

Rajshahi win big

SPORTS REPORTER

Rajshahi got off to a flying start in the super league of the 27th National Hockey Championship yesterday when they drubbed Mymensingh 8-1, thanks to Rimon who struck four goals including a hattrick.

Shishu scored twice while Rajan and Krishna netted one each for Rajshahi, who led 3-0 at the break of the opening super league match at the Maulana Bhasani National Hockey Stadium.

Alamgir scored a consolation goal for Mymensingh.

Dhaka will take on Mymensingh while BKSP are pitted against Faridpur in today's matches.

Kapil shuns high-profile coach

BBC ONLINE, undated

Indian cricket legend Kapil Dev says the team arriving in England in early July for a nine-week tour must show more individual responsibility.

"I think they have had a rough time in the last year -- they've been struggling and the World Cup was very, very bad," former skipper Kapil told the BBC.

He said that the absence of a team coach should not distract them.

"Basically the cricketers have to lift themselves. It's a responsibility they have. They have to lift the team."

Kapil was one of the great all-rounders of the 1980s, with Sir Ian Botham, Sir Richard Hadlee and Imran Khan.

Under his captaincy, they beat West Indies in the World Cup final of 1983, but this year they lost to Bangladesh and Sri Lanka failing to make the last eight.

Since then, Greg Chappell has left as coach and has not been replaced.

It means the team arriving for three Tests and seven one-day internationals has to make do with a team manager, a fast-bowling coach and a fielding coach.

Kapil said: "There have been too many problems about who should be coach or manager.

"You don't need a high-profile guy for the sake of it. You need someone who can deliver.

"You may have the best coaches but if a player doesn't work, nothing good happens. The bat has to talk and the ball has to take wickets."

Kapil said it was "very sad" that dashing batsman Virender Sehwa and star off-spinner Harbhajan Singh had been dropped for the tour.

"Both the players are very, very good match-winners, but every selection committee has a different way of thinking.

"I hope that even though they are not here the team can do well."

Imran fumes

FROM PAGE 21

He raised further questions about the state of Bangladesh's bowling which was badly exposed in the match, especially the pathetic performance of the two left-arm spinners.

"I must say our bowling standard has deteriorated. Actually our players are not good learners and they hardly have any personal drive to improve their standards. At this level, you can't depend solely on a coach. I don't know whether they have any vision," he said.

Imran however said that the real problem actually lies on our poor domestic first-class structure.

"You don't expect that everything will be alright in a day without proper planning in the domestic level. I will give you one example from my first-hand experience so you can understand what is our four-day cricket like. I know many players being happy if they were dropped from the (divisional) squad," he said.

"We have to arrange a meaningful four-day competition, not a fun one. The time has come to plan long-term to make it competitive. Otherwise we will not find the solution to this problem," he suggested by recalling his experience to watch first-class matches in Australia.

Akram also echoed with Imran's sentiment.

"There is no shortcut. We should improve our domestic standard otherwise it would be difficult to avoid this kind of embarrassments. We desperately need a long-term planning," said the former national captain.

"I can't understand how a player (Mohammad Ashrafu) was so inconsistent after making a hundred on his debut. Look at Malinga. He was an ordinary bowler two years ago and now he is the main weapon in his side. Two or three of our players like Habibul Bashhar and Ashrafu should perform consistently like Aravinda de Silva and Arjuna Ranatunga did in their early days," he said.

Too old to coach

FROM PAGE 24

1993, 1996, 2003 and 2005.

Against the odds the club also reached the quarterfinals of the Champions League in 1997.

Roux had been set to replace Francis Gillot who resigned after a poor end to the season which saw Lens blow their chances of playing in next season's Champions League.



PHOTO: STAR

Action from yesterday's match between Mymensingh and Rajshahi in the 27th National Hockey Championship at the Maulana Bhasani Hockey Stadium.

Arthur keen on Steyn

Cricket

AFP, Belfast

Mickey Arthur believes the ongoing series against India here in Belfast will help South Africa find the answers to questions regarding their one-day bowling attack.

The Proteas have been criticised for being too dependent on right-arm fast-medium bowlers, although it was their batting that let them down in a seven-wicket World Cup semi-final defeat against eventual champions Australia in St Lucia in April.

But South Africa coach Arthur reckons fast bowler Dale Steyn and off-spinner Thandi Tshabalala could give the Proteas' attack increased variety.

The duo are struggling with flu but Arthur expects them to play in Friday's second game of a three-match series against India, which the Proteas lead 1-0 after Tuesday's four-wicket win.

However, the series opener featured a third-wicket stand of 158

between experienced India batsmen Sachin Tendulkar (99) and Rahul Dravid (74).

"I've done a lot of analysis on our last performance," said Arthur.

"And the only thing I can think of is I still think between overs 20-35 we are still a little bit predictable, if you look at the likes of Andrew Hall, Vernon Philander and Jacques Kallis bowling in that area, they are all pretty much the same.

"I really want to see Steyn and Tshabalala tomorrow (Friday). We need to go home with some answers," Arthur added.

"We need them bowling at the Tendulkars, the Dravids the Sourav Ganguly and Yuvraj Singhs."

Spin has been a problem area for South Africa for some time and whether Tshabalala, 22, known for firing the ball in at the stumps, is the answer against high-class batsmen, remains to be seen.

He took one for 22 on his one-day international debut in Sunday's 42-run win against Ireland at the Stormont but didn't feature in the India opener.

Steyn is a more experienced

cricketer, the 24-year-old having appeared in 11 Tests and five one-day internationals. This season he has also been playing for English county Warwickshire.

"I'm really hoping Dale comes through tomorrow (Friday) -- and I'm pretty sure Thandi will play," Arthur added.

"Maybe that will give us the variation we are looking for. We were criticised a lot in terms of the variation of our attack -- and I think that criticism was true.

"The guys we took to the World Cup were the best we could have, the team we had built for two years. But now is definitely the time to refresh it and take on board that variation.

"We need to find a spinner, and the other variation you can have is express pace -- which Dale Steyn does bring to the party."

One young player who has made a mark already in this short series is all-rounder Vernon Philander. The Cape Cobras player marked his 22nd birthday and one-day international debut by taking four for 12 against Ireland.

Biman shrug off Armanitola

SPORTS REPORTER

Title contenders Biman defeated Armanitola 3-1 in yesterday's AB Bank Senior Division Table Tennis super league match at the Woodenfloor Gymnasium.

Unbeaten league leaders Biman went 2-0 ahead through Pappu and Hamlet when each came back from a set down to beat Badal and Ripon respectively.

Armanitola's Tuhin pulled off a victory against Manash but Biman sealed the victory when Pappu blanked Ripon in the fourth set.

In another match, Wari beat Ajax 3-0.

In the women's league, defending champions Abahani beat Dhaka Youngs Club in straight sets with Rumi Saleha and Soma all winning their matches.

Biman also won 3-0 against Armenian Girls while Moler TTC edged Lalbagh TTA 3-2.

Hayden not keen on retiring

INTERNET, undated

Matthew Hayden has no plans to follow his long-time opening partner Justin Langer into retirement, and says he is ready to help lead Australia through their gruelling 2008.

Hayden believes he is in career-best form, which is a reasonable claim given that he topped the World Cup run tally with 659 -- 111 more than the second-placed Mahela Jayawardene.

He will be 36 when Australia play their next Test against Sri Lanka in November, making him the oldest of the certain starters.

That will be the beginning of an almost non-stop 18 months in which Australia will play 27 Tests, including trips to Pakistan, West Indies, India and South Africa, and a host of one-day series.

"I will give myself the best chance to do it," Hayden told the Herald Sun.

"It's as big a year as anyone has ever had in cricket.

I am in such a privileged position at the moment.

I not only feel at the top of my game but I also love it and I am in a great position to be a role model into the future." Hayden is in the middle of a rare four months without cricket before the Twenty20 World Championship in South Africa.

That is followed by Australia's home summer, during which he will have a new opening partner in the Tests.

Loss that means

FROM PAGE 21

aggressive in creating opportunities. Overall, it was a brilliant performance but there are areas we can still improve. Our ground fielding was brilliant but we dropped chances," he explained.

He also praised his off-spin wizard Muttiah Muralidaran who picked up the man-of-the-match award for a match haul of nine wickets.

"On a placid track, the way Murali created the opportunities on the first day to take five wickets actually changed the whole game for us. From that moment, we knew that the Test was in our hands unless we made some silly mistakes. It's brilliant to have a guy like Murali. Now we've got a bowling lineup which creates opportunities among themselves with Lasith (Malinga), Dilhara (Fernando) and (Chaminda) Vaas. Murali has less pressure now to run through teams," he said.

Sreesanth

FROM PAGE 21

Gautam and see how he is before we make a call on that.

"Dhoni, being a batsman and a wicket-keeper, might not be that much of a concern," Dravid added.

Earlier on Tuesday, South Africa coach Mickey Arthur questioned whether India would be weakened by the lack of a bowling all-rounder and Dravid, captain of a team that failed to make the second round at the World Cup in the Caribbean, said it was an issue.

"In these sort of conditions we have used Sourav Ganguly, used Sachin Tendulkar a little bit and we used Yuvraj Singh in the last game because the spinners were bowling well and against the South Africans we thought he might be quite handy," said Dravid.

"You've just got to see who is best for the conditions. If there was one guy we were using all the time we wouldn't need a part-time bowler."

