

Bradman's cap incurs loss!

AFP, Sydney

The baggy green cap worn by Australian cricket legend Donald Bradman at his final Test sold for more than 400,000 dollars (267,000 US) Tuesday, less than its vendor paid for it in 2003.

Auctioneer Charles Leski would not reveal the exact price but said it was above 400,000 dollars and below the 420,000 dollars Tim Serisier paid for it in England with the help of his winnings from the TV show "Who Wants To Be A Millionaire?"

The cap, Bradman's when he captained the 1948 Australian "Invincibles" on their Ashes tour of England, failed to attract a single bid at auction in Melbourne Monday despite predictions it could fetch more than 600,000 dollars.

Leski said Serisier, who won 250,000 dollars on the game show, was aware that a global financial crisis was not the best time for an auction.

"Yes, he agrees the timing wasn't the greatest," he told national news agency AAP. "He's accepted the consequences of his decision."

The cap was given to the son of an English friend of Bradman's after the Australian cricketer noticed the boy playing cricket in a substandard hat.

"Sir Don said: 'We can't have that, we'd better get you a decent one', and a short while later in the mail the 1948

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Shakib's timely ton

SPORTS REPORTER



All-rounder Shakib Al Hasan returned to form at the right time with a strokeful hundred as Khulna remained in a comfortable position to win the penultimate round of their National Cricket League match against Dhaka on the third day at the Khulna Divisional Stadium yesterday.

The left-hander's 129 guided the home side to 352 runs in their second essay, to set an improbable 527-run winning target for the Mohammad Ashraf-led Dhaka, who finished the day on 204-5, still 323 runs behind the target with just five wickets in hand.

Ahead of the home series against Sri Lanka there was another good news for the national team as Barisal rode on Rokibul Hasan's fine half-century to brighten their chances of a win. It also opened up the title race as Chittagong lost two wickets for 63 in reply to a winning target of 313 at the Chittagong Divisional Stadium.

Barisal had more good news as league leaders Rajshahi were kept indoors. The third day's play was abandoned due to dense fog and bad light at the Rajshahi Divisional Stadium.

KHULNA-DHAKA

Shakib excelled with his left-arm spin in the just-concluded South Africa tour but was off-color with the bat as he scored only 46 runs from four innings and that was the reason of his desperate need for a big score ahead of another tough challenge

against Sri Lanka at home.

The 21-year-old left-hander, who holds a very poor average of 22.82, got back his confidence with his third first-class hundred. The Magura lad executed the pull and cut shots during his 145-ball knock rather than his favourite sweep shots and

smote 20 boundaries and a six before being bowled by left-arm spinner Mehrab Hossain.

Resuming the day on 146-5, Shakib got good support from youngster Raihan Anas as the overnight pair added 202 runs for the sixth wicket stand. Raihan, who smashed thirteen boundaries in his 125-ball essay, missed out on a hundred by ten runs.

"Shakib gave us no chances and played brilliantly. It was nice to see him return among the runs," said Bangladesh captain skipper Ashraf, who made a duck in the second innings. "He mostly played the pull and cut shot during his hundred," added the Dhaka skipper.

"I just got back my confidence," responded Shakib when asked about his innings.

Dhaka made a disaster start in reply to a towering target when Rabiul Islam removed Anamul Haque with the scoreboard reading eight runs and things got worse when the visitors lost three wickets on the score of 40.

Mahmudullah Riyad joined opener Javed Omar to repair the damage as the pair contributed 107 runs for the fifth wicket before the discarded national opener was caught behind off Rabiul after a 109-ball 76 that had 15 boundaries.

Ziaur Rahman and his new-ball partner Rabiul caused the



PHOTO: FILE

Shakib Al Hasan ensured that he will go into the upcoming Sri Lanka Tests with some runs under his belt.

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SA's chance to be No 1 Perth Test begins today

Cricket

BBC ONLINE, undated

South Africa will look to their pace attack to take charge of the series when the first Test against Australia starts in Perth on Wednesday.

The tourists are Dale Steyn, the highest-ranked seamer in the world ratings, fit again to lead their formidable four-pronged pace attack.

