

Sachin on Twitter!

India's star batsman Sachin Tendulkar, revered by millions of fans in his home country and across the world, has joined the ranks of the "Twitterati" on the popular microblogging site Twitter.

The 37-year-old opened his account sachin_rt on Tuesday with the post: "Finally the original SRT is on twitter n the first thing I'd like to do is wish my colleagues the best in the windies."

Tendulkar, nicknamed the "Master Blaster", is recovering from injury and not part of India's squad taking part in the World Twenty20 tournament in the Caribbean, which began last week.

But the record-breaking cricketer, considered one of the sport's greatest ever players, said he was struggling with the new technology, although he managed to post a photograph of himself.

"My kids r happy that I m finally on twitter.They hv been tryin 2 get me 2 join twitter or facebook for ages.I m still gettin the hang of it," he added.

In a sign of his popularity, Tendulkar had more than 41,000 followers by mid-afternoon Wednesday, including leading Bollywood stars, just 16 hours after his first "tweet".

A number of people said they had specifically joined Twitter to follow Tendulkar's posts.

One, using the name shine82h, commented: "GOD IS ON TWITTER, cant ask for more ! BIG FAN ! Wish you all the best ! You sir are truly THE GREATEST!"

Martina, Anna set to pair at Wimbledon

Retired tennis stars Martina Hingis and Anna Kournikova will team up to play in the legends doubles event at Wimbledon, their agents announced Tuesday.

The Octagon agency announced the planned All-England Club reuniting of the 1999 and 2002 Australian Open women's doubles champions.

Hingis, 29, won five Grand Slam singles crowns before retiring in 2007, when she was suspended two years for testing positive for cocaine at Wimbledon. She denied taking the drug but did not appeal the ban, which ended last September.

Kournikova, 28, reached the Wimbledon singles semifinals in 1997 but the Russian beauty has not played regularly on the WTA Tour in seven years.

Flanagan new ACSU chief

Sir Ronnie Flanagan, formerly the most senior policeman in the British province of Northern Ireland, is to become the new chairman of the International Cricket Council's anti-corruption and security unit (ACSU), the governing body announced Tuesday.

Flanagan will replace another former senior British policeman in Lord Paul Condon, previously head of London's Metropolitan Police, who is retiring from the role at the end of June.

Until recently, Flanagan was the Chief Inspector of Constabulary for England, Wales and Northern Ireland and was previously the head of the police force in Northern Ireland from 1996 until 2002.

Premier v'ball

East End Club beat East End Boys 25-15, 25-22, and 25-09 in their clash of the National Bank Premier Division Volleyball League at the Volleyball Stadium in Oldham yesterday.

In the other match, Fire Service beat Bhai Bhai Sangha by 25-18, 18-25, 25-22 and 25-15 sets.



Shamima Akhter Liza (L) receives the Arlin Developer 31st National Women's Chess Championship trophy at the Narayanjanj Club yesterday.

Liza champion Miller, Ingram

Shamima Akhter Liza picked up her second national women's crown in style yesterday, staying undefeated in the Arlin Developer 31st National Women's Chess Championship in her hometown Narayanjanj.

The Women's FIDE Master earned 10.5 points from eleven games after she beat Rajshahi's Protiva Talukdar in the final round match-up. She was a full point ahead of runners-up Sharmin Sultana Shirin, who was the defending champion of the event. This is Liza's second title after she had won the 2005 edition.

Shirin and Liza shared the top spot up to the penultimate round but the former lost her last round game to Nazrana Khan Eva.

Rani Hamid, who also won her last round game against Aeon Sarker, became third while Eva finished fourth.

A total of 12 players participated with Liza earning Tk 15,000 as the top prize.

Shamsur Rahman, Deputy Commissioner of Narayanjanj and president of Narayanjanj District Sports Association distributed prizes among the winners as chief guest.

Rain favours England

England qualified for the second round Super Eights of the World Twenty20 following a no-result washout with Ireland here on Tuesday.

Both sides had previously lost to table-toppers the West Indies, but England went through as the second qualifier on superior run-rate after rain robbed this Group D shootout of a winner.

That meant Ireland, who've flown the flag for non-Test nations in recent years, paid dearly for their 70-run defeat by the hosts on Friday when they were skittled out for a record tournament low of 68.

Crucially, rain meant Tuesday's match failed to reach the five-overs-played minimum in the second innings for a result to be declared, with Ireland 14 for one off 3.3 overs when the game unable to resume at the cut-off time of 21:59GMT.

