian domestic cricket and it definitely has a place but we have got to be careful it does not dilute the 50 over cricket."

Stand up: Kevin to bowlers



AFP, London

Kevin Pietersen has told England's novice bowlers to "stand up and be counted" as the team prepares for its Test series against Pakistan.

England head into Thursday's first Test at Lord's on the back of seven straight defeats against Sri Lanka -- one in a Test match, one Twenty20 and five one-day international reverses -- and with several key players out of action because of injury.

Flamboyant batsman Pietersen is himself fit after a knee problem but captain Michael Vaughan and Simon Jones (both knee) are sidelined, as is left-arm spinner Ashley Giles (hip), while star all-rounder Andrew Flintoff only made his comeback from an ankle problem in a Twenty20 clash on Sunday.

And just when England thought their injury problems couldn't get any worse senior seamer Matthew Hoggard, the man they were hoping would anchor their attack at Lord's, is now a major doubt after his hand was gashed last week in a bizarre warm-up accident during the A team's draw with Pakistan at Canterbury.

England have been hardest hit in the bowling department and Ian Bell, who has been recalled to bat at number six, and Paul Collingwood will have to supplement a raw, four-man attack with

their medium-pacers.

Quicks Liam Plunkett and Sajid Mahmood and left-arm spinner Monty Panesar have all shown promise while on Test duty.

But none has yet won a match for England and Pietersen insists that will have to change if England are to gain revenge for their 2005 2-0 series defeat in Pakistan, and so head to Australia in confident mood for the defence of the Ashes later this year.

"It's time for the youngsters to put in match-winning performances," Pietersen said. I know how desperately hard they practice and how desperately they want to do well.

"They have been in the set-up for seven or eight months now and they are coming up to double figures for Test match caps now. "Having bided their time it is now a case of standing up and being counted," added the Hampshire batsman, who scored two hundreds in the drawn Test series with Sri Lanka.

"They have the mental toughness to do it. I am looking forward to the time when a bloke comes up, takes his chance and grabs that magnum of champagne," the South Africa-born shotmaker added.

"It's important we get back to winning regularly against Pakistan and take that into Australia," explained Pietersen, who was speaking at the launch of a schools' cricket initiative in London

on Monday.

Pietersen is confident he is "120percent fit" despite missing the final two Sri Lanka one-dayers with bruising on his left knee -- the fourth time he has suffered such a problem.

But with Flintoff out, Bell has been recalled and is set to bat at six.

Bell has opened and batted in every other position in the top five since making his Test debut against the West Indies just under two years ago.

He hopes this week's match can change the perception of him as a 'spare' player at Test level.

"I want to become one of England's top-order players and I would like to think I can cement an actual place for myself," said Bell, who scored two fifties for the A side against Pakistan.

"I don't want to be the guy that keeps coming in up and down the order," added the Warwickshire batsman, whose Test prospects have been hampered by the rise of Essex left-hander Alastair Cook.

Meanwhile England are not alone in suffering injury woes.

Pakistan saw seamer Navedul Hasan depart the tour Monday with a groin problem, while fellow quicks Mohammad Asif (elbow) and Mohammad Sami (knee) are both doubtful for Lord's in the absence of spearhead Shoaib Akhtar (ankle).

Freire does the double



AFP, Dax

Spaniard Oscar Freire of the Rabobank team dominated some of the world's fastest sprinters to win the ninth stage of the Tour de France here Tuesday.

After 169.5km of racing from Bordeaux, Serguei Gonchar of the T-Mobile team retained the race leader's yellow jersey ahead of the first climbing stage of the race, a 190.5km ride from Cambo-Les-Bains to Pau.

Gonchar, the first Ukrainian to wear the coveted yellow jersey, holds a one-minute lead over American Floyd Landis of Phonak, with his T-Mobile teammate Michael Rogers of Australia third at 1:08.

Freire, meanwhile, now has three career stage wins on the race, winning the fifth stage in Caen and claiming his maiden win in 2002.

The Spaniard kept his cool in the long home straight to surge past Belgian world champion Tom Boonen and Erik Zabel before holding off a resurgent Robbie McEwen by a matter of centimetres at the finish.

Boonen, who has yet to win a stage on this year's race, finished fourth behind Germany's Zabel.

With Wednesday's first climbing stage set to begin the process of elimination on the race, the peloton was delighted the organisers had decided to squeeze in a flat stage after Monday's rest day.

Materazzi denies

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The Sun newspapers believes Materazzi's insult was aimed at Zidane's mother Milika, who is suffering with illness.

