



Did U Know?

Only three countries - Malaysia, Indonesia and China - have won the Thomas Cup since its inception in 1948.



Arjuna Ranatunga
(Legendary Sri Lanka cricketer)

"I think we will never be able to win the World Cup if things do not change. Winning it will remain a dream. I don't know who runs cricket today. We should not panic, but have to act swiftly."



What to Watch

ESPN
Sportscentre India
Sports News
Live at 8:30pm



DAY'S EVENT
Premier Div Cricket League
Abahani v Gazi Tank
Venue: Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium, Mirpur
Mohammedan v Partex
Venue: Fatullah Cricket Stadium
Biman v Young Pegasus
Venue: BKSP
Citycell B. League
Mohammedan v Khulna Abahani
Venue: Bangabandhu National Stadium
Time: 4:30pm

Ctg MSC's double against Reds

SPORTS REPORTER

Chittagong Mohammedan kept their slim hopes alive for a fourth-place finish in the Citycell B. League with a comfortable 2-0 win over Muktiyoddha yesterday.

The visitors, playing their last match in capital in the competition, went ahead after nine minutes at the Bangabandhu National Stadium when captain Masud Parvez Kaiser shot home on a pass from Rassel.

The port city side, who had won their home match against the Reds by same margin, sealed the victory in the 57th minute when Kaiser set Intiaz Sultan Jitu to score his second league goal.

The victory, fifth-placed Mohammedan's eighth in 19 games, took them to 30 points, just one behind Brothers Union who have two matches in hand.

On the other hand, relegation fears kept Muktiyoddha haunting as the struggling giants remained second from bottom with ten points from 19 matches.

The Reds play their last match against bottom-table Khulna Abahani, who must win both their remaining games including one against Mohammedan in Dhaka today to avoid demotion.

Muktiyoddha, however, will be safe if runners-up contenders Mohammedan expectedly win today.

Focus on Gazi, Abahani

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

The spotlight will be on the battle between defending champions Abahani and Gazi Tank when the second round of the Premier Division Cricket League starts today at the three different venues.

Mashrafe Bin Mortaza-led Abahani will definitely try to take revenge of their eight-wicket defeat to the Premiers newcomers in last week's Twenty20 semifinal when they lock horns with his national team boss Mohammad Ashraful's side at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur.

In recent times, the league has witnessed big match in the early stage as most of the newcomers came up with big names and Gazi Tank, following the footsteps of DOHS and Sonargaon Cricketers, roped in national skipper Ashraful, opener Imrul Kayes and paceman Rubel Hossain on their debut.

That was the reason Abahani considered it a vital match in their attempt to retain the title and have decided to bring in veteran Indian batsman Amol Muzumdar for this game.

The 34-year old right-hander Amol was expected to arrive in the capital last night to strengthen Abahani's middle order. The Dhanmondi-based club made a flying start by winning their first game against CCS at the

same venue, thanks to a rare 200-run opening partnership by Tamim Iqbal and Rony Talukdar.

The team's think-tank, worried over their middle order batting, considered Amol for only one game as all-rounder Venugopal Rao -- who has played 16 one-day internationals for India -- will join the team for the rest of the matches.

The name of Amol Muzumdar is not new for ardent cricket followers in the country but one has to go thirteen years down the memory lane to recall a then promising Indian batsman. The Mumbai ace played just one match for Mohammedan against Biman in the 1994-95 Damal Smriti tournament where his match winning half-century on a very tricky pitch is still fresh in many minds.

Gazi have also hired little known Indian batsman Pravanjan Mullick who made a half-century in the first game against Biman but still, Ashraful's boys lost the game by five wickets.

"I think we have the strength to beat Abahani. Our main challenge would be to make an early breakthrough because Tamim (Iqbal) and Rony (Talukdar) are both dangerous batsmen," said national team and Gazi Tank captain Ashraful.

On the other hand, his national team deputy Mashrafe, now the central attraction in the cricket fraternity following his whopping 600,000 deal in the Indian Premier League (IPL), is looking forward to play a good match.

SEE PAGE 18 COL 1



A FAMILY AFFAIR: India's Pathan brothers Yusuf (L) and Irfan are all smiles during the post-match presentation after the one-off Twenty20 international against Sri Lanka at the Premadasa Stadium in Colombo last night.

PHOTO: CRICINFO

Husseys do it for Aussies

Cricket

BBC ONLINE, Adelaide

David Hussey's 79 was the top score as Australia cantered to a six-wicket victory in the fourth match of their one-day series against New Zealand at the Adelaide Oval on Tuesday.

The hosts had been set a target of 245 by Daniel Vettori's men, but Hussey, aided by brother Mike's unbeaten 75, ensured they hunted it down with ease.

There were still 10 balls remaining when a crunching six from Mike Hussey brought up the winning runs.

The series is now level at two apiece ahead of Friday's decider in Brisbane.

