

Waqar priorities tasks

Cricket AFP, Lahore

New Pakistan coach Waqar Younis hopes to invigorate his troubled team ahead of next month's World Twenty20...



New Pakistan coach Waqar Younis (R) imparts some tips to Mohammad Aamer during a practice session at the Gaddafi Stadium in Lahore yesterday.

"I think the team lacked faith," Waqar told reporters at the start of a three-week training camp in Lahore. "They were not able to perform in crunch situations..."

Shahid Afridi, Pakistan's captain for the upcoming World Twenty20, has said that Sachin Tendulkar's absence from the Indian team for the tournament will be a blessing in disguise for the other sides.

WORLD TWENTY20 'Sachin absence a blessing in disguise'

CRICINFO, undated

Shahid Afridi, Pakistan's captain for the upcoming World Twenty20, has said that Sachin Tendulkar's absence from the Indian team for the tournament will be a blessing in disguise for the other sides.

Afridi feels that Tendulkar has not had any effect on the game as he is only getting better and better as a batsman. He is not playing for India in the Twenty20 World Cup...

NZ v AUS, 2ND TEST

Tourists in driver's seat

Cricket CRICINFO, undated

After two days of frenetic activity, Simon Katich returned the game to Test pace and his important, grafting century led to a commanding lead of 300 against New Zealand on the third day of the second and final Test in Hamilton yesterday.

The total might already be enough for Australia, who are chasing a 2-0 cleansweep, but Ricky Ponting will be in no rush to declare given there is so much time left and the forecast is for more sunshine.

There were two periods when the hosts were in with a chance, but once Tim Southee broke through twice in the morning Katich and Michael Hussey crept ahead during a 155-run partnership.

Katich held the innings together over the first two-thirds of the day to ensure there were no terminal wobbles during the most crucial segment of the Test.

Clarke was strong off the back foot and he also played some strong drives during an upbeat conclusion, while North, who hit seven fours and a six, was happy to attack Daniel Vettori.

Katich brought up his half-century in the over after lunch with a clip behind square off Southee and backed up with another boundary through gully.

Martin with the new ball took Katich into the 90s. A French cut for four off Katich moved him to 99 and the hundred was sealed in the second-last over before tea with a strong cover drive.

The tea interval disrupted Katich's concentration and he followed Hussey in an almost carbon copy of his dismissal. Both batsmen nibbled at Arnel, who was coming around the wicket and their fine edges went to Brendon McCullum.

Hussey hasn't had a great series, but he improved with hard-fought 66 that was committed, purposeful and patient. Like Katich, he wasn't bothered by maidens or mistakes until his nicking curve returned when he had trouble re-starting in the third session.

The spinners operated for large chunks of the day, but neither Vettori, who delivered 33 overs, nor Patel (27) were able to break through despite building regular bouts of pressure.

Southee had Australia 91 for 2 and slowed them down following an 85-run opening stand. The dismissal of Ponting (6) was expertly planned, with Southee delivering a short ball which the captain managed to top-edge pull over the slips for six.

The sharp catch followed Southee's revenge on Shane Watson, who hit him for a six and three fours in his first three overs of the morning.

SCORES IN BRIEF AUSTRALIA: First innings 231 all out (Katich 88, Clarke 28; Vettori 4-36, Southee 4-61) NEW ZEALAND: First innings 264 all out (Taylor 138, Watling 46; Johnson 4-59, Harris 3-50, Bollinger 3-57) AUSTRALIA: Second innings 333 for 4 (Watson 65, Katich 106, Hussey 67, Clarke 42 batting, North 42 batting; Southee 2-74, Arnel 2-43)

BCB's poor

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can be assured when BCB can appoint a permanent CEO, a post which has been vacant for almost three years.

Robben blow

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It was an emphatic win in the circumstances, with Chelsea winning earlier in the day," Ferguson said after seeing striker Dimitar Berbatov score twice.

The Bulgaria international was standing in for Rooney, but both the former Everton man and his England colleague Ferdinand will feature in Munich.

The English champions will be at full strength as Ryan Giggs has made a successful comeback from a month-long lay-off, playing a part in two of United's goals at Bolton.

