



Participants of the Grameenphone Pacer Hunt programme enter the Chittagong Divisional Stadium on Wednesday.

79mph highest for the day!

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Chittagong

Iqbal Hasan Ronny notched up the highest speed of 79mph on the first day of the GrameenPhone Pacer Hunt campaign that got underway at the Chittagong Divisional Stadium yesterday.

Besides the Noakhali lad only local boy Mozammel Haque Robin hit a speed beyond 70mph out of around 500 aspirants who took part on the first day of the three-day campaign in the port city.

Robin, who plays under-19 cricket for the Chittagong District team, came up hitting the 73-mph mark on the speedometer.

A total of around 1,400 youth registered their names for the three-day selection and screening sessions supervised by former fast bowler Sarwar Imran, who was aided by Golam Faruk Suru.

Earlier in the day, GrameenPhone Chief Marketing Officer Stein Naevdal formally inaugurated the programme, second of its kind after two years.

SUB-JUNIOR CHESS Majumdar takes solo lead

SPORTS REPORTER

Aniruddha Majumdar of St. Joseph School took solo lead in the 27th National Sub-Junior Chess Championship when he secured the maximum five points after winning his fifth round board against Sharif Hossain at the federation hall-room yesterday.

Sharif, Rezaul Islam Babu, Siddique Rahman, Abdullah Al Saif, Abir, Old Bin Manzil and Mahmudul Hasan followed the leader with four points each.

Meanwhile, the BASIC Bank 28th National Junior Chess Championship will begin on February 12.

DU Sports Saturday

SPORTS REPORTER

The annual sports competition of Rokeya Hall of Dhaka University will be held on Saturday at their own ground.

The interested students have been asked to be in contact with the office.

Bangladesh

FROM PAGE 17 only bright presence for the hosts, who twice threatened to score from long range in the second half.

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Bangladesh coach Abu Yusuf complained that his boys did not follow instructions.

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TEAMS

Hong Kong: Jian, Tong, Lin, Li, Wu, Yip (Chun), Leung, Wai, Sham (Cheng), Chan (Ming) and Kwok.

Bangladesh: Himel, Auroop, Zahirul, Ariful, Waly, Zahid Hossain, Maruf (Mamun), Sharif (Nasir), Zahid Parvez, Ujjal (Robin) and Emily.

Aragnes cleared

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October 2004 when he was heard in a training session telling striker Jose Antonio Reyes that he was better than "that black shit," referring to the Spaniard's Arsenal teammate Henry.

The 68-year-old Aragnes was originally fined 3,000 euros for behaviour "contrary to the good order of the sport" by the RFEF.

The offence was upgraded to "conduct which could be considered to be racist" by the government-run CEDD and both Aragnes and the RFEF successfully appealed against that decision to the Spanish court.

The RFEF were unable to say, however, whether Aragnes would still have to pay the fine for the original charge.

"My lawyer told me this morning," Aragnes told Cadena Ser radio late on Tuesday. "I went to court because it was a stain on my reputation and because the offence did not exist as some judges believed."

Aragnes initially apologised after widespread criticism of his behaviour, saying he had not meant to offend anyone and that his conscience was clear.

He stirred further controversy, however, by mounting an energetic defence of his comments before a friendly against England in November 2004.

That match in Madrid was marred by racist abuse of England's black players by sections of the crowd.

Vaughan worries England

Cricket

AFP, Brisbane

A resurgent England will again sweat on the fitness of inspirational captain Michael Vaughan for Friday's first triangular series against Australia at the MCG.

Reports that Vaughan's hamstring injury was still troubling him came as England also revealed that fast bowling duo Jon Lewis and Chris Tremlett were heading home because of injury.

Few expected the English to make the tri-series finals after their horror tour, during which they have lost all five Test matches and all limited-overs games against the Australians, bar their unexpected win on February 2.

But Vaughan's astute leadership in the final qualifying game against New Zealand on Tuesday lifted them off the canvas and gave them the chance to gain some revenge for their Ashes whitewash in the best-of-three finals series.

However, Vaughan, who had missed the previous five games because of a hamstring strain, admitted he felt the injury in the field during the latter stages of the New Zealand innings.

Vaughan said he expected to play on Friday, but conceded his fitness was an issue.

"It's a little touch and go," he said here on Tuesday.

"I'll work with (physio) Dean (Conway) and hopefully be fine for Friday."

If Vaughan is unavailable it will be a huge blow to the English, even though he made a duck against the Black Caps.

His presence as a captain

steadied the English when they were under pressure, with his bowling changes pivotal to the result, and also allowed all-rounder Andrew Flintoff the freedom to concentrate on his bowling.

Should Vaughan be unavailable, Flintoff would have to take over the reins again.

"I think the lads have to take the last two performances and take the momentum from the last two games," he said.

"If we can reproduce that sort of performance then we can put Australia under pressure."

"We want to win the finals and we want to end the tour on a good note."

He said the English, who have also been lifted by the form of Liam Plunkett with the ball, were capable of improving greatly on their performance against New Zealand.

"We were patchy at times, which is even more of a positive," he said.

"We've beaten a very good New Zealand team having not played our best cricket."

Should Vaughan miss out, opener Mal Lye would be expected to slot back into the side at the top of the order.

With Symonds missing, Australia have turned to injury-prone all-rounder Shane Watson, who will be under great pressure to both perform and prove his fitness as the World Cup looms.

Bowlers Shaun Tait and Stuart Clark have been dropped from the Australian squad, with Watson's return offering another pace bowling option.

Having made an unbeaten 99 against the Black Caps, the unlucky Brad Hodge could be squeezed out by the return of Watson.

Captaincy hurts Flintoff

Cricket

BBC ONLINE, undated

England coach Duncan Fletcher says Andrew Flintoff is much happier without the burden of captaincy in Australia.

The all-rounder struggled as he led his team to Ashes defeat but his bowling has improved in the one-day matches.

Michael Vaughan has captained in three of the nine games so far and Fletcher has noticed a difference in Flintoff.

"We feel when he's not captain he feels a little bit freer, his bowling is a lot more confident and there's a weight off his shoulders," he explained.

"He seems a lot more relaxed. Anyone who's not captain of the

side would be a little bit more relaxed.

"I don't think there's a captain who goes in there and feels very relaxed when he's leading his country."

Vaughan has been struggling with a hamstring injury during the triangular one-day series and is doubtful for the first match in the best-of-three finals against Australia on Friday.

He felt sore after Tuesday's win over New Zealand and will be reassessed on Thursday.

England name their final 15-man squad for the World Cup next week and there have been suggestions that Vaughan should be left out for fitness and tactical reasons.

But Fletcher said: "He's captaining England successfully and is a very important factor for us."

"Strauss is very inexperienced and to come out here and captain in Australia is a very difficult job," he insisted.

"You always worry with Michael

because that experience is immense."

Flintoff was one of the keys to England's 2-1 Ashes triumph in 2005, when Vaughan was skipper, scoring 402 runs and taking 24 wickets.

But as captain in the 2006-07 series he managed 254 runs in five Tests -- all of which his team lost -- and claimed only 11 wickets, although he only returned to action in the Champions Trophy in November following ankle surgery on the summer.

Some critics had argued that opening batsman Andrew Strauss should have been put in charge but Fletcher refused to accept they had made a mistake.

"Strauss is very inexperienced and to come out here and captain in Australia is a very difficult job," he insisted.

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Umpires, in a little while, found one of them under the advertising board. Brothers' supporters then threatened their own players, most of whom live in the club tent in Gopibagh. The players, some of them ex-national players, were worried to say the least.

More than players' security, the ancient and immature mentality of clubs was exposed in Dhamrai yesterday. Any number of players could have been hurt due to their inexperience, thinking that too at a Premier League match. The match referee left with the umpires, without mentioning the match decision, with anxiousness in their face.

The match events were derailed and Partex were declared winners by eight runs as per Duckworth-Lewis method.

Earlier, Brothers scored 244 for six to which Partex were in striking distance of a win with their score on 239 for six in 48.2 overs.

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Bangladesh coach Abu Yusuf complained that his boys did not follow instructions.

"They forgot about the briefing and were too attacking. It resulted in a midfield collapse," the frustrated coach said.

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