

Dhaka build massive total

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

Mohammad Sharif and Mosharraf Hossain are better known for their exploits with the ball. But Sharif, a former national pacemen standing at the wrong end of this career, and left-arm spinner Mosharraf, whose prospect in the national team got unstuck following his involvement in the rebel ICL, combined together to produce something the National League has never experienced before.

The pair scored a staggering 236 runs for the ninth wicket against Rajshahi at the Fatullah Cricket Stadium as Dhaka floored a few records in the country's lone first class competition. The partnership in not only a record for the ninth wicket, but is also the highest stand for any wicket in this year's competition so far.

Sharif hammered a captain's knock of 147 not out while Mosharraf scored a fluent 104. With the pair reveling on a placid wicket Dhaka, resuming the second day on 245-8, raced to 500. Interestingly, it is the first time an innings produced 500 runs this year.

Sharif struck seven towering sixes and as many boundaries in his 230-ball vigil at the crease. Mosharraf on the other hand struck a dozen boundaries and a six in his polished 183-ball knock.

Rajshahi, in reply, finished the day on 93-3 with Anisur Rahman batting on 46. Dhaka paceman Mahabubul Alam picked up two quick wickets for 44 runs.

Meanwhile, at BKSP in Saver, Sylhet added only 72 runs to their overnight total before losing their last four wickets against a disciplined Chittagong attack.

Golam Mabud, who started the day with two runs away from half-century, was unbeaten on 60 but got little support at the other end. His 147 ball knock contained six boundaries.

Chasing Sylhet's 273, the port city outfit finished the day on 169-4 with opener Mahabubul Karim (62) and middle-order Mominul Haque (72) steadying innings after they lost two early wickets. Nabil Samad broke their 110-run partnership picking up Karim.

At the Zahur Ahmed Stadium in Chittagong, Khulna left the field on a strong footing on a day when rain allowed only 50 overs of play.

Chasing Khulna's 197, Barisal lost

half of the batting for just 93 runs.

Barisal, who started the second day in pursuit of a lead against Khulna, were in dire straits before rain interrupted and stopped play.

Bishwanath Halder removed opener Bikash Sharma for zero before he grabbed two more vital wickets of Shohag Gazi (2) and Asif Ahmed (0).

Fazle Rabbi (47) was the only batsman who made an effort to score but became of the Nizamuddin's two victims.

BRIEF SCORES

DHAKA: First inns 500 all out (Sharif 147*, Mosharraf 104; Sanjamul 3-184, Shubhashish 2-31).

RAJSHAHI: First inns 92-3 (Anisur 46*, Myshukur 20 ret'd. hurt; Mahabubul 2-44, Rony 1-12)

SYLHET: First inns 273 all out (Golam 60*, Rajin 55; Mamun 3-42, Kamrul 2-41).

CHITTAGONG: First inns 169-4 (Karim 62, Mominul 72; Shaker 2-52, Tapash 1-19)

KHULNA: First inns 197 all out (Nizamuddin 78, Jubaydur 40; Shohag 4-49, Shafaq 3-48).

BARISAL: First inns 93-5 (Fazle 47, Nasiruddin 17*; Bishwanath 3-25, Nizamuddin 2-20)

Bale in fitness race

AFP, London



Wales winger Gareth Bale is a doubt for Tottenham's Champions League quarterfinal against Real Madrid after sustaining a grade one hamstring strain while on international duty.

Bale, 21, withdrew from Gary Speed's squad to face England last Saturday after pulling up in training and he was sent for a scan on the injury Monday.

Results revealed the winger had suffered a grade one strain - the recovery time for which usually stands from between seven and 10 days.

Spurs will continue to monitor Bale's condition ahead of this weekend's match against Wigan, but his participation in the first leg of the Champions League quarter with

Real next Tuesday could be in doubt if he does not respond well to the conditioning of the injury.

"Gareth has returned to Spurs Lodge and took part in controlled straight-line running so we could assess him," Tottenham said in a statement.

