

Only Sachin can pull Mumbai up

PTI, Mumbai
Rampaging Delhi Daredevils, who have shot to the top of the table and are firing on all cylinders, take on the wobbly Mumbai Indians in the Indian Premier League clash at the D Y Patil Stadium today in hot and humid conditions.

The home team has sorely missed its captain and injured icon player Sachin Tendulkar in their first five matches and the non-tooth-encouraging news is the master batsman is still not feeling 100 per cent fit.

A lot hinges on Tendulkar's availability for the tie if Mumbai Indians are to stun the high-flying Delhi outfit captained by another icon player in the Twenty20 League, Virender Sehwag.

Tendulkar played his first match on Friday, albeit against a team made up of his own teammates, after more than a month and fielded for the whole of the opposition's 20-over innings and also batted.

He is to take a final call on whether he is fit to play the match only today and the hosts are hoping fervently he's available to play his first competitive game since turning out for India against South Africa in the first Test at Chennai in March-end.

Fox and Nine combine for 2011 WC
Channel Ten's move into cricket broadcasting with the Indian Premier League has not yet extended to international coverage after Fox Sports and the Nine Network picked up the rights to all ICC events until 2011.

Ten's bid for the IPL was reported to be up to 15 million dollars and there have been suggestions they will attempt to end Nine's hold on the local market when the current deal expires in 2013.

Fox Sports and Nine will show the 2011 World Cup and the Champions Trophy in 2008 and 2010. "We are genuinely delighted to have formed this partnership which underscores the long-term commitment we have to investing in first-class content," Nine's David Gynell said in the Daily Telegraph. "Nine is committed to bringing Australian audiences the best free television coverage from the cricket."

Mushie's knee operated on

AFP, London
Sussex spinner Mushtaq Ahmed could be out of action for up to three weeks after undergoing keyhole knee surgery, his club revealed Thursday.

The former Pakistan international was admitted to hospital on Wednesday evening after the county champions decided to bring forward the planned operation.

Mark Robinson, Sussex's professional cricket manager, said: "We made the decision very quickly on the Wednesday morning. We were originally hoping that we would just play him in four day cricket up to the Twenty20 window where he'd then have the operation."

New EC body of Swadhinata formed

SPORTS REPORTER
The executive committee for 2008-09 of the Swadhinata Krira Sangha was formed recently with Md Jasim Uddin Khan Khokon and Syed Saifur Rahman Tulu made president and general secretary respectively.

The four vice-presidents are Shahid Hossain Swapan, Zakir Hossain, Ajmat Ullah Khandaker and Shamsuddin Shaheen.

Besides the committee has three assistant general secretaries in Mahmudur Rahman Litu, Golam Gaus and Anisuzzaman Bobin, said a press release.



Did U Know?
During the 1932 Walker Cup, golfer Leonard Crawley accidentally hit his ball in the wrong direction and it ended up hitting and denting the Walker Cup trophy.



Delhi captain Virender Sehwag raises his bat upon reaching a blazing half-century against Chennai in the Indian Premier League at the MA Chidambaram Stadium in Chennai on Friday.

A day of Marshalls

Cricket
Ten Doeschate took 5-57, underpinning Marshall's 128 as the cornerstone of an innings which saw contributions notably from Aaron Redmond (35), Daniel Flynn (39) and Iain O'Brien.

Redmond hit seven boundaries in his breezy 35, but after Jamie How was lbw to Tony Palladino Ten Doeschate removed Redmond in similar fashion in his first over.

Marshall and Flynn then put on 128 in 25 overs, before the latter drove Ten Doeschate to mid-off, while Jacob Oram, Vettori and Kyle Mills did not last long.

Marshall ploughed on until he gave Ten Doeschate his fifth wicket. New Zealand rallied with Michael Mason and O'Brien frustrating Essex by adding an unbroken 52 late on.

