



PHOTO: STAR

Khulna players are joyous after winning the third Women's National Cricket League at Khulna yesterday.

DRS won't be

FROM PAGE 17 Devendra Prabhudesai who indicated it would not be in use. Bangladesh Cricket Board's acting CEO Nizamuddin Ahmed Chowdhury also confirmed that the DRS would not be in use in the series.

Khulna women are champs

Khulna Division emerged champions in the third Women's National Cricket League with an emphatic 58-run win over Dhaka Division at Khulna Divisional Stadium yesterday.

Salma Khatun grabbed three scalps as Dhaka were skittled out for 78 in 42.3 overs chasing a moderate total of 136 made by Khulna, who fell in trouble after opting to bat first.

Opener Suktara, however, stood tall against the Dhaka bowlers and hammered 54 off 140 balls that included six fours. Suktara, who was adjudged man of the match and player of the series, repaired the early setback adding 34 runs with one-down Rumana Ahmed, who made a 33-ball 14 before being run out, leaving the side at 43 for two.

She later built up another significant partnership of 54 runs for the fourth wicket with captain Salma Khatun, who made 22 off 55 balls before being the third scalp of Dhaka bowler Salma Akhter.

After the departure of Salma, Khulna added 39 runs losing the last five wickets to finish 136

all out in 50 overs as number nine batter Bayshakye struck a 29-ball 16 featuring two boundaries.

In reply, Dhaka lost wickets at regular intervals as pacer Zaria struck a double blow sending back Sharmin (4) and Chamilly (5). Rumna broke the middle order while captain Salma wrapped up the tail taking three wickets for three runs. Opener Ayesha top-scored with 17 followed by Shohily Akhter, who remained unbeaten on 11.

In the day's other match, Rajshahi Division handed a 56-run defeat to Chittagong Division in Khulna. Chasing the winning target of 158, Chittagong were all out for 101 in 43.4 overs in the face of some tight bowling from Lota Mondal (3/15), Doli Rani (2/14) and Shathira Jakir (2/18). Fatema-Tu-Johura was the most successful batter scoring 46 runs off 89 balls that included seven boundaries.

After choosing to bat first, Rajshahi got off to a fine start as the openers put on 37 runs before being separated. Shathira Jakir made 23 while her partner Lota Mondal made 14 before both were victims of Tripti. Middle order Doli Rani, however, top-scored with 32 for Rajshahi to put on a competitive total of 157 all out in 37.1 overs.

Gautam does

FROM PAGE 17 doing at the other end," Gambhir said. "I have my own game, I have my own style. One good thing that happened with me is that I came to know my game much early in my career. I know my strength and I play according to it."

Straight Drive

FROM PAGE 17 limited overs matches over the next year or so will be used by most Boards as trial games for preparing the teams for the World Cup 2011 and so there could be a fair bit of churning in the personnel over the year. 2009 was a very good year for all three teams with Bangladesh getting a big series win in the West Indies, the Lankans getting to the finals of the ICC World Twenty20 and India finishing as the number 1 team in the Test rankings. They will all be looking to get the new year off to a winning start and that's what will make this tri-series what to look forward to.



Did U Know?

West Indies cricket legend Brian Lara holds the record of scoring most number of runs in a single over in a Test match. He hammered 28 runs off an over by Robin Peterson of South Africa in 2003.



Wasim Akram

(Pakistan cricket legend) "Attacks on the Sri Lankan team blew away our cricket. They made the year [2009] the most unforgettable in our history." While reflecting on the shocking gun and grenade assault on the Sri Lanka cricket team in Lahore in March last year.

Ntini decision tough

Smith said he expected to have a final team by Saturday evening after a meeting between Arthur and the selectors, but said the eleven would only be announced shortly before play on Sunday.

Asked whether dropping Ntini would be a sensitive issue, Smith said: "It's a sensitive issue in South Africa. That's being honest. "Makhaya is an icon to the country. He's not only the most iconic player of colour we've had, he's also been one of the most iconic cricketers in terms of performance over the last decade."

Smith indicated that the struggles of Ntini, who has taken 390 wickets in 101 Tests, presented challenges for the team management.

"When senior players are at the point where a lot of questions are being asked about them it's always a tough time for a leadership group to manage.

"We've always tried to support Makhaya as much as we can behind the scenes and he's been working hard on his game. Let's hope there's some confidence left in him for the future."

Smith said it was a crucial match for his team, who are one-nil down in the four-match series, but said the situation was not greatly different to what they had faced in the past.

Sehwag issues a warning

FROM PAGE 17 of wicket. First up it's a good track to bat on and later on it gets slower and slower, and if there is dew then it can be a big factor. It's a big factor in Bangladesh because I watched some matches of Bangladesh and Zimbabwe. The team batted second won the matches easily," he observed.

