

3 hatricks in Club Cup

SPORTS REPORTER

Four goals from Selim and a hatrick by Shahed helped hosts Raipur Jagrani Club to an 8-2 victory over Crescent Club in the Basundhara Champions Club Cup football tournament in Meherpur yesterday.

The goal rush began as early as the fifth minute with Shahed hitting the back of the net and it was rounded off by Selim's fourth, in the 86th minute.

Jhalu of Dinajpur Football Academy scored the day's third hatrick when his three sunk Kanchanjanga Football Academy in a 5-0 victory.

In Tangail, home side Udayan Kira Chakra crushed Sonali Otit of Manikganj 6-1. The other winners of the day were Ukilpara Sporting Club (Kishoreganj), Nijra XI (Gopalganj) and Young Star Club (Moulavi Bazar).

Moin Smriti Sangsad had a goalless draw with Unmachan while Diganta Prasari and Singra drew 2-2.

KP admits T20 flaws?

PTI, London

The most expensive IPL player and flamboyant England batsman Kevin Pietersen has confessed he is not good at playing the hugely popular Twenty20 format but vowed to make amends during in the World Championships, beginning next week.

"I'm not very good at Twenty20 cricket, am I?" Pietersen said on the eve of the World T20 Championships in England.

"The more you play T20 cricket the better you become and I haven't played a lot of it, and I'm not very good at it," he was quoted as saying by 'The Mirror'.

Pietersen, who was not a part of the inaugural edition of IPL, played only six matches in the IPL-II in South Africa and has made just one T20 50 for England, averaging 26.

Pietersen disclosed he had developed new theories to suit his batting to the quickest

SEE PAGE 18 COL 4



Did U Know?

The first basketball game was held on January 20 in 1892. The court was half the size of courts used at the NBA League nowadays and only one point was scored in the whole match. In this game, there were nine players in each team.



Mohammad Ashraful

(Bangladesh cricket captain)
"We have a good team suited for Twenty20 cricket, so I am confident we can deliver if we play to our potential. We are not scared of taking on the best."
On their prospect in the upcoming ICC World Twenty20.



What to WATCH

STAR Sports
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Live from 3:00pm
ESPN
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Sports News
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Bangladesh pacesman Rubel Hossain leads his teammates into the pavilion after his five-wicket haul against Scotland at Sir Paul Getty's Ground in Wormsley on Friday.

Tigers warm up well

TIGERCRIKET.COM, Oxfordshire



For Mahmudullah Riyad and Rubel Hossain England has just been like the comfort zone of the backyard. Both have taken the opportunity given to them with both hands and have been the star performers for the Tigers in the three warm-up matches played so far.

Riyad's unbeaten 46 after pacer Rubel's five-for powered the Tigers to finish the unofficial practice games with a six-wicket victory over Scotland at Wormsley on Friday.

Right-hander Riyad took the opportunity with both hands as he top-scored with 43 in the first game against New Zealand and followed that up with 56 against Holland and 46 not out in Bangladesh's successful chase against Scotland.

Fast bowler Rubel did not play the first game but when given the chance he returned with four for 19 and five for 16 in the two matches.

"I am going out there with a very positive mind. I am looking to hit the ball hard and score runs all the time. I guess the mindset is helping me a lot," said Riyad.

"I also started this tour very confident because I am coming off a successful domestic season where I made runs. Also I had worked on my technique, especially on my backlift with Jamie (Siddons) and it has paid off," he added.

For Rubel the practice matches were a chance to show what he has practised.

"The slower ball is coming out really good," said the quick who has rattled batsmen with fast yorkers and sharp bouncers and caught the eyes of former England pacers Devon Malcolm and Phillip DeFreitas who were at Wormsley on Saturday playing for the PCA Masters against Holland.

"He is improving all the time. He trains hard and has so far managed to execute what he is doing in training. His natural pace and slightly unusual action makes him an interesting proposition," said Tigers' bowling coach Champaka Ramanayake.

Both players are also loving the atmosphere in the team.

"There is a definite buzz. We are together all the time enjoying each other's company. There is great camaraderie," said Riyad.

"I am loving it. Mashrafe (Bin Mortaza) has been an idol and to be on the same team is amazing. He helps me a lot and so does the other teammates," said Rubel.

The Bangladesh team enjoyed an off-day Saturday. Today morning the Tigers travel to their World T20 base in Nottingham.

The Tigers will play their first official practice game against Australia on June 1 and second against Sri Lanka a day later before taking on defending champions India in the first Group A match at Trent Bridge on June 6.

SEE PAGE 18 COL 5

Salahuddin dreams big

Football

SPORTS REPORTER

Nobody knows better than Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) president Kazi Salahuddin that there is no alternative to creating football stars to bring back the glory days of the game.

Following the past few years' doldrums in the game, the country lacks genuine football stars and that is the reason why the BFF boss announced yesterday that the federation was looking forward to the ongoing Citycell National School Football Championship for creating new stars.

