



PHOTO: STAR

Sheikh Russel's Moroccan centre-back Bourdif tries to thwart an attack from Brothers Union right-back Rony during their B. League encounter at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

Club shooting begins

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangpur

The three-day 13th Inter-club shooting competition began amid huge enthusiasm at the Rangpur Rifles Club ground yesterday.

A total of 280 shooters from 37 clubs of 27 districts are participating in three events.

Maj Gen Saiyed Fatemi Ahamed Rumi inaugurated the meet organised by National Shooting Federation in association with Rangpur Rifles Club.

Pakistan

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sources said Wednesday.

Younis, who was deputy to former skipper Inzamamul Haq for nearly two years, is demanding full powers like his powerful predecessor, a condition unacceptable to the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB), board sources said.

Following the country's humiliating first-round exit from the World Cup in Caribbean the PCB says it wants to put in place a new code for players and the captain.

"The new strategy envisages strong checks and balances on the captain to curtail his role in selecting players and dictating terms to the coach and the management, as has been the practice in the past," a PCB official told AFP.

"Younis Khan wanted to be an all-powerful captain and is reluctant to accept curbs," the official said on condition of anonymity.

The PCB wants to curtail "player power", which it believes has been responsible for the poor showing of the national team in big tournaments.

The official said announcement of the captain had been delayed as the board authorities try to resolve the problem.

However a cricket board spokesman said the delay in choice of men for the two key posts was not due to any differences with Younis.

"The board is still discussing various options on who should be appointed as captain and coach for the team," spokesman Ahsan Malik told AFP.

"We have not reached the stage where we can offer captaincy to any player, we have chalked out a criterion and once that is settled we will announce the name."

Lara quits

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Runs: 10,354
Highest score: 169
Average: 40.60
Strike rate: 79.38
100s: 19
50s: 63
Fours: 1,031
Sixes: 131
Catches/Stumpings: 119/0
Bowling
Matches: 297
Balls: 49
Runs: 61
Wkts: 4
Best bowling: 2/5
Average: 15.25
Economy rate: 7.46

De Villiers

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game under pressure and I guess that's what it's all about, so we're happy.

"To get 356 was a superb total. We had the game won pretty early and it was about finishing it off at the end."

LOCAL SNIPPETS

SPORTS REPORTER

IM Abdullah Al Rakib regained his solo lead in the 33rd National Chess Championship after his win over Mohammad Javed at the NS hall-room yesterday.

While his win took him to 7.5 points, it was GM Ziaur Rahman who helped Rakib's cause after the former champion dropped points against Minhazuddin Ahmed. Ziaur gained seven points at the end of nine rounds.

Meanwhile, FM Aminul Islam earned nine games International Master norm after his win over Abdul Malek.

DIV 1 CRICKET
Sadharan Bima continued their dream run in the Kai-Altech First Division Cricket League with a 40-run win over Rupali Bank at the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium.

Opting to bat first, Sadharan Bima posted a massive 206 for 8 in 24 overs after early morning shower in Dhanmondi delayed the start of the match. In reply, Rupali Bank were bowled out for 166 runs in 19.5 overs.

Rajib struck an unbeaten 61 for Bima.

DIV 2 CRICKET
Bipul Dey had a day to remember as

his all-round effort saw Farashganj Sporting Club to an exciting two-wicket win over Mirpur Cricket Club in the Kai-Altech Second Division Cricket League at the Dhaka University ground.

Having bowled out Mirpur for only 99 runs in 29.2 overs with Bipul taking five for 27. When Farashganj replied, it was Bipul again who took centre-stage as his unbeaten 32 saw his side home in 30.4 overs.

In the other match, Shawon's 110 off 99 balls gave Young Cricketers (344-5 in 39 overs) a massive 150-run win over Udayachal Club (194 all out in 38.3 overs).

CLUB CUP CHALLENGE

Panditpara of Mymensingh defeated Provati Sangha by four wickets in the Club Cup Challenge at the Mymensingh Stadium.

Arafat struck an unbeaten 74 to propel Panditpara to a successful chase of 218 runs. They got past the total in 43.5 overs.

