



Left-arm spinner Arafat Sunny (R) celebrates his wicket against Sylhet at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

Dhoni finds few friends

PTI, New Delhi

Mahendra Singh Dhoni's threat to resign to back a player of his choice did not find much support among former cricketers, who Tuesday insisted that while a captain does have the right to give his inputs, the final call should rest with the selectors.

The former cricketers said while a captain's views should be given priority the ultimate responsibility and authority lies with the selectors, who have been entrusted with the job.

"The inputs of captain and coach in selection matters are very important. It's also important for the selection committee chairman to have a quiet word, informally, on the day before the selection panel meeting with the captain and coach. I used to do it most of the times, but not always," former chairman of selectors Dilip Vengsarkar told PTI.

"If the captain's demands are reasonable then it's okay to go with him as he formalises the team strategies. Every captain will put forth his views in selection meetings and Dhoni is no exception. But the final decision rests with the selectors," he added.

Former captain Bishan Singh Bedi said that the captain's views should be considered as much as possible.

"The captain is a co-opted member of the panel. His views should be considered as much as possible. But the selectors also have their plans and they should mutually sort out the issues if there are any," Bedi said.

Former captain and selection panel chairman Chandu Borde said the captains are given their due say during the meetings.

"During our times we used to include captain and manager (now coach) in selection committee meetings for discussions. Generally 85-90 per cent players select themselves on merit and performance. Only one or two players need to be picked."

Muktijoddha

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replay the loans with the sponsors' money.

"We had taken loans to meet the budget of running the club earlier and we are trying to pay them back," Feroz said.

There was rumour that Muktijoddha would not be able to field a team in their Friday's B. League match against Abahani as their temporary residence was closed by the owner following no payment for five months.

But the club official claimed things would be all right and they will continue playing in the league.

"We are looking forward to start our club activities in Gulistan before Eidul Azha, which I hope would take care of things," added Feroz.

No hair, no

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not believe in astrology but rather rely on his own skills when it comes to ruling the 22 yards. Fed up by suggestion and recommendations that he should wear jersey with specific numbers on it while playing, the flamboyant Indian opener went on to wear a numberless shirt in the fourth one-day game against England on Sunday.

"I don't believe in astrology but my family members do. Too many people used to call up and pester me and my family to use different numbers."

"I was so fed up that I decided not to take any of their advices. We play Test matches without numbers and hence I don't use any number on my T-shirt," Sehwaig, adjudged man-of-the-match for his scintillating 69 in Bangalore, said.

An unusual celebration

Cricket

PTI, Bangalore

The entire Indian squad came out onto the field hours after play got over. They had the run of the empty stadium, and a jubilant team made the most of it. Running, screaming and having fun --- a victory lap and a victory dance away from the fans, but in the middle of the stadium --- the perfect way to celebrate.

As dark clouds hovered over the Chinnaswamy stadium India started with a fresh opening pair as Sachin Tendulkar came in. But the master batsman looked rusty and he was put out of his misery by Stuart Broad. That brought together the red hot pair of Sehwaig and Gautam Gambhir and they raced along to 82 for one when the skies opened up.

The rain stopped play twice and the match was reduced to only 22 overs per side. Sehwaig opened with a bang again but fell to Graeme Swann at 69, trying to up the tempo. However, with Yuvraj Singh at the crease run-rate was never a problem.

Yusuf Pathan played just one ball and that too was dispatched for a six. India ended at 166 for four but with Duckworth Lewis in play the target was revised to 198 for England.

Shant Sharma came up with excellent effort to start the proceeding while Ravi Bopara was dismissed in the second over by new ball partner Munaf Patel. Gautam Gambhir dropped a Owais Shah at mid wicket but on the very next ball Harbhajan finally made it two down for the visitors.

Shant, coming back after a lay off, was in the thick of the things getting Kevin Pietersen clean bowled for five and England's ship seemed to be sinking. Owais Shah and Andrew Flintoff then kept the visitors in the game with Shah hitting some big blows to cheer their camp. But after Shah looped up a simple catch to Tendulkar and then with Flintoff gone, India were on the verge of a series victory.

