



Arambagh's Kenyan defender Thomas Biketi (R) makes a clearance during their B. League match against Farashganj at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

Auspicious start for Russel

SPORTS REPORTER

Sheikh Russel comfortably won their opening match of the AB Bank Senior Division Table Tennis League yesterday when the defending champions brushed aside Mohammedpur Boys in straight sets at the Woodend floor gymnasium.

The star-studded Russel, featuring country's top-ranked players Mahbub and Mostafa -- the Billah brothers -- and former national number one Nasimul Hassan Kachi, did not play on the opening day of the nine-team competition.

Mostafa gave them a solid start beating Tuhin 11-4, 11-4, 11-7 while Mahbub defeated Regan 11-4, 11-1, 11-3 before Kachi wrapped up the show for Russel outplaying Saifur 11-1, 11-1, 11-2.

Binam won their second match in a row when the title chasers blanked Mariners 3-0 with Edison, Pappu and the seasoned Rochi winning their respective matches.

In another match, Shahed, Baban and Rokin helped Wari defeat Brothers Union 3-0.

Day One

FROM PAGE 17
taking place as players waited in the pavilion.

A spokesman for the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) said the value of refunding what had been expected to be a sell-out 15,600-crowd was 640,000 pounds but that this would be met by their insurance policy.

The match is now set to resume on Saturday at 1000 GMT.

England have already won the series, going 2-0 up with one to play after their 60-run win in the third Test at Old Trafford completed Monday.

West Indies have won just two of their last 38 Tests.

More than

FROM PAGE 17
Khalna Abahani.

"We would have had the advantage in the race had we not missed numerous chances in that match. We also wasted a penalty in the drawn match against Chittagong Mohammedan," said Rupu shortly after a full training session at the Abahani ground in Dhamondi.

With Abul scoring both the goals in their 2-1 win against Chittagong Mohammedan last week, the national mid-fielder will press for a place but has to convince the management that he is better than Ujjal, Khoubache, Zahed Parvez or untested Nigerian player Obi Mikel John, whose international transfer certificate was due to arrive last night.

"The attitude is very important. We have to be aggressive in front of the goal. We have created chances but failed to translate them into goals," said coach Amalesh Sen explaining Abahani's main problem.

"I feel that the confidence has been regained and if our players manage to keep the opposition under pressure, we will not feel the absence of Caporale, who was outstanding," told Amalesh.

"Mohammedan have been playing well but relies too much on Paul's goal scoring ability. But half of his dozen goals came in just one match. That tells us that he is not consistent and nothing to worry about really," the ex-national mid-fielder added.

Vaughan backs Panesar

Cricket

AFP, Chester-Le-Street

England captain Michael Vaughan has told Monty Panesar to carry on appealing, saying any attempt to curb the left-arm spinner's natural enthusiasm risked diminishing one of modern cricket's leading characters.

The exuberant Panesar took 10 for 187 in England's 60-run third Test win against West Indies at Old Trafford, which gave the hosts an unbeatable 2-0 lead in the four-match series.

Panesar, whose haul meant he was the first England spinner to take 10 wickets in a Test for a decade, has been his side's leading bowler this series with 17 wickets at under 21 apiece and has been Vaughan's 'go-to' player when his quicks have proved expensive.

On the final day at Old Trafford, umpire Aleem Dar who told the Northamptonshire slow bowler to observe cricket etiquette by appealing to him first before changing down the pitch to celebrate a wicket spoke to Panesar.

Under the International Cricket Council's Code of Conduct, players risked being fined or even suspended for excessive appealing.

But Vaughan, speaking on the eve of the fourth and final Test which starts at Riverside here Friday, insisted he had no problems with

Panesar's conduct.

"We're in a position of maybe taking characters out of the game," Vaughan told reporters at Riverside here Thursday. "We all love Monty Panesar -- he appeals, he celebrates with a high-five, he misses the odd high-five and he's brilliant for the game."

"We don't want to see that taken away," Vaughan stressed. "Now if it gets too much and he's appealing every ball, yes we'll maybe say something."

"But at the minute he's a young lad bowling brilliantly and entertaining a lot of people. Let him continue," said Vaughan of Panesar, whose enthusiasm and skills have made him something of a cult hero with crowds around the world.

"Monty's very approachable and if you say to him 'just calm it down a little bit' he'll do it."

Panesar, who has now taken 59 wickets in his 16 Tests at an economical average of under 30 apiece and is now ranked twelfth in the ICC Test bowling rankings, has been the mainstay of a four-man attack in the absence of injured all-rounder Andrew Flintoff.

"It does put quite a lot of pressure on your spinner at some stages but fortunately he is standing up to that pressure tremendously well for a 25-year-old who's not played a huge amount of cricket," Vaughan explained.

