

Sarwan to lead again

CRICINFO, undated

Ramnaresh Sarwan will step in for the injured Chris Gayle and lead West Indies in the first Test against Australia at Sabina Park on Thursday. Gayle has succumbed to the groin injury that kept him out of the Indian Premier League and the home team's leadership will revolve around Sarwan and Dwayne Bravo, the new deputy. Sarwan guided the team in two Tests in England last year and will face a tough assignment against the world champions.

The opener Sewnarine Chattergoon, who made his debut against Sri Lanka in April, has been ruled out with a shoulder problem, leaving a spot for Brenton Parchment. Parchment is currently captaining a Jamaica XI in the tour game against the Australians and scored 25 on the opening day.

Ryan Hinds and Runako Morton were included in the outfit, which is also without Marlon Samuels after he was found guilty of dealing with a bookmaker. The

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Did U Know?

European Football Championship (Euro) 2008 will take place in Austria and Switzerland from June 7 to 29. It is the second successful joint bid in the competition's history, following the Euro 2000 hosted by Belgium and the Netherlands.



Gary Kirsten

(India cricket coach)

"I believe the time is right to create a world league system for Test cricket. The game needs to have a world champion every year."



SET Max

Indian Premier League
Kolkata Knight Riders v Chennai Super Kings

Live from 4:30pm
Deccan Chargers v Mumbai Indians
Live from 8:30pm

STAR Cricket
England v New Zealand
First Test, Day 4
Live from 4:00pm

STAR Sports
Primera Liga
Real Madrid v Levante
Live from 11:55pm

ESPN
Azlan Shah Hockey
5th/8th Placing
Live from 1:00pm

3rd Place/4th Place
Live from 3:30pm
Hamburg Masters Final
Live from 7:00pm

Today's Event
Premier Cricket Super League
Biman v Abahani
Venue: Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium, Mirpur

Mohammedan v City Club
Venue: BKSP-2
BKSP v Surjo Torun
Venue: Fatullah Cricket Stadium



PHOTO: STAR

Abahani goalkeeper Zahid Hossain dives full-length to his left to thwart a Mohammedan attack during their Green Delta Insurance Premier Division Hockey League encounter at the Maulana Bhasani National Stadium yesterday.

Abahani salvage a draw

Hockey

SPORTS REPORTER

Abahani staged a spectacular second-half rally to share the spoils with their bitter rivals Mohammedan in a 3-3 draw in a crucial Green Delta Insurance Premier Division Hockey League encounter at the Maulana Bhasani National Stadium yesterday.

It was an entertaining match in front of a cheering crowd but the most refreshing aspect was that the two traditional foes' battle ended peacefully after their ill-tempered first meeting of the season last month. The last encounter of the two giants in the season's curtain raiser was marred by violence and had to be completed in two days.

Mohammedan, who lost that game in tie-breaker, looked the better side this time with a 3-1 cushion in the first-half with double strikes from Zahid Bin Talib and the other by veteran Isa Miah. But

their ultra defensive approach in the second-half simply backfired.

Mamunur Rahman Chayan, the highest scorer in the Club Cup tournament, completed Abahani's second-half rally, scoring the third goal from a penalty corner in the 63rd minute. Moududur Rahman Shuvo and Imran Khan scored the other two goals for the Dhamondia outfit.

Mohammedan coach Jahurul Islam Mitul admitted after the match that they allowed their opponents to put pressure on them in the last half an hour that denied them a victory.

"It's really frustrating that the match ended in a draw. We were totally disorganised in the last half an hour and were too much defensive which helped Abahani to take away the momentum from us. But I am happy because we played a clean and entertaining match today," said Jahurul.

Praising opponents goalkeeper Mehrib Hossain Kiron, Abahani coach Mahub Harun expressed his satisfaction with the final outcome.

"Mohammedan put up a spirited display and I am happy that it was a real competitive match. The result could have been different if our striker Jimmy was not badly out of sorts today," said Mahub.

Abahani started the match with great pace and got the first opportunity to take the lead but striker Rasel Mahmud Jimmy missed the shot in the ninth minute.

Mohammedan however made no mistake to capitalise on their first opportunity with unmarked Zahid unleashing a powerful hit after receiving the ball from Asif-A-Noor to put the Motiheel outfit ahead in the 13th minute.

Pakistani forward Mohammad Modasser had a chance to equalise for holders Abahani after five minutes but Mohammedan goalkeeper Mehrib Hossain Kiron, who was brilliant under the bar, salvaged the black and whites with a superb save.

