



Chittagong Mohammedan and Abahani players observe a minute's silence before the start of the second half of their B. League match as a sign of respect to Bangladesh cricketer Manzur Islam who died in a tragic road accident yesterday.

Tigers mourn

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World Cup we will dedicate that to Rana," added Bashar.

Bashar also expressed his grief at the sad demise of Setu who was on the back seat of the same motor-bike Rana was riding.

"It is a great loss for our cricket. Our heartfelt sympathy goes out to Setu's young family," said Bashar. The Bangladesh team have also decided to wear black armbands during the match to show their respect to Rana.

BANGLADESH SQUAD

Habibul Bashar (Captain), Shahriar Nafees, Tamim Iqbal, Aftab Ahmed, Shakib Al Hasan, Mohammad Ashraful, Mushfiqur Rahim, Mashrafe Bin Mortaza, Mohammad Rafique, Abdur Razzak, Syed Rasel, Tapash Baisya.

Dhaka giants

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marks, beating Arambagh 1-0, but the local giants have been far from impressive even under the guidance of Shafiqul Islam Manik, the wily coach who does not have a very strong squad. They drew 1-1 with Sheikh Russel and a win or a draw will keep them atop the table until they take on perennial foes Abahani in the next week.

With leaders Brothers having a break, Arambagh will be pitted against Chittagong Abahani at home on Tuesday and the week will be rounded off with the Sheikh Russel-Rahmatganj match on Wednesday.

Irish heroes

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The main hero of the team is 33-year-old Australian-born fitness instructor Jeremy Bray, who carried his bat for 115 off 137 balls.

"The great Irish trait of never giving in earned the cricketers a stunning tie," says the Irish Independent. "It sparked scenes of jubilation both on and off the field."

It said Bray's performance "must count as Ireland's finest ever innings" and the match was "Ireland's finest ever cricketing day."

The game is very much a minority sport in the Republic with attitudes only changing in recent years following the Northern Ireland peace process and the arrival of immigrants from cricketing countries boosting the game.

In the past, playing cricket had a political dimension. It was known as a "garrison" sport because it was associated with British army barracks around the country during colonisation.

It was brought to Ireland by the English and initially thrived when it also spread through landed estates.

The progress of the game was then hampered by two developments -- "land wars" of the late 1800s against mainly Protestant British landlords and the 1884 founding of the Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA) to nurture the native games of hurling and Gaelic football.

In 1890s the GAA brought in a ban on "foreign games" like cricket, hockey, rugby and soccer. The ban was not rescinded until 1971.



Did U Know?

Ellis Edgar Achong, who played Tests for West Indies, is the only player of Chinese descent.

LOCAL SNIPPETS

SPORTS REPORTER

Cricket Stadium.

In the other match of the day, Kathalganbagan beat CCS by 19 runs in a low-scoring affair.

SCHOOL CRICKET

In the zonal final of the Standard Chartered School Cricket tournament, Rayer Bazar High School beat Dhaka Ideal High School by 55 runs at the East End Club ground.

Rayer Bazar was bowled out for 194 in 40.1 overs but then went on to bowl out Dhaka Ideal for only 139 runs in 45.2 overs.

Al Amin took five for 33 for Rayer Bazar.

PREMIER VOLLEYBALL

Ten teams will take part in the Premier League Volleyball competition as it begins today at the volleyball court.

Two matches will be played on the day.

NATIONAL WOMEN'S CHESS

Sharmin Sultan and Rani Hamid will play-off against each other today after both players were tied at 10 points each after the end of the last round of games in the final phase of the 28th Aromatic Gold National Women's Chess Championship at the Federation Hall Room yesterday.

BKSP CUP

Green Herald and BKSP will contest the final of the BKSP Cup basketball tournament at BKSP today. Green Herald advanced after beating St Gregory's 65-40 while BKPS got the better of Chittagong Basketball Training School 72-51 in the other semifinal.

'No Urdu ban'

AFP, Basseterre

The International Cricket Council (ICC) has denied it has stopped Pakistani players from speaking in Urdu in post-match press conferences during the World Cup, an official said Thursday.

"At no point did the ICC say it cannot allow the Pakistan team management to hold press conferences in Urdu. The ICC doesn't tell the participating teams in which language they have to speak," an ICC spokesman told AFP.

There have been reports in Pakistan claiming that the ICC asked Pakistan to avoid holding media conferences in their native language.

"The issue of Pakistan players speaking in Urdu was discussed with the Pakistan Cricket Board chairman Naseem Ashraf in Kingston earlier this week and he agreed with the ICC that for all media events happening inside the playing field players will speak in English.

"While for all media events outside the playing field, Pakistan players will talk in Urdu," added the ICC spokesman.

Pakistan last week announced that its players would speak Urdu in order to stop them being misquoted.

The team's media manager Pervaiz Mir has been acting as an interpreter.

Pakistan lost their first match in Group D to the hosts West Indies by 54 runs in Jamaica on Tuesday. They next play Ireland on Saturday.

The top two teams will qualify for the next round of Super Eights.

A cruel

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Condoling the death, Bangladesh Cricket Board, its club Abahani, Kalabagan Kira Chakra, Young Pegasus, Bangladesh Sports Journalists Association, Bangladesh Sports Writers Association and Sammilito Kira Paribar expressed deep sympathy for the bereaved family and prayed for the salvation of the departed soul.

For any sports writer, it was heartbreaking to create a career compilation after a player who is just 22 years old had appeared six Tests and 25 one-day internationals.

The man was set to leave for Colombo on March 24 to play for his country once more, but destiny took him into eternal darkness.

A tough game

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match, they beat Namibia by 171 runs, and Wasim Akram collected five wickets for 28 runs.

