



Did U Know?

The very first postage stamp depicting a chess motif was issued in Bulgaria in 1947.



Talk Turkey



Mahendra Singh Dhoni
(India's one-day captain)
"It (victory) means a lot. We wanted to prove that the victory (in the World Twenty20 Championship in South Africa) was not a fluke." After winning the one-off Twenty20 international against Australia on Saturday.



What to Watch

BTV
National Cricket League
Dhaka v Khulna
Live from 9:30am

TEN Sports
Pakistan v South Africa
Third ODI
Live from 12:00pm

ESPN
Sportscenter India
Sports News



11th SA Games in Dec 2009?

The Bangladesh Olympic Association (BOA) is contemplating to put back the 11th SA (South Asian) Games further after the event already suffered one deferral.

The Games were originally scheduled for December 2008 in Dhaka but the organisers had settled for a January 2009 date recently.

BOA's acting secretary general Kutubuddin Ahmed yesterday informed that they are thinking to host the Games in December 2009, one year behind the initial schedule.

He said that it was only in the planning.

"The country will go through busy time in that period," Kutub told referring to the general elections and political activities. "So we want to hold it in the latter part of 2009."

The BOA will submit the proposal at SA Games' member countries' meeting in December, which has been deferred from November on request from Pakistan due to their involvement in the Islamic Solidarity Games, informed Kutub, also the secretary of the 11th SA Games working committee.

The fate of the Games as well as the disciplines to be held would be finalised in the meeting.

It can be noted that financial crisis of the government could also be a reason behind BOA's plans to defer the eight-year event.

Sports Adviser Tapan Chowdhury, last month mentioned about financial crisis of the government, which showed its worries over the huge Tk 89-crore budget for the Games.

Batsmen rescue Dhaka Khulna benefit in exciting draw

SPORTS REPORTER



The opening round match of the 9th National Cricket League between heavyweights Khulna and Dhaka ended in a draw yesterday but there was no shortage of excitement on the final day of the four-day match at the Mirpur Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium.

Brilliant batsmanship of Dhaka skipper Mohammad Ashraful was the highlight of the day as the prolific right-hander's 85-run knock not only salvaged a draw for the home side but also had raised hopes of winning the game at one stage under difficult conditions -- the ball kept low while the outfield was slowish.

Left-handed batsman Mehrab Hossain also deserved some credit as the number five kept cool during his unbeaten 184-ball 62, as Dhaka -- needing 224 runs on the day after resuming on 72-2 -- scored 284 for eight while chasing a winning target of 314.

While Ashraful expressed his satisfaction over the outcome, his counterpart Habibul Bashar was disappointed because of some missed opportunities despite the fact that his side secured eleven points against the hosts' four bonus points.

"I am specially happy because the way both the teams fought in the match. It was not easy to make runs on this kind of surface," said national skipper Ashraful.

"I think we were deprived of an outright victory because of our poor fielding as we slipped as many as four vital catches," said Bashar.

Overnight three, Ashraful gave two early chances. But Syed Rassel dropped a sitter at mid-off off Mashrafe Bin Mortaza. Ashraful never looked back on way to execute a well-composed knock.

A victory looked on sight when he paired with Mehrab for the fourth wicket in front of a lively crowd after overnight batsman Javed Omar was caught behind off the bowling Shakhil Al Hasan for 45. However, leading paceman Mashrafe broke the 76-run stand in his very first over after lunch to shatter Dhaka's hopes.

