

Brett Lee (C) and his teammates stretch during a training session in Nottingham on Friday.

PHOTO: INTERNET

'Cricket of the year 08' published

UNB, Dhaka
Bengal Tiger, the only fan club of Bangladesh cricket team, on Saturday released a book titled 'Cricket of the year 08' containing information about domestic and international events of country's cricket at the National Sports Council (NSC).

Vaijan Smriti volleyball

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna
Pabna Badminton Club became champions in the 'Vaijan Smriti Volleyball tournament' when they defeated Shalgaria Volleyball team 3-0 set.

The final of the tournament was held at the Pabna town hall premises on Saturday. State Minister for power and energy Advocate Samsul Haque Tuku was the chief guest in the final. Babul Akter was adjudged man of the match.

Adib charges to 174 in T20

SPORTS REPORTER
Adib smashed an unbeaten 174 in EEE Chargers' massive 220-run win over LSC Gladiators in the Igloo Summer Twenty20 Challenge at the Dhanmondi Club ground yesterday.

Bating first, the Chargers piled 338-2 in 20 overs before Gladiators were bowled out for just 108 runs. Pritam took four for 19. In the day's second match, Transformers beat Cricket Mentors by five wickets.

An Indian

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"Before he was made the captain, standing in the slips I interacted with him, and he picked up a lot of things which clearly indicated that he has a sharp brain. His approach is pretty clear and not complicated." Dhoni led India to its first Test series win in New Zealand in 42 years in March, following impressive home wins against world champions Australia and England earlier in the season. But he himself admits that retaining the World Twenty20 title will be a tough act to follow. "It will be silly to name favourites in a 40-over game, things can change so quickly," he said. "It all depends on how one plays on a particular day. The secret is to play to your potential and try to be as consistent as possible. Hopefully we will do that in England." India are drawn with Bangladesh and Ireland in the preliminary round, but face the prospect of battling Australia, South Africa and England in the Super Eights.

Big-talking Kiwis

AFP, Wellington
Despite their unimpressive credentials, the New Zealand World Twenty20 squad are talking boldly from their camp at Sir John Paul Getty's palatial estate on the outskirts of London. "A lot of thought has gone into the preparation for this tournament and we hope that it will be rewarded," coach Andy Moles said. If the just-completed Indian Premier League (IPL) series is any yardstick that is a big hope, but then New Zealand takes the view that the shorter the game the more level the playing field. Ranked eighth in Test cricket and leaping to fourth in ODIs, New Zealand sees opportunity in the blossoming Twenty20 version of the game -- even if none of its seven players in the IPL tournament performed with real distinction. Ross Taylor of the Bangalore Royal Challengers -- the beaten finalists -- was the best of the stroke makers but his average 31.11 only ranked him 15th in the tournament. Kyle Mills was the Mumbai Indian payroll but not used at all while the rest of the New Zealand contingent fell somewhere between Taylor and Mills with largely non-descript performances from limited appearances. But the failure of the cream of New Zealand's cricket crop to set the IPL alight did not bother selector Glenn Turner going into the World Twenty20. "The nature of the beast which is the Twenty20 game is very hit and miss," Turner said, adding that even net practice at the IPL was better than "sitting at home in the winter doing nothing".

