



An action from yesterday's women's cricket match between China and Malaysia in Guangzhou. China won the Group A match by 55 runs. Cricket has been included in the showpiece event of the continent for the first time.

WI eye maiden glory

Cricket
AFP, Galle

The West Indies will be keen to put in a solid all-round performance as they seek their maiden Test victory in Sri Lanka in the three-match series starting in Galle on Monday.

The West Indies have so far played six Tests in Sri Lanka, losing five and drawing one.

The visitors, who are without experienced batsman Ramnaresh Sarwan, will find it tough to change the script this time under new skipper Darren Sammy and vice-captain Brendan Nash.

All-rounder Sammy, who replaced Chris Gayle, has been given the task of building the team for the future after being named captain last month.

Gayle and vice-captain Dwayne Bravo were replaced after they turned down central contracts offered by the cricket board.

But the pair have been named in the squad and are expected to play key roles in their team's campaign along with veteran batsman Shivnarine Chandernaul.

Sammy, who has played only eight Tests since making his debut in 2007, is confident of a good performance from his team.

"We want to win, to play well and bring the passion and pride back to the West Indies. We are a little bit inexperienced, but we have put in a good preparation work ahead of our coming here," he said ahead of the series.

"I am very confident of all the players I have here, likewise all the players are confident of giving off their best for the West Indies."

The West Indies bowlers face a stiff task to keep pressure on Sri Lanka's formidable batting as skipper Kumar Sangakkara, Mahela

Jayawardene, Thilan Samaraweera and Tillakaratne Dilshan are capable of dominating any attack.

The hosts also have an impressive record in Galle, having won nine of their 16 Tests at this venue. They have lost three matches and drawn four.

Sri Lanka will be without off-spin wizard Muttiah Muralitharan, who played a key role in many of his team's victories at this venue before retiring from Test cricket this year with a record 800 wickets.

But the hosts have talented spinners in Suraj Randiv, Rangana Herath and Ajantha Mendis, who can put pressure on the West Indies.

Sri Lanka start the Test series as favourites as they have recently clinched their maiden one-day series in Australia, but Sangakkara said they were not taking the West Indies lightly.

"We don't take any team lightly. We want to win the Test series. We expect nothing but the best from the West Indies and for us to match them," the Sri Lankan captain said ahead of the Test.

SQUADS

SRI LANKA (from): Kumar Sangakkara (captain), Mahela Jayawardene, Tillakaratne Dilshan, Tharanga Paranavitana, Thilan Samaraweera, Angelo Mathews, Prasanna Jayawardene, Thilina Kandambadi, Ajantha Mendis, Suraj Randiv, Rangana Herath, Kaushal Silva, Dhammika Prasad, Dilhara Fernando, Thilan Thushara, Suranga Lakmal.
WEST INDIES (from): Darren Sammy (captain), Brendan Nash, Chris Gayle, Adrian Barath, Carlton Baugh, Suliseman Benn, Darren Bravo, Dwayne Bravo, Shivnarine Chandernaul, Nelon Pascal, Kemar Roach, Andre Russell, Shane Shillingford, Devon Smith, Devon Thomas.

Strauss, Cook hit hundreds

AFP, Adelaide

Opening batsmen Alastair Cook and Andrew Strauss hit centuries but rain thwarted England as their three-day tour game against South Australia ended in a draw at the Adelaide Oval on Saturday.

Cook made an unbeaten 111 and Strauss smashed 102 off 121 balls to put the tourists in a position to declare their second innings at 240 for one early on the last day.

But England, building up to the opening Ashes Test against Australia in Brisbane on November 25, only bowled 20.5 overs at South Australia before rain and bad light finished the match late in the day.

"I'm happy the batsmen have all had good time at the wicket because the conditions are slightly different," Strauss, the England captain, said.

"You need to adjust your game and the only way you do that is by playing in the middle against decent quality bowling."

"The preparation has gone well so far but we have got one more game to up it a level before the Test match."

