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Did U Know?

The Olympic five-ring symbol was taken from an emblem on an altar in the ruins of ancient Delphi, in Greece.



Dwayne Bravo
(West Indies all-rounder)
"Both (Brian) Lara and (Sachin) Tendulkar have a lot of knowledge. You learn so much by just watching how they move around, how they speak and how they treat their cricketing gear, especially the bat."



SET Max
Indian Premier League
Royal Challengers Bangalore v Kings XI Punjab
Live from 7:30pm

ESPN
Sportscentre India
Sports News
Live at 8:30pm

English Premier League
Newcastle United v Chelsea
Live from 8:55pm

Inter lose Milan derby

AC Milan triumphed 2-1 over Inter in the Milan derby at the San Siro on Sunday to boost their hopes of Champions League football next season and delay their city rivals' title celebrations.

AS Roma's impressive 3-0 win at Sampdoria ensured champions Inter still need three more points from their final two matches to clinch a third straight crown.

After Fiorentina's 2-1 defeat at Cagliari, Milan moved up to fourth and now have Champions League qualification within their own hands.

Predictably, hosts Milan made the brighter opening in the day's big match.

Massimo Ambrosini and Giuseppe Favalli were both wildly off target with early long-range efforts before the Kaka-Filippo Inzaghi partnership started kicking into gear.

On 20 minutes world player of the year Kaka prepared to shoot on the edge of the area but fooled everyone by playing in Inzaghi instead. Inter's Brazilian goalkeeper Julio Cesar stood up well, though, and blocked his shot for a corner.

Milan should have had the lead in first half stoppage time as Kaka broke down the right and crossed for Inzaghi but his stooping header from three yards somehow drifted wide of the far post.

Milan started the second half as they had ended the first, putting pressure on the leaders and their greater endeavour soon paid off.

Ambrosini had just headed an Andrea Pirlo corner over from close

Rajib new GM

Chess

SPORTS REPORTER

Country's new grandmaster of chess Enamul Hossain Rajib once again urged the Bangladesh Chess Federation to increase facilities for the chess players.

Rajib, who secured the third and final GM norm yesterday during the 32nd National Chess Championship, told The Daily Star that all chess players, experienced and the youngsters apart, face similar problems.

"The main problem is lack of private support. Our result is not bad considering the facilities we get. So we need sponsors to support us so that we can concentrate on our game," said the 27-year-old Rajib, whose first norm came at the 2002 Chess Olympiad in Slovenia.

Rajib, who sealed the second norm in Abu Dhabi last year during a GM tournament, enjoyed a

remarkable 2007 when he reached the second round of the World Chess Cup in Russia in November with an upset victory against world No 19 Pavel Eljanov of Ukraine.

Rajib, who considered that success still as his greatest achievement, said he was happy to become the fifth GM after Niaz Murshed, Ziaur Rahman, Reefat Bin Sattar and Abdullah Al Rakib.

Rajib was dismissive of the thought that the number of GMs in Bangladesh was not enough.

"In Russia, China and India, there are plenty of GMs because they give their players top facilities. But if you consider the 140 countries that play chess, it is not bad. Most countries have one or two GMs. Even a top chess nation like Estonia has just two GMs.

"We get the chance to play only a few GM tournaments every year, that's why most of our players reach the top level late.

"Teams like Biman and Destiny

support players and there are organisations like Standard Chartered but we need more," said Rajib, who plays for Destiny.

Rajib said that the federation should have their focus on training budding players.

"There is no talent hunting programme. The players have to work on their own initiatives. We need to have proper plans to groom them.

"It also does not need much fund or foreign coaches because we now have five grandmasters. All we need is the federation to be more active and use the local experts.

"We also need more preparation for big events, which we never get. It's not so easy to play chess in Bangladesh, because there's no governmental support, but still some players manage to develop and show good results.

"If we had adequate facilities, we would have had more grandmasters by this time."

Bangladesh, Afghanistan play in opener today

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh will look forward to a winning start when they take on fellow South Asian opponents Afghanistan in the opening match of the AFC Challenge Cup Group C qualifying rounds in Bishkek today.

The match will kick off at the refurbished 19,000-seater Spartak Stadium in the Kyrgyzstan capital at 5:30pm Bangladesh time.

In their two previous meetings, Bangladesh drew 2-2 with Afghanistan before winning 4-1 in the Asian Cup qualifiers in 1979 at home although the two under-23 sides drew their SA games match in 2006 in Sri Lanka.

Hosts Kyrgyzstan, however, start as favourites after Laos's 11th hour pullout on Friday reduced the action to a three-horse race.

Bangladesh, who hosted the inaugural edition of this competition in 2006, will have to topple both the teams as only the group winners are assured of a place in the finals to be held in south Indian city of Hyderabad from July 30-August 10.

With all of Laos's matches

cancelled, the home team fans will have to wait until May 7 to see Kyrgyzstan launch their campaign against Afghanistan though coach Nematjan Zakirov told the-afc.com that the South-East Asian side's withdrawal hardly made matters easy.