Notwithstanding the IPL performances, an upbeat Moles maintained New Zealand deserved to be ranked as potential champions given that the hit-and-hope nature of Twenty20 reduced the talent difference between sides. "We have plenty of match-winners with bat and ball; it's a matter of them performing as consistently as possible. This is our strongest squad so there are no excuses," he said. Moles is promising New Zealand will be "very aggressive" in the tournament, and one area which could prove vital is their renowned fielding, where accuracy can go some way towards compensating for batting and bowling shortfalls. There could even be a lift from the pride of playing for country instead of IPL cash, although a recent survey of New Zealand's top cricketers showed 45 percent now see an IPL contract as the pinnacle of world cricket. But the bottom line is that the senior players who failed to impress at the IPL will have to find a sudden burst of form to lead the way. In addition to Taylor, Brendon McCullum was showing signs of class with the bat towards the end of the IPL although his Kolkata Knight Riders finished last. However, the remainder of the New Zealand contingent -- Jesse Ryder, Jacob Oram, Daniel Vettori and Scott Styris, were relegated to being spare parts contributors. Of the balance of the squad Iain O'Brien, James Franklin, Ian Butler and Peter McGlashan have been playing in England while Brendon Diamanti, Nathan McCullum, Neil Broom and Martin Guptill remained in New Zealand. bowler Yusuf Abdulla and slow bowling all-rounder Roelof van der Merwe. The core of the side, though, have a wealth of experience and most of the key players had successful campaigns in the recent Indian Premier League, including veteran all-rounder Jacques Kallis, whose Royal Challengers Bangalore team reached the final. Kallis won a Twenty20 recall after being controversially left out of the side that played in the inaugural world event in South Africa in 2007. The history of South Africa in world events is one of near-misses, none more heart-breaking than their tied match against Australia in the 1999 World Cup semi-final in England which eliminated the tournament favourites on run rate. Another tied game, against Sri Lanka in the 2003 World Cup in South Africa, meant elimination at the group stage, again on run rate. In the first World Twenty20, South Africa won four out of five matches but their single loss, against eventual champions India, condemned them to yet another run rate dismissal after India, New Zealand and the Proteas finished in a triple tie on points in their Super Eight group. With quick-scoring batsmen like Smith, Herschelle Gibbs, AB de Villiers and JP Duminy, and hard-hitting all-rounders in Albie Morkel, wicketkeeper Mark Boucher and Van der Merwe, agile fielders and some capable bowlers, coach Arthur is confident South Africa have a team well-equipped to succeed. "Whether the conditions suit pace or slow bowling, I believe we can field a team with seven possible bowlers and batting down to number ten," said Arthur. But as hosts and close-up witnesses of the extravaganzas of the Indian Premier League, South Africa are painfully aware of the unpredictability of Twenty20 cricket where one bad over can cost a team its chance of glory.

Chance to end drought

AFP, Johannesburg
When Mike Procter, the former great South African all-rounder, took over as convener of the country's selectors last year he faced up to an uncomfortable truth. For all their success on the cricket fields of the world South Africa haven't won a major international tournament in more than a decade. The World Twenty20 in England provides another opportunity to end the drought. The offices of Cricket South Africa have cabinets gleaming with trophies from successful bilateral series and several triangular or quadrangular tournaments. But the only International Cricket Council honour remains the ICC Knockout trophy, now known as the ICC Champions Trophy, which South Africa won in Bangladesh in 1998. "We've been number one in the one-day game, close to number one in the Test arena and it's a bit frustrating that we haven't got any silverware," said Procter. "So we're taking the World Twenty20 very seriously. It's a World Cup and we want to win it." Planning for the tournament began in earnest when South Africa picked a 15-man squad for two Twenty20 internationals against Australia in March. All 15 men played in at least one game but for Procter it was equally important that the players, including some experimental selections, spent time with national coach Mickey Arthur and captain Graeme Smith in a squad environment, "so it won't be a judgment just on a particular game". Thirteen of that squad will be in England, including two of the relative unknowns who were tried against Australia, left-arm pace

Salahuddin dreams KP admits

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member delegation to the FIFA Congress. A meeting of the confederations will be held on June 1 where the world leaders of football gather for the 59th edition of the Congress. Salahuddin told at the briefing at the BFF House that he would confirm issues about Bangladesh's bid to host the SAFF men's and women's championships in 2009 and 2010 respectively. "A meeting of the SAFF [South Asian Football Federation] is scheduled to be held in the Bahamas where we expect to take decisions on the SAFF Championship. During the AFC Congress, we made bids for both the tournaments in Bangladesh. I am going to fight all the way for the rights

because during the next three years, we are planning to make Bangladesh the centre of South Asian football," he said. "Also, we are going to talk about the SAFF executive committee, which has been running the show for the last ten years. Bhutan objected about the one-man show for too long and we had seconded the decision during the last SAFF meeting in Kuala Lumpur," he added. "I also hope to finalise the teams to participate in the Bangabandhu International Gold Cup and confirm their commitment." BFF vice-president Kazi Nabil Ahmed, technical director Shahidur Rahman Shantoo and general secretary Al Musabbir Sadi were also present. KP admits from page 17 format of the game. "The more I play it though the more I'll catch up with my records in Test and one-day cricket definitely. I just know that I will get much better at it. I've worked out some new theories about how to go about my batting in T20 and that will make a difference, hopefully starting next week!" he said. The 28-year-old England captain, who failed to impress as the Royal Challengers Bangalore captain in IPL, said he loved the experience. "I made a great captain didn't I," Pietersen said in a lighter vein.

Security stops Lankans from going to Oxford

CRICINFO, undated

Less than three months after their team bus came under terrorist gunfire in Lahore, members of the Sri Lankan cricket team have withdrawn from a scheduled visit to Oxford due to security concerns.

Muttiah Muralitharan, Kumar Sangakkara and team manager Brendon Kuruppu informed the Oxford Union debating society on Friday they feared a backlash after a front-page story in the Times in which it was claimed that 20,000 Tamil civilians had been killed in recent hostilities between government troops and LTTE.