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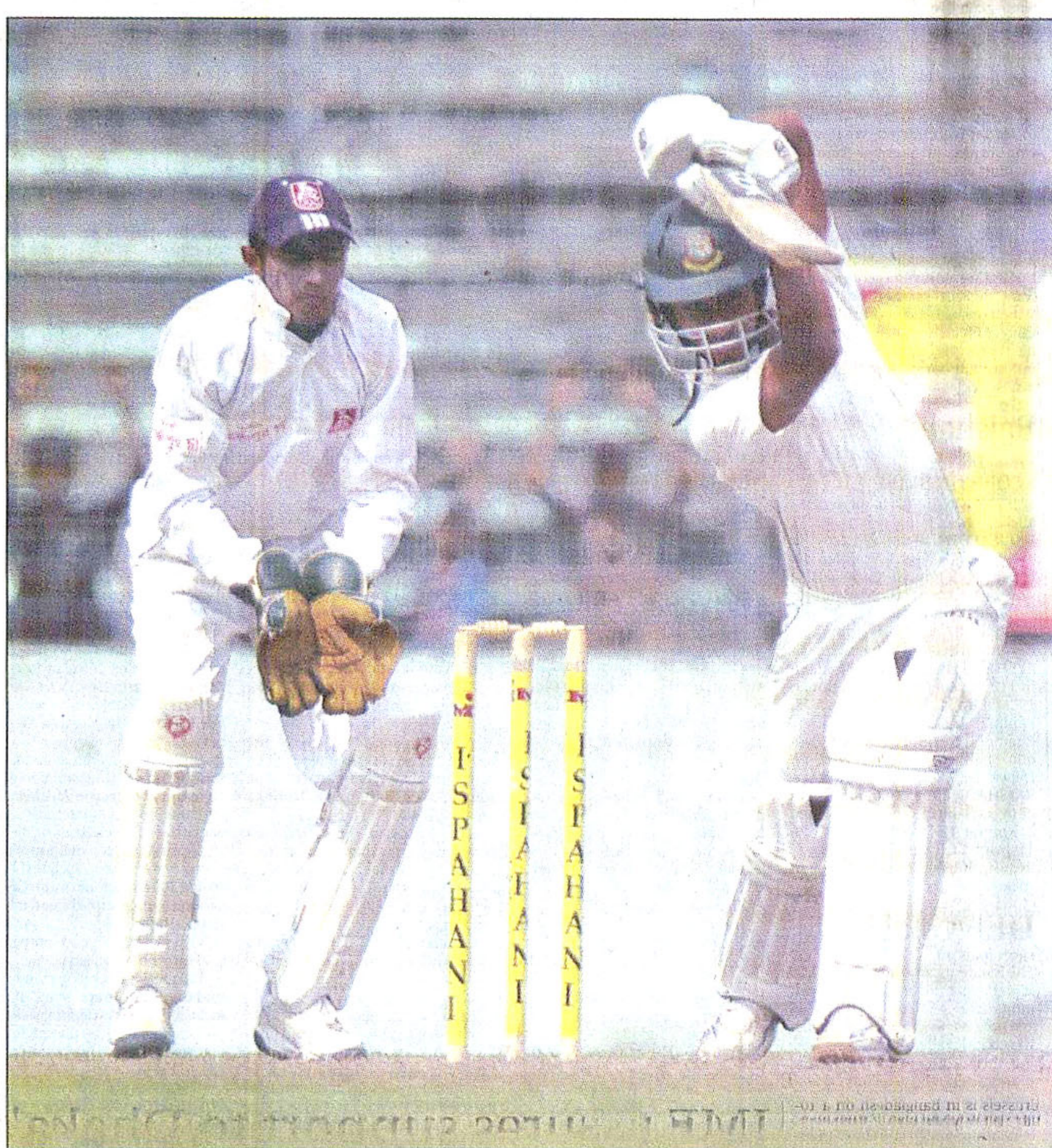
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Dhaka and Bangladesh captain Mohammad Ashraful plays a copybook front foot drive during his match-saving knock of 85 against Khulna on the fourth and final day of the 9th National Cricket League at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

Rajshahi, Barisal win

SPORTS REPORTER



As expected Rajshahi secured maximum points in the first round of the Ispahani Mirzapore Tea 9th National Cricket League from the match against Sylhet while Barisal made a great start with an outright victory against Chittagong on the final day of the four-day games at different venues across the country yesterday.