Gambhir almost dropped a second one in the innings but managed to hang on to get rid of Samit Patel, prompting his skipper to lend his gloves to him. In the end the margin was 20 runs. India won the seven-match limited overs series 4-0.

Plan damage limitation

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generally bouncy and we need to cope with that if we are to improve our performance," Ashraful observed.

"Our top-order failed to score in the last match. But if we get a good start and then at least one batsman carries his bat for a long time, the second Test would be different," he said.

Bangladesh could bat only 88.3 overs in two innings of the first Test.

About his struggle against the South African pace attack the right-hander agreed with his coach's observation that his height or the lack of it was a factor.

"Yes, my height is a concern but I have to be good enough

to handle this," he said.

The Tigers skipper informed that they had worked out their first Test mistakes over the last three days, but he believed that there were a few things that could not be solved overnight with practice in the nets and on the drawing boards.

"We have to improve facilities at home if we want to cope with this kind of condition. You can't survive if you are not habituated with this kind of pitches. Unfortunately we have a very wrong thinking that the bouncy pitch should be grassy, no we need sporting wickets where the ball comes onto the bat at a particular height," he demanded.

Crucial win for Biman

SPORTS REPORTER

Biman Bangladesh crossed major hurdle in the Fahami Group First Division Badminton League when they edged fellow title contenders Knitt Concern 3-2 in the men's competition at the NSC Woodenfloor Gymnasium yesterday.

In other matches, Gulshan SC blanked Tejkunipara KS 5-0, Abhan defeated Dewan Textile 3-2 and Maha SC beat Surjo Torun 3-2.

In the women's competition, Biman thrashed Surjo Torun 3-0 while Dewan Textile beat Maha SC by same margin.

BRIEF SCORES

BARISAL: First innings 252 all out in 95.3 overs (Rony 21, Nasiruddin 61, Hannan 4, Imran 0, Nasir 1, Raisul 22, Shahin 58, Arafat 22, Tariqul 30, Monowar 18*, Talha 4; Zia 2-51, Rabiul 4-58, Anas 2-16, Dollar 2-46).

KHULNA: First innings 69 all out (Sadat 0, Amit 8, Ashraful 0, Tushar 4, Sahagir 6, Anas 19*, Salim 1, Zia 0, Dollar 0, Atiqur 7, Rabiul 21; Talha 5-35, Monowar 2-14, Arafat 3-15) and second innings 131 all out in 44.2 overs (Sadat 9, Ashraful 9, Tushar 15, Sahagir 16, Anas 20, Salim 2, Zia 14, Dollar 11, Atiqur 11, Rabiul 3*, Talha 3-46, Monowar 1-32, Arafat 5-44, Tariqul 1-7).

Result: Barisal won by an innings and 52 runs.

Man-of-the-match: Talha Jubair.

RAJSHAH: First innings 240 all out.

CHITTAGONG: First innings 80 all out (Arman 20, Nafis 11, Masum 1, Tariq 1, Faisal 0, Mintu 0, Rezaul 7, Kamrul 0, Tariq 11, Arafat 23, Younus 0*, Shahzada 2-11, Shafiu 3-36, Shuvo 3-21, Saqlain 2-3) and second innings 89-2 in 40 overs (Arman 24, Nafis 19, Masum 34*, Tariq 11*, Shahzada 1-19, Saqlain 1-13).

SYLHET: First innings 363 all out in 142.5 overs (Imtiaaz 58, Saikat 14, Mithun 9, Rajin 94, Kamrul 77, Ejaz 4, Rezaul 73, Taposh 12, Nabil 8, Roy 4*, Sumon 0; Azim 3-64, Arafat 5-73, Elias 1-46).

DHAKA: First innings 155-4 in 35 overs (Anwar 12, Elias 16, Shamsur 15, Marshall 45, Riyad 52*, Nadif 6*; Saikat 2-33, Roy 1-48, Sumon 1-32).

Barisal hand Khulna

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wickets each while Mohammad Shahzada and Saqlain Sajib snapped up two each as Chittagong had a bad second day.

