



Current and ex-shooters brought out a rally in the Gulshan area yesterday demanding exemplary punishment for the people involved in the events of "Black Monday."



Did U Know?

Badminton was first played as an Olympic medal sport at the 1992 Games in Barcelona.



Kumar Sangakkara
(Sri Lankan wicketkeeper)
"I have been fortunate because as a wicketkeeper I have had the best view in the world of his artistry, the extent of which never ceases to amaze me."
On Muttiah Muralidaran.



ESPN
Sportscenter India
Live at 8:30 pm

CHAMPIONS TROPHY Shiv Sena cautions Pakistan

AFP, New Delhi

A right-wing Hindu group has threatened to prevent Pakistan from playing in India in the Champions Trophy tournament scheduled to start this week, officials said on Wednesday.

The Shiv Sena (Lord Shiva's army) party, which holds sway in the western Indian state of Maharashtra, said the step was to protest against July's bombings of trains in provincial capital Mumbai that killed 186 people.

"How can they allow Pakistan to play matches in our country when the Mumbai police have evidence of its (Pakistan's) involvement in the July 11 terror attack?" Shiv Sena executive president Udhav Thackeray said in comments published Wednesday.

Mumbai police chief AN Roy on Saturday publicly accused Pakistan's spy agency, the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), of orchestrating the attacks on trains that also wounded 800.

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Shooting in disarray NSF to sue responsible cops

SPORTS REPORTER

The National Shooting Federation (NSF) has decided to file a case against the policemen who were involved in assaulting national shooters and NSF employees on Monday at the National Shooting Complex in Gulshan.

The decision was taken in an executive committee meeting of the federation yesterday afternoon.

NSF general secretary Nazimuddin Chowdhury told reporters that the federation would also go to higher court to defend the three shooters, a cook and an on-duty Ansar member.

The shooting team's participation in the coming Asian Games also looked uncertain after the NSF called off the camp.

"If the mental state of the shooters get better, we will resume the camp as soon as possible and see

whether we can send a good team to the Asia," said Nazim.

The federation, which demanded exemplary punishment for DC North of DMP Obaidur Rahman, OC of Gulshan Police Station Mahbub, SI Faisal Zaman and SI Jasim, also demanded to know the identity of the others involved in the attack and better treatment for the injured. The shooting officials has decided to attend today's human-chain organised by Sommiito Krira Paribar at Muktangan at 3pm and stuck to their previous demand of forming a judicial inquiry to investigate the incident.

With leading air rifle shooter Asif Hossain Khan injured and Sharmin Akhter suffering from fever following the brutal police attack, Bangladesh can hardly send a top-class team to the Doha Games this December.

Despite the NSF decision, the shooters have refused to leave the

camp and stayed at the complex hoping that the authority will give them a chance to get into action soon.

Meanwhile, tension mounted around and the federation high-ups and the shooters seemed to stand on different platforms on the issue. The shooters brought out a rally from the shooting complex yesterday demanding punishment for the guilty but the federation officials did not join.

Ex-shooters have been on the road protesting the police action and been trying to encourage the young shooters forget the horror they have been through. The federation officials, however, want to do it on their own.

Former shooter Abdul Gaffar

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Aussies' point to prove



AFP, Sydney

Australia have won three World Cups but have come up short in the Champions Trophy, a failure that skipper Ricky Ponting wants his team to redress in this month's fifth edition in India.

The Australians, nominal favourites for a hat-trick of World Cup victories in the Caribbean next March-April, have prepared for a serious crack at the Champions Trophy by winning a tri-series against the West Indies and India in Malaysia last month.

Australia will be bolstered by the return of wicketkeeper-batsman Adam Gilchrist, who along with teammate Mike Hussey ranks as the two top-ranked ODI batsmen in

world cricket.

Ponting's team, who have won 16 of their 24 ODI matches this season, tuned up for the world's second biggest one-day tournament with a crushing 127-run victory over the West Indies in the final of the DLF Cup in Kuala Lumpur on September 25.

The tri-series was Australia's first competitive cricket since white-washing Bangladesh in three ODIs last April.

Ponting, who also has his eye on regaining the Ashes off England in the five-Test home series later this year, believes Australia has all the bases covered for the Champions' Trophy.

"It's obviously one we want to win. It is the second biggest one-day tournament in the world and it is one that has eluded Australia," Ponting said.

"We have been knocked out in the semifinal in the last two Champions Trophies, but we definitely have the

squad and the players to challenge seriously this year.

