



PHOTO: COURTESY
Bangladesh cricket coach Dav Whatmore visits a young patient at the Dhaka Medical College Hospital yesterday. The Sri Lankan born Australian also wished success to the Australian plastic surgery team, who will provide free treatment to the poor.

KL prays for India

REUTERS, Kuala Lumpur

Organisers of the tri-series will be holding their breath on Wednesday when India take on West Indies, knowing that only a victory will keep the Asian side in with a chance of reaching Sunday's final.

The warm-up tournament for next month's Champions Trophy is heavily backed by India's cricket governing body BCCI and ticket sales have only been brisk on days when the Indian team are in action.

The only time the 3,500 capacity Kinrara Oval has been near capacity was on Saturday, when India's match against Australia was abandoned because of rain.

Having lost to West Indies in their first match, India must win their last two matches, including a Friday clash with Australia, to reach the final.

Malaysia has a large ethnic Indian population, but most of them have little interest in cricket.

The majority of the fans who have turned up to watch them are school children or expatriate Indians.

On the field, India are facing an uphill battle, though they could be forgiven for believing they have been hard done by.

After posting a challenging 309 against West Indies, they lost the rain-shortened match on the Duckworth-Lewis method. And despite a batting collapse against Australia, the points were eventually shared after rain forced the match to be abandoned.

Indian coach Greg Chappell said he was not looking beyond the West Indies match.

Club Cup hockey

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The winners will receive Tk 20,000 as prize money and the runners-up Tk 15,000, he added.

Senior Division Hockey League committee vice-chairman Shafiuddin Khan and secretary Kazi Moazzam and Shah Sports marketing director Syed Naqvi were also present.

Must win

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and if you sacrifice accuracy for pace, then you will go for plenty of runs."

Against the odds, the West Indies have already qualified for the final on Sunday after victories over India and Australia, and their confidence is running high.

The top of their order has been performing well but they remain vulnerable to middle-order batting collapses, which Lara is keen to halt.

"The guys are still finding their footing but hopefully more practice and we can get it right," he said, adding that the whole team had been lifted by making the final.

"It was important that we get to the final. We did not come here to play games and watch the final."

Lara is hoping that his leading fast bowler Corey Collymore will be fit after missing all their matches so far with a right thigh injury.

In his absence, Ian Bradshaw and Jerome Taylor have opened the attack.

"We would love to have Collymore on the park," said Lara, and hinted one or two other changes could be in store.

"We'd like to see all 14 guys in our squad have a go."

If India win on Wednesday, their match against Australia on Friday will decide who plays in the final.

Team Asia dazzles at WC

Athletics

AFP, Athens

Asian athletics hit new heights at the IAAF World Cup over the weekend with the Team Asia men's squad finishing in an unprecedented fourth place here on Sunday.

Qatar's Saif Saeed Shaheen and Bahrain's Youssef Saad Kamel won the 3000m steeplechase and 800m respectively on Sunday, adding to Shaheen's win over 5000m and victory for Japan's Koji Murofushi in the hammer on Saturday.

The feat compares sharply with Team Asia's performances in the previous nine editions of the four-year competition.

Only two wins in individual events had been previously achieved in the entire 29-year history of the World Cup, which brings together continental representative teams as well as the United States and Europe's top nations.

"I was focused on the win and getting the maximum nine points for Asia. I wasn't tired after winning the 5000m on the first day and I'm very satisfied at fulfilling my goals," said Shaheen.

The Kenyan-born Shaheen will also be running happily all the way to

the bank whether it is in Doha, Nairobi or London, where he spends much of his time.

Individual winners in the Greek capital each pocketed 30,000 dollars so Shaheen's two wins earned him double the cash.

The 3000m steeplechase world record holder and reigning world champion has had bigger paydays but it was still a lucrative weekend for him.

"My race was very open so I told myself that I had every chance of winning. From this moment, I start my preparations for the Asian Games in Qatar that are coming up in December," said Kamel who, like Shaheen, was born in Kenya.

The Asian Games, with the athletics events scheduled for December 8-12, should be a showcase for the improvement in the sport on the continent.

Despite continued scepticism around Asia and the rest of the world about the ethics of buying in African talent, particularly by Gulf states like Qatar and Bahrain, Team Asia's outstanding showing in Athens was down to more than some countries opening their chequebooks.