Australia are without their top bowler Stuart Clark and have called up the inexperienced Peter Siddle as cover.

South Africa could replace Australia as world number one team if they win 3-0.

However, they have never won a Test series in Australia and could be overtaken in second place by India.

Skipper Graeme Smith dismissed suggestions that there were mental scars left from previous series against Australia, when Glenn McGrath and Shane Warne often proved the difference.

"The guys have developed nicely over the last year and a half and have moved forward," he said.

"We have given them every opportunity to prepare properly and they are very excited

about what lies ahead.

"One of the great things the players have learned over a period of time is how to perform away from home. Our record speaks for itself in that regard."

The hosts are expected to hand spinner Jason Krejza a home Test debut while South Africa could play Paul Harris.

Harris boosted his chances of making South Africa's team by taking 4-94 at the Waca on the final day of South Africa's two-day warm-up match against Western Australia.

He faces competition from paceman Lonwabo Tsotsobe for the final place in the starting XI, but skipper Graeme Smith has indicated he would prefer to have a spinner in the side.

Siddle, meanwhile, may lose out to all-rounder Shane Watson.

TEAMS

AUSTRALIA: Matthew Hayden, Simon Katich, Ricky Ponting (captain), Michael Hussey, Michael Clarke, Andrew Symonds, Brad Haddin, Brett Lee, Jason Krejza, Mitchel Johnson, Peter Siddle.

SOUTH AFRICA (probable): Graeme Smith (captain), Neil McKenzie, Hashim Amla, Jacques Kallis, Ashwell Prince, AB de Villiers, Mark Boucher, Morne Morkel, Paul Harris, Dale Steyn, Makhaya Ntini.

Lorgat lauds Eng, India

Cricket

AFP, Dubai

International Cricket Council (ICC) chief executive Haroon Lorgat praised both India and England following the first Test in Chennai.

India won a thrilling match by six wickets on Monday after batting star Sachin Tendulkar scored the 41st Test century of his illustrious career.

But both Tests in this two-match series were placed in doubt following last month's Mumbai terror attacks which saw England cut short the one-day leg of their tour.

However, Kevin Pietersen's men decided to return for a match which began just a fortnight after the attacks in Mumbai, which left 172 dead and more than 300 injured.

Lorgat, in a statement issued from the global governing body's Dubai headquarters, said: "I have been in touch with both the BCCI (Board of Control for Cricket in India) and the ECB (England and Wales Cricket Board) since the end of the match to

thank them for what was a great advertisement for cricket."

The South African added: "There was a lot of debate before this game as to whether it would even go ahead because of the terrible events in Mumbai."

"Last week, I was convinced the right thing to do was for the match to take place and now I'm glad we have witnessed a great game of cricket."

"Although India takes the plaudits for winning the match, thanks and congratulations are also due to Kevin Pietersen and his team who played so well while under enormous pressure from forces over which they could exert no control," Lorgat, who attended the first two days in Chennai, said.

"I was very impressed with their attitude and today I can say I am especially proud to be involved in this great game."

"I have no doubt the England players will be very disappointed after this match but they have a huge amount of which to be proud."

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Shaheed Jewel XI win V-Day match

Cricket

MOHAMMAD ISAM

Leg-spinner Raihanuddin Arafat's four-wicket haul was the only shining light in an otherwise dull encounter that saw Shaheed Jewel XI win by 28 runs against Shaheed Mushtaque XI in the annual Victory Day match at the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium yesterday.

Under perfect settings and in front of a holiday crowd at Dhaka's most accessible cricket ground Jewel XI laboured to 201 for nine in their 50 overs to which the Mushtaque XI replied with a pathetic 173 all out in 43.1 overs.

The expectant crowd that turned up even on such an auspicious day felt let down by the quality of cricket. The ground had the look and feel of a Victory Day cricket match but nothing in the middle inspired.

In fact the team that batted first after being put in, Shaheed Jewel XI, struggled from the very beginning, losing both their openers by the sixth over. Latiful Azam (13) and skipper Mehrab Hossain rescued the situation with a 38-run third wicket stand but both fell in quick time to make it 70 for four. The former national batsman made 27 off 52 balls with a couple of boundaries and a six but found the gloves of Ashiqul Islam off a Niaz Morshed delivery.