"Ryan has so much experience of these types of situations. It's great to have him back," said midfielder Darren Fletcher.

Meanwhile, Bayern look set to welcome back Germany international Mario Gomez after he returned from three weeks out with a ruptured calf muscle in training on Sunday.

He is likely to begin on the bench against United, but may be an option for the start-ingleven.

"I'm ready," said Gomez, after staying out for extra shooting practice.

The 24-year-old last played for Bayern in the Champions League fixture away to Fiorentina on March 9.

Tuesday's match re-unites the teams that contested the 1999 Champions League final, in which United prevailed 2-1 thanks to two injury-time goals to record their only win over Bayern in Europe's premier club competition.

Yousuf bids

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was 1,788 Test runs in 2006 with nine hundreds -- the world record for most runs scored and hundreds in a calendar year, beating Viv Richards's 1976 record of 1,710 for the West Indies.

He also won International Cricket Council (ICC) Test player-of-the-year in 2007.

Asked during Monday's news conference if he could rescind his decision, Yousuf said: "At the moment my playing in the team is harmful so I am quitting".

Strauss impressed by captain Cook

Cricket AFP, London

England captain Andrew Strauss believes Alastair Cook's performance as stand-in skipper during the recent Test series in Bangladesh proved he has the potential to do the job on a permanent basis in the future.

Strauss missed England's tour of Bangladesh in order to rest ahead of a busy year which will culminate with the Ashes series in Australia.

But the batsman has no regrets because Essex opener Cook led the team to a 2-0 series win and gained valuable experience which will benefit England in the long-term.

Cook averaged 114 in Bangladesh to demonstrate he could cope with leading the team and opening the batting and Strauss told BBC Radio Five: "If I got injured this season then he would take over definitely -- I think he's done an excellent job."

"It's not easy when you have not had much experience captaining sides before to come in and captain England with all the attention that goes alongside it, and I think he dealt with that side of it very well."

"It obviously didn't affect his game, he batted exceptionally well and it further enhances his respect within the group."

"I don't think he can be faulted for anything. No one knows how long I'm going to go on for but certainly Alastair is going to be one of the names

on the list and will be much better for the experience he has had now."

Strauss also rejected criticism from the likes of Sir Ian Botham and Shane Warne that he should have gone on the tour.

He added: "That's their opinion but I don't share their opinion. It doesn't concern me really -- certainly in Warne's case I'm quite used to being sledged by him."

"If you do something different to what's been done before there's always going to be criticism."

"I do believe just as strongly now that the benefits of me resting will be seen at a later point for the England team either during the Ashes or at the World Cup or beyond that."

MSC maul

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"As the season's first match, I am satisfied the way the boys played but not happy and I think they will improve much as the tournament progresses," said Chapal after the game.

The score-line could have been bigger had the Mohammedan strikers not squandered a few open net chances and the coach was not disappointed with his charges.

"I am not thinking of the way they missed the open net because they played as per my strategy and I am pleased that they followed my instruction throughout the game," said the former national striker.

LOCAL SNIPPETS

FROM PAGE 17

In the day's other matches, Dhaka (117-3) defeated Sherpur (113-10) by seven wickets, Faridpur (176-7) beat Manikganj (175-10) by three wickets, Rangpur (99-2) routed Kurigram (95-10) by eight wickets, Barisal (74-2) posted an eight-wicket victory against Patuakhali (72-10), Sylhet (179-8) beat Moulavibazar (178-10) by two wickets and Kushtia (230-10) secured a 33-run victory over Meherpur (197-10).

The first round will be played in a knock-out format with eight teams qualifying for the second stage where they'll be divided into two groups. The top two teams from each group will play in the semifinals.

Manikganj Cricket

Juger Alo Samity posted a seven-wicket victory over Pouli Bulbul Club in the Khan Real Estate Second Division Cricket League at the Government Boys' High School playground in Manikganj yesterday.

Pouli Bulbul Club were all out for only 61 runs in 24.3 overs. Shawkat picked up four wickets while Saddam took two wickets.

