

MERDEKA CUP Second defeat for Bangladesh

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh suffered their second defeat in the Merdeka Cup when neighbours Myanmar handed them a 1-0 defeat in the Group B match at Kuala Lumpur yesterday.

A 23rd minute strike from Soe Myatmin separated the teams at the Shah Alam Stadium and all but confirmed the elimination of the Bangladesh team from the tournament.

Shafiqul Islam Manik's side were beaten by Mozambique Under-20 team in the first game also by same margin and will play their last group match against the Vietnam Olympic team (Under-23) tomorrow.

Vietnam Olympic team dominated the group as they defeated Myanmar 3-1 in their first game and then outclassed Mozambique 4-0 yesterday.

According to message received here Manik's defensive strategy denied the chance to bounce back in the match after going 0-1 down in the first half. Surprisingly Manik brought attacking midfielder Zahid Hossain into the field with only four minutes remaining.

SEE PAGE 18 COL 5

All eyes on ICC

CRICINFO, undated

With talks between the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) and Indian cricket League (ICL) on officially accommodating the Twenty20 league having failed, the spotlight now is on the next move by the parties concerned. The ball appears to be in the International Cricket Council's (ICC) court; it will be briefed -- before November 4, under its own stipulation -- by the Indian board on Thursday's meeting in New Delhi, and has been asked by the ICL to convene a board meeting by November 7 and decide on the issue.

At Mohali, on the sidelines of the India-Australia Test match, ICC chief executive Haroon Lorgat said it would wait for the BCCI's official report before considering the ICL application for recognition. In the

SEE PAGE 18 COL 5

6-shooter Shakib puts Tigers on top

MOHAMMAD ISAM in Chittagong

After the second day's play of the first Test against New Zealand, Shakib Al Hasan took very little time to tell everyone that he is playing this game as a spinner first and then a batsman.

In the 19th over and the gamely in the balance, Shakib pitched the ball just a shade inside the line of off-stump and then it turned and beat Ross Taylor's outside edge, the furniture and Mushfiqur Rahim's gloves. He did the same with Brendon McCullum once again and later in the day, made Jeetan Patel's leave look a tad foolish. None of these deliveries brought him a wicket but this is how a good bowling performance comes from.

It is a super-stition among some spinners that good deliveries don't necessarily get you wickets, it merely adds to the pressure and builds up a great bowling performance. Shakib's 6-31 was indeed a great bowling performance by a Bangladeshi in international scene after a long time.

His mesmerising spell after a morning disappointment that saw the home side lose their last six wickets in a fashion that they are infamous for turned the match on its head. And it was only fitting for Shakib to lead the Tigers off the field leaving the Kiwis in tatters with 155-9.

Shakib did not make it turn out of bounds but did enough to make a top-order light on experience look vulnerable on a wicket that deteriorated as the day progressed.

"I don't know about the other bowlers but I found the wicket very helpful as there was turn and bounce," said the 21-year-old.

"It was not uneven bounce and I think luck also had a big role to play,"

added Shakib.

He began his work on the two New Zealand openers -- Jamie How and Aaron Redmond -- in their first major trip to the sub-continent. Both batsmen failed to read Shakib's length and paid the price. Debutant Jesse Ryder and Brendon McCullum were too extravagant for that early in an innings with the latter playing the worst shot of the day -- a nothing, one-handed flay at a pitched up delivery that ended up being an easy catch for mid-on. Shakib accounted for both the aggressive batsmen but his most satisfying scalp was none other than the towering Jacob Oram.

"I think the wicket of Jacob Oram was the vital one, albeit a bit lucky," said the mild-mannered Magura boy who had the number one all-rounder in the world caught at short mid-wicket.

Although Vettori had to endure watching his team fall into a quagmire that is 100 for seven, he couldn't help but like what he saw from the Tigers left-arm spinner.

"Shakib was outstanding and unfortunately, we played into his plans," said the left-arm spinner who has 262 Test wickets to his name after snaring five earlier in the day.

"He bowled exceptionally well. I think his style of bowling is very well suited to the pitch and I don't think he even bowled a bad ball," said a clearly impressed Vettori.

Chief selector Rafiqul Alam described the performance as 'outstanding' and said that it was just a reward for the man who, in his words, 'has been the go-to guy for us in the last one year'.

