

Pakistan crush Kiwis

Cricket

AFP, Hamilton

Pakistan's left-arm attack of Abdur Rehman and Wahad Riaz ripped through the New Zealand batting lineup on Sunday to seal a 10-wicket victory inside three days in the first Test.

New Zealand's second innings lasted less than 39 overs as they were bowled out for 110 leaving Pakistan a mere 19 runs to win, a target they achieved in 22 balls.

The win was a much needed boost for Pakistan who are without leading players Salman Butt, Mohammad Asif and Mohammad Aamer, who are at the centre of a spot-fixing inquiry which has dogged the nation's cricket since last year.

Captain Misbahul Haq said the win showed his side was not distracted by the ongoing anti-corruption hearing which is being held in Qatar.

At one stage New Zealand lost four wickets for one run, collapsing from two for 60 to four for 61, after a baffling array of aggressive shot-making at a time when patience was required from the batsmen.

Captain Daniel Vettori lamented his side's "dismal" performance.

Pakistan, who resumed the day at 235 for four in their first innings, were all out midway through the second session for 367, a 92-run lead.

By the time New Zealand passed

that target they were already eight wickets down, with most dismissals the result of poor decision-making by the batsmen.

Man-of-the-match Rehman took three for 24 off 15 overs with his left-arm spin, while medium-quick Riaz took three for 38 in an unbroken 11-overs spell.

New Zealand reached 36 in 12 overs before the wickets started to tumble. Tim McIntosh -- who had survived three close leg-before appeals and an edge to second slip -- was first to go when he charged down the wicket to Rehman, misread the ball and was stumped by Adnan Akmal.

Brendon McCullum reached 35, in a typically attacking knock which included five boundaries, before he was caught behind, although television replays showed the ball deflected off his thigh pad and not his glove.

New Zealand were unconvincing but still staggered through to 60 when their game fell apart completely in the space of 15 balls.

Martin Guppitt (11) tried to sweep Rehman out of the park but top-edged the ball to Taufeeq Umar at midwicket, Jesse Ryder went lbw to Riaz' first ball, Ross Taylor (8) was run out going for an unnecessary single, and Kane Williamson (1) was caught by Azhar Ali at second slip of Riaz.

Tim Southee, who top-scored for New Zealand with 56 in the first innings, reached 17 when he tried to hit Umar Gul over the boundary, but was

caught at mid-on to have New Zealand eight for 90.

All the partisan crowd could find to cheer about was the batting of tailender Chris Martin, whose average of 2.47 is one of the worst in Test cricket, but he managed to make seven and reach his 100th Test run in his 60th international.

Pakistan had earlier looked to be in trouble at four for 107 in their first innings before Asad Shafiq and Misbahul Haq put on 149 for the fifth wicket.

When they fell in successive balls and Pakistan were six for 256, Adnan Akmal and Abdur Rehman added 76 for the seventh wicket and put the tourists in front.

The second and final Test starts in Wellington on Saturday.

SCORES IN BRIEF

NEW ZEALAND: First innings 275 (McCullum 56, Southee 56, Guppitt 10, Williamson 50; Tanvir 4-63, Rehman 3-51)

PAKISTAN: First innings 367 (Taufeeq 54, Azhar 24, Younis 23, Misbahul 62, Asad 83, Akmal 44, Rehman 28; Martin 3-86, Southee 2-82, Arnel 4-95)

NEW ZEALAND: Second innings 110 (McCullum 35, Southee 17; Gul 3-28, Rehman 3-24)

PAKISTAN: Second innings 21 for no loss (Taufeeq 12 not out, Hafeez 9 not out)

Result: Pakistan won by 10 wickets.
Man-of-the-match: Abdur Rehman.



PHOTO: AFP

Pakistan left-arm spinner Abdur Rehman celebrates the fall of another Kiwi wicket on a dramatic third day of the first Test at Seddon Park in Hamilton yesterday.

Indian venues short on time

AFP, New Delhi



Just six weeks before the cricket World Cup, several venues including India's most famous stadium are chaotic scenes of cranes and rubble, raising fears they will not be ready in time.

