

Star SPORT

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Tension Mat 'Lee'

Cricketer Brett Lee strummed the guitar and sang some popular rock numbers at Kolkata Knight Riders' promotional event. The 'KKR Tension Mat Le' event was organised at a shopping mall in the city which saw a huge audience turn up to watch Lee perform on Sunday. Lee also distributed some T-shirts among the audience signed by him. The audience was thrilled to see the musical side of Lee. "I am feeling very excited. Brett Lee was great. Even the band, which played with him, was great. Everyone played great, even the cheerleaders," said Aniruddha Pal, a cricket fan.

— INTERNET



Rubic sets eyes on Pakistan

SPORTS REPORTER

Croat coach Robert Rubcic seeks at least a 10-day practice period before facing Pakistan in the World Cup pre-qualifiers next month. The Bangladesh football coach made this point as he watched the Bangladesh League fixture between Muktijoddha Sangsad and Arambagh yesterday after returning from his one-month holiday.

"I need at least 10 days to train them before the home match against Pakistan and I will talk to the authority concerned," said Rubcic, who arrived here on Sunday after having spent a one-month holiday in Croatia.

The coach informed that they have already chosen 32 players including three new players with the assistant coach Roxy, who watched the just concluded Independence Cup football tournament.

"Still, I have more than one month's time to watch those players again," said Rubcic. "But, the actual problem lies with the players, most of them sit out on the bench for the clubs in the

SEE PAGE 17 COL 4



Muktijoddha striker James Moga (L) is joined in his celebration of a goal by his fellow goalscorer Mithun Chowdhury during their 3-0 defeat of Arambagh at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

Pilot's final flight

NCL final between Dhaka-Rajshahi from today

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

Former national captain and wicketkeeper Khaled Mashud will play his last first-class match when Rajshahi take on Dhaka in the five-day final of the 12th National Cricket League which begins today at the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium in Mirpur.

"I will lead the team for the last time as I have decided to quit first-class cricket to create opportunities for the young players," said Mashud, who retired from international cricket in September 2008, yesterday.

"What I felt is that now is best time for me to say goodbye [to first-class cricket] because a number of good players are in the Rajshahi side now. When I started playing the National League I was the only player from the Rajshahi side who represented the national team but the scenario has now changed completely," he added.

The seasoned campaigner expressed his satisfaction about the fact that Rajshahi were now the top side in the competition. "It's a great satisfaction that I am leaving Rajshahi in a position of strength. I think the beauty of the Rajshahi team lies in its team spirit," said Mashud.

Rajshahi, who won the last match against Dhaka in the second-leg encounter, go into the match with a hope of hat-trick of titles in the country's lone first-class competition and Mashud was looking forward to sign off on a high.

"We are going to play the match with full strength side as the national players are all set to play the final. It will be great for me if I

can lead the team to the title and I have confidence in my team," hoped Mashud.

The veteran wicketkeeper, who is more known by his nickname "Pilot", however expressed his dissatisfaction over the way the country's major tournament is being run; he was especially frustrated about this year's competition.

"There have been a lot of complaints about this competition. I must admit things got better, but still this tournament is yet to reach a standard, mainly because of poor financial package. There have been a lot of complaints on team selection. It's my opinion that the cricket board must have involved the national selectors in the selection process until the divisional cricket associations set their feet in," explained Mashud.

"From my experience what I can say is that this tournament deserves more attention from the authorities. You can't achieve anything without improving the standard of this competition. We have to have a special planning about the League," suggested Mashud.

Dhaka captain Mohammad Sharif said that everybody would miss Mashud in the competition.

"He is a great character of our cricket. Young cricketers can learn many things from Pilot bhai. No way can one raise question about his dedication. Almost single-handedly he led Rajshahi to the top position in the country's cricket," said Sharif.

Sharif accepted that Rajshahi were the better team, but he was hopeful about his team's chances of regaining the title.

"Rajshahi is the better team, but ours is

SEE PAGE 17 COL 5

Muktis maintain lead

SPORTS REPORTER

Leaders Muktijoddha Sangsad returned to winning ways in the Grameenphone Bangladesh League with a comprehensive 3-0 win over Arambagh KS at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday. Mithun Chowdhury and James Moga are now tied neck and neck as joint top-scorers in the league as both of them struck against the mid-table side while Russian midfielder Boris Kochikin scored in between to ensure Muktijoddha's hundred percent success against Arambagh this season.

The 11th victory in 14 matches meant Muktijoddha widened their lead to 35 points, six points ahead of Abahani, who have however played a match less than the All Reds. Arambagh have 16 points to be in seventh position.

In the day's other match, Brothers Union defeated visitors Feni Soccer Club 2-0 at the Bishreshtha Shaheed Mostafa Kamal Stadium.

Feni came into the game on the back of two successive victories but they found the going hard against the Gopibagh-based outfit, who went ahead in stoppage time of the first half with Tanmoy Hossain Taru opening the account.

After resumption, Argentine midfielder Danilo Rafael struck his league's fourth goal to seal Brothers fifth victory that pushed them into fifth position with 19 points from 14 matches while Feni Soccer remained stuck to ninth position with 12 points.

At the BNS, Muktijoddha Sangsad came out from their previous match's defensive strategy where they played out a 1-1 draw against star-studded Sheikh Jamal and took only 14 minutes to find the net as Zahed Parvez whipped in a cross from the right flank for fit-again Mithun Chowdhury to find the back of the net after two games with a spectacular diving header.