It was tough on Ireland, who had given themselves a shot of qualifying and more glory in the Caribbean, having beaten both Bangladesh and Pakistan out of the 2007 World Cup in the West Indies, by restricting England to 120 for eight.

But for England, who made 191 against the West Indies only to lose by eight wickets after a downpour left the home side with a target of 60 in six overs here on Monday, the rules and the rain had turned in their favour.

England captain Paul Collingwood, who'd fumed about the Duckworth-Lewis method for rain-affected matches after Monday's loss, said: "I guess the rain's come around today (Tuesday) at a time that's got us through to the next stage."

"It didn't help us yesterday but today I guess it's helped us a little bit," the all-rounder added. "It could have got quite close."

In another twist, former Ireland batsman Eoin Morgan top-scored for England, with 45, the left-hander repairing the early damage, as he had done with a 55 against the West Indies.

No other England batsman made more against Ireland than Luke Wright's 20, with South Africa-born Kevin Pietersen (nine) and Collingwood (nought), both falling cheaply.

But this time it was Ireland captain William Porterfield who was left feeling frustrated by the weather.

"If the rain hadn't come we were pretty confident chasing down 120 that we could knock it off," Porterfield said. "But it's just one of those things," he added, his reaction in contrast to Collingwood's fury on Monday.

Porterfield though was proud of the way his side had performed following their embarrassing start.

"The way we came out today, after Friday's disappointment, was great. If we can take that into every game, we'll go places."

Ireland's Australia-born paceman Trent Johnston took one wicket for 14 and seamer Kevin O'Brien two for 22 while teenage left-arm spinner George Dockrell conceded a mere 19 runs from his full quota of four overs.

As against the West Indies, England lost the toss and found themselves being sent into bat.

They struggled to 49 for four as Johnston and Dockrell choked off the supply of runs.

But Morgan, in a stand of 41 with Wright, revived the innings with some typically innovative shots before his 37-ball knock featuring five fours ended in the last over.

England can now look forward to starting their Super Eight campaign against either defending champions Pakistan or Australia in Barbados on Thursday.

Raina masters short ball

Stephen Fleming, the Chennai Super Kings coach, has attributed Suresh Raina's impressive show in the Indian Premier League (IPL) and the ongoing World Twenty20 to his determination and effort to combat his weakness against the short ball, which was exposed in England last year.

Raina was the third-highest run-getter in the IPL and was the man-of-the-match in the final, which Chennai won. He followed that up with a 59-ball century against South Africa in St Lucia to seal India's place in the Super Eights.

"He knew that he would be attacked with short balls and I felt he is more than equipped to deal with it," Fleming told Daily News and Analysis. "I just had to make him realise his strengths. He went on to turn the so-called weakness into his strength."

"We have worked out plans on the areas where we thought he might be attacked. He tried hard at the nets with rising balls to make the right adjustments. He is a hard trier."

The adjustments Raina has had to make have not affected his strengths, Fleming said. "That's what good players do. Improvement in one area cannot be allowed to lead to deterioration in another area."

Fleming also credited Gary Kirsten for Raina's improvement and said his own role had been to concentrate on the mental aspect of Raina's game.

"Suresh has been working on this with Gary Kirsten. My duty has been to facilitate and organise the facilities needed for him to work on those areas. More specifically I worked on the mental part of Suresh and his Twenty20 game. I've advised him on what frame of mind he should be in a Twenty20 format."

"Success breeds confidence. The range of shots he plays is a kind of expression of himself. He is able to play them because of his new-found confidence. His level of confidence matches his abilities. He is very positive and is not afraid of playing shots."

"He is very hard to bowl to I'd imagine. At this stage, Suresh is well ahead of his age in cricket. I was not even half as talented at that stage."

Where does

Sometimes a big defeat can be the perfect antidote but is there any time for even a quick fix? Is such a measure necessary or should the whole system be looked at? More importantly, are people interested to answer these questions?

Postal boost

Postal department won their first medal in the competition when Momotaz Begum took the silver in the women's 800m event.

No show

Mahfuzur Rahman Mithu, silver medalist huddler Sumita Rani, former fastest women Nazmun Nahar Beauty, former fastest men Abu Abdullah and Shamsuddin.

Duckworth defends method

Frank Duckworth, the co-creator of the Duckworth-Lewis (D/L) method for settling rain-affected matches, has leapt to its defence after it came under fire from England captain Paul Collingwood.