The hosts were first bowled out for 80 and then had something to take home as they ended the day on 89 for two.

Rajshahi failed to match Barisal's ruthlessness but still have two days to spare and a lead of 79 runs.

DHAKA-SYLHET

Sylhet took the key wicket of Marshall Ayub to take the upper hand when they begin the third day today.

Rising star Marshall edged a Sumon Saha delivery to wicketkeeper Mithun Ali for a 59-ball 45.

He struck seven boundaries in his 84-minute stay and was in the middle of a 61-run partnership with Mahmudullah Riyad, who remains unbeaten on 52 off 74 balls.

The pair came together when Dhaka had lost their top-order for just 70 runs with Saikat Ali taking two and paceman Shuvashish Roy claiming the wicket of makeshift opener Elias Sunny for 16.

Earlier, Sylhet piled on the runs in their first innings, with contributions from allrounder Rezaul Haque and Kamrul Islam. Both got out in the 70s but their knocks ensured Sylhet would end the day with a substantial lead.

Russel back on top

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first-time shot wide after Bulbul inspired a counter attack from left. Bulbul then forced a fine save by Zia, who palmed away an angled shot six minutes from half-time.

Wajed Gazi's side, like their previous games, got off to a blazing start after resumption but Bulbul fluffed the easiest chance of the day two minutes into the second half when he broke in with a through from Moroccan midfielder Iqbal Mohamed but Zia parried the weak effort.

The resulting corner broke the deadlock in the 48th minute when Bulbul drove the ball into the roof of the net from handshaking distance after Zia had brilliantly stopped Youness's powerful header on Hassan's flagkick.

Brothers reasserted soon but Zahid, who was fed by Matiu Munna's across-the-field pass eight minutes later, shot into the side netting.

Russel defended doggedly against tremen-

dous pressure but it told when Divine finally chipped a perfect cross from the right for Mishu -- ungaurded at the far post -- to nod home the equaliser.

With both the teams waiting for the final whistle, Russel snatched a dramatic late goal when Rajan Mia, who replaced Bulbul a minute earlier, gave a lethal pass to Youness from the left flank. The Moroccan shrugged off a challenge by rival centre-back Ariful inside the area and neatly placed an angled left-footer into Zia's far corner for his fourth league goal.

Yellow card: Youness (Russel)

TEAMS

RUSSEL: Azam, Aminul, Zahirul, Bourdip, Hassan (Parvez Babu), Youness, Monwar, Iqbal, Tanveer (Mobarak), Alfaz and Bulbul (Rajan).

BROTHERS: Zia, Shuvra, Ariful, Masud Rana, Arup, Divine, Mishu, Zahid (Liton), Matiu Munna (Shakil), Tapu (Roni) and Henry.

Referee: Azad Rahman.

ARMY ATHLETICS

Abdullah takes 100m crown

UNB, Dhaka

Corporal Abu Abdullah set a new national mark in the 100-meter sprint of Bangladesh Army Annual Athletics Championship with a timing of 10.13 seconds on the closing day of the meet at the Army Stadium in Banani yesterday.

Abu Abdullah, representing the Comilla team, bettered the event's previous record of 10.30 seconds and was adjudged the best athlete of the meet.

Jessore however emerged champions securing 128 points while Rangpur finished runners-up with 120 points.

On the closing day, Sepoy Shahidul Islam of Rangpur earned the gold in the 800-meter while Chittagong bagged the gold in the 4x400 meter relay.

Chief of General Staff of Bangladesh Army Maj Gen Sina Ibn Jamali witnessed some events on the final day as chief guest and later distributed medals and trophies.

Motijheel in 2nd spot

SPORTS REPORTER

Motijheel T&T Club advanced to second position in the Second Division Football League after a 1-0 win over Euro Famous Club at the Kamalapur Stadium yesterday.

Minar's 24th minute strike took the Motijheel club to 33 points from 15 matches behind leaders Uttar Baridhara Club, who have 36 points from 14 outings.