That made way for Mohammad Rahi, who played a dour but effective knock of 71 off 88

balls. The innings had eight boundaries and the batsman who played for First Division Side Bangladesh Boys last season added 80 for the sixth wicket with Abahani's reserve wicketkeeper Kuntal Chandra (20).

Morshed was Shaheed Mushtaque XI's best bowler, picking up three for 31 with his gentle pace and swing.

Shaheed Mushtaque XI skipper Rashedul Haque, who leaked 54 in his quota of ten overs, top-scored for his side with 36 off 53 balls that had a couple of sixes. Fazle Rabbi, the left-handed opener, gave Shaheed Mushtaque XI a good start smashing two sixes in his 25 but when he was clean bowled by legspinner Arafat, the wickets started to fall.

Apart from Arafat's four, Rahi and Nazmul Islam took two each while paceman Ariful Islam had one wicket to his name.

If a little more thought was put into the organisation of the match, it could make the Victory Day memorable for all the fans in Dhaka, who demand a good game of cricket. What was dished out yesterday was not the best way to celebrate Victory Day, or the struggles of martyrs and lifelong cricket lovers Shaheed Jewel and Shaheed Mushtaque.

BRIEF SCORES

SHAHEED JEWEL XI: 201-9 in 50 overs (Rahi 71, Mehrab 27; Niaz 3-31, Aslam 2-31)

SHAHEED MUSHTAQUE XI: 173 all out in 43.1 overs (Rashedul 36, Aslam 33; Raihan 4-34, Rahi 2-23)

Result: Shaheed Jewel XI won by 28 runs.

(PHOTO ON PAGE 18)

India discuss Dravid form

BBC ONLINE, undated

India's chairman of selectors has had talks with Rahul Dravid about the veteran batsman's poor recent form.

Dravid, 35, made his debut in 1996 and has played 130 Tests, but has scored only 32 runs in his last six innings.

It is believed chairman Krishnamachari Srikkanth suggested Dravid should take a break from international cricket to regain form in the domestic league.

First-Test hero Sachin Tendulkar backed Dravid: "It happens to all, but he's a great player, not a good player."

Dravid, who no longer plays one-day internationals, has a Category A central contract with the Board of Control for cricket in India running

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SL can tour Pakistan

Cricket

CRICINFO, undated

As doubts continue to hover around India's tour to Pakistan next month, options have finally begun to emerge for a cricket-starved Pakistan. Though no official contact has yet been made between the boards, Sri Lanka has already expressed its readiness to replace India for the tour.

Senior officials of Sri Lanka Cricket (SLC) say they would be willing to consider any such offer seriously and foresee no problem with security.

"We have not been approached by the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB), but if a tour is proposed we will give it serious consideration," Duleep Mendis, chief executive of SLC, told Cricinfo.

The board chairman, Arjuna Ranatunga, has also assured Pakistan of his support if India pulls out.

"We will not hesitate sending our team to Pakistan if we are invited," Ranatunga told PTI.

"Pakistan has proved it can provide adequate security, as it did during the Asia Cup Cricket tournament," he

said.

The PCB is keen to stress that no contact has been made yet. As far as the board is concerned, says a senior official, India is coming for a series of three Tests, five ODIs and one Twenty20 unless it indicates otherwise.

"Nobody has approached Sri Lanka yet," Salim Altaf, chief operating officer of PCB, told Cricinfo.

"Nobody has spoken from the board to anyone as a replacement because we haven't yet received a positive or negative from the Board of Control for Cricket in India."

Though India's tour was in doubt anyway over security concerns, the chances of it going ahead have fallen further in the wake of the Mumbai terror attacks. One fallout of those was heightened political and diplomatic tension between the two countries. The Indian board says it is willing to tour Pakistan but only if it gets a clearance from the government. A decision is still pending.

Indeed, the PCB has already begun implementing the standard operating procedures for the series, due to begin from January 6. Security and ticketing

arrangements, work on floodlights and turnstiles, said a board official, had already been put into practice.

