

Bangladesh A need 325 runs to level series

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh A finished the third day of the final four-dayer brightly yesterday but were still facing an uphill task to level the series against Sri Lanka A at the Colts Cricket Club ground in Colombo.

Left-arm spinner Mosharraf Hossain grabbed five wickets but the home team managed valuable runs in their second essay to set a 341-run winning target for the visitors, who were 16 without loss at stumps.

Jahurul Islam (7) and Mehrab Hossain (6) successfully negotiated seven overs towards the end of play and the opening pair will resume the final day needing 325 more runs to win the four-day Test and square the series.

Earlier, Sri Lanka A declared their second innings on 184-6 with left-handers Kanchana Gangawadene and Jehan Mubarak making 51 runs each.

Tall spinner Mosharraf was the most successful bowler by claiming five wickets for 69 while fellow left-arm slow Enamul Haque, who captured six wickets in the first innings, took the other wicket.

Bangladesh A, overnight 201-7, conceded a 156-run first innings lead after bunting out for 239.

Slow left-arm orthodox Rangana Herath captured all three Bangladeshi wickets to fall on the day to return with figures of 5-45.

SCORES IN BRIEF

SRI LANKA A: 395 and 184-6 dec. in 55.5 overs (Gunawardene 51, Udawatte 43, Vandort 4, Kapugedera 7, Mubarak 51 n.o., Chandana 7, Silva 15, extras 6; Mosharraf 5-69, Enamul 47).

BANGLADESH A: 239 all out in 79.2 overs (Jahurul 23, Mehrab 51, Nazimuddin 4, Tushar 31, Nafis 0, Mahmudullah 48, Sahagir 5, Sharif 20, Mosharraf 1, Nazmul 13, Enamul 5 n.o., extras 38; de Silva 2-44, Herath 5-45, Prasad 1-24, Chandana 2-71) and 16-0 in 7 overs (Jahurul 7 batting, Mehrab 6 batting).

Unforgiving

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Ireland were unable to practice outdoors on Sunday and had to be satisfied with playing rugby on Monday at the Boudra Ground after rain prevented them from holding a nets session.

"We got here on Saturday (from Jamaica) but we haven't been able to do much because of the weather," Ireland coach Adrian Birrell told Reuters.

"We struggled on Sunday to even get started. On Tuesday we got started and it rained halfway. Instead we planned a gym session and a pool session after that."

"We're trying to keep busy and keep working away where we can. The other countries are all in the same boat as us and struggling as well. We've just got to keep at it and do what we can."

"We are going to go to an indoor hall that has a bowling machine so at least our batsmen should have a bit of a hit."

"It's frustrating but it's frustrating for everyone. It's good to know that the others are also struggling to keep busy and preparing for the big games."

LOCAL SNIPPETS

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the pair of Pesta and Arif 21-14, 21-11.

In the women's singles event, Shapla and Konika won their respective matches against Rozina and Nabil.

BRITISH BUSINESS GROUP CRICKET

Standard Chartered Bank won the annual British Business Group six-a-side cricket competition when they beat HSBC at the British American Tobacco Bangladesh ground held on March 26.

Mehbub was adjudged the man of the final.

Six teams – BATB, British High Commission, Standard Chartered Bank, Unilever Bangladesh, James Finlay Bangladesh and HSBC – took part in the day-long competition.

British High Commissioner Anwar Chowdhury was present during the prize distribution ceremony.

NATIONAL CHESS CHAMPIONSHIP

Nine players qualified to the final phase of the 33rd National Chess Championship at the federation hall-room.

FIDE Masters Taibur Rahman and Abu Sufian Shakil took the top two places while Mohammad Javed finished third in the qualification.

PRIME BANK GOLF

Major Faruq won the Prime Bank golf tournament at the Jessore Golf and Country Club in Jessore Cantonment on March 23.

102 golfers including 12 children and 19 ladies participated in the competition which began on March 21.



PHOTO: COURTESY

Standard Chartered Bank skipper Touhid receives the winners' trophy of the British Business Group annual cricket tournament from British Deputy High Commissioner Stephen Bridges and managing director of British American Tobacco Bangladesh Nicholas Hales at the BATB ground on March 26.