Cook and Strauss posted the fourth-highest opening stand by an England side at the Adelaide Oval with 181 runs.

Strauss attacked the local bowling with gusto in the morning session smashing 13 fours and six sixes and raising his century by lofting left-arm spinner Aaron O'Brien for six over mid-on.

His whirlwind century came off just 118 balls before he was bowled three balls later by O'Brien attempting another big hit.

Cook brought up his century off 152 balls with a pull shot for four off medium pacer Tim Lang.

He finished with 18 fours and a six and was still there with Jonathan Trott on the Hobart for a four-day match against Australia A starting on Wednesday, their final game before the first Test.

"The last thing we can do is get complacent and pat ourselves on the back, because we are ramping up our preparations now," Strauss said.

BCB yet to take

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down on the board," he added.

He also believed that it was a wake-up call for the authority concerned.

The event was a total mismanagement that upset cricket-loving people of the country and many feared a bigger test might expose even greater weaknesses as the organisers miserably failed to conduct such a small but crucial event properly.

The tournament's host director Ali Ahsan Babu however said that they had learnt lot of lessons from the incident happened Wednesday night. It will help them organise the coming programmes properly.

"We are still discussing the issue and are taking steps to avoid this kind of incidents in the future. Mistakes can happen but the important thing is whether we learn lessons from those. We are taking the criticism positively so that we can avoid such things in future," hopped Babu.

He was however not ready to blame the event management companies.

"Grey and Matra got the rights to conduct the promotional activities. You can't say one particular company is at fault when such thing happened. Rather we all were responsible for it," he added.

"We are well ahead of the other two host countries in terms of preparation, so definitely we are upset with some mismanagement. But we are looking forward to better things," he continued.

Ashraful eyes

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stage and almost set to play the semifinal against Sri Lanka. So we must get accustomed with the conditions within the five-day time," said Ashraful.

BCB's director Jalal Yunus, the head of delegates, informed that the wicket will be slow as they got the information from former Bangladesh skipper Aminul Islam, who is working in China as a development coach.

"Our first target is to play the final. What we have been informed is that the pitch is slow, so we have to adjust to the conditions very quickly," said Yunus.

Coach Sarwar Imran was also confident with his team though he was a little bit worried with the lack of preparation.

"Batting is our main strength, and the spin bowlers will also play a vital role. But the lack of match practice is an issue because the approach of one-day cricket and T20 cricket is totally different," said Imran, adding that his charges also coped up with the new type of balls that will be used in the Games.

SQUAD

Mohammad Ashraful (captain), Shamsur Rahman (vice-captain), Naem Islam, Faisal Hossain, Shahadat Hossain, Mahbubul Alam, Nazmul Hossain, Nazimuddin, Sohrawardi Shuvo, Dollar Mahmud, Rony Talukder, Nasir Hossain, Mohammad Mithun, Shabbir Rahman and Shuvagata Hom.

Tayef, chess only 'winners'

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won silver while Iran's Ehsan Peyghambari finished with the bronze medal.

Basna Khandaker was eliminated from the 60kg Taulu while in the Sanshu 52kg, Eti Islam earned a bye and entered the quarterfinal stage.

It was almost a similar fate for Shabira Molla, who was second from bottom with 135 points in the women's 48kg event. China's Wang Mingjuan topped the table with 210 points.

In the chess competition, Sharmin Sultana won one of two games, Shamima Akhtar Liza earned a walkover against Momena Mahmud of Maldives. GM Niaz Murshed also won his game against Korea's Li Kaun.

Faruque handed one-match ban

SPORTS REPORTER

Barisal batsman Nasiruddin Faruque has been suspended for today's National Cricket League final after being found guilty of dissent in Friday's game at the Sher-e-Bangla.

The incident occurred in the last game of the second phase when the left-handed opener was given out leg-before in the fifth over against Dhaka. There was a loud appeal from bowler Mahmudullah Riyad and when given out (on the front foot), Faruque stood still for quite sometime and trudged off, looking towards the umpire. When he had crossed the boundary rope near the players' viewing area, he threw away his bat in disgust.

