

Katich misses century

Simon Katich struck form at the right time, but he was unable to seal his return to national colours with a century as he fell three runs short on the second day of the tour match against a Jamaica XI on Saturday.

With Michael Clarke missing the first Test due to family reasons, Katich confirmed his place as the Australians completed a strong warm-up by posting 396.

Katich took his time once he resumed on 35 and kept the innings together after losing Phil Jaques for 48, Ricky Ponting for 17 and Michael Hussey for 19. While Ponting and Hussey missed out on long stays, Andrew Symonds and Brad Haddin took advantage of the conditions with half-centuries in an energetic 145-run stand.

Symonds collected 86 while Haddin, who will make his Test debut at Sabina Park on Thursday, picked up a confidence-boosting 64. However, the day was most important for Katich, especially after Brad Hodge, the other contender to replace Clarke, did not make a major impact.

Katich seemed set for three figures, but he missed the milestone when aiming the spinner Lorenzo Ingram towards midwicket, where Xavier Marshall collected a fine diving take in the outfield. Donovan Sinclair was the most successful bowler, finishing off the innings with 3 for 14, while Andre Russell and Nikita Miller picked up two each.

The hosts reached 11 for 0 at the close, and in their brief stint in the field the Australians wore their baggy green caps after being criticised for having a sponsor's hat on during the first innings. Cricket Australia said that because Haddin did not yet have a baggy green -- he will receive it on the first morning of the Kingston Test -- the team decided in the interests of uniformity to wear their blue training caps, which bear the sponsor's logo.

BRIEF SCORES
JAMAICA XI: First innings 297 (Baugh 111 not out, Marshall 30, Jackson 29, Parchment 25, Wallace 22; MacGill 4-79, Katich 2-51, Johnson 2-64)

AUSTRALIA: First innings 396 (Katich 97, Symonds 86, Haddin 64, Jaques 48; Sinclair 3-14, Miller 2-75, Russell 2-85)

JAMAICA XI: Second innings 11 without loss

Trouble thy

FROM PAGE 17
 those close to the bowler, said Shoaib often visits a Badian Row farmhouse on the outskirts of Lahore to attend private dance parties where he also takes drugs.

The farmhouse reportedly is owned by his friend Kamran, an official in the Federal Investigation Agency. The PCB official added that a friend of Shoaib had once told him that cocaine is popular among fast bowlers, including the Rawalpindi Express, because of its effectiveness as a short-term energy booster. "Though crack cocaine is usually sold in Pakistan for Rs20,000 per gram, it is hard to stop yourself from sniffing and smoking it when you are in a mood to party and want to have a ball," he quoted Shoaib's friend as having told him.

Meanwhile, following Pakistan media reports that Shoaib Akhtar carried a large number of syringes to India, the World Anti-Doping Agency has decided to conduct surprise dope tests on cricketers participating in the Indian Premier League's Twenty20 tournament. "There are surprise dope tests to begin today (Saturday). The (WADA) team from Sweden has already come down. We don't know which team will be subjected to the tests first or which player's samples would be taken first," said IPL Commissioner Lalit Modi.

Last year, Akhtar pulled out of the World Cup due to injury, but most suspected the real reason was that there were traces of Nandrolone, a banned steroid, in his system.

Azlan Shah Cup
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 Diwakar Ram and Sandeep Singh warded off the initial inroads and goalkeeper Adrian D'Souza came out with some scintillating saves to deny their rivals any early advantage.

In the fourth minute, when umpire Ged Curran of Scotland awarded a penalty corner to Argentina after Adrian made a diving ground clearance, the enraged Indians advanced menacingly towards him. Durrant talked to his colleague Amrajit Singh, but at the end preferred to stick to his decision.

Ignacio Gilardi took the shot, but Adrian saved it with his characteristic calmness.

Shivendra Singh and S V Sunil staged a counterattack in the 10th minute and when they were brought down near the circle, Amrajit signalled India's first penalty corner.



England batsman Andrew Strauss flicks the ball towards fine-leg during his half-century against New Zealand on the third day of the first Test at Lord's in London yesterday.

New Zealand claw back



AFP, London

New Zealand captain Daniel Vettori took two wickets in as many balls as England struggled to 239 for six at tea on the fourth day of the first Test at Lord's here on Sunday.