Marshall's 128 came on the same day Hamish, who after limited chances with New Zealand has concentrated on country cricket, brought up a three-figure score for Gloucestershire 166 miles away in Bristol.

With New Zealand set to face England in their first Test on May 15, it was James Marshall's display that has more significance.

"It's nice to get a hundred early in the tour. I was just pleased with the way I constructed the innings on a surface that wasn't easy to bat on," said James.

"There were a lot of shots that probably weren't on today and you had to be mentally strong not to bring those out."

Cook was hurt when he dropped Daniel Vettori at gully off Ryan ten Doeschate, but after an X-ray he is expected to return to duties on day two and against the Kiwis in the Test series.

Laxman showed just how much he has developed as a Twenty20 batsman, adding the leg-side hook to more conventional strokes. The 12th over saw Laxman at his sublime best, as he drove Kumble past extra-cover, used his feet and lofted on the off side, and flicked past midwicket for three fours.

Bangalore's total ultimately turned out to be just enough, but at the halfway stage it seemed they had frittered away another game, as their attempt to solve the riddle of Twenty20 batting came unstuck again. They seemed on course for much more after ten over, when they were cruising at 80 for 1, but then fell away quite predictably in the second half as the Deccan bowlers struck back with regular wickets, in the process exposing -- yet again -- Bangalore's lack of firepower.

Till the halfway stage, the picture was an encouraging one as Jaffer and Kohli laid a perfect platform.

Rajasthan Royals exude confidence

PTI, Jaipur
Now that the Chennai Super Kings have lost their aura of invincibility, a buoyant Shane Warne and his Rajasthan Royals teammates are optimistic of pulling off their fifth straight win when they host the MS Dhoni-led side in the Indian Premier League match here today.

Having won all their previous matches, the Chennai side looked invulnerable till last night when Delhi Daredevils duo of Virender Sehwag and Gautam Gambhir tore them apart, much to the delight of the Rajasthan Royals.

Since their first match defeat against the Daredevils, Rajasthan Royals' graph has shot upwards and fresh from their win against Kolkata Knight Riders, Warne's men are ready to come hard on the depleted Chennai side.

"We don't want to be the fourth team in the semifinal. We are looking for fifth win and one more will place us comfortable. Then we would like to carry on for as many more wins as possible. Our aim is to remain at the top," said Darren Berry, coaching director of the Rajasthan Royals.

The hosts have the resources and strategy to realise their dreams and their strategy of surprising the opponents has paid rich dividends too. Asking Swapnil Asnodkar to open the innings against Kolkata Knight Riders was such a ploy that paid off well.

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Bangalore clinch thriller

FROM PAGE 17
form. The launching pad was ready, but the take-off went completely away. After racing to 44, Jaffer topped a slog-sweep off the impressive Pragyan Ojha, who foxed Kallis in his next over. Kohli perished soon after, and when Misbah was at the receiving end of a poor lbw decision -- the ball from Afridi was drifting down leg -- Bangalore had lost three for nine and had wasted all the good work done earlier.

Dravid's two sixes in the last over from the No. 6 position helped lift the total beyond 150, and in the end, those hits proved decisive.

Through the early part, though, the home team prospered. As usual they lost their first wicket early, as Bharat Chipli inside-edged onto his stumps to ensure that six opening stands have fetched them a grand total of 74 runs. Then came the best passage of batting for Bangalore, as Kohli, promoted to No. 3, justified that move, adding 72 for the second wicket with Jaffer in nine overs.

On an abrasive pitch where the ball tended to stop, neither batsman completely dominated the bowling, but yet they got their runs at a fair clip. In between a few mistimed shots, Jaffer executed some crisp drives, and was prepared to innovate as well, moving across his stumps to Sanjay Bangar and Afridi to clip them to the fine-leg bound-

ary. Kohli was more forceful in his shot-making, getting two sixes, carving Bangar over midwicket and then striking Ojha cleanly over his head.