Shakib believed that his duty was to be a spinning all-rounder than a batsman in this Test.

"I know that I am a batsman and maybe I would value a big score like 70-

odd more than a five-for, but what I did today [Saturday] was important for the team," said Shakib, undaunted by his poor average in this form of the game.

"I targeted good areas and the wickets were a bonus and I didn't really expect it to be so well," added the left-arm spinner.

While all this had happened, he certainly didn't think that the bowling part would be transcended but later proclaimed it to be the happiest part of the day.

"I think I am happier with the catch than the wickets," he said of the low, diving effort at the end of the day that summed up the day for Bangladesh: unpredictable; satisfying.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard at stumps on the second day of the first Test between Bangladesh and New Zealand at the Chittagong Divisional Stadium on Saturday:

BANGLADESH: First innings (overnight 183-4)

Tamim c McCullum b Vettori	18			
Zunaed lbw b O'Brien	0			
Rajin b O'Brien	20			
Ashraf lbw b Vettori	2			
Mehrab c Radmond b O'Brien	73			
Mushfiqur c How b Vettori	89			
Nayeem st McCullum b Patel	14			
Shakib c Vettori b Patel	5			
Mashrafe c Ryder b Vettori	0			
Razzak c McCullum b Vettori	11			
Shahadat not out	0			
Extras: (b-12, lb-1)	13			
Total: (All out in 122 overs)	245			
Fall of wickets: 1-0, 2-34, 3-40, 4-44, 5-188, 6-229, 7-229, 8-229, 9-245.				
Bowler	O	M	R	W
Mills	19	7	46	0
O'Brien	23	11	36	3
Oram	20	13	14	0
Ryder	3	1	10	0

SEE PAGE 18 COL 1

Pakistanis hail Tendulkar

AFP, Karachi

Pakistan cricket greats Saturday showered praise on Indian batting maestro Sachin Tendulkar becoming Test cricket's leading run-maker, saying his feat is a matter of pride for the sub-continent.

Tendulkar overtook retired West Indian Brian Lara's tally of 11,953 runs on the first day of the second Test against Australia at Mohali on Friday.

Tendulkar hit a brilliant 88 to take his run aggregate to 12,027 in his 152nd Test.

Former captain of arch-rivals Pakistan Wasim Akram said Tendulkar was the best among the best.

"I definitely rate him alongside Lara, Sunil Gavaskar, Viv Richards and Ricky Ponting," Wasim told AFP. "Tendulkar is the best of all time."

Wasim, who led Pakistan's bowling attack when Tendulkar made his Test debut in Karachi in 1989, said Tendulkar displayed his class right from the start.

"As a 16-year-old he showed the talent to go places and hinted that he would play for 20 years and break all records."

Wasim said he valued Tendulkar's wicket above all others.

"Since he has to lose his wicket, his was always a prized scalp," said Wasim, who holds the record for most one-day wickets with 502.

Former batting legend Javed

SEE PAGE 18 COL 1

Inter-varsity football

SPORTS REPORTER

The 'Mentors Inter Private University Tournament 2008', organised by Auritro, kicks-off at 3pm today at the Army Stadium in the city.

The opening match will see North South University take on Northern University after the tournament is officially inaugurated by Secretary of the Sports Council, Mohammad Akbar.

Organised in association with the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF), the third edition of the tournament brings together ten private universities across the city.

Both of the previous editions of the tournament has been won by Stamford University.

SENSATIONAL SHAKIB: Spinner Shakib Al Hasan (in the foreground) goes on a celebratory lap after taking yet another New Zealand wicket as teammates rush to congratulate him on the second day of the first Test at the Chittagong Divisional Stadium yesterday. He took six wickets for 31 runs in 24 miserly overs.

PHOTO: ZOAHER HOSSAIN SIKDER

CHITS FROM CHITTAGONG

MOHAMMAD ISAM from Chittagong

The surface did play up and it made the batsmen struggle throughout the day, reflected clearly by the 15 wickets that fell yesterday.

And who took all those wickets? Spinners.

But New Zealand captain Daniel Vettori did not lay the blame solely on the conditions for his side's poor batting.