"We've played some good cricket in Indian conditions before so we can go there now with confidence."

Australia have been knocked out of the Champions Trophy in the last two semifinals, by England two years ago and Sri Lanka in 2002.

Australia will field four of the top-10 ranked batsmen in ODI cricket -- Hussey (1), Gilchrist (2), Ponting (4) and Andrew Symonds (5) -- and three of the top-10 bowlers -- Brett Lee (2), Nathan Bracken (4) and Glenn McGrath (5).

But the team will be strengthened by left-arm speedster Mitchell Johnson and all-rounder Shane Watson, who both did well in the Malaysian tournament.

Johnson snared a career-best 4-11 against India before he was sent

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Mohammedani players stretch ahead of their final showdown against archrivals Abahani at the Maulana Bhasani National Hockey Stadium yesterday.

Bashar slightly happy

SPORTS REPORTER from Chandigarh

Bangladesh captain Habibur Bashar said that he wants the same responsible batting from his top-order batsmen when the main event begins.

The 33-year-old skipper was excited with the way his top-order played against PCA XI in the practice game at Chandigarh but he was well aware of the fact that it would be a different ball game when they take on Sri Lanka, West Indies and Zimbabwe in the preliminary round of the ICC Champions Trophy.

"It is very encouraging to see that our top-order clicked at the right time. But once we do the same in the tournament proper, I can say that our problem is solved because you should understand that it was a practice match and against a comparatively weaker opponent," he explained.

"We have been struggling with this for long so it was refreshing to see that it has worked for a change. I think we couldn't carry our innings further as the problems lies in our mind. I want to see a batsman carry his innings and not be dismissed at 30," he added.

"I was not dissatisfied with the overall performance but the only

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A lazy Nafees

SPORTS REPORTER from Chandigarh

Vice-captain Shahriar Nafees is going to be heavily punished by the team management for being late in reaching the ground.

Nafees, the cricketer and best batsman recipient of the year, went to the field half an hour late.

"He woke up late and as a result reached the venue 30 minutes later than the team. The team management took the matter seriously and will be punished duly," a team sources said.

Captain Habibur Bashar refrained from commenting on the issue but he admitted the fact.

"I can only say that it is not a good practice for a player," he said.

Epyllion to sponsor Tigers

SPORTS REPORTER

Epyllion Group will sponsor the national cricket team for the ICC Champions Trophy in India, the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) officially announced yesterday.

The leading textile manufacturer Epyllion will pay Tk 15 lakh for the first three qualifying matches, informed BCB officials at a press conference at the NSC conference room.

The sponsorship money, however, would be raised if the Tigers make it to the second stage, said BCB vice-president and marketing and commercial committee chairman Aziz Al Kaiser Tito.

Welcoming Epyllion for coming forward to sponsor the national team, BCB general secretary Mahbub Anam said that the board had struggled to find a sponsor as no telecom company, bank and soft drinks, electronics or automobile manufacturers other than tournament sponsors Hutch, Scotia Bank, Pepsi, LG and Hero Honda are allowed to sponsor the teams.

"Here these companies are the largest sponsors and it was a daunting task to find a sponsor," Mahub said adding that the logo of Epyllion Group would be carried on the

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MSC-Abahani final today

SPORTS REPORTER

Abahani will face the challenge of archrivals Mohammedan Sporting Club in the last attempt in defence of their Shah Sports Club Hockey Tournament title today.

The final of the eight-team meet will kick off at 2.45pm at the Maulana Bhasani National Hockey Stadium.

Both the local giants have maintained perfect record on way to the final with holders Abahani ousting Mariners 2-0 he semifinals while Mohammedan eliminating Usha 1-0 in the other last four clash.

Abahani won the last edition two years back when they made a dramatic comeback, breaking the Mariners hearts winning the final 4-3 after conceding a 3-0 first half lead.

Two-time winners Mohammedan made it to the final this time with a solid defence and coach Barkatullah Chapal thinks that the fans will see a different black and

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Perfect practice

Tigers trounce PCA XI by 7 wickets



BISHWAJIT ROY from Chandigarh

All the worries of inadequate preparation of the Tigers is now put to rest as they made a solid start to their ICC Champions Trophy campaign with a seven-wicket win over Punjab Cricket Association (PCA) President's XI in a practice match at the Sector 16 Stadium in Chandigarh yesterday.

