

DC Gold Cup results

UNB, undated

Rajshahi Players Welfare Association (RPWA) emerged champions in the DC Gold Cup football tournament beating Panchagarh Chamber of Commerce XI 5-4 in the tiebreakers after the exciting final ended 1-1 at the jam-packed Panchagarh Stadium yesterday.

Nigerian recruit Elijah Junior, who was the top scorer of Bangladesh's inaugural professional football league, put hosts Panchagarh ahead in the 20th minute while Sumon restored parity for the Rajshahi side on the hour.

Deputy Commissioner of Panchagarh Mohammad Hafiz Uddin distributed trophies among the winners as chief guest.

About 20,000 spectators enjoyed the final at the country's northern town but 5,000 fans failed to enter the venue despite holding tickets.

A total of 16 teams took part in the tournament organised by Panchagarh District Sports Association.

In Habiganj, Habiganj Sadar Upazila clinched the DC Gold Cup for the fourth consecutive time defeating Nabiganj Upazila 2-1 in the final at the Jalal Stadium yesterday.

Kenyan booter Domenic, who played the B league for Dhaka outfit Arambagh, scored both the goals for the champions while Selim reduced the arrears for the runners-up.

Sufal of Nabiganj was adjudged the player of the tournament while host team's Bablu was the highest scorer.

Deputy Commissioner of Habiganj Mohammad Ataur Rahman gave away prizes as chief guest.

At the Borguna Stadium, Altaf Hossain Smriti Club lifted the 24th DC Kishore Gold Cup with a 1-0 win over Sonakhal Shatata Club in the final also yesterday.

Mithun scored the matchwinner.

Deputy Commissioner Altaf Hossain distributed trophies.

Ban Shoib for life: Asif

PTI, Karachi

Lambasting the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) for creating a spoilt brat like Shoib Akhtar, former captain Asif Iqbal demanded a life ban for the erratic speedster following the Johannesburg brawls that tarnished the country's image.

A furious Asif said Shoib has done enough damage and should be permanently dumped with a life ban for hitting teammate Mohammad Asif with a bat in Johannesburg.

"The line has to be drawn somewhere and if it is not drawn here, the question has to be asked are we waiting till he commits mass murder?" a livid Asif wrote in his column for the News.

Shoib, part of Pakistan's Twenty20 World Cup squad, had a spat during the nets in Johannesburg during which he hit pace colleague Mohammad Asif with a bat that left the youngster with a bruised thigh.

The team management promptly sent Shoib back and on his return, the temperamental pacer claimed he was provoked by Shahid Afridi and apologised for the episode. The PCB has formed a three-member panel to probe the issue.

Shoib's word of apology, however, could not assuage Asif's anger and the former captain advocated a "no mercy" policy while dealing the issue.

This, of course, is not the first time that a Pakistani cricketer has disgraced himself, his team and his country by resorting to physical violence and unless very stern action is taken, it will not be the last either," he said.

Asif went on to add that this kind of incidents have ramifications that spill well over the boundary of cricket.

No stopping

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No luck this time, either. Djokovic rocketed a shot that went long and challenged the call. The instant replay showed the ball was out by one millimeter.

"I cannot believe," Djokovic said. "I was asking the crowd what I need to do. Nobody could give me any advice."

Federer kept up the pressure in the final set.

"He was just mentally better -- a little bit. Little bit. It could have been the other way around," said Djokovic's coach, Marian Vajda.

Federer earned a Grand Slam record \$2.4 million: \$1.4 million for winning the tournament, and a \$1 million bonus because he finished atop the U.S. Open Series standings based on performances at hard-court tuneup events.

He's now reached the final in 10 straight Slams, with his lone losses to Nadal in the last two French Opens.

In this tournament, almost everyone except Nadal took their best shots at Federer. Young John Isner and Andy Roddick brought their booming serves, Nikolay Davydenko ran all over the court and Djokovic showed promise.



PHOTO: AFP

Indian vice-captain Yuvraj Singh is about to aboard the team bus at the Johannesburg airport on Monday. The Indian team is now in South Africa to play the Twenty20 World Championship which starts today.

No pressure on us: Dhoni

AFP, Johannesburg



India will go into the inaugural Twenty20 world championships fresh and confident despite a mixed tour of England, captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni said on Monday.

"The England tour was very tiring and exhausting but this is a World Cup and that brings excitement, freshness and confidence to the team," Dhoni said.

Dhoni said he was under no pressure to captain the cricket-mad nation, even if only for the Twenty20 tournament.

"I never even dreamt of playing for my country, so to captain India is a massive bonus," he said. "But I am not under any pressure because it is the team that must implement my decisions."

"I only make the decisions and whether they are successful or not

forgotten. "I don't think fatigue will have any impact on the team," the swash-buckling batsman-wicketkeeper told reporters here.

"I know it is a very big challenge to be captain but success is not just about the captain. Good captains are made by good teams."

Five players who were not part of the touring team in England have joined the team here. They are spinner Harbhajan Singh, all-rounders Joginder Sharma, Irfan Pathan and Yusuf Pathan and aggressive opening batsman Virender Sehwag.

India take on Scotland in Durban in their first match on Thursday. They play arch-rivals Pakistan on Friday at the same venue.

The top two teams in the group will advance to the Super Eights round.