"That [pitch] probably played a part but I think overall we didn't play that well. Some of the options we took were very poor. The wicket was helping a little bit but not enough to put us in this position," added the Black Caps captain who took his 16th five-wicket haul in Tests.

"I think it is more difficult the newer the ball is. If the ball gets older, then the wicket dies a little bit and we found that out while bowling.

"I think Bangladesh was at their most dangerous when the ball was new and Shakib (Al Hasan) and (Abdur) Razzak were bowling. When the ball got older, I was out there then, the ball wasn't turning

that much. I think it's easier the longer you bat but I think that's everywhere in the world," said the Kiwi skipper, who rated his unbeaten 48 higher than the five-for.

TOO HOT FOR JOURNOS

While the batsmen felt the heat under the blazing sun and facing the spinning ball, the journalists found themselves in uncomfortable surroundings.

The already inadequate air-conditions, four in total, at the stadium's press box stopped working from the morning of the second day and for a scribe who has a tough job of covering a Test match, there cannot be anything worse.

Cricket has evolved into a multi-billion dollar sport and while the spoils are shared around the Test-playing nations, something went missing in Chittagong. The sizable contingent from Dhaka suffered under the immense heat and the continuous whirr of pedestal fans, usually found in weddings around town or inside factories, although both don't seem to be related.

The media had to endure the heat for nearly three hours during which time the electricity went for a lemon break, only to complicate matters.

Whoever is to blame, be it the BCB's logistics, grounds and facilities committees or the local organisers, the media deserves the best services for it takes pride in covering every step of the Tigers' journey.

DRAWING PARALLELS

The Tigers have the chance to get their second first innings lead in the last three Tests and seventh overall in the last eight years since gaining Test status.

The first two times were in 2003 in the same series in Pakistan -- Peshawar and Multan, where Bangladesh couldn't cross the last hurdle.

A year later it was in Gros Islet where then captain Habibul Bashar even had the privilege of declaring in the second innings. The win against Zimbabwe also had a sizable first innings lead in this same ground while the most memorable one came against Australia at the Fatullah Cricket Stadium when the Tigers were beaten by three wickets.

South Africa would have bad memories of a Test match in Mirpur when the Proteas fell to Shahadat Hossain's six-for but managed victory.

Anisur propels Rajshahi

SPORTS REPORTER

Anisur Rahman slammed an unbeaten hundred to put hosts Rajshahi

on top against Chittagong on the first day of the four-day Ispahani Mirzapore Tea 10th National Cricket League yesterday.

All the teams suffered early hiccups but the batsmen still ruled the opening day of the second round matches as Sylhet made a bold start against Dhaka in their home ground, in which the country's lone first-class competition returned after five years.

At the Fatullah Cricket Stadium, an unlikely 127-run eighth wicket partnership between Shaheen Hossain and Sajedul Islam helped Barisal to reach 278-8 against

Khulna, the only team which won the first round game.

RAJSHAHI-CHITTAGONG

Moktar Ali gave the visitors an early breakthrough by trapping Shakil Haider in front for 13 and the run out of another opener Zahurul Islam saw the home side struggling on 46-2. But the home team recovered from the damage to finish the day on 275-4 at the Rajshahi Divisional Stadium.

Rafiqul Islam joined Forhad Hossain to repair the damage before he was trapped leg before for 20 runs but it was seasoned campaigner Anisur who took away Chittagong's early initiative after being invited to bowl first.

Anisur and Forhad added 142 runs for the fourth wicket stand. During his more than three and a half hour stay, Forhad struck nine boundaries while Anisur, who hit

13 fours in 162 balls, remained not out on 111.

SYLHET-DHAKA

The home team rode three half centuries to consolidate their position as they scored 253-5 before stumps were drawn for the first day at the Sylhet District Stadium.

Sylhet lost two quick wickets on 25 but opener Golam Rahman combined with Mohammad Mithun to add 116 runs for the third wicket to repair the damage. Golam Rahman scored a 192-ball 71 that featured eight fours and a six while Mithun contributed 69 off 81 balls with the help of six fours and a six.

Kamrul Islam was batting on 53 and Ejaz Ahmed accompanied him with 36.