LOCAL SNIPPETS

SPORTS REPORTER
Jamalpur experienced a mixed day in the Exim Bank 19th National Handball Championship at the Rajshahi Divisional Women's Sports Complex yesterday.

In their first match of the day, Jamalpur eased to a 10-1 victory over Dinajpur but later were crushed 14-0 by Joypurhat.

In the other matches, the hosts and Gaibandha beat Kurigram 13-4 and 7-5 in their respective matches while Naogaon beat Natore 12-5.

National Sports Council deputy director for Rajshahi Division Badaruddin Ahmed inaugurated the zonal meet. Handball Federation assistant general secretary and tournament's organising secretary M Nurul Islam and general secretary of Rajshahi Divisional Sports Association Mahmud Jamal were also present.

NATIONAL CYCLING
Bangladesh Ansar became champions of the NCC Bank 32nd National Cycling Championship that concluded at the Outer Stadium.

The victors secured 17 gold, 9 silver and 7 bronze medals in the meet. Bangladesh Rifles finished a distant second collecting three gold, three silver and four bronze medals while Chittagong came in third with two gold medals.

NCC Bank chairman Tofazzel Hossain was the chief guest at the closing function and distributed the prizes.

Some 100 cyclists from 18 teams took part in the three-day meet for the top slot of the 12 men's and 11 women's events.

DIVII CRICKET
North Bengal Cricket Academy, Gopibagh Friends and Sinha Textiles all chased successfully in their respective Second Division group matches yesterday.

At the Dhaka University ground, Imtiaz struck an unbeaten 45 to guide North Bengal (202-6) to a four-wicket win over Udiya Club (201-9).

Sinha Textiles (179-6) also won by identical margin, beating Young Ones (178 all out) at the Fatullah Cricket Stadium while at the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium, Gopibagh (147-7) beat East End Club (144 all out) by three wickets.

RAJSHAHITWENTY20
RU Correspondent: Town Cricket Club defeated West Zone Cricket Club by three wickets in the Twenty20 Cricket tournament at the Divisional Women's Sports Complex playground yesterday.

After winning the toss, West Zone Cricket Club batted first and made 110 runs in 17 overs before being bowled out. Shafi made 43 and Nehal scored 31. Navid and Ratul claimed two wickets each.

In reply, Town Cricket Club reached their target in 16 overs losing seven wickets. Diky struck a match-winning 62 for Town Cricket Club.

Blatter wishes Salahuddin

SPORTS REPORTER
FIFA president Sep Blatter congratulated newly-elected Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) chief Kazi Salahuddin.

In a faxed letter to Salahuddin, the country's football legend, Blatter stated that the election represents a historical milestone in Bangladesh's football and also appreciated that a former footballer has come forward to take the helm.

Blatter promised his personal support to BFF president Salahuddin saying, "In this task (as president), you can rely on my support and on FIFA assistance to develop football in Bangladesh after years of difficulties for the BFF."

Blatter also conveyed his good wishes to Salahuddin's colleagues after their successful election of April 28.

Delhi snap

FROM PAGE 17
Fleming in his first over, conceded only one run in his final over. Virender Sehwag shuffled his bowlers about -- giving Asif only one over in his opening spell -- and with all his fast bowlers having finished their quotas, he tossed the ball to Rajat Bhatia for the final over. Bhatia, who hadn't bowled in the innings so far, impressed as he conceded only 11.

Delhi have not been greatly affected by the exodus of international players -- they have lost only Daniel Vettori -- and, with a third of the league done, they will fancy their chances of staying at the top of the points table.

SCORES IN BRIEF
CHENNAI SUPER KINGS: 169 for 6 in 20 overs (Patel 21, Fleming 13, Vidyut 54, Dhoni 32, Morkel 28, Raina 3, Badrinath 11 not out; McGrath 1-21, Asif 1-34, Mahesh 1-31, Sehwag 1-21, Bhatia 1-11)
DELHI DAREDEVILS: 172 for 2 in 19 overs (Gambhir 50, Sehwag 71, De Villiers 26 not out, Dhawan 19 not out; Gony 1-29, Sharma 1-35)
Result: Delhi Daredevils won by 8 wickets.
Man-of-the-match: Virender Sehwag.
Umpires: BF Bowden and K Hariharan.
Toss: Chennai Super Kings.