Seven minutes later, Mithun once again connected from a similar cross by Zahed but his glancing header drifted away. A minute later Arambagh came close to levelling the margin

but Benjamin Cooper saw his shot to the far post saved by the stretching hand of goalkeeper Biplob Bhattacharjee for a corner.

After resumption, Muktijoddha almost ensured their victory within five minutes after striking two goals.

Sudanese striker Moga advanced into the box from the right side and released a superb square-pass to Boris, who just tapped the ball home in the 47th minute and the Russian striker then fed the ball for Moga three minutes later.

From the outside of the right-hand box, Boris pushed a low-drive toward the six-yard box and the tall Moga poked the ball with his left foot past goalkeeper Mitul Hasan. The strike made him joint top-scorer with Mithun Chowdhury on 13 goals in 14 games.

The margin could have been widened had Moga given up his selfish tendency as he squandered at least two opportunities while going alone despite having better options in Boris and Mithun with him.

Liza back on top

SPORTS REPORTER

Defending champion IWM Shamima Akter Liza returned to the joint lead in the Arlin 32nd National Women's Chess Championship after Nazrana Khan Eva shared points with IWM Rani Hamid in the sixth round game at the Bangladesh Chess Federation yesterday.

Liza, who slipped from the top by playing out a draw in her fourth game and allowed Eva to go ahead of her, defeated Jahanara Haque Runu in the sixth round while Eva drew with Rani to share the lead with five points each.

Rani with 4.5 points is now in second position along with Sharmin Akter Shirin, who beat Dilara Jahan Nupur. Mahmuda Haque Moli beat Masuda Begum, Arifa Khatun beat Rokshana Titlee while FIDE master Zakia Sultana beat Tanjina Akter Tani.



Mahmuda Haque Moli is deep in thought as she ponders her next move during her victory over Masuda Begum in the 32nd National Women's Chess Championship at the Chess federation yesterday.

Super Kings' seventh win

SPORT DESK



Chennai Super Kings' powerful batting line-up was back to top form as they beat Rajasthan Royals by 63 runs in an IPL game at the Sawai Man Singh Stadium in Jaipur last night.

On a pitch that wasn't the usual slow-and-low surface, typical innings from Chennai's top four set up a difficult 197-run target for Rajasthan, who made 133 runs in 19.3 overs.

Ajinkya Rahane's 36-ball 52 was the only solace as he struck seven boundaries and kept the Royals in hunt. But his dismissal to new boy Dwayne Bravo in the fifteenth over spelled their doom as the required run-rate soared.

Earlier, Michael Hussey provided the initial impetus as Murali Vijay took his time to find his range. Hussey relied on power-hits only for the rare heaves to midwicket, otherwise it was more about touch and placement. Just as the man averaging above 50 in the IPL seemed set for another half-century, he was foxed by Johan Botha's full delivery.

There was no let-up even after the Suresh Raina-Vijay partnership ended as skipper MS Dhoni came out blazing. He thrashed Siddharth Trivedi onto the roof of the first tier for his first six before unleashing a series of shots.

BRIEF SCORES

CHENNAI: 196-3 in 20 overs (Vijay 53, Hussey 46; Botha 1-23). RAJASTHAN: 133 all out in 19.3 overs (Rahane 52; Bollinger 3-22).

Result: Chennai won by 63 runs.

ICC's crucial meeting at Lord's from today

Cricket

AFP, London

The future of Test and one-day cricket, as well as the controversial umpire's decision review system (UDRS), will be among the subjects up for discussion when the International Cricket Council (ICC) cricket committee gathers at Lord's for a two-day meeting starting here on Tuesday.

The ICC would like UDRS, first introduced in 2009, to be used in all one-day internationals (ODIs) as was the case at the recent World Cup in the Indian subcontinent.

But India have been opposed to the system almost from its inception and a controversial lbw decision during their World Cup tied match with England, where England's Ian Bell was given not out even though replays suggested he was in fact lbw, is unlikely to have softened their stance.

Bell was rerieved under the '2.5 metre' rule' which says that if a batsman is at least that far down the pitch he cannot be given out on review as the available technology is not sufficiently accurate at that distance.

Prior to the World Cup, concerns were expressed that ODIs were becoming increasingly 'formulaic' contests.

Suggestions the ICC committee will look at for reviving the 50-over game include split innings, possible use of two new balls per innings and allowing bowlers to bowl more than the current ODI maximum of 10 overs each.

Floodlit Tests have long been seen as the way to revive declining worldwide spectator interest in the five-day game, which has suffered from falling attendances outside of traditional strongholds such as England in recent years.

Committee chairman Clive Lloyd, the former West Indies captain, played in similarly floodlit matches during the 'rebel' World Series Cricket tournament in Australia in the late 1970s.

But then as now, the problem of finding a ball that wears at the same rate as the traditional red leather cricket ball -- unsuitable for use under floodlights where a white ball and coloured clothing are now the norm for day/night one-dayers -- has proved a problem.

Various different coloured balls have been trialled around the world but the first day/night Test match still seems some way off.

A white ball has generally been perceived as giving bowlers too much of an edge in anything longer than a floodlit one-day match and

SEE PAGE 17 COL