Bucking the trend of the series, New Zealand decided to bat for the first time, but their innings only really picked up pace towards the end of their 50 overs.

Openers Brendon McCullum and Martin Guptill were steady rather than spectacular, scoring 33 and 45 before falling to Michael Clarke and Nathan Bracken respectively.

The middle order looked tentative and, Ross Taylor apart, failed to impose themselves on the Australian attack.

Peter Fulton's departure for five off the bowling of James Hopes brought Taylor to the crease and, he watched McCullum, Grant Elliot (26), Craig Cumming (0) and Neil Broom (11) all head back to the pavilion, during a fine innings of 76 off 71 deliveries.

Kyle Mills helped push the score along with a rapid 23 during a late powerplay, while Mitchell Johnson's pace and bounce made him the pick of the home attack with figures of three wickets for 51.

A total of 244 never looked safe on a tame Adelaide Oval pitch, but the New Zealanders briefly had a series-clinching

win in sight when a mix-up with David Hussey saw Brad Haddin run out for 43.

The New South Wales right-hander scored a century in the side's previous meeting in Sydney at the weekend and had looked to be in fine form.

With Clarke (14) and Ricky Ponting (15) both falling cheaply and David Hussey struggling for form, Haddin's dismissal left Australia vulnerable on 101-3 in the 25th over.

But the Hussey brothers united for 115-run partnership that had seen their team all but home by the time an

Iain O'Brien yorker cleaned up David.

There had been earlier opportunities for New Zealand to break up the family affair with Cumming spilling a presentable catch off the bowling of Elliot that would have seen Mike Hussey walk on 40.

Callum Ferguson's calm 13 helped pick off the remaining runs before Mike Hussey's crashing shot over long-on secured the win.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard of the fourth one-day international between

SEE PAGE 18 COL 5



DAVID HUSSEY ... 79

Butt won't resign

PCB boss, Miandad at loggerheads

Cricket

AGENCIES, Karachi

Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) chairman Ijaz Butt has dismissed calls for his resignation by members of the Senate Standing Committee on Sports, claiming that he continues to have the backing of PCB chief patron Asif Ali Zardari.

The senators tore into Butt and other officials at a special hearing on Monday and blamed them for the poor state of affairs in the cricket board. But Butt made it clear he had no intentions to resign.

"Why should I resign? I will continue to work until I enjoy the confidence of the chief patron of the board (President Asif Ali Zardari)," he told reporters after the hearing.

"Me and my team are doing everything to streamline cricket affairs in the country and for this we need some time. We can't produce results overnight," Butt, a former Test player, said.

Butt was to hold a press conference later Tuesday to clarify certain points made after the senate hearing.

Earlier on Monday senators demanded that

President Asif Ali Zardari sack the cricket board, branding its officials incapable and accusing them of making a mess of the national game.

The senate committee held a highly-charged session to probe falling standards of the national cricket team, fears of bankruptcy in the PCB and reasons why its director general resigned.

Pakistan crashed to their lowest one-day score at home when they were dismissed for 75 in the series-deciding one-day match against Sri Lanka in Lahore last month which led to their heaviest defeat in limited overs cricket by 234 runs.

In the aftermath, captain Shoaib Malik was replaced by senior batsman Younis Khan.

"Financial mismanagement has been there for a long time now, but this current set-up of the PCB is incapable and if they remain in charge, cricket will be completely destroyed," Senator Enver Baig told reporters.

"I request the President to reconsider the appointment of Ijaz Butt as chairman," said Baig. Butt was appointed PCB chairman last October.

"Good cricketers cannot be good administrators and so it's proved," he said.

SEE PAGE 18 COL 6

Tri-nation moves to Khulna

Cricket

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

The women's cricket team of Bangladesh, Pakistan and Sri Lanka reached Khulna yesterday evening from Bogra to participate in the second round of matches of the GrameenPhone Tri-Nation Women's Cricket Tournament.

The two big guns Sri Lanka and Pakistan lock horns tomorrow at the Shaheed Flight Lieutenant Motiur Rahman Stadium in Mujgunni in Khulna City.

After tomorrow's match, Sri Lanka meet Bangladesh on February 13 and on the concluding day on February 14, Bangladesh will play against Pakistan.

Meanwhile, Shaheed Birshrestha Flight Lieutenant Motiur Rahman Stadium is fully geared up to host the three matches and the pitches along with the outfield have been prepared accordingly.

The Stadium at Mujgunni in Khulna City attained status as an international venue for cricket in 2006. Two ODIs and one 20-20 match were played here after attaining the mark.

Div-I Cricket Khelaghar on form

SPORTS REPORTER

Khelaghar continued their good form into the longer version of the game after winning the T20 title, when they beat Orient in the Dhaka First Division Cricket League at the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium (DCS) yesterday.

Batting the entire fifty overs, Khelaghar fell four runs short of 200, losing nine wickets with Maksudul picking up 3-39. In reply, Orient were bowled out for 167 in the 46th over.