Their Italian lip-reader believes that the stopper called the No 10 a "son of a terrorist whore" before he was sent crashing to the ground by Zidane's attack.

However, Materazzi's agent has defended his client and insisted Zizou reacted to a jibe about the possibility of swapping shirts at the end of the game. "It'd rather take the shirt off your wife," it's claimed he stated.

The sprinters teams in particular had this stage in their sights, and made sure the early breakaway, composed of Christian Knees, Stephane Auge and Walter Beneteau, did not gain too much ground.

The trio formed after Knees, who is on his first Tour, attacked the main peloton early on.

The bunch allowed them to go up the road and by the 25km mark the trio had built a 4:05 lead.

It continued to grow to almost eight minutes but that was their limit as the T-Mobile team of Gonchar and Rogers, helped by three of the sprinters' teams, decided to up the pace.

From the 7:50 lead they held after just 50km of racing the leaders' advantage began dropping shortly after the stage's second intermediate sprint at the 72km mark, and it kept dropping as the peloton closed in.

Knees was the most stubborn of the lot, the German attacking his two other breakaway companions in the closing kilometres in a bid to go it alone.

However, each time the Milram rider was countered.

The front trio were caught in the final five kilometres and two kilometres further on Australia's Stuart O'Grady attacked up the right hand side.

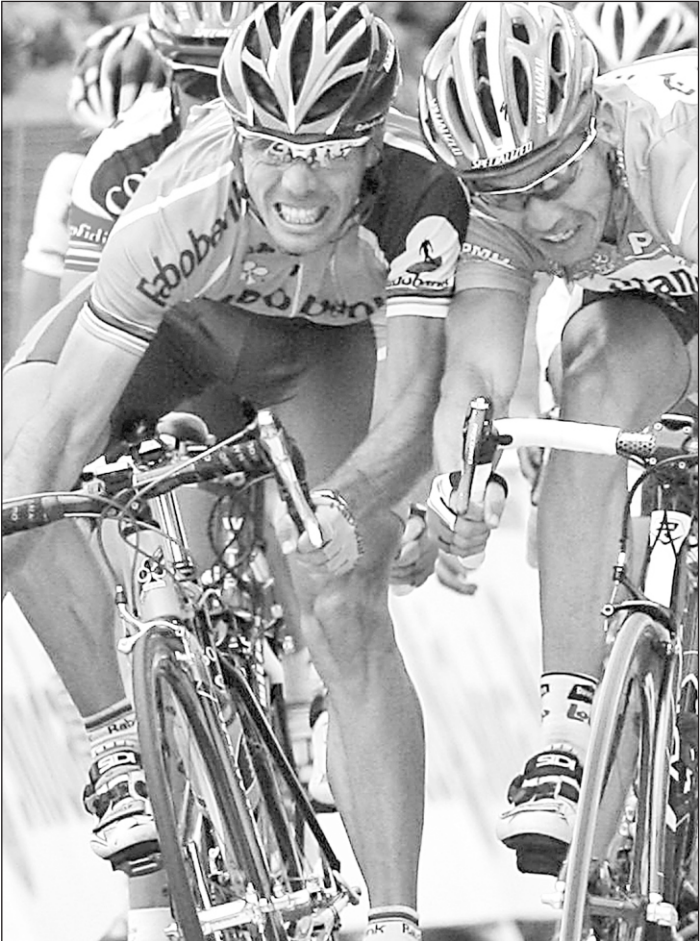


PHOTO: AFP

(From R) Australia's Robbie McEwen (Davitamon-Lotto/Bel) and Spain's Oscar Freire (Rabobank/Ned) sprint towards the finish line of the 169.5 km ninth stage of the 93rd Tour de France cycling race from Bordeaux to Dax on Tuesday. Freire won the stage.



PHOTO: AFP

Indian legend Sachin Tendulkar (L) bats for the International XI against Pakistan during a charity match to raise funds for the victims of the Pakistan earthquake at the Brit Oval in London on Monday.

Impressive Tendulkar

AFP, London

Sachin Tendulkar took another step on his road to recovery from a shoulder injury by scoring 50 not out for an International XI, against Pakistan, in a Twenty20 game at The Oval on Monday.

Rain reduced the match to 10 overs a side and Tendulkar, who opened the innings with Brian Lara, faced 26 balls hitting eight fours and a six helping his team to 123 for one.

However he was upstaged by the hitting of Pakistani all-rounder Shahid Afridi who scored 41 from 12 balls, hitting five sixes and two fours, and treated the bowling with complete disdain as Pakistan won by six wickets with captain Inzamamul Haq making a quickfire 36 to guide his team home.