In another match, Bangladesh Boys outplayed Matuail Udayan Sangha 3-0 with goals from Mukul, Palash and Alam, all in the first half.

Little Friends Club beat Sadharan Bima by a solitary goal scored by Shahin in the 26th minute.

In today's matches, Kadamtola Sangsad face Uttar Baridhara while Prantik take on Gazirchat.

Pindi gets the chop

AFP, Islamabad

Pakistan's cricket chief on Tuesday said Rawalpindi has been dropped as a venue for the upcoming home series against India because the central city's stadium is not ready.

"We will not be able to finish the renovation work that includes the relaying of the outfield, so the matches scheduled for Rawalpindi will be shifted to other cities," Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) chairman Ijaz Butt said.

Rawalpindi was scheduled to host the second of three Test series and the third match of the five limited-overs international match series.

But said Faisalabad or Multan, due to host one-day internationals during the India series, were likely replacements.

Men's team

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The Bangladesh women's team clinched 74th place among 114 teams after losing 3.5-0.5 to Luxembourg.

WFM Tanima Parveen earned the half-point after a draw with WFM Bakalarz Grazyna while WFM Shamima Akhter Liza, Nazrana Khan Eva and Syeda Shabana Parveen Nipal lost their boards.

They earned 10 match points and 19 game points with five wins and six defeats.

India sense

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left in this series and we are going to have to get something out of them," the Lancashire star said.

"We can't win the series, so it's down to our own personal pride and also trying to gain some momentum going into the Test series."

Flintoff, however, warned teammates not to think of the Test matches just yet.

"I think it would be dangerous to think about anything other than these one-day matches because we could get found out even more," he said.

"The way India have played, they've been ruthless. They have outplayed us in every department. They are very well drilled and have learnt a lot of new skills with bat and ball, and we have been found wanting a little bit."

Djeparov Asia's best

Football

AFP, Shanghai

Uzbekistan's Server Djeparov was Tuesday named Asian player of the year while Gamba Osaka was voted club of the year and Japan the national team of the year at a glittering ceremony in Shanghai.

Japan dominated the annual Asian Football Confederation awards, with Gamba's Akira Nishino winning coach of the year and late Japan Football Association president Ken Naganuma handed a lifetime achievement award.

The country also won the fair play award while Homare Sawa won the women's player of the year at a separate ceremony last week.

But it was Uzbek international Djeparov who won the top honour ahead of Japan's Gamba midfielder Yasuhito Endo, considered to be the frontrunner after being voted most valuable player at this year's AFC Champions League.

The influential midfielder, who played a key role in Kuruvchi's domestic double and their AFC Champions League campaign this year, said he was honoured.

"It is so surprising to receive this trophy," he

said.

"I want to thank all Uzbekis. They told me to come home with this trophy and I am."

Nishino was named coach of the year for guiding Gamba to the AFC Champions League title, where they beat Adelaide United 5-0 on aggregate in the final and secured a place in the Club World Cup in Japan next month.

"It is incredible," he said. "Thank you to my team, they are wonderful players."

"I'll continue to work to contribute to the development of Gamba Osaka, Japanese football and Asian football."

Naganuma was recognised with the special "Diamond of Asia" award for his services to football.

Naganuma, who died of pneumonia in June aged 77, was a former coach of the Japanese national team who led them to their only Olympic medal (bronze in Mexico in 1968) and then headed the JFA from 1994-1998.

He played a central role in the inauguration of the J-League in 1993 and as honorary president of the JFA was pivotal in bringing the 2002 World Cup to Japan, which co-hosted the event with South Korea.

United Arab Emirates' Ahmed Kalil was named youth player of the year while Uzbekistan's Ravshan Irmatov was referee of the year.



Server Djeparov of Uzbekistan holds the AFC Player of the Year trophy in Shanghai on Tuesday.

Moles new NZ coach

Cricket

AFP, Wellington

Former Warwickshire batsman Andy Moles was Tuesday appointed to replace John Bracewell as the new coach of the New Zealand cricket team, after front-runner Matthew Mott pulled out at the last minute.