England captain Michael Vaughan was still at the crease on 61 not out and Stuart Broad was 10 not out.

But England, with Vaughan, who'd dropped down to No 3 from opening, the last of their recognised batsmen, were still 38 runs behind New Zealand's first innings 277.

With so much time lost in the game to bad weather -- fewer than nine overs were bowled on Saturday alone -- the draw still appeared the most likely result.

But New Zealand could take great heart from the performances of left-arm spinner Vettori (three wickets for 33 runs in 13 overs) and new-ball bowler Chris Martin (two for 65 off 28).

England, who had been 148 for one, resumed after lunch on 160 for three having lost well-set openers Andrew Strauss (63) and Alastair Cook (61) before star batsman Kevin Pietersen was lbw to Vettori.

Martin struck for the second time Sunday when Ian Bell, drawn into playing a lifting delivery outside off-stump, edged to wicketkeeper Brendon McCullum, whose 97 was the centerpiece of

New Zealand's innings.

Vaughan hit back by commandingly cover-driving teenage quick Tim Southee for four. But the 33-year-old was fortunate, on 30, to survive a justified lbw appeal from Martin.

However, two successive Vettori deliveries reduced England to 208 for six.

Paul Collingwood edged to first slip Ross Taylor before keeper Tim Ambrose, in his first Test in England, was lbw after bizarrely not playing a shot.

Broad narrowly avoided becoming Vettori's hattrick victim when the next ball just passed his outside edge. Vaughan, who has now been batting for more than three hours, though held firm and a single off Vettori took him through to fifty off 150 balls with seven fours.

It was the Yorkshire right-hander's first fifty in six innings since the first Test of England's 2-1 series win in New Zealand, in Hamilton in March.

England had been making serene progress while left-handers Strauss and Cook compiled their first century stand in 23 Test innings as an opening duo.

Their partnership was worth 121 when Martin, bowling intelligently from around the wicket, took Cook's outside edge and McCullum held a diving catch.

Strauss and Cook's previous Test-best as a first-wicket pair was the 95 they shared against India in Nagpur in 2005-06.

They had been re-united at the top of the order following Vaughan's decision to swap with Strauss after averaging barely more than 20 in New Zealand.

But pace bowling all-rounder Jacob Oram had Strauss, who made a century on his Test debut against New Zealand at Lord's four years ago, lbw to a ball that just pitched on the stumps and would have hit off.

SCOREBOARD
 Scoreboard at tea on the fourth day of the first Test between England and New Zealand at Lord's on Sunday:

NEW ZEALAND: First innings 277 (McCullum 97; Sidebottom 4-55, Anderson 3-66)
ENGLAND: First innings (over-night 89-0)

Strauss	lbw	Oram	63
Cook	c McCullum	b Martin	61
Vaughan	not out		61
Pietersen	lbw	Vettori	13
Bell	c McCullum	b Martin	6
Collingwood	c Taylor	b Vettori	6
Ambrose	lbw	Vettori	0
Broad	not out		19
Extras	(lb-7, w-1, nb-11)		10
Total	(For 6 wks in 85 overs)		239
Fall of wickets:	1-21, 2-148, 3-152, 4-180, 5-208, 6-208.		

To bat: Sidebottom, Panesar, Anderson.

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Martin	28	8	65	2
Mills	19	3	53	0
Southee	12	1	48	0
Oram	13	2	33	1
Vettori	13	4	33	3

SCORES IN BRIEF
BIMAN: 125 all out in 36.3 overs (Kapali 33, Nafis 19 not out; Nazmul 4-14, Rafique 2-15)
ABAHANI: 129-3 in 22.4 overs (Kandamby 48 not out, Nafees 36 not out; Mashrafe 1-36, Mahubul 1-40)
 Result: Abahani won by seven wickets.

Mohammedan
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 MSC: 141-3 in 30.2 overs (Rashedul 60, Nadimuddin 37, Shafaq 2-11).
 Result: MSC won by seven wickets.
 SURJO: 206 all out in 49 overs (Shamsur 72, Sharif 30; Anas 4-23).
 BKSP: 207-5 in 49 overs (Nasir 65, Mahmudul 59; Yunis 4-40).
 Result: BKSP won by five wickets.

