

Panditpara clinch Club Cup title

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

Local club Panditpara beat Bangladesh United of Comilla by two wickets in the final of the BCB Club Cup Challenge at the local stadium yesterday.

Batting first, the visitors were bowled out for 180 runs in 49.2 overs with Palash and Salauddin scoring 33 each. In reply, Panditpara reached the target with five balls to spare.

Imran and Arafat both scored 30 while wicketkeeper-batsman Kadir hit an unbeaten 24 to clinch the title.

ADC (general) Mohammad Nazmul Hasan Khan was present during the prize distribution ceremony as chief guest.

Justin bats for Marcus

BBC ONLINE, undated

Former Australia opener Justin Langer says Marcus Trescothick can rediscover his best form at Somerset this season and return to the England fold.

Trescothick, 31, pulled out of tours to Australia and Pakistan after breaking down with a stress-related illness.

But he says he now wants to return and new Somerset captain Langer told *Five Live*: "He is an outstanding batsman."

"We all want him playing for England, but it will be a big bonus to have him at Somerset. He'll have a huge impact."

Trescothick made an astonishing return for the county in a pre-season friendly against Devon, firing 256 off just 117 balls.

And Langer admits England have sorely missed the opener in both forms of the games.

"He was always one of the guys Australia liked playing against least because we knew what a dangerous player he was," he said.

"In fact, he was the catalyst behind England's Ashes win in 2005 for me. He showed his brilliance, especially on the first morning of the second Test, and that turned the momentum in their favour."

"He is a terrific person and a fantastic cricketer and I'm sure he can have a big season for club and country."

Langer also believes Trescothick's presence will help Somerset to success this season: "The optimism here is high and everyone is hungry for success."

"We've got a very good list of players with the likes of Trescothick, Andy Caddick, Ian Blackwell and Cameron White and so on, and the competition for places is intense."

"We haven't experienced as much success of late as we'd like here but the enthusiasm and energy is there for us to rectify that this season."

Spanish trio

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Alkmaar, who briefly held them at 1-1, as Klose rediscovered his scoring touch in style and had coach Thomas Schaaf saying 'crisis what crisis?' about his star striker, who is being chased by several clubs including Juventus.

"Miroslav always trained hard and never lost confidence," said Schaaf.

"His situation was never as catastrophic as people said."

"He knew he had not lost his goalscoring talents and today his work paid off."

Paul slams

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TEAMS

MOHAMMEDAN: James, Arif, Odafe, Biplob, Zahid (Ripon), Emeka, Mithu (Rony), Sharif (Santu), Kamal, Paul and Farhad.

RAHMATGANJ: Amjad (Apel), Mihuddin, Sony, Shipon, Rimon, Rizvi (Hanif), Emon, Apu, Ruku, Milon and Shoaib.

Referee: Abdul Hannan.

Greg feared

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join the Australian Cricket Academy as its head coach.

According to reports, Chappell is a clear favourite to succeed Tim Nielsen, who leaves the job to take over the Australian team's reins from John Buchanan after the World Cup.

Chappell, however, kept the cards close to his chest and said he would reveal his future plans within three weeks.

"I am not making decisions yet but after a while I will look at the options," he said.

Chappell said over the next few days, he would be visiting friends and family in Canberra and Adelaide before deciding his future.

"I just want some time away from it all," he said in what is probably his first interview to the Australian media after returning from India.

"We are just going to spend some time catching up with family all around the country and then we will work out what happens."



PHOTO: COURTESY

Sports Adviser Tapan Chowdhury (C) visits the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur to check on the preparations for the upcoming tour of the Indian cricket team yesterday.

LOCAL SNIPPETS

SPORTS REPORTER

IM Abdullah Al Rakib defeated GM Niaz Mursheed in the eleventh round game of the 33rd National Chess Championship at the NSC hall-room yesterday.

With this vital win, Rakib consolidates his position at the top of the table with 9.5 points. He is followed by GM Ziaur Rahman and IM Arminul Islam who are on second place with eight points.

In today's match, Rakib takes on FM Mahfuzur Rahman.

U-14 CRICKET

The two-day match between visiting Cricket Association of Bengal (CAB) and Rajshahi Division under-14 sides was drawn at the Shaheed

Chandu Stadium.

The Kolkata-based side declared their first innings after scoring 260-7 in 67 overs with Dipankar scoring 63.

Masud took three wickets for the local side.

In reply, Rajshahi reached 181-7 with Shoib scoring a patient 42.

GAIBANDHA CRICKET

Kisholoy crushed Abahani by 170 runs in the First Division cricket league at the local stadium.

Opting to bat first, Kisholoy

reached 238-5 in 50 overs. In reply, Abahani were shot out for 68 runs in only 25.4 overs.

DIV 1 CRICKET

BKSP beat Surjo Tarun in a crucial Kai-Altech First Division match by three wickets at the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium.

Having scored 201 for nine in 45 overs in a rain-affected innings on Thursday, BKSP reached their target in 41.4 overs, losing seven wickets.

Hasan struck an unbeaten 80 while Nasir hit a polished half-century. Ujjal took three for 50.

On Thursday, Surjo Tarun struggled under a cloudy sky as only Nazimuddin (47) and captain Moniruzzaman (46) stood against the spin of Rajan Anas who took five wickets for BKSP.