The tournament, being held in India, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh from February 19, will attract huge crowds and worldwide television audiences drawn by the best international players competing in 49 matches.

But it threatens to be a replay of New Delhi's recent Commonwealth Games, which instead of marking the arrival of a new, modern India on the world stage became a national embarrassment of delays, shoddy works, and alleged corruption.

As the cricket clock ticks down, anxiety is growing over the preparedness of organisers, with a ten-million-dollar upgrade to the 80,000-seater Eden Gardens stadium in Kolkata causing the biggest headache.

Amid the diggers, dust and bare concrete, hundreds of labourers wearing virtually no safety equipment are toiling day and night to finish off two new blocks of stands which are still covered in scaffolding.

Pillars rise out of the new stands awaiting roofs that have not been begun, while the club house is still under renovation, with many toilets broken or blocked. Old team photographs are covered in builders' dust.

Seats are not fitted in many tiers, the outer wall surrounding the venue has collapsed in sections, corporate boxes are far from complete, and parts of the stadium are still being dug up.

"It's impossible to complete such a massive project in just 11 months," Sajal Pramanik, manager of the Shapoorji Pallanji construction company which is building the two new blocks of seating, told AFP.

"It's not magic. We need time to complete the work. I think the roof on the eastern block cannot be fixed before February."

The ground -- one of the great pilgrimage sites of international cricket -- also has major security problems, with curious members of the public free to walk around it despite the risks of militant attacks in volatile South Asia.

Before the Commonwealth Games in October, the budget ballooned wildly out of control and poor facilities nearly triggered a boycott.

A police probe into corruption has since targeted senior figures, including the head of the Games' organising committee, who was questioned by detectives on Wednesday.

"Apart from the construction of the two new blocks (of seating), there are other problems at Eden Gardens," the Cricket Association of Bengal's joint secretary Biswarup De admitted to AFP.

"We are in talks with ICC officials to solve the problems such as sponsors' tickets and hospitality. We will leave no stone unturned."

Mumbai's Wankhede stadium, where the final will be held, is another venue rushing to be ready on time after two years of renovations at a cost of 55 million dollars.

A report by the International Cricket Council (ICC), the sport's governing body, leaked to the Deccan Herald newspaper last month named Wankhede, along with Eden Gardens, as not certain to meet a January 31 deadline for hand-over to the ICC.

The report said areas of concern include the floodlights' power supply, new glass that reflects into batsmen's eyes, the umpires' room put in the wrong place and unsuitable anti-doping facilities and medical rooms.

Lalchand Rajput, joint honorary secretary of the Mumbai Cricket Association, told AFP that targets to complete work by the end of 2010 had

been missed due to late monsoon rains, but the schedule was back on track.

"The ICC made some suggestions that we have taken into account and the construction is under control. They (the ICC) will be coming for an inspection on January 24," he said. "We should be ready."

New Delhi's ground -- the Feroz Shah Kotla -- had a crisis in 2009 when a game against Sri Lanka was abandoned after the pitch was deemed too dangerous, but inspectors have since passed the surface following a complete re-lay.

Sri Lanka is confident that its two brand new stadiums -- one in Kandy costing nine million dollars and another in Hambantota costing 13.6 million dollars -- will cope with the rigours of World Cup cricket and large crowds despite being largely untested.

"Contractors have assured us that the grounds, stands and surrounding areas will be finished by January 15," Sri Lanka Cricket secretary Nishantha Ranatunga said.

And in Bangladesh, which has never hosted a major sporting tournament before, officials have reassured excited fans that preparations are in full swing with 42 million dollars being spent sprucing up venues.

"We promise to deliver world-class facilities," Bangladesh Cricket Board spokesman Jalal Yunus said. "We'll ensure power supplies at the venues are uninterrupted, floodlights work and that the pitches are of the highest standard."

Tournament director Ratnakar Shetty told AFP that all venues would be completed and tidied up in time for the first ball to be bowled.

