

Cook steadies England

SPORTS REPORTER

Opener Alastair Cook struck his first limited overs fifty as England steadily went to 113 for one after 25 overs in the first one-day international against India at The Rose Bowl in Southampton yesterday.

Captain Rahul Dravid won the toss and inserted the hosts on an overcast day with three seamers at his disposal but only left-arm Zaheer Khan left an impression during the opening exchanges.

Cook, opening with under-fire wicketkeeper Matt Prior, took command with five sweetly-struck boundaries in his unbeaten 59 off 84 balls while Prior smote a six during his curious 31-ball 19.

Prior fell to a good catch from Dravid at mid-on with the score on 43 in the eleventh over to a pitched up delivery from Zaheer.

Introduction of leg-spinner Piyush Chawla slowed the scoring as the youngster bowled two beautiful overs, troubling both Cook and one-drop Ian Bell, who was unbeaten on 34. Their partnership have yielded 70 runs so far.

India won the just-concluded Test series against England 1-0 as they play the first of seven one-day matches in this series.

Indonesia beat Bangladesh 1-0

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh's second-string national football team lost 1-0 to Indonesia in their opening match of the Merdeka Cup in Kuala Lumpur yesterday.

Indonesia settled the score of the Group B match from a 25th minute freekick, according to a message received in Dhaka.

Bangladesh striker Saifur Rahman Moni wasted two good chances as Bangladesh built pressure in the second half but failed to beat the defensive shell of the Southeast Asian nation.

Bangladesh will take on Singapore tomorrow.

On the opening day, holders Myanmar edged Lesotho 1-0 and hosts Malaysia blanked Laos 2-0 on Monday.



Did U Know?

Weightlifting made its debut as an official sport in the first Modern Olympics in 1896, but was left out of the 1900 Games. It returned to the Olympic stage in 1904, and became a regular event in 1920.



Rafa Benitez
(Liverpool manager)
"If Chelsea are naive and pure, then I am Little Red Riding Hood."
After his side drew with Chelsea in the Premiership match on

**What to
WATCH**

ZEE Sports
Neuro Cup Football
Bangladesh v Cambodia
Live from 7:30 pm

ESPN
Sportscenter India
Sports News
Live from 8:30 pm
England v Germany
International Soccer Friendly
Live from 12:30 am (Thursday)



PHOTO: STAR
THAT'S HOW YOU DO IT: Bangladesh captain Mohammad Ashraful smacks the ball towards mid-wicket as Academy wicketkeeper Dhiman Ghosh looks in that direction during their practice match at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium yesterday.

Football for aid

SPORTS REPORTER

down the memory lane.

Jewel Rana will wear the Abahani shirt for the first time in his long career when the veteran centre-back will be the part of an exhibition football match tomorrow against his old club Mohammedan.

The Abahani-Mohammedan match will feature current and ex-footballers who gather at the Bangabandhu National Stadium along with silver screen stars for the noble cause of raising fund for the country's flood victims.

The match, originally scheduled for last Friday, was deferred due to inclement weather and unplayable condition.

Footballers at a press conference at the NSC conference room yesterday hoped that the match between Abahani and Mohammedan -- the local archrivals and also the two top teams of the recently concluded B. League -- would give the fans a trip --

playing together.

Meanwhile, Mohammedan coach Shafiqul Islam Manik and Abahani manager Satyajit Das Rupu, representing the two heavyweights, promised a tight match and perhaps for the first time, engaged in a verbal war without realising.

"I have heard that Abahani have been training for seven days. So, it looks an interesting prospect," said Manik, whose side finished runners-up in the inaugural professional football league.

Rupu reminded that B. league champions Abahani will go for win as they always do.

The two teams also had a few common names on the roster, midfield stalwarts like Yusuf, Babul and Alok, who graced both the sides.