"We sent him for an ultrasound scan examination this afternoon and that has confirmed the presence of a minor grade one hamstring strain.

"Gareth has reported no pain or stiffness after taking part in the running this morning and we shall continue to monitor him and see how he responds to his conditioning programme throughout the week."

Tottenham became embroiled in a club versus country row with Wales after the Football Association of Wales (FAW) claimed that Bale had suffered the injury before reporting for international duty.

Liza, Shakil become IM

SPORTS REPORTER

Shamima Akhter Liza became country's second Women International Master (WIM) after Rani Hamid, who won it in 1985, as she earned seven points from nine games in Asian Chess Zone 3.2 Championship in Sri Lanka yesterday.

Liza and Ranasinghe of Sri Lanka earned equal seven points but the latter finished top by virtue of a tie breaker. Liza had earned her first WIM norm last year during Six Seasons Women's International Rating Chess in Cox's Bazar.

Apart from Liza, FIDE master Abu Sufian Shakil also earned his third and final norm of International Master from the championship as Shakil secured 6.5 points from nine matches to finish third in the men's section where GM Ziaur Rahman finished top to qualify for the World Chess Championship.

Shakil had earned his first IM norm back in 2009 from the National Chess Championship and then secured the second one from a competition in Indian state Orissa last year, according to information provided by Bangladesh Chess Federation.

SCHOOL KABADDI

Jamalpur, Narail champions

SPORTS REPORTER

Jamalpur and Narail became champions in the girls' and boys' section of the Standard Chartered National School Kabaddi Championship yesterday.

Jamalpur Govt Girls High School thrashed Rajshahi Bahumukhi High School 41-26 with three 'lona' in the girls' final while Narail's Barnar Dakhil Madrasa beat Mymensingh Palsha Adarsha High School 47-45 with three 'lona' in the boys'.

Secretary for Youth and Sports Mahubul Ahmed distributed prizes among the winners.

Mother of all

FROM PAGE 16 Pakistan, who've yet to register an individual hundred at this event, have lost all four of their World Cup matches against India.

However, Hafeez said: "Pakistan has not defeated India in the World Cup but in the last 12 years, Australia also had not lost a single World Cup game. But then they lost to us (by four wickets) and to India.

"There is no point thinking about the past. We think about the day; whoever the opponent is, we try to win the day."

A Sincere Apology

FROM PAGE 16 enough time to make the encounter on the 30th.

But when he went to the embassy to collect his visa on the given date, he was informed that his visa had still not arrived and he would have to check back again tomorrow. At that stage, a one-day delay was not definitive but when he went back again on the 24th, a Thursday, he was informed that his visa had still not arrived.

With two days lost on the weekend, things got hasty but even more frustratingly, on the 27th, he was again informed that his visa had not arrived. There was seemingly no way to deal with this, no way to get in touch with any authorities and no way to gather more information than was possible through the visa officers who handed you the visa.

After two more days of struggle, the visa finally arrived on the afternoon of the 29th.

As such, this leaves our reporter with no available flights to connect to Mohali in time for the encounter and hence we will have to sit this one out.

We apologize again for not being able to give our readers the best possible coverage, but rest assured that this was at no fault of our own; we had the best intentions at heart.

One would have thought that a tri-national World Cup would be the first steps to greater regional integration. In truth, we already have a reporter in Colombo for the New Zealand-Sri Lanka semifinal and he had no issues with visa processing.

However, the draconian measures of the Indian High Commission has prevented our reporter from a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity and, more importantly, deprived our thousands of readers from first-hand coverage.

Yet again, I apologize.

- SPORTS EDITOR

Siddons excited by Aus

FROM PAGE 18 the one-off games in the World Cup, particularly a couple of them. But I thought we had a great World Cup, apart from those two games and, now Australia is coming, we all look forward to that, the boys are very keen to bounce back from the last game we had, which was a bit of a disaster but not the end of the world.