Zahid gave Mohammedan a 2-0 lead from a cleverly taken penalty corner that he first pushed forward

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Bangladesh to play AHF Cup

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh will play in the 3rd Men's Asian Hockey Federation Cup to be held in Singapore from June 14.

Of the nine participating teams, Bangladesh are in Pool A with Chinese Taipei, Uzbekistan, Brunei Darussalam and hosts Singapore.

Hong Kong, Sri Lanka, Oman and Thailand will compete from Pool B. Bangladesh will play their first match against Brunei on June 14 and their second match against Chinese Taipei on June 15.

Then, after a two-day recess, Bangladesh will play the third match against Singapore on June 18 and the fourth match against Uzbekistan on June 19.

The top four teams from this competition will qualify to the Asia Cup.

Reefat joins Zia, Rakib

SPORTS REPORTER

Grand Master Reefat Bin Sattar joined GMs Ziaur Rahman and Abdullah Al Rakib in second position with three other players in the Mayors Cup 1st International Open Chess tournament in Mumbai yesterday.

In the ninth round, Zia drew with Rakib and Reefat beat IM Deepen Gupta of India as the Bangladesh trio are all on 7.5 points each.

Polish GM Michal Krasenkow is now leading the pack with eight points.

LOCAL SNIPPETS

SPORTS REPORTER

Sohel Rana's 124 powered Kakrai Boys to a seven-wicket victory over Green Leaf in the Second Division Super League at the City Club ground.

Batting first, Green Leaf piled 250-8 but Soheli smashed ten sixes and seven boundaries to make a mockery of Green Leaf's huge total as Kakrai reached their target in 44.3 overs.

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'Mashrafe the key'

Biman's chance to lift title today

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

Mashrafe Bin Mortaza can play a key roll in today's crucial Premier League match between Bangladesh Biman and Abahani, believed Sanwar Hossain.

The Biman captain said, "If there is one man from both sides who can change the complexion of this match, that has to be Mashrafe. He is my main weapon."

Mashrafe's splendid performance throughout the competition has inspired Biman to the extent that they are a win away from claiming the Premier title after winning 12 matches out of 14. Be it his tenacious batting against Abahani or the inspired last over against BKSP in the first round battles, it has always been Mashrafe.

"He has really done exceedingly well in the big matches and in difficult situations he has bailed us out. Had he bowled those final two overs against Mohammedan (first round match on March 30), the

picture would have been completely different," pondered former national player Sanwar of Mashrafe's deadly eight overs almost gave Biman a victory but he failed to bowl his last two overs due to an infection.

"From the present national team, Mashrafe is a standout since he gives his heart out on the field," said Sanwar.

Sanwar's opposite number Tushar Imran recognised the importance of Mashrafe.

"He is a vital player and we have made some plans for him. Let's see how it goes in the centre tomorrow (Sunday)."

"We had the advantage of having some Mohammedan batsmen out of form and that worked for us."

But they (Biman) have a lot of players who are in form and we have tactics in place for all of them too," revealed Tushar ahead of the match at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur.

He decided to give his side an extra ten per cent chance and further believed that if they can replicate Thursday's performance against Biman today, they have a fair shot at equalling the points.

"I would not call it 50-50 but give my team sixty per cent chance of winning. We can beat Biman if we can play just like we played against Mohammedan," added Tushar.

If Biman, who are on 25 points, would take an unassailable lead and win the title but if they don't win, Abahani would level them on points but Sanwar was only thinking about a victory.

"We are on top and I think our option is quite simple. We have to win tomorrow (Sunday) and we are confident enough although both sides are equal on paper and out in the ground," concluded Sanwar, who has played nine Tests and 27 ODIs for Bangladesh.

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SUPER LEAGUE TABLE

Team	P	W	L	T/NR	Points
Biman	14	12	1	1	25
Abahani	14	11	2	1	23
MSC	14	10	2	0	20
BKSP	14	8	5	1	17
Surjo Torun	14	7	7	0	14
City Club	14	5	8	1	11

Rajasthan on a roll

Razzak makes unimpressive debut

CRICINFO, undated



Bangalore Royal Challengers' woeful Indian Premier League campaign plunged

new depths at the Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel Stadium in Jaipur as they slumped to a 65-run drubbing at the hands of Rajasthan Royals, who are virtually assured a place in the semi-finals with their eighth win in ten games on Saturday.