Mohammedan 'officials' claimed that Khorshed Babul had signed for them the previous night

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Lawson meets team

Cricket

AFP, Lahore

Haq, Abdul Razzaq, Mohammad Yousuf and Imran Farhat -- had joined a breakaway Indian league.

"Whatever happens, the players who turn up will count for me and not the ones who go and do something else," said Lawson, who was to hold a press conference later Tuesday.

Both Lawson, also known as Henry, and Dwyer are on two-year contracts.

Pakistan team manager Talat Ali said the first meeting between the players and Lawson was excellent.

"It was an initial interaction which was very good and necessary as we are going to start the final preparation for the Twenty20 World Cup," Ali told reporters of the meeting and the training camp which will end on September 26.

"A coach is very necessary for the team and as we have a hectic season ahead of us we are on the right track in our preparation," said

Ali, the only surviving staffers following Pakistan's failed World Cup campaign of March-April.

Pakistan will fly to Kenya on August 28 where they feature in a four-nation Twenty20 tournament also involving hosts, Bangladesh and United Arab Emirates.

They will then compete in the Twenty20 World Cup to be played from September 11-24. Pakistan's first match is against Scotland at Durban on September 12 before they take on arch-rivals India at the same venue two days later.

Pakistan host South Africa for two Tests and five one-day internationals in October before touring India in November-December.

They also host Zimbabwe for five one-day internationals and world champions Australia for three Tests and five one-day matches early next year.



PHOTO: AFP
HE'S THE MAN: New Pakistan coach Geoff Lawson (L) walks with superstar Shoaib Akhtar at the National Cricket Academy in Lahore on Tuesday.

Tigers' winning warm-up

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

The national cricket team comfortably won both of their Twenty20 practice matches against the BCB National Cricket Academy (NCA) team at the Mirpur Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium yesterday.

But the first endeavour of the Tigers against the cubs with bat and ball after a month's lay off hardly produced any fireworks that they are supposed to demonstrate in September when the first ever Twenty20 World Championship will be staged in South Africa.

Skipper Mohammad Ashraful, hard-hitting batsman Aftab Ahmed and all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan scored some runs, but batting was as damp as the rain-ruled day itself.

And it was bowling Tigers who won the matches by 60 runs and five wickets respectively.

Although those were only warm-up games, a large number of cricket lovers turned to the new home of cricket in Mirpur anticipating some fireworks from exciting opener Tamim Iqbal, who treated the world with an array of stroke play during the World Cup, and Junaed Siddiqui, the left-handed opener who won his maiden national call-up for his hitting exploits for Mohammadan in domestic cricket last season.

Heavy rain also played foul with them but ultimately it couldn't stop the matches as there was only need fifteen minutes to resume the play.

SCORES IN BRIEF

BANGLADESH: 144-9 in 20 overs (Tamim 6, Junaed 0, Aftab 43, Ashraful 4, Shakib 33, Kapali 21,

Hossain for six in the very first ball in the second game and was dismissed for 5-ball 6 while his partner, who was the top scorer in the domestic Twenty20 competition, made first-ball duck in the second match after making 12-ball 7.

Aftab however excelled with some big-hitting ability along with Shakib in the first game as the national team recovered from 18-3 to complete the 20-over quota for 144-9.

The right-hander featured four boundaries and a six to make 32-ball 43 while left-handed Shakib smote two sixes and a four to score 25-ball 33.

The Academy team, whom chase was halted in the middle due to heavy rain, were all out for 84 runs with one over to spare.

In the second match Australia-bound Academy side batted first to score only 103 for six in allotted 20 overs but still the Tigers played 17.2 overs to overtake the total with 104-5.

Ashraful guided his side with 33-ball 45 that contained sweetly times three fours and two sixes.

There is scheduled a 40-over-a-side match today at the same venue but the management suddenly realized that there is no point to play this kind of match for preparing for the Twenty20 World Championship and that's why they have decided to split the match in a twenty20 affair.