"Let's put it this way, in the four other World Cup games we made more than 200 runs. In all World Cups before that we have only ever done that three times. So we failed twice but we succeeded four times. We won three out of six this time, and last World Cup we won three out of nine games. So, not such a bad performance. People should look at the stats, not just one or two games that a really

young cricket team failed in, or failed under pressure. Four times we made more than 200, never been done before," said Siddons, defending his team's performance.

There have also been whispers that there is hardly any chance for the Australian to get another extension from the board.

"We've had a chat, yeah, and there will be decisions and announcements made soon. Put it this way, I know what I'm doing over the next two or three months," he said when asked about his recent meeting with the BCB president AHM Mustafa Kamal.

In the end there was an obvious question: Who will win today's high-profile match. "Pakistan are very exciting, but India are a little more professional I think. India will win," was the prediction from the Bangladesh coach.

Dhoni unfazed by form

FROM PAGE 16 "I have been batting quite well, some of the situations have not been good for really playing flamboyant cricket. Like against Bangladesh, I could not get to bat. Also some shots went straight to fielders.

"What is important, especially in India is when you are batting at five, six or seven, if the top order scores well, it does not give much opportunity to the lower order.

"The last game (against Australia) was ideal where I could have got good runs, which were also needed then, but I could not get them."

The 29-year-old added he was proud to captain India, saying: "It's an honour to lead the side. If you take a pressure job, you will find yourself in a pressure cooker."

This match is being seen by some observers as a way to start an improvement in diplomatic relations between feuding nuclear powers India and Pakistan.

But Dhoni was adamant his team would just concentrate on the job at hand.

"It depends on what you mean by hype, media, sponsors, politicians -- we are not getting involved.

"We are expected to play good cricket. The biggest, distinguished guests will be there to see the game, but they are here to enjoy cricket, so we have to be at our best."

India Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and Pakistani counterpart Yousuf Raza Gilani are both set to be among a capacity crowd on Wednesday.

"That will be a distraction if looking forward to that, that's the role I have been handed," Dhoni explained.

"Somebody has to lose this game, irrespective of political talking.



Japan striker Shinji Okazaki (R) scores past J-league select goalie Seigo Naezakaki during a charity match to raise money for the earthquake and tsunami disaster victims at the Nagai Stadium yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

Fundraiser for victims

Football

AFP, Osaka

Japanese internationals past and present battled head-on in Osaka Tuesday to raise funds for victims of the country's devastating earthquake and tsunami at an all-star football match.

Before a roaring sell-out crowd at the 47,000-capacity Nagai Stadium, Alberto Zaccheroni's Blue Samurai beat a J-League select side, including many former internationals, 2-1.

Gamba Osaka midfielder Yasuhiro Endo opened the scoring with a free kick in the 15th minute and Stuttgart striker Shinji Okazaki doubled the score five minutes later for the Blue Samurai.

But Kazuyoshi Miura, the oldest J-League player at 44, pulled one back on 82 minutes when he took a headed pass from Marcus Tulio Tanaka in the box and slotted beyond substitute Samurai goalkeeper Masaaki Higashiguchi.

"It was your support which gave us great power when we usually fought on the pitch," Japan captain and Wolfsburg midfielder Makoto Hasebe said as the players gathered on the pitch before a silent prayer and the 19:20 pm (10:20am

GMT) kick-off.

"Now it is our turn to support you. Believing in the power of football, we will play our heart out," said the 27-year-old, one of the 12 players released by European clubs for the event.

The charity match, following the catastrophe which devastated the country's northeast coast, brought together the Blue Samurai for the first time since they lifted a record fourth Asian Cup title in Qatar just two months ago.

It was held under floodlights as western Japan has been spared the rolling blackouts caused by damage to power facilities, including a nuclear plant some 580 kilometres (360 miles) north-east of Osaka.

The J-League has shut down its regular season for five rounds until mid-April to save the electricity used to stage night matches.