Nayeem shapes

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SYLHET-CHITTAGONG

Nabil Samad bowled Sylhet to a convincing victory as the left-arm spinner picked up four wickets for 33 runs to wrap up the Chittagong innings for 155 in 38.2 overs. Discarded national opener Nafis Iqbal top scored 56 for the southern division.

Sylhet, after choosing to bat first, rode on Imtiaz Hossain and Ijaz Ahmed's 36 each to score 215 in 50 overs.

SCORES IN BRIEF

RAJSHAHI: 285-6 in 50 overs (Rabiul 32, Junaid 50, Nayeem 81, Anisur 63, Mahbub 22 n.o., extras 24; Murad 5-50).

KHULNA: 213 all out in 48.3 overs (Nazmus 15, Kayes 26, Jamaluddin 20, Asadullah 78, Fahim 24, extras 12; Shahajada 2-42, Shafiq 2-46, Mushfiqur 2-25, Sajib 2-26).

Result: Rajshahi won by 72 runs.

BARISAL: 238 all out in 49.4 overs (Imran 47, Iftekhar 81, extras 21; Mahabub 3-36, Sharif 2-51, Marshall 2-47).

DHAKA: 239-5 in 46.1 overs (Anwar 39, Shamsur 39, Sharif 5 n.o., Sajid 47 n.o., extras 25).

Result: Dhaka won by five wickets.

SYLHET: 215 all out in 50 overs (Imtiaz 36, Ijaz 36, extras 30; Sunny 3-27, Sabir 2-40).

CHITTAGONG: 155 all out in 38.2

overs (Sunny 56, Salahuddin 34, extras 14; Nabil 4-33, Mawla 2-31).

Result: Sylhet won by 60 runs.

Smith knows

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more runs before being dismissed.

"It is to be expected that you will become dehydrated in these conditions," Smith said. "It's the first time it's happened to me, I've scored hundreds in these conditions before so it did come as a shock to me."

Smith said the South Africans would be more mindful about the hot and humid Caribbean weather in future.

"Our medical team are working at hydrating the team properly so it doesn't happen to us again," he said.

The last time Sri Lanka and South Africa met on the World Cup stage, in Durban in 2003, a tied match eliminated South Africa from the tournament in the first round.

"We haven't discussed it, but we haven't forgotten about it either," Smith said. "It has not been a major issue in the team since I have taken over the captaincy."

Shaun Pollock was sacked as captain and replaced by Smith in the wake of South Africa's shock early exit.

South Africa were greeted by rain when they arrived in Guyana on Sunday, and similar weather on Monday forced the cancellation of their planned training session.

Pietersen knocks off Hussey

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ENGLAND

England's Kevin Pietersen has replaced Australia's Michael Hussey on top of the one-day international batting rankings, the ICC announced on Monday.

The 26-year-old Pietersen has scored 121 runs at an average of 60.50 at the World Cup including half-centuries against New Zealand and Kenya in Group C.

Pietersen is the first England player to top the rankings since Marcus Trescothick did so for one match in 2005 and only the third in history with Allan Lamb doing so back in 1989.

Hussey has dropped two places to third position while his captain Ricky Ponting moves up to second.

"His average speaks for itself," said Pietersen's England colleague Sajid Mahmood.

New Zealand seamer Shane Bond has climbed to second position in the bowlers table for the first time, illustrating the good form that the Black Caps are in at the World Cup.

Bond has moved up five places and is now level in second spot with Sri Lanka spinner Muttiah Muralidaran who is up seven places for his highest ranking for more than a year.

They are both, however, still a long way short of displacing South Africa's Shaun Pollock at the top.

Pollock, who conceded over 80 runs off his 10 overs on Saturday when South Africa were beaten by Australia, is still clear of Bond and Muralidaran at the top of the rankings.

BATSMEN

1. Kevin Pietersen (ENG)

2. Ricky Ponting (AUS)

3. Mike Hussey (AUS)

4. Kumar Sangakkara (SRI)

5. Graeme Smith (SA)

BOWLERS

1. Shaun Pollock (SA)

2. Shane Bond (NZ)

3. Muttiah Muralidaran (SL)

4. Chaminda Vaas (SL)

5. Glenn McGrath (AUS)

Pitch baffles

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SQUADS

SOUTH AFRICA (from): Graeme Smith (captain), Jacques Kallis, Loots Bosman, Mark Boucher, AB de Villiers, Herschelle Gibbs, Andrew Hall, Justin Kemp, Charl Langeveldt, Andre Nel, Makhaya Ntini, Robin Peterson, Shaun Pollock, Ashwell Prince, Roger Telemachus.

