

Kiwis make a fist of it

SPORTS REPORTER



The Sher-e-Bangla National stadium was bathed in brilliant sunshine yesterday as play in the second Test between Bangladesh and New Zealand got underway after three frustrating days of wash-outs.

With only two days remaining, there seemed to be nothing of interest left in the match. But at the end of the fourth day play, it was not all about a merry affair of finishing the match as the ridiculous batting of the Tigers gave the visitors room to even think about a result in the match.

The home side were tottering at 13-3 after New Zealand captain Daniel Vettori decided to make it a contest by declaring their innings for 262-6 with less than an hour's play left on the fourth day.

It may be hard for anybody to imagine anything other than a draw with the fact that the Black Caps have to dismiss the hosts twice before the end of the final day but the way three Bangladesh batsmen including captain Mohammad Ashraful got out in one over of Daniel Vettori alarmed many.

It can be a perfect example of how careless a batsman can be by the way Zunaed Siddiqui was dismissed to pave the way for a

mini-collapse in the fog end of the match under fading light. As if his side was in a hurry for a run chase the left-hander came down to charge none other than the New Zealand skipper in the penultimate over of the day.

If someone is looking for an answer from Zunaed Siddiqui about why the left-hander lost his concentration than the second question would be why Ashraful decided to negotiate last two overs under fading light rather than sending out any night-watchman.

The Bangladesh skipper was courageous enough to take the decision but was not ready to defend his decision as debutant pace bowler Mahabub Alam appeared to meet the press only to assure everybody that they have still plenty of batsmen to save the team.

"It's disappointing to lose three wickets but we are not scared because still we have batsmen to come," said the young paceman, who along with his illustrious new ball partner Mashrafe Bin Mortaza gave Bangladesh a bright start sending back two New Zealand openers for 10 runs.

There is however a previous unwanted record that will irk the Tigers. They lost a Test match by an innings and 52 runs in 181.4 overs after rain ruined the first two days play in Hamilton in December 2001.

This fact may encourage the Kiwis to make it 2-0 after they won the first Test by three wickets in Chittagong thanks to a brilliant

captain's knock from Daniel Vettori.

"I think the first session tomorrow is going to become the big one for us. If we push hard and get early wickets and go on from there then anything is possible for us. Definitely we'll go for a win," said a confident Jesse Ryder when asked whether he expects a result from this match after rain washed out the first three days and the prospects of making Bangladesh follow-on with the target reduced to 100 as this is now being considered a two-day match.

"They (Bangladesh players) could be a little cagey tomorrow. If we show a bit of hustle and good body language and come strong then hopefully we can keep them on the back foot," he added.

Ryder also expressed his disappointment on getting out nine runs short of a maiden Test hundred.

"It is hard to accept falling short by 9 runs after you have worked so hard to get there. But I will learn from that and go on from there and hopefully in the next innings (it will happen)," he said.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard at close on the fourth day of the second Test between Bangladesh and New Zealand at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur on Tuesday:

NEW ZEALAND: First innings	2
Redmond lbw b Mashrafe	2
Howb Mahabubul	8
Ryder c Mehra b Razzak	91
Taylor b Shahadat	19
McCullum c Ashraful b Shakib	66

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SHOCKER! Bangladesh opener Zunaed Siddiqui tries to regain his crease in vain as New Zealand wicketkeeper Brendon McCullum (2nd from L) completes a successful stumping in his second attempt during the eventful penultimate over bowled by Kiwi captain Daniel Vettori on the fourth day of the second Test at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium yesterday.

Third round finally begins

SPORTS REPORTER

Play finally started in all three venues in the third round of the National Cricket League yesterday.

But the matches started in the afternoon in Rajshahi, Bogra and Chittagong, after rain ruined the first two days.

The latest of those starts was at the Shaheed Chandu Stadium when the umpires decided that only an hour and 42 minutes would be possible.

RAJSHAHI v DHAKA

Discarded national opener Javed Omar struck an unbeaten 66 to keep the Dhaka first innings together after they were reduced to 32 for four at the Rajshahi Divisional Stadium.

The Dhaka captain struck eleven boundaries in his 119-ball knock and shared a fifth wicket stand of 101 runs with Nadif Chowdhury, who was not out on 49 off 83 balls, with five boundaries and a six.