"Though Laos are not participating anymore, these matches will not be an easy task for my players," said Zakirov whose charges lost to Oman 2-0 in a preparatory friendly recently.

The highlight of the group games - provided Afghanistan do not upset the mighty odds stacked against them -- is set to be the Kyrgyzstan versus Bangladesh match on May 9 when the two renew their rivalry after the Nehru Cup last August in India where the Central Asians won convincingly 3-0.

While Kyrgyzstan lost to eventual winners Tajikistan in the semi-finals of the inaugural edition of Challenge Cup, Bangladesh were ousted from the quarterfinals by the same opposition.

Newly appointed Bangladesh coach Abu Yusuf, who ruled not playing any preparation match, was confident about his team's chances.

"We have played before against Kyrgyzstan and Afghanistan and their level is the same as ours," said Yusuf after arriving in the Kyrgyz capital.

"Sometimes you might not play good, might not understand your partners, but this time we understand each other well, and I hope with our good planning we can win," the former Bangladesh defender said.

One match less in the qualifiers, however, will frustrate Bangladesh's plans as they are looking forward to play as many international matches as possible in preparation for next month's SAFF Championship in Sri Lanka and Maldives.

The opening match would be still important for Yusuf's men, who have been drawn with the Afghans in their SAFF Championship group.

Despite their low FIFA ranking of 196, Afghanistan coach Klaus Staerk was optimistic of a decent show.

"We have to show our best performance and everything will be fine," said Staerk, who led the Afghans in the opening instalment

Pollock propels Mumbai



CRICINFO, undated

A magnificent all-round performance by Shaun Pollock produced the biggest upset of the tournament as Mumbai Indians - languishing with just one win in five games - pipped the fancied Delhi Daredevils by 29 runs in a gripping contest at the DY Patil Sports Academy Stadium on Saturday.

Requiring a modest 163 for the fifth win, Delhi's much-vaunted batting line-up collapsed for a paltry 133.

One player influenced this result more than any other. Pollock has had a mixed tournament so far, but here he was immense in every aspect. With the bat, he came in to bat in the 15th over, when Mumbai were languishing at 112 for 5, and blasted 33 off a mere 15 balls, including 22 off the penultimate over, which changed a below-par total into a competitive one. He then returned with the ball and sent down four metronomic overs, conceding just 16 for two wickets. In his second over, he nailed Shikhar Dhawan, and then returned for a second spell to dismiss the dangerous Shoaib Malik. Add a catch to dismiss Virender Sehwag, and some inspired captaincy moves, and there was no doubt about who the Man of the Match was.

Delhi's strength has been their top-order batting - their top three

have been in outstanding form - but here, two of them were back in the hutch after 14 deliveries, and the rest failed to measure up. On a slow pitch, both Gautam Gambhir and Dhawan mistimed drives on the up, and after three overs, the scorecard read a sorry 6 for 2. To make matters worse, Sehwag struggled to get the strike, facing just seven deliveries in the first six overs.

AB de Villiers and Sehwag mounted a mini-revival, but when de Villiers was unluckily run out backing up too far, it was the first indication that the day was going to belong to Mumbai. Sehwag, though, wasn't about to give up too easily. He continued to struggle to get to the striker's end, but when he did, he made it count: Pollock was slashed over point for a huge six, Dwayne Bravo's slower one was heaved over



GREAT SUPPORT: Bollywood star Katrina Kaif (L) applauds the fall of a Hyderabad wicket with Bangalore's team owner Vijay Mallya during the Indian Premier League match at the Chinnaswamy Stadium in Bangalore on Saturday.



WELCOME TO OUR WORLD: Grand Master Reefat-bin Sattar (L) congratulates Enamul Hossain Rajib (R) who has just confirmed his assumption as the fifth Grand Master of the country. Rajib won his final round match of the National Chess Championship against Reefat to collect the required 10 points for his third GM norm at the Chess Federation hall room yesterday.

Zia's 10th nat'l chess crown

SPORTS REPORTER

Ziaur Rahman regained the national chess crown yesterday when the Grand Master defeated FIDE Master Mohammed Javed after 30 moves in the final round at the Chess Federation hall-room to win the 32nd National Chess Championship.

Zia finished with 11 points from 12 games for his tenth national title while International Master Enamul Hossain Rajib settled for runner-up with ten points also after 12 games.

Most of the players had to play 12 games in the 13-round competition following the withdrawal of GM Niaz Murshed early into the meet.

Rajib, who defeated GM Reefat Bin Sattar, notched a 9-game norm to complete all three grandmaster norms and can apply for the GM title to world chess body FIDE.

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Premier Super League from May 9

SPORTS REPORTER

The Premier Cricket Super League will kick off in Dhaka on May 9 with Biman, Mohammedan and defending champions Abahani beginning a three-way race for the title.