South Africa too have fitness worries. Fast bowler Dale Steyn and off-spinner Thandi Tshabalala are both suffering with 'flu while all-rounder Justin Kemp has a thigh strain.

The series concludes at Stormont on Sunday. India then play Pakistan in a one-day international in Glasgow on July 3 before facing England in three Tests and seven one-dayers from July 19 to September 8.

Gayle to fight WICB

Cricket

CRICINFO, undated

West Indies' under-fire captain Chris Gayle has said there is "no love lost" between himself and the West Indies Cricket Board and he has vowed he will fight his bosses every inch of the way as the team's off-field problems escalated on the eve of the first Twenty20 international at The Oval.

On Monday Ken Gordon, the president of the WICB, and the tour manager, Mike Findlay, issued Gayle with a strong reprimand after he criticised the team's preparations in his weekly Cricinfo diary. It was later suggested by the West Indies Players' Association that the comments had been cleared for publication by Findlay himself. WIPA went on to accuse the board of attempting to widen the gulf between itself and the players.

The board has said it intends to pursue the matter further after the tour, but seeing as West Indies were forced to field five club cricketers in their warm-up game against

England Lions last Thursday because of the late arrival of their one-day specialists, Gayle is adamant that he has nothing for which to apologise.

"Will I stand up to the board? Yes, that's me," said Gayle. "I always stand up for what I believe in and when I'm wrong, I'm wrong and when I'm right, I'm right. If there are going to be any consequences you have to stand up and deal with it as a man. I'm always ready for anything.

"I'm a big man. I'm always up for the challenge and, whatever the situation may be, I am here to handle it and deal with it whatever the circumstances may be. This is crunch time. This has been a real challenge to deal with, everything happening at one time, but as you go on in life things are going to get tougher. You have to deal with these situations, be a man and stand up and handle it.

"There is no love lost between myself and the board," Gayle added. "These things happen and you just have to move on in life and not take these things personally against each other. I am in the right frame of mind. I have been in

tougher situations than this before and I have dug myself out of it and I am just looking forward to contributing to the team as well."

Gayle now has to compartmentalise his frustrations and attempt to lead his team to victory over Paul Collingwood's new-look England at The Oval on Thursday. "To be honest I didn't think it was the right time for the board to deal with these things," he said. "I have the cricket to focus on. I have put the negatives aside and tried to be positive because I have a role to play as a captain as well."

But, he added, the row has served to bind his players closer together.

"That is something we have had discussions about," he said.

"We have had team meetings and discussed trying to put the negatives aside and try and plan how we are going to compete against England. It's been a good unit so far and hopefully we can take what we have done in the practice games into the middle tomorrow (on Friday)."

Majola slams Aussie sway

Cricket

CRICINFO, undated

The ICC's future tours programme (FTP) has turned Australia into a cricket superpower, according to Cricket South Africa's chief executive Gerald Majola. He believes hosting matches favour Australia, India and England in peak periods and the other Test-playing nations "get the scraps of what is left over".

Majola said Australia's stranglehold on the Boxing Day and New Year's Tests was unfair and he confirmed 2008-09 would be the last time South Africa would take part in those iconic matches in Australia. South Africa usually host Tests at the same time -- except when visiting India -- but they are upset the FTP does not require Australia to tour around Christmas.

"All of the countries were asked to submit our most favourable times and seven countries all had the same peak period of Box Day and New Year's," Majola told The Australian. "Yet, when the FTP was drawn up only Australia got it every

year in Australia. No other country had that privilege. For me that was seriously unacceptable and I challenged that."

The ICC were this week set to discuss South Africa's complaint that other countries are financially disadvantaged by the scheduling, which limits their ability to draw big crowds to home fixtures. "I am taking nothing away from Australia being as good as they are but I think the schedule has made Australia into a superpower," Majola said.

"They play more home games and most of those home games are during their peak period, therefore financially they will always be fine because they get bigger crowds than anyone else. There are only three countries which have far more games than anyone else: England, India and Australia.

"Everybody else just gets the scraps of what is left over from that. Our argument is that if the ICC wants the game to be globalised there should be enough cricket to create equality. Because if you don't have the games in the first place, how are you going to develop your players to compete with the best?"

A great escape

FROM PAGE 21

Nepalese forward Santosh who played a brilliant square pass inside for Tamba, who stepped over it to allow an onrushing Khokon drill the ball into Biplab's right hand post.

Under sporadic rain, Abahani took absolute control of the second half after an early wake up call when Biplab had to rush out of his line to deny a dangerous counter attack by Tamba.

Afterwards, a blue tied swelled near the Chittagong goal but both Ibrahim and Abul saw their efforts deflect off the defensive wall.

The relentless pressure told when Nigerian midfielder Obi Mikel John set up Emily's seventh league goal with his last shot of the match.