The Rajshahi opening duo of Alamgir Kabir and Mohammad Shahzad took two wickets each, removing Ashiqul Islam, Shamsur Rahman, Mahmudullah Riyad and Marshall Ayub cheaply after play began at 1.30pm.

CHITTAGONG v KHULNA

Nafis Iqbal was the other national discard who struck a half-century as hosts Chittagong moved to 115 for three.

The right-hander struck 53 off 110 balls with seven boundaries. He found some support from Tariq

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Kumble back for India

Third Test against Australia from today

Cricket

AFP, New Delhi

Fit-again Anil Kumble will be back to lead India in the crucial third Test against Australia on Wednesday with the tourists bolstered by the return of fast bowler Stuart Clark.

"I'm 100 per cent fit," Kumble told reporters on Tuesday at the Feroz Shah Kotla ground.

But Kumble, who missed the second Test in Mohali due to a shoulder injury, said doubts still remained over the availability of off-spinner Harbhajan Singh, who has been suffering from a toe injury.

"He's still not sure for the match. We just want to wait and see and, depending on his fitness, we'll take a final call tomorrow."

Harbhajan's injury could open the door for leg-spinner Amit Mishra to sneak into the India squad, although Kumble stressed the importance of having the right balance in the team.

"It's a question of keeping the balance and obviously Harbhajan is a key member of the side and we are hoping he would be fit by tomorrow morning."

Harbhajan took three wickets in 10 balls in Mohali to set up India's 320-run victory.

The home side lead 1-0 in the four-match Border-Gavaskar series. The opener in Bangalore ended in a draw.

Mishra, who played as a replacement for Kumble at Mohali, also impressed, picking up seven Australian wickets in his debut Test.

The tourists, who must win here to keep alive their chances of winning the series, were relieved at having Clark back in the squad after the bowler missed the Mohali

game due to a sore elbow.

"Clark is back into the mix and (Peter) Siddle will sit out," captain Ricky Ponting said, adding that Australia were yet to decide on their spin options, with Cameron White and the untested Jason Krejza both in the mix.

"It could be one (spinner), it could be two, Jason is definitely in

the reckoning," he said.

Ponting was concerned that the haze hanging over the skyline here owing to Diwali, the festival of lights, might have an effect during the course of the match.

"It might be an exceptional day with all the haze hanging around from the fireworks tonight."

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PHOTO AFP

Fit again Indian captain Anil Kumble is on his delivery stride while spin partner Harbhajan Singh looks during practice session ahead of the third Test against Australia at the Feroz Shah Kotla in New Delhi yesterday.

Oram injury not serious

AFP, Wellington

Injury-prone New Zealand all-rounder Jacob Oram expressed relief Tuesday after being cleared of any serious back injury following his early return from the Bangladesh tour.

Oram, who was sidelined for most of 2005 with a major back problem, flew home at the weekend after experiencing stiffness while bowling in the first Test victory against the hosts.

"It is reassuring to know that it is only a soft tissue injury," he said in a statement.

"I have had some major lower-back problems over my career and while you are always hopeful that the latest problem is not a pointer to something more serious, you can never be certain."

Oram will head to the gym on Wednesday to begin his rehabilitation but it is not yet clear when he

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Lawson, PCB resolve issues

CRICINFO, undated

Outstanding financial issues between the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) and outgoing coach Geoff Lawson have been resolved after a meeting on Monday.

Lawson had sent back a cheque the board had given him over the weekend, claiming the payment was far short of what was owed to him as per the terms of his contract, a claim which was correct.

Lawson told Cricinfo the meeting with Salim Altuf, the PCB's director-general, was "a cordial one" and that the issue was resolved "amicably".

"We had a good meeting," Altuf told Cricinfo. "There had been a communication gap in the past but we have ended on good terms."

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Return for Rokibul, Nazmul

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

Fit-again Rokibul Hasan and Nazmul Hossain were recalled when the national selectors announced a 15-member squad for a Twenty20 international and three one-day internationals in South Africa.

All-rounder Mahmudullah Riyad was the only player dropped from the squad that played the recent one-day series against New Zealand at home to pave way for Nazmul Hossain.

"Considering the conditions we picked five pace bowlers. Nazmul could not make it in the home series against New Zealand as he was unlucky but he is informed and matured enough to play in South African condition," said chief selector Rafiqul Alam in a press

conference yesterday.

"On the other hand Rokibul is fully fit and it's a very good news for us because he is a very dependable batsman right at the moment. He may not play the Twenty20 match but will be available from the one-day series," he said when confirmed about the fitness of Rokibul, who had fractured his thumb during the first one-day of the three-match series against Australian Darwin.

The Tigers will kick off their

second trip to South Africa with the lone Twenty20 international at the Wanderers Stadium in Johannesburg on November 5 and then involve in a three-match one-day series and two-match Test series during their month-long stay.

Rafiqul also explained the reason behind the exclusion of Riyad.

"The performance of Riyad was not up to the mark. On the other hand Nayeem so far has done well," he said.

The former national player

however said that the opening slot is real problem for his side.

"It's always a big problem for our team. You know we have hardly any options after the departure of Shahriar Nafees and Nazimuddin. We included Imrul Kayes because of his good performance in the different levels and I am hopeful about his service," said Rafiqul.

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3 more for Challenge Cup

Football

SPORTS REPORTER

Alfaz Ahmed has been given another chance to return to the national fold when the ace striker was included in the preliminary squad for Bangladesh's trip to Myanmar.

Although the 20-member team that went to the Merdeka Cup in Malaysia earlier this month were supposed to be reduced to 18 for next month's 3rd Grand Royal Challenge Cup, the think-tank felt the need of a few changes.

And coach Shafiqul Islam Manik had proposed the names of Sheikh Russel striker Alfaz, Abahani midfielder Zahed Parvez and Brothers fullback Atiqur Rahman Mishu to the National Team

Management Committee (NTMC), which endorsed the choices in its yesterday's meeting.

"We have decided to add the three players to the squad according to the coach's request. He will now announce the final team on November from the 23-member squad," told NTMC chairman Badal Roy last night.

Badal had ruled out any chance of Alfaz's inclusion on the previous day, saying there were reasons to exclude the former captain for Merdeka Cup and they remained. The Bangladesh Football Federation vice-president, however, gave no explanations.

When reminded, he informed that the coach has already talked with Alfaz and we believe the problems have been sorted out.

Out of the 20 that toured Malaysia, only Hassan Al Mamun

looks uncertain for the Yangon meet, where Bangladesh are pitted against hosts Myanmar and Indonesia in Group A.

"The NTMC has also decided to strongly monitor the national team's performance on and off the field. We are keen to increase facilities for the footballers but in return, we want their best."

"We are going to make recommendations to the federation about making the league and the club structure stronger in the future, which we feel will strengthen the national team also. We feel that players should at least get gymnasium facilities at all levels," said Badal who will be the team leader in Myanmar.

The former national football captain confirmed that a four-member coaching staff -- coach,

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ICL suspends Cairns, Mongia

CRICINFO, undated

Chris Cairns and Dinesh Mongia, both of the Chandigarh Lions, have been suspended by the Indian Cricket League (ICL).

Andrew Hall, the South African all-rounder, will replace Cairns as Chandigarh's captain.

A brief statement issued by the ICL did not specify the reason but sources have told Cricinfo that the action was taken by the ICL's executive board "on disciplinary grounds".

Cairns arrived for the current Twenty20 tournament carrying an ankle injury, and did not disclose his fitness status to the ICL, it has been learnt. "This violates the player's contract, which clearly states that he needs to be fit when appearing for the tournament, or should inform the ICL in case of an injury," the sources said. "Cairns has been sent back and will no longer take part in this particular tournament. His ICL contract

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Allen's antics with English WAGs

Cricket

TIMES ONLINE, Antigua

Matt Prior did not appear to be suffering from whatever was causing the rest of his teammates to drop catches, but no one would have blamed the England wicketkeeper if he had spilt a chance after looking up at the giant screen to see his pregnant wife sitting on the knee of a middle-aged billionaire.

Prior and some of the other England players were said to be embarrassed, uncomfortable and perhaps a little angry at what they regarded as inappropriate behaviour from Allen Stanford, the Texan who is bankrolling the Stanford Super Series.

Stanford was seen mixing with the players' wives and girlfriends during the warm-up match against

Middlesex on Sunday. He is said to have placed Emily Prior on his lap and put his arm around Alice Hunt, the girlfriend of Alastair Cook.

The billionaire appeared to be enjoying himself, but the women were allegedly reluctant to refuse his advances because these matches culminate in the winner-takes-all clash on Saturday that could result in their other halves walking away with 1 million dollars each.

Stuart Broad, the England bowler, said: "There were a few gobsmacked faces when it popped up on the big screen. I didn't see it because I was bowling the over but I think Matt Prior had a bit of a shocked look on his face."

The episode added an edge to the relaxed atmosphere at the Stanford Cricket Ground and the lacklustre cricket on the field. Excellence is not something you

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PHOTO: INTERNET

Texan billionaire Allen Stanford (C) sits Emily Prior, wife of England wicketkeeper Matthew Prior, on his lap after getting slightly carried away in the festivities during a warm-up match between England and Middlesex at the Stanford Cricket Stadium in Coolidge, Antigua late on Sunday. Stanford's frolic with Emily and the other England WAG's saw him take heavy flak from the England team, for which he subsequently apologised.

Procter quits ICC for new CSA role

CRICINFO, undated

Mike Procter has stood down as an International Cricket Council (ICC) match referee to take up his new role as Cricket South Africa's (CSA) convener of selectors.

Procter, who officiated in 47 Tests, 154 ODIs and 15 Twenty20 internationals since becoming a match referee in 2002, will take up his new job on December 1 after completing his obligations with the ICC.

His last two series will be between Pakistan and West Indies in Abu Dhabi, followed by Zimbabwe and Sri Lanka.

"Speaking from personal experience I know that his new role as CSA's convener of selectors will be a challenging and rewarding one," said ICC's chief executive, Haroon Lorgat. "However, I also know that Mike will bring to it all the cricket wisdom he has acquired over more than 40 years of top-level involvement."

Did U Know?

Henri Cochet of France won most French Open titles (9) - four singles, three doubles, and two mixed doubles between 1926 and 1930.



BTv

Bangladesh v New Zealand
Second Test, Day Five
Live from 9:30am

Neo Cricket

India v Australia
Third Test, Day 1
Live from 10:00am

ESPN

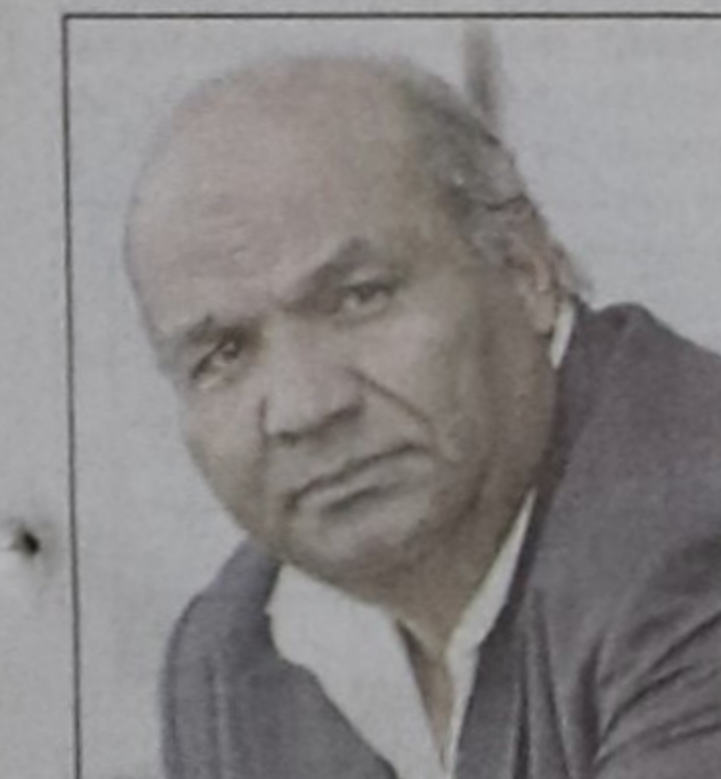
English Premier League
Arsenal v Tottenham
Live from 2:00am (Thursday)

STAR Sports

English Premier League
Man United v West Ham
Live from 2:00am (Thursday)

TEN Sports

ICL Twenty20
Ahmedabad v Hyderabad
Live from 8:00pm



Intikhab Alam

(Pakistan new cricket coach)
"Nobody is (player) bigger than the game and instilling discipline among the players will be my priority. After he was appointed coach last week."



Nat'l Cricket League

(Four-Day, Day Four)
Chittagong v Khulna
Venue: Chittagong Divisional Stadium
Rajshahi v Dhaka
Venue: Rajshahi Divisional Stadium
Barisal v Sylhet
Venue: Shaheed Chandu Stadium, Bogra