SRI LANKA (from): Mahela Jayawardene (captain), Kumar Sangakkara, Sanath Jayasuriya, Upul Tharanga, Marvan Atapattu, Tillakaratne Dilshan, Russell Arnold, Chamara Silva, Chaminda Vaas, Farveez Maharoof, Lasith Malinga, Diliha Fernando, Nuwan Kulasekara, Muttiah Muralidaran, Malinga Bandara.

Umpires: Steve Bucknor and Daryl Harper.

The power of prayers!

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TIGERCRICKET.COM, Port of Spain

Mrs. Cotton is one of those sweet little old ladies with a big heart and all the affection of your model Grandma. On learning that a group of die-hard Bangladesh fans were looking for a place to invite the Tigers over for dinner Mrs. Cotton offered the extension of her place which she usually rents. This time however she would not charge a dime.

"You know I had prayed all day to God when you played India," Cotton was saying as she went from one player to another for autographs with the excitement of a star-struck teenager. "I said 'God, an upset please' and He listened. I also told all my friends at the church to pray for the Bangladesh team and they did," said Cotton.

There is a significant presence of Muslims in Trinidad also, some 10-12 percent I was told mostly of Indian descent. The Muslim community on learning that the Bangladesh players wished to say the Juma'a prayers on Friday arranged transportation for the cricketers to go the mosque. The Imam of the Nur Islam Mosque in downtown Port of Spain then offered special prayers for the Bangladesh team. The players were given gifts, offered snacks and ice-cool soft-drinks and had to oblige autograph seekers and well-wishers as the India – Sri Lanka match continued to decide Bangladesh's fate at the Queen's Park Oval. Even grand old ladies and girls wearing the hijab just had to come and shake the players' hands after the prayers.

Diving intervention was going on all around it seemed. Pace bowler Tapash Baisya went to a local Hindu temple and sought blessings. He then proceeded to the Oval and saw Sri Lanka crush the Indian dream and revive the Bangladeshi one.

UNILIVER GOLF Lee, Moon clinch titles

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Chittagong

Golfers GB Lee and Moon clinched the title in men's and women's event respectively in the 5th Unilever Independence Day golf tournament held at the picturesque Bhatiary Golf and Country Club on Monday.

A total of 126 players including nine women golfers from home and abroad competed in this year's event.

Later in the evening, BGCC senior vice-president and GOC of 24 Infantry Division and Chittagong Area Commander Major General Sina Ibrahima Jamali gave away the prizes among the winners.

Winner: G B Lee, Runner-up: Md B Doza, Second runner-up: Isham Ahmed, Best gross: Jong Oh Be, Senior winner: MR Chowdhury, Ladies winner: Moon, Ladies runner-up: Sifat Yousuf, Nine hole winner: Col Jahangir Hossain Malik, Junior winner: Mashudul Karim Rashik, Best front nine: MA Hamid, Best back nine: MH Murad, Longest drive: Lt Col Mohiuddin, and Nearest to pin: Lt Col Mohammad Saidul Karim.

Yousuf, Younis

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round of the tournament after a stunning loss to Ireland, sparking protests by angry fans as well as speculation about a possible link between Woolmer's murder and match-fixing gangs.

"We have taken security measures and will ensure their security, but so far we are not sure on which flight they are coming," Karachi police chief Azhar Farooqi said.

Sources said the players might arrive on separate flights to Lahore and Karachi via Dubai.

Pak team set

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before the senate committee for sports about the team's poor performance at the World Cup, where Pakistan were dumped out by Ireland.

Senator Anwar Baig, a member of the committee, said: "We asked the chairman why no legal assistance was provided to the players in Jamaica when they were facing the investigation."

"Ashraf said the board will do it if required," Baig told AFP after the nearly two-hour hearing in Islamabad.

Jamaican police questioned the whole team once and captain Izamam, caretaker coach Mushtaq Ahmed and manager Talat Ali twice after Woolmer's death. The squad also gave DNA samples and finger-prints.

SA wary of Murali

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AFP, Georgetown

South Africa skipper Graeme Smith has said his team are well-equipped to