

Women's kabaddi

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Ansar and BJMC reached the semifinals of the Meizan National Women's Kabaddi Championship by winning their respective matches at the Dhanmondi Sultana Kamal Women's Sports Complex yesterday.

In the day's matches, BJMC defeated Jamalpur by 37-19 points while Bangladesh Ansar crushed Kurigram 58-12 and Jamalpur beat Sathkira 36-20.

Bangladesh Ansar will face Magura while BJMC will meet Gazipur in today's semifinals at the same venue.

The final match will also be held today at 4 pm.

ICC to probe Oval ODI

AFP, London

Pakistan's beleaguered cricket team came under the officials' spotlight again Saturday following "suspicious scoring patterns" in the third one-day international against England.

Pakistan won Friday's match by 23 runs, however the International Cricket Council has since launched an investigation after receiving information from a British newspaper.

The Sun claimed Saturday it has evidence that shows bookmakers knew details of the Pakistan innings before the match had begun.

ICC chief executive Haroon Lorgat said the match featured "a certain scoring pattern" that warranted further investigation.

Following information received by the ICC from a British newspaper and its source, the ICC now believes a full investigation is warranted, an ICC statement read.

Lorgat added: "A source informed The Sun newspaper that a certain scoring pattern would emerge during certain stages of the match and, broadly speaking, that information appeared to be correct.

"We therefore feel it is incumbent upon us to launch a full enquiry into this particular game although it is worth pointing out at this stage that we are not stating as fact that anything untoward has occurred. Only in the fullness of the investigation can that be established.

"The ICC maintains a zero-tolerance approach to corruption in cricket and, as a matter of course, follows up on all credible information that is received, whatever the source.

"Any player or official found guilty of an offence will face the full rigour of our robust Anti-Corruption Code so that we can ensure the integrity of the sport is maintained."

The investigation is yet more bad news for the beleaguered Pakistan team, who have been under the spotlight this summer amid allegations of 'spot-fixing' against members of the touring party.

'Irfan got gifts from stranger'

CRICINFO

Irfan Pathan had reported to the team's assistant manager that he was given gifts by a stranger during the 2006 tour of Pakistan, the official has confirmed. Wing commander M Baladitya, the team's assistant manager on the tour, said the incident had taken place at the Pearl Continental Hotel in Karachi.

Irfan was quoted by an Indian TV channel as claiming that he was sent expensive gifts by a "stranger", suspected to be a bookie, during the series. He said he never saw the person again and reported the matter to the authorities concerned.

"Irfan had told me that somebody came to his room and left expensive gifts for him", Baladitya told PTI. "I told him to return them immediately. However, he said he did not know who had kept the gifts in his room."

Baladitya, who was part of India's tours to Pakistan in 2004 and 2006, said he mentioned the incident in his tour report submitted to the BCCI after the series but not to the ICC's Anti-Corruption Unit.



A Jamalpur raider is thwarted by Sathkira players during their National Women's Kabaddi at the Sultana Kamal Women's Sports Complex in Dhanmondi yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

Waqar cheers charges on

Cricket

AFP, London

Coach Waqar Younis has urged his Pakistan side to go on and win the current one-day series against England after their stunning display at The Oval on Friday.

Their 23-run victory, built on Umar Gul's brilliant show of reverse swing bowling, left the series 2-1 in England's favour with a game at Lord's on Monday and the final match in Southampton on Wednesday to come.

Pakistan's tour has been dogged by spot-fixing allegations -- although they have managed a Test win against both Australia and England on the trip -- but Waqar still believes his side can come back and seize an unlikely series win despite the off-field troubles.

"The series is still alive and it gives us the incentive that we can come back and win the series now," said Waqar.

"The momentum is with us. It is outstanding to be going to Lord's with this win behind us and we will be looking to make it 2-2. There is no reason why not.

"It has been a real tough tour on and off the field with a very young side. We have done pretty well. We won two Test matches and I am pretty pleased if you look at the bigger picture but there is still work to be done.

"Hopefully in the next two games we can produce some more good cricket. In the first two games we produced some pretty good cricket but we just couldn't finish.

"I am happy with the overall performance

but we probably could have done better and we will discuss that. We could have put another 30 or 35 runs on the board.

"We are a really young side with young bowlers and we have always been very good when it comes to reverse swing."

Pakistan are still unable to play cricket at home due to security concerns, but Waqar is confident for the future.

"I hope it comes as soon as possible. We want to take cricket back into Pakistan, there are heaps of stadiums there and the people are waiting for cricket to come back," he said.

"I don't know how long it will take but I want it to happen as soon as possible."

Pakistan wicketkeeper Kamran Akmal was heading for hospital for a scan on his injured hand on Saturday morning.

Akmal left the field on Friday in considerable pain but Waqar is hopeful he will be fit for Monday's game.

Meanwhile, England captain Andrew Strauss expects Paul Collingwood to have recovered from the virus that kept him out of the match at The Oval.

