

Under-19s escape defeat

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Under-19 team must thank the weather gods after rain forced their opening match of the tri-nation series against the hosts Sri Lanka Under-19s to be called off in the tri-nation series yesterday afternoon at the Police Sports Club ground in Colombo.

Batting first, the youngsters were all out for only 132 runs in 37 overs, collapsing from a fine start of 80-2. In reply, Sri Lanka were in cruise control, on 47 for 1 from 18 overs, when rain intervened.

The teams were given a point each, as minimum 20 overs are to be bowled by each side for a result.

India play Sri Lanka today in the second match of the tournament.

Bangladesh, India and Sri Lanka are playing the tri-nation meet as part of their preparation for the Under-19 World Cup to be held in Malaysia early next year.

Navy clinch swimming meet

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Navy clinched the Inter-Service Swimming competition yesterday at the Naval Headquarters Swimming Complex in Banani.

They grabbed 14 gold, 6 silver and 8 bronze medals, closely followed by Bangladesh Army who won six gold medals.

Rubel Rana added the 50m backstroke to five medals he won in the competition, to be adjudged the best swimmer.

In the water polo competition, Army beat Navy to clinch the gold medal.

'T20 match not possible'

PTI, Karachi

Pakistan has expressed its inability to play a Twenty20 match against India to raise funds for their former coach Bob Woolmer's cricket academy in South Africa because of a packed international schedule.

Widow of Bob Woolmer, Gill had written to the cricket Board's of Pakistan and Indian to arrange a Twenty20 match to raise funds for the academy coming up in memory of her husband in Cape town.

"It is just not possible to schedule any match for the next year or so because of our hectic international schedule. But we are willing to help in other ways to set up the academy," Director, cricket operations, Pakistan cricket Board Zakir Khan, said on Thursday.

He said that Woolmer remained a much admired and respected person in Pakistan cricket and since his death the Board had been supportive of his family in many ways.

"But it is very difficult to play a twenty20 match with India because even when we tour India in November-December the itinerary is already finalised and can't be revised," he said.

He said that the ICC had already kept a regulation that teams cannot play more than seven Twenty20 matches in a year and Pakistan has already committed to the inaugural ICC Twenty20 World Cup in South Africa in September.

Malaysia coach

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But the former assistant to Abdul Rahman Ibrahim and Allan Harris has enjoyed only mixed results.

The Asian Cup has brought Malaysia's demise from a regional power to the tournament's bottom-ranked team into painful perspective, with the FAM's deputy president also stepping down on Sunday.

Malaysia finished bottom of Group C with no points and a goal-difference of minus 11.

Real, Barca

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French midfielder Ludovic Giuly, who won the Champions League with Barca in 2006, has agreed to join AS Roma for an initial 3.2 million euros, rather than the six million the Catalan club hoped for, though another 1.2 million could come if he helps the club qualify for the Champions League.

Barca also want to offload Santi Ezquerro to former club Athletic Bilbao, along with Brazilian Thiago Motta and Maxi Lopez, a striker who spent last season on loan with Mallorca.

Valencia have gone with youth in signing 21-year-old defender Alexis and 23-year-old striker Javier Arizmendi along with German keeper Timo Hildebrand, 28, from Stuttgart, with 37-year-old Santiago Canizares now in the twilight of his career.

Coach Quique Sanchez Flores is set to offload defenders David Navarro, Asier del Horno, formerly of Chelsea and Curro Torres as he plots an improvement on last year's third place.

UEFA Cup winners Seville have signed up Mali midfielder Seydou Keita from French side Lens and taken Dutch defender Khalid Boulahrouz on a year loan from Chelsea.



PHOTO: STAR

Scene from the eighth round of the Standard Chartered Ninth School Chess Tournament at the chess federation conference room yesterday.

'Violence no worry'



AFP, Karachi

Pakistan cricket officials Thursday said they hoped a surge in violence will not affect upcoming tours by South Africa and Australia.

Bomb blasts and attacks have left over 180 people dead in an apparent reaction to the army's storming of the radical Red Mosque in the capital earlier this month.

