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Did U Know?

Badminton was included for the first time in the XII Pan American Games in 1995.



Chaminda Vaas
(Sri Lanka fast bowler)
"I give myself one more year in Test cricket and in that time I hope to take 350 wickets before I quit."
While revealing his plan to retire from international cricket in 2008.



What to Watch

DD National
India v Pakistan
Second Test, Day Four
Live from 10:00am

TEN Sports
Sri Lanka v England
First Test, Day Three
Live from 11:00am

ESPN
English Premier League
Man United v Fulham
Live from 12:55am (Tuesday)

Gen Moeen gets BNS probe report

SPORTS REPORTER

Nearly eight weeks after the press box at the Bangabandhu National Stadium collapsed, the investigation report by National Sports Council (NSC) reached the hands of its chairman yesterday.

The NSC chairman and Army Chief General Moeen U Ahmed is expected to give the directives to the NSC to take measures against the guilty within a few days.

The roof of the press box crashed during a rainstorm on October 8 following the World Cup pre-qualifying match between Bangladesh and Tajikistan.

The NSC had formed a 5-member probe committee on the next day with NSC director Abdur Rahman as its chairman.

The committee took nearly two months to complete its mission and the delay was mainly caused by unavailability of the laboratory test reports in time.

The two organisations to run the tests, Military Institute of Science and Technology (MIST) and Bangladesh University of Engineering Technology (BUET), collected materials from the crash site after Eid and Pujia vacations in October and handed over the test results to the probe committee on October 31 and November 10 respectively.

Dilip not to resign

CRICINFO, undated

Dilip Vengsarkar left Kolkata late on Saturday, after informing the board president of bereavement in Mumbai and requesting permission to fly home. It has been speculated that Vengsarkar was upset at the board's decision to disallow him from writing columns and therefore left Kolkata in a huff after latest discussions with Sharad Pawar, the board president, failed to result in a softening of the BCCI's stance.

However, sources in the BCCI confirmed that Vengsarkar had not offered to resign and was not

SEE PAGE 18 COL 1

Akmal, Haq defy India

Cricket

AFP, Kolkata

Kamran Akmal and Misbahul Haq cracked impressive centuries under pressure to sustain Pakistan's hopes of avoiding the follow-on in the second Test against India here on Sunday.

Akmal scored a solid 119 for his fifth hundred and Misbah 108 not out for his maiden ton, as Pakistan recovered from 150-5 to post 358-6 in their first innings at stumps on the third day in reply to India's 616-5 declared.

The tourists, trailing 1-0 in the three-Test series, now require 59 more runs with four wickets in hand to make India bat again in the match.

In-form Misbah and wicketkeeper Akmal counter-attacked to put on 207 for the sixth wicket. They kept the Indian attack at bay for more than two sessions with their responsible knocks.

Pakistan found the right pair just when they looked like conceding a huge advantage to India. They were in trouble in the morning after losing four big wickets in the space of 73 runs in a poor batting display

on a good track.

Akmal, 25, was more aggressive and was the first to reach three figures -- his fourth ton against India -- when he cut paceman Munaf Patel for a four. He then removed his helmet and touched the ground with his forehead.

"It was tough when I went in to bat as we had lost four wickets. It was the toughest of my centuries. I was under pressure to perform. The instruction from the coach and captain was to bat as long as possible," said Akmal.

"I am disappointed that I got out at the wrong time. I should have batted out the day. Our aim now is to save the follow-on Monday morning."

The 33-year-old Misbah, playing only his ninth Test, reached his hundred when he turned leg-spinner Anil Kumble to square-leg for a four. He has so far struck 10 boundaries in his 204-ball knock.

The pair required both luck and pluck to pull their team out of trouble, with Misbah offering a chance on 22 and Akmal on 87.

Kumble was the bowler to suffer in the morning when Sachin Tendulkar dropped Misbah at mid-wicket and then left-arm seamer Zaheer Khan saw Patel floor a catch

at long-leg to let off Akmal.

The lapses proved costly as both Misbah and Akmal went on to dominate the Indian attack with their attractive strokeplay. Akmal was bowled by off-spinner Harbhajan Singh in the day's penultimate over after hitting 20 fours.

India struggled after claiming four wickets in the first session, with Harbhajan taking two, and Kumble and Patel one apiece.

"Misbah and Akmal batted well. Misbah is a quality batsman and plays spin very well. We all know that Akmal is a gutsy batsman and has scored centuries against us in similar circumstances," said Harbhajan.

"We can still win the match and seal the series. The first session Monday will be very important. We need to get four wickets early and then decide what to do. A result has to come in this match."

Harbhajan put Pakistan on the back foot when he dismissed overnight batsman Salman Butt (42) and experienced Mohammad Yousuf (six) in successive overs to spark early celebrations.