The Sri Lankans arrived in England this week ahead of the World Twenty20; their first international assignment since the attack outside the Gaddafi Stadium, which claimed the lives of eight security and transport personnel and wounded seven players and coaching staff. Murali, who is himself a Tamil, had been due, along with Sangakkara and Kuruppu, to deliver an oration at the Oxford Union - following in the footsteps of US presidents and other heads of state - but the visit was scrapped due to uneasiness over security arrangements.

Kuruppu, the former Sri Lankan wicketkeeper who is now the team's manager, told Cricinfo that after reading the newspaper article, the team management had decided not to take any chances. The Sri Lankan government has denied the Tamil civilian death toll quoted in the front-page report. "It is nothing alarming," Kuruppu said. "We just don't want to take chances."

Tigers warm

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Bangladesh face ICC associate members Ireland on June 8 in the second group match.

BRIEF SCORES
SCOTLAND: 141-7 in 20 overs (Hamilton 45, McCallum 50, Berrington 18, extras 11; Mashrafe 1-21, Rasel 1-31, Rubel 5-16, Riyad 2-35, Borren 1-29)
BANGLADESH: 142-4 in 18.4 overs (Tamim 33, Shamsur 1, Ashraf 3, Shakib 36, Riyad 46 not out, Rokibul 15 not out, extras 8; Nel 1-18, Stander 1-13, Watson 1-29)
Result: Bangladesh won by six wickets.

Expecting

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"From those eight months, I had a lot of time to think about where I wanted my career to go. I definitely want to make up for mistakes," added a man who is averaging just over 16 with the bat in his nine T20 internationals while also picking up four wickets. "Sometimes the shot selection wasn't great, some times it was bad decisions by me and other times, I used to bat after a long bowling spell and felt tired." "That's why I am working very hard on my fitness now. I want to play well and for long, contribute to my team's success consistently."

Fans get behind Maria

AFP, Paris



Dealing with adversity has brought Maria Sharapova a new fan base in Paris, the Russian glamour girl believes.

The former World No.1 has gone the distance in the three matches she has played to date at this year's French Open coming from behind with defeat staring her in the face on each occasion to reach the last 16.

And that in just her second tournament back after a 10-month injury layoff to deal with an injury to her right shoulder that was casting a dark cloud over the rest of her career.

It has revealed another side to a once dominant player much admired for her looks and star appeal and respected for her all-action style, but seldom a sentimental favourite.

Asked if she had noticed a change in the way the Roland Garros faithful had got behind her this year the 22-year-old Sharapova replied: "Yeah, probably because you're ranked outside the top 100, so people like you."

"When you're No. 1 in the world, for some reason they don't like you anymore. It's amazing how the society works."

"Especially here in France, I think they always love the underdog, and they always love the one that comes back from behind, or the one that's not expected to win. I'm probably that person."

Sharapova admits that the 10 months she sat on the sidelines have given her a new perspective on life allowing her to enjoy new experiences and take some time away from the spotlight.

But she says that the time was ripe for her return to competition and she is determined to make the most out of it no matter how it goes.

"I'm full of surprises. I surprise myself on a daily basis," she said.

"I'll tell you, just when you think you've seen everything, I manage to just shock everyone. Just ask a member of my team."

"I think coming into Warsaw and coming into this tournament, it's all really a test and it still is a test."

Next test for Sharapova on Sunday will be China's Li Na, herself the victim of a career-threatening injury to her right knee.

The two have played four times with Sharapova winning in straight sets each time. But it will be the first time that the two have played on clay and the first since the 2006 US Open.

The prize for the winner will be a quarter-final spot and every chance of reaching the last four.



Maria Sharapova of Russia jubilates after winning against compatriot Yaroslava Shvedova in the French Open third round match at Roland Garros in Paris on Friday.

PHOTO: AFP

Samantha stuns Elena

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windy conditions inside Court Philippe Chatrier.

The first four games of the second set all went against serve until Dementieva made the crucial break in the 10th game to level the tie.

But 25-year-old Stosur raced away in the decider taking a 4-0 lead before wrapping up the match with another power-packed, crosscourt winner as Dementieva joined third seed Venus Williams as a major third round casualty.

"I came out playing well. I wasn't too nervous and I tried the handle the wind as best as I could," said Stosur.

"Even though I lost the second set, I knew I had to keep plugging away in the third."

Fifth seeded Serbian Jelena Jankovic, a semi-finalist in the last two years, brushed aside Australia's world number 73 Jarmila Groth 6-1, 6-1.