A BCB (Bangladesh Cricket Board) press release also said that Faruque "used abusive language after being given out and continued behaving in an improper manner for the rest of the game".

Match referee Akhtar Ahmad found the player in breach of the BCB Code of Conduct and ICC Code of Conduct (Level of offence 2.2.1).

He was also fined his entire match fee for the game.

Butt's lawyer withdraws

AFP, Lahore

Suspended Pakistan cricketer Salman Butt suffered a blow Saturday in his fight to have his name cleared over spotting allegations after his lawyer withdrew from the case.

"I don't think the suspended players will get justice, so I have withdrawn from the case," Aftab Gul told Pakistani media of the case which will be heard in Qatar from January 6-11 next year.

Salman, Mohammad Asif and Mohammad Aamer were provisionally suspended by the International Cricket Council (ICC) last month over allegations of spot-fixing during Pakistan's tour of England.

The suspension came after revelations in British newspaper News of the World, which claimed several Pakistani players took money to bowl deliberate no-balls during the Lord's Test against England in August.

Gul, along with another lawyer Khalid Ranjha, represented Salman during the appeal against the suspension, which was dismissed last month.

Aamer, who was represented by lawyer Shahid Karim, also had his appeal turned down, while Asif withdrew his appeal after initially deciding to challenge the punishment.

The ICC on Friday announced a three-man panel led by Michael Beloff to hear the case of the players in which the actual charges levelled against the players will be examined.

World Cup

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days when nothing clicked, and that at one point he tried getting out, but couldn't succeed even at that. He even revealed that he nicked the second ball he faced, and rued not walking. He was summoned to the team management to explain his innings, and the matter was dropped after that without any action taken. The general feeling was that paying spectators and the game of cricket had been cheated. It was a gloomy start to what eventually was a resoundingly successful tournament.

The Chinese debut

Hosts beat Malaysia in women's cricket

AFP, Guangzhou



The sound of leather on willow. Flags fluttering in a gentle breeze. Thousands of miles from the game's birthplace, cricket breaks new ground -- in the industrial heartland of China.

Guangong Cricket Stadium was the setting on Saturday for the first official cricket match in the vast nation of 1.3 billion people, a Twenty20 fixture at the Asian Games.

But even as China's women took to the field against Malaysia, where they clinched an impressive 55-run win in front of just a smattering of spectators, the future of the game as part of the sporting showpiece hung in the balance.

China's players, clad in red, mixed stylish orthodox strokeplay with some enterprising hitting, reaching 116-6 in their 20 overs against some

wayward Malaysian bowling. In reply Malaysia were off to a slow start against accurate Chinese bowling and lively fielding and were restricted to 61-8.

Asian cricket chiefs say the game is making major strides in China but spectators of the morning clash in the sun-drenched stands had mixed views after their first taste of action.

"It's the first time I've seen a cricket match. I'm a little interested but to be honest it's a bit boring," said Zhen Zhilin, who listed his favourite sports as basketball and football.

But the 21-year-old student said despite his mixed feelings he was prepared to give it another go.

"This is the first time I've seen cricket and it's very interesting. I didn't know about this game and I will come again," said Tan Zhaowen, 19, who described it as a "difficult game".

But despite the lukewarm reception, Chinese Cricket Association secretary general Liu Rongyao was upbeat,

saying he was proud to be involved in such a historic occasion.

"Our cricket team has only been together for a few years so I'm very satisfied with the performance and the way they have come together as a unit," he said. "We'll push forward to see how far we can go."

Looking ahead, he said the Chinese were suited to the cricket because it involved intelligence, technique and strategy.

As to China's eventual aims, he said with a smile "world champions", adding: "There's not a good soldier who doesn't want to be a general."

Asian Cricket Council (ACC) spokesman Shahriar Khan said the match was "highly symbolic", adding: "It's the biggest stage in Asia below one-day internationals."