England have selected off-spinner Graeme Swann and all-rounder Luke Wright for their forthcoming one-day international tour of Sri Lanka.

Swann has been recalled seven years after his last England appearance, while Wright, who made a half century on his debut against India last year, gets a further chance to impress.

Swann, 28, who bowled just five overs when he made his only appearance of the tour of South Africa in Bloemfontein in January 2000, admitted he thought his England career was over.

"You start to think that at some stage but I hoped it hadn't. I now hope to go to Sri Lanka and get in the team," he told Sky Sports News.

"If the wickets are turning I've got to make sure I bowl well enough to earn a place in the side."

"This season things have gone really well for me at Nottinghamshire and I'm glad to have got the recognition."

"I got the phone call yesterday. It's been hard to keep a lid on, I've been really excited."

Ravi Bopara and Ryan Sidebottom have both been named in the squad despite nagging injuries. Bopara has a thumb injury and Sidebottom is recovering from a side

strain.

Chairman of selectors, David Graveney, said: "The selectors were delighted with many aspects of the team's performance against India."

"We have retained Luke Wright in the squad to tour Sri Lanka following his impressive debut last week and made one change to the original squad named for The NatWest Series against India with Graeme Swann replacing Chris Tremlett.

"The local conditions in Sri Lanka are, of course, favourable to spin bowling and Graeme's inclusion in the squad will give us the option of fielding two spinners in our starting line-up if required."

England wicketkeeper Matt Prior was not given a central contract for the 2007-08 season.

SQUAD

Paul Collingwood (captain), James Anderson, Ian Bell, Ravi Bopara, Stuart Broad, Alastair Cook, Andrew Flintoff, Dimitri Mascarenhas, Monty Panesar, Kevin Pietersen, Matthew Prior, Owais Shah, Ryan Sidebottom, Graeme Swann, Luke Wright.

Collingwood confident

AFP, Johannesburg



England's 4-3 one-day series win over India last week had given the team confidence to do well in the inaugural Twenty20 World Championship, captain Paul Collingwood said on Monday.

"We have got experienced Twenty20 cricketers amongst our squad and hopefully they can give us a little bit of an edge over the other teams."

"We are all looking forward to it, we are buzzing. It has only been a couple of days since we won against India on Saturday and I think that a hosts' extracted revenge in the one-dayers."

Collingwood said the team was excited by the series win and looked forward to doing well in the

Twenty20 event despite lack of adequate preparation.

"We played some fantastic cricket against India and we come into the world Twenty20 with a lot of confidence," Collingwood told reporters here.

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Know the bashers

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shots in the burnt copybook of fast bowling! With fast hands, he will take care of the outfield for the Black Caps. Sixes: 139.

Chris Gayle

Chris Gayle would like to add to his just a single over-boundary in this form of the game. And your bet is as good as mine. He will. His attitude to be the calm person in the middle cannot overwhelm his aggressive batting. His partnership with Shiv Chanderpal could be the winning factor for West Indies. Sixes: 129.

Virender Sehwag

Virender Sehwag is on a comeback trail. His opening salvo with Pakistan would be a key battle for himself as well as his side. Once the Tendulkar-look-alike, Sehwag has since moved on and has created his own niche of chipping the ball, lethal drives and yes, the

upper-cut. Sixes: 116.

Andrew Symonds

Andrew Symonds will smash them a long way. His 16 sixes in an innings is still a world record in first-class cricket. A soft-spoken man, Symonds can shift gears as fast as you can say shift. He must bring his A game -- fielding and bowling included -- if Australia are to become the first T20 champions. Sixes: 103.

Kevin Pietersen

Kevin Pietersen could have been the most wanted taped-tennis player if he was in Bangladesh. Bowlers find it hard to bowl yorkers at him; that's good. This competition is supposed to be England's domain and if the inventors (yet again) of this form are to flourish, they'd need KP to strut his stuff in the middle. Sixes: 82.

Aftab Ahmed

Aftab Ahmed could be the smallest of

the big-hitters but this pocket dynamo from Chittagong riles the opposition.

With lightning fast hand-eye coordination and a penchant to use the inner-circle restrictions, Aftab is a gift when it comes to this fast-paced game. He will also be responsible for patrolling the 30-yard circle because he is the best fielder in Bangladesh. Sixes: 51.

Elton Chigumbura

Elton Chigumbura enjoys the lofted drive. For Zimbabwe to make a stir in this competition, big Elton should play that lofted drive everytime he has to. He is 21 but don't let age judge his maturity. With the likes of Brendan Taylor and the returned Tatenda Taibu in the batting line-up, Elton can share the load of six-hitting. Sixes: 41.

U-14 tennis

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The participating countries are Sri Lanka, India, Pakistan, Vietnam, Japan, Myanmar, Malaysia and hosts Bangladesh.

Sponsor Prime Bank will provide Tk 4,00,000 out of the Tk 4,50,000 total budget.

Meanwhile, the Asian Open Development Fund (AODF) will donate US \$2,000 to 40 host countries per year through Asian Tennis Federation (ATF) to run the tournament.

Bangladesh will receive US \$2,000 for the tournament as the host country.

Bangladesh Tennis Federation general secretary Sanau Haq disclosed the details of the tournament at a press conference at the Ramma Tennis Complex yesterday afternoon.

Prime Bank managing director M Shajahan Bhuiyan was also present on the occasion.

Swann, Wright for England

AFP, London

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