ACA for world club event

Cricket
CRICINFO, undated
The Australian Cricketers' Association has outlined its push for an international club competition that would "spread the workload" of its players.

Following the initial success of the city-based franchises of the Indian Premier League (IPL), Paul Marsh, the ACA chief executive, has called for a reduction in traditional contests, an ICC-sanctioned window for Twenty20 tournaments and an end to the "counter-productive" official views on the rival Indian events.

Marsh said the game was relying too heavily on international matches for its revenue and the global club structure would ease the financial pressure and player demands. He said Australia's cricketers represented the country for an average of 100 days per year compared to 15 for the national rugby union team and ten for the Socceros.

"It is clear that cricket is limiting its potential by relying on too much from too few," Marsh said in the ACA's newsletter. "Up until the advent of Twenty20, our game may not have had the vehicle with which to move towards an international club structure. With Twenty20's popularity and format, we now have this vehicle."

Marsh, who has already pushed for a window in the ICC's Future Tours Programme, wants the new format to complement international games, but has asked for a cut in those matches. "Test cricket between traditional rivals and important ODI events should be protected," he said. "However, there is scope to reduce the current numbers of games, particularly ODIs."

The ACA sees two models developing if a window is created. "Similar to soccer, international club leagues could be formed throughout the world and players would likely end up in leagues commensurate with their ability," Marsh said. In that scenario the IPL could be the leading competition with other events in Australia and England containing the next rung of players.

"Or the IPL may become the only club league, but would expand internationally to include teams from all over the world," Marsh said. "We may see a league with six clubs in India, two in Australia, England, Pakistan, New Zealand, South Africa etc, one team in China and the United States and so on."

The players' union has received strong support from its members over the Indian Premier League and its unsanctioned rival, the Indian Cricket League. In an ACA survey almost half of Australia's state and national representatives said they would consider early retirement to take up a place in the lucrative tournaments and Marsh said both competitions were "good for cricket".

"Currently they are competing and with competition comes the inevitable split in the game that we are now seeing," he said. "The positions adopted by the boards for the IPL and ICL are counter-productive to the future health of the game."

Marsh said it was only a matter of time before the "potentially unreasonable restraints of trade" were legally challenged. "Where the ICL is concerned, players are being forced to choose between it and authorised cricket," he said. Jason Gillespie, Matthew Elliott, Michael Kasprovic and Jimmy Maher avoided potential bans for joining the ICL by resigning from their local duties towards the end of the 2007-08 season.

"With IPL, players are being put into positions where if they want to retire from international cricket to play IPL, a body with which they no longer have a contractual relationship -- ie Cricket Australia -- may not allow them to play in this competition for up to two years post retirement," Marsh said.

"Whilst these restrictions will no doubt de-motivate some players from joining the ICL or retiring early to play IPL, others will simply see the ICL as a more attractive option, free of contrived and unlawful restrictions. This in turn may lead to the rise of further unauthorised leagues that these players can play in throughout each year."

Missing the 'Big Three'

Chennai on four wins each, have bowled attacks to boast about but Chennai has largely ridden on its batting. Hayden and Co. have posted targets of over 200 twice so far, giving the bowlers the upper hand.

Perhaps the replacements Stephen Fleming, S Vidyut and Albie Morkel just need time to get going. Vidyut, in fact, impressed with 54 off 37 balls on debut. His innings helped set a platform of sorts for Chennai were 102 for 2 in the 12th over and in a position to push for a score in excess of 169.

However, watching the top order bat today inspired little confidence, certainly not as much as Hayden did, and the run flow was primarily due to a flurry of edges that fell safely behind square on both sides of the wicket.