"We are monitoring continuously all 13 stadiums on a day-to-day basis. At Eden Gardens, there's about one stand that remains to be completed," he said.

Beautification

FROM PAGE 16

National Stadium to Bangabandhu National stadium divided into two zones will come under the project named "Improvement of road infrastructure and beautification works around Mirpur Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium and Bangabandhu National Stadium" Col Masud said.

Around 300 army personnel and some 36 civilians are working round the clock complete the work by the scheduled time, he also mentioned.

Mohammad Abdur Razzak, superintendent engineer of DCC said they would clear all the roadside billboards from Bangabandhu to Sher-e-Bangla that come into conflict with the ICC directives.

Shakib places

FROM PAGE 16

(Jamie Siddons), because (Mohammad) Salahuddin bhais is not around.

"Our main focus right now is on the Premier League. We will practice for the national team, but play on the match days for our respective clubs. From now on, every player will have the World Cup in their thoughts."

"They are also doing well so it is a plus for us. They will be confident in the World Cup if they score runs and take wickets beforehand. It hardly matters what cricket they play as long as they can take some confidence from it," said Shakib.

India win

FROM PAGE 16

it was always going to be an uphill struggle after De Villiers was run out by a direct hit from Suresh Raina.

Indian captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni admitted that conditions had suited India better than the hosts.

The match marked the last international appearance of South African fast bowler Ntini, who got a rousing reception from a crowd of about 47,000 but conceded 46 runs off four overs without taking a wicket.

He had the consolation of holding a good catch on the long-on boundary to end Sharma's innings.

Sharma, fresh from the news that he had been bought for two million dollars by IPL franchise Mumbai Indians, hit five fours and two sixes.

Suresh Raina hit 41 off 23 deliveries before being caught off the last ball of the innings going for a big hit.

SCORES IN BRIEF

INDIA: 168 for 6 (Kohli 28, Vijay 14, Sharma 53, Yuvraj 12, Raina 41, Dhoni 10 not out; Theron 2-29)

SOUTH AFRICA: 147 for 9 (Van Wyk 67, De Villiers 14, Miller 10, Botha 25, Parnell 14; Nehra 2-22, Pathan 2-22)

Result: India won by 21 runs.
Man-of-the-match: Rohit Sharma.

Div II cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

Farashganj Sporting Club won a thriller against Wari Club by just one run on the opening day of the Second Division Cricket League at the BKSP-3 ground yesterday.

In reply to Farashganj's 111 all out, Wari were all out for 110 runs with Adil taking 5-26.

At the adjacent field, Dhanmondi Cricket Academy (DCA) easily beat Badda Akota by seven wickets. Badda were restricted to 117 runs, DCA then rode on Sadikur's unbeaten 70 to reach the target in 16.5 overs.

In the day's other matches, Kalindi Kriya Chakra (123 all out) lost to Young Pegasus A (127-6) by four wickets and Talent Hunt (139 all out) lost to Uday Club (141-6) by the same margin.

Dust bowl

FROM PAGE 16

practice. They can improve the environment around the ground. I think this is the best practice facility in Bangladesh, in terms of ground and wicket," said Tigers skipper Shakib Al Hasan yesterday.

It is practically the best practice ground in Dhaka, and any player would love to train there. With a heavy cricket schedule ahead, many feel that BCB should plan diligently so that the ground is not overused.

Bangabandhu Gold Cup football

SPORTS REPORTER

Isdir Govt. Primary School of Narayanganj moved into the final of the Bangabandhu Gold Cup Primary School Football Tournament beating Charbaria Govt. Primary School of Barisal 2-0 in the semifinal at the bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

Selim and Sajjad struck one goal each for Isdir School, who will play the final against the winners of the other semifinal between Khulna's Kaila Primary School and Nishchintapur Primary School of Sylhet which takes place today.

The final will be held at the same venue on Thursday.

Ban on Jimmy, Faruque

SPORTS REPORTER

Striker Rasel Mahmud Jimmy and Faruque have been slapped with suspension and monetary punishment for their scuffle in the final of the Dhaka Bank Victory Day Hockey Tournament last week.