"We are preparing for all the tours and have no feelings that anyone has shown reservations or concerns," Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) director operations Zakir Khan told AFP.

"An Australian security delegation is touring Pakistan and on Thursday they inspected Rawalpindi stadium and we have received no such (concerns) from South Africa," Khan said.

The six-man Australian delega-

tion is here to assess security and facilities for their A and Under-19 teams' tours to Pakistan in September-October this year.

The Australian senior team is also due to tour Pakistan in March-April next year, their first visit to the country in ten years.

South Africa, due to tour Pakistan for two Tests and five one-day internationals in September-October this year, have however expressed concerns over the situation in Pakistan.

Cricket South Africa general manager Brian Basson told a newspaper that cricket bosses were worried about the situation in Pakistan but their tour was still on.

South Africa have confirmed a tour itinerary in which they play a Test in the southwestern city of Karachi and a one-day match in Peshawar -- both venues rejected by international teams in the recent past over security fears.

PCB chairman Nasim Ashraf earlier this week brushed aside

security reservations in Pakistan.

"Pakistan is as safe as Sydney and we are confident that our home series will not be affected. We still have time and hope things will settle down," Ashraf said on Monday.

Pakistan became a perceived danger zone for international teams in the wake of 9/11 incidents of 2001. The West Indies and Australia refused to tour Pakistan and only agreed to play their series at neutral venues.

New Zealand were also forced to cut short a tour after a bomb blast near their team hotel in Karachi killed 14 people, including 11 French naval staff, May 8, 2002.

South Africa also refused to play a Test in Karachi on their 2003 tour due to security fears in the wake of a bomb blast two weeks before their arrival.

India finally broke the deadlock by playing a one-dayer in the port city in 2004 and also played a five-day Test here two years later.

Saif, Prantik on top

SPORTS REPORTER

Abdullah Al Saif and Carmel School Kolkata's Prantik Roy lead the points table at the end of eighth round games in the StanChart 9th National School Chess tournament at the BCF hallroom yesterday.

After his win over Akshat Agarwal, Quality Education School student Saif went up to seven points to join Prantik at the top while Mosabbir Khan was in second position with 6.5 points.

In the Kindergarten to Class V group, Shayan Majumder of Kolkata Indira Gandhi School and Mainuddin Ahmed of Hazrat Shah Ali School were in the lead with 7.5 points.

Hosts name 30-man squad

AFP, Johannesburg

Hosts South Africa named eight spinners in a provisional 30-man squad for September's Twenty20 world championships, which also included a surprise call-up for veteran batsman Neil McKenzie.

The Proteas were widely criticised for their all-pace attack in the recent World Cup but the pool of 30, which must be whittled down to 15 by August 11, marks the start of a drive to develop slow bowlers for the international stage.

Spinners Gulam Bodi, Johan Botha, JP Duminy, Justin Ontong, Paul Harris and Thandi Tshabalala have all been included after missing out on the one-day squad which reached the World Cup semi-finals in the Caribbean.

South Africa will open the inaugural world championships when they take on the West Indies at the Wanderers in Johannesburg on September 11.

SQUAD Graeme Smith (captain), Hashim Amla, Loots Bosman, Gulam Bodi, Johan Botha, Mark Boucher, AB De Villiers, JP Duminy, Herschelle Gibbs, Andrew Hall, Paul Harris, Justin Kemp, Jacques Kallis, Charl Langeveldt, Neil McKenzie, Albie Morkel, Morn Morkel, Andre Nel, Makhaya Ntini, Justin Ontong, Alvaro Petersen Robin Peterson Vernon Philander, Shaun Pollock, Dale Steyn, Roger Telemachus, Alfonso Thomas, Thandi Tshabalala, Johan van der Wath, Morn van Wyk.

Vieri signs

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"Something more is needed to compete in the top five and in Europe. I'd say we have 80 per cent of a squad, but we need more experienced players to help us improve and qualify for the Champions League."

Vieri played just seven games for Atalanta last term, but he showed glimpses of the magic that allowed him to hit 103 goals in 144 appearances for Inter between 1999 and 2005.