Second places were achieved by Iranian discus thrower Ehsan Hadadi, Japanese pole vaulter Daichi Sawano and China's 2004 Olympic

Games 110m hurdles gold medallist and world record holder Liu Xiang.

All are home-grown talent in their respective countries.

There had been much talk of Liu breaking his own world record in Athens, the scene of his gold-medal winning performance two years ago, but despite running a world class time of 13.03sec he had to concede victory to American former three-time world champion Allen Johnson.

"The starter was very fast," said Liu, ruefully admitting he had been left in his blocks by the inspired Johnson.

Team Asia's women's team finished a more modest seventh out of the nine teams in Athens with only one win over the weekend.

Bahrain's Maryam Yusuf Jamal became the first Asian woman from outside of China to win a World Cup event after the Ethiopian-born runner had unleashed a blistering last lap to run away with the women's 1500m in a Cup record 4:00.84.

"Like nearly all of my Team Asia colleagues here, my focus is now on the Asian Games and I'm going to go away to the United States to prepare. But I don't think I need to fear anybody at the moment," said Jamal confidently after her third consecutive win in as many weeks over the classic distance.

Hussey rests captaincy talk

AFP, Kuala Lumpur

Michael Hussey has brushed off talk of wanting to succeed Ricky Ponting as Australian captain, saying he is happy just to be playing in the same side.

Hussey took charge of his first game as skipper on Monday in the DLF Cup here against the West Indies and led from the front, scoring a maiden one-day century only to see his side beaten by three wickets.

His efforts came hot on the heels of a poll on leading website baggygreen.com that showed 54 percent of voters believed Hussey should be Australia's next captain.

Current vice-captain Adam Gilchrist attracted just 20.3 percent of the votes.

"I've mentioned a few times that I'm 100 percent behind Ricky and Adam as captain and vice-captain of the team, and I can't really see that changing for the foreseeable future," said Hussey, who was deputising for a resting Ponting.

"I'm really happy to get an opportunity, but I'm 100 percent behind them."

Hussey has emerged as an astute cricketing brain and also a valuable one-day batsman, and said he thoroughly enjoyed his first outing as skipper.

"I enjoyed trying to come up with new ideas to find a wicket, or how we were going to keep it tight," he said.

"I'm also lucky that I had some very experienced cricketers around me to give me some help. I enjoyed watching the way Brian Lara constructed his innings as well, and trying to play some mind-games with him."

At one point Ponting was the drinks man, bringing out refreshments for Hussey, who said he asked for advice.

Saleha women's singles champ

SPORTS REPORTER

Saleha came from a set down to beat Jayati 4-1 and clinch the women's singles title of the Dayang Open Table Tennis tournament yesterday.

Saleha, who lost the opening set 5-11, marched to glory winning 11-5, 11-6, 11-8, 11-8 at the NSC Woodenfloor gymnasium.

Sabuj won the boys' (sub junior) singles title defeating Himel 12-10, 11-5, 13-11 in the final.

The men's team and singles crowns will be decided today, the concluding day of the meet.

BCB hell-bent

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The board has all the resources -- whether technical and non-technical -- in terms of appointing a manager. If they think that it is the job for a non-technical person, they can select one of the board high-ups and members who regularly travel with the Tigers, which rose to as many as four during the Tiger's last tour to Africa.

Alternatively, if they think that the job-holder must have a cricketing background, then the selectors, who by rotation toured with the team and did the job successfully, can be depended upon this time when there are reservations against the board's appointed manager.

But it seems that BCB is desperate to send the controversial man in this very prestigious meet but the question remains: Why?

Tiger has

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brought together old friends and Ryder Cup partners Darren Clarke and Lee Westwood.

Woosnam continued his low-key approach to captaincy saying that above all else he wanted his players to feel relaxed and comfortable.

"We had a nice team meeting last night. Did my little bit," he said. "We had a great bit of fun, a few beers and in the camp everybody's happy with everything."

Local players McGinley and Harrington would be a huge draw on the occasion of Ireland hosting the Ryder Cup for the first time. They have played many times together both in the Ryder Cup and for Ireland in World Cup events.