SEE PAGE 18 COL 5

McGain has shoulder op

AFP, Sydney

Leg-spinner Bryce McGain, who returned home injured from Australia's current tour of India, underwent shoulder surgery Saturday, Cricket Victoria said.

McGain, who was poised to make his Test debut at the age of 36, suffered tendon damage while bowling in India and was forced to return home early.

McGain initially injured the area underneath his right shoulder during an Australia A match in India last month and further aggravated it while preparing for a tour match with the senior Australian squad.

"No-one likes to be sidelined and this injury under my armpit has come at a particularly bad time," McGain said in a statement.

"Hopefully the fitness work I've done during the pre-season will stand me in good stead in terms of my recovery and allow me to get stuck into my rehab and back in the nets as soon as possible.

"This is a setback, but I've bounced back from a few of these before and am confident this treatment will allow me to return as strong as ever."

Medical staff said McGain's recovery time will depend on his progress following the surgery.

Australian cricket is struggling to throw up a quality spinner following the retirements of legendary Shane Warne and fellow wrist spinner Stuart McGill in quick succession over the last two years.

India corner Australia

Cricket

AFP, Mohali

Debutant leg-spinner Amit Mishra picked up two key wickets as India pushed Australia into a corner on the second day of the second Test here on Saturday.

Mishra, 24, sent back Simon Katich (33) before dismissing Michael Clarke (23) off the penultimate ball of the day to reduce the visitors to a shaky 102-4 on what still seemed a good batting wicket.

His efforts with the ball came after Sourav Ganguly hit a century and Mahendra Dhoni an attacking 92 to take India to 469 all out in the first innings.

At stumps, Michael Hussey was on 37 with five fours.

"We are in a very good position at the moment," Ganguly said at the post-match press conference.

"The bowlers have done their job well. Mishra was impressive

considering the wicket has not started to turn as yet. We hope spinners will get more purchase as the match progresses."

It was Zaheer Khan again who gave the home side the crucial breakthrough when he cleaned the off-stump of opener Matthew Hayden for a duck off just the third ball of the Australian innings.

It was the third time in the series that the left-arm paceman claimed Hayden cheaply after dismissing him twice in the drawn Bangalore opener.

Australian captain Ricky Ponting fumbled around for nearly half an hour for his five runs before being trapped leg before by a sharp in-cutter from new-ball bowler Ishant Sharma.

Katich looked in good touch, reading both the seamers and the spinners well until he misjudged Mishra and gifted him his maiden Test wicket.

His 65-ball knock contained six fours, including three of them off

Sharma. Australia would have been in deeper trouble had Dhoni taken a simple catch of Hussey off Harbhajan Singh when the batsman was on 25.

Earlier, Ganguly hit eight fours in his patient 225-ball knock and shared a 109-run partnership with Dhoni, who hammered eight fours and four sixes in his entertaining 124-ball innings.

Ganguly, set to retire after the four-Test series for the Border-Gavaskar trophy, reached his 16th Test century with a four to the square leg fence off leg-spinner Cameron White.

The 36-year-old former captain was out soon after reaching his century, holding out to Brett Lee at long off to give White his first wicket of the match.

"It was a very satisfying knock though not my best," Ganguly said.

"But any century against Australia is special. I had to work

SEE PAGE 18 COL 2



What to WATCH

BTV

Bangladesh v New Zealand
First Test, Day Three
Live from 9:30am

Neo Cricket

India v Australia
Second Test, Day Three
Live from 10:00am

ESPN

English Premier League
Stoke City v Tottenham
Live from 8:55pm

STAR Sports

English Premier League
Hull City v West Ham
Live from 8:55pm

TEN Sports

ICL Twenty20
Mumbai v Kolkata
Live from 2:30pm
Ahmedabad v Lahore
Live from 8:00pm

TALK TURKEY



Pratibha Patil

(India President)

"I am extremely delighted and proud that you have reached the pinnacle of achievement in cricket by becoming the highest run-getter in Test. You have given joy to millions of Indians and I am sure you will continue to set new standards of achievement in the future." While paying tribute to batting maestro Sachin Tendulkar.



PHOTO: AFP

HERE I AM: India batsman Sourav Ganguly raises his arms to celebrate his century on the second day of the second Test against Australia at the Punjab Cricket Association Stadium in Mohali yesterday.