

LOCAL SNIPS

SPORTS REPORTER

Tarek cracked 92 to steer Azad Sporting Club to a comprehensive six-wicket win over Bangladesh Boys in the Kai-Altech First Division Cricket League at the Dhamondi Cricket Stadium yesterday.

Although Tarek missed a deserving hundred, his side raced to 240-4 with more than five overs to spare after restricting the opposition to 239-9 in 50 overs, built around Arifur's 95.

In other matches, Rupali Bank (192-7) inflicted a three-wicket defeat on Dhaka Wanderers (190), Uttara SC (300-8) handed a 27-run defeat to Dhamondi Club while Lalimata Club (219-7) snatched a three-wicket win over Orient SC (218-9).

BKSP CUP

Hosts BKSP got off to a bright start in the BKSP Cup (Under-20) basketball tournament when they dumped BAF Shaheen College 76-13 at their home ground. Shaheen lost their second match too when they went down 87-17 to Notre Dame College. In other games, Green Herald beat Notre Dame 73-57 and St Gregory's defeated Chittagong Basketball Training School 97-65.

NAVY HOCKEY

BNS Haji Mohsin clinched the Bangladesh Navy Hockey Championship when they defeated BNS Issa Khan by a solitary goal at the Sailors Colony playground in Dhaka. SN Malakar of BNS Haji Mohsin was adjudged the player of the 5-day meet. Commodore Jasim Uddin Bhuiyan distributed prizes on the final day as chief guest.

Woolmer may stay put

REUTERS, Kingston

Bob Woolmer could stay on as Pakistan coach beyond his current contract which expires in June, the country's cricket board chairman said on Wednesday.

Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) chief Nasim Ashraf said he planned to discuss Englishman Woolmer's future after the World Cup.

Asked by Reuters if he thought Woolmer would extend his deal, Ashraf said: "I would not rule it out."

"Bob is contracted until June 30 as are the other members of our team management. We will sit down and discuss everything."

"I have had nothing but the greatest confidence in Bob Woolmer as a coach."

"Everything needs to be decided after this World Cup and it all depends on how we do here."

Pakistan suffered a 54-run defeat by hosts West Indies on Tuesday but are expected to qualify for the Super Eights as the other two teams in Group D are Ireland and Zimbabwe.

Anderson now breaks finger

AFP, Gros Islet

England suffered a World Cup setback on Wednesday when it was confirmed that fast bowler James Anderson had broken a finger.

The Lancashire quick, 24, fractured the little finger on his right bowling hand during fielding practice, just two days away from the crucial Group C clash against New Zealand.

"James Anderson has fractured the little finger on his right hand. He will be reassessed on Thursday," said an England team statement.

Anderson, one of England's more experienced one-day bowlers, is vying for a place in the attack with Jon Lewis, Sajid Mahmood and Liam Plunkett.

He came home early from the one-day series in Australia last month with a suspected recurrence of a back injury which had sidelined him for most of last season.

It's elementary

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tour the Netherlands in 1891.

It must have been a worthwhile experience for the writer as he went on to play 10 matches for MCC, eight of them at Lord's. He only took one wicket in his career but it was memorable - dismissing WG Grace for 110.

The first club in the Netherlands was formed in Utrecht by students from both The Netherlands and the Cape Colony in 1856.

Despite those historic social and political links with South Africa, the Dutch, who conceded a world record of 443-9 last year in a mauling by Sri Lanka, will find it hard to stop the South Africans.

But they are determined to give it a go.

"We'll be out to prove that we belong," said captain Luke van Troost.

"We will be playing for our pride. Our first priority will be to beat Scotland, but we also want to do well against Australia and South Africa."



PHOTO: AFP

Pakistan all-rounder Shahid Afridi gives his autograph on a small bat for a fan at a hotel lobby in Kingston on Wednesday.

'Hard work will save Pak'

AFP, Kingston



ICC Cricket World Cup
WEST INDIES 2007

Pakistan coach Bob Woolmer pledged his team would put in the 'hard yards' to salvage their World Cup campaign which suffered a setback at the hands of the West Indies in the tournament opener.