He hit Scott Styris for four off the last ball, after the New Zealander had bowled a no-ball with the previous delivery, to win the game.

Afridi hit his first four balls, from Zaheer Khan, for three sixes and a four and greeted Scott Styris by hitting his first two balls into the crowd before holing out to a good catch by Lara at short fine leg.

Tendulkar missed India's recent winning series in the West Indies, after having surgery but has scored four centuries in five matches for Lashings, the English celebrity team.

Tendulkar, who spent Sunday watching Roger Federer win the Wimbledon tennis title, and Lara (32 from 21 balls) put on 72 for their first wicket before Mahendra Singh Dhoni joined the fun and smashed 35 from just 13 balls, with three sixes and three fours.

Pakistan, who have injury worries ahead of Thursday's first Test against England at Lord's, gave Mohammad Sami an outing to test out his knee injury and he bowled his two overs with no alarms.

He made Tendulkar play and miss once or twice but was not operating at anything like full pace.

With Navedul Hasan ruled out of the Test series with a groin injury and Mohammad Asif struggling with an elbow injury, Waqar Younis turned out for Pakistan, opening the bowling but getting hit for three successive off-side fours by Lara.

Lara walked when he edged Abdul Razzaq to Kamram Akmal behind the stumps but that just brought in Dhoni who hit the ball to all parts.

However even his hitting was upstaged by Afridi.

Tigers likely

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the series.

Habibul Bashar's men have been practising for the Africa trip under the supervision of Dav Whatmore since June 1.

The Tigers have already played and won two practice games against the Academy team and they are due to play another practice match against the same opponents on July 19.

Calciopoli verdict

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released on Tuesday or Wednesday.

However, latest speculation in the peninsula suggests that we may have to wait until Thursday or as late as Saturday to be informed of the CAF court's decision.

Chief judge Cesare Rupertto and his pool of colleagues are considering charges of sporting fraud with regard to the 2004-05 season.

Chief prosecutor Stefano Palazzi has called for Juventus to be relegated to a Division "lower than Serie B" and deducted six points.

He has urged the court to relegate the three other teams to Serie B with a 15-point deduction for Fiorentina and Lazio, but Milan with only a three-point deficit.

Harmison in upbeat mood



AFP, London

Stephen Harmison has insisted England's injury crisis cannot be used as an excuse when the team take the field for the first Test of a four-match series against Pakistan at Lord's here Thursday.

Fast bowler Harmison, returning to the Test arena after missing the drawn series at home to Sri Lanka with a shin injury, is set to be the senior bowler in an otherwise fledgling attack.

Star pace bowling all-rounder Andrew Flintoff (ankle) -- who England hope will captain the team in Australia later this year after Michael Vaughan was ruled out with a knee injury -- and fellow Ashes winning bowlers Ashley Giles (hip) and Simon Jones (knee) are all currently out of Test contention.

Meanwhile Matthew Hoggard, another of England's heroes against Australia last year, is struggling to be ready in time for Thursday with a freak hand injury sustained while warming-up during the A team match against Pakistan in Canterbury last weekend.

"It's disappointing these players won't be able to take the field but, having said that, this is a good England team that's going out there," Harmison told reporters at

Lord's here Tuesday.

"We can make as many excuses as we like about injuries but it's time we put them to bed."

Last year Harmison produced a sensational spell of bowling at Lord's on the first day of the Ashes, hitting Australia opener Justin Langer on the head while taking five for 43 as the tourists were dismissed for 190.

But despite those figures he said he'd still uncomfortable at the 'home of cricket' where the Lord's slope has disturbed many a bowler.

"It's a place I don't enjoy bowling at but I've always taken wickets here whether I've been playing for Durham or England.

"Even during the Ashes I felt a tad uncomfortable, I was still not 100 percent convinced of my rhythm. It probably is the slope."

Harmison, who returned to international action during England's 5-0 one-day series thrashing by Sri Lanka, has bowled just 32 first-class overs this season taking four wickets for 95 runs.

"I feel strong," the 27-year-old Durham quick insisted. "I bowled nigh on 50 overs in the one-dayers. I'm going in fit. If I didn't feel that I hold my hands up and say I need more time.

"But I'm ready to play," he added after a one-day series where he struggled for accuracy.

"I wasn't consistent in anything

lines, lengths, or spells. I didn't perform, I did feel a bit rusty. But at the end of the day I'm not making excuses.

"Hopefully, the Test matches will be different and I'll bowl like I can do."

Since the end of 2004, when he was ranked the world's No 1 Test bowler, Harmison's form has tailed off.

