



Scene from yesterday's National Volleyball Championship final which saw Bangladesh Army defeat Bangladesh Air Force at the Dhaka Volleyball Stadium.

'Bangladesh can learn from Sri Lanka'

Cricket

SPORTS DESK

Renowned Australian cricket writer Peter Roebuck, in a piece that appeared on Cricinfo yesterday, focused on the troubles facing some of international cricket's underperforming teams, paying special attention to Bangladesh while also mentioning Zimbabwe and the West Indies. Bangladesh's underperformance combined with their massive interest and adequate talent is what makes Roebuck, the former Surrey captain who later emigrated to Australia, single them out. The following are excerpts from the article.

"Of course the problems in the tottering nations vary and it can be left to the local experts to provide a compelling analysis. From a distance Bangladesh is the most disconcerting.

Admittedly the game's newest Test nation staggers under the weight of poverty and tragedy. poverty has a profound effect on the well-being of a game. Even so Bangladesh seems to have enough talent at its disposal to make a bigger impact. Instead the national team remain lightweight."

While admitting that a week's visit (Roebuck was in Bangladesh for a week to cover the World Cup) is not enough to form concrete

impressions, Roebuck did point out two issues that "stood out". Both were related to the team's inexperience. He also had some sympathetic words for young captain Shakib Al Hasan.

"The first came from a headline appearing in a local paper a few days after the team had been knocked out. It was a story announcing that Shakib Al Hasan, the team's captain, was celebrating his 24th birthday that day. And he has been in office for quite some time."

"Shakib is developing his skills and at the same time trying to satisfy a vast audience and maintain optimism in the dressing room. It is a tall order for anyone, let alone an inexperienced youngster."

Not to say that he was the wrong choice as captain...Examining the Bangladesh team, it's not easy to find an alternative. Simply the side is young and somewhat naïve. The results remind observers that ability alone is never enough."

The second problem he identified was the dearth of quality senior cricketers to provide a guiding hand, which according to the writer was also tied to an ineffective domestic structure.

"Clearly the main problem in Bangladesh cricket is the lack of proven senior players, men to rely on in tough times. Give them the Husseys, for example, and in a trice the side might seem altogether harder to beat. No country can control the production of champions but a core of senior players ought to be possible. It is the lack of them that holds Bangladesh back."

"But losses to the ICL and a lazy lifestyle alone cannot explain the weakness in the senior ranks of Bangladesh cricket. Clearly the domestic cricket is not sufficiently demanding, and so does not prepare players for the next step, let alone the highest challenges....Nor is it easily remedied. Indeed it takes a lot of hard work and investment in pitches, schools, coaches and so forth."

Roebuck did hint at a way forward by looking at Sri Lanka as a model for improvement, and celebrated the system that has produced unique cricketers like Muttiah Muralidaran, Lasith Malinga and Ajantha Mendis, despite sharing many of the hardships, both political and economic, with Bangladesh.

"Somehow the Lankans have managed to promote diversity and imagination and along the way to produce a steady stream of high-class performers. Like the Indians, they have been lucky with their senior players, but it cannot begin and end with them. No team in living memory, and none, it may be supposed, outside works of fiction, has contained as many original players and characters. Just to watch them bowl is to accept the point."

"Whatever the causes - and doubtless several others could be mentioned - Sri Lanka's performance has been impressive and can serve as a model for those still striving to make their mark. Both the ICC and individual boards ought to take note."



PETER ROEBUCK

Kohli downs Delhi

AFP, New Delhi

Virat Kohli smashed a brisk half-century to help Royal Challengers Bangalore post a three-wicket victory over Delhi Daredevils in an Indian Premier League match on Tuesday.

He hit two sixes and eight fours in his 38-ball 56 as Bangalore surpassed Delhi's total of 160-6 with three balls to spare for their third win in seven matches of the Twenty20 tournament.

Bangalore needed 22 runs to win in the last three overs, but skipper Daniel Vettori (18 not out) and Syed Mohammad (13 not out) held their nerve under pressure to see their team home.

It was Delhi's fourth defeat in six matches. Kohli looked in excellent touch from the beginning, cracking four boundaries in an over from seamer Irfan Pathan before completing his half-century off just 31 balls.

He put on 82 for the second wicket with West Indies opener Chris Gayle after the first-ball dismissal of Sri Lankan Tillakaratne

Dilshan. Gayle, who hit a century in the previous match, scored a 14-ball 26.