The West Indies won the Group D clash at Sabina Park by 54 runs leaving Pakistan, the 1992 champions, needing to ensure their place in the second round Super Eights by beating Zimbabwe and Ireland.

Victory on Tuesday also gave the hosts a crucial two points to take through to the Super Eights stage.

"It was our goal to take the two points through but we now will have to do the hard yards," said Woolmer.

"The first goal is to get into the Super Eights and then let's see what happens from there."

Pakistan's build-up to the World

Cup has been dogged by problems.

Pace spearheads Shoaib Akhtar and Mohammad Asif, who were both at the centre of a doping scandal, were ruled out on the eve of the tournament because of injury. Experienced all-rounder Abdul Razzaq also limped out of contention.

But Pakistan would have fancied their chances of victory on Tuesday after restricting the West Indies to a modest 241 in their 50 overs.

Woolmer admitted his team's batting just wasn't up to scratch.

"Our batting was disappointing because the West Indies bowled with great discipline and we struggled to get on top," said the coach.

"But like all games there were a number of crucial moments.

Ramnaresh Sarwan (49) and Marlon Samuels (63) were two important innings although I thought generally we bowled and fielded well.

"There is some pressure on us now, but we will regroup and come back for the next match."

remain positive for the rest of the tournament."

Pakistan face debutants Ireland on Saturday and Woolmer said he was impressed by what he saw when they had South Africa struggling at 92-8 in a warm-up last week before the world number one team recovered to claim a narrow victory.

"I have watched Ireland and I have been impressed by their discipline in the games against South Africa and Canada. I will watch them on Thursday (when the Irish face Zimbabwe) again after our practice."

Earlier Wednesday, Pakistan skipper Inzamamul Haq blamed his experienced batsmen for the demoralising defeat to the West Indies and demanded they come good in the remaining matches.

"Our middle order is a very experienced batting line-up and we should have taken more responsibility in the opening game of the tournament," said Inzamam.

"There is some pressure on us now, but we will regroup and come back for the next match."

build on his performance in the World Cup opener.

The captain has hammered home that he is a vital member of the side with the bat in the lower order, where he can slug valuable runs, and with the ball in support of the frontline bowlers.

"His performance was excellent, and he knows that, and from here what he wants to do is build on it, not just sit back and think I've started well and that's it," said the coach.

"We've hopefully got 10 more games in the tournament and he is looking for a performance like this every time."

West Indies face Zimbabwe in their second group match on Monday at Sabina Park.

McGrath closes

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and speedster Shaun Tait (2-45), but McGrath, the long-standing Australian spearhead, was content to come on when required.

"All the guys know their roles. Shaun's is to blast a few out, that's his job. It's all going well with the fast bowlers."

McGrath added that there was another advantage to seeing his team rack up 334-6 in their 50 overs.

"It's my goal to never have to bat again," he smiled.

Ricky 31 runs

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their 1992 World Cup triumph after his side failed to chase the hosts' modest total of 241 at the tournament opener at Sabina Park on Tuesday.

"Although I have been pushed lower and lower in the batting order, it has not really affected my confidence," said McGrath.

"Our middle order is a very experienced batting line-up and we should have taken more responsibility in the opening game of the tournament," said Inzamam.

Lara has cautioned Smith to now

Pushkin's death anniversary today

SPORTS REPORTER

The second death anniversary of sports organiser and hockey player Zahidur Rahman Pushkin will be observed tomorrow.

Abahani will organise a commemorative meeting and a doa mafil to pay tribute to Pushkin, who was the club's ex-hockey secretary and also the joint-secretary of Bangladesh Hockey Federation.

Pushkin died of cerebral haemorrhage two years ago, within a year of the death of one of his closest friends Monem Munna, an Abahani legend and a former national football captain.

JFA Cup Dhaka's

SPORTS REPORTER

Dhaka came from a goal down to edge BKSP 2-1 to lift the 3rd JFA Cup Under-15 football championship title yesterday.

In an entertaining final at the Bangabandhu National Stadium, Sabuj shot BKSP ahead midway through the first half but Dhaka bounced back with two goals inside four minutes.

Ruel struck the equaliser in the 44th minute while Raju slammed the match winner four minutes later. It was Raju's 12th goal in the competition, which earned him the top scorer's award.