Apart from the toss, everything was perfect for Rajasthan as Bangalore put in another thoroughly abject performance with the ball, bat, and in the field. Swapnil Asnodkar and Graeme Smith were the protagonists for Rajasthan, putting together 109 in a mere 12.2 overs -- the second first-wicket century stand for the team -- before Shane Watson applied the finishing touches with a 28-ball 46. They finally settled for 197, which was far too many for a batting line-up, which is completely lacking in form and confidence. The first three wickets went down within 14 deliveries, and though Rahul Dravid struck a defiant 36-ball 75, the result wmen pinged the third-man region regularly. Asnodkar got a 50, but it was one of the most unconvincing half-centuries of the tournament, as he got the benefit of an lbw shout, and then edged twice over the wicketkeeper off Jacques Kallis.

After seven overs Rajasthan were motoring along at 63 without loss, mostly thanks to Asnodkar, but Smith soon joined in the act, making room and striking the ball cleanly over mid-on and midwicket. Abdur Razzak became the first Bangladesh player to get an IPL game, but his start was hardly auspicious: he began with a no-ball which was edged for four by Smith, and the free hit was deposited on the midwicket roof.

Those early exchanges swung the momentum Rajasthan's way, and they ensured they never let it go. Anil Kumble finally got his first wicket of the tournament, but Asnodkar's departure only brought in the even more destructive Watson,

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PHOTO: INTERNET

VINTAGE SHAUN: Mumbai spearhead Shaun Pollock shows Kolkata opener Salman Butt (R) the way to the pavilion during Friday's Indian Premier League match at the Wankhede Stadium in Mumbai.

Cook fifty before rain

Cricket

AFP, London

Rain continued to frustrate England's attempt to build a first innings lead in the first Test against New Zealand at Lord's here Saturday.

Only 8.5 overs were possible in the morning and with dark clouds looming and sporadic showers keeping the outfield damp the players remained in the pavilion after an early lunch was taken.

An inspection had been due at 3.20pm (8.20pm Bangladesh time) but a further heavy shower saw the covers put back on.

When play had been possible in the morning, England openers continued to blunt the New Zealand as they took their overnight score to 89 without loss with Alastair Cook unbeaten on 53 and Andrew Strauss not out 31.

England are 188 runs behind

New Zealand's first innings total of 277.

As the inclement weather continued to play havoc with the scheduled order of play, only an hour of play was possible in the opening session before the rain called the early lunch.

Cook and Strauss made serene progress after rain and bad light delayed the start by 25 minutes.

Cook, 43 not out overnight, brought up his 10th Test fifty with a crisp punch off the back foot off Kyle Mills.

The 23-year-old enjoys batting at Lord's having scored two of his previous seven Test centuries at the home of cricket.

Strauss also looked in good touch, moving his feet with purpose as he looked to back up his 177 at Napier in the last Test of the winter tour of New Zealand with another big score.

The Middlesex batsman looked comfortable with his move back to

the top of the order, where he started his England career in 2004 at the same ground, following Michael Vaughan's decision to revert to number three.

He played the shot of the morning off Kiwi paceman Chris Martin when he rocked back on his heels to a short pitched delivery outside off stump and deftly flicked the ball over the slips for four.

But the weather continued to frustrate the crowd and the players by intervening yet again shortly afterwards.

This is the first Test of a three match series.

SCOREBOARD
Scoreboard at lunch on the third day of the first Test between England and New Zealand at Lord's on Saturday.

NEW ZEALAND: First innings 277 (McCullum 97; Sidebottom 4-55, Anderson 3-66)

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King Kahn bids goodbye

Football

INTERNET, undated

Oliver Kahn says he knew his destiny from childhood onwards and lived his life accordingly to become one of the most loved or hated figures in German and international football. "It was my vision from early on: I wanted to be the best goalkeeper in the world. The best goalkeeper in the world! The best!" he says in his upcoming book "I - Success Comes From Within" of which excerpts are printed in the Bild daily.

The former Germany captain plays his last competitive match on Saturday when Bundesliga champions Bayern Munich host Hertha BSC on the last day of the league season.

An ensuing Asian swing with Munich will see his last matches with the finale coming for good on May 27 in Kolkata, India, against local club Mohan Bagun. A testimonial match with Munich against Germany's national team wraps up the farewell on September 2.

Kahn, who turns 39 on June 15, quits after 557 Bundesliga games, with only Karl-Heinz Koerber (602)

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PHOTO: AFP

Bayern Munich's goalkeeping great Oliver Kahn shows the bouquet he received before his last Bundesliga match against Hertha Berlin at the Allianz Arena yesterday.

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