

Daily Star
shot down

SPORTS REPORTER

Defending champions Daily Star failed to make it last four this time in the Pepsi-DRU Cricket Tournament as they suffered a 27-run defeat to Channel i in the quarterfinal match at the Maulana Bhashani National Hockey stadium yesterday.

Channel i scored 68 runs for one wicket and then restricted Daily Star for 41 for three to set a semifinal clash with Samakal to be take place at the same venue today at 11am.

The first semifinal will be held at 10am between Jugantor and BanglaVision.

Bangla Vision (77/1) defeated Naya Diganta (45/2) by 32 runs, Samakal (54/3) beat Independent (53/5) by one run and Jugantor (58/2) beat Kalerkantha (32/5) by 26 runs in the day's other quarterfinals.

LOCAL SNIPPETS

FROM PAGE 17
of the Badla Benefit Open National Squash Tournament, organised by Dhaka Club, which concluded on Wednesday.

Omar Bhai clinched the A Division trophy while Karim finished runner-up in the category.

In the under-18 year competition, Saju emerged champion and Shaheen runners-up while Irshad Hossain became champion and Mohammad Iftikharuddin finished runner-up in the veterans category.

Dhaka Club president Sadat Hossain Salim distributed the trophies as a chief guest and handed over a cheque of Tk 3.35 lac to Badal Chouhan in recognition of his 31 years of dedicated service to the club.

PVT-VARSITY
FOOTBALL

Independent University reached the semifinal of the Mentors Inter Private University Football Tournament beating University of Asia and Pacific by 2-0 goals at the Army Stadium in Banani yesterday.

After a barren first half, Syed Mazid put Independent University ahead in the 55th minute while Ali Azam Bibop doubled the winners' margin scoring one more goal in the 61st minute.

Saturday's matches: BRAC University v East West University, Presidency University v International University of Business, Agriculture and Technology (IUBAT).

DIVI FOOTBALL

OUR CORRESPONDENT,

Patuakhali
Nandan Sporting Club clinched the Patuakhali first division football league title with a 2-0 victory against Babuda Smrity Sangsad in the final at the local stadium yesterday.

Prodip struck both the goal for the winners in the first half.

Md. Reaz Ahmed, Deputy Commissioner of Patuakhali, distributed the prizes.

Aussies clear

FROM PAGE 17
humiliation of England two months later, which propelled them to second place.

The highlight of the year came in the Champions Trophy in South Africa, where they emerged triumphant to take the top spot. Finally, victory against India after trailing 1-2 has ensured a fitting conclusion to the year on the ODI circuit.

A tale of two

FROM PAGE 17
injury prone, he has missed 64 ODIs and 18 Tests since his debut through one form of injury or other. He has missed most of the matches this year, depriving him of the chance to get a firm grip on the captaincy.

Any decision on Mashrafe's future as captain will have to be made considering his fitness and his availability. Continuation is an important ingredient in a team's success, and that may well harm his chances.

Both players are equally deserving of the position. Shakib has put his name in the hat through the successes that Bangladesh has enjoyed in the past year, as well as his own individual performances. Mashrafe has impressed all and sundry throughout his career as a committed player who commands the respect of his team. The momentum is with Shakib having led the team well in successes, but it is Mashrafe's team that he led in the fastest bowler's absence.

It is a healthy situation to have two equally deserving captains, whereas in the past Bangladesh were hard pressed to find one. The selectors will have to tread carefully when making the decision, as the next year could well tell us where exactly Bangladesh stands in international cricket, and the captaincy will play no small part in that.



John Proctor (R), director international of The City Schools, hands over the champions' trophy to the winners of the sports gala of the institution at the Gulshan Youth Club ground recently.

Venus-Maria
showdown

AFP, Bangkok

Venus Williams and Maria Sharapova will warm-up for the Australian Open with an exhibition match in Thailand to mark the 100th anniversary of the Hua Hin seaside resort, organisers said Thursday.

The tennis superstars will spend New Year's Eve in Hua Hin before their match on January 2, which will be followed by a mixed doubles clash alongside local heroes Paradorn Srichaphan and Danai Udomchoke.

"I am delighted to be able to spend my New Year in Hua Hin, Thailand," said Sharapova, who is battling to find her best form again after arthroscopic surgery a year ago to repair her right shoulder.

"I am sure it will be an exciting time and I am looking forward to competing in the Centennial Invitation."

Williams, who lost to sister Serena in the final of the season-ending WTA Championships this month, is also excited.

"I have very fond memories of my previous visits to Thailand and am really looking forward to returning for the Centennial Invitation match in Hua Hin," she said.

After their match, both players move to Hong Kong for the Tennis Classic team event, which features players representing Europe, Russia, the Americas and the Asia-Pacific.