Delhi fought back when they dismissed Gayle, South African AB de Villiers (five) and Kohli in the space of 13 runs to reduce Bangalore to 96-4. Kohli fell in the 10th over, bowled by South African paceman Morne Morkel.

Morkel then removed Saurabh Tiwary (18) and Abhimanyu Mithun in the same over to finish with 3-25 off four overs.

Australian James Hopes earlier hit a 43-ball 54 with the help of seven fours as Delhi reached a competitive total at the Ferozeshah Kotla ground.

SCORES IN BRIEF

DELHI DAREDEVILS: 160-6 in 20 overs (Hopes 54, Sehwag 25, Rao 24; Mithun 2-37)
ROYAL CHALLENGERS BANGALORE: 161-7 in 19.3 overs (Kohli 56, Gayle 26; Morkel 3-25)

Result: Royal Challengers Bangalore won by three wickets.
Man-of-the-match: Virat Kohli.

BFF confirms Argentina

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BFF House yesterday. "It will not be an exhibition match, but a FIFA international friendly match between Argentina and Nigeria, so in line with FIFA regulations, I cannot disclose the amount we need to get them," said the BFF boss.

However, it has been learnt that some Tk 30 to 35 crore will be needed to get both the teams and the payments will be cleared in three to four installments.

The match will take place on September 6 at the BNS while Argentina will arrive here on September 3, one day after playing the match in Kolkata.

Salahuddin said that he would only let the media know about the program of Argentina and Nigeria after signing the agreement with Indian agency Celebrity Group, who have previously brokered the deal to get Diego Maradona to Kolkata.

"The contract is bound by the appearance of Messi, Di Maria, Tevez and that means the first choice Argentina team," said Salahuddin. He also informed that Argentina would

hold two practice sessions one which would be for the local journalists and ticket-holders and the other which will be a closed door practice session.

Queried about the reasons behind bringing Argentina to Bangladesh spending a lot of money, the BFF boss said, "The BFF will not put a single penny as money will come from outside and if we can make profit through it, it will be put into the development programme."

He also pointed out two more reasons saying that the move would increase football awareness for the next generation.

"If they can see a player like Messi play in Bangladesh as well as see the standard of football, then they will think that there is future for them in football and they will take football seriously. This will also put Bangladesh on the global map and show all that we are capable of holding an international friendly match."

Salahuddin also indicated that if they manage to hold the friendly match successfully, then he would try to hold an international friendly match each year.

Sk Jamal conquer Abahani

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put his header on a cross from a Femi Orunnimi.

The start of the second half saw Abahani showing more of an urgency to get back in the match and they made a couple of decent attacks. On both occasions Twum Frank happily failed to find the target.

But such has been the goal scoring form for the Ghanaian striker that he wasn't going to miss on when presented with a third chance on the 64th minute. The hard work was done through by his compatriot Awudu Ibrahim who dodged past a defender to advance into the box before nutmegging two others in one exquisite turn

and having a shot at goal which came right off the bar and fell kindly for Frank to complete the job. It was the 9th goal in the ongoing league for the lightfooted Ghanaian.

When it looked like Abahani were making all the right moves, in a sudden stroke of ill luck, all their chances evaporated. A failed attempt of clearance from defender Ashraf Mahmud found Enamul Haque, who had been on the field five minutes, with only the keeper to beat and the lanky forward chipped the ball over the keeper to ensure Sheikh Jamal three valuable points and taste of a first victory over big brothers Abahani.

Abahani: Twum Frank, Samad Yussif, Yusuf Aminu, Pranotosh Kumar (C), Mehedi

Akram lands chief's

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I firmly believe that we will enjoy full freedom," said Akram.

Minhaz was also excited and said that he was looking forward to the new challenge.

"I didn't have any role to play as a coach for the last eight months, so I am really excited that I have been appointed a selector. I am looking forward to it and hope that I can do something in this new capacity," said Minhaz.

On the other hand Bashar hoped that the new committee would be able to work as a team to play a positive role in Bangladesh's cricket.

"I'm really excited and I must thank the board for giving me an opportunity to share my experience as a selector. I have a good relationship with the new generation players and hope it will be helpful for me," said Bashar.

Army lift nat'l v'ball title

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Army clinched the men's national volleyball crown while Ansar & VDP clinched the women's crown beating their respective opponents in the finals at the Dhaka Volleyball Stadium yesterday.