Collina

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honour to be given this responsibility.

"But I am not, and don't want to be considered as the saviour of refereeing."

"I only want to bring to the job my experience, my 28 years as a referee."

Collina, who took charge of the 2002 World Cup final, retired from refereeing in 2005 and spent time as a financial advisor and a television pundit.

Ashraful

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hardly had anything encouraging against the islanders and the reality is that they are going to play the series on the back of a nightmarish Test series. So it is hard to think about anything extraordinary from the Tigers but the only hope is that they have sometimes sparked against all odds.

Sanath boost

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one-day cricket again. He has played well for Lancashire and he had some really good games," said a confident Jayawardene.

Jayasuriya has smashed three hundreds and three half centuries in 15 matches. The left-hander, however, was not ready to use the word 'rate' after Bangladesh's World Cup run.

"You can't say how I rate Bangladesh after their World Cup performance because there are ups and downs in their performance even in one-day cricket. It was a tough game against them in the World Cup because we were under pressure after their victory against India in the first game," he observed.

He said that he believed in one mantra, that is 'hard work' and which is the reason behind his success even at the age of 38.

"I always believe in hard work. What I still believe is that I can still contribute for my team. That's why I retracted my retirement decision," said Jayasuriya, who is on the verge of achieving the unique feat of becoming the first man to score over 10,000 runs and grab 300 wickets.

Grand affair

AFP, London

Grandfathers and grandsons to have played Test cricket after England's Chris Tremlett, grandson of Maurice, made his debut against India at Lord's here Thursday (grandfather, country, year of debut, grandson, country, year of debut):

Grandfather	Debut	Grandson	Debut
*George Headley (WI)	1930	Dean Headley (Eng)	1997
*Majid Jahangir Khan (Ind)	1932	Bazid Khan (Pak)	2005
Victor Richardson (Aus)	1924	Ian Chappell (Aus)	1964
		Greg Chappell	1970
		Trevor Chappell	1981

Maurice Tremlett (Eng) 1948
Note: George Headley's son, Ron Headley also played Test cricket for the West Indies and Majid Jahangir Khan's son, Majid Khan, played for Pakistan.

A crucial relationship



CRICINFO, undated

Okay, it's not quite the Ashes or India v Pakistan. It doesn't even carry the needle and tension of a contest between England and Pakistan, or the piquancy of a trans-Tasman rivalry. There has been the odd stirring performance -- Vinoo Mankad's bravery in 1952, Ian Botham's all-round solo in the Jubilee Test, Sunil Gavaskar's fourth-innings double hundred at The Oval, Rahul Dravid's masterpiece at Headingley, and Andrew Flintoff's insouciance at the Wankhede Stadium -- but over its 75-year history, India v England has been devoid of sustained spark and sharpness.

That said, a lot rides on this series. A soulless World Cup has shaken the faith of cricket fans round the world, not to speak of that of sponsors and television companies. The misery has only been piled on since then. We have seen Bangladesh being thrashed senseless by their neighbours, West Indies' capitulation against England in three Tests, the reprehensible Afro-Asia Cup, and some pointless one-day cricket in Ireland and Scotland. Cricket is desperate for a renewal, a wholesome display of skills, a few individual sparks, and contests worthy of the game. It is an opportunity for England and India to rise above their lacklustre past; and they have the tools to do so.

It is a pity that Flintoff won't be playing -- what a tragedy it will be for cricket if he is unable to ever recapture his form of 2005-06 -- but England will still have the advantage of home conditions. It was swing that did it for them in 2005, and while they will miss the old-ball mastery of Flintoff and Simon Jones, in Matthew Hoggard -- if and when he plays -- and the rediscovered Ryan Sidebottom, they have two fine exponents of new-ball swing. Their batting looks solid if not spectacular, and Matt Prior has added a new dimension to the lower order.

