



Did U Know?

Alec Bedser, the former England fast bowler, is the only bowler to dismiss Don Bradman for a duck on more than one occasion.



Luca Pancalli
(Italian Football Federation chief commissioner)
"Enough is enough. Violence is everywhere, but violence in the stadiums connected to a game -- I find that truly unacceptable."
Inciting his intentions to eradicate violence from soccer after the Catania tragedy last Friday.

Women's cricket final today

SPORTS REPORTER

Khulna clash with regional rivals Bhola in the final of the first ever Women's Cricket Championship at the Mirpur Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium today.

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) president Abdul Aziz will witness the final and distribute trophies as chief guest.

On their way to the final, Khulna crushed Jahangirnagar University by 113 runs while Bhola snatched a three-wicket win over Dhaka in the semifinals.

Dhaka Bank Jr tennis from today

SPORT REPORTER

The Dhaka Bank 21st Bangladesh International Junior Tennis Championships (Group 3) will begin in Dhaka today.

A total of 100 boys and 48 girls from 23 countries will take part in the 8-day event, told the organisers at a press conference at the Bangladesh tennis Federation yesterday.

Already, the Group-4 competition has been hosted at BKSP while the Group-3 Rajshahi-leg was completed yesterday.

Dhaka Bank and co-sponsors Qatar Airways will provide Tk 5 lakh and Tk 91,000 respectively out of the total 7-lakh taka budget.

The qualifying rounds of the singles will be held today while the main draw starts tomorrow.

My form is back: Irfan

PTI, Vadodara

Irfan Pathan claims he has rediscovered his form and rhythm after playing in domestic matches and hoped to do well in the forthcoming World Cup.

"I played in three Ranji Trophy matches after being rested from the Indian team. I bowled 109 overs and picked 15 wickets," Pathan told PTI.

"I have got my form back, and also the rhythm. I am fully prepared now. Getting back into the Indian team is always tough. But I was mentally tough." The Baroda left-arm seamer was sent home from the tour of South Africa after a prolonged form slump.

The 22-year old answered the selectors with a stunning performance in the Ranji Trophy semifinal against Mumbai when he picked a five-wicket haul, reducing the opponents to none for five in the course of his new ball spell, in the second innings.

Bashar hits form



SPORTS REPORTER

Nothing could have been better than the way Habibul Bashar began his campaign in Zimbabwe by leading his side from the front to a 45-run victory in the first one-dayer of the four-match series at the Harare Sports Club ground yesterday.

It was the Tiger's eighth consecutive win against their southern African opponents but considering their previous tour experience this first match success was very crucial for the Tigers to fulfil their mission of beating the Africans in their own den.

This time Bashar's men made no mistake to take the early advantage and continue their supremacy over the hosts.

Smarting under the heartbreaking 3-2 away defeat in July-August last year, the 34-year old Bangladesh skipper had promised to maintain a cautious approach towards their opponents unlike the last trip and set an individual target to make a big score. Both his desires were fulfilled in the first game when his side rode on his career best 78 and 68 by young Sakib Al Hasan to post a challenging total of 260-9 on the board before wrapping up their opponents for 215 runs in 48 overs.

For Bangladesh leading pacesman Mashrafe-bin-Mortuza, who had the nightmare of conceding 17

runs in a over in the last tour which had played a decisive role in his side's series defeat, it was a remarkable start as his searing spell of 4-31 in 9 overs helped the tourists to shoot out the home team.

There was whisperings from certain quarters about Bashar's one-day fortunes but his innings definitely pointed towards the fact



BASHAR ... 78

that he has still the ability to serve his side with the World Cup knocking at the door. The Tiger's skipper however got a half-century after 13 matches following his 70 against Australia at Fatullah in April last year.

On way to his thirteenth half-century in 95 matches, Bashar who has significantly changed his batting

style by checking his favourite pull shots, smote seven boundaries from 87 deliveries to eclipse his previous best of 74 also against the same opponents in 2001 at the same venue.

He was dropped by bowler Gary Brent but it ultimately did not turn out to be expensive for the home side as he was on 70.