Casey and Donald enjoy playing with each other having won the World Cup for England in Mexico in 2003, while Garcia's pinpoint accuracy off the tee looks ideally suited to complement Olazabal's peerless iron play.

Clarke and Westwood have played with each before at Ryder Cups and are close friends. The 38-year-old Ulsterman will draw a big crowd as he continues his return to action following the death from cancer last month of his wife Heather.

Woosnam said that he had not lost much sleep putting together his initial pairings as "there's a lot of them out there that just naturally go together."

But he said he would keep a keen eye on form over the three days of practice and make any changes that proved necessary.

Proteas clinch series

Cricket

AFP, East London

Jacques Kallis completed a rare double as he led South Africa to a six-wicket win over Zimbabwe in the second one-day international against South Africa at Buffalo Park here on Monday.

Kallis became the first player to score 8000 runs and take 200 wickets in both Tests and one-day internationals when he scored his first run in an innings of 26.

South Africa raced to victory and a winning 2-0 lead in the three-match series when they overhauled Zimbabwe's 152 all out with 22.2 overs to spare.

Although the final margin was similar to their five-wicket win in the first match in Bloemfontein on Friday it was a much-improved performance by the South Africans, who took control with disciplined bowling and fielding after Zimbabwe won the toss and batted.

"We got the rust out the other night and the boys came out with a lot more confidence and put in a good performance," said Kallis, captaining South Africa in the series in the absence of the injured Graeme Smith.

Zimbabwe were under early pressure when Vusi Sibanda, their top-scorer with 51 in the previous match, was caught behind for ought off a superb delivery by Makhaya Ntini in the second over, with Sibanda drawn forward and edging a ball which lifted and moved away.

Zimbabwe slipped to 73 for five before Justice Chibhabha (38) and Elton Chigumbura (30) put on 47 for the sixth wicket in the only substantial partnership of the innings. Both batsmen struggled to keep the score moving, however, and the stand took 109 balls.

Chigumbura eventually lost patience and charged down the

pitch to be stumped off left-arm spinner Robin Peterson. Chibhabha was seventh man out when he hooked Ntini to square leg after a painstaking 101-ball innings.

Medium-pace Andrew Hall took three for 23, while Ntini, Kallis and Robin Peterson took two wickets each.

By contrast South Africa set up an early finish when Loots Bosman and new cap Alvaro Petersen blazed to a 53-run second wicket partnership off only 33 balls.

Both batsmen lost their wickets trying to maintain the hectic pace. Petersen (20) edged a ball from medium-pace Piet Rinke into his stumps in attempting to nudge the ball down to third man, while Bosman was bowled for 38 by Rinke four balls later when he drove over a full-length delivery.

Kallis said he was not concerned that his side lost four wickets.

"We set a target of trying to win in as close to 25 overs as we could. We knew we would lose a few wickets along the way playing positively but that's the way we want to play going forward."

When Kallis completed a double which primarily confirms his batting prowess, he and Sanath Jayasuriya of Sri Lanka became the only players to achieve the mark.

Jayasuriya, who has played in 364 matches -- 133 more than Kallis -- has scored 11104 runs and taken 278 wickets. Kallis took his total to 8025 runs and 207 wickets.

Kallis joined Garfield Sobers as the only man to achieve the all-round feat in Tests when he took his 200th wicket in the final match against New Zealand last season, adding to his 8033 runs.

The match was postponed because of rain Sunday and started an hour late because of a wet outfield but the pitch did not pose any major problems for the batsmen, although the bowlers were able to get some lateral movement.

Team pleases Lara

Cricket

AFP, Kuala Lumpur

Captain Brian Lara has voiced confidence in his underperforming West Indies team, who he says are determined to claw their way back up the world rankings.

The once-dominant West Indians have faded over the past decade and plunged to eighth in the official rankings.

But Lara believes they are again starting to gel, with their confidence buoyed by reaching the final of the DLF Cup tri-series in Malaysia that also features world No.1 Australia and world No.4 India.

"Some people don't seem to have much confidence in my players, but I do," said the 37-year-old batting legend, who is in his third stint as captain.

"We are not highly ranked in the world and we really are focused on

getting up there.

"I feel it is going to come right. The players played pretty well on Monday (in beating Australia)."