At the Rajshahi Divisional Stadium, the hosts put an end to Sylhet's second innings resistance on the final day morning to taste a comfortable eight-wicket victory which ensured them to collect maximum 15 points from the first round, one point advantage over Barisal.

Barisal showed their mettle in the chase on the fourth day to beat Chittagong by five wickets at the Shaheed Chandu Stadium in Bogra.

Chittagong and Sylhet both gained only four bonus points each from this round.

RAJSHAHI-SYLHET

Left-arm spinner Suhrawardy Shuvo picked up four wickets for 93 runs as Sylhet were bundled out for 258 in their second essay to set a meagre 99-run winning target for the last year's runners-up team.

Rajshahi reached the target by losing two wickets in 28 overs as Jahurul Islam made an unbeaten 39 off 66 balls with the help of four boundaries and a six and Naeem Islam was not out with 23 off 42 balls that saw four fours.

Sylhet started the day on 167-4 with an aim for a draw. But Shuvo gave the first breakthrough to snap the two overnight batsmen's resistance as national wicketkeeper Mushfiqur Rahim added only five runs to his overnight score of 22 while new ball bowler Mohammad Shahjada sent skipper Rajin Saleh to wicketkeeper-captain Khaled Mashud quickly to dismiss any turnaround hopes of the visitors.

Resuming the day on 53, Rajin was dismissed for 68 runs off 186 balls that included 10 boundaries. Shahjada claimed three wickets

for 70 runs in 27 overs.

BARISAL-CHITTAGONG

Barisal thrived on two half-centuries from Roquibul Hasan and Raisul Islam to chase down the Chittagong's respectable target on the fourth day to secure eight points for their outright victory.

Chasing a target of 220, Barisal lost skipper Shahriar Nafees for only two runs on the board but out-of-favour opener Hannan Sarkar first repaired the damage during his 47-run second wicket stand with Imran Ahmed (19) and then accumulated 68 runs for the third wicket with Roquibul to give the

foundation for the win.

Hannan, who hit three boundaries during his 125-ball innings, fell one run short of his fifty.

Roquibul however didn't miss it as he made 55 off 132 balls with the help of three boundaries while Raisul finished the job with an unbeaten 54 off 93 balls that featured six boundaries.

Saju Datta took three wickets for 61 runs.

Earlier, Chittagong were bowled out for 317 after resuming the day at 307-9.

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An all smiles Raisul Islam (L) walks back to the dressing room with Nasiruddin Faruque after leading Barisal to a five-wicket win against Chittagong on the fourth day of their National Cricket League match at the Shaheed Chandu Stadium in Bogra yesterday.

AFC U-16 QUALIFIERS Bangladesh lose to Turkmenistan

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh youth football team lost their third match in the AFC Championship (Under-16) qualifiers as they went down against Turkmenistan 3-1 at the Military Physical Education Centre ground in Abu Dhabi yesterday.

It was their second successive defeat in the competition. Bangladesh lost their second match against UAE 9-1 after an identical margin victory over Palestine in their Group D opener.

The winners led the first-half by a solitary goal, scored by Rusik in the 28th minute. Vahyt scored the other two for Turkmenistan in the second-half -- first from a free kick in the 50th minute and the second from a penalty in the 82nd.

Saddam scored the consolation goal for Bangladesh in the 84th minute with a powerful shot.

Bangladesh will play Uzbekistan and Tajikistan in their remaining matches on October 25 and 28 respectively.

Proteas may not play in Karachi

AFP, Faisalabad

South Africa play Pakistan in the third one-day international at the Iqbal Stadium here on Tuesday with uncertainty prevailing over their final match in the southern city of Karachi later this month.

The South Africans appear reluctant to play in Karachi where a suicide bomber ripped through a rally of former prime minister Benazir Bhutto killing at least 140 people and injuring over 500 last Friday.

A Pakistan Cricket Board official said the South African management was likely to take a decision on Monday if they would be going to Karachi for the October 29 match.

"They don't appear keen on going to Karachi because of the changed circumstances there after the bomb blast. We have discussed some options with them including playing the final match in Multan or shifting it to Lahore," the official said.