Jankovic will face either Denmark's Caroline Wozniacki or Romania's Sorana Cirstea for a place in the quarter-finals.

Svetlana Kuznetsova, the Russian seventh seed, continued her low-profile progress through with a 6-1, 6-3 win over Hungary's Melinda Czink.

Kuznetsova, a former US Open champion and who was runner-up here in 2006, has lost just 11 games on her way to the fourth round for a sixth successive year.

The 23-year-old will face Polish 12th seed Agnieszka Radwanska who put out unseeded Ukrainian Kateryna

Bondarenko 6-2, 6-4 for a place in the quarter-finals.

"Radwanska moves well. She reads the game well. It's her strength. As far as weaknesses are concerned, I will keep to myself," said Kuznetsova.

Belarusian ninth seed Victoria Azarenka set up a last 16 clash against defending champion Ana Ivanovic after she beat Spain's Carla Suarez Navarro 5-7, 7-5, 6-2 in a tie held which was suspended Friday because of bad light.

Later Saturday, American second seed, and 2002 champion, Serena Williams faces Spain's Maria Jose Martinez Sanchez who has never made the last 16 of a Grand Slam.

Andy Roddick reached the last 16 at the French Open for the first time in his career on Saturday by defeating France's Marc Gicquel 6-1, 6-4, 6-4.

It was a stunning turnaround in fortunes on clay for the former world No.1 who went out in the first round here in 2006 and 2007 before missing last year's tournament with a shoulder injury.

The win made him just the second American through to fourth round at the French Open since Andre Agassi in 2003, Robbie Ginepri having achieved the feat last year.

Also through to the last 16 in early action was German veteran Tommy Haas who defeated France's Jeremy Chardy 7-5, 6-3, 4-6, 6-4.

It was just the second time that the 31-year-old had made it through to the fourth round

in Paris and he will take on either second seed Roger Federer or Frenchman Paul-Henri Mathieu for a place in the last eight.

Argentine fifth seed Juan Martin Del Potro reached the French Open last 16 on Saturday with a 6-4, 7-5, 6-4 win over Russia's 25th seed Igor Andreev.

Del Potro faces either France's Jo-Wilfried Tsonga or Christophe Rochus of Belgium for a place in the quarter-finals.

MCA fight

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dismissed Rohan Bhosale for 53 off 121 balls.

Ankit Bawne made 57 while Ganesh Gaekwad added 30 but their consecutive losses put the home side before the tourists regained control.

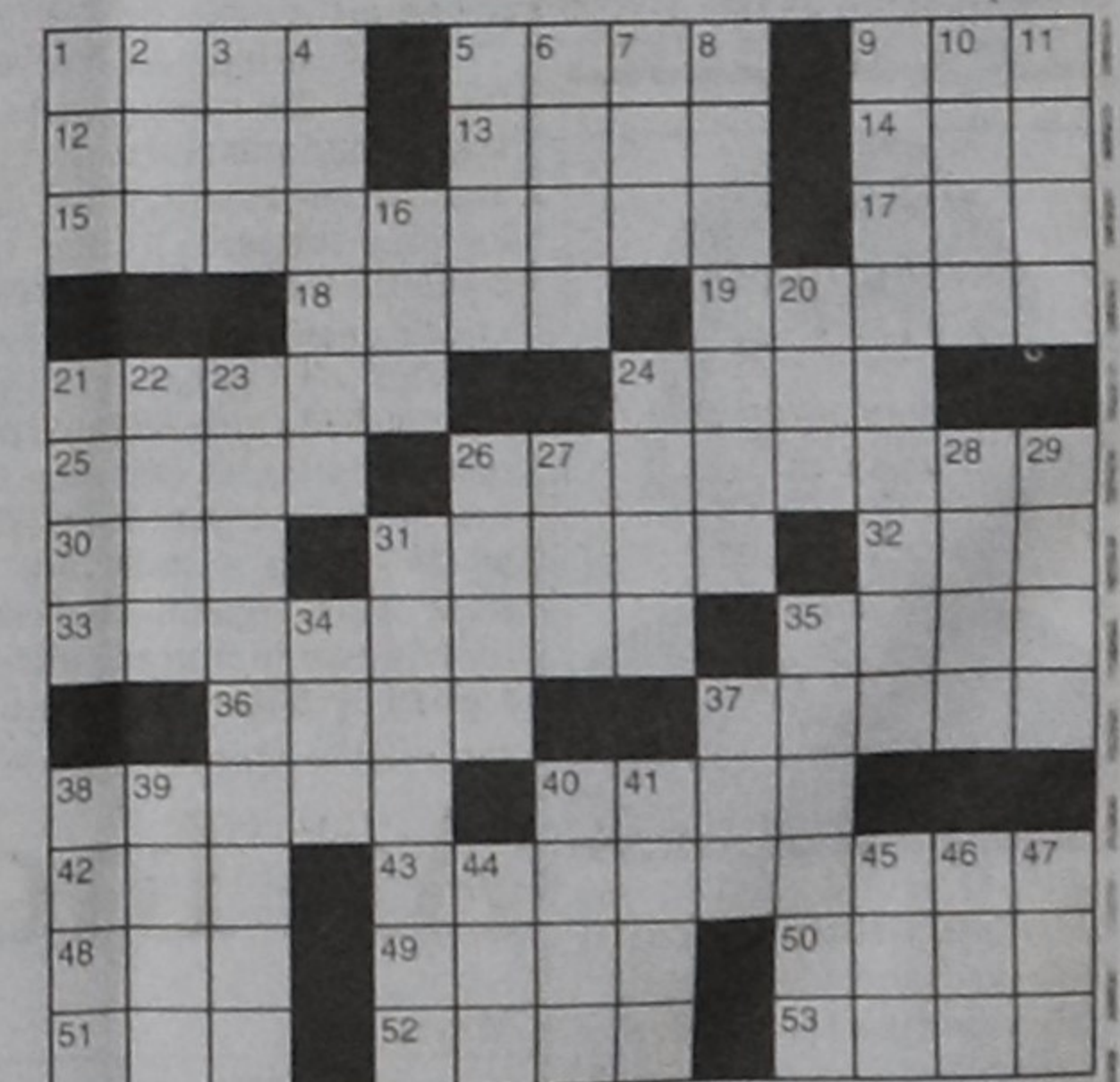
Talha Jubair took two wickets and there was one each from Sajidul Islam, Enamul Haque, Dollar Mahmud and Rajin.

