

Irene blasts first ton

SPORTS REPORTER

Irene Sultana slammed an explosive hundred on the opening day of the first Women's Cricket Championship as Khulna thumped Narayanganj by 234 runs at the Nabin Sangha ground yesterday.

In the 30-over-a-side match, Sultana took only 70 balls to rattle 105 as her side piled on 288 for five after winning the toss. In reply, Narayanganj skittled out for only 54 runs, with Alma taking three wickets.

After the opening ceremony at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium, Dhaka promptly dispatched Ansar and VDP by 34 runs, thanks mainly to Towhida as she took four for 12.

Away at the Jahangirnagar University ground, Bhola outplayed the hosts by eight wickets.

Kabaddi WC India's

SPORTS REPORTER

India successfully defended their Kabaddi World Cup title when the hosts defeated Iran 29-19 in the final of the second edition of the competition at the Kamala Sports Academy in Panvel, near Mumbai on Friday night.

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England's Archibald MacLaren was the first batsman to reach a Test century with a 6.



ESPN

Australia v New Zealand
8th ODI, CB Series
Live at 10:30 am

South Africa v Pakistan
Third Test, Day Three
(2nd & 3rd Session)
Live at 6:30 pm

Primera Liga
Barcelona v Celta Vigo
Live at 11:55 pm

STAR Sports

Australian Open
Mixed Doubles Finals
Live at 11:00 am

Men's Singles Final
Live at 2:00 pm

FA Cup

Chelsea v Nottingham Forest
Live at 7:55 pm

Arsenal v Bolton Wanderers
Live at 10:00 pm

Primera Liga
Real Betis v Valencia
Live at 1:55 am (Monday)



Premier Division Cricket League

Old DOHS v Brothers Union
Venue: BKSP

Biman v City Club
Venue: Fatullah Cricket Stadium

Mohammedan v Abahani
Venue: Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium



Michel Platini

(French football legend)

"Today it's a great triumph for me, but I won't be doing any lap of honour. I am just happy to be representing European football. It is the start of a great adventure."

After he was elected UEFA president.



PHOTOS: ANISUR RAHMAN

Ansar & VDP fans (R) were cheerful throughout but it was Dhaka (L) who had the last laugh as they won by 34 runs on the opening day of the first-ever women's cricket championship at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

Giants unafraid of Mirpur Abahani face Mohammedan challenge

SPORTS REPORTER



Abahani aim to consolidate their place in the Kai-Altech Premier Cricket League when the table-toppers take on archrivals and second-placed Mohammedan Sporting Club in a crucial seventh round match today.

In other matches, third-placed DOHS meet bottom-table Brothers Union at BKSP while Bangladesh Biman face City Club at Fatullah Stadium in a mid-table battle.

Abahani, the only unbeaten side, will also seek revenge of their Twenty20 League's group-stage defeat to eventual champions Mohammedan but eyebrows have already been raised in the authority's decision to host the mega-clash at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur.

Due to newly prepared pitches, Mirpur has been producing low-scoring matches throughout the

season with 177 being the highest team total so far. The record, however, goes to Mohammedan.

Abahani coach Aminul Islam, a former Bangladesh captain, also raised the question about holding a prospectively attractive match at this ground.

"I am worried about the wicket because batting would be difficult here. I can't think why the league committee has decided to hold a big match like Abahani-Mohammedan at this ground," Aminul questioned.

The two captains, also successors to Aminul in the national team, however, did not bother about conditions saying that both sides would face similar problems.

"I am not concerned about the wicket. Its relatively new so it would be hard to score runs," said Habibul Bashar whose Mohammedan have suffered their only league defeat, to Biman, at this venue.

"It is an important match for us because if we lose, Abahani will

open up a big lead in the table. I think our strengths are almost equal but Abahani have a very strong bowling and have won all their matches so far. So it would be a tight game," said Bashar, who missed the last game through a stomach upset.

It would be the last match for all national cricketers as they leave Dhaka for the Zimbabwe tour on January 31 and begin World Cup preparations after their return.

"I know it would be a long time when we come back to the league but if the players are busy playing domestic competitions, the attraction of the league will not be hampered much," the national captain added.

Even the authority does not know when the Super League will start after the 11-round first-leg ends in February.

With Sandeep Sharma gone back to India after playing just one match, Mohammedan will be

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PHOTO: AFP

Indian cricketer Robin Uthappa whips the ball on the on-side during the third one-day international between India and West Indies at the Chidambaram Stadium in Chennai yesterday.

WI defy after Robin blitz

Cricket

AFP, Chennai

Young opener Robin Uthappa hit a robust 70 off 42 balls as India made 268 all out in the third one-day international against the West Indies here on Saturday.

Captain Rahul Dravid scored 57 and senior pro Sachin Tendulkar returned to form with 60 after West Indian captain Brian Lara elected to field in the day-night game at the Chidambaram Stadium.

India, leading 2-0 in the four-match series, were cruising at 232-3 in the 35th over when the tourists bounced back with seven wickets for 36 runs.

Seamer Dwayne Bravo, hampered for 19 runs by Uthappa in his first over, grabbed four wickets for 20 runs in his next eight to lead the West Indian fightback.

Uthappa, a 21-year-old playing only his fourth one-dayer, enhanced his World Cup claims by smashing 11 boundaries and two sixes in his first appearance in the series.

The right-hander reached his half-century off 32 balls by lofting rookie all-rounder Reyad Emrit for a six and celebrated the landmark with the run feast off Bravo.

When Uthappa fell in the 11th over, holing out in the deep off Chris Gayle, he had contributed 70 runs in India's total of 95-2.