Butt added 16 to his overnight score of 26 before former captain Rahul Dravid at slip caught him.

SEE PAGE 18 COL 6

Ash asks vital question

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

Under the guidance of new coach, Bangladesh cricket team started their training yesterday for the demanding tour of New Zealand to prove that they have improved since their last tour to the country Down Under six years back.

Inspired by his one-year extension as captain, Mohammad Ashraful however believed that Bangladesh cricket took a few steps forward from their last visit to New Zealand in 2001 where they suffered innings defeats in both Tests.

"Playing New Zealand in their own conditions is always a tough challenge for any team in the world and it has become a much tougher for teams like us. But we improved a lot in the last few years, especially by proving that we can challenge any team in one-day matches," said Ashraful, who scored only 28 runs in four outings in his last New Zealand visit.

Bangladesh however did not

play a full series in their first tour as there were no one-day matches but this time they are going to start the series with a three-match ODI series after playing couple of practice matches.

The training camp got underway with all fifteen players for the one-day series under the supervision of Siddons, the former assistant coach of Australia whom many believe to be a hard taskmaster and will put some new things in training.

Paul Chapman, in his last working day with the Tigers, headed the fitness session and that was followed by Siddons' introductory session with his charges where he also presented his ideas on a projector.

"We had preliminary discussions on the first day and our new coach shared some ideas about his planning. Everybody has their own style but I think the basic is still the same. Actually the ultimate question is whether we have improved or not," said Ashraful while reflecting on the new coach's first meeting with the players.

The ace batsman said that they have to make sure that during

practice the players get some ideas about the awaiting conditions.

"I am relatively happy with the boys' performances in the National Cricket League and it is always good to play some matches before a series. But the problem is that there is a big difference playing at home and in New Zealand conditions. I was not happy with the condition in which we have played the matches," explained Ashraful, who had fleeting form in the first-class competition.

"So we have to make it up as much as we can during the practice sessions. The good news is that we have some build-up games before the start of the one-day series," he demanded.

The right-handed batsman was happy with the fact that the board extended his tenure as skipper till December next year.

"The decisions will definitely help me a lot in order to lead properly. I can now design my own way that would not have been possible if I had the job in a series-to-series system. But main thing is that I have to perform well first," said an excited Ashraful.



SO, HOW ARE DOING? New Bangladesh cricket coach Jamie Siddons (L) exchanges views with captain Mohammad Ashraful (R) and assistant coach Sarwar Imran during a break from the inaugural day's practice session at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday. The Australian coach began his stint with the Tigers yesterday.

Charity series starts today

Abahani, Mohammedan ready to roll

Football

SPORTS REPORTER

Mohammedan Sporting Club will be playing their third match inside four days when they take on archrivals Abahani in a charity football match today.

It would be the first match of the Teletalk Best of Three Series, organised by the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF), to raise fund for the distressed people of the southern part of the country which was ripped through by Cyclone Sidr last month.

All three matches -- on December 3, 5 and 7 -- will start at 4.30pm at the Bangabandhu

National Stadium with the two arch-foes of the city fighting for prestige and glory. The matches will be settled in tiebreakers in case of a draw after regulation 90 minutes.

Sports Secretary Golam Mostafa Talukder will inaugurate the series as chief guest.

A rally was held yesterday morning from the Bangabandhu National Stadium to Jatiya Press Club as part of the event's promotion. Tickets (gallery Tk 30 daily, Tk 75 for all three matches and VIP Tk 100) will be available at stadium booths today.

Mohammedan coach Shafiqul Islam Manik yesterday admitted that his side might look tired after playing in two exhibition matches on Friday

and Saturday in Sylhet and Tangail.