"Cricket has had enough of preaching to the converted. We want to get new people involved and people not just interested in the game but excited about it," he told AFP. "Fourteen months ago this

ground was a flat piece of mud. The ACC and International Cricket Council came and inspected the ground in our hard hats not realising things would get done so quickly and to such a high standard."

He said cricket was developing fast in China and that a thriving domestic game could exist within 10 years.

But its future at the Asian Games is far from certain.

The alarm bells rang when cricket was omitted from Incheon's list of events proposed for the 2014 Games.

The Olympic Council of Asia (OCA) decided last year that the number of sports in future Asian Games should not exceed 35, with 28 from the Olympic Games and a maximum of seven to reflect the sporting culture of Asia's five zones.

Cricket was last seen at a major multi-sport event at the 1998 Commonwealth Games in Kuala Lumpur, but was dropped for the next three editions in England, Australia and India.

Even going in Dubai

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wrap South Africa's first-innings to 380 all out.

Experienced batsman Younis Khan was unbeaten on 21 and Azhar Ali was 12 not out as Pakistan trail by 236 runs with eight wickets intact.

Pakistan will pin their hopes on Younis -- playing his first Test since July last year -- to build up a decisive first-innings lead as the pitch was expected to take spin on the last two days of the five-day match.

Hafeez, playing his first Test for three years, and Umer, playing his first since 2006, gave Pakistan a sound start, countering the three-pronged South African pace attack with confidence.

Hafeez smashed seven boundaries during his fourth Test half-century before giving a simple catch to mid-on off left-arm spinner Paul Harris.

Six runs later, Umer was trapped leg-before by paceman Morne Morkel. This was Pakistan's first century stand for the opening wicket after 17 innings.

Earlier, Gul (3-100) led Pakistan's fightback and was ably supported by left-arm spinner Abdul Rehman (3-101) and Saeed Ajmal (2-95) as Pakistan dismissed seven South African batsmen for 69 runs.

Gul claimed three scalps in 20 balls to help Pakistan put the brakes on South Africa's innings in which the middle order crumbled under pressure with just Jacques Kallis putting up any resistance during his 73-run knock.

Kallis hit six boundaries during his 156-ball knock before he edged off-spinner Ajmal to

debutant wicket-keeper Adnan Akmal, ending South African hopes of posting a big first-innings total.

Pakistan, who had to pull out experienced batsman Mohammad Younis minutes before the toss on Friday, also lost paceman Wahab Riaz because of a side strain which will prevent him from bowling in the innings.

Riaz, who will bat if needed in the first Test, was ruled out of the second, starting in Abu Dhabi from November 20, after MRI scans revealed he needed four to five weeks for recovery.

Resuming at 311-3, South Africa lost Harris for a duck in the sixth over of the day when the nightwatchman edged Gul to the slips where Younis Khan held onto a difficult catch.

Gul then had AB de Villiers (five) bowled with a sharp incoming delivery and in his next over trapped Ashwell Prince leg-before for one, leaving South Africa on 329-6.

Rehman trapped Mark Boucher (nine) leg-before and bowled Johan Botha (10) to further derail the South African innings. Ajmal wrapped up the innings by dismissing Morne Morkel (10).

The series was shifted to United Arab Emirates after South Africa refused to tour Pakistan over security fears.

SCORES IN BRIEF

SOUTH AFRICA: First innings 380 (Smith 100, Petersen 67, Amla 80, Kallis 73; Gul 3-100, Rehman 3-101, Riaz 2-61, Ajmal 2-95)

PAKISTAN: First Innings 144 for 2 (Hafeez 60, Umer 42, Younis 21 not out; Harris 1-34, Morkel 1-38)

Dhaka wary of Barisal

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score runs to play. It is as simple as that," he added.

The final is of similar importance to Mohammad Ashraful, who has returned among the runs after a long period. He has looked in some semblance of form during the domestic season's curtain-raiser, scoring 319 runs at 79.75 in his six outings with a century and two fifties.