Fleming is bound to improve on his performance today, where he began slowly before cashing in on consecutive free hits against Yomahesh but he's hardly going to intimidate bowlers like Hayden does with his muscular walk down the pitch followed by a powerful swat

between midwicket and mid-on. Hussey, who was able to accumulate runs inconspicuously at a healthy strike-rate, and Hayden will be missed because they were able to bat lengthy periods and sustain aggression. Oram hasn't had much of a role to play with the bat so far but his boundary-clearing abilities are proven and perhaps matched only by Dhoni in the Chennai outfit.

What Chennai have to come to terms with for future matches is that they are now on a far more level playing field. When the tournament started their batting was far superior to most other franchises but they are now on par with most others.

Moreover, their bowling attack hasn't been the most economical in the tournament and, Murali apart, has a fast-medium sameness to it. Winning matches could get much harder for Chennai henceforth and the way their exceptional start to the tournament could prove to be the difference as the league stage approaches its business end.



Cricket
CRICINFO, undated

Term it whatever you want -- the law of averages, or an off day -- but Chennai slumped to their lowest score after their batting order had taken a severe hit. They were shorn of their three-choice overseas players: their two highest runs-scorers, Matthew Hayden and Michael Hussey, and an all-rounder, Jacob Oram and the loss of this formidable trio eventually hurt.

A strong batting performance against a bowling attack led by Glenn McGrath and Mohammad Asif would have boosted their confidence but they will now have to wait until Sunday, when they travel to Jaipur to take on Shane Warne's Rajasthan Royals, to gain that belief.

What the exodus has done to Chennai is erode their primary strength -- the batting order. Delhi and Rajasthan, who are level with



Trevor MacDonald, general manager of Dhaka Sheraton Hotel and Monir Ahmede, managing director of Asiatic Laboratories Ltd, inaugurating the Asiatic Lab doubles tennis tournament at Sheraton Hotel court on May 1.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS
1 Run for exercise
4 'Star Wars' director
9 Earthenware container
12 Raw rock
13 -- acid ware
14 Gorilla
15 Multitude
17 TGIFers' bane (Abbr.)
18 Chart format
19 Beginning
21 More quickly
24 Island garlands
25 Lalm 101 word
26 Depot (Abbr.)
28 Wealthy one
31 Lummock
33 Harvest goddess
35 Traditional tales
36 Moving rate
40 Apprehend
41 Pile
43 Center director
45 Region of Italy
47 Beerlike beverage
48 Born
49 Entrance
54 Marino or Quayle
55 Spooky frequency
56 Jerry -- bane (Abbr.)
57 Peculiar
58 Gloomy format
59 Pond carp
DOWN
1 Occupation
2 Bobby of hockey
3 Tracker or Prizm
4 Half the audience?
5 Author Eco
6 Spy novel title
7 Year's records
8 Saturated
9 Fleming hero
10 Fairy-tale preposition
11 Kindly bloke up
16 Suitable
20 Test tube
21 FDR's pooch
22 Andy's pal
23 Indiana city
27 Spring-time abbr.
29 Exam type
30 Actress
32 Lauer
34 It's capital is Mogadishu
37 Brought up
39 Steering lever
42 Tabloid
44 Society newcomer
45 Loosen (Pres.)
46 Anthropologist Margaret
50 Before
51 Sort
52 Modern (Pres.)
53 'Agnus --

Cryptogram puzzle grid with numbers 1-53 and letters A-Z.

CRYPTOQUIP
CMG TCLLGM ICLGVYJ
TCDKY LUAG UVCDB KCUM
IQUFAI WI BQUB BQGI UFG
WMBGFGIBGY WM WMBGFGIB
Saturday's Cryptquip: MY FRIEND ASKED ME TO LOOK AT A GOOSE FARM SOMEBODY HAD TOLD HIM ABOUT, SO I TOOK A GANDER.
Today's Cryptquip Clue: W equals I