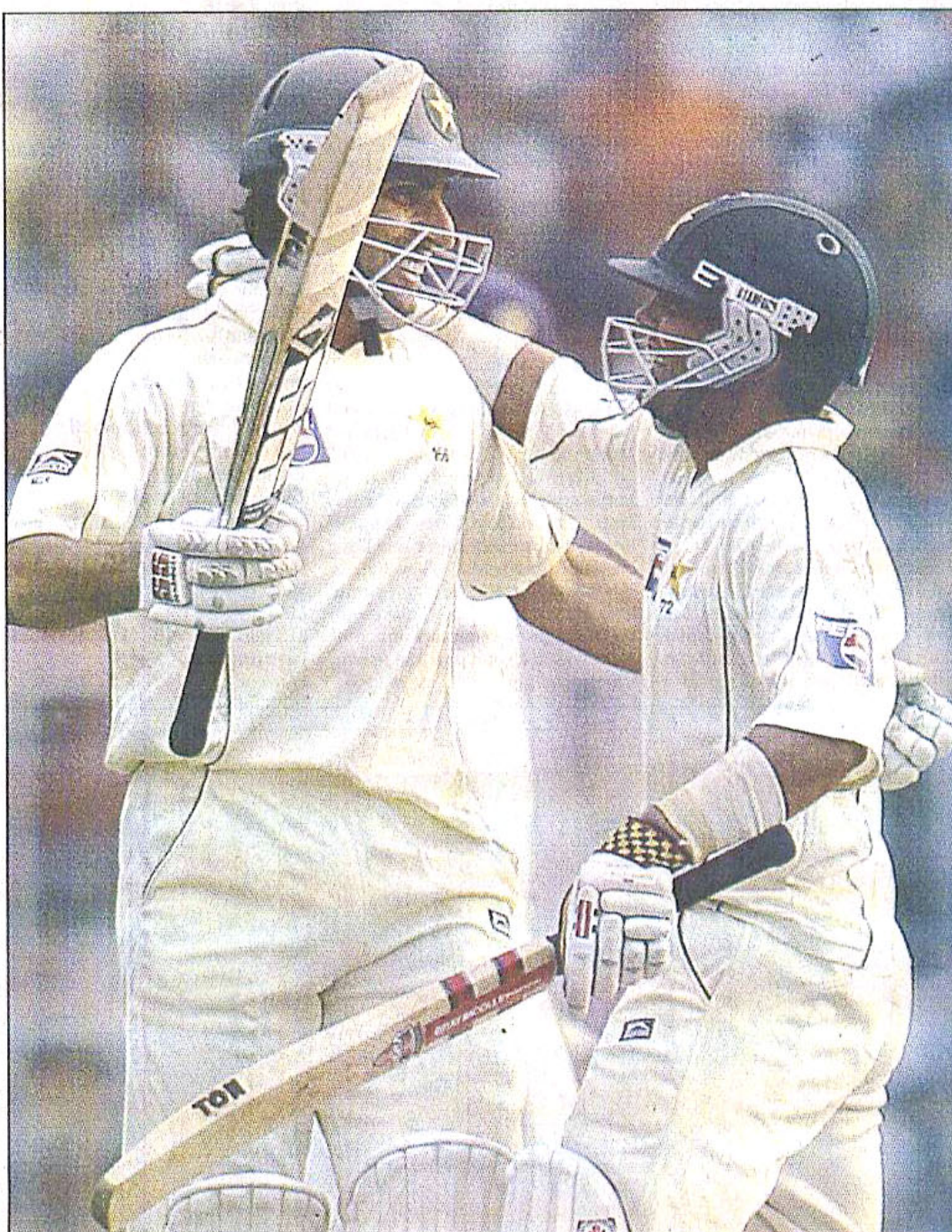
"We haven't got enough recovery time after a lot of journey to play those matches," said Manik.

"It might affect performance but we can't do anything about it now. The two matches outside the capital were hastily arranged," said the former national footballer, who will take the new-look black and whites to the pitch.

Mohammedan, who finished runners-up in the inaugural professional football league, had used six foreign footballers in the B. League but neither of them is here now.

Instead, they go with two mediocre foreign players -- Mark Manjabin and Charles Figo -- in

SEE PAGE 18 COL 2



OUT OF IMMINENT DANGER: Pakistan batsman Misbahul Haq (L) hugs Kamran Akmal after he hit his maiden century on the third day of the second Test against India at the Eden Gardens in Kolkata yesterday. Wicketkeeper Akmal also scored a century.

ACC U-15s meet turns into farce

INTERNET, undated

After being accused of fielding over-aged players, Team Nepal have been disqualified from the ACC U-15 Elite Cup 2007 by the Asian Cricket Council (ACC). Nepal had won the title on two occasions in the past.

In the competition being held in Kathmandu, eight among the ten teams (that includes semifinalists Afghanistan, Hong Kong and Nepal) were disqualified after being found fielding over-aged players. Now the remaining two teams, Singapore and Kuwait, who were found to be fielding less than three over-aged players in their squads, will vie for the prestigious title Monday evening.

ACC had taken this difficult decision after the results of the Age-Verification Program conducted on 140 players of the 10 countries concluded that the eight teams including Nepal had fielded players above 15 years of age.

"In instances where more than

SEE PAGE 18 COL 4

WI level in style

CRICINFO, undated

After being embarrassed in the first match of the series on Friday, West Indies hit back with a convincing performance, showing far more intensity with the bat and in the field to run away with a 110-run win and level the five-match series. Put in to bat on a surface offering some early seam and swing, West Indies posted 286 -- with handsome contributions from Runako Morton and Chris Gayle -- and then took wickets at regular intervals to ensure that Zimbabwe were never in the hunt.

The defeat in the first game was marked by utter listlessness in all aspects, but today's display showed that loss had clearly stung the team. The urgency was apparent from the start, and no-one demonstrated it more than Morton, whose 94-ball 79 was in sharp contrast to his lacklustre half-century a couple of days back, when he potted around and appeared clueless against the spinners.

Seeing his obvious discomfort against spin, the team management promoted him to No.3, dropping Shivnarine Chanderpaul, the centurion in that match, to No.4, and the move paid off handsomely. After Devon Smith's first-over dismissal, Gayle and Morton combined in a 120-run partnership

SEE PAGE 18 COL 6

Gibbs gives SA series

Cricket

AFP, Cape Town

Herschelle Gibbs hit a majestic century as South Africa cruised to a series-clinching five-wicket win in the third and final one-day international against New Zealand at Newlands Sunday.

Gibbs made 119 off 101 balls as South Africa chased down New Zealand's 238 for eight with 28 balls to spare.

Playing on his home ground, Gibbs raced to fifty off 40 balls and reached his 19th one-day international century off 77 deliveries with ten fours and sixes.

Gibbs took the attack to the New Zealand bowlers from the start, hitting two boundaries in each of Mark Gillespie's first two overs, then lifting Kyle Mills for a straight six. Gillespie was replaced by Jacob Oram and Gibbs hit his first ball for another six.

Gibbs slowed down after reaching his century but there was one more six before he top-edged a sweep against New Zealand captain and left-arm spinner Daniel Vettori to be caught at deep midwicket.

Gibbs dominated an opening partnership of 173 with captain Graeme Smith. When he reached his century the total was 136 and Smith was on 29.

While Gibbs made batting look ridiculously easy, Smith battled his way to 51, surviving chances on 23 and 44. Smith was playing despite a scan which showed he had an enlarged spleen after contracting a virus on a tour of Pakistan in October.

New Zealand hit back after Smith was caught at deep midwicket off Vettori, with Gibbs following four overs later, to be

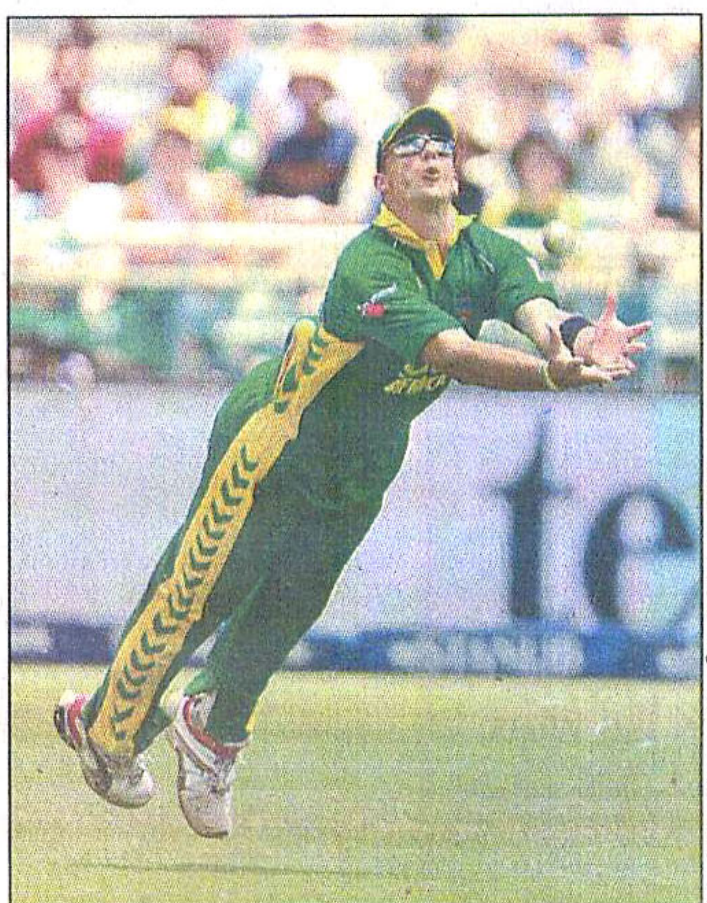
followed quickly by AB de Villiers and JP Duminy. Four wickets fell for 18 runs. Vettori was mainly responsible for the slump, taking three for 33.

Jacques Kallis and Mark Boucher steadied the South African innings, putting on 46 before Kallis

chased a wide ball and was caught behind off part-time bowler Lou Vincent with only two needed to win.

New Zealand struggled early in their innings after winning the toss. Fast bowler Dale Steyn, playing

SEE PAGE 18 COL 2



FLYING FIELDER: Andre Nel of South Africa is about to take the catch offered by Scott Styris of New Zealand during the third and final one-day international at Newlands in Cape Town yesterday.

Fm 89.6

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