But India are far less likely to be rolled over than West Indies. Their batting might never again scale the heights of 2003-04, but their ageing middle order still possesses plenty of class and experience. Most important, Sachin Tendulkar's fire seems to have been rekindled, and the prospect of him being willing to dominate bowlers again is a delicious one. VVS Laxman and Sourav Ganguly have missions of their own, and there isn't any evidence yet the mental pressures of the captaincy are weighing down that Rahul Dravid's batting. And ironically, the seam-and-swing-friendly conditions in England will provide Indian bowlers with the best chance of taking 20 wickets in a Test. England might prevail in the end, but it is reasonable to expect a close series.

But the importance of India and England to the world of cricket goes far beyond the field. It has evolved into a complex, multi-layered relationship that has come to acquire massive significance. Cricket is a small world but there is no escaping the reality that it is a polarised one, and polarised still, regrettably

enough, along cultural and racial lines. England may not have been a dominant force on the cricket field in the last three decades, but it remains the guiding light for countries like Australia and New Zealand. India, the new powerhouse of cricket, has meanwhile forged a powerful subcontinental alliance with Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh. West Indies retain close ties with England, and South Africa continue to dither.

Cricket presented the picture of a happy family last month when the two principal factions struck a cosy deal over the ICC presidency. England's David Morgan gets the first stab at the job, but India's Sharad Pawar will be in the chair when the subcontinent hosts the World Cup in 2011. Cricket has been spared the prospect of a messy election and the lobbying and deal-making that accompany one.

But only the innocent will be fooled into believing that this agreement was the result of either or both sides discovering the spirit of accommodation and co-operation. It was more to do with the fact that someone was bound to get a bloody nose, but neither side knew who. The votes had been tied in the earlier round, and neither wanted to risk defeat. A compromise suited everyone.

Morgan is, by all accounts, a diligent but -- as demonstrated by his paralysis over the Zimbabwe issue in 2003 -- weak leader. He will head world cricket for two years before Pawar, a wily politician and capable administrator, but with no real affinity and feel for cricket, takes over for two more. But the real worry is: to what degree will deals of convenience of this nature compromise the administration of the game?

Will the Zimbabwe problem be swept under the carpet? Will a voice rise within the ICC against the insanity of the international playing calendar? Will someone stop the ICC from piling one World Cup on top of another? A divided game is bad, but it is far worse if administrators find expedient compromises on the issues vital to cricket.

India and England represent two different worlds in cricket. The game needs India's enterprise, passion and money. Equally, it needs to uphold the traditional values engendered and upheld by English cricket. England and Australia remain the real home of Test cricket, and to watch a full house at Lord's or the MCG during a Test match remains among the most uplifting experiences in cricket.

Test cricket is the supreme form of the game, and the most rewarding form for players and connoisseurs alike. It is an ideal worth fighting for to preserve. From a cricket lover's point of view it was distressing that the English and Indian cricket boards chose to sacrifice a Test this summer in favour of a couple of additional one-dayers.

Cricket needs the entrepreneurial spirit championed by India -- indeed the ICC would have long since been bankrupt without India -- but it also needs a strong counterbalance against the adventurism of the Indian board and the senseless

proliferation of the one-day game promoted by it. The rise of India was essential to break the unhealthy monopoly England and Australia exercised over cricket. In the same way, the Indian board which, like it or not, will remain the most influential body in world cricket, should not be allowed to control the agenda of international cricket.

Some see England as cricket's past and India as its present. Cricket is not a sport that can do without its past. A balance between enterprise and tradition is vital to the health of the game.

Sania sails

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quarterfinals, defeating Romanian qualifier Anda Perianu 6-4, 6-3.

Perianu had recorded her first WTA Tour match win on Tuesday when she beat Melinda Cizink in the first round.

But she couldn't stop world number eight Chakvetadze, who has won titles at Hobart and S'Hertogenbosch already this season.

The only other seeded player in action, No. 7 Akiko Morigami of Japan also had an easy second-round match.

A finalist here in 2005, Morigami dispatched German teenager Angelique Kerber 6-2, 6-2.

In other second-round action, American Lilia Osterloh topped Georgian qualifier Anna Tatishvili 7-5, 6-1, while in the first round China's Yuan Meng defeated Australian Casey Dellacqua 6-4, 4-6, 6-2.