Chennai prevail in rain
 FROM PAGE 17
 couple of audacious straight sixes off Muttiah Muralidaran -- who had a day to forget -- but for the most part he was content to play second fiddle to the classy Butt, who played an outstanding knock.

As is his wont when he is form, Butt was all silken grace through the off side, either making room to cream drives through the covers, or getting behind the line to pepper the point and cover boundaries off the back foot. Manpreet Gony was crisply hit through the covers in his first over, while Ntini, who otherwise gave little away, leaked successive fours off two exceptional shots, as Butt moved away and lofted one through the covers, and then square-drove the next ball through point. Muralidaran was spared either, as Butt slog-swept a

plenty of hope for the home crowd, but his limp performance, followed by the rain, means Kolkata have plenty of catching up to do to win a semifinal berth.

SCORES IN BRIEF
KOLKATA KNIGHT RIDERS: 149 for 5 in 20 overs (Butt 73, Hafeez 6, Ganguly 2, Das 27, Shukla 13 not out, Saha 15 not out; Ntini 4-21, Balaji 1-36)
CHENNAI SUPER KINGS: 55 for no loss in 8 overs (Patel 19 not out, Fleming 32 not out)
 Result: Chennai Super Kings won by 3 runs (D/L method)
Man-of-the-match: Makhaya Ntini.
 Umpires: Asad Rauf (Pakistan) and K Hariharan
 Toss: Kolkata Knight Riders.

Nadal dethrones Federer

AFP, Hamburg

Rafael Nadal beat world number one Roger Federer 7-5, 6-7 (3/7), 6-3 to claim his first Hamburg Masters Series title here on Sunday.

In a rematch of the 2007 final, which was won by Federer, triple French Open champion Nadal showed a determined fighting spirit with a superb array of shots to claim victory after 2 hours 52 minutes.

It was the Spaniard's tenth win over Federer and his eighth on clay. The win also ended the Swiss star's 41-match unbeaten run on German soil.

LOCAL SNIPPETS

SPORTS REPORTER

East End Juniors blanked Adamjee KC 3-0 in the Pioneer League at the Jagannath University ground in Dhupkhola yesterday.

Ashik, Rocky and Sentu scored one goal each for the winners while Ujjal slotted the lone goal in Mansoor SC's 1-0 win over Commissioner Shafuddin Smiti Sangsad at the same venue.

At the Mohammadpur Idgah ground, Baden Povel SC defeated Dragon KC by a solitary goal with Nazrul scoring the match winner.

DIVII CRICKET
 Eskaton Sabuj Sangha beat Sinha Textile by four wickets in a Second Division Super League match at the City Club ground.

Opting to bat first, Sinha Textile were bowled out for 168 in 46.1 overs. Later, Eskaton took only 38.1 overs to reach the target with Raihan making 43.

In other matches, Nabin Sangha (205) beat Mirpur Cricket Club (176) by 29 runs at the Dhaka University ground and East End Club (218-8) defeated Dhanmndri Cricket Academy (196) by 22 runs at the Dhanmndri Cricket Stadium.

UNIVERSITY CRICKET
 University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh claimed their fourth straight win when they beat State University of Bangladesh by five wickets in the ULAB Fair Play Twenty20 competition at their campus ground.

Batting first, SUB scored 103-8 with Babu taking four wickets. In reply, ULAB reached the target in 16 overs with Shoaib scoring 27.

BAPS SWIMMING
 The Inter-base swimming and water polo competition of Bangladesh Air Force got underway at the Naval Headquarters swimming complex.

Gaffar of Base Matur Rahman won two gold medals, 100m butterfly and 200m IM, while Nayem and Siraj of Air Headquarters Unit won gold medals in the 50m backstroke and 50m breaststroke respectively. Sharif (Base Bashar) clinched the 100m freestyle gold.

In water polo, base Matur Rahman trounced Base Kurmitola 15-0 while Base Zahurul Haque beat Base Bashar 7-2.

Afro-Asia Cup back

CRICINFO, undated

CRICINFO has learned that the Afro-Asia Cup, which was reported to have been quietly sidelined after the 2007 event in Bangalore, has been revived.