This was the second consecutive and the 13th national triumph for Army in the 25th Men's national competitions since its inception in 1973.

In the men's finals, Army scored a straight 29-27, 25-16, 25-11 points victory over Bangladesh Air Force while Ansar & VDP also managed a straight 25-18, 25-23, 25-18 win over BJMC.

Chittagong University finished third in the men's group while Rajshahi DSA earned the third spot in the women's section.

ATN Bangla advisor Nawajesh Khan was chief guest handed over the prizes to the winners at the end of the game, while Walton deputy director FM Iqbal bin Anwar was present as special guest.

NCL final May 10

SPORTS REPORTER

The National Cricket League final between Dhaka and Rajshahi has been rescheduled to take place on May 10 instead of April 29 at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium.

The shift in the final match was decided after both the finalists requested the tournament committee to shift the match.

It was done so that they could play the final with full-strength sides, with their players participating in the Bangladesh-A team tour of South Africa and the Academy home series due to be back before the revised date.

Club Cup final on May 7

SPORTS REPORTER

Rajshahi's Mukti Shingha will face Sylhet's Bir Bikram Yeamin Krira Chakra in the Inter District Club Cup Cricket final on May 7 at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium.

Fletcher India's

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challenge will come from the media. He has never really understood how it works."

Fletcher has recently served as a consultant to South Africa and New Zealand.

Shehzad paying back

Cricket

AFP, Bridgetown

Ahmed Shehzad has thanked the Pakistan management team for showing confidence in him following his World Cup calamity which almost cost him a trip to the Caribbean.

The 19-year-old opening batsman was speaking after he made 102 -- his second one-day international century -- to lead Pakistan to a seven-wicket victory over West Indies on Monday to take a 2-0 lead in the five-match series.

Shehzad failed to score consistently in five matches in the World Cup, and was dropped, leading to questions about his place in the squad for the tour of the Caribbean.

But the Pakistan selectors and the team management continued to show faith in him and Monday's hundred was a down-payment on that investment.

Shehzad has become the latest player to hail the visitors' limited-overs captain Shahid Afridi for instilling a sense of self-belief and self-confidence in him.

"I would like to thank my team management for the way they have supported me," he said.

"Shahid is the man to follow. He is giving confidence to every single individual -- I think it is amazing."

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

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|--------------------------------|---|---|--------------------------------------|
| ACROSS | 43 Father Time's prop | DOWN | 11 Divorce settlement portion |
| 1 Writer Kingsley | 46 Festive parties | 1 "Mamma Mia" group | 16 Depot (Abbr.) |
| 5 Hot tub | 50 Exile isle | 2 Man-handle | 20 Mexican money |
| 8 Adam and Eve's son | 51 "Who Wants to Be a Millionaire" | 3 "do for now" | 22 "Star —" |
| 12 Dog owner's chore | 54 Gridiron terminus | 4 Cheap merchandise | 23 Beelzebub |
| 13 Work unit | 55 Bikini half | 5 Witness chart | 25 Funny Leno |
| 14 Burning heap | 56 Great Lake | 6 Crowbar | 26 Back when |
| 15 High score in darts | 57 Shrek is one | 7 Census statistics | 27 Wonka creation |
| 17 Ogler's look | 58 Stitch | 8 Gymnastic maneuver | 29 Vacillate |
| 18 Apportion | 59 Time-table, for short | 9 Something superficially attractive | 31 Feedbag morsel |
| 19 Kitchen rack fillers | | 10 Genealogy chart | 32 Coloring agent |
| 21 "Memory" musical | | | 34 Slamdance |
| 24 Greek vowel | | | 38 Trumpet sounds |
| 25 Hoist | | | 40 "— of Two Cities" |
| 28 Beams of light | | | 42 Early bird? |
| 30 Agree silently | | | 43 Lily variety |
| 33 — Khan | | | 44 Stop up |
| 34 "Likewise" | | | 45 Recedes |
| 35 Rotation duration | | | 47 Caprice |
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Solution time: 21 mins.

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CRYPTOQUIP

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O F L M N O J H ' M F Y H F - A J Q C ?

Yesterday's Cryptquip: IF A GREEN LIQUEUR IS ALL SOME FOLKS THINK ABOUT, I'D SAY THEY MIGHT BE QUITE ABSINTHE-MINDED.
Today's Cryptquip Clue: H equals T