Miandad vows

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working as a specialist batting coach, Miandad said, "It is premature to say anything on it. There is no such offer at the moment so I would only think about it if there is any possibility in the future."

Miandad, arguably Pakistan's greatest batsman, described Lawson's gesture as "a slap in the faces of those (PCB) officials" who have overlooked his credentials in recent years. Miandad has coached Pakistan on three occasions and in his last stint Bob Woolmer eventually replaced him in June 2004. Famously, the two had a private dinner soon after Woolmer took over but relations between the two continued to cool thereafter, leading Miandad to hope that "it will be different with Lawson."

Strauss nears

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Bell, Prior, Tremlett, Sidebottom, Panesar, Anderson

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Zaheer	14	3	55	0
Sreesanth	13	6	40	0
RP Singh	9	3	32	0
Ganguly	9	3	24	1
Kumble	10	1	25	0
Tendulkar	2	0	8	0

INDIA: Jaffer, Karthik, Dravid, Tendulkar, Ganguly, Laxman, Dhoni, Kumble, Zaheer, RP Singh, Sreesanth

Toss: England

Umpires: Steve Bucknor and Simon Taufel.

CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

1 "Dragnet" star

5 Potential syrup

8 Portent

12 Unorigi-one

13 George's brother

14 Ersatz swing

15 Arri-vederci

16 Trawling need

17 B&Bs

18 They're marine and "army"

20 Braggart, perhaps

22 Opposite of "trans-"

23 Pompous fool

24 Poison-ivy symptom

27 Dining surface

32 Vest

33 Mound stat

34 Mess up

35 Variety of orange

38 Hydrox

39 Alloy

40 Frankster

42 Cuff-lot-crotch measure

45 Vacillate

49 Track trans-actions

50 Make up your mind

52 Narthex neighbor

53 Enrages

54 Neckline shape

55 Okla-homa

56 "Finding Nemo" character

Solution time: 25 mins.

57 Cauliflower, maybe

58 Ohio team

DOWN

1 Texas city

2 Grand story

3 Pulsate

4 Pin

5 Evil

6 Exist

7 Cracker spread

8 Fulle

9 Givite (Abbr.)

10 Sea

11 Egg con-tainer?

19 Circle ratio

21 Young woman

24 Doctrine

25 Wonder-land quaff

26 Sugar holder

28 Onassis, familiarly

29 Railing

30 Raw rock

31 Expert

36 Chic

37 Alias

38 First game of the season

41 Yours truly

42 Footnote abbr.

43 Pianist Peter

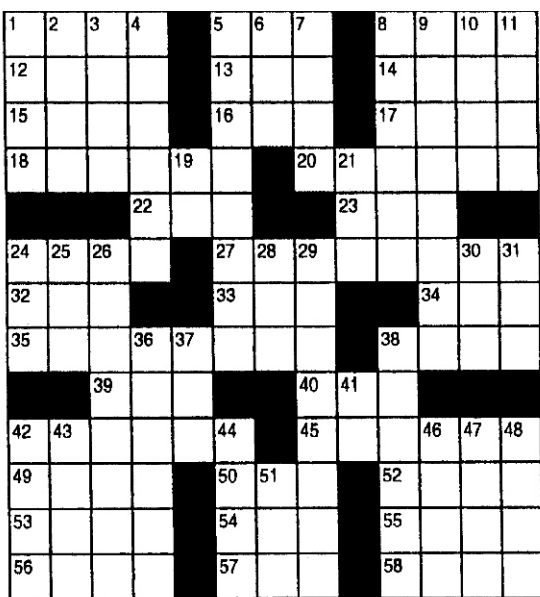
44 Relocate

46 Logical

47 Eager

48 Becomes one

51 Princess' insomnia cause



CRYPTOQUIP

BL PLR IREELIW DMCP
XMDI LARCWVDWC
ALLB OVPXWZVUUB
VUMOWCDVYP EYDYMZUW?
Yesterday's Cryptquip: IF MS. FONDA
DECIDED TO BECOME A JET PILOT, I GUESS YOU
MIGHT SAY SHE'D BE A PLANE JANE.
Today's Cryptquip Clue: P equals Y