The South Africans had a practice session at the Iqbal Stadium in tight security with the police taking no chances by not authorising any car parking a fair distance from the stadium and also the team hotel.

The security officials have also changed the plans to take the South African team to Multan for the fourth match by road and they will now fly by air to the central city.

Third SA-Pak ODI today

Cricket

CRICINFO, Faisalabad

Faisalabad's Iqbal Stadium provides one of the more festive cricket-watching experiences in Pakistan. With a capacity of 19,000 -- packed even during bare run-fests such as the India-Pakistan 2006 Test -- it is no heaving amphitheatre of sport, but its openness provides a delightful personal interaction with the contest.

If you sit right, you can ask a fast bowler at the top of his run what he'll bowl next; as a spectator you are expected to double as a fielder anywhere around the ground. The amusement park within the complex helps with the merriment. If the swing is timed right, the pirate ship should allow a decent if intermittent view of the game.

Next door is an auditorium named after one of Faisalabad's most famous product, Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan; a stadium named after a poet and an auditorium next to it named after a qawwal means the venue must be one of the more artistically-inclined around the world.

What happens on the field on Tuesday, between South Africa and Pakistan, should add to the festivities. If you ignore last year's ODI against West Indies (when Pakistan lost eight wickets chasing 152), the pitch is traditionally partial to runs. Mickey Arthur, South Africa's coach, didn't see anything in the 22-yard pale brown strip contrary to that belief. Add small boundaries and big hitters to the mix and a typically modern, run-heavy ODI awaits.

"It looks like a very good deck. Much fresher than the last wicket we played on and we're quite happy about that," said Arthur.

Criticising a pitch that produced over 500 runs and a century is a peculiarly contemporary condition but middle-overs spin, on a used surface, stumped South Africa as much as six wickets between two fast bowlers.

But that has been South Africa's only aberration through a commanding tour. And despite the loss, there remain few real concerns with morale or personnel. "We played really well through the tour and we had a little stutter at Lahore," said Arthur. "We've set ourselves extremely high goals through this competition. We've set our team high standards and we

need to maintain those standards. Lifting the boys after that loss will be no issue."

Arthur admitted, at a push, that only one position is under scrutiny, without revealing further, but also added, "we'll probably given them a chance again." Such is the mood that not even poor returns from Jacques Kallis and Justin Kemp (1 and 8 in the two ODIs) is a worry just yet. "I don't foresee too many changes. We want to be pretty consistent. Our top order has been good. We didn't get the start we wanted in Lahore. Everybody has performed their roles to their abilities."

"We've asked Kemp to bat at 5. It's a role he knows and he can fulfil. He is wasted down the order as he gives us major impetus if he bats a long time. He's done really well for us of late and we're going to give him every opportunity to cement that position."

Despite levelling the series, a few issues remain to be resolved for Pakistan. From the top, Yasir Hameed is likely to replace Imran Nazir as a partner for Kamran Akmal, the third different combination in three matches. A more deserving change is hard to imagine: 41, 57, 71, 41, 10, 50 and 22 are

SEE PAGE 18 COL 6

Booters' long journey begins tomorrow

SPORTS REPORTER



The 18-member Bangladesh football team will leave Dhaka tomorrow afternoon for Bangkok en route to Dushanbe to play their second leg match of the 2010 World Cup pre-qualifiers against Tajikistan.

Syed Nayeemuddin's boys will start directly from their residential camp at BKSP to board a Thai Airways flight at 1.30pm at the Zia International Airport.

The team will fly to Uzbekistan from the Thailand capital for a stopover at Tashkent, informed Bangladesh Football Federation

(BFF) officials last night.

Much to the relief of the footballers, the journey will be shortened as they will not have to travel from Tashkent to Dushanbe by road as it had been earlier learned.

They will have to take a two-hour drive from the Uzbek capital before boarding a domestic flight for Dushanbe, where they reach on October 25.