"The last year and a half has been quite ordinary for me. When I was dropped for the New Zealand series, I thought I was batting well in the nets and coming back to form. I think I have worked

well to get back into runs in domestic cricket," said Ashraful.

The senior Dhaka batsman will have Tamim for support as well as the likes of Shamsur Rahman, Shuvogoto Hom and Mahmudullah Riyad. But he is also wary of Barisal's strength in team unity as well as some of their performers. "The tournament's top run-scorer is Fazole Rabbi and the highest wicket-taker is Kamrul Islam so one cannot disregard a team that has form players," he said.

There was some doubt whether the match would be held today but the BCB's

tournament committee gave the green signal despite it the dawn-to-dusk strike in the country.

Barisal entered the final through the head-to-head count where they went ahead of Rajshahi, the tournament favourites. A tough contest can be expected although Barisal can be too reliant on their top-order and little meat after Arafat Salahuddin and Asif Ahmed among the later batsmen. Dhaka, on the other hand, are spoiled for options and would definitely start as favourites.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS	42 Suitable	4 Curvaceous character	23 Blond shade
1 Lavished love (on)	44 Hurry	46 Capri, e.g.	24 Personal question?
6 Signs of an electric problem	50 Doohick-eyes	5 Use adjectives, perhaps	25 Mr. Hammar-skjöld
12 Last car?	52 Heavy overcoat	6 Miffed	26 White wine drink
13 East	54 Vast expanses	7 Roam predatorily	28 Wood nymph
14 This way	55 Greet a superior	8 Help	30 Aye canceler
15 Comic Danger-field	56 Veep under	9 Deserter	31 Prepare Easter eggs
16 Largest amount	57 Congregational shouts	10 Recognized	33 Corral
17 All hands on deck		11 Ophthalmologist's case	34 X rating?
19 Ram's mate		12 Scenery chewer	39 Danish money
20 Tortoise's rival		18 Entries for entrees?	41 Supermarket section
22 Trail the pack		21 Rocker Wine-house	42 Enthusiastic
24 Sentence parts (Abbr.)			43 Elite alternative
27 Isinglass			45 Cold War faction (Abbr.)
29 Hourglass filler			47 Phaser setting
32 Annual greeting			48 Reply to "Shall we?"
35 Shrek is one			49 Before 51 Chap
36 Duel tool			53 Felon's flight
37 CBS logo			
38 Tattooist's supply			
40 Sicilian spouter			

Solution time: 27 mins.

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Riaz out of SA series

AFP, Dubai

Pakistan paceman Wahab Riaz was ruled out of the remainder of the on-going first and next week's second Test against South Africa after straining a muscle, team manager Intikhab Alam said on Saturday.

The 25-year-old took 2-61 off 18 overs on the opening day of the first Test on Friday before suffering the muscle injury on his right side and could not bowl on Saturday.

"Riaz has suffered a side strain on the right side and needs four to five weeks for recovery before rehabilitation, so he will return to Pakistan after the first Test," Alam told AFP.

Alam said there will be no replacement for Riaz.

This is the second blow to Pakistan in the two-Test series after experienced batsman Mohammad Younis had to be withdrawn from the team as his groin injury recurred minutes before the toss on Friday.

Riaz made his Test debut on Pakistan's tour of England, taking five wickets in the Oval Test. He has so far played three Tests, nine one-day and two Twenty20 matches.

The second Test starts in Abu Dhabi on November 20.

Sehwag's

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The third and final Test will be played in Nagpur from Nov 20-24.

SCORES IN BRIEF

NEW ZEALAND: First innings 350 (McIntosh 102, Guptill 85, Ryder 70; Zaheer 4-69, Harbhajan 4-76)

INDIA: First innings 178 for 2 (Sehwag 96, Gambhir 54, Dravid 7 not out, Tendulkar 11 not out; Southee 1-45, Vettori 1-45)

CRYPTOQUIP

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