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Riyad 2, Forhad 8, Mashraf 7, Mushtaq 12 not out, extras 8; Nazmul 1-19, Dollar 3-30, Mehrab 1-35, Nayem 2-17).

NCA: 84 all out in 19 overs (Nayem 12, Faruque 21, extras 15; M ashrafe

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Faruque unhappy

SPORTS REPORTER

Chief national cricket selector Faruque Ahmed criticised the delay about announcement of the new national selection panel.

"It's getting too late to finalise the panel at the end of this month. I don't know why they are taking too much time to decide about the new committee," said Faruque, whose contract along with his other colleague Athar Ali Khan will expire on August 31.

"What I feel that it would not be easy for someone to decide about within a day or two whether he will accept the offer from the board. One should understand one thing that it is no more an amateur job," he added while talking with reporters at the Mirpur Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium yesterday.

Meanwhile, the new ad-hoc committee formed a sub-committee headed by Shafiqur Rahman Munna to form the new selectors' committee and what Munna already informed that they would announce the selectors' names at the end of this month.

organisation," BCCI treasurer N. Srinivasan told reporters after day-long meetings.

"However, if he chooses to associate himself with any other

organisation, he will not derive any benefit or be connected with any of BCCI's activities in any way.

"You can't have a foot in both places. That's why Kapil has ceased to be the chairman of the NCA."

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The ICL, bankrolled by media baron Subhash Chandra who owns India's largest listed media company Zee Telefilms, plans to hold Twenty20 tournaments between city teams for the next three years.

ICL officials said on Monday they had already signed up seven international stars and 44 Indian first-class cricketers, adding that top players from around the world were expected to join.

Former Test captains Brian Lara of the West Indies and Inzamam-ul Haq of Pakistan lead the ICL list that also includes Pakistanis Mohammad Yousuf, Abdul Razzaq and Imran Farhat and South Africans Lance Klusener and Nicky Boje.

Among the Indian first-class players signed up are all-rounder Dinesh Mongia, who toured Bangladesh with the Indian team in May, and former internationals

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BCCI

BCCI removes Kapil

Cricket

AFP, Mumbai

India's cricket chiefs intensified the battle against an unofficial multi-million dollar league on Tuesday by removing the legendary Kapil Dev as head of the country's junior academy.

It would give Syed Nayeemuddin an opportunity to end his two-match losing streak as Bangladesh coach after a 2-0 loss to Syria and a solitary goal defeat to hosts India.

The former Indian international and coach, who took over charge three weeks ago, must know that his only realistic chance to win in the five-team meet is against the bottom-ranked Cambodia.

However, Cambodia's dazzling display in a 4-3 loss to Kyrgyzstan in both sides' opener must make Nayeem a worry man, especially after his experiment badly failed.

For unknown reasons, Nayeem chose a makeshift rightback in

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NSC chief meets Dhaka clubs

UNB, Dhaka

Chairman of the National Sports Council (NSC) and Army Chief General Moeen U Ahmed yesterday made a courtesy call on the officials of the inaugural professional football league clubs from Dhaka.

Addressing the B. League club officials at the NSC conference room, Moeen asked them to hunt and nurse the players from the grassroots, side by side playing their role in the national level.

Moeen, who is also the president of Bangladesh Olympic Association, informed the representatives of the leading football clubs of the country that they are taking initiative to arrange playground in each upazila.

He also assured the clubs that they would take necessary steps for solving the problems of the clubs, who drew the attention of the NSC chairman regarding latest their financial crisis and inadequate ground facilities.

WOMEN'S FOOTBALL First friendly today

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh's women footballers face a tough task when they host the visiting Orissa State football team today at Shafiqur.

The Orissa eves arrived Dhaka on Monday night to play five friendly matches across the country.

Former national footballer, coach and mentor of the current women's team Abu Yusuf yesterday told at a press conference at the BFF Bhaban that this series would be a learning process for the girls, who have very little experience.

"This time we have recruited

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