English-born Moles, 47, will



ANDY MOLES

take up the role next week in time for the West Indies series, which begins with the Test in Dunedin starting on December 11.

As a player, Moles was forced to retire in 1998 by an achilles tendon injury, and has since gained extensive coaching experience with Free State in South Africa, Hong Kong, Kenya and Scotland.

For the past two years he has coached the New Zealand state

side Northern Districts, taking them from bottom to top of the national championship in his first season in charge.

"Andy has an outstanding coaching background," New Zealand Cricket chief executive Justin Vaughan said.

"He also brings leadership, passion, commitment and a drive to get the best out of his teams, attributes we believe are essential for this role."

Vaughan said Bracewell would step down at the end of the current Australian tour.

"With the new coach available to start immediately, we have mutually agreed that John would step down after the Australian series, allowing Andy to take up the role during a home season rather than on the road."

Mott had kept New Zealand Cricket on tenterhooks as he weighed up whether to accept the job, saying a week ago "it's about a 50-50 split" before announcing this week he would re-sign with New South Wales.

BCB's new

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for the Category 1 vice-president (10 directors to vote) while Aziz Al Kaiser Tito, who was in Mahhub Anam's panel during the EC election, will fight it out with Shafiqur Rahman Munna or Ahmed Sajjadul Alam Bobby for the vice-president in Categories 2 and 3 (13 directors to vote) as the Enayet-Bobby panel was yet to decide on their candidate.

T20 CHAMPS LEAGUE 'Indian duo favourites'

PTI, New Delhi

All set to begin a new innings as a commentator, maverick South African batsman Herschelle Gibbs said barring miracles, either Rajasthan Royals or Chennai Super Kings would clinch next month's Champions League Twenty20.

Gibbs, who represented Deccan Chargers in the inaugural Indian Premier League (IPL), said each of the eight teams would do whatever it takes to win the title but in the end, home advantage might tilt the scale in favour of the two Indian outfits.

"It's very difficult to predict the winners, for there are quite a few teams which look really formidable. But I think the Indian teams would have a great advantage because they would be playing in familiar conditions," Gibbs told PTI from Cape Town.

Nafees powers

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Kapali fell for a 23-ball 44 just after striking his fourth six.

India, however, goosed in the 18th over. Jesuraj bowled a wide, Ambati Rayudu dropped a sitter at long-off to retrieve Nafees, With 11 to win off six balls, Reddy let the ball go through his legs at deep midwicket first ball, and very next ball Nafees slammed six over long-off to level the scores. The third ball was driven to mid-on, and the batsmen crossed for a victory.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS	35 Vast expanse	57 Oliver Twist's request	22 Yellow-flowered shrub
1 Micro-wave, e.g.	36 Type squares	58 — out a living	23 Dark, as twilight
5 Upper limit	37 Egyptian cross	59 Feed the hogs	25 Big fib
8 Mid-month date	38 Honk	39 Sardines	26 Infernal find
12 Sandwich shop	41 Bygone times	43 Mocher	3 Otherwise
13 Ruckus	42 Dirty words	50 Jeans-maker	5 Auto
14 Catastrophic	43 Mocher	51 Unobtrusive	6 Flix
15 Tosses out	44 Works	52 Works	7 Fence part
17 Slave to cross-words?	45 Works	53 Works	8 Perfect
18 Insnare	46 Works	54 Works	9 Reveal
19 Found the source of	47 Works	55 Works	10 Sea eagle
21 Unchaste	48 Works	56 Works	11 Progeny
24 Right angle	49 Works	57 Works	12 Mimic
25 — and the	50 Works	58 Works	20 Start over
28 Colored	51 Works	59 Works	44 Mexican money
30 One who gives a hoot?	52 Works	60 Works	45 Advantage
33 Mid-afternoon, on a sundial	53 Works	61 Works	47 Blue shade
34 "Saturday Night Fever" venue	54 Works	62 Works	48 Blouse (Prel.)
	55 Works	63 Works	49 Flight component
	56 Works	64 Works	52 Squid fluid
	57 Works	65 Works	53 Seek damages

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