In reply, Juger Alo raced to 62 losing three wickets in 10.4 overs. Alek made 20 runs while Sharifhit an unbeaten 14.

In another match, Garpara Association (112-7) beat Manikganj Super King (108-10) by three wickets.

Eaton Open TT

The Independence Day Eaton Open Table Tennis Tournament ended at the wooden-floor gymnasium yesterday. Manosh of Biman became champion in the men's group while Rahima of Abahani became champion in the women's group.

Himel became champion in the under-18 age group and Sarjil of Naraal became champion in the under-12 age group.

Goals galore in second

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KS's Alfaz Ahmed, Nicodemus Anunda, Sheikh Russel's Moroccan Samir Omari and Chittagong Mohammedan's Akbar Hossain Riddat and Alamu Bukola.

The treble also took Sheriff to the top of the scorers list with 11 goals, one goal ahead of Omari.

National striker Enamul Haque sealed the fate of the match striking the team's seventh and his league's seventh goal in the 74th minute that made sure of both home and away wins over Beamanbar, whom they defeated 3-1 in the corresponding fixture.

Feni Soccer v Mohammedan SC

Our correspondent from Feni adds: On the back of a 4-1 triumph over Chittagong Mohammedan in the last match of the first leg, Dhaka Mohammedan took to the field against Feni Soccer Club and produced an identical result to thump the hosts 4-1 in front of a packed stadium.

Abdul Baten Komol, who was given a place in the starting eleven in place of off-form striker Zahid Hasan Emily, immediately paid off the gamble and put Mohammedan ahead in the 15th minute before Emeka Christian doubled the margin eight minutes later. His compatriot Alamu Bukola then made it 3-0 in the 30th minute before Anwar pulled one goal back four

minutes from the breather. After resumption, national striker Komol struck his second goal to give Mohammedan their 10th triumph in 13 matches.

Shuktara Jubo vs Sheikh Russel Sheikh Russel, who beat Shuktara 2-0 on home soil, went ahead in the 25th minute through a goal from Rajon Mia and midfielder Maruf Ahmed doubled the lead in the 29th minute. Then, Ronny made it 3-0 in the 38th minute and completed the rout nine minutes from time.

Muktijoddha Sangsad vs Brothers Union

It was a sweet revenge for Muktijoddha Sangsad, who went one goal down to Brothers Union in their first meeting.

The freedom fighters' side, who tasted their first triumph in the first leg after five straight defeats, put up a spirited show against falling giants Brothers and Raphael, who joined the All Reds from Rahmatganj MSF in the second leg, justified his inclusion having put Muktijoddha ahead in the 35th minute before doubling the lead four minutes from the break.

Jalal made it 3-0 in the 61st minute while Toru reduced the margin one minute later for Brothers, who are now equal with Muktijoddha on 14 points each from 13 outings.

Nadal rolls into Rd 4

Tennis AFP, Miami

Rafael Nadal joined Roger Federer as a seeded survivor at the upset-plagued Miami Masters as the Spaniard defeated David Nalbandian 6-7 (8/10), 6-2, 6-2 Sunday for a fourth-round berth.

Top seed Federer and number four Nadal are all that are left of the top four seeds after exits by number two Novak Djokovic and number three Andy Murray in the second round.

American sixth seed Andy Roddick kept the home crowd happy with his 6-2, 6-1 defeat of Sergiy Stakhovsky of the Ukraine, while resurgent Spanish veteran Juan Carlos Ferrero eliminated John Isner of the United States 6-2, 3-6, 6-3.

Nadal's next opponent will be 15th seeded compatriot David Ferrer, who tamed the huge serve of Ivo Karlovic -- only ten aces for the Croatian -- 7-6 (7/5), 6-3.

Fellow Spaniard Nicolas Almagro beat Frenchman Jeremy Chardy 6-2, 6-7 (9/11), 6-3 to set up a match with Brazil's Tomaz Bellucci, who ended the run of Djokovic's

Bhaji fined

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Raman, through his twitter update shortly after the match. "Harbhajan fined USD 15K by the referee. Found guilty -- level an offence. During Suman's dismissal," Raman's twitter-feed read.