Jimmy has punished with two-tournament suspension and Tk 20,000 fine while Faruque has been suspended for one tournament with a fine of Tk 10,00. The tournament committee yesterday took this decision in light of the umpires' reports, said tournament committee vice chairman Anvir Adil.

During the final that took place on last Thursday, Sonali Bank's Jimmy hit Muktabihanga defender Faruque on the head with his stick.

Russel join

FROM PAGE 16

Rahmatganj launched numerous attacks but failed to get past an athletic Mamun Khan as proved immaculate under the Sheikh Russel bar. The former Ctg Mohammedan goalkeeper thwarted at least four chances to keep Rahmatganj at bay.

"I am happy to secure full three points as the boys defended the lead well and Charles, Moro and Abass Inusah defied their injuries to play for full 90 minutes," said Mahmudul Haq Liton, coach of Sheikh Russel KC.

But, Rahmatganj coach Ali Ashgar Nasir was not happy with the role of the referee.

"We were deprived of two penalties and the referee was very too lenient towards Sheikh Russel. If things keep going in that direction, the game will die," said Nasir.

School football

SPORTS REPORTER

Dolair Par High School and Siddheshwari Boys' High School won their respective matches of the Ashiyani City Dhaka Metropolitan School Football Tournament at the Abahani Club Ground in Dhanmondi yesterday.

Dolair Par beat BAF Shaheen College 2-0, courtesy of Tanvir and Faisal. Despite losing the match, Shaheen College made it to the semifinals as group runners up.

In the other match, a Tamal hattrick powered Siddheshwari to a 3-1 win over Govt. Science Annex High School.

The two semifinals will be held at the same venue tomorrow, where A Latif Charitable School will take on Shaheen College while Dolair Par will play against Dhaka Residential Model College.

