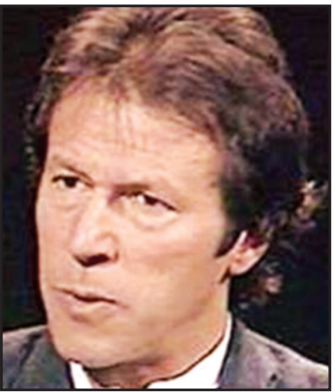




Did U Know?
Paul Collingwood scored 206 runs in the first innings of the second Ashes Test against Australia. He was the sixteenth player and first from England to score a double century at the Adelaide Oval.



Imran Khan
(Pakistan cricket legend)
"Mohammad Yousuf's feat is commendable and all Pakistan is proud of his world record achievements."



BTV & Channel i
Bangladesh v Zimbabwe
Third ODI
Live at 1:30 pm
TEN Sports
Pakistan v West Indies
First ODI
Live at 11:45 am
UEFA Champions League
Barcelona v Bremen
Live at 1:00 am (Wednesday)
ESPN
Australia v England
2nd Ashes Test, Day Five
Live at 6:30 am
Sportscenter India
Live at 8:30 pm

Rain feared at Rawalpindi

First Pakistan-West Indies ODI today



AFP, Rawalpindi

Torrential rain threatens the first of game of the five-match one-day series between Pakistan and the West Indies scheduled for Tuesday. Heavy rain continued to lash the city on Sunday and Monday, leaving the Rawalpindi ground waterlogged. The organisers have valiantly been working to keep the pitch fit for play in the day-night fixture. Pakistan, who clinched the preceding three-match Test series 2-0, expect a tough fight from the tourists, who have produced better

Tigers going for the kill

Mashrafee doubtful for today's match



SPORTS REPORTER from Bogra

After two convincing victories, Bangladesh captain Habibul Bashar got out of the shell as he said that they were ready to be ruthless against Zimbabwe in the third match to confirm the series victory with two matches in hand at the Shaheed Chandu Stadium today. The 33-year old skipper had been reserve before the second game because of their bitter experience of losing the away series 3-2 but the sides' performance in the last two games has given him the confidence that it is just matter of time to decide the series.

"I want to confirm the series win tomorrow. I am happy the way we played the last two games. We have so far played excellent cricket and we are ready to continue this form till the last game," said Bashar during yesterday's practice session.

His main worry was Mashrafe Bin Mortuza, who looks a doubtful starter for the crucial match following a shoulder injury. Although team physio Paul Close

had assured in the morning that he would get better before the match, the leading paceman continued to complain and the team management is reluctant to take risk on him.

The Tigers had achieved their first ever one-day series victory against the same opponents in 2005 at home bouncing back from a 2-0 deficit but this time they are in upper hand.

"Yes, we struggled in the last home battle against them and you all know we lost the away series earlier this year for some very small mistakes. But we are more matured now and the team performed as per my desire," the captain said.

Although the limelight was on strong batting displays, especially the amazing Shahriar Nafees's unbeaten 105 and 67, Bashar heaped praises on the bowlers.

"Our batsmen, especially Nafees, are among runs but I am really impressed the way my bowlers have bowled. The wicket was totally flat in the second game but they did an excellent job to restrict the opponents for 217."

The premier Bangladesh batsman was dismissive of the notion that they are on top against a weak opponent.

"I'd rather say they looked weak because of our excellent performance. But its true that Zimbabwe are missing some good players."

"I don't like to change the squad for only for the sake of change

because my main objective is to win all the matches and quite convincingly," he said.

But chief selector Faruque Ahmed hinted at changes for the last two matches in Dhaka if Bangladesh can seal the series here.

"The selection committee will meet tomorrow during the match to decide about the squad for the last two games. It is not unlikely to see one or two new guys in the team," said Faruque.

When asked to comment on the new opening pair, Faruque said: "It is too early to comment but I am really impressed by the attitude of young Mehrab (Hossain). We can see a ray of hope with the new pair."

SQUADS

Bangladesh (from): Habibul Bashar (captain), Shahriar Nafees, Mehrab Hossain, Aftab Ahmed, Sakib Al Hasan, Mohammad Ashraful, Khaled Mashud, Mohammad Rafique, Mashrafe Bin Mortuza, Abdur Razzak, Shahadat Hossain, Forhad Reza and Syed Rasel.

Zimbabwe (from): P Utseya (captain), T Mawoyo, G Brent, C Chibhabha, E Chigumbura, G Cremer, K Dabengwa, R Higgins, A Ireland, N Mahwire, H Masakadza, S Matsikenyeri, C Mpofu, M Nkala, E Rainsford, B Taylor and S Williams.

Nafees sets the standard



BISHWAJIT ROY from Bogra

It's true that left-handed opener Shahriar Nafees got the chance to play teams like Zimbabwe and Kenya more frequently than his predecessors, but whatever the case, his splendid run with the bat can never be underrated.

The 20-year-old Bangladesh vice-captain has set a rare example of consistency in recent times to give his colleagues some food for thought.

Once there had been talking about only the talent but the time has come to think about how a batsman stands to the world level and no doubt that average is the most important criteria to ensure one's position in the highest level of the game.

Nafees stands far away from his teammates with a healthy average in both versions of the game and his 41.66-run average in 30 one-day internationals -- which includes three hundreds and six fifties -- is undoubtedly exemplary for the others.

His form has brought Bangladesh's two most talented batsmen -- Mohammad Ashraful and Aftab Ahmed -- under scrutiny and it could be an interesting study to know how both the batsmen think about the issue.

Aftab has improved his average in shorter-version of the game with his recent performances but still, an average of 26.41 in 44 games does not reflect his ability as a standard batsman. On the other hand, nobody can be blamed for branding Ashraful as an ordinary batsman considering his average -- 19.92 in 80 matches -- and many believed that he has yet to flourish his potential so far.

After Nafees's run spree the question was asked to both the

batsmen whether they were concerned about their poor averages and they had their own explanations.

"I must agree that Nafees has showed a rare kind of consistency to maintain a very good average. I am very much aware of the fact that my average poor if compared with him," admitted Ashraful, who was included in squad following his tremendous form in the National Cricket League.

"What I realise is that he uses his head besides hard-work to get success at this level which actually makes the difference. No doubt his batting is an inspiration to us and it has forced everybody to rethink about their batting," said the ace right-hander, who played some brilliant innings to surprise the cricket world but failed to maintain consistency.

But Ashraful found another reason behind Nafees's success at this level.

"I think we had to play some formidable opponents in the initial

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PHOTO: AFP

Pakistan captain Younis Khan (L) and his West Indies counterpart Brian Lara hold up the ODI trophy during a ceremony in Islamabad on Monday.

Hockey, kabaddi teams lose badly

SPORTS REPORTER



0 in their Pool B match in the 15th Asian Games hockey competition at the Al Rayyan hockey ground in Doha yesterday.

Shivendra Singh, Ragunath Vokkaliga and Adam Sinclair scored one goal each for India, who led 4-0 at the break.

In another Group B match yesterday, China handed Oman a 6-1 defeat with Yi Song slamming four goals including a hat-trick.

Bangladesh will take on South Korea today.

In football, Bangladesh will end

their campaign today against Vietnam after losses to South Korea (3-0) and Bahrain (5-1).

The kabaddi team crashed to their third consecutive defeat when Bangladesh suffered a shocking 56-39 loss to unfancied Iran. The winners led the first half 31-20 and finished the game with eight lonas compared to Bangladesh's two.

International Master Enamul Hossain Rajib and Grandmaster Reefat Bin Sattar both ended on 4.5 points in the men's rapid chess 9-round Swiss League, clinching 18th and 20th places respectively. Kazakhstan's Murtas Kazhgaleyev, unbeaten in nine games, finished atop with 7.5 points. Total of 42 players competed.

In women's rapid chess, Shamima Akhter Liza finished 13th among 21 players, grabbing 4.5

SEE PAGE 18 COL 2



PHOTO: AFP

Bangladesh spinner Mohammad Rafique is about to deliver a ball as teammate Mohammad Ashraful looks on during a training session at the Shaheed Chandu Stadium in Bogra on Monday.

Zim cricket on a sticky wicket

AFP, Harare

Zimbabwe's cricket body was on Monday convicted by a Harare magistrate's court for breaching the country's stiff foreign exchange laws.

Zimbabwe Cricket (ZC), represented by the association's accountant Anesu Kafesu, pleaded guilty to making unauthorised payments to a foreign television company without the go-ahead from the central bank.

The southern African country, reeling under record inflation and a serious shortage of essential goods, fuel and foreign currency, has introduced strict laws on foreign payments which need central bank approval.

State prosecutor Obi Mabawana said between November 2004 and September last year the body had paid Britain-based television production company Octagon CSI 1.3 million US dollars for advertising and marketing services.

Mabawana said in the second charge ZC sold advertising space at Harare sports club to 7Cs, a South Africa-based company, in May 2005.

For unspecified reasons, it cancelled the contract with the firm and entered into another deal

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Tons-up Rajshahi

SPORTS REPORTER



Centuries by Jahurul Islam and Nayeem Islam put Rajshahi in the driving seat in their home match against Barisal while Alok Kapali's lone battle on Monday was competently supported by Nabil Samad and Nazmul Hossain as visiting Sylhet tightened their grip over leaders Dhaka on the second day of the four-day matches in the Ispahani Mirzapore Tea 8th National Cricket League.

In the other match, Khulna were on the verge of taking a first-innings lead against hosts Chittagong.

RAJSHAHI v BARISAL

Overnight 94-2, Rajshahi built on their lead with opener Jahurul making a patient 139 and Nayeem Islam a faster 126 to take their total to 370-7 at stumps at the Rajshahi Divisional Stadium.

The two added 215 runs for the third wicket before Abul bashar dismissed Jahurul, who hit 18 fours and two sixes in his 305-ball vigil. Nayeem's 235-ball essay featured 17 fours and two sixes before he was scalped by Ahsanullah Hasan.

With two days to go, Rajshahi enjoy a massive 277-run lead.

DHAKA v SYLHET

Alok Kapali smashed 173 before Sylhet's pace and spin combination wrecked the home batting at the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium.

In reply to Sylhet's 365, Dhaka slumped to 193 for eight at close of play as new ball bowler Nazmul grabbed 3-41 and left-arm spinner Nabil 4-42.

Apart from opener Uttam Sarkar (61 off 94 balls) and Marshall Ayub (38 off 96 balls), the Dhaka big guns completely lost their way when they were reduced to 20-3 after nine overs. The tail, however, kept their hopes alive to cross the 200-mark.

Earlier, Alok Kapali added 45 runs to his overnight 128 to single-handedly lead Sylhet's way to an imposing first innings total. The out-of-favour Tiger, who faced 254 balls in nearly six hours, sent the ball 21 times into the fence and whacked one six. He was the last man dismissed in the innings by Mohammed Sharif, the paceman who claimed 5-135.

CHITTAGONG v KHULNA

At the Chittagong Divisional Stadium, the hosts had their backs on the wall for the second consecutive day as Khulna reached within nine runs of posting a first-innings lead.

A collective effort saw them

Soccer, cricket transfers delayed

SPORTS REPORTER

Transfers of both domestic football and cricket, scheduled to begin from today, have been delayed due to the ongoing political unrest.

The Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF), despite having all preparations, deferred the transfer of the inaugural Professional Football League responding to fresh appeals by the participating clubs and footballers yesterday.

The clubs came out with a new proposal to start the transfer from December 15 and even managed to convince the protesting booters, who have been staging sit-ins for the past few days at the BFF Bhaban.

After a big showdown yesterday, the booters decided to postpone their sit-in programmes.

The revised date for transfer is December 14-February 14, 2007 and the Pro League will begin from February 15, 2007.

The participants' deadline for registration, however, remains December 13.

Meanwhile, the Cricket Committee of Dhaka Metropolis (CCDM) -- also set to begin the 3-day transfer from today with a plan to extend the period -- in a late night decision postponed the procedures due to the countrywide blockade.

CCDM chairman Khondoker Jamiluddin told last night that after announcing the schedule, he received calls from the concerned cricketers who are spread across the country for national duty and for the National Cricket League.

"It would be difficult for the players to reach the capital in this situation and we cannot ignore the players' safety or concern," Jamil said.

"If the situation gets better, we will sit with the clubs to announce a fresh date within 48 hours. Otherwise, we will consider announcing new date after December 10," he added.

score 233-3 in reply to Chittagong's 241 with skipper Manzarul Islam, fresh from a century in the previous round, batting on 59. Nazmus sadat, sajjadul Hasan and Jamauddin all scored in their 40s.

SCORES IN BRIEF

BARISAL: First Innings: 93; Rajshahi First Innings: 370-7 in 128 overs (Jahurul 139, Farhad 5, Anisur 31, Nayeem 126, Mushfiq 2, Rahim 29, Rosel 13*, Shuvo 6, Shahjada 1*, extras 18, Sajidul 2-34, Sonnet 1-41, hasan 2-80, Rajan 1-55, Bashar 1-23).

CHITTAGONG: First Innings: 241; KHULNA: First Innings: 233-3 in 95 overs (Sadat 46, Sajjadul 42, Sahagir 29, Jamal 42*, Manzarul 59*, extras 15, Sabbir 2-66, Saju 1-31).

SYLHET: First Innings: 365 all out in 104.2 overs (Rahman 4, Imtiaz 34, Mithun 0, Rajin 100, Kapali 173, Mabud 8, Sadikur 19, Rezaul 0, Hasibul 1, Nazmul 6, Nabil 0*, extras 20, Sharif 5-135, Musharraf 4-102, Sunny 1-53); DHAKA: First Innings: 193-8 in 68.1 overs (Javed 5, Uttam 61, Anwar 0, Sanwar 6, Al Shahriar 6, marshall 38, Nadif 22, Sharif 6, Mosharraf 14*, Sunny 13*, extras 22, Nazmul 3-41, Hasibul 1-26, Nabil 4-42).