Earlier, it was Mushfiqur Rahman's 55 which was instrumental in Provati posting 217-9 in 45 overs. Arafat took three for 34.

Sachin, Zaheer to play in Twenty20

PTI, Mumbai

After being rested for the zonal phase, Sachin Tendulkar, Zaheer Khan and Ajit Agarkar are available for Ranji Trophy champions Mumbai in their quest to add the inaugural twenty20 crown and make it a grand treble for the cricket season.

"Tendulkar, Zaheer and Agarkar have intimated to us they want to play in the All India Twenty20 Tournament. The Mumbai squad is to be chosen tomorrow," said Mumbai Cricket Association's joint secretary Lalchand Rajput.

Despite the trio's absence for the zonal rounds held earlier this month Mumbai, also winners of the corresponding national 50-over title, easily qualified for the inter-zonals by topping the West Zone league with three wins and a loss.

Tendulkar has been sent a show cause notice by MCA's parent body, the Cricket Board, seeking explanation for violating its Code of Conduct by speaking to the media after the Indian team's debacle in the World Cup.

The inter zonals are to be held in a league format in two groups, with Group A matches scheduled to be played here and Group B ties -- also featuring Mumbai -- in Ahmedabad from April 15-19, culminating in the final between the winners of the two pools.

The summit clash is to be held at the Cricket Club of India's Brabourne Stadium here on April 21.

Bangladesh Academy smell victory



SPORTS REPORTER

Ziaur Rahman and Mosharrarf Hossain shared six wickets evenly as Bangladesh Cricket Academy were on the brink of victory against their Pakistani counterparts in the first four-day match at the Mirpur Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium yesterday.

Pakistan Cricket Academy ended the third day's play on 130-9 in 42 overs, still 91 runs away from the winning target.

New ball bowler Ziaur (3-28) started the carnage before left-arm spinner Mosharrarf (3-47), who caused damage in the visitors' first innings by picking up four wickets, ripped through the middle order.

Earlier, despite overnight batsmen Rokibul Hasan and Nazimuddin's 155-run third wicket partnership, the local boys were all out for just 222 in their second essay to set a 221-run target for the opposition.

Bangladesh Academy resumed the day on 70-2 with Rokibul, who was overnight 35, playing a stroke-fall 120-ball 83 that contained 14 boundaries. Nazimuddin, who

resumed on 29, also faced same number of deliveries to score 59 with the help of seven fours and a six.

The home side were well placed at 165-2 but off-spinner Atif Maqbool's five-wicket haul brought the Pakistanis back as they grabbed eight wickets for 57 runs including the last half in the space of only 32 runs. Maqbool finished with 5-50 from 16.3 overs.

The tourists ran into big trouble in the chase when Zia and his new ball partner Sajidul Islam shattered the top order. Zia conceded 28 runs in 11 overs for his three victims while his partner took two for 23 runs from seven overs.

Mosharrarf's three wickets came in 13 overs that took his match analysis to 7-126.

Captain Fawad Alam topscored 47 before being trapped by left-arm spinner and his Bangladesh counterpart Mehrrab Hossain.

SCORES IN BRIEF
BANGLADESH ACADEMY: 223 and 222 all out in 63.3 overs (Jahurul 0, Mehrrab 4, Nazimuddin 59, Rokibul 83, Nadif 23, Sahagir 24, extras 22, Najaf 3-52, Maqbool 5-50, Zhoabi 1-25).

PAKISTAN ACADEMY: 225 and 130-9 in 42 overs (Rahim 0, Latif 1, Yousef 2, Fawad 47, Adnan 7, Tanveer 5, Sharfaraz 21, Rauf 0, Zhoabi 22 n.o., Maqbool 18, Najaf 0 n.o. extras 7, Zia 3-28, Sajidul 2-23, Mosharrarf 3-47, Mehrrab 1-16).

Fleming's self

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But Jayawardene said generally slow West Indian surfaces meant ideas of good totals had to be revised.

"On these pitches 230, 250 is a very acceptable score. Sanath didn't get many against England (25) but the middle-order did well."

New Zealand bat a long way down. Oram and fellow all-rounder Scott Styris pivotal figures, while a well-balanced attack features fast bowler Shane Bond and left-arm spinner Daniel Vettori.

"They've got guys who can bail them out if they struggle at the top. But we've played them a lot in the last 12 months and we know their strengths and weaknesses," said Jayawardene.

New Zealand must decide whether to recall batsman Ross Taylor, whose 128 in Napier, was his maiden one-day international hundred.

Taylor has missed the last four games due a hamstring injury, sustained during his half-century against Kenya in a group match.

TEAMS

NEW ZEALAND (from): Stephen Fleming (captain), Peter Fulton, Ross Taylor, Hamish Marshall, Scott Styris, Craig McMillan, Jacob Oram, Brendon McCullum (wk), Daniel Vettori, James Franklin, Shane Bond, Jeetan Patel, Mark Gillespie.

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

Umpires: Asad Rauf and Billy Doctrove.

WC too long: Hayden

AFP, Bridgetown



Australia opener Matthew Hayden said Tuesday that the World Cup is too long and called for the

marathon tournament to be trimmed.

"It's too long. It's too long for everyone," said Hayden with another 18 days still to play in the 47-day marathon competition.

World Cup holders Australia played their first match in the Caribbean, a warm-up game against Zimbabwe, back on March 5 in St Vincent.

Since that time, they have played three first round group games in St Kitts and three Super Eights matches in Antigua. But it's the huge gaps in between which irk many players.

Australia's seven-wicket win over England on Sunday was their first match in eight days; they won't play again until Friday this week when they clash with debutants Ireland here.

"As a batter, it's nice to be able to get that continuous sort of

rhythm and once you get into that flow, you don't want to stop," added Hayden, the top run-scorer in the World Cup with 436.

International Cricket Council (ICC) chief executive Malcolm Speed has defended the length of the tournament which will not finish until the final at the Kensington Oval here on April 28.

"We are criticised sometimes because there is too much cricket and we are criticised here because some of the breaks between two matches are too long," said Speed.

"The team that wins this tournament will play 11 matches in 47 days -- something like a match every four days -- so there are generally healthy breaks between matches."

The West Indies have been outraged by the schedule.

They played the first three of their six Super Eights matches in the space of six days and then had a nine-day break where most of the players took the opportunity to have a holiday.

Brian Lara's men, who were playing a make-or-break clash with South Africa in Grenada on Tuesday, were to face another

nine-day interval before they took on Bangladesh on April 19.

Lara criticised the schedule after his team had slumped to a lacklustre 113-run defeat to Sri Lanka in Guyana on April 1.

"It was very tough," said Lara when his side failed to chase the target of 304 to win.

"It was our fourth match in 10 days and you could see that some of the guys were really flat in the field. (Fast bowler) Daren Powell has lost 10km in the last few days."

Sri Lanka captain Mahela Jayawardene, whose team is on course for the semifinals, said his squad had planned for a lengthy tournament.

"We knew the scheduling and we've prepared for this. We never look further than our next game," Jayawardene told AFP.

"Some times you do need a break. It's a particularly important thing for the fast bowlers to try to have. You need your best 11 playing at a World Cup."

Russel still on top

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striker, did well to shrug off Shuvra but his angular shot was superbly parried by goalkeeper Mohammed Ali.

Brothers, who relied on the flanks, saw a few crosses pass harmlessly across the rival goal and a long range effort by midfielder Monwar miss the mark for inches in the first half.

However, Syed Naymuddin's side came out a different side with Nigerian forward Elijah Junior showing exquisite skill. The

Brothers top scorer with four goals, Junior stunned Russel's Moroccan captain Bourdif Mohamed on the edge of the area with a stepover and cut the ball back for Tapu who shot into the defensive wall.

Junior kept mesmerising the opposition but he received little support from his teammates as Brothers failed to capitalise on a series of chances.

Russel survived a close shave in the 70th minute when goalkeeper Zia's reflex foiled an almost own goal as centre-back Hasan headed

the ball towards his own post while trying to clear Brothers skipper Masud Rana's chip from the left. Zia was also there when he pulled off another save on Tapu's low drive on the rebound.

Mamun almost gave Brothers the lead five minutes from time but the substitute's effort from outside the penalty box hit the sidebar while Tapu scooped the ball over the bar three minutes later from 12 yards as the two-time defending Premiership champions slumped to their second draw.