In 17 Tests for England since then he has taken 55 wickets at an expensive 37.5 apiece. And, excluding matches against minnows Bangladesh, his figures are an even more disappointing 43 wickets at 41.6 in 15 matches.

But Harmison, who in his career 41 Tests had taken 159 wickets at a shade under 30, insisted: "I don't feel I have a point to prove."

England haven't won a Test series since the Ashes, losing 2-0 in Pakistan and drawing away to India before the Sri Lanka campaign ended all square.

"The one thing we haven't been doing in recent times is nailing Test matches," Harmison explained. We've got to get back to doing the basics well scoring 400 plus (in the first innings) and taking 20 wickets."

Pakistan have injury problems too with spearhead quick Shoaib Akhtar definitely out with an ankle problem and fellow pacemen Mohammad Asif and Mohammad Sami battling injuries.

SL tri-series in chaos



AFP, Colombo

A bitter battle to control Sri Lanka's cricket establishment has wrecked the schedule for next month's limited-overs tri-series against India and South Africa.

The dispute, generated by upcoming elections at Sri Lanka Cricket (SLC), revolves around holding the first four matches of the August 14-29 tri-series in the central town of Dambulla.

The government-appointed interim committee running SLC last week changed the original schedule and decided to hold all seven matches of the series at two venues in capital Colombo.

Officials running in Saturday's SLC elections, however, said it will shift the first four matches back to Dambulla if it wins the polls and blamed the interim committee for causing confusion.

"It's just poor management from the interim committee," Mohan De Silva, who is running for SLC president against interim head Jayantha Dharmadasa, told AFP on Tuesday.

"It is just a matter of making outstanding payments to the authorities in Dambulla and the ground will be available.

"When we get elected, we'll make sure that matches take place according to the original schedule."

The Rangiri international stadium in Dambulla was championed by former SLC president Thilanga Sumathipala, who was thrown out

by the government last year and replaced by Dharmadasa's interim committee.

Sumathipala is not contesting this time but has thrown his weight behind De Silva.

Graeme Smith's South Africa are due to arrive in Sri Lanka next week to play two Test matches and then the tri-series.

Both Tests will be played in Colombo with the first at the Sinhalese sports club on July 27 and the second at the Sara stadium on August 4.

SCHEDULE

Aug 14: Sri Lanka v South Africa
Aug 16: Sri Lanka v India
Aug 18: India v South Africa
Aug 20: Sri Lanka v South Africa
Aug 23: Sri Lanka v India
Aug 26: India v South Africa
Aug 29: Final

And the LCD TV goes to Liton

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Bangladesh has the same passion for the game. We are proud because Toshiba is also a sponsor of the FIFA World Cup 2006 itself and what makes me even more proud is that Rangas was involved in the first live telecast of World Cup in Bangladesh in 1982," he said.

Bangladesh Football Federation president SA Sultan, general secretary Anwarul Hoque Helal, former national footballers Sheikh Mohammad Aslam and Kaiser Hamid also spoke on the occasion. Former national footballer and national coach Golam Sarwar Tipu, national booters Alfaz Ahmed, Hassan Al Mamun and Aminul Haque attended the draw.

BUMPER WINNERS
FIRST PRIZE
Md. Liton

Plot-12, Road-4, Block-C, Avenue-5, Mirpur, Dhaka-1216
SECOND PRIZE
Nasima

43-No., Malakatala, Sutrapur, Dhaka-1100
THIRD PRIZE
Selina Begum

C/52, South Banasri, Goran, Dhaka-1219
FOURTH PRIZES

Mohammed Shafiqul Haque 'Khaleda House', A-60, B-Block, Bank Colony, Savar, Dhaka-1340
A. B. Ashanta
Dhaka College
FIFTH PRIZES

Ameer Hamja
225, Khan Jahan Ali Hall, Khulna University
Japrun Nahar
2-G/5-19, Mirpur-2
Dhaka
Rabindra Nath Mistry
27/B Dhaka University R/A,

Dhaka-1000

Taufique Morshed Hasan
9, Sheikh Shaheb bazaar, Azimpur, Dhaka-1205
Sayed M. Shafiqul Alam
Hafiz Monzil, Tengra, Sarulia, Demra, Dhaka

CORRECT ANSWERS

1. Whom did Ronaldo overtake as the leading scorer in the World Cup? Answer: Muller.
2. Which player was shown three yellow cards in a World Cup match? Answer: Simunic.
3. Who scored the 2000th World Cup goal? Answer: Allback.
4. Which World Cup champions failed to win it at home? Answer: Brazil.
5. Who is this player? Answer: Drogba.