

Bangladesh A capitulate

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh A were staring defeat at its face as they were bundled out for a paltry 81 runs in 29.1 overs in their first innings on the second day of the 4-day match against hosts Maharashtra Cricket Association yesterday. MCA finished day two on 32 for one to build up a massive lead of 280 runs with nine second-innings wickets remaining.

Earlier, MCA started day two on 309 for 8 in their first innings and added twenty more runs for the last two wickets in seven overs. Dollar Mahmud was the best bowler for Bangladesh A as he took 3 wickets in the first innings conceding 62 runs. Dollar enhanced his tally later as he took the only wicket in the second innings to fall so far.

But the good work of the bowlers was undone by the

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Mainul visits SA Games venues

SPORTS REPORTER

Convenor of the SA Games venue management subcommittee and director general of Bangladesh Rifles Major General Mainul Islam AWC, PSC yesterday visited various venues selected to host the upcoming SA Games, said a press release from Bangladesh Olympic Association. Bangabandhu national Stadium, Maulana Bhashani

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Did U Know?

Tennis player Andy Murray's maternal grandfather Roy Erskine played football for Hibernian.



Mahendra Singh Dhoni

(India cricket captain)
"I do feel disappointed but frankly speaking I find it difficult to say if we were up for this tournament or not. We were off the boil against Pakistan and we lost. Then we had a wash-out and we won the match against West Indies. I can't say if our performance was bad." Summing up India's performance in the ICC Champions Trophy where they were ousted from the first round.



ESPN
English Premier League
Arsenal v Blackburn
Live from 7:30pm
STAR Sports
English Premier League
Chelsea v Liverpool
Live from 10:00pm



Federation Cup Football
Bangladesh Army v Barisal (3:00pm)
Venue: Bangabandhu National Stadium
Feni v Sheikh Russel (5:00pm)
Venue: Bangabandhu National Stadium

Kiwis polish Pak top order

CRICINFO, undated



New Zealand found the perfect balance between defense and offense after having lost the toss on a flat pitch surrounded by an outfield as fast as a highway. The frustration at not being able to score freely combined with aggressive bowling from Shane Bond made for a dangerous mix for the Pakistan batsmen, four of whom had departed by the halfway mark.

Two players making their comebacks from ICL made for a delightful face-off. Bond was forever accurate, consistently bowling inswingers headed for the top of off stump. The first such delivery to Imran Nazir hit only the inside half of the bat, and

also showed Bond a slight bat-pad gap. All through his first spell Bond kept working on that gap: a fascinating contest ensued. Bond played on the intelligence and ego of a batsman known for his attacking instinct and dashing stroke play -- mixing the inswingers with slower legcutters.

On his part, Nazir played one of his more mature knocks. He didn't try any expansive shots to Bond. Kyle Mills complemented from the other end, not giving anything loose, except for a couple of wides down leg side while trying outrageous outswingers. The first hit-me ball came at the end of the seventh over, a half-volley that Nazir lofted over mid-off. Nazir found release by hitting Ian Butler for three boundaries in his first over, and Pakistan suddenly

looked healthy at 43 for 0 after nine overs.

That was when Bond produced a special over. Two accurate bouncers, one a no-ball, and the other one, a jaffa, rising from just short of a length and jaggling into Nazir and taking the edge, reminded the cricketers what it had been missing.

Kamran Akmal, seated until then at 11 off 19 balls, looked to counter and targeted Butler again. But Butler hit back by inducing an edge from a promoted Shoaib Malik. Kamran felt more pressure then, and lofted Butler in his next over, straight to sweeper-cover. At 69 for 3 Pakistan needed a renovation job from Younis Khan and Mohammad Yousuf and bowling at such times is right up Daniel Vettori's alley.

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DRAWING FIRST BLOOD: New Zealand paceman Shane Bond (R) celebrates after dismissing Pakistan opener Imran Nazir (L) during ICC Champions Trophy's second semifinal at the Wanderers Stadium in Johannesburg yesterday.

Strauss bemoans loss

Cricket

INTERNET, undated

England captain Andrew Strauss backed his side's style but bemoaned the execution as they crashed out of the Champions Trophy to holders Australia.

Centurions Ricky Ponting and Shane Watson combined in a record 252-run partnership to seal a crushing nine-wicket win under the Centurion floodlights. However, the match was only taken as far as the 42nd over of the chase thanks to a career-best 80 from Tim Bresnan and Luke Wright's 48.

"We were definitely keen to go out there and play our shots on a very good wicket and unfortunately it didn't come off," said Strauss. "You live by the sword and you die by the sword."

He added: "It's frustrating. When you lose six wickets for 100 runs on that kind of surface you

are always struggling.

"We have to keep playing our shots, it's refreshing to see the guys going out there and expressing themselves but we have to work on our skills to improve our percentages."

"Tim Bresnan played exceptionally well and was well supported by Luke Wright."

"We weren't completely out of the game at the halfway mark but it was a 300-par wicket and we were still quite light which meant we needed three or four wickets with the new ball, which we weren't able to get."

When Graham Onions prised out Tim Paine in the second over, following a 15-minute delay caused by an invasion of flying ants, it appeared to be the perfect start.

But Ponting struck his 28th one-day international hundred and became the first Australian to pass 12,000 runs at this level.

"You always hope under lights it might misbehave a little bit and there's always pressure chasing but Ponting and Watson played exceptionally well," Strauss added.

Sachin's injury mysterious!

ANI, Mumbai

Master Blaster Sachin Tendulkar, who returned to Mumbai on Friday after India's elimination from ICC Champions Trophy, revealed much more than a minor health scare that was reported in South Africa on the eve of their must-wingame against West Indies.