Yellow cards: Rony, Rintu, Tapu (Brothers) and Zia, Bourdif, Khoubache (Russel).

TEAMS

BROTHERS: Ali, Rony, Jewel Rana, Shuvra, Masud Rana, Monwar, Rintu, Inani (Mamun), Faisal (Manju), Jalal (Tapu) and Junior.

RUSSEL: Zia, Pradip, Bourdif, Hasan, Mishu, Ighir (Kaiser), Saad, Rikta, Rana (Nayan), Khoubache and Bulbul.

Referee: Ramkrishna Ghosh.

Nothing could

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build-up to Tuesday's make-or-break clash against South Africa when he spoke at a Jesus 2007 Not Out event at the new 13,000-seat temporary stand at Kensington Oval.

"I would like to be Barnabas the great encourager and give the team a lift. I know that millions of West Indies cricket fans might have been disappointed with our previous visits to the crease, but we must still support the team. They are our team," said Hall who took 192 Test match wickets.

"What the team need to do is to play every game like a final. If they play each game like a final and win all the games then I'm sure that would be a great blessing to all West Indian people.

"We want the fight to come back, we want the players to play with pride. What we do not want is another supine surrender."

Hall lamented the absence of a strike bowler in the West Indies team and his mood would not have been lightened by seeing Jerome Taylor dropped again from the team to face the South Africans in Grenada.

Fergie's greatest night

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1999 team's treble-winning achievement.

"In a European sense it is my greatest night here. You never expect a scoreline like 7-1. But saying that the quality of our game was so high that once we scored two or three you felt we were going to do something big here.

"I think it was a special night. Hopefully it's not a one-off, but certainly the number of goals and the quality of them, it's difficult to think you are going to get that again."

"I said some months ago that the key to success at our club are the ones sitting on the bench."

"The players that have come in have responded to the challenge and I don't think they have looked out of place. We looked like men tonight."

"That is the kind of quality we have. It is difficult to lose two games at a club like this but we are able to respond to that pressure."

"I think they have to win something and hopefully they can do that. The way they are playing and enjoying their football they deserve it. But we have come to the part of the season where every match is a test. There are big games all the time and hopefully they can get through all that."

United were in the kind of mood that can make them one of the most exciting teams in Europe. Their slick passing and finely-honed movement destroyed Roma during an amazing opening period.

Michael Carrick opened the scoring in the 12th minute with a superb long range effort and Alan Smith got the second five minutes later with a perfectly-placed strike.

Wayne Rooney turned in Ryan Giggs's 19th minute cross to send Old Trafford wild and put United firmly in control of the tie.

United were determined to savour their dominance and Ronaldo fired in their fourth just before half time. The Portuguese winger was in typically brilliant form and added his second when he turned in Giggs's cross after 49 minutes.

But the hosts weren't finished there. Carrick made it six with another superb 25-yard strike and, after Daniele De Rossi pulled one back for Roma, Patrice Evra completed the humiliation with an 81st minute drive to seal United's biggest ever Champions League victory.

Ferguson was delighted to see Smith get his first goal since November 2005 after his long battle with leg and ankle injuries and he said: "I think everyone is pleased for

Alan. His enthusiasm spreads through the team. The great quality he has had in the last year is patience. He has kept going and going and has got his reward tonight."

"I just think the early goal was difficult for Roma because it gave us the advantage and put them on the back foot. It gave us the confidence to get at them and the speed of our play caused them a lot of problems after that."

Roma's defeat was the heaviest suffered by an Italian side since Juventus lost 7-0 against Vienna in 1958 and coach Luciano Spalletti admitted he was shell-shocked by the result.

"No-one imagined this performance," Spalletti said, "We suffered from a lack of experience."

"The first goal changed the face of the game. We lost our shape and played into their hands. We have played many good matches this season but we got it badly wrong tonight."

"We made a lot of mistakes and got punished heavily for them. We ended up chasing the game."



PHOTO: STAR

Grand Master Ziaur Rahman (L) concentrates hard against Minhazuddin Ahmed during the 33rd National Chess Championship at the NSC hall-room yesterday.