The win comes as a boost ahead of their October 7 opening clash against Sri Lanka in the neighboring city of Mohali. Bangladesh chased down a modest target of 205 set by the hosts in only 41 overs under brilliant sunshine and in almost perfect conditions -- something which they lacked back home.

Tigers arrived in India with only half a practice match behind them and much speculation about their groundwork but middle-order batsmen Aftab Ahmed and Sakib Al Hasan combined to give the Tigers a convincing victory.

The two young batsmen went on to add 120 runs for the third-wicket after they came together with the score on 66 for 2 in the 17th over when opening batsman Shahriar Nafees was dismissed for 29.

Right-handed Aftab blazed away in his 71-ball 76 that included eight fours and two huge sixes, while left-hander Sakib played a composed



AFTAB AHMED... 76

innings of 66 that featured a six and half a dozen boundaries, last of which was the winning runs off spinner Bipul Sharma through mid-

wicket. Bangladesh coach Dav Whatmore expressed his satisfaction over his charges' performance in the match though, he was a little disturbed by the fielding effort.

"The major encouragement was that we played a full practice match after inclement weather hampered it at home and the boys, positively,



SAKIB AL HASAN... 66 n.o

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WI look on bright side



AFP, St John's

When the West Indies won the 2004 Champions Trophy in the gloom of a London autumn, skipper Brian Lara hoped it would be the dawn of a new era for the fallen kings of one-day cricket.

But two years on and the Caribbean calypso still resembles more of a slow waltz.

Crushed by Australia in the DLF Cup final in Kuala Lumpur last month and still dogged by bitterness over contracts and selection procedures, Lara, in his third spell as skipper, believes his team can be a force in India despite having to play in the qualifying tournament.

"I see it as a good way of going into the tournament," said Lara whose side have to face Zimbabwe,

Sri Lanka and Bangladesh before the serious business gets underway.

"Australia, England, and Pakistan will arrive for their first game, but we will already have had three games going in. That's a slight plus."

Lara, who threatened to quit in July in a row over selection, took some comfort from seeing his side beat both Australia and India during the Kuala Lumpur tournament.

But he knows that others in the team have to start taking the pressure off himself as well as fellow senior players Shivnarine Chanderpaul and Ramnaresh Sarwan.

"I think Dwayne Smith -- we just need to get his batting together," he said. "You can see he's a power-hitter, but we need to get him to spend more time in the middle. I think (fast bowler) Jerome Taylor improved as the tournament progressed. We've got five or six in and around form. There are other players we have to massage and get together. I still believe in them."



BCB General Secretary Mahbubul Anam (R) addresses a press briefing to announce new sponsors Epyllion for the ICC Champions Trophy. On his right is Marketing Committee Chairman Aziz Al Kaiser Tito and Media Committee Chairman Reazuddin Al Mamun.

About time Kiwis flew



AFP, Wellington

New Zealand has to overcome a long layoff and hope its injury prone stars stay fit if they want to repeat their 2000 victory in the Champions Trophy.

The victory in the 2000 tournament, then known as the ICC Knockout, was due in large part to an unbeaten century by all-rounder Chris Cairns in the final against India in Nairobi.

Cairns retired this year and captain Stephen Fleming will be looking for big contributions from his more experienced players to rediscover the form of 2000.

The team has not played a one-day match together since beating the West Indies 4-1 in a home series

which ended in early March.

Several of the key players are returning from injury, including world class speedster Shane Bond, wily left arm spinner Daniel Vettori and pace bowler Kyle Mills.

All-rounder Jacob Oram is also returning from a series of career-interrupting injuries.

Scott Styris, also a valuable batting all-rounder in the one-day game, has the biggest question mark hanging over him after suffering a back injury playing for English county Middlesex last month.

Team manager Lindsay Crocker said Styris would be monitored up to the team's departure for India.

Despite the long lay-off for the team since a test series against South Africa in May, several of the players have been playing English county cricket to keep their hand in.

The Champions Trophy is the start of a long season dominated by one-day matches and culminating in the World Cup in the West Indies

starting in March.

New Zealand is sticking with tried and tested campaigners for the trophy, with Wellington pace bowler Mark Gillespie the only newcomer in the side.

Gillespie had shown the ability to swing the ball both ways and offers another option for bowling in the crucial final overs of each innings, coach John Bracewell said when naming the team.

"In the day/night games in India the ball's likely to swing and the teams that we're playing against early on in the tournament have, we feel, weaknesses in the areas where he can contribute," Bracewell said.

New Zealand greatest weakness in recent seasons has been a fragile batting top order.

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