Three matches will be played every day with two days' gap to give the teams enough recovery time during the hottest time of the season.

Three grounds, Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur, Fatullah Stadium and BKSP will be used for the 15 matches of the championship leg.

The top three teams, separated by just one point from another, were sweating over recruiting foreign players and only Biman look settled on Pakistani left-handed opening batsman Nasir Jamshed.

The other teams are BKSP, Surjo Torun and City Club.

Batsmen let NCA down

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

GP-BCB National Cricket Academy (NCA) produced an all too familiar batting failure that allowed Pakistan Cricket Academy (PCA) walk all over them at the end of the third day of their second four-day encounter at the Rajshahi Divisional Stadium yesterday.

When they go out to bat on their second innings score of 56-1, the visitors require only a further 93 runs to take a 2-0 victory in the two-match series. PCA were gifted this easy task after the local batsmen were left out of their depths by the PCA pace trio of Anwar Ali, Wahab Riaz and Sohail Khan who snaffled all ten wickets between them. NCA were bowled out for 173 in the second innings, taking a lead of 148 runs after PCA scored 289 in their first innings. Ahmed Shehzad and Khalid Latif were unbeaten on 27 and 23 respectively after Sajidul Islam snared Khurram Manzoor in

the second over of PCA's second innings.

Earlier, Imrul Kayes (14) edged to Sarfraz Akhtar off right-arm pacesman Anwar in the seventh over after giving NCA a rapid start. But that soon fell away, as Anwar and Sohail took care of the top-order, removing Nasiruddin Faruque, dangerous Nayem Islam (33 off 47 balls) and Tigers' Test batsman Mushfiqur Rahim cheaply.

Then Anwar took the wicket of in-form Farhad Hossain for only 15 and put NCA in a precarious 88-5. Farhad had a brilliant start to the day, picking up five PCA wickets in the first innings.

But 88-5 soon became 96-6 as Nadif Chowdhury was caught behind off Anwar, who finished with figures of 4-56 from 14 overs.

NCA still had Shamsur Rahman, who smashed an unbeaten 86 in the first innings, in the crease and he added 33 runs for the seventh wicket with Suhawardi Shuvo. Shamsur, also nicknamed Shuvo, cracked six boundaries and a six in

his 46-ball salvo but left-arm seamer Wahab Riaz had him clean bowled to ensure PCA got back the upper hand.

Tail-ender Dollar Mahmud hit two lusty sixes and two boundaries but his sparkling 24 off 14 balls was closed when Riaz made him his third victim. Nazmul Hossain and Sajidul Islam also fell to the left-arm seamer, who has played three ODIs for Pakistan so far.

Earlier in the day, Azhar Ali added 10 runs to his overnight but Farhad, with his innocuous but accurate off-spin, took the last two Pakistani wickets to finish with figures of 5-57 from 17.5 overs.

SCORES IN BRIEF

NCA: First innings 264 and second innings 173 all out in 43.4 overs (Shamsur 34, Nayem 33, Dollar 24, Suhawardi 22*, Anwar 4-56, Wahab 4-45, Sohail 2-30).
PCA: First innings 289 all out in 89.5 overs (Azhar Ali 84, Sarfraz 38; Farhad 5-57, Dollar 2-37) and second innings 56-1 in 21 overs (Shehzad 27*, Latif 23*; Sajid 1-8).

Akhtar cleared for IPL

Cricket

CRICINFO, undated

Shoaib Akhtar has been cleared to play in the IPL after the Appellate Tribunal decided to suspend his five-year ban for one month, until they reconvene on June 4. The PCB has, in turn, granted Shoaib a No Objection Certificate to feature in the IPL, where he will play for the Kolkata Knight Riders.

Lalit Modi, the chairman and commissioner of the IPL, confirmed that Shoaib will play the tournament. "We look forward to Shoaib playing for us," Modi said. "I am going to call him immediately and invite him to come to Kolkata tonight or Monday morning."

Farrukh Aftab, the head of the three-man tribunal, announced the decision. "We have suspended the ban for one month and the next hearing will be held on June 4," Aftab told reporters in Lahore. "Had we not suspended the ban, he could not have been played in the IPL, which we thought was injustice to Akhtar."

Meanwhile, Shoaib expressed relief after his clearance. "This is a great relief for me as I am keen to play in the IPL," Shoaib said. "But this is just one battle won and we

still have to win the final case."

The tribunal's decision to grant Shoaib a temporary reprieve comes after his lawyers pressed for the suspension of his ban.

Earlier, the tribunal, on April 30, had decided to uphold the PCB's ban on an interim-basis. Shoaib

was banned for comments he made after not being offered a contract by the PCB, in which he lashed out at domestic tournaments, pitches and the administration in general. He made the comments while on a two-year probation after

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HE'S BACK, FOR A MONTH: Pakistan fast bowler Shoaib Akhtar arrives to face the tribunal at the Pakistan Cricket Academy in Lahore yesterday.

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