"Our coaches have been scouting and have handpicked a lot of talented players. We want to take them under our wing for a month-long trial camp and want to invest on the survivors of the camp -- only the very best," said Salahuddin, arguably the best striker the country has ever produced, while talking with the reporters before departing for the FIFA

Congress which will be held over June 2-3 in Nassau, the Bahamas.

"We will offer scholarships to these players under the school development programme. Even if we don't get any sponsors, the BFF will continue supporting the young talents," he continued.

When asked how many players would be selected, the BFF president said that number was not a factor but the quality was. "We will pick all the quality players and even if the number exceeds 300, we will take them."

"We will take care of their education as long as they remain a footballer. This is a professional approach we have taken and if just four players rise from the ranks, it would be a great achievement. I just want the parents to know that there is a future for footballers in the country."

The former national football captain also added that the young boys would continue their studies at home and the BFF development committee will arrange short-term training camps for them.

The BFF president is leading a three-

SEE PAGE 18 COL 2

An Indian encore?

AFP, London



Mahendra Singh Dhoni will relive a pathbreaking moment in his fairytale career when he leads India's defence of the World Twenty20 title in England.

Dhoni marshalled India to a stunning triumph in the inaugural World T20 in South Africa in 2007, his first assignment as captain after just two years as a regular team member.

He has not looked back since, rising from a lowly and poorly paid railway employee in his home town Ranchi in eastern India to become one of the country's most celebrated sportsmen.

Some call him India's lucky mascot, others marvel at his unflappable composure that has earned the dashing batsman-wicketkeeper the nickname of 'Captain Cool', but no one doubts his Midas touch.

The supremely confident Dhoni has won

five of his seven Tests as captain, with the remaining two ending in draws.

He also has 31 wins in 50 one-day matches at the helm and six victories in 12 Twenty20 internationals, securing Dhoni the status of cult figure in the cricket-obsessed country.

Lucrative sponsorship deals have followed and he is the highest-paid home star in the Indian Premier League with a 1.5-million-dollar-a-year contract with the Chennai Super Kings.

"He is a very impressive captain who knows how to get the best out of his team," said former India captain Dilip Vengsarkar, who handed Dhoni the top job in 2007 as chairman of the selection committee.

World batting record holder Sachin Tendulkar, now in his 20th year in international cricket, is another Dhoni fan.

"I am extremely happy and delighted at the way he has conducted himself," said Tendulkar. "He is a balanced guy and is always on his toes all the time."

SEE PAGE 18 COL 1

5-star Rubel crushes Singra

SPORTS REPORTER

It was the Rubel and Toufiq show as Gobindganj High Schools thrashed Singra Dum Dum Pilot School 8-0 in the Citycell National School Football Championship at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

Rubel struck five times while Toufiq slammed a hatrick in the day's second match at the Big Bowl. Earlier in the first game, Shuti VM Pilot High School beat Azimuddin High School 4-3 in a high-scoring affair.

Nearby at the Brothers Union ground, Moslehuddin Secondary School notched up a 3-1 win over Zia Urea Fertiliser High School.

In the Abahani football ground, Lokman's goal proved the difference as Govt Nasirabad School beat Laxmi Narayan Cotton Mill 1-0.

Hasan wants to emulate Sehwag

PTI, Karachi

Rookie opener Shahzaib Hasan, who was a surprise inclusion in Pakistan's squad for the Twenty20 World Championships, says he wants to emulate his explosive Indian counterpart Virender Sehwag in the mega-event that starts June 5 in England.

The 19-year-old was included in the Pakistan squad and has been backed by skipper Younis Khan to do well in the tournament.

Shahzaib has a tally of 80 fours and 13 sixes in 10 first-class matches. The youngster says he loves watching Sehwag in action.

"He is someone I would like to emulate and bat like. He dictates the pace of the game and I want to do that," Hasan said.

Hailing from Karachi, the youngster has already made an impact in the national Twenty20 Championship that concluded on last night.

Shahzaib might find it difficult to get a spot in the playing XI because the Pakistani think-tank is contemplating using wicketkeeper Kamran Akmal as a makeshift opener in the tournament.

"I will wait for my chance when it comes I will try to take it with both hands. For me just to get into the Pakistan team is a dream come true. Because my career is not a very long one," Hasan said.

Expecting much from Bravo

AFP, St John's

While his colleagues shivered and slumped to an embarrassing Test series defeat in England, Dwayne Bravo was gaining crucial Twenty20 experience in the IPL.

Playing in the same Mumbai Indian squad as Sachin Tendulkar, he hit a memorable unbeaten 70 against Kings XI Punjab although his efforts weren't enough to give his side a semi-final place.

The 25-year-old Trinidadian had long been touted as a future West Indies star ever since his Test debut in 2004 when he snatched three wickets against England at Lord's.

His reputation grew, especially in the limited overs form of the game, and he took over the captaincy in 2007 when Chris Gayle was injured.

Bravo suffered an ankle injury in 2008 which kept him sidelined for eight months.

Despite returning to face England in the ODI series in the Caribbean earlier this year, he wasn't selected for the tour to face Andrew Strauss's side and he was allowed to play again for the Mumbai Indians.

Like Gayle, Bravo is a fan of the IPL.