Tendulkar, one-day cricket's most successful batsman with

14,568 runs and 40 hundreds before this match, finally hit form after making just 202 runs in his last 10 innings.

Both Tendulkar and Dravid hit their 75th one-day half-centuries in a fourth-wicket stand of 106 before falling in the space of five runs to trigger the collapse.

Bravo, who removed Tendulkar to a catch in the deep, dismissed Yuvraj Singh and Dinesh Karthik in three balls and then took the last wicket of Shanthakumaran Sreesanth.

India's selectors, not hesitating to change and chop in a bid to arrive at the perfect World Cup combination, rested Sourav Ganguly, Harbhajan Singh, Mahendra Dhoni and Zaheer Khan for the match.

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B. League bosses still sleeping

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) may defer the start of the B. League by a day or two if the sponsors demand.

The BFF's main headache remains to get a sponsor for the inaugural Professional Football League scheduled to kick off on February 15, but the governing body of the game expected to strike a deal within two-three days, it was discussed in an executive meeting of the federation yesterday.

BFF's communications manager Sayeed Al Fatah told The Daily Star last night after the meeting that the sponsors, in a bid to get more exposure, might be interested to delay the start of the league and the BFF is ready to meet that demand.

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SA need 161

BBC ONLINE, undated

South Africa were set 161 to win the third Test and series after bowling Pakistan out for 186 on Day Two at Newlands on Saturday.

That target could have been smaller after Dale Steyn took three wickets to reduce the tourists to 121 for seven.

But Mohammad Sami (31) and Shahid Nazir (27) added 55 brisk runs to boost the total before Jacques Kallis got both.

WI on course

SPORTS REPORTER

West Indies are just 56 short of a well-earned win as stylish batsman Marlon Samuels closes in on a hundred with skipper Lara in support. They were 212 for three in the 32nd over with both batsmen going great guns.

Pakistan cracking fast

Cricket

AFP, Cape Town

Pakistan were struggling to set a challenging target as wickets continued to fall on the second day of the decisive third and final Test against South Africa at Newlands Saturday.

Pakistan were 117 for six in their second innings at tea, an overall lead of 91, in an extraordinary match in which 26 wickets had fallen for 457 runs.

Pakistan captain Inzamamul Haq carried his team's hopes as the last remaining recognised batsman after Dale Steyn and Andrew Hall took two wickets each for South Africa. Inzamam was 19 not out.

South African wicketkeeper Mark Boucher earlier batted aggressively as South Africa squeezed out a slender first innings lead.

Boucher hit an unbeaten 40 as South Africa made 183 all out, a

lead of 26, on a pitch which has helped pace and spin bowlers.

South Africa, resuming on 131 for five, were soon in trouble when Ashwell Prince was given out in the third over with only two runs added.

Prince was beaten by a Danish Kaneria googly and it seemed that wicketkeeper Kamran Akmal had missed his second stumping chance against the left-hander.

The ball bounced off Akmal's gloves and Yasir Hameed dived forward from silly point to catch it. Umpire Steve Bucknor gave Prince out caught to the batsman's undisguised surprise. Replays suggested Prince had missed the ball.

Two balls later nightwatchman Paul Harris edged Mohammad Asif to Younis Khan at second slip and South Africa had lost two wickets for two runs.

Andrew Hall was quickly caught behind off Kaneria for four but Steyn stayed with Boucher long enough for 43 runs to be added for the ninth

wicket.

Boucher went on the attack after a quiet start in which only 18 runs were scored off the first 11 overs, hitting three fours, a two and a straight six in an over from Asif which cost 22 runs. The over included two no-balls.

Boucher slammed Kaneria over midwicket for six in the next over but the partnership was ended when Boucher tried to steal a single off the fifth ball of an over from Mohammad Sami, who replaced Asif.

Boucher dabbed the ball towards third man but Younis Khan chased it from slip and hit the stumps at the batsman's end to run out Steyn.

Boucher did not get a chance to face again because last man Makhaya Ntini was out first ball, leg before to Sami.

Boucher made his runs off 36 balls with five fours and two sixes. Kaneria, bowling into a large

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Stephen glorifies Lou

Cricket

AFP, Perth

New Zealand captain Stephen Fleming is confident recalled opener Lou Vincent can once again rise to the occasion against Australia when the two sides meet here on Sunday.

Vincent, who has played 87 limited-overs internationals and spent his teenage years in Adelaide, has flown to Perth to join the New Zealand squad in the wake of Nathan Astle's shock retirement.

The right-hander, who was born in Australia, is expected to open the batting alongside Fleming in Sunday's triangular series one-day

international and should have fond memories of the WACA ground.

It was at the WACA that Vincent made his Test debut in late 2001, scoring a century against Australia to launch a career that has not quite reached the heights that innings suggested.

Fleming said although Astle's retirement was a blow, Vincent was a capable replacement.

"It changes the fabric," Fleming said of Astle's departure.

"But you get Lou in, who has got skills to offer, and he's experienced."

"Not the experience that Nathan has got, but he has played against these guys quite a bit. He has opened the batting for New Zealand a lot."

"He has worked hard after

getting a setback at home and he is coming into form, which is a positive sign."

Astle's departure also increases the pressure on Fleming, who has himself been battling for form in the tri-series.

However, Fleming believes he and Vincent can form a successful partnership at the top of the order.

"My view is that I obviously need to get the majority of the runs, being the experienced player, and I haven't done that so far," he said.

"Lou can create a strike-rate with the way he plays and if he comes off then it makes my job easier."

The Kiwis are contemplating resting injury-plagued speedster Shane Bond for Sunday's game,

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