In 1987, Pakistan batsman Manzoor Elahi hit 109 off 65 balls, including 10 sixes, during a limited-overs (60 overs) tour match against Ireland in Dublin.

SQUAD

PAKISTAN (from):

Inzamamul Haq (captain), Azhar Mahmood, Danish Kaneria, Imran Nazir, Kamran Akmal, Mohammad Hafeez, Mohammad Sami, Mohammad Yousuf, Navedul Hasan, Rao Iftikhar Anjum, Shahid Afridi, Shoaib Malik, Umar Gul, Yasir Arafat, Younis Khan.

IRELAND (from):

Trent Johnson (captain), Andre Botha, Jeremy Bray, Kenny Carroll, Peter Gillespie, Dave Langford-Smith, Kyle McCallan, John Mooney, Paul Mooney, Eoin Morgan, Kevin O'Brien, Niall O'Brien, William Porterfield, Boyd Rankin, Andrew White.

Umpires: Billy Bowden (NZL) and Brian Jerling (RSA)

Cup matters: Flintoff

AFP, Gros Islet



Friday.

"To me it's on a level," giant all-rounder Flintoff told reporters at the Beausejour Cricket Ground here Thursday when asked to compare the Ashes and the World Cup.

"If you look at our team, we have the Ashes which is obviously the biggest thing and the World Cup in the one-day format is huge.

"If you look at any other sport the World Cup is the pinnacle of all players' careers. In the one-day format this is it. This is what you want to play for, this is what you want to play in."

In South Africa four years ago, England's World Cup campaign was overshadowed by protracted wrangling which ultimately led them to boycott their scheduled group match in the Zimbabwe capital of Harare on safety and political grounds -- a decision which cost them valuable points.

England will look to Flintoff to lead their pace attack and provide some quick runs in the middle-order. And the Lancashire star said he was ready for the challenge.

"At 29, I've played far more one-day international cricket, I'm better equipped. I'm expecting to perform."

"I think it's quite wide open. If you look at the top six or seven sides everyone's got a chance," he added.

"The one thing we've got to find is consistency to play well for a long period of time."

"We can win one-off games but we've got to keep going from where we left off in Australia, winning four games on the bounce."

"We've been able to get out there, train and practice, just building up. We're in a nice position."

Looking ahead, Flintoff added: "I've played in two World Cups and

not got to the second round yet and I am keen to do well in this one."

"It's a big stage and it is a chance for people and teams to shine."

"If you look at our team, we have a side of match-winners and each one of those will want to perform and show what they can do. It's something which excites me and it's definitely something exciting the rest of the lads as well."

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SL rejoice big win

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"We also didn't stretch the West Indies or England in the 1975 World Cup, but we came back strongly to win in 1996," he said.

"There should be a proper development and I'm sure the ICC is monitoring the progress of these countries. The more games they play at this level, the more they will improve."

"For us, it is always good to have these countries playing in big tournaments. That was how we learnt. Hopefully, they will do the same. We have to take into consideration that they are making their debut."

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard of the World Cup Group B match between Bermuda and Sri Lanka at the Queen's Park Oval in Port of Spain on Thursday:

SRI LANKA

Tharanga c Minors b Hurdle 30
Jayasuriya c Pitcher b Mukudem 22
Jayawardene c Hurdle b Cann 85
Sangakkara c Tucker b Leverock 76
Silva not out 55
Dilshan c Tucker b Hurdle 12
Maharoff c Hump b Mukudem 9
Arnold not out 2
Extr: (lb-3, nb-14, w-13) 30
Total: (For six wkt in 50 overs) 321
Fall of wickets: 1-62, 2-78, 3-228, 4-267, 5-305, 6-316.

Bowler O M R W
Hurdle 9 1 61 2

LOWEST WC TOTALS

AFP, Port of Spain

Lowest World Cup totals after Bermuda were bowled out for 78 against Sri Lanka in the Group B match at Queen's Park Oval here on Thursday.

Lowest totals (Team, score, opponents, venue, year):

Canada	36	Sri Lanka	Paarl	2003
Canada	45	England	Manchester	1979
Namibia	45	Australia	Potchefstroom	2003
Scotland	68	West Indies	Leicester	1999
Pakistan	74	England	Adelaide	1992
Bermuda	78	Sri Lanka	Port of Spain	2007
Namibia	84	Pakistan	Kimberley	2003
Sri Lanka	86	West Indies	Manchester	1975
England	93	Australia	Leeds	1975

Minnows offer mixed bag

AFP, Bridgetown

Bermuda joined Scotland in the World Cup hall of shame when they slumped to the second heaviest defeat in tournament history on Thursday.

But fellow debutants Ireland then rode to the rescue of the game's minnows by snatching a heart-stopping last-ball tie with Zimbabwe.

Bermuda, chasing 322, were shot out for just 78 by Sri Lanka in Port of Spain, the sixth lowest World Cup total ever registered.

The 243-run margin of defeat was just 13 shy of the record 256-run mauling that Australia handed out to Namibia in 2003 and came only a day after Scotland had lost by 203 runs to the world champions, now the third heaviest defeat.

Bermuda skipper Irving Romaine admitted that his side were bamboozled by Sri Lanka's seam attack.

"The front-line batsmen could not handle Malinga," he said. "Tackling that style of bowling was a new experience for all of us."

At Kingston, Ireland pulled off only the third tie in World Cup history.

Bermuda, chasing 222 to win, were cruising at one stage with just 15 needed from 36 balls. But nerves took over and Edward Rainsford was run out on the last delivery.

"We did our best to throw it away," said Ireland skipper Trent Johnston. "But we fought back in the

last eight to 10 overs to give ourselves a chance."