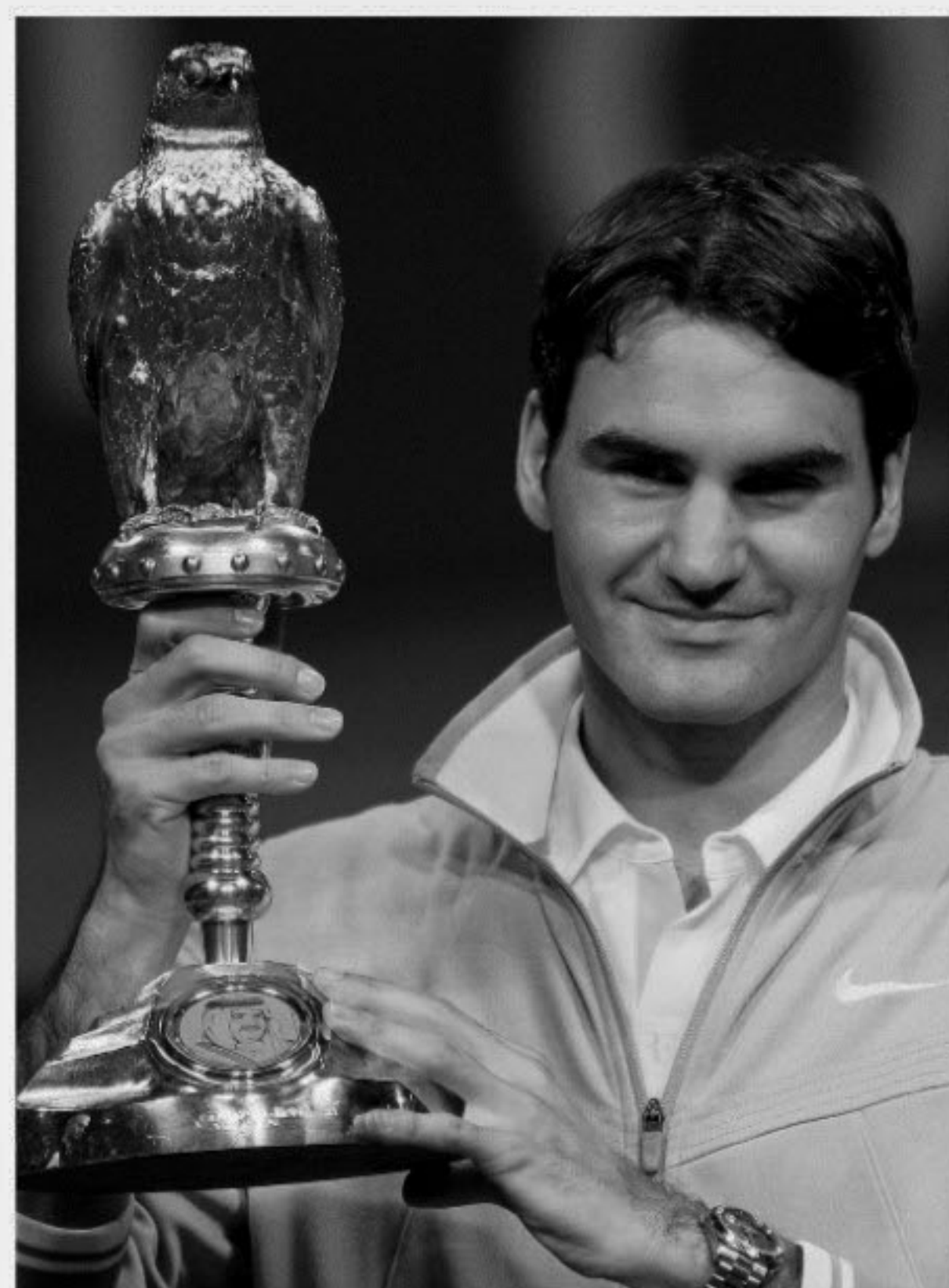


PHOTO: AFP

Swiss world number two Roger Federer poses with the winner's trophy after beating Russia's Nikolay Davydenko in the Qatar Open final in Doha on Saturday. Federer won 6-3, 6-4.

Qatar Open Federer's

AFP, Doha

Roger Federer hammered out his determination to hang on to his Australian Open title when he brushed aside Nikolay Davydenko to regain the Qatar Open crown on Saturday.

Last year the Russian beat the Swiss master on the way to the title.

This time world number two Federer overwhelmed the defending champion, who had put out top seed Rafael Nadal in Friday's semifinals, 6-3, 6-4 to complete the capture of the trophy without dropping a set.

He was assertive, consistent, and very intent on taking his 67th career title and third in Doha.

"It feels fantastic," said Federer.

"I have had a good week. I really appreciate the support I get here. I have had good preparation. I can't believe that I am on the board already this year."

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

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ACROSS

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8 "Hey, you!"
12 Raw minerals
13 Rhyming tribute
14 Lotion additive
15 Burgers and fries, often
17 City in Alaska
18 Loosen, as 38-Across
19 Nibbled persistently
21 Chum
22 Apiece
23 Tummy muscles
26 Chaps
28 Leavening agent
31 Tra—
33 Label
35 Opposed
36 Utah city

DOWN

1 Bean curd
2 Middle East nation
3 Netting, legally
4 Prevalent, legally
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6 Commotion
7 Topiary canvas, maybe
8 Cure-all
9 Pointer
10 A handful

11 Prepared to drive
16 Lather
20 Aye
23 Matter-horn, e.g.
24 Tavern
25 Display of anger that builds up
27 Apprehend
29 Pigpen
30 Dead heat
32 Stayed away from
34 So as to elicit an "Eee-wwww!"
37 Sphere
39 Family member
42 Postpone
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Solution time: 21 mins.

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CRYPTOQUIP

Q G C B X E L C Z E A J X Q H O C X
E S G C I O C E O W C X
G N B A Z N F X , H N X X R L C S G C J
Q H W W F C S A H X - O R I X C A .

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: IF THE TOPIC OF YOUR ORTHODONTIST HAPPENS TO COME UP ON THE SIDE, IS THAT MERELY INCI-DENTAL?

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: O equals P