Tendulkar had been ruled out of India's match against West Indies on Wednesday after coming down with a bout of food poisoning, but when he came back to Mumbai a cut near his nose and another one below his left eye gave a different story altogether.

According to reports, on the night before the much important game, Tendulkar went to an Indian restaurant in Johannesburg along with his captain MS Dhoni, Ashish Nehra and Harbhajan Singh, and after returning to his hotel room, he felt dizzy and lost consciousness.

He subsequently fell flat on his face, which left him with the cut marks and a black spot on his nose.

Tendulkar returned home along with all-rounders Yusuf Pathan and Abhishek Nayar, team manager Anurag Thakur, physio Nitin Patel and masseur Ramesh Mane.

Toyota Motors Rapid Chess held

SPORTS REPORTER

Delwar Hossain of Air Destiny became unbeaten champion in the Toyota Motors Rapid Chess Tournament on Friday, said a press release from the Bangladesh Chess Federation. Delwar earned six-and-a-half points in 7 games to clinch the title while four players earned six points each. Masum Hossain became runner-up, Abdur Rashid became third and S.A.M. Naser became fourth in progressive score of tie-breaking system. Three players earned five-and-a-half points each. The event was held at Bangladesh Chess Federation hall-room in 7 round Swiss-League system and 94 players participated. Renowned Chess Organiser Md. Shahidul Islam Miah and Md. Habibur Rahman of Toyota Motors distributed prizes among the winners after end of the event on same day.

GP Zim series sponsors

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

Grameenphone, the leading mobile phone operators of the country, earned the title sponsorship rights for the upcoming one-day home series against Zimbabwe in October-November.

"Despite the financial recession across the world, we have been moving forward and got a sponsor for the upcoming Zimbabwe tour of Bangladesh and sold the rights at a reasonable price to Grameenphone, who once again came forward to sponsor yet another series," said Aziz Al Kaiser, chairman of Bangladesh Cricket

Board's (BCB) commercial and marketing committee, at a press conference at Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

The mobile phone company also announced a Tk one lakh cash award for Shakib Al Hasan for his inclusion in the ICC World Test squad.

Grameenphone and Axiom Technologies bid for the sponsorship rights and the former won the race, offering 3,000 dollars more than the floor price of 60,000. Axiom offered around 60,900 dollars.

However, although Grameenphone had already won the rights, the board later managed to convince the cell phone giants to increase another 15,000 dollars to finally sell the rights at 78,000 dollars.

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PHOTO: STAR

Bangladesh vice-captain and a proud member of the world's Test eleven Shakib Al Hasan (R) receives a bouquet of flowers from Grameenphone's chief communications officer Kazi Monirul Kabir (2nd from L) after a press briefing in connection with Bangladesh's home series against Zimbabwe at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

'Indo-Pak still the biggest'

Cricket

PTI, Karachi

No match is bigger than an Indo-Pak contest and the rivalry between the two neighbouring nations still remains the biggest in international cricket, feels Pakistan skipper Younis Khan.

"People talk about the Ashes rivalry and some people have said that India and Australia series has replaced Indo-Pak contests."

"I disagree," Younis said from Johannesburg. "I think the response our match with India in this ICC Champions Trophy evoked is proof that Indo-Pak rivalry is still the biggest in world

Ricky's 3-word mantra

Cricket

AFP, Centurion

Skipper Ricky Ponting needed only three words to explain why Australia crushed England by nine wickets and qualified for the Champions Trophy final Monday.

"Respect every ball," was the message the 34-year-old leader drilled into his teammates at SuperSport Park Friday before the eighth ODI clash between the countries in the last two months.

And this was the most humiliating of seven England losses with Australia scoring 258-1 off 41.5 overs to surpass the 257 of England in 47.4 overs that owed much to 80 runs from bowler Tim Bresnan after a top-order implosion.

This was not a match, nor even a mismatch. It was a massacre as Ponting (111 not out) and man-of-the-match Shane Watson (136 not out) created a record Australian one-day partnership.

Now the world champions are just one match away from becoming the first country to successfully defend a competition that brought the best eight countries to South Africa for a mini-World Cup.

Pakistan, beaten by a last-ball Aussie bye in the group stage, are favoured to defeat New Zealand at the Wanderers in the other semifinal that took place on Saturday and set up a potentially fascinating climax.

"I told my boys to take nothing for granted against England -- to respect every ball. We were pretty good and very good with the bat," Ponting told reporters.

"We were really looking forward to this game because playing in the big ones is what it is all about. We stood up and got the job done and now we look forward to getting our heads together before the final."

Tasmanian Ponting always seems uncomfortable when his personal achievements are raised and it was no different in Centurion after being quizzed about his latest milestone.

When one of the great skippers struck a boundary by pulling Graham Onions to deep square, he became only the third batsman after Sachin Tendulkar of India and Sanath Jayasuriya of Sri Lanka to amass 12,000 ODI runs.

"It is a nice achievement, but I had no idea before the game how many runs I had scored. I hit runs for my country and when my career is over I can reflect on the successes," he said.

Ponting preferred to laud Watson, who began the Champions Trophy with ducks against the West Indies and India, before getting into the groove by scoring 24 off the Pakistani bowlers.

"Shane has been through a lean patch but is peaking at the right time. He and I went through a few critical overs before the runs started to flow," admitted Ponting of the star who also snapped up two wickets.

England skipper Andrew Strauss offered no excuses despite the absence of injured bowler Stuart Broad, who took 10 wickets in three group games, and virus-struck wicketkeeper Matt Prior.

"This was a thoroughly professional job from Australia. Shane and Ricky battled magnificently well after we fell about 40 runs short of the total needed to be competitive on that track," he confessed.

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