Supporters, who paid up to 5,000 yen (\$60) a head, chanted: "Nippon, Nippon." Banners read "Gambare (Hang on), Japan," "You'll Never Walk Alone" or "World Football Family, Arigato (Thank you)."

Proceeds from the match will go to the disaster areas, according to the Japan Football Association.

Endo's 20-metre free-kick came after

CSKA Moscow midfielder Keisuke Honda was fouled by Kawasaki's Kengo Nakamura outside the box. Okazaki trapped a through pass and slotted past former international goalkeeper Seigo Narazaki.

Zaccheroni, who took over the Blue Samurai after they reached the last 16 at last year's World Cup, and J-League manager Dragan Stokjovic, the Serbian manager of league champions Nagoya Grampus, made several substitutions.

Stokjovic sent on Miura, the 1993 Asian Footballer of the Year, and former Celtic star Shunsuke Nakamura, 32, in the second half.

"Technically, it turned out to be a great, quality match with a plenty of quality players," said 57-year-old Zaccheroni, a former AC Milan boss.

"For the J-League side, Miura scored a goal which symbolised his career and I'm pleased," he said. "I believe we could show what everybody in Japanese football can do as one."

Stokjovic, 46, said that the disaster victims must have realised "they were not alone. We are always with them."

Prior to the match, supporters donated a total 15 million yen (\$184,000) while attending open practice sessions over three days.

Afridi upbeat

FROM PAGE 16

He added: "I think the boys are doing a great job. We've been going through a very tough time for the last seven, eight months but we are playing as a unit."

Pakistan have been forced to play all their matches away from home since the country was turned into a 'no-go area' for the world's top teams after armed gunmen attacked the Sri Lanka team bus in Lahore in March 2009.

"It is very important, this World Cup matters a lot to us and we try to bring cricket back home," Afridi explained.

And he insisted the pressure was all on India, who, like Pakistan, are bidding

for a second World Cup title.

"We are not the most favourite team for this competition, India is the most favourite team and we have played above expectations. We are very confident and we are enjoying our cricket."

Wednesday's match has been billed as a contest between India's batsmen and Pakistan's bowlers but Afridi said: "You can say that but I know my team is very balanced.

"We've got some good experienced players, with youngsters, and our bowlers are doing a great job."

The 31-year-old Afridi was especially pleased by the temperament shown by

some of his side's younger players.

"A few of the players are playing really mature cricket especially the youngsters, (batsman) Umar Akmal and (off-spinner) Saeed Ajmal."

Afridi has been leading from the front, but as a leg-spinning wicket-taker rather than as a dynamic batsman, which is how he made his name in international cricket.

He is the leading bowler at this World Cup with 21 wickets.

"In the last three or four years I have really focused on my bowling because in batting, I don't know, sometimes I perform and sometimes I don't," said the captain.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

1 Writer Kingsley
5 Petrol
8 Spaces
12 Swag
13 Have bills
14 Ear-related
15 One present
17 Maestro Klem-perer
18 Barber-shop request
19 Humble
21 Tend texts
24 Foolish one
25 Read, in a way
28 Lowers the lights
30 Definite article
33 Mr. Sajak
34 Expense record
35 A billion years
36 Illustrations
37 Addict
38 Probability

DOWN

1 "Oh, woe!"
2 Wool eater
3 Tittle
4 Spielberg or Tyler
5 Deity
6 Shock and—
7 Appear
8 Merchandise
9 Swore (to)
10 Peach stones
11 Highlander
16 Homer's neighbor
20 Brewer's oven
22 Mid-month date
23 River through Rome
43 Hatteras, for one
44 On the briny
45 Smear
47 In due time
48 Landlord's due
49 Turns blue?
52 Give it a go
53 Dead heat

Solution time: 21 mins.

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CRYPTOQUIP

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H V G C F K P Q L'W J S M G - K L T B.

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: ANIMATED DISNEY MOVIE ABOUT A BALLERINA WHO EVERYBODY THOUGHT WAS PRETTY: "LEAPING BEAUTY." Today's Cryptoquip Clue: W equals M