At the Dhaka University Ground, Azad won their first game against Agrani Bank by one wicket. It was a close encounter as Agrani Bank finished at 201-9 in the stipulated fifty overs, which was duly chased by Azad amidst a regular fall of wickets in the last over of the match.

Azad's Habib top scored with an unbeaten 61.

Prime Dolshwar also won

SEE PAGE 18 COL 5

Identical wins in Div 3

SPORTS REPORTER

Shantinagar and Mirpur XI recorded identical 1-0 wins in the Citycell 3rd Division Football League at the Birshrestha Shaheed Mostafa Kamal Stadium in Kamalapur yesterday.

Aminul's 62nd minute strike gave Shantinagar full points against Lalbagh SC while Sujon scored Mirpur's match winner against Muslim Institute in the 43rd minute.

Pathans power India

Cricket

AFP, Colombo

Brothers Irfan and Yusuf Pathan plundered 59 runs off 25 balls as world champions India posted a thrilling three-wicket win over Sri Lanka in the one-off Twenty20 international match here on Tuesday.

India were struggling at 115-7 chasing a 172-run target before the Pathan duo steered their side home with four balls to spare in the first-ever Twenty20 game in Sri Lanka.

Yusuf, who had earlier taken two wickets with his off-spin, remained unbeaten with a 10-ball 22 with the help of two sixes and one boundary.

He was named man of the match for his all-round display.

His younger brother Irfan finished the match when he swung paceman Lasith Malinga over mid-wicket for a six. He cracked two sixes and as many boundaries in his 16-ball 33 notout.

Sri Lanka skipper Tillakaratne Dilshan (61) earlier smashed a maiden half-century to help his side set a challenging target after being dropped in the opening over. He had yet to open his account at that stage.

Leg-spinner Malinga Bandara (3-32) then raised visions of a Sri Lankan victory when he dismissed well-set Suresh Raina (35), skipper

Mahendra Singh Dhoni (13) and Ravindra Jadeja (five).

But the Pathan brothers shattered the hosts' dream with their bold stroke-making on a flat track in the day-night match.

Raina and Yuvraj Singh (32) propped up the innings when they added 67 runs off seven overs for the third wicket after openers Gautam Gambhir (13) and Virender Sehwag (one) had fallen in the opening two overs.

Yuvraj hit two sixes and three fours in his 21-ball knock before he was caught by wicket-keeper Dilshan while attempting to cut off-spinner Jehan Mubarak.

Sri Lanka got off to a brisk

SEE PAGE 18 COL 1

Too much rest for top footballers!

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) kept its promise to keep the game on field for at least ten months every year but the partial domestic calendar (till December 2009) published for the season 2009-10 shows that the country's top footballers will get very little action in six months.

After the Super Cup, the three-week mega event which is expected to kick off March 6, the top booters will join national camp for preparation for next May's AFC Challenge Cup qualifiers in Dhaka.

Club commitment also ends in May after Abahani play the AFC President's Cup qualifiers also at home.

After just a handful of games in April and May, there would be no top-level domestic or international competitions in June-July when football goes indoors in shape of futsal (for Division I and II players only)

due to the monsoon. The 2009-10 season starts in October with the Federation Cup, which will be followed up by the third B.

League in November. BFF member and ex-general secretary Anwarul Hoque Helal, however,

SEE PAGE 18 COL 2

BFF CALENDAR 2009

DOMESTIC		INTERNATIONAL	
Jan-Feb: B. League	Jan-Mar: 3rd Division	Jan-Feb: National Women's Championship	Feb-Mar: U-13 Festival
Mar: Super Cup	Mar-Apr: National women's Super Championship	Mar-Apr: Independence Cup	Mar-Apr: National Club Championship
Apr: National School Championship	Apr: Women's Corporate League	Apr: Senior Division	May-June: U-15 JFA Cup
May-Aug: Pioneer League	June-July: Futsal Championship (Div 1, II)	Aug-Nov: 2nd Div	Sep-Oct: Divisional Futsal
Oct-Nov: National Championship	Oct-Nov: Divisional Women's Championship	Oct: Dhaka Metropolitan Women's School competition	Nov-Dec: B. League 2009
Mar 4-14: PM Cup, Nepal	May: AFC Challenge Cup (Dhaka)	May 6-16: AFC Presidents Cup (Dhaka)	May 10-23: AFC U-13 Festival (Iran)
Oct-Nov: AFC Futsal Championship 2010 qualifiers	Oct 3-18: AFC U-16 qualifiers	Nov 1-15: AFC U-19 qualifiers	November: International tournament (Dhaka)
December: SAFF Championship (India)			



National hockey players, who have decided to boycott the camp for South Asian Games in demand of standard food, accommodation and pocket money, skip training for the second successive day and play a game of football at the Maulana Bhasani National Hockey Stadium yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR