



Cricketers called to the camp for the upcoming home series against Zimbabwe take part in the first training session at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

Tigers start fitness drills

SPORTS REPORTER

The national cricketers started their preparation at Mirpur yesterday for the home series against Zimbabwe in October sans captain Mashrafe Bin Mortaza and vice-captain Shakib Al Hasan.

Mashrafe is expected to join the camp today although he is going through a rehabilitation programme after having operated both knees again and it was still not clear whether the pace spearhead can play the five-match home series against Zimbabwe.

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) retained Mashrafe as captain for the series despite the uncertainty. As per the advice from Australian surgeon David Young, Mashrafe will be able to return to action in mid-November.

National team physio Michael Henry however expressed his guarded optimism. "It is very difficult for any surgeon to put a definite time frame on return with the kind of injury he (Mashrafe) has had. There is still one and a half months to go so at this point we cannot rule him out also," said Henry while talking with the reporters during practice.

Shakib Al Hasan is now in Adelaide to continue his treatment for groin injury while coach Jamie Siddons has no chance to join the team before Eid.

A total of eleven cricketers took part in the fitness session on the first day.

Ctg Mohammedan, Rahmatganj win

SPORTS REPORTER

Chittagong Mohammedan and Rahmatganj MFS made good starts in the Federation Cup as they won their respective opening matches at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

Two African recruits Idris Kasirye and Raphael Sagnio stole the show in the second half as Rahmatganj secured a comfortable 3-1 victory over

Arambagh Krira Sangha in the day's second encounter.

Rahmatganj took the lead first through a 14th minute strike from Mamun who found the net with a well-directed shot after receiving the ball from Choumin Rakhina, who got the ball in the danger zone from an Idris cross.

Arambagh was however quick to equalise the score as veteran striker Alfaz Ahmed tapped the ball from his opponents' defence lapse in the

18th minute.

Rahmatganj however regrouped in the second half and it was substitute left-back Anisur Rahman Sweet who energized the attack to threaten the opponents' fort. It was Guinean striker Raphael Sagnio who struck the second goal in the 70th minute after dodging three defenders in the box and Idris again created the opportunity for his side.

With three minutes from the final whistle, Ugandan Idris sealed the margin with a goal.

In the day's first match, Chittagong Mohammedan came from behind to beat Shuktara Jubo Sangsad of Narayanganj 2-1.

After squandering a number of good chances striker Akbar Hossain Ridon struck twice in the second half to ensure the full points.

Rezaul Karim Liton put Shuktara ahead just before the break as he produced a right footer from inside the danger zone after taking a pass from Sohel to put his side ahead.

Ridon restored parity for the port city team in the 69th minute with a well-judged shot from a vantage position utilizing a pass from Shariful while he scored the match-winner in the 86th minute with an angular shot from inside the D-box capitalizing on a minus from Farhad.

TEAMS
ARABAGH: Mustaq, Forhad, Prodip, Akram, Deen, Mohammad, Sharif, Maloy (Mustafizur), Kabir, Nurul Islam, Turjo and Alfaz (Surat).
RAHMATGANJ: Himel, Rajib, Bhasani, Rimon, Jahangir.

SEE PAGE 18 COL 5



Former national striker Alfaz Ahmed (R) of Arambagh vies against a Rahmatganj player for possession during yesterday's Federation Cup match at the Bangabandhu National Stadium.

PHOTO: STAR



Did U Know?

Marcello Lippi is the only man to coach four Champions League finalists in 1996, 1997, 1998 and 2003 (all Juventus).



STAR Cricket

England v Australia
Fourth ODI
Live from 4:15pm

TEN Sports

Sri Lanka v India
Tri-Series, Third ODI
Live from 4:00pm
US Open Tennis
Men's Semifinals
Live from 12:15am (Sunday)

ESPN

English Premier League
Man City v Arsenal
Live from 8:55pm
Tottenham v Man United
Live from 11:25pm

STAR Sports

English Premier League
Liverpool v Burnley
Live from 8:55pm

SuperSport7

Primera Liga
Getafe v Barcelona
Live from 11:00pm

Espanyol v Real Madrid
Live from 2:00am (Sunday)

DAY'S EVENT

Federation Cup Football
Farashganj v Beanibazar SC (4:00pm)
Venue: Bangabandhu National Stadium

Sk Russell v Bangladesh Army (4:00pm)
Venue: Army Stadium

TALK TURKEY

Diego Maradona

(Argentine soccer coach)

"I am not afraid of criticism. I am afraid of nobody. I am doing my job, I have my team and I am going to go forward."

After losing 1-0 to Paraguay in the FIFA World Cup qualifiers on Wednesday.

ICC mulling 25-over innings

CRICINFO, undated

The ICC is considering a trial splitting of one-day matches into two innings of 25 overs for each team, Dave Richardson, the ICC's cricket manager, has said. The idea was mooted by Sachin Tendulkar last week.

"I quite like that idea, I believe South Africa may trial something along those lines," Richardson told BBC Sport. "This might work in day-night cricket where one team has to bat in day and the other at night. It provides something different and reduces the effects on the team who loses the toss and has to bat first on a damp wicket, for example."

Richardson believed the concept, discussed during the ICC's cricket committee annual meeting at Lord's in May, could breathe life into the 50-over format, which has been increasingly threatened by

the rise in popularity of Twenty20 cricket.

Though two innings of 25 overs could lead to new strategies and even reduce the influence of winning the toss in favourable conditions, Richardson was eager to prevent results becoming predictable. His concern was that splitting the innings could take away scoring opportunities for the batsmen.

"I don't necessarily like the idea of playing two matches of 25 overs each with the openers batting again," he said. "The charm of one-day cricket is seeing someone batting at four and scoring a good hundred. If you bat in the middle order of a Twenty20 or a new 25-over innings, you're not to get much of an opportunity to hit three figures, one downside of the Twenty20 game."

The clamour for a fresh approach to the one-day game has grown considerably with players including Tendulkar 50-over games be played over two innings to provide similar overhead conditions for

both teams. Tendulkar said the contests were becoming too predictable because results of "close to 75 per cent of matches" could be predicted after the toss.

The England and Wales Cricket Board recently agreed to scrap the domestic Friends Provident Trophy, the only 50-over domestic cricket tournament, in favour of an expanded Twenty20 competition along with a 40-over format. Cricket South Africa are also likely to join the bandwagon as it considers changes to its 45-over competition.

However, Richardson said the experiment would have to be successful at the domestic level before changes could be made to the international game. "The bottomline is if we can come up with a product that is better than the existing one, then everyone would like to look at it," he said. "If it has been trialled successfully at domestic level, it may give the trial to give it the go-ahead at international level."

SEE PAGE 18 COL 5

Pak to host Aus at Lord's

AFP, London

Australia will face Pakistan in two Test matches at Lord's and Headingley in July 2010, the England and Wales Cricket Board revealed on Friday.

Ricky Ponting's Australians have not toured Pakistan since 1998 and next year's series has been switched to neutral territory because of the security situation in the Asian country, which was heightened following a terrorist attack on the Sri Lanka team bus in March in Lahore.

The ECB have adopted the recommendations of the Independent Major Match Group to ensure the maximum number of Pakistan fans can attend the matches.

Pakistan will also face Australia in two Twenty20 matches at Edgbaston, while Cardiff will host two Twenty20s matches between Pakistan and England.

ECB chairman Giles Clarke said: "I thank Lord Morris of Handsworth and his MMG as well as Gordon Hollins, ECB Head of Venue Partnerships, for the sensible approach they have made to ensure that the largest number of members of the Pakistani ethnic community

SEE PAGE 18 COL 1

Kiwis thwarted

Cricket

AFP, Colombo

Ashish Nehra and Yuvraj Singh shared six wickets as India restricted New Zealand to 155 in a tri-series match yesterday to boost their hopes of qualifying for the final.

Left-arm seamer Nehra finished with 3-24 and left-arm spinner Yuvraj with 3-31 as India never allowed New Zealand to build a big partnership. Skipper Daniel Vettori top-scored with 25 in his team's below-par batting display.

Fast bowlers Rudra Pratap Singh and Ishant Sharma bagged two wickets apiece as New Zealand failed to last their quota of 50 overs.

New Zealand, who need a victory to keep alive their hopes after losing to Sri Lanka in the first match, failed to cope with India's pace-spin combination after electing to bat on a slow pitch in the day-night game.

Each side will play two league matches before the top two qualify for the final on September 14.

Nehra rocked the top order when he trapped Jesse Ryder leg-before with the match's

third delivery and then dismissed Brendon McCullum in a similar fashion in his next over for his 100th wicket in one-day internationals.

Yuvraj dismissed Grant Elliott (22) and Martin Gupthill (22) before accounting for Neil Broom (21).

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard of the New Zealand innings in a tri-series match against India in Colombo on Friday:

NEW ZEALAND
McCullum lbw b Nehra 3
Ryder lbw b Nehra 0
Gupthill c Dravid b Yuvraj 22
Taylor c Dhoni b RP Singh 11
Elliott c Dhoni b Yuvraj 22
Oram c b Sharma 24
Broom c Raini b Yuvraj 21
Vettori b Sharma 25
Mills b RP Singh 6
Butler c Harbhajan b Nehra 6
Bond not out 10
Extras: (lb-4, w-1) 5
Total: (All out in 46.3 overs) 155
Fall of wickets: 1-1, 2-4, 3-19, 4-51, 5-66, 6-101, 7-116, 8-134, 9-142.

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Nehra	8.3	0	24	3
RP Singh	8	2	22	2
Sharma	10	2	26	2
Yuvraj	10	0	31	3
Harbhajan	8	0	39	0
Raini	1	0	4	0
Pathan	1	0	5	0



India pacer Ashish Nehra (R) appeals for an lbw against New Zealand batsman Jesse Ryder during their tri-series match at the R Premadasa Stadium in Colombo yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

White eyes whitewash

Cricket

AFP, Southampton

Cameron White believes Australia can finish their Ashes-losing tour with a flourish by trouncing England 7-0 in the ongoing one-day international (ODI) series.

White's century at the Rose Bowl on Wednesday helped world champions Australia to a six-wicket win and left them 3-0 up with four to play.

Victory at Lord's today will give Australia the series but White promises there will be no prospect of the tourists easing up.

Although he has scored 200 runs in three innings, White is set to lose his place at number three this weekend as Australia captain Ricky Ponting returns from his post-Ashes break.

Worryingly for England, White, whose 105 at the Rose Bowl was his maiden ODI hundred, reckons Australia have room for improvement - a concerning thought too for the rest of the world's leading cricket nations as they get ready for the start of the Champions Trophy tournament in South Africa later this month.

"At the moment if we keep playing good, consistent cricket, keep bowling and fielding

well, there is no reason why not," Victoria all-rounder White said when asked about the possibility of a clean sweep.

"In saying that, winning seven one-dayers against a really good side is a pretty strange thing to happen. But I am not saying that it can't."

"We want to keep the momentum going and I don't think we are playing at our total best at the moment."

"There are still probably some areas that we think we can improve in, so there are things we need to work on to get better for these four games. Then, come four games' time, we are hopefully at our peak."

But the stressed Australia were not complacent. "England's a good cricket team, they'll bounce back at some stage," he added.

White is one of several players in the Australia ODI side who played no part in the Ashes series, which ended last month with England winning the five-Test campaign 2-1 with two draws.

"The big for us was to halt the momentum and then change it," said White. "We have done that now. The new guys coming in have added a bit of energy around the group."

"Not that everyone had their heads down or anything when we got here but there is a good feeling around the group again."

Del Potro through Rain keeps Nadal waiting

AFP, New York

Juan Martin del Potro reached the US Open semifinals on Thursday and then sat back and watched as the Rafael Nadal-Fernando Gonzalez match was suspended in the third set due to rain.

The sixth-seeded Argentinian converted eight out of eight break points to reach the last four with a 4-6, 6-3, 6-2, 6-1 win over Marin Cilic of Croatia.

In a battle between two giant 20-year-olds, sixth-seeded Del Potro started slowly before wresting control of the match away from Cilic midway through the second set.

He finished with a flourish to reach his second Grand Slam semifinal of the year after his five-set loss to Roger Federer in the French Open in June.

"It was a good comeback, you know, the crowd cheering for me at 1-3 in the second. I started to play better after that moment," he said.

"Of course, I need to improve for the semis a lot, but I'm happy with my match and with the result."

Del Potro has enjoyed a meteoric rise through the ranks over since he emerged in 2006 from the tennis centre of Tandil, which also produced Mariano Zabaleta and Juan Monaco.

He was the youngest player in the year-end top 200 in 2005, the youngest in the top 100 in 2006, the youngest in the top 50 in 2007 and the youngest in the top 10 in 2008.

This year, he broke into the top five in April and was ranked there for three months before slipping out to his current sixth ranking.

Del Potro enjoyed a good summer buildup to Flushing Meadows, winning in Washington

and reaching the final in the Montreal Masters before running out of steam in the final against Andy Murray.

But he came into New York well-rested, having taken the next two weeks off and ready for what he has designated as his main target of the year.

"I like to play here in US and I like hardcourts. I like this tournament. I like everything. So, I work hard for this part of the year."

"My dream is to win this tournament. I'm so

SEE PAGE 18 COL 5



PHOTO: AFP

Juan Martin Del Potro of Argentina celebrates a point against Marin Cilic of Croatia during their quarterfinal match at the US Open in Flushing Meadows on Thursday.