"I think he's going to improve pretty quickly, he's certainly a quick learner," said Vaughan.

Jamaica launches inquest

Cricket

AFP, Montego Bay

Jamaican authorities have launched an inquiry into the handling of the death of former Pakistan cricket coach Bob Woolmer, after police admitted he was not murdered.

The review would "assess the appropriateness of the techniques and the standards of professionalism employed by police investigators, as well as medical and other professional personnel," National Security Minister Peter Phillips told parliament on Wednesday.

He was speaking after Jamaican police, in an embarrassing U-turn on Tuesday, overruled their initial findings of homicide and said Woolmer, 58, had in fact died of natural causes.

News that police were treating

strangled.

But after three independent pathologists' reports, a barrage of toxicology tests and interviews with hundreds of people, Jamaican police three months later finally ruled out any foul play.

"Given the high degree of public interest which the case generated at home and abroad and the circumstances surrounding the case," Phillips said, "considered it desirable to commission a review of the investigations."

A former president of the Court of Appeal, Justice Ian Forte, was named as the chief investigator and is to report to Phillips no later than July 31.

Woolmer's body was discovered at the Jamaica Pegasus Hotel the day after Pakistan suffered a phenomenal three-wicket loss to newcomers Ireland in the first round of the Cricket World Cup.

Just after his death police announced they were treating the case as a homicide, saying an autopsy report showed he had been

Tigers to fly

FROM PAGE 17
Mahmudullah Riyad are set to join the team to play the one-day series after the Tests.

TEST SQUAD

Mohammad Ashraful (captain), Mashrafe Bin Mortaza (vice-captain), Habibul Bashar, Javed Omar, Mehraab Hossain, Shahriar Nafees, Rajin Saleh, Shakib Al Hasan, Khaled Mashud, Shahadat Hossain, Syed Rasel, Mohammad Rafique, Abdur Razzak, Mohammad Sharif and Mushfiqur Rahim.

runs at 27.43, but he has reached 50 only twice from his last 30 innings.

Marshall snubs country

FROM PAGE 17
future with the Blackcaps, however I accept his reasons for pursuing the certainty of a career in county cricket and wish him all the best."

Marshall said he owed a debt of gratitude to John Bracewell and the rest of New Zealand's off-field staff for the opportunities he had received. "They have created an excellent team environment that I have found very difficult to leave," he said.

"I would also like to acknowledge the support I have had from my (New Zealand) team-mates, who it has been a pleasure to play alongside. This has not been an easy decision but I now look forward to the future and hope that I will be playing well but relies too much on Paul's goal scoring ability. But half of his dozen goals came in just one match. That tells us that he is not consistent and nothing to worry about really," the ex-national mid-fielder added.

He was more often used as a limited-overs player but he never quite matched the brilliance of his first overseas tour in 2003-04, when he averaged 81 and scored his only ODI century, an unbeaten 101, in a five-match series in Pakistan. From 66 ODIs, Marshall has made 1454

Happy hunting for Farashganj

SPORTS REPORTER

Farashganj took revenge of their first leg loss to Arambagh when the riversiders recorded a solitary goal victory in yesterday's B. League match at the Bangabandhu National Stadium.

The league resumed after a four-day break due to seasonal rain and Farashganj, who suffered a 2-0 defeat in their earlier meeting, settled for a scoreless first half.

Mohammed Robin separated the two sides with a 79th minute strike -- the young striker's sixth league goal -- to also help Farashganj topple Arambagh in the table with their fourth overall win in 13 games.

Arambagh, who have also played 13 matches, stuck to 16 points and slipped to eighth place following their third consecutive defeat in the second leg and overall seventh loss.

BFF will send U-15 booters to Tata

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) will send its under-15 football squad for a month-long training at India's famous Tata Sports Academy.

The 25-member team in addition of coaches Golam Jilani and Bayezid Alam Nipu are expected to leave Dhaka on June 22 for the Jamshedpur academy.

However, it was learned yesterday that five of the players do not have passports. In case the problem cannot be sorted out in time, 20 players will attend the training programme, which will be held under management of Tata with help of Bangladesh Olympic Association.

All the booters have been requested to report to the coaches on June 17 at the BFF Bhaban at 4pm.

Gayle named ODI captain

AFP, Chester-Le-Street

This match is set to see Matthew Hoggard, Vaughan's Yorkshire colleague, replace Liam Plunkett in the attack after the swing specialist missed the last two Tests with a groin injury sustained in the drawn series opener at Lord's.

Plunkett was particularly wayward at Old Trafford and Vaughan hopes Hoggard, eighth in the ICC rankings, can restore an element of control.

