

Captain leads Australia

AFP, London



Ricky Ponting played a captain's innings of 56 as Australia beat New Zealand by seven wickets in their ICC World Twenty20 warm-up match at the Oval here on Tuesday.

Australia, chasing 148 to win, wobbled at 26 for two after James Franklin struck twice in his first over.

But an expertly paced stand of 104 between Ponting and Michael Clarke, unbeaten on 49, helped Australia to victory with four balls to spare as they made it two wins out of two following Monday's defeat of Bangladesh.

Earlier, left-arm quick Mitchell Johnson took four wickets as Australia restricted New Zealand to 147 all out.

New Zealand lost openers Brendon McCullum and Jesse Ryder for a duck apiece and collapsed to 21 for five inside six overs before a stand of 71 between Scott Styris (42) and Peter McGlashan (49) revived the innings.

Svetlana sinks

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A more tenacious Cirstea forced Stosur to save four break points in the opening game of the second set, before the Australian broke for a 2-1 lead.

Stosur's advantage stretched to 4-1 when Cirstea sliced a backhand into the tramlines in her next service game, with Stosur surviving a late rally from her opponent before breaking again to close out the match.

Nafis guides

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Motwani off Samad Fallah, who also gave the first breakthrough by removing Imrul Kayes (23).

Rain also played foul during the first four-day which ended in a draw at the Shaheed Chandu Stadium in Bogra.

BRIEF SCORES
BANGLADESH A: 158-3 in 64 overs (Imrul 23, Nafis 75 no out, Imran 5, Mehrab 54, Rajin 1 not out; Samad 2-44, Azhar 1-34)

Johnson, though, finished with fine figures of four for 20 from four overs.

Australia coach Tim Nielsen was satisfied with his team's performance, telling reporters: "We are getting better, we are getting closer. There are still a couple of areas where we can improve."

"We still have a few overs that went for a few too many but the pleasing thing was to have them five for 21."

"Brett (Lee) and Mitchell almost put the game to sleep in the first five or six overs and then we batted sensibly, chased the runs down and we probably had plenty up our sleeve."

Australia saw Franklin remove Shane Watson and the big-hitting David Warner.

But Ponting, playing some typically stylish shots, steadied the ship and lofted New Zealand captain and left-arm spinner Daniel Vettori for six before meeting out the same treatment to all-rounder Styris.

Ponting, one of the world's best batsmen in all forms of the game, went to fifty in 34 balls, including four fours to go with his pair of sixes.

But in sight of victory, he was caught by Jacob Oram off Vettori.

Australia made an ideal start after Vettori won the toss.

Fast bowler Lee had the dangerous McCullum caught behind after the batsman chased a wide ball while Ryder

was out to Johnson's second ball, caught at long leg by Peter Siddle off a hook.

The Black Caps, who on Monday beat defending champions India at Lord's, were in dire straits at 21 for five off five overs when all-rounder Oram was run out without facing a ball.

However, the experienced Styris counter-attacked by lofting Siddle for a superb straight six into the Pavilion before driving him next ball for four.

But the stand was broken when Brisbane-born Styris, like McCullum, chased a wide delivery and was caught by wicketkeeper Brad Haddin off Johnson.

His 42 had come in 28 balls with two sixes and six fours.

McGlashan kept the momentum going with two reverse swept four off Hauritz before falling to the off-spinner one short of his fifty when caught at long-off by David Hussey. He faced 35 balls with a six and six fours.

McGlashan's performance was all the more impressive as this was his first match against Australia.

"They got the result but there were definitely positives we could take out of it," McGlashan said.

Reflecting on his own innings, McGlashan said: "I had nothing to lose, is in the New Zealand women's team."

Pakistan learnt lesson

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pretty evident in Monday's practice game against South Africa, which Pakistan lost by 59 runs. Except for off-spinner Saeed Ajmal, who bowled economically and opener Ahmed Shehzad, who made 31, none of the Pakistan players showed any sort of form.

Alam admitted the players were still coming to terms with foreign conditions and there is no way out except to understand each player's responsibility. "We are still settling down. I wasn't really proud of our performance yesterday. It takes at least a week's preparation for a team to get attuned to the conditions but there is nothing to be worried about."

According to Alam, for Pakistan to become consistent

the key is their senior players, starting with their captain Younus Khan, need to perform. "I'm expecting a great deal from Younus Khan. Then we have people like Salman Butt, Misbah, Shahid Afridi, who can hit the ball and are tailor-made for this kind of cricket."

Afridi, never shy of speaking his mind, said he would want to make the same impact like in the previous World Twenty20, where he was one of the best bowlers in the 2007 Twenty20 World Cup. I will do my best once again and I've been doing well with the ball in the last few years for Pakistan. As for the batting, I know people expect a lot from me and luckily I've had a few decent knocks against Australia recently."

Gayle toys with Irish

AFP, London

West Indies captain Chris Gayle led his side to a crushing nine-wicket win over Ireland in their ICC World Twenty20 warm-up match at the Oval here on Tuesday with a blistering innings of 88 not out.

West Indies, set 131 to win, finished on 134 for one with four overs to spare after left-handed opener Gayle's whirlwind knock of 88 not out saw him face just 55 balls with seven sixes, most of them superb straight hits, and six fours in his innings.

"It's good to get a win," Gayle, who saw his side well beaten by England in both a Test and one-day series earlier in the English season, told reporters.

"You might say it was against a weak side but if they had beaten us it would have been a different story."

"This is a fresh start," added Gayle, whose side face hosts England in a warm-up match at Lord's on Wednesday.

No cricket

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is to be prepared for a cricket match," explained the minister.

Ahad's statement comes in the wake of a highly intensified demand by the country's cricket clubs and the BCB who want to see World Cup matches at the BNS.

He leaves for London today to watch matches of the ICC Twenty20 World Cup and also look at the facilities which he believes will help him for the World Cup to be co-hosted by India, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh.

Shakib exudes

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"Yes, we do talk about that match and it lifts us no doubt. However, this is a totally different format and conditions are different. We have to field well to win matches and get the batting and bowling plan right. How we prepare is very important."

The Bangladesh team had no cricket practice yesterday. The players signed bats and appeared for the profile recording for the official broadcasters in the morning before heading for a gym session.

Kevin gets England thru'

AFP, Nottingham



Kevin Pietersen hit an unbeaten 53 to steer England to an unconvincing six-wicket win over Scotland with six balls remaining at Trent Bridge here on Tuesday in a World Twenty20 warm-up.

The Scots batted first with Kyle Coetzer making 34 and Craig Smith hitting 45 to help their team to 136-5 off their 20 overs.

Pietersen finished the match in style with his second six with recent former Ireland international turned England convert Eoin Morgan not out on 23.

It was a gallant display from a Scottish side who, the day before, had been rocked by a bitter fall-out between skipper Gavin Hamilton and pace bowler John Blain, an argument which prompted the seamer to withdraw from the tournament.

"Blainy and I had a big fall-out," said Hamilton, a former England international.

"He was only with us one day so we can't say we miss him. We've still got to discuss this but I'm not going to discuss it with him during this tournament, I've got enough on my plate. We've got 14 guys who I think are very much behind me and the John Blain thing will be dealt with after."

Meanwhile, England skipper Paul Collingwood was delighted to see Pietersen in the runs after shaking off an Achilles injury which ruled him out of the recent one-day series with the West Indies.

"He's raring to go," said Collingwood.

"He's had a few weeks off through injury. He's got the buzz about him and a big smile on his face. I thought it was a real mature innings from him tonight, and we're going to need more of them."

England get the World Twenty20 underway with a game against the Netherlands at Lord's on Friday.

Pair bridge

SPORTS REPORTER

The worldwide pair bridge contest will be held tomorrow across the world.

For Bangladesh it will take place at the Bangladesh Bank premises at 4pm.

The entry fee has been fixed Tk 300.00 for each pair.

Lauwai crush

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Mohammedan Sporting Club of Jamalpur also earned comfortable victory when they blanked Soukhin Krira Protibha Onneshan of Netrakona 4-0 at the Sherpur Stadium.

Milon scored hat-trick while Mamun netted the other goal for Jamalpur Mohammedan.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

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