In case India does pull out, SLC are indeed understood to be keen to tour Pakistan. They face a drought of sorts following the tour of Bangladesh in December-January. After the two Tests and a tri-series, involving Zimbabwe as the third team, their next assignment isn't until June, when they participate in the World Twenty20. An ODI series against Zimbabwe is scheduled for February, but it is unlikely to be a financially-lucrative option and a Pakistan tour, in that sense, would be preferable.

Pakistan haven't played any Tests in 2008 and their last one-day series was against West Indies in Abu Dhabi in November. Any cricket against credible opposition will be the greatly appreciated.

More will emerge after December 27, when board officials from both sides are likely to meet at the executive board meeting of the Asian Cricket Council in Kuala Lumpur. By then, hopes the PCB, a decision will have been made by India.

Shahadat fined for swearing

SPORTS REPORTER

Shahadat Hossain was fined half his match fees for abusing a batsman during the second day of the Khulna-Dhaka National Cricket League tie at the Khulna Divisional Stadium yesterday.

Firebrand Shahadat, who plays for Dhaka, was found guilty of verbally abusing Khulna paceman Rabiul Islam while batting in his side's first innings. He has been disciplined for breach of BCB Code of Conduct and ICC Rules of Conduct.

Match referee Akhtar Ahmed held a hearing after close of play on Monday to decide the fine.

Army clinch v'ball title

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Army clinched the Pepsi Victory Day volleyball tournament by defeating Bangladesh Navy in straight sets in the final at the Volleyball Stadium yesterday.

Army won 25-18, 25-23 and 25-20 in the six-team meet. The other teams were BDR, Bangladesh Air Force, Police and Fire Services.

Trustee of Liberation War Museum Akku Chowdhury distributed prizes among the winners.

Bangladesh Volleyball Federation president Golam Kuddus Chowdhury was also present on the occasion.

KP plays with fractured rib

PTI, London

England captain Kevin Pietersen revealed he played the Chennai Test with a fractured rib and oozed confidence of playing the Mohali Test as well despite the injury.

"I have got a fractured rib," Pietersen told the Guardian.

"There are no dramas. I will deal with it. I don't like injections. I will just take painkillers," said the England skipper, insisting he would play the second and final Test in Mohali starting Friday.

Pietersen was injured before the fifth one-dayer in Cuttack but the gangling batsman played down his rib injury as he spent agonising moments deliberating England's return to India for the Test series.

Pietersen initially dismissed the injury as a side strain and went on to score a century in the match before things went worse.

In the Chennai Test, which they lost to India by six wickets, Pietersen scored four and one and looked in great discomfort in the field yesterday.

Pietersen was often seen clutching his right side and throwing under-arm.

Two years ago, Pietersen sustained a similar injury while stepping out and trying to hit Glenn McGrath out of the ground at the MCG.



PHOTO: AFP

Sri Lanka left-arm spinner Rangana Herath (L) shares a joke with coach Trevor Bayliss during practice at the R Premadasa Stadium in Colombo yesterday. Herath has been called up by Sri Lanka for their tour of Bangladesh only after sensational off-spinner Ajantha Mendis was ruled out due to injury. The Lankans are arriving here tomorrow to play two Test matches and a tri-series also involving Zimbabwe.



Did U Know?

The Khan clan - Jahangir Khan, Baqar Jilani, Javed Burki, Majid Khan, Imran Khan and Buzid Khan - have played 182 Tests, the most number of Tests by one family.



STAR Cricket
Australia v South Africa
First Test, Day 1
Live from 8:30am
ESPN
Sportscenter India
Sports News
Live from 8:30pm



AB de Villiers
(South Africa batsman)
"He looks like a normal orthodox off-spinner. There's nothing too special that we've got to worry about."



National Cricket League
(Four-Dayer, Day 4)
Khulna v Dhaka
Venue: Khulna Divisional Stadium
Rajshahi v Sylhet
Venue: Rajshahi Divisional Stadium
Chittagong v Barisal
Venue: Chittagong Divisional Stadium