Plans had been discussed whereby the existing Asia Cup, which takes place in Pakistan next month, would be supplemented with an African Cup. The winners of the two tournaments would then play off in an Afro-Asia final.

However, the packed international schedule meant that it was too difficult to find room for the African competition in 2008 and so a competition using the old three-ODI format will be held in Kenya during 2009.

Although the event has raised valuable funds for the African Cricket Association and the Asian Cricket Council, it has been less than a hit with audiences and has struggled to find a niche in the calendar. Despite the best intentions of the two associations, the weight of cricket means that it is still by no means certain to proceed.

Knight Riders sign Mendis

CRICINFO, undated

The Kolkata Knight Riders have signed Ajantha Mendis, the Sri Lankan slow bowler, on a three-year deal. Mendis, who shot into prominence in the ODI series against West Indies with his unusual action and crafty variations, flew into Kolkata on Saturday.

The agency which manages Mendis's affairs was certain that their client will be able to deliver the goods. "Kolkata is a place where the pitches are generally slow and receptive to spin and a bowler like Mendis would be able to make the maximum use of the conditions," the spokesman told the Nation, a Colombo-based daily.

Dramatic Punjab win

CRICINFO, undated

DLFA INDIAN PREMIER LEAGUE
 Not even 20 overs were bowled but there was no shortage of excitement and drama as Kings XI Punjab inched closer to a semifinal spot in the Indian Premier League with a win that was sealed -- in a somewhat chaotic finish to a rain-shortened game -- with a six off the final ball on Saturday.

The result left Delhi Daredevils, who made the early running in the tournament, with ten points from 11 games and a fight to make the last four.

Virender Sehwag and Gautam Gambhir delighted the home crowd at the Feroz Shah Kotla with some fireworks before the first rain interruption but it was the unbroken 63-run stand, off just 27 balls, between Mahela Jayawardene and Luke Pomersbach that clinched the match for Punjab under the Duckworth-Lewis rules as another spell of rain brought about a premature finish.

The two had added 51 in just three overs to turn a precarious position into one of strength, before Sehwag handed all-rounder Rajat Bhatia the eighth over. Bhatia, mixing up the pace, drastically brought down the scoring in his first five deliveries. With the rain beginning to come down, Punjab, after 7.5, were at 88 for 3 and, had another dot ball followed, the scores would have been tied under the D/L method. Jayawardene, though, seized the situation, and a shorter ball was put over deep midwicket for six. With the showers intensifying, the umpires called for the covers, and after a bit of confusion, the match was called off, with Punjab picking up their seventh win in eight games.

Sehwag would repent the over

he bowled in the chase, in which he conceded 22, but perhaps the result would have been different had rain not interrupted his innings. He had decided to bat after a light drizzle delayed the start, and along with Gambhir powered Delhi to a blistering start, scoring 68 off the powerplay overs, though they were lucky not to fall early. Yuvraj Singh spilled a sitter as Sehwag got a top edge off Sreesanth in the third over, and two balls later, Gautam Gambhir got a thick outside edge, but VRR Singh was slow off the blocks at third man.

Gambhir provided the early momentum, making room against Irfan Pathan to send the ball racing through the off side. He was fortunate that a few mistimed shots managed to stay clear of the fielders. Sehwag, who had been getting a thin share of the strike, carted consecutive sixes off VRR Singh through the off side, before he steered a fuller delivery wide of the keeper to make it 22 for the over.

Ramesh Powar was brought in after the powerplays, and he castled Gambhir. That didn't deter Sehwag, who smashed a four and six in Piyush Chawla's first over, then stepped out against Powar and deposited him over midwicket, before rain halted Delhi's innings at 94 for 1 after 8.1 overs.

A long interval followed. Sehwag, on 47 off 19, appeared to have lost his touch on resumption, as Delhi came out with the intention to clear the boundaries with the innings reduced to 11 overs. They lost wickets in a flurry, and strong winds didn't aid batting either. James Hopes bowled an exceptional final over, giving away just three, and Sehwag had crawled after the resumption, managing just four off seven deliveries.

Punjab were chasing a revised target of 123, but a charged-up fielding effort from Delhi had them in trouble. Shikhar Dhawan and

Shoaib Malik both got under a skier from the in-form Shaun Marsh, before Dhawan managed to hold on after avoiding a collision. Glenn McGrath had given away just three in the first over, but Yuvraj, who had delightfully steered Pradeep Sangwan to the leg-side boundary before making room and depositing one in the off-side stands, hit him for consecutive sixes. It seemed to be a captains' day out but Yuvraj mistimed a pull off a slower ball, and unlike Punjab's sloppy efforts in the field, Delhi's fielders managed to take some stunning catches.

Amit Mishra, the leg-spinner, removed Hopes soon after, and Punjab were left needing 90 off 42. Then Sehwag came on and the match turned. Jayawardene, who hadn't made much of an impact in the tournament, deftly guided one past short third man, before reverse-sweeping to beat the same fielder. Another swept four and a Pomersbach six had Punjab's innings up and running again, and two sixes were hit in Mishra's next.

Pomersbach's six off Farveez Maharof brought up the fifty stand off just 19 balls, and the final blow from Jayawardene left Delhi with a sinking feeling.

SCORES IN BRIEF

DELHI DAREDEVILS: 118 for 4 in 11 overs (Gambhir 40, Sehwag 51 not out, Dhawan 8, Dilshan 8, Malik 1 not out; Power 2-22, Hopes 2-2)

KINGS XI PUNJAB: 94 for 3 in 8 overs (Marsh 2, Hopes 4, Yuvraj 23, Jayawardene 36 not out, Pomersbach 25 not out; McGrath 1-18, Sangwan 1-12, Mishra 1-21)
 Result: Kings XI Punjab won by 6 runs (D/L method)
Man-of-the-match: Mahela Jayawardene
 Umpires: AV Jayaprakash and RE Koertzen (South Africa)
 Toss: Delhi Daredevils.

Torch relay halted for earthquake mourning

AFP, Beijing

The Beijing Olympic torch relay will be halted for three days as part of a national mourning period following a devastating earthquake, Games organisers said Sunday.

The torch relay suspension will begin on Monday, the organising committee said in a statement on its website.

The decision marks the latest setback for the relay, which was supposed to be a months-long celebration of Beijing's hosting of the Olympics but has continually been disrupted.

Pro-Tibet demonstrators disrupted the relay in London, Paris and San Francisco to protest against China's crackdown on unrest in the Himalayan region, which broke out in mid-March and spread to neighbouring regions.

The torch was put out several times in the chaotic relay through Paris.

The flame, which returned to China earlier this month for a three-month national journey ending in Beijing in August, also had to be put out on Saturday when an over-enthusiastic crowd in the eastern city of Wenzhou blocked the relay route, the Beijing Youth Daily reported.

It was not immediately clear whether the relay would skip part of its planned route to make up for lost time or merely be temporarily halted.

The torch was to be taken through the eastern city of Ningbo on Monday.

"All of the public entertainment activities will be cancelled during the three days of mourning including the torch relay," Lao Jinhong, vice president of the Ningbo Municipal Sports Bureau, told Xinhua news agency.

China's Cabinet on Sunday announced three days of national mourning after an estimated 50,000 people died in its worst earthquake in three decades.

Chinese government buildings will fly the national flag at half-mast for the three days starting Monday, it said.

The nation will also observe three minutes of silence at 2:28 pm (0628 GMT) Monday, exactly one week after the earthquake struck southwestern Sichuan province.

Nel quits Essex for IPL

BBC ONLINE, undated

Andre Nel will miss his final match as Essex's overseas player to join up with Indian Premier League team the Mumbai Indians, BBC Sport has learned.

Fast bowler Nel, who may return to England later in the summer with the touring South Africans, was in Mumbai on Sunday but was not picked to play against Hyderabad Deccan Chargers.

He was due to play for Essex against Middlesex that day, before Danish Kaneria takes over as overseas pro.



Usha midfielder Zahidul Islam Rajan (L) takes the ball past a Mariners defender during their Premier Hockey League match at the Maulana Bhasani National Hockey Stadium yesterday.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS
 1 Pavlova 36 Sticky stuff 55 Gets
 2 Despot 40 Point in light 22 Repair
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 13 Present 14 Medal 15 First person 16 Hazelnut
 18 He served Calvin and Franklin late 20 NAFTA signatory 22 Showman
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