Put into bat by home skipper Prosper Utseya the visitors were reduced to 93-3 following the dismissal of Mehrab Hossain (12), Shahriar Nafees (34) and Aftab Ahmed (31). But Bashar joined his young partner Sakib to set the platform for a big total associating 105 runs in a fourth wicket stand.

It was none but the 19-year old Sakib who once again showed why he is considered as a very dependable player in the middle order as the left-handed batsman scored a 74-ball 68 that featured six boundaries. The young all-rounder was not only successful with his willow by making his second fifty after an unbeaten 67 against Sri Lanka in the ICC Champions Trophy in 15 appearances but also lent his support with his left-arm spin to take two wickets for 37 runs in 10 overs.

Coach Dav Whatmore must be relieved with his top order's batting in the first game but his tail-enders' performance was hardly encouraging as a mini-collapse saw them fall

SEE PAGE 18 COL 2

Ricky leads from front



AFP, Melbourne

Ricky Ponting continued his superb summer with a century to lift Australia to victory over New Zealand in their triangular series one-day international at the MCG here on Sunday.

Set 291 to win, the Australians looked in deep trouble at 3-112, but man-of-the-match Ponting and Brad Hodge, who finished on 99 not out, came together and led their side in a record run-chase at the ground, winning with 10 balls to spare.

In reply to New Zealand's 290 for seven, Australia finished on 291 for five as the Black Caps' frustrating run of narrow losses to the Australians continued.

The Australians have now won 20 of their past 22 matches against their near neighbours.

Ponting and Hodge put on 154 for the fourth wicket to turn on its head a game that appeared at New Zealand's mercy.

The skipper eventually fell for 104, made from 113 balls with six fours and one six, but Hodge guided the Australians home.

While Ponting, back from a hip injury, continued his imperious form and did not give a genuine chance in scoring his seventh one-day international hundred at the MCG until he was caught, Hodge was the surprise packet as he played for his career on his home ground.

Given another chance at international level only because of the injury to Andrew Symonds, Hodge was on his last chance and started nervously.

However, he blossomed as his partnership with Ponting developed and played himself into World Cup contention.

He and Ponting needed more than eight runs an over at one stage, but remained calm under pressure as the Kiwis started to wilt

and lost control of their bowling.

Hodge's first 17 runs were all singles, but then he started to find the boundary and faced just 86 balls, hitting seven fours and one six and fittingly scoring the winning runs.

Ponting said he had faith Hodge could do the job.

"I've never had any doubts about Hodge's abilities or capabilities," Ponting said.

"He took over through the middle of that innings really.

"His last 70 must have come off

40 balls or something, so it's a match-winning knock under pressure."

"I think he can definitely keep doing that for us there."

The result means the winner of Tuesday's clash between New Zealand and England will face Australia in the tri-series finals.

The run chase came after Black Caps opener Lou Vincent backed up his tough talk with a superb 90 to lay the foundation for New

SEE PAGE 18 COL 6



PHOTO: AFP

Australian captain Ricky Ponting drives on the up during his match-winning 104 against New Zealand in the Commonwealth Bank series at the Melbourne Cricket Ground yesterday.

Indira winners as Kalabagan walk out

SPORTS REPORTER

Indira Road Krira Chakra recorded their second victory in the Kai-Altech Premier Cricket League under controversial circumstances when they were declared winners by 37 runs after Kalabagan Krira Chakra refused to play in protest of biased umpiring during yesterday's match.

In reply to Indira's 212-9, Kalabagan reached 175-9 when play was stopped at the Fatullah Stadium.

The last Kalabagan pair came out of the field when Ashiqur Rahman, an Indira Road player, allegedly told rival batsman Mahmuduzzaman to play on without any fuss because they (Kalabagan) were certain (!) to lose, according to a Kalabagan official.

The Kalabagan players and officials complained that one of the two umpires, Rafiqul Islam John whose umpiring has been severely criticised this season, gave at least two contentious run-out decisions against Kalabagan out of three.

John is reportedly in the pocket of a major Premiership side who, as a reward of his favours in the field last season, arranged a tour of Europe for the umpire.

Former national paceman Ziaul Islam Masud, the other umpire, tried to bring Kalabagan back without any avail.

The league committee imposed a Tk 10,000 fine on Kalabagan following the match referee's report.

SCORES IN BRIEF

INDIRA ROAD: 212-9 in 50 overs (Rajesh 36, Ashiqur 24, Rasel 36, Mehdi 1, Sumon Barua 35, Mawla 29, Hamidul 17, Younus 6, Ariful 1, Sumon Shah 1, Tariqul 2 n.o., extras 24, Mahmuduzzaman 3-38, Salahuddin 3-53, Nahidul 2-35, Rashedul 1-33).

KALABAGAN: 175-9 in 44.2 overs (Uttam 29, Arman 10, Mahbubul 13, Rahman 8, Shahbaz 0, Nahidul 33, Salahuddin 13, Monirul 21, Rashedul 17 n.o., Kangkan 16, Mahmuduzzaman 0 n.o., extras 15, Sumon Shah 2-34, Ariful 1-37, Younus 3-33, Tariqul 1-28).

Result: Indira won by 37 runs.

Dilip backs all-round options

PTI, Mumbai

Chairman of cricket selectors Dilip Vengsarkar believes all-rounders will hold the key to success at the upcoming World Cup, and Irfan Pathan and Mahendra Singh Dhoni could lend balance to the Indian middle order.

In what could be music to Pathan's ears, Vengsarkar said the 22-year old, subject to his inclusion in the squad, coming in at number seven will strengthen the lower order batting and will also allow the team to play five specialist bowlers.

"India has an advantage with a wicketkeeper-batsman like Mahendra Singh Dhoni batting at No. 6 and Irfan Pathan at No. 7. (But) this is all subject to selection on 12th February (when the World Cup squad is to be picked)," Vengsarkar told PTI in an exclusive interview.

"The conditions in West Indies are similar to those in India.

"However, the importance of having all-rounders in the squad is crucial in one-day cricket, for not only the batting line-up gets the

SEE PAGE 18 COL 1



PHOTO: STAR

Rajin Saleh of Partex celebrates upon reaching his hundred against Abahani in the Kai-Altech Premier League match at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium yesterday.

Tons always don't win matches

SPORTS REPORTER



Partex captain Rajin Saleh scored his second century in the Kai-Altech Premier Cricket League yesterday but his lone battle was not enough to halt Abahani's amazing winning run.

Abahani's four-wicket victory -- their ninth in as many games -- at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur ensured that they will start atop the Super League table.

Abahani, who toppled Partex's moderate 190-7 with seven balls to spare in a curtailed 48-overs a-side match, have opened up an unsailable first-leg lead of four points.

In a contrasting fortune, young opener Rabiul Karim ended up for the winning side after his second hundred in the league guided Young Pegasus to a comprehensive seven-wicket win against City Club at the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium.

After nine rounds, Abahani were on 18 points, followed by

Mohammedan and Victoria (both 14 points) at second place, Sonargaon (12), Biman, DOHS (10), Pegasus (8), Kalabagan, Partex (6), City, Indira (4) and Brothers (2).

ABAHANI-PARTEX

Out-of-favour Bangladesh international Rajin made exactly 100 not out in 128 balls but inserted Partex failed to make much of his efforts against a very tidy attack.

Rajin, also an ex-national vice-captain, lost partners at regular intervals after a sedate 43-run opening stand in 12 overs when Talha Jubair ran havoc.

The first-change Abahani seamer finished with 3-43 after the new ball pair failed to hit the inroads and later received good support from the spin trio o restrict the opposition to a modest total.

Rajin, who made 112 against Pegasus, hit nine fours and one six in his unconquered knock.

Abahani, on way to 194-6, did not have an easy ride, though. When it seemed that Nazimuddin and Naeem Islam's 111-run partnership for the third wicket would all but secure victory, the leaders suffered

a hiccup losing four wickets in the space of 31 runs.

Coming together at 47-2, one-down Nazim and number four Naeem both made half-centuries to swing the match Abahani's way. But quick dismissals of Naeem (57 off 75 balls), out-of-form captain Khaled Mashud (1), Sri Lankan import Sajith Fernando (7) and Shuvo (2) put pressure.

Nazim, however, kept his poise to complete the job with an undefeated 84 off 123 deliveries with help of nine hits to the fence that earned him the man-of-the-match award. The winning runs, however, came from Ziaur Rahman's bat when he whacked rival paceman Shirhan Sharif for a six over midwicket.

CITY-PEGASUS

Promising right-handed opener Rabiul, who had scored his maiden Premiership ton against Abahani, gave the Pegasus chase momentum after an early loss while chasing City's challenging 259 all out.

SEE PAGE 18 COL 5



PHOTO: AFP

South Africa batsman Mark Boucher crashes one through the covers during his blistering 78 in the first one-day international against Pakistan at the SuperSport Park in Johannesburg yesterday.

Proteas punish Pakistan



AFP, Centurion

South Africa went on a batting rampage to set up a comprehensive 164-run win over Pakistan in the first one-day international at Centurion Park Sunday.

South Africa hammered 392 for six after being sent in and then bowled out the tourists for 228.

To add to a miserable day for Pakistan, Shahid Afridi risked disciplinary action when he prodded his bat at a barracking spectator as he walked up the steps to the dressing room after being dismissed.

South Africa's innings was built on two century partnerships at far better than a run a ball on an excellent batting pitch.

Captain Graeme Smith (72) and AB de Villiers (67) gave South Africa an explosive start, putting on 140 off 112 balls for the first wicket.

But that was made to seem relatively pedestrian as Jacques Kallis (88 not out) and Mark Boucher

(78) thrashed 128 off 66 balls for the fifth wicket, with Boucher making his runs off just 38 balls.

It was the seventh highest total in one-day internationals and the highest conceded by Pakistan, whose previous worst was 363 for seven by England at Nottingham in 1992.

The Pakistan bowlers took a pounding and made their situation worse by sending down 16 wides and nine no-balls.

Pakistan's batsmen went for their shots in search of an unlikely victory but four wickets fell in the first 12 overs.

Mohammad Yousuf made a stroke-filled 39 off 25 balls as he and captain Inzamamul Haq put on 49 for the fifth wicket. But both men were out in the space of four balls with the total on 119.

Pakistan slid to 125 for eight and were in danger of suffering the biggest defeat by a margin of runs in one-day internationals before Shoaib Malik and Mohammad Sami reduced the deficit below the 256 runs by which Australia beat Namibia in Potchefstroom during

the 2003 World Cup.

With the intensity out of the match, Malik and Sami put on 73 for the ninth wicket off a pedestrian 119 balls, with Malik making an unbeaten 52 and Sami a career-best 46.

Smith and De Villiers gave South Africa a flying start before the introduction of spin in the 19th over brought two wickets and a slowing down of the scoring rate.

Smith charged down the pitch and was stumped by Kamran Akmal off the second ball from off-spinner Mohammad Hafeez after bludgeoning 72 off 47 balls.

The South African captain hit 15 boundaries, including six in succession off Navedul Hasan, who conceded 27 runs in a nightmare over which included two wides and a no-ball.

Smith's innings followed his unbeaten 70 off 40 balls in Twenty20 international at the Wanderers in Johannesburg Friday.

Boucher thrashed nine fours and four sixes.

Mohammad Asif, the most

impressive Pakistan bowler in an opening spell in which he conceded 33 runs off eight overs, gave up 28 runs in his only other over, including two sixes and two fours by Boucher, a four by Kallis and two no-balls. It was the joint third most runs in an over in one-day internationals.

Hafeez and Razzaq both conceded 22 runs in a single over as the batsmen cut loose.

Inzamam returned to the side after recovering from a back injury. His decision to send South Africa in was based on a good record for teams chasing targets at Centurion but Pakistan were required to beat their own highest score in one-day internationals, 371 for nine against Sri Lanka in Nairobi in 1996-97.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard in the first one-day international between South Africa and Pakistan at Centurion Park on Sunday:

SEE PAGE 18 COL 1