"I learn about others. IPL has been great in that way. These are the players you are playing against, and now you get to know them better," he told www.cricinfo.com.

He also admitted that his frustrating time out of the game also helped him refocus.

SEE PAGE 18 COL 5

Mashrafe raring to go

AFP, London



Bangladesh's think-tank must be secretly delighted

that Mashrafe Bin Mortaza was treated shabbily by his Kolkata Knight Riders team in the Indian Premier League.

The astonishing price tag of 600,000 dollars paid by Bollywood star Shahrukh Khan for Mortaza appeared a bad investment as coach John Buchanan confined the young fast bowler mostly to the reserves despite the team's dismal showing.

But warming the benches for five weeks left a frustrated Mortaza hungry for success on the field when he turns out for Bangladesh in the World Twenty20.

"I can't wait to get back on the field," said Mortaza. "It was a great experience mixing with all the top players in the IPL. I learnt so much just watching them."

"Now I want to play and do

well for my country. That is the only thing on my mind."

Mortaza's desperation should please Bangladesh captain Mohammad Ashraful and coach Jamie Siddons.

The 25-year-old has risen steadily since his dramatic debut in 2001 when he was launched into the Test squad by West Indian legend Andy Roberts, the then coach, even before he had played first-class cricket.



MASHRAFE BIN MORTAZA

Mortaza's hard-hitting batting lower down the order makes him ideally suited for Twenty20 cricket where he has a strike-rate of 105.88 in nine matches and six wickets, although at an expensive economy rate of 9.22.

Now free from a spate of knee and back injuries that troubled him over the years, Mortaza must play a major role with both bat and ball if Bangladesh are to progress in the tournament.

"Mashrafe is obviously one of our key players," said coach Siddons. "The heavy English conditions will suit his style."

Skipper Ashraful added: "He is a kind of player you turn to when in trouble and invariably he will deliver whether it is with the bat or ball. The whole team relies on him. He is our superstar."

Bangladesh open their campaign against defending champions India in Nottingham on June 6, followed by the second group match against Ireland two days later at the same venue.

MCA fight back, take lead

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh A bowlers could not stop a late-order revival by Maharashtra Cricket Association (MCA) on the third day of their four-day game at the Shaheed Chandu Stadium in Boga yesterday.

At 247 for 6, the second-string side were close to taking a big first innings lead. But Rohit Motwani and Srikanth Mandke batted well to make sure the visitors in turn took a 20-run lead, as they ended the day on 363-6 in reply to

Bangladesh A's 343.

The left-handed Motwani batted with utmost patience, scoring 95 with the help of four boundaries in his 223-ball innings. He remained unbeaten with Mandke, who made 57 off 102 balls with a six and seven boundaries. The two have so far added 116 for the seventh wicket when all seemed lost for the visitors.

The Ranji Trophy side resumed the day on 69 for two but it was the hosts who quickly gained advantage, removing Kedar Jadhav for 19. Forty-five runs later, occasional off-spinner Rajin Saleh

SEE PAGE 18 COL 8

Zia shares 2nd spot

SPORTS REPORTER

Grand Master Ziaur Rahman drew his eighth round board against Grand Master Nguyen Ngoc Trung Son of Vietnam in the 2nd Subic Open International Chess tournament at Subic Freeport, Olongapo City, Philippines yesterday.

Zia improved his tally to six points to share the second position along with Indian GM Sandipan Chanda and Xiu Deshun of China.

Another Bangladeshi Grand Master Niaz Murshed lost his game to Nguyen Van Huy of Vietnam and remained on four points.

GM Ghaem Ehsan Magami leads the table with 6.5 points.



PHOTO: AFP

Australia's Samantha Stosur pumps her fist after beating Russia's Elena Dementieva in the French Open third round match at Roland Garros in Paris yesterday.

Samantha stuns Elena Roddick in last 16

AFP, Paris



Russian fourth seed Elena Dementieva, the 2004 Roland Garros runner-up, was sent crashing out of the French Open in the third round on Saturday by Australia's Samantha Stosur.

The 30th seed won 6-3, 4-6, 6-1 to reach the fourth round of a Grand Slam for only the second time in her career, and the first time on the testing clay courts of the French capital.

Stosur will now tackle France's Virginie Razzano, who put out Italian veteran Tathiana Garbin 7-5, 7-5, where a victory would make her the first Australian woman to make the quarter-finals here since Jelena Dokic in 2002.

"I am far away from being in good shape,"

admitted the 27-year-old Dementieva.

"She was very solid and there wasn't enough power from me so I will have to work on my physical conditioning in time for Wimbledon."

The 27-year-old Russian had struggled in the previous round when she went a set down to Dokic before the Australian retired in tears with a back injury.

Dementieva praised Stosur's physical ability and fitness.

"It's difficult to play against someone who is so fit. Her serve is unusual for the women's game, there's a lot of spin and she has a very powerful game," said Dementieva.

Gold Coast resident Stosur, who had lost to the Russian in the third round of the Australian Open, took the first set with a trademark, big forehand before both players struggled with the

SEE PAGE 18 COL 6