Mikel, who was taken off just after the equaliser, had released a sharp centre from the right to pick Emily whose glancing header beat Surendra at the far post.

Emily nodded a similar chance wide while Ibrahim's low drive was cleared off the goalline by Chittagong Abahani's Sohel Rana as the hosts got desperate for a winner.

But the visiting side looked like

stealing an away point after losing their home leg 2-0 in last April when Surendra pulled off two excellent saves off substitute Abdullah Parvez.

However, holding midfielder Pranotosh, occupying Joy's position, bailed out the sky-blues when he exchanged three passes with Emily and Abul at the right side to weave through the rival backline and place an angled shot into the far corner from the edge of the six-yard box.

Yellow cards: Mikel (Abahani) and Sohel, Khokon (Chittagong Abahani)

TEAMS

ABAHANI: Biplab, Siraji, Pradip, Nazrul, Wali, Ujjal (Zahed), Pranotosh, Ibrahim, Mikel (Parvez), Emily and Souleyman (Abul).

CHITTAGONG ABAHANI: Surendra, Dhiman, Bonei, Sohel, Narayan, Monir, Jahangir, Khokon, Jitu (Anis), Tamba (Mintu) and Santosh (Tripti).

Referee: Ramkrishna Ghosh.

TOP SCORERS

14 goals: Junior (Brothers)
13 goals: Paul (Mohammedan)

POINTS TABLE									
Teams	M	W	D	L	GF	GA	Pts		
Abahani	14	8	5	1	21	5	29		
Muktijoddha	15	7	6	2	23	11	27		
Russel	15	7	6	2	18	9	27		
Mohammedan	14	7	5	2	30	8	26		
Brothers	14	6	5	3	25	12	23		
Arambagh	15	6	1	8	15	16	19		
Farashganj	15	4	6	5	12	15	18		
Ctg MSC	14	5	3	6	11	18	18		
Khulna Abahani	14	3	2	9	13	29	11		
Ctg Abahani	15	3	2	10	13	30	11		
Rahmatganj	15	2	3	10	10	38	9		

Real get rid of Capello

FROM PAGE 24

problems in finding the person that we believe in."

While former German international and former Real midfielder Bernd Schuster has been tipped strongly to replace Capello, Mijatovic denied that he was waiting in the wings.

"Schuster is a coach who would be ideal but he has a contract with Getafe," commented Mijatovic.

"He is one of the candidates."

"Bernardo (Schuster) is one of the coaches who have many of the qualities we are seeking but we know full well he is under contract at Getafe. He is one of the candidates (but) we don't want to do things in a hurry. We will take time to look" Mijatovic told reporters.

He also unveiled the recipe required for the next man in charge.

"We are clear on his profile. A man with experience, who is well versed in the mentality of Spanish football and if he is young, so much the better.

"He will have to mark out an era by winning many titles while serving up an entertaining style of play."

The Spanish press have also named among the possibilities Arsenal's Arsene Wenger -- which would set him up against his former

striking star Thierry Henry, who left this week for Barcelona -- former Danish international Michael Laudrup and PSV Eindhoven's Ronald Koeman.

Mijatovic said that he would personally talk to Capello following the decision to jettison the Italian and his coaching staff.

He explained that Capello, who will be paid off a year's salary of 5.2 million euros (7.5 million dollars), had been "much brought into question" as a coach and that the media "and the majority of the fans" wanted him out.

Earlier, Spanish sports daily Marca reported that Real president Ramon Calderon had justified the impending sacking to Real directors by insisting the side must "always search for excellence".

"We've made an important step with the title, we've laid the foundations but we need to find another more enthusiastic way of playing," Calderon was quoted as saying.

Capello, who has coached AC Milan and Juventus in Serie A, leaves two years ahead of the end of his contract.

Speed irked

FROM PAGE 21

because the board advised the forensic auditors that no cars had been imported or sold.

Speed's report, co-signed by Faissal Hasnain, the ICC's chief financial officer, concludes that: "This is a complete about-turn by ZC and there is uncertainty here regarding these pseudo agreements as referred to by ZC. The auditors and ICC have been misled about these transactions.

"It is clear that the accounts of ZC have been deliberately falsified to mask various illegal transactions from the auditors and the government of Zimbabwe. The accounts were incorrect and at no stage did ZC draw the attention of the users of these accounts to the unusual transactions. It may not be possible to rely on the authenticity of its balance sheet."

In conclusion, the report says that there may be serious breaches of the ICC's code of ethics and, as a result, the board has only been paid \$2 million of the monies owed from the World Cup.

A former employee of Price Waterhouse Coopers, who audited the board's accounts until 2005, told Cricinfo: "When we signed off the 2004 audit we raised a number of ethical concerns."