Harbhajan was in his element in the match, smashing an 18-ball 49 to lift Mumbai to a good score, and then snaring three wickets to help them defend 172. Suman was dismissed caught and bowled by Harbhajan, after which the bowler gave him an invective-ridden send-off.

Delhi ride

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He got perfect support from Paul Collingwood (53), whose innings came straight out of the Paul Collingwood school of batting - practically without a back lift. Out of their 128-run stand in 16.2 overs, Warner scored 74 off 54.

On a slow, turning pitch, the visitors' innings never took off after Chris Gayle was out for 30 and Australian David Hussey dismissed on 29.

BRIEF SCORES DELHI DAREDEVILS: 177 for 4 in 20 overs (Warner 107 not out, Collingwood 53; Langeveldt 2-35) KOLKATA KNIGHT RIDERS: 137 for 9 in 20 overs (Gayle 30, Hussey 29; Yadav 2-27, McDonald 2-37) CHITTAGONG TIGERS: 138 for 3 in 18.5 overs (Tamim 44, Mithun 29, Manjur 24) Result: Chittagong Tigers won by 7 wickets.

Enamul Haque and Sri Lanka Milinda. Enamul, Milinda and pacer Kamrul Islam took two wickets each to stifle the runs for most part of the innings.

Nafees Iqbal's 25 and Tushar Imran's 18 gave them some momentum before a few lusty blows from Mohammad Rafique and Ziaur Rahman ensured Brothers finished with a decent score of 137 for nine. Ziaur finished unbeaten on 35 from just 20 deliveries with two sixes in the last two balls.

Nazimuddin's mammoth six against Enamul, which occasioned for a change of ball, was the high point of an otherwise dull display of batting.

Women's school

FROM PAGE 17

Bengali and English medium schools, are pitted in four groups who will play in league system before the semis on April 7 and the final on the 8th. All the matches will be held in two different grounds of the city -- the Sultana Kamal Women's Complex and Azimpur Girls' School and College ground.

A press briefing in connection with the championship was arranged at Bangladesh Football Federation's (BFF) conference room yesterday. Sirajul Islam Bachchu, member of the BFF and chairman of the women's football wing of the federation, Al Musabbir Sadi, the BFF general secretary, and Mahfuza Akhter Kiron, convenor of the tournament committee, spoke at the briefing.

Sirajul Islam in his address said that the championship would work as the root of women's football in the metropolis as well as outside. Bringing one more student to the field will mean they can bring a family, which will raise interest and status of the game.

Four new teams have joined the championship this time while Agha Khan failed to appear. Siddeswari School remain suspended for the tournament. A total of 9 lakh taka has been allocated to bear the costs of the tournament. The champions will receive Tk 20 thousand while the runners-up will get Tk 10,000.

Each team will be given an amount of Tk 6,000 as appearance fee. Apart from that there will also be awards for the best player and top scorer.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS 36 Allay 56 Elusive 11 Blacken 20 Raccoon coat 1 Pt. of speech 37 Hooter DOWN 1 Arrive 22 "Saturday Night Fever" venue 2 Type of 50-Across 3 Bottle feature 4 Typical blue-collar guy 5 Request 27 Annoy 6 Skeleton component 30 "Whadja say?" 7 Heebie-jeebies 31 Prior to 8 Witness 35 Chess piece 9 Benedict XVI, e.g. 36 Hardly funny 10 Election Day verb 39 CNN's Blitzer 40 Satan's specialty 41 Simple 43 Waikiki winding 45 Wheel-base terminus 46 Man-handle 47 TV trophy 49 Fool

Solution time: 27 mins.

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Crossword grid with numbers 1-54 indicating starting positions for words.

CRYPTOQUIP

ISUZDQS N WZBS Z QANFWP DHTSCQPZHTNH F ZIJDP FNBHNF PZPPJJQ, N'T UZAA PWZP ZH NHGNHF NHGANHF.

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: THE LONGTIME ROWING BOAT RACER WANTS TO FIND A NEW CAREER. HE MUST BE BORED OUT OF HIS SCULL. Today's Cryptoquip Clue: T equals D