He also assured that they would not take any team lightly in the competition. "I think Sri Lanka are the toughest considering the strength, but Bangladesh are also tough opponents in their own conditions because they can surprise anyone. They can beat any one; they have beaten Australia and Pakistan, so we are not taking Bangladesh lightly," said Sehwag, whose side itself has a bitter memory of losing the first round game against the Tigers in the 2007 World Cup in West Indies which confirmed their early exit from the competition.

Question was asked whether they had been

informed about the absence of Mashrafe Bin Mortaza and whether it's an advantage for them as Sri Lanka were missing some of their key players, but Sehwag looked little interested over the issues.

"I don't know the team but whoever is playing, is playing for Bangladesh. It's a pride for them and hopefully they will do well," was the reply from the master blaster.

"The key players were there in India also, but they did not perform. Still they [Sri Lanka] are a good side. When the new players come nobody knows what he will do or what he does. It's difficult for the teams to bowl or bat against them. So, it will be a tough task for us," he added.

Master batsman Sachin Tendulkar has opted out of the one-day tournament and Sehwag believes that it's good to give the seniors some break.

"We have been playing so many matches, so it's our duty and responsibility to give break to senior players to make sure whenever they

come, they come as a fresh player to give their best. So it's good to be have a break," he defended.

And the right-hander issued a warning by saying that he was looking forward to prolong his purple patch.

"I think I am batting really well. And I am hoping that 2010 will also be good for me. But last two years you know I was in my prime form. So I am just carrying the same confidence with which I scored against Sri Lanka and against other teams. Hopefully I will do well in 2010 also. But it's difficult to maintain your form consistently. I will try to work hard and maintain my form," he promised.

SQUAD

Mahendra Singh Dhoni (captain), Virender Sehwag, Gautam Gambhir, Virat Kohli, Suresh Raina, Rohit Sharma, Ravindra Jadeja, Harbhajan Singh, Zaheer Khan, Ashish Nehra, Yuvraj Singh, Sudeep Tyagi, Dinesh Karthik, Sreesanth, Ashok Dinda and Amit Mishra.

Eng can win it now

S Africa's back against the wall



CRICINFO, Cape Town

Newlands, and the dramatic backdrop of Table Mountain, is the setting for the third Test match starting today with plenty at stake. South Africa must defeat England to draw level, while the visitors are one win away from a memorable series victory.

If that seemed unlikely before the series began it was almost unthinkable following England's late-afternoon collapse on the final day of the first Test in Centurion. Yet such was England's dominance in the second Test at Durban that South Africa are now forced into playing 'catch-up' cricket, demanding a style of positive play that contradicts the naturally risk-free approach they prefer.

Newlands is, however, something of a fortress for them. In 20 matches since readmission they have lost just three, each to Australia. Three more have been drawn but the rest won. Five years ago a potent England side, again one up in the series, came to Cape Town confident and were duly demolished by 196 runs. Graeme Smith's men have the resources to repeat the feat and could be buoyed by the clarity of the task ahead. In the aftermath of the Durban rout Smith said he felt his team were not 'decisive enough', they now had no choice.

England, though, need only to look as far back as last summer, to fully appreciate the challenge ahead. Then they had

the chance to seal the Ashes at Headingley having gone one up in the second Test at Lord's. On cue, they fluffed their lines entirely, and were hammered by an innings and 80 runs. It's a lesson the team are desperate to heed.

Their only concern is the fitness of Paul Collingwood, but given the importance of both the match and of the man himself, it's likely he will overcome his dislocated finger in time. If he did pull up short, Michael Carberry could slot in at number five.

It was on this ground almost seven years ago that James Anderson launched his career with four top-order Pakistan wickets at the 2003 World Cup. Then he was zipping the ball around at pace from a natural, whippy action. Now the self-proclaimed leader of England's attack, he had a quiet outing in Durban and hasn't really excelled in Test cricket since his 5 for 80 at Edgbaston last summer. Given happy memories and the strong back-up from Graham Onions, Stuart Broad and Graeme Swann this may be his time again.

There has been plenty of agonising about the potency of South Africa's attack. With Makhaya Ntini on his last legs and Dale Steyn continuing to struggle against England, Morne Morkel, has been Smith's main threat. Twice he has worked over the England captain this series, having troubled him in the one-dayers and dismissed him three times in seven innings when the sides met in England in 2008. With natural pace and steep bounce he has all the tools to trouble the best

players. Whereas in the past those skills have not always come together, he has looked well synced all series and could prove key for South Africa this game.

It was a batting collapse that lost South Africa the last Test, but it's the bowlers who are feeling the pressure. Ntini has enjoyed a remarkable career but after eleven years and 101 games at the highest level, his bite and threat have disappeared. Friedel de Wet did plenty in his debut at Centurion to suggest he can slot in here, but they will still need to deliver the goods for Smith.