In another match, Orient (212-5 in 47.4 overs) beat Sadharan Bima (5) by five wickets at the BKSP ground.

Batch 01 clinched the North South University Intra-Batch cricket tournament when they beat defending champions Batch 02 by five wickets in the final at the Banani WAPDA ground.

Batting first, Batch 02 struggled all the way to reach 161 runs in 27 overs before being bowled out in the 33rd over. Batch 05 romped to their target in 17 overs.

The day belonged to Emon as he took four wickets and scored 47 runs to make sure his batch won with ease.

For Batch 02, Rahat scored 74 while Raihan bowled well to take three wickets.

Faculty Advisor Iqbalur Rahman distributed prizes among the winners.

his sterling display.

Eight teams from different Navy ships and bases took part in the five-day competition.

OFFICERS CLUB TENNIS

AMAO Masir clinched the Dhaka Officers Club annual tennis competition at the club's tennis court when he beat Humayun Kabir in the final.

Moasir joined with Dr. SB Nasim to lift the doubles' title as well.

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NAVY BASKETBALL

Titumir ship beat Shaheed Moazzem 4-3 in the final of the Bangladesh Navy basketball competition at the Isha Khan Sports Complex.

PK Goswami was adjudged the best player of the tournament after

his sterling display.

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Botham fears for England

AFP, Bridgetown

Africa, they will get crushed."

Both England and South Africa are in the running for a semifinal place but Graeme Smith's side are two points better off and could be four in front by the time they face England as they take on New Zealand in Grenada on Saturday.

Botham also feels that England made very little of a fast Kensington Oval pitch that suited them rather than Bangladesh.

"I would have thought this was the perfect wicket for them to play Bangladesh. It was a good cricket wicket. It swung a bit earlier on, there was very little seam movement and what you put in as a quick bowler, and you got out."

"If you banded it in and put it in the right areas, you caused batsmen problems with the bounce."

"But as soon as these little left armers (Bangladesh's slow bowlers) come on, we don't seem to know what to do. We don't seem to have a game plan. We either resort to the slog sweep or the sweep. What is wrong with down the ground?"

"England have got to have a game plan. The top three contribute to a lack of confidence in the middle order because they continuously feel they are under the rack."

"There is a lack of confidence at the moment," Botham told Sky Sports.

"There are two or three players playing well and there are a few that are scratching around and they are looking ordinary at the moment."

"England today, we seem to take one step forward and three steps back in one-day cricket. I think we were a better side two years ago, or certainly a year ago, than we are now, and I don't understand why because there are better players in that side now."

"It has to be a confidence thing and they need to sort it out because if they go and perform like that, like started rabbits, against South

Shane Warne has ruled out acting in a coaching role to old enemy England.

The record-breaking Test bowler, who retired with 708 wickets to his name after the 5-0 Ashes drubbing, insists that he is only concentrating on the captaincy of Hampshire ahead of the new English county championship season.

"I'm not even thinking about coaching at the moment. I have enough on my plate leading Hampshire," said Warne who added, however, that he was always keen to pass on advice to young spinners.

"I'm always happy to talk to anyone. I've never been one not to help other players if they feel I can help them."

"I talk to other spinners all the time, and I had a long chat with Monty Panesar last summer and I hope that helped him."

Warne told the BBC that with the likes of England batsman Kevin Pietersen in the side, he was confident that Hampshire could win their first county championship title since 1973.

"We're quietly confident we can go all the way. Obviously, every county thinks that at the start of the season but we believe we're one of the best sides in the competition," said Warne who will also have Australian international teammate Stuart Clark leading the seam attack.

"Stuart is one of the best fast bowlers in the world at the moment. He's a great asset and as a captain it's tremendous to have someone like him to throw the ball to and say: 'Get me a wicket'."

The county championship starts on April 18 with Warne hoping that if England fail to make the World Cup semifinals, he can call upon Pietersen immediately.

"I'm not sure how long England will last in the World Cup, but I would be disappointed if players aren't available for their counties," said Warne.

"(England coach) Duncan Fletcher might not want them to play for their counties and ask for them to be rested."

"But the ECB pays their wages and I hope they would override him and order them to play."

"Having Kevin Pietersen around is going to help us, and I'm sure Lancashire think the same way about Freddie Flintoff and Sajid Mahmood."

"That's something we lost but Vaas put his hand up and performed. Murali did the same, but the other bowlers backed them up," added Jayawardene after his side moved a step nearer the semifinals for an unprecedented third straight title.

"You don't want to play the best side in the world with a losing mentality. We are looking forward to it."

'Lasith wasn't risked'

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"Lasith was probably okay for today (Thursday) but didn't want to take the risk. He bowled a little bit in the morning but the way things are going we just want to make sure he's 100 percent before we let him loose."

"If he's not 100 percent there is a danger he could do his ligaments more and it could be a serious thing."

Jayawardene is also keen to keep Malinga fresh for the last two Super Eights matches against champions Australia here on Monday, and Ireland two days later.

"We'll see what the physio comes up with," said the captain.

"With Lasith not being in the team it gave us a different combination. He's the leading wicket-taker in the tournament."