"I'm delighted to have Matthew Hoggard back because I know what consistency he brings and how easy he is to captain," Vaughan said.

England's batsmen have collectively been in fine form this series, scoring eight hundreds in three Tests.

However, opener Andrew Strauss has managed just one century in his last 17 Test innings. "I've been in that position where I've been playing great in the nets but in the middle it hasn't happened for me," said Vaughan.

"He just has to focus ball by ball. One thing you do sometimes when you are struggling for runs is look too far ahead, saying 'I desperately need a hundred'. You go out thinking about the hundred before even getting to ten."

"If you break an innings down, and he gets to five, gets to 10 and knock it down a little step by step he'll be fine. He's got a lot of mental strength and he's a good player."

"It does put quite a lot of pressure on your spinner at some stages but fortunately he is standing up to that pressure tremendously well for a 25-year-old who's not played a huge amount of cricket," Vaughan explained.

"I think he's going to improve pretty quickly, he's certainly a quick learner," said Vaughan.

SQUAD

Chris Gayle (captain), Shivnarine Chanderpaul, Dwayne Bravo, Fidel Edwards, Runako Morton, Darren Powell, Denesh Ramdin (wicketkeeper), Ravi Rampaul, Darren Sammy, Marlon Samuels, Lendl Simmons, Devon Smith, Dwayne Smith, Austin Richards.

FIXTURES

June 28: 1st Twenty20 v England, The Oval
June 29: 2nd Twenty20 v England, The Oval
July 01: 1st ODI v England, Lord's
July 04: 2nd ODI v England, Edgbaston
July 07: 3rd ODI v England, Trent Bridge
July 10: ODI v Netherlands, Dublin
July 12: ODI v Scotland, Dublin
July 14: ODI v Ireland, Dublin

Vermeulen trial

FROM PAGE 17

told a Harare magistrate that the case could not be heard as the state was deliberating medical reports relating to Vermeulen's mental health.

"The accused is to be remanded (out of custody) to July 11," Zvekare said adding that "the medical affidavit which we were waiting for has been compiled, and we are (still) making final deliberations."

The 28-year-old batsman, who played the last of his eight Test matches in 2004, faces two counts of arson and will face 25 years in prison with hard labour if convicted.

Vermeulen is accused of first trying to torch the association's boardroom at the Harare Sports Club ground in October last year and then burning down the pavilion at the training academy the following day.

As part of his defence, Vermeulen has been examined by a psychiatrist.

Another medical report from Australia describing the effects of a serious skull fracture he sustained in January 2004, has also been submitted.

I am flabbergasted. If I was Rahul Dravid I would have bowed and said

Yuvraj eyes Irish luck

Cricket

CRICINFO, undated

Yuvraj Singh has never been to Ireland but he is confident that it is where India can set the tone for a successful summer and where he can secure a permanent spot in the batting order. India play three one-day internationals against South Africa in Stormont before a taking on England in three Tests and seven ODIs.

"How the tour progresses is very important, so if we can do well against South Africa in Ireland I'm sure we'll play good cricket," he said at the end of day three of a four-day conditioning camp at the National Cricket Academy (NCA) in Bangalore. "For the last six or seven years I've been batting in the middle order, but it's been tough finding my place, especially in Tests. It depends where I come to bat. If I come lower down then I have to go for my shots. If I get sent up the order then I can settle in and open up later."

"Current form can't be assessed in one or two series. At the World Cup I was in form but unfortunately we didn't go far and in Bangladesh I couldn't get started. In the Afro-Asia Cup I came in lower down, so if I can get a run for a five or six-match series at one spot then you can see how I perform. It's going to be a tough tour so we have to focus on being mentally and physically fit, but I'm confident of doing well."

"Morgan has informed me that he isn't available for the ODIs because of his commitments with Middlesex," Simmons said. "He wants to qualify and play for England, and feels that by obtaining a regular place in the Middlesex team is the best way to achieve that."

"Bray asked not to be considered for selection for these matches and Gillespie has decided to retire from representative cricket."

"The positive aspect to this is that a number of the younger players in the squad will now get a chance to show what they are capable of," Simmons said. "They have the opportunity to firmly establish themselves in the squad. I'm already starting to look ahead to the World Cup qualifiers in the UAE in 2009, and the composition of the team."

SQUAD

Trent Johnston (capt), Kenny Carroll, Alex Cusack, Thinus Fourie, Dominic Joyce, Gary Kidd, Kyle McCallan, Kevin O'Brien, Niall O'Brien, William Porterfield, Roger Whelan, Andrew White, Gary Wilson.

part and parcel of the game but it is Morgan's case which is a greater concern, as more and more Ireland players pledge their future to England.

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