They then head to Australia for the opening Grand Slam of the season.

Another top German international, Sebastian Deisler, quit the game two years ago at the age of 27 after being treated for depression. His former club, Bayern Munich, are one of the few in the Bundesliga to employ a psychologist.

Handover's press spokesman Andreas Kuhn said depression remained "a taboo in the Bundesliga" while Enke's long-time goalkeeping coach Georg Sievers said: "Depression is something that is clearly seen as a weakness."

German press commentators agreed Thursday that depression, along with homosexuality, was an issue football would rather not know about but would now have to tackle more seriously.

Both subjects "don't exist in the world of strong men," Kicker magazine wrote.

The Sueddeutsche Zeitung said the question had to be asked as to how much values such as care for others and sympathy counted in the world of professional sport and particularly football.

Enke's death had affected so many people in Germany because they sensed that the goalkeeper in particular embodied these values.

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Germans

FROM PAGE 17
(DFB) president Theo Zwanziger praised the courage of Enke's wife who attended a news conference to reveal her husband's illness the day after his death.

"She did it to give us a message," he said.

"We should never allow a situation that a person should give up so much by committing suicide, to feel there is no alternative but to take such a decision," he said.

Zwanziger said football needed time to reflect, and indicated the federation would learn the lessons from Enke's death. German team manager Oliver Bierhoff said no one in the squad had been aware Enke was suffering from depression.

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Div 1 cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

Uttara Sporting Club coasted to a six-wicket victory over Dhaka Wanderers Club in the low-scoring match of the first division cricket league at the Dhamondi Cricket Stadium yesterday.

Shamsul Alma claimed four wickets for 15 and Shakib took three for 12 as Wanderers were bundled out for 86 runs which Uttara achieved in 26.1 overs by losing four wickets.

At the Jahangirnagar University ground, Jatrabari Krira Chakra defeated Indira Road Krira Chakra by seven wickets. Shafiqul Islam hit an unbeaten 50 as Jatrabari scored 187 for 3 in reply to Indira's 183 all out in 45.3 overs.

Dharmodhi Club (164-6) recorded a four-wicket victory over Bangladesh Boys (159-10) at the City Club ground.

Rameez, Inzy
hail Younus

AFP, Dubai

Former players Wednesday hailed Younus Khan's decision of opting to sit out the three-Test series in New Zealand and handing the captaincy to Mohammad Yousuf.

"I think it is a wise call," former captain Rameez Raja said of Younus's decision after a poor batting form which saw him score 23 runs in team's 2-1 defeat against New Zealand in the one-day series which ended in Abu Dhabi on Monday.

The 31-year-old Younus was under pressure to perform and was not been able to win a one-day series since taking over as captain in January this year -- a fact Raja believed led to his decision.

"When you are out of touch as Younus was, you tend to react to situations and it becomes a negative thought which starts to engulf the team and affect the team's performance," said Raja, a TV commentator for the series here.

"Questions were asked about Younus's batting form, so he has taken a wise decision to take time out, regain his form in domestic matches and come with a new vigour."

The 35-year-old Younus has previously led Pakistan in three Tests and four one-day internationals and was deputy to Inzamam-ul-Haq for several years -- an experience Raja feels may come in handy.

"We have to wait and see, how he uses his experience to unite the team and help them do well in New Zealand," said Raja of the three-Test tour which starts with the first Test at Dunedin from November 25.

Another former captain Inzamam said Younus had lost confidence with his fellow players.

"I think the biggest task a captain faces is to unite his players," said Inzamam, who retired two years ago. "Younus failed to give confidence to his fellow players which went against him."

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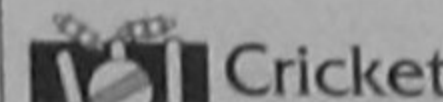
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First T20 today
England in selection problems

AFP, Johannesburg

England face several selection problems ahead of the first Twenty20 international against South Africa at the Wanderers Stadium on Friday.

There are injury concerns about no fewer than four of the touring team's bowlers, while a poor batting performance in a warm-up game against South Africa A raised doubts about the batsmen earmarked for the 20-overs clash.

Star batsman Kevin Pietersen joined up with the squad on Wednesday after recovering from heel surgery and there may be a temptation to rush him into action, although it was expected originally that he would only be considered for the five-match one-day international series which starts on Friday week.

There may also be a discussion about tour captain Andrew Strauss, the team's most impressive batsman on tour so far, after the team slumped to 89 all out in his absence on the way to a four-wicket defeat against South Africa A in Bloemfontein on Wednesday.

Strauss, who hit 72 against the Eagles and 117 not out against the Warriors in 50-overs matches, is not due to play in the shortest form of the game.

Collingwood also said it was unlikely Pietersen would be rushed into an early return