Strauss said: "Hopefully he will be fit for Monday. It looks like it is going to get better rather than worse."

"He is one of our most experienced players and having him coming in at number four is always a positive."

Strauss was one of Umar Gul's six victims on Friday but refused to talk up the skills of the Pakistani.

He added: "A lot of bowlers reverse swing the ball but I am not going to hype him up."

28 called for U-17 training

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) has selected twenty-eight players for the two-week long training camp of the Under-17 Development Squad.

The camp will be held at the BKSP from September 20 to October 3 and the selected players have been asked to report at BKSP by 5pm today.

The selected players are Zahed Zaved, Arafat Sunny, Rafsan Al Mahmud, Fatim Noor, Mizanur Rahman Sayeem, Saddam Hossain, Mosaddek Hossain Saikat, Yasir Ali Rabbi, Kamran Hafiz, Liton Kumar Das, Bayzeed Amin, Salman Hossain, Sheikh Arman Ullah, Hasanuzzaman Rumi, Rashed Khan Toru, Sajid Akter, Rahatul Ferdous Zaved, Adnan Bari, Salehin Rifat Saad, Zubair Hossain Likhon, Zakir Hossain Munna, Mehedi Hasan, Abu Haidar Rony, Sukanto Kumar Zey, Taskin Ahmed, Musabbir Hamid.

Bolt may

FROM PAGE 17

Bolt said he had chosen to skip next month's Commonwealth Games in Delhi because it was at the wrong time and would cut into his training schedule for the 2011 World Championships in Daegu, South Korea.

"A lot of top athletes are skipping this one because the World Championships are very important," he said, adding that he expected Jamaica would still dominate the sprints.

"Anybody in Jamaica who decides to go is going to be good because the depth is getting bigger and there are a lot of youngsters coming up."

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

Crossword puzzle grid with clues for Across and Down words. Includes a solution time of 27 mins and a word bank at the bottom.

Redbacks reach semis

AFP, Durban



Michael Klinger hit his third successive half-century as the South Australia Redbacks became the first team to qualify for the Champions League Twenty

semifinals with an eight-wicket win over Royal Challengers Bangalore at Kingsmead on Friday. Redbacks captain Klinger hit 69 not out and shared a second successive century opening partnership with Daniel Harris (57) as the Australian side cruised to victory with nine balls to spare after bowling out Bangalore for 154.

With three wins in three matches, the Redbacks are sure of a place in the last four, worth a minimum of 500,000 dollars in prize money.

"I'm super-proud of the boys today," said Klinger. "It was a good all-round performance."

The result meant that only one of Bangalore and fellow Indian Premier League giants Mumbai Indians can reach the knock-out phase -- and they could yet be upstaged by host nation team the Highveld Lions.

All three teams have won one match in Group B. Bangalore, who were without South African

all-rounder Jacques Kallis because of a back injury, made a bad start when they lost two wickets in the first eight balls of their innings.

Ross Taylor looked in dazzling form before Klinger brought back strike bowler Shaun Tait in the ninth over. His bold move paid off as Taylor was caught behind for 46 off 28 balls.

Bangalore captain Anil Kumble admitted: "Ross Taylor's wicket was critical."

Bangalore slumped to 76 for five but Dillon du Preez hit a breezy 46 in a sixth wicket stand of 58 with Cameron White (25).

The Indian side suffered another collapse, culminating in their last three wickets falling to medium-pace Daniel Christian for only two runs in the last over.

Kumble said the defeat meant that Sunday's match against Mumbai at the same venue was critical.

"It is a must-win game. Hopefully Jacques Kallis will be fit."

SCORES IN BRIEF

ROYAL CHALLENGERS BANGALORE: 154 in 19.5 overs (Taylor 46, White 25, Du Preez 46; Tait 2-23, Putland 2-37, Christian 4-23)

SOUTH AUSTRALIA REDBACKS: 155 for 2 in 18.3 overs (Harris 57, Klinger 69 not out, Ferguson 21 not out) Result: Redbacks win by eight wickets.

Paes, Bhupathi keep India alive

Tennis

AFP, Chennai

Leander Paes and Mahesh Bhupathi continued their winning run in Davis Cup doubles to secure India a point in the World Group playoff against Brazil on Saturday.

The veteran duo demolished Bruno Soares and Marcelo Melo in straight sets to extend their unbeaten streak in the tournament to 24 matches, the most by any doubles team in the world.

Paes and Bhupathi won 6-4, 7-6, 6-1 in two hours and 19 minutes in front of some 2,000 home fans at the Nungambakkam Tennis Stadium in Chennai.

Brazil led the tie 2-1 after hard-fought victories in Friday's singles.

World number 27 Thomaz Bellucci beat the 479th-ranked Rohan Bopanna 6-7, 7-6, 7-5, 4-6, 10-8 in four hours and 28 minutes in the opening singles.

Ricardo Mello then marked his return to Davis Cup play after three years to oust India's number one Somdev Devvarman 4-6, 6-2, 6-7, 6-2, 6-4 in another classic that lasted four hours and 12 minutes.

Brazil, who have lost four consecutive playoff ties since 2006, need a win in one of Sunday's two reverse singles to return to the World Group

for the first time since 2003.

Bellucci takes on Devvarman in the first match, before Mello clashes with Bopanna.

India were forced into the playoffs after losing to Russia in the first round of the World Group in Moscow in March.

Paes, 37, and Bhupathi, 36, who won three Grand Slam doubles titles together before parting ways in 2001, join hands for India in multi-national events like the Olympics, Asian Games and the Davis Cup.

"We create magic whenever we play and today was no different," said Paes, who

began his 21st year in Davis Cup play with this tie.

"We have played so much together in the past that it all clicks when we come on court. I am really glad we won a point today and helped India stay in the tie."

Paes said the first reverse singles between Devvarman and Bellucci on Sunday would be crucial.

"Bellucci may be ranked 27th, but as I always say, anything can happen in the Davis Cup. He was very tired after yesterday's match and Som has it in him to create an upset."

"I am very positive about tomorrow."



PHOTO: AFP

India's Mahesh Bhupathi (R) and Leander Paes celebrate during their doubles match against Brazilians in their Davis Cup World Group play-off tie at the Nungambakkam stadium in Chennai yesterday. The Indian pair won the match 6-4, 7-6, 6-2.

Ricky's toughest 7 months lie ahead

Cricket

ANI, Sydney

Skipper Ricky Ponting has said that the next seven months for Australia and himself will be the greatest challenge of his career.

He believes that a tour of India, the Ashes and the World Cup in India, all will pose a stern test of character, ability, skill and performance.

His predecessors, Mark Taylor and Steve Waugh, had the luxury of throwing the new ball to Glenn McGrath, before throwing the old ball to Shane Warne. In the batting department, there was Matthew Hayden, the Waugh brothers, Justin Langer, Adam Gilchrist and/or half a dozen others, all of whom scored hundreds with their eyes shut.

By comparison, Ponting has inherited a more blue-collar and beatable Test XI. "As an Australian player, you don't get any bigger than what we've got coming up. I don't see any reason why we can't keep winning to the same degree, even if the wins are harder to come by," Fox Sports quoted Ponting, as saying.

"They might be harder work but I enjoy that. We all do. It's definitely a different environment to those really dominant teams we had but I love the challenge of it."

"There's no reason why we can't achieve very similar results to what the great Australian teams achieved even though we've got players who are a lot less experienced in Test match cricket," he added. Australia leave on Sunday night for a five-week tour of India.

Jadeja's fear

AGENCIES

Legalising betting cannot stop corruption in cricket, feels former India all-rounder Ajay Jadeja, who says there is very little that can be done if an individual "is ready to do something".

"I don't think legalising solves any problem. If some individual is ready to do something, there is very little you can do," Jadeja said.

Asked about the spot-fixing scandal that has led to the suspension of three Pakistan cricketers -- Salman Butt, Mohammad Asif and Mohammad Aamer, Jadeja said, "if there is any wrong doing, the law should take its own course." "You must wait for the Scotland Yard to complete the criminal investigation," he added.

On the changes that the game has undergone and the growing scepticism about Test cricket's future, Jadeja said the five-day version of the game should be top priority for the administrators.

"Test cricket has its sanctity. I genuinely believe in Test cricket. It should stay. Test cricket is played for pleasure of the game," Jadeja said while delivering the Ranji Memorial Lecture at the Nehru Center.

Gul guns

FROM PAGE 17

He bowled Strauss off the inside edge for 57 before trapping Michael Yardy leg before. Wright and Morgan seemed to have the match at their mercy but Gul returned to cause mayhem and take the game away from England.

SCORES IN BRIEF PAKISTAN: 241 all out in 49.4 overs (Fawad 64, Shafiq 40, Afridi 34, Razaq 31; Anderson 3-26, Bresnan 3-51) ENGLAND: 218 all out in 45.4 overs (Morgan 61, Strauss 57, Wright 48 not out; Gul 6-42, Razaq 2-38) Result: Pakistan won by 23 runs. Man-of-the-match: Umar Gul.

Uttu Smriti football

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Manikganj

Century Association beat Sonali Atit Club 2-1 in the Hafijul Islam Khan Uttu Smriti First Division Football League at the Shaheed Miraz-Tapan Stadium yesterday.

Rezau put Century Association ahead in the 5th minute but Sekandar levelled the margin in the 49th minute. Rubel netted the match winner in the 63rd minute.

With the outcome Century Association improved their tally to nine points from five matches while Sonali Atit Club remained at five points from six outings.

Manikganj City Club will face Dashara Nabajagan Sangsad in the today's match.