With Ian Bell and Alastair Cook finding form just in time at Kingsmead, England have settled their selection issues for the moment. Collingwood should play, but if not Carberry would be a straight swap leaving the four-man attack to pick up where it left off last week. While the extra-bowler is always an option, a series lead and memories of Headingley, where a batsman-light England were trounced, should mean England stick with the balance they have.

TEAMS

SOUTH AFRICA (probable): Graeme Smith (captain), Ashwell Prince, Hashim Amla, Jacques Kallis, AB de Villiers, JP Duminy, Mark Boucher, Paul Harris, Morne Morkel, Dale Steyn, Friedel de Wet. ENGLAND (probable): Andrew Strauss (captain), Alastair Cook, Jonathan Trott, Kevin Pietersen, Paul Collingwood, Ian Bell, Matt Prior, Stuart Broad, Graeme Swann, James Anderson, Graham Onions.

Feni's 2nd win

FROM PAGE 17 availing a through pass from captain Firoz Mahmud Titu from the right.

The freedom fighters' team looked on the right direction to record their first triumph in the Bangladesh League until Manju came on as a substitute in the second half.

Three minutes into the second half, Titu with Feni goalkeeper Golam Mostafa to beat frustrated Muktiyoddha to drive outside, but Manju did not disappoint his side as the substitute striker headed a free kick from Mintu Sheikh home to restore parity.

Muktiyoddha could have gone ahead again had a shot from Rokunuzzaman Khanchan not come off the sidebar in the 65th minute. Seven minutes later, Manju doubled the lead of Feni Soccer striking his season's third goal and league's second goal as the former Brothers Union striker headed a Monayem Khan Raju cross to seal the match.

The margin of Feni even could have been bigger had Liton not squandered a chance in the 75th minute despite getting Mukti goalkeeper Nizam Majumder alone.

Transcom

FROM PAGE 17 Bangladesh cricket would keep on going. BCB acting chief executive officer Nizamuddin Chowdhury and Khurshid Irfan Chowdhury signed the agreement on behalf of the respective organisations.

Country manager of PesiCo International Tejinder Khurana, BCB senior vice-president Mahbub Anam, BCB vice-president Ahmed Sajjadul Alam Bobby, Axim Technology managing director, agent of Transcom Beverage, Rizwan Faruq were also present on the occasion.

Colly could play



AFP, Cape Town

England batsman Paul Collingwood looks set to start the third Test against South Africa at Newlands on Sunday, according to captain Andrew Strauss.

Collingwood, who did not take the field on the last two days of England's innings win in the second Test in Durban after injuring his left index finger, batted against his side's fast bowlers in the nets on Saturday after taking some sharp chances in slip fielding practice.

"Everything looks fine," said Strauss. "He was batting without any real discomfort. We're very hopeful, barring any last minute incidents. "He's contributed a huge amount in this series and in previous series and he's an experienced player as well so it would have been a shame if he had missed out."

Strauss said the challenge for England, who are one up in a four-match series was to be "ruthless and just as desperate to win as when you're up."

He said England learnt a lesson from their innings defeat against Australia at Headingley last year after they had gone into the match with a chance of clinching the series.

"We started talking about 'we could finish it this week and let's realise our dreams' instead of just talking about winning the first half hour."

He said the talk in the dressing room had been about "starting from square one" and "keeping our feet on the ground."

"In Test matches you've always got to earn the right to get on top of the opposition and that's what we did well in Durban," he said.

"We forced them to stay in the field for over two days and maybe that's affected their second innings batting. It's important to start a Test match well so the opposition don't get on top of you."

Strauss said there was no reason to be concerned about England's poor record at Newlands, where they have lost three successive Tests against the host nation.

"Generally the players haven't been involved in the previous defeats here. I'm the only player who was involved in the last Newlands Test. The guys have no fear of playing at Newlands."

Pakistan's Aamer blow

FROM PAGE 17 Kaneria is set to join forces with Ajmal in a twin-spin attack on Australia's most famous turning surface. The younger contingent of Australia's modern day batting line-up have had little exposure to quality leg-spin, possibly providing Kaneria with an early advantage.

Ricky Ponting was surprised by Kaneria's record when he checked it out last week. "He's a very good bowler but I saw his record come up against some of the great spinners of the last 10 years and it stacks up very well against the best of them," he said. "His record is actually better than Abdul Qadir and

everyone knows how highly regarded he was. "We have played him here before and he has bowled well."