BRIEF SCORES
BANGLADESH A: First innings 343 all out in 91 overs (Kayes 4, Nafis 30, Imran 50, Hannan 39, Rajin 1, Mehrab 81, Sahagur 2, Dollar 79, Sajid 0, Enamul 11, Talha 2, Samad 6-108, Aditya 1-68, Kiran 2-73).

MAHARASHTRA CRICKET ASSOCIATION: First innings 363-6 in 119 overs (Khadiwale 8, Bhosale 53, Sirikhande 23, Jadhav 19, Bawne 57, Motwani 95, Gaekwad 30, Mandle 57, Sajid 1-88, Talha 2-59, Dollar 1-37, Enamul 1-95, Rajin 1-18).

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS 35 Small 1 Cry like a banshee 5 "Say again?" 9 Crafty 12 Europe's neighbor 13 German car name 14 Tiny veggie 15 Peter Parker's alter ego 17 Cartesian conclusion 18 Hostels 19 Drove 21 Founded (on) 24 Unaccompanied 25 Swiss peaks 26 Directly 30 Floral neckwear 31 Actor Alan 32 NASA deviation 33 Last page? 35 Small combo 36 Nestling hawk 37 Dash-board 38 Folkways 40 Painter Mondrian 42 Actress Gardner 43 1984 48 Buddy 49 Sea flock 50 Therefore 51 Wapiti 52 Method (Abbr.) 53 Turned blue? Solution time: 21 mins. OAHU SIB CAFE ALLOPECIA ARIA FIRSTAD MELT HAM GLEAMS CAROL DEAR UNIT MERMALO PEG CLEER COP WAYLARD HODA EELS SYNOD BIGAMY SOB ADAR BEAFRAID TOLL UNFAIRLY SLAY GEE DELE DOWN 16 Conclude 1 Existed 2 Cleopatra's slayer 3 Midafternoon hour 4 Restroom designation 26 Spheres 27 Guitar's kin 28 Greet 29 Pairs 31 Accumulates 34 CBS logo 35 Named 37 Narcs' org. 38 Jerry Herman musical 39 Ellipse 40 Needles' mates 41 "Meet Me - Louis" 44 Use a crowbar 45 Take a shot at 46 Time of your life? 47 Home for 14-Across



CRYPTOQUIP

BV RWN TADDAQ X TWAI SMAD BIIAQBXSACR SMUAK BS XKXR, KWNCQ RWN JXR RWN ZA QA ZAUBVBAQ Yesterday's Cryptoquip: BEING THAT THE BIG BLACK BIRD IS ACTING LIKE A COWARD, WOULD YOU SAY IT'S A CRAVEN RAVEN? Today's Cryptoquip Clue: R equals Y