Bangladesh Football Federation president SA Sultan distributed trophies after the final.

Gul & Naved

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as a part of ICC's anti-doping regulations for the World Cup, which requires two players from each of the 16 teams to be selected at random for testing at 15 of the World Cup matches.

The ICC had earlier tested selected players in the World Cup warm-up games.

Gul and Naved are the spearheads of Pakistan's attack that had received a pre-World Cup setback when Shoaib Akhtar and Mohammad Asif were withdrawn from the squad at the last minute because of injuries.

However, it is suspected that they were held back to shield them from ICC dope tests during the World Cup as there were fears that both still carried traces of meldonium in their bloodstreams.

The West Indies won the 2003 World Cup by 54 runs leaving Pakistan, the 1992 champions, needing to ensure their place in the second round Super Eights by beating Zimbabwe and Ireland.

"It was our goal to take the two points through but we now will have to do the hard yards," said Woolmer.

"The first goal is to get into the Super Eights and then let's see what happens from there."

"It's too early to talk about being in tight corners. Let's make sure we

Rahul serious about Tigers

PTI, Port of Spain



ICC Cricket World Cup
WEST INDIES 2007

Rahul Dravid has warned India not to underestimate Asian rivals Bangladesh when the two sides meet in the World Cup on Saturday.

Bangladesh pulled off a stunning win over New Zealand in the warm-ups last week and the Indian skipper is wary of complacency creeping into his highly-fancied side.

"I expect the team to put up a very professional and clinical performance, irrespective of who we play against. We respect Bangladesh. We have seen what they have done against New Zealand," said Dravid.

"We have to be switched on for that game. I expect everyone to be switched on for every game in the World Cup."

Dravid said his team had been

looking forward to playing against Bangladesh at what should be a packed Queen's Park Oval.

"We are happy to be in Trinidad. We do enjoy a lot of support here. We are looking forward to playing that game and I think the atmosphere will be very exciting," added the Indian captain.

India will also play Group B matches here against Sri Lanka and debutants Bermuda, with the top two sides qualifying for the next Super Eight stage.

Dravid added that he wants his lower order to develop all-round strength if they are to last the course over seven weeks.

"There might be stages in a game where they have to make crucial contributions. There might be one match in the tournament or two, but they could be most important games," he said.

"Credit to them that a lot of them have really improved. They are really working hard on it. We expect runs from them."

India coach Greg Chappell said the team are ready to play after a relaxing time in Montego Bay in Jamaica.

"The guys have enjoyed a few days of peace and quiet before the tournament, so in a way that's been good. Now, everyone is keen for the tournament to start," said Chappell.

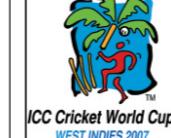
"We've been practising, relaxing, swimming, sailing and snorkeling. We have been doing things you would expect to do in the West Indies, things we sometimes don't get an opportunity to do."

Chappell was satisfied with his team's performances in the warm-up games where India won both of their matches, beating the Netherlands and the West Indies.

"In warm-up games, you are trying to do different things and I think we got most of things we wanted from these matches," he said.

Sree looks forward

AFP, Port of Spain



ICC Cricket World Cup
WEST INDIES 2007

and I am very fortunate to be even in the squad. I should take it as an opportunity to learn and be with the team."

Sreesanth, who also has 37 Test wickets since making his debut against England at Nagpur last year, believes he will have a major part to play in the tournament.

"I'm sure I'll play a big role in the World Cup," he said.

The 24-year-old, who has so far grabbed 35 wickets in 27 matches since making his one-day debut against Sri Lanka at home two years ago, is one of five seamers in the squad here and is not sure of a starting place.

But he said that if he was given the opportunity, he would gladly seize his chance.

"It's better to struggle than not to be there at all," he said.

"A person who struggles is better than the one who never makes an attempt. If I struggle, I will also learn. I will surely get an opportunity and I will make the most of it. It's a matter of confidence."

"It is a dream come true for me. This is my first World Cup

to make a major impact at the World Cup."

The 24-year-old, who has so far grabbed 35 wickets in 27 matches since making his one-day debut against Sri Lanka at home two years ago, is one of