Batting has been the major West Indies concern here, with middle-order collapses always a threat once Lara, Chris Gayle and Shivnarine Chanderpaul are back in the pavilion.

Lara, though, is happy with the way they are progressing ahead of their defence of the Champions Trophy next month.

"I was happy with our batting. There was a bit of a hiccup at the end again but we have got some time now to work on it," he said.

"The guys are still finding their footing but hopefully more practice and we can get it right."

(Dwayne) Bravo took his time to get in and he batted really well, and the likes of Wavell Hinds and Dwayne Smith and Marlon Samuels, these guys have scored

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard in the second one-day international between South Africa and Zimbabwe at Buffalo Park on Monday:

ZIMBABWE
Sibanda c Boucher b Ntini 0
Mufambisi b Pollock 21
Chibhabha c Duminy b Ntini 38
Masakadza c and b Kallis 5
Taylor c Hall b Kallis 5
Matsikenyeri b Hall 14
Chigumbura st Boucher b Peterson 30
Rinke lbw b Peterson 3
Utseya not out 24
Ireland b Hall 1
Rainsford b Hall 1
Extras: (lb-3, w-7) 10
Total: (All out in 49.4 overs) 152
Fall of wickets: 1-1, 2-27, 3-33, 4-50, 5-73, 6-120, 7-122, 8-126, 9-132.

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Pollock	10	3	28	1
Ntini	10	0	33	2
Kallis	6	2	22	2
Hall	8.4	1	23	3
Kemp	5	1	16	0
Peterson	10	0	27	2

SOUTH AFRICA
Bosman b Rinke 38
Dippenaar c Sibanda b Ireland 9
Peterson b Rinke 20
Kallis b Ireland 26
Duminy not out 31
Kemp not out 28
Extras: (lb-2, nb-1, w-1) 4
Total: (For 4 wkts in 27.4 overs) 156
Did not bat: Boucher, Pollock, Peterson, Hall, Ntini
Fall of wickets: 1-14, 6-67, 3-72, 4-109.

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Rainsford	5	1	38	0
Ireland	7	0	40	2
Rinke	6	0	35	2
Utseya	9	0	33	0
Chibhabha	0.4	0	8	0

Result: South Africa won by six wickets and lead series 2-0.
Man-of-the-match: Andrew Hall.

Easy win for Hingis

Tennis

AFP, Kolkata

Former world number one Martina Hingis made a winning start Monday in her first appearance on Indian soil, advancing easily to the second round of the WTA Kolkata Open here.

Hingis, on a comeback trail this year after injuries interrupted her career, breezed through the first round with a 6-1, 6-2 win over Melinda Czink of Hungary.

The world number nine hit 19 winners to secure victory in less than an hour against the 84th-ranked Czink.

Hingis, who turns 26 on

September 30, said she was delighted to be taking part in the 175,000-dollar event being played indoors in this bustling eastern metropolis.

"It is a pleasure to be playing in India and I thank you for having me here," Hingis told some 1,000 cheering fans at the Netaji indoor stadium.

"I love playing indoors and it was nice to get off to a good start. Hopefully I can preserve myself for the rest of the week."

Veteran Tamarine Tanasugarn of Thailand overcame a hesitant start to defeat sixth-seeded Estonian Kaia Kanepi 6-7 (10/12), 7-5, 6-0.

Tamarine, ranked 124 in the world, survived a series of unforced errors in the first set to fight back in the second set and take the decider

without dropping a game.

In other matches, Tzipora Obziler of Israel beat Yulia Beygelzimer of Ukraine 6-2, 6-3 and Abigail Spears of the United States defeated another Ukrainian, Akgul Amanmuradova, 6-3, 6-4.

Tatiana Poutchek of Belarus was stretched by Anne Keothavong of Britain before winning 6-2, 6-7 (5-7), 6-3.

India's Sania Mirza, seeded fifth and facing a possible semifinal clash against Hingis, will meet a qualifier in her first round match.

Mirza, who turns 20 in November, faces pressure from her home crowd as she bids to bounce back after dropping from number 31 last year to 70.



PHOTO: AFP
Martina Hingis of Switzerland plays a forehand against Melinda Czink of Hungary during a first round match of the Sunfesta Open tennis tournament in Kolkata on Monday.