But he said the International Cricket Council (ICC) needs to look at the minimum length of an innings required to constitute a Twenty20 match.

Collingwood was left fuming after England suffered an eight-wicket loss to the West Indies in the visitors' tournament opener here on Monday, despite scoring 191 -- a challenging Twenty20 total.

Rain, though, left the West Indies with a target of 60 from six overs.

At present, five overs of the second innings of a Twenty20 international must be played in order for a winner to be declared and Duckworth told The Wisden Cricketer: "The ICC ought to look into whether five overs for a valid match is appropriate because you can get this apparent distortion."

Collingwood, who saw England bow out of last year's World Twenty20 to the West Indies in similar fashion at the Oval, said after Monday's match: "I don't know what equation you should have but you shouldn't have that one."

"We've played a near perfect game but we've lost."

But Duckworth, who devised the system with fellow statistician Tony Lewis, countered by saying: "While Paul Collingwood may have been angry at Messrs Duckworth and Lewis, he might have been angry at (England bowlers) Messrs (Tim) Bresnan, (Graeme) Swann and co who added to the four wickets that they bowled before the rain by adding four more wickets."

"So, the West Indies target wasn't just 60, it was effectively 52."

England still managed to qualify for the second round Super Eights, on superior run-rate, following a no-result washout with Ireland here on Tuesday after the game failed to reach the five over mark in the second innings by the scheduled cut-off time of 21:59GMT.

"I guess the rain's come around today (Tuesday) at a time that's got us through to the next stage," Collingwood said.

Duckworth, speaking before the England-Ireland match, said it was only England who'd complained about the use of the D/L method in Twenty20.

"Since Twenty20 came into the world in 2002, there have been about 70 cases of T20 with a D/L revised target or result."

"And there's only been two moments of dissent, both by Paul Collingwood or ECB (England and Wales Cricket Board) people, both following England not doing very well against the West Indies."

"The other 68 matches -- like the one that occurred earlier (on Monday, between Sri Lanka and Zimbabwe), nobody queried that and in fact the result went the other way. The side batting first (Sri Lanka) won."

Duckworth and Lewis updated their system in October after examining data that Duckworth insisted proved the method did not require wholesale revision for Twenty20 matches.

"As a result of that analysis we did decide that a few changes were needed but these were only slight adjustments to the parameter of the formula."

"The important thing that we discovered was that the scoring patterns in Twenty20 fit in perfectly with our original formula derived largely from 50-over games."

Meanwhile, others were critical of the decision to stage matches in Guyana during the 'rainy season'.

One e-mail contributor to BBC Radio's Test Match Special, wrote: "I'm currently thinking of hosting a drinks-based event but am stumped about where to hold it."

"Do you think the ICC, with their renowned timing and planning nous, so well demonstrated by staging part of a sunny weather-dependent international sporting competition in Guyana during the rainy season, might be able to find me a suitable brewery?"

The contributor's sarcasm was misplaced however: it was the West Indies Cricket Board, based on applications from its member countries, who selected the venues for the World Twenty20 and not the ICC.

Flame flay Shaons

Flame Boys Club beat Shaons Club by 54-21 points in their clash of the Premier Bank Metropolitan First Division Basketball League at the Dhanmondi Wooden Floor gymnasium yesterday.

The winners led the first half 22-14. Morshed scored 17 points while Troy collected 15 for the winners.

In the other matches of the day, Bakshibazar Club defeated Rangers Club 64-45, Gregarious Club crushed Gregs Club 114-53 while Dhumketu Club thrashed Bakshibazar Club 104-34.

NSC demands

BOA treasurer Sanaul Haque Bakul said that they have been working on it and 15 federations out of 23 have already submitted their reports.

He informed that BOA had formed 20 sub-committees of which only fifty percent placed their audit reports and they were now waiting for other committees.

Bakul, however, hoped that he would be able to get all audit reports by May 15 and would place it to the government immediately.

The NSC meeting also formed a five-member committee to find out those disciplines away from spotlight as well as select districts to run talent hunt programs with NSC's own fund worth Tk one crore.

Robi lights

flourish with their own power and make the nation proud.

Jamil said that they had taken all necessary steps to make the tournament a success and hoped that the qualifiers would make a good impact on the country's hockey.

Batting let Tigers

Mashrafe Bin Mortaza had the unenviable task of keeping David Warner and Shane Watson quiet in the first over and he did just that, keeping the two hitters on a tight leash. There was instant reward for the Narail Express when his well-directed bowler had Watson caught out by Aftab Ahmed for four. Warner struggled against spin and in Shakib's second ball, holed out to Aftab at deep mid-wicket for 16 off 11 balls.

Australia had skipper Michael Clarke and Brad Haddin to take them to 37 runs when Haddin top-edged an almighty heave off Abdur Razzak, only to be caught at short third-man by Shaiful Islam. Three overs later, it was Clarke's turn to go, chipping Mohammad Ashraful's off-spin to long-on where Jahurul Islam took a simple catch.

Mashrafe then had his second wicket, another bouncer that had his Kolkata Knight Riders teammate David Hussey top-edging to wicketkeeper Mushfiqur Rahim. Things got even worse for the Aussies when Cameron White was cleaned up by Shakib, as the Bangladesh skipper tied the noose around their much-vaunted opponents.

But Australia had their finisher Mike Hussey at the crease and the left-hander resurrected a broken innings along with new boy Smith. The two played spin as patiently as possible and then launched into Mashrafe, taking him for 17 runs in the 17th over of the innings. The Aussies took 52 off the final five overs with Hussey smashing an unbeaten 47 off 29 balls with a six and four boundaries while Smith made a crucial 27 off 18 balls that had two sixes, both off Razzak's last over, and a boundary.

Shakib and Mashrafe took two wickets each while Ashraful and Razzak had one each. Smith was the last wicket to fall, being run out by Rahim in the penultimate ball of the innings.

SCORES IN BRIEF
AUSTRALIA: 141 for 7 in 20 overs (Warner 16, Clarke 16, M Hussey 47 not out, Smith 27; Mashrafe 2-28, Shakib 2-24, Razzak 1-29, Ashraful 1-24)
BANGLADESH: 114 all out in 18.4 overs (Shakib 28, Mushfiqur 24, Jahurul 18, Shaiful 16; Nannes 4-18, D Hussey 2-8, Smith 2-29)
Result: Australia win by 27 runs.
Man-of-the-match: Michael Hussey.



Bangladesh Hockey Federation general secretary Khondoker Jamil Uddin (3rd from R) speaks at a press conference in connection with the Asian Games Hockey Qualifiers title sponsorship rights at the National Sports Council conference room yesterday. Mobile phone company Robi's chief marketing officer Biddut Kumar Basu is seen on his right.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

1 Lend a hand
 4 Snow-bank maker
 8 Celeb
 12 Morning cup
 13 Tibetan monk
 14 Subside
 15 It does the hole job
 16 Fertility goddess
 17 Dermatology case
 18 Com-plains vehemently
 21 Expert
 22 Hoover, for one
 23 Store-door data
 26 Roscoe
 27 Carte lead-in
 30 Relaxed
 31 Remuneration
 32 Pitt or Garrett

DOWN

10 Part of A.D.
 11 Coral construct
 19 Nimble
 20 Nosh
 23 With it, once
 24 Rowing need
 25 Handle shop
 26 Throttle
 27 Branch
 28 Retriever, for short
 29 Com-mo-tion
 31 Football
 32 Nitwit
 34 In favor of
 35 Smile
 when you say that
 36 Unisex garb
 37 Drag (Var.)
 38 Guffaw, in "Variety"
 39 Twistable treat
 40 Telegram
 41 Banks on the runway
 42 Hawaiian island
 43 Milky gem
 44 Dissolve

Solution time: 27 mins.

ABE BOO REPEL
 CAR ARP IMAGO
 EYE SWEETS SPOT
 RUC HERTZ
 BOTT LAC GETS
 AWL HURRAH
 ALAMO FOAMY
 COSMOS ZOO
 ESPY ARI MUFF
 AGENT KEA
 SOURDOUGH ALL
 OZED SEA SOS
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CRYPTOQUIP

TFBZWNFCERSFLZVJRHFA
 VAREMKFHCOLRHNCJJMR
 MKFVJRRABZOPRWNZP
 C'SFJRHF AFLMKFTJRE?

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: MY FAVORITE HEAVY SHOES ARE COMPLETELY FALLING APART, AND I HAVE BECOME VERY BROGAN-HEARTED.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: S equals V

DAY'S EVENT

Tri-Nation Tournament
 West Indies A v South Africa A
 One-Day Match
 Time: 9:15am
 Venue: Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium, Mirpur
 GP-BCB Academy v South Africa Academy
 Second One-Day Match
 Time: 9:30am
 Venue: Shaheed Chandu Stadium, Bogra