Simon Katich's elbow problem is enough of an issue for Phillip Hughes to be called in as a standby, although it would take a lot for Katich to give up his spot after working so hard to get it back. Ponting (elbow) and Hauritz (groin) are carrying niggles, however the fact selectors opted against naming shadow players indicates those two will play. Marcus North appears the only member of the starting XI under pressure with three single-figure dismissals this summer to balance out two half-centuries. The final

two Tests against Pakistan will provide a strong indicator as to whether he will be retained for this year's Ashes series.

TEAM

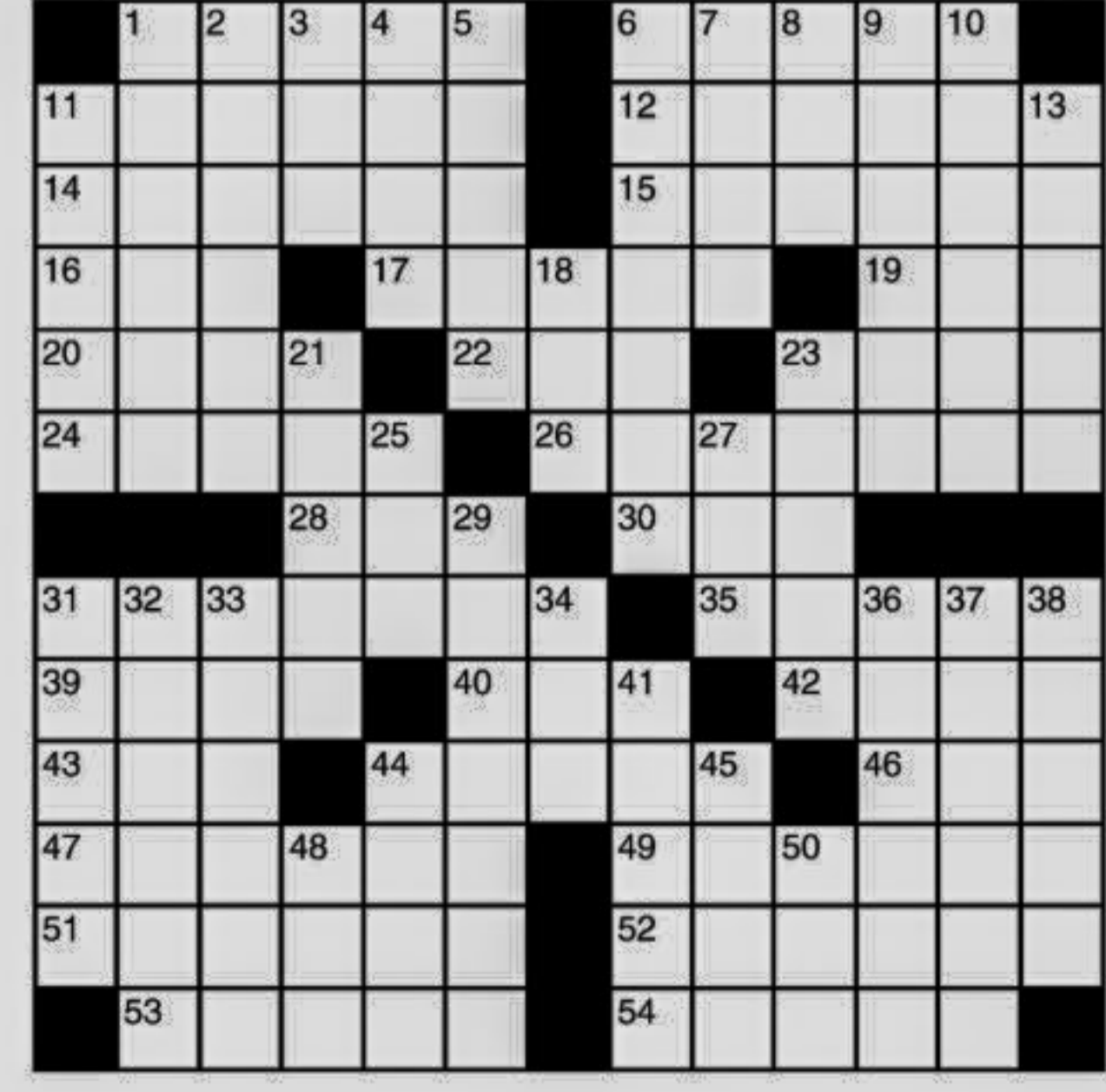
AUSTRALIA (probable): Shane Watson, Simon Katich, Ricky Ponting (captain), Michael Hussey, Michael Clarke, Marcus North, Brad Haddin, Mitchell Johnson, Nathan Hauritz, Peter Siddie, Doug Bollinger.

PAKISTAN (probable): Salman Butt, Imran Farhat, Faisal Iqbal, Mohammad Yousuf (captain), Misbahul Haq, Umar Akmal, Kamran Akmal, Mohammad Sami, Umar Gul, Mohammad Asif, Danish Kaneria.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

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CRYPTOQUIP

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