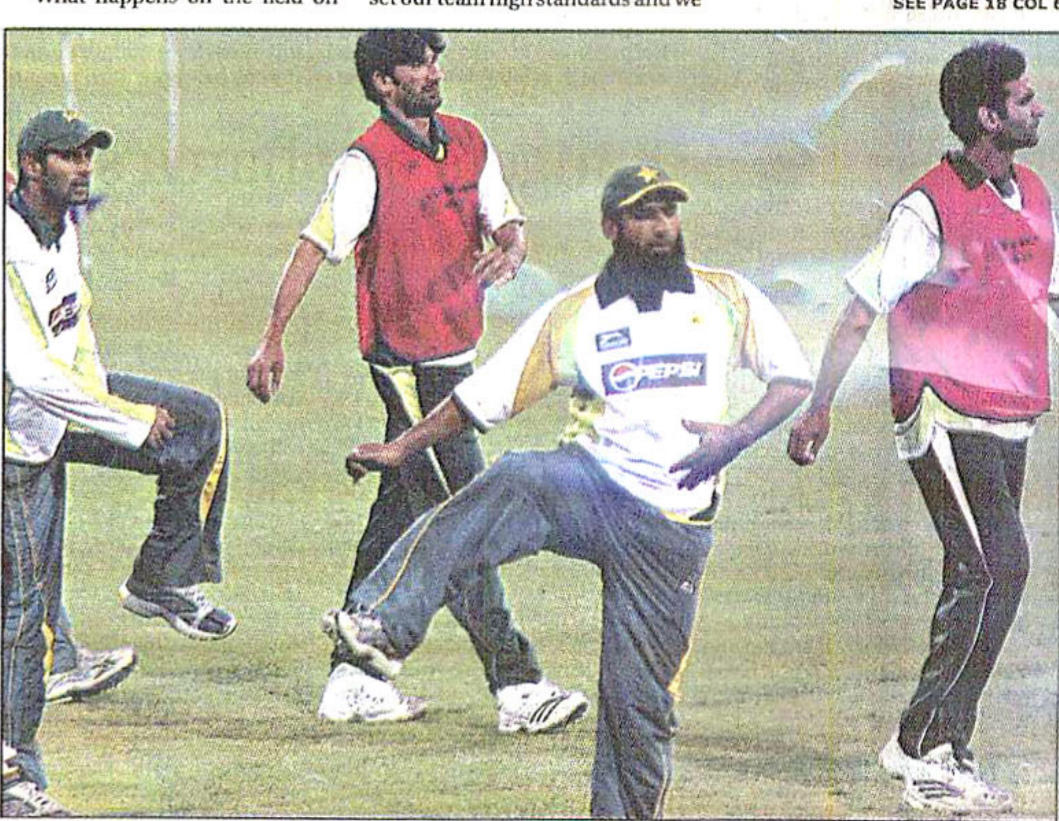
The trip, involving a series of breaks which forced the team to get visas for Thailand as well as Uzbekistan, is going to cost the BFF a massive 23-24 lakh Taka.

The away match will be played on October 28 with Bangladesh needing to beat the Central Asians or at least draw 2-2 to reach the second stage of Asian qualifiers for

the South Africa World Cup.

The weather forecast for the period Bangladesh will stay in the former Soviet state, however, is bad news for the visitors who will face bitter cold. The temperature is expected to fall as low as three degrees (Celsius) with prediction of rain, which could make things worse.

Bangladesh drew 1-1 with the Tajiks in the first leg on October 8 at home with heavy showers and an unstable pitch helping the hosts who had lost all three previous games to their World Cup bane Tajikistan, who had won 2-0 and 2-0 in the pre-qualifiers for the 2006 World Cup in 2003 and 6-1 in the AFC Challenge Cup in Dhaka last year.



WARMING UP FOR ANOTHER TON! Pakistan batsman Mohammad Yousuf (C), who hit a century in the second one-day, trains with his teammates at the Iqbal Stadium in Faisalabad yesterday ahead of the third ODI against South Africa.