

BOA starts Olympic Day celebrations

SPORTS REPORTER

To celebrate Olympic Day, the Bangladesh Olympic Association has undertaken an elaborate programme that started yesterday through tree plantation.

BOA president Kutubuddin Ahmed inaugurated the programme planting a tree at the premises of the BOA headquarters which will be followed by the same being done in 100 schools, sports federations and stadiums.

A seminar on sports and environment was also held at the BOA auditorium yesterday with Zahid Ahsan Rasel, the chairman of parliamentary standing committee on youth and sports, present as chief guest.

Olympic Day is celebrated worldwide tomorrow to mark the foundation of International Olympic Council and the BOA will hold Olympic Day Run in all 64 districts including the capital tomorrow as previously it was being held only in Dhaka and the divisional cities.

Bangladesh has been celebrating the day since 1987, though programmes in the previous years were limited to only holding the Olympic Day Run.

The programme also includes art competition, sports programme for orphans, intellectual-challenged children, blood donation and a photo exhibition.

Mishra fined for dissent

AFP, New Delhi

India's Amit Mishra was on Wednesday fined 10 per cent of his match fee for "showing dissent at an umpire's decision" during the ongoing first Test in Jamaica.

After close of play on the second day on Tuesday, Mishra accepted the proposed sanction by match referee Jeff Crowe, the International Cricket Council (ICC) said in a statement.

"On being given out caught behind the wicket, Amit stood his ground for a lengthy period of time and while doing so gestured to his arm-guard until finally he left the crease," said Crowe.

A first-class

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The reason trotted out by the board -- unavailability of the stars -- does not hold water anywhere else because in the other Test-playing nations, the first-class competition is the bread-earner (even after the Twenty20 boom) for professional cricketers.

Imrul Kayes, who last played in the 2008-09 season, recently lamented the lack of cricket he's played against the red ball. If there was a better schedule in place, Imrul would have played a few first-class matches before the World Cup this year. But the BCB thought playing any longer-version cricket would be a mistake before a big one-day tournament.

As cricketers across the country go through yet another anxious wait for next season's calendar, the hope remains of promises being fulfilled. A lack of tradition can be forgiven given the country's limitations but all that is required is a bit of common sense and the right priorities in place.

Sk Jamal

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"They (Sheikh Jamal) were under pressure in the first 15 minutes and we availed that chance to go ahead but failed to keep the momentum when they had re-organised to pressure us," said Brothers coach Wasim Iqbal.



JOB HALF DONE: India batsman Rahul Dravid (C) barely acknowledges the cheers upon reaching his half-century, knowing that there is still work to be done for India to reach a position of dominance against West Indies on the third day of the first Test at Sabina Park in Kingston yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

India well ahead

Cricket

AFP, Kingston

Rahul Dravid survived an early chance, and batted doggedly, giving India the upper hand in the first Test against West Indies on Tuesday.

The former India captain was on 45 not out, as India reached 91 for three in their second innings -- an overall lead of 164 -- at the close on the second day of the first Test.

Fortune smiled on Dravid on six, when West Indies captain Darren Sammy dropped him at second slip off Ravi Rampaul.

Dravid kept his nerve, and defied West Indies with resolute batting, offering little or no chances for the remainder of the day.

He added 56 for the second wicket with Abhinav Mukund, fortifying India's position, after Ishant Sharma collected three for 29 from 17 overs, and fellow fast bowler Praveen Kumar three for 38 from 18 overs in his test debut, as West Indies were dismissed for 173 about 25 minutes before tea.

The visitors were short-handed in the later stages of the West Indies innings, when Kumar was barred from bowling, after running onto the protected area of the pitch.

But his team-mates adjusted well to the challenge, and outside of opener Adrian Barath, whose 64 was the top score, no other West Indies batsman

made a substantial contribution. Murali Vijay then fell early, when India batted a second time, trapped lbw playing back and across for one to a delivery from Rampaul that kept low in the second over.

Mukund was caught behind for 25, top edging a cut off Devendra Bishoo, and next over, Sammy held a return catch to dismiss V.V.S. Laxman for a duck, leaving India 57 for three.

Virat Kohli survived a late barrage of short-pitched bowling from Fidel Edwards in the closing stages, batting through the remainder of the day with Dravid to enhance India's position.

Earlier, India's bowlers were paragons of discipline, observing metronomic lines and lengths, and reaped the benefits.

Before lunch, three wickets -- all to Kumar -- in the final hour before the interval left West Indies reeling. Sharma had given the visitors an early breakthrough, after West Indies continued from their overnight total of 34 for one.

He trapped Ramnaresh Sarwan lbw for three, playing forward, but offering no stroke to a delivery moving back in the second over of the day.

After India met resistance in the shape of a 56-run stand for the third wicket between Barath and Darren Bravo, Kumar went to work.

He had Barath caught behind, playing defensively to a well-pitched delivery that moved away. The diminutive opener stroked nine fours and one six from 122

balls in close to three hours. In his next over, Kumar had Bravo also caught behind for 18, playing defensively forward, before another left-hander Brendan Nash was caught at third slip for one, leaving West Indies wobbling on 102 for five.

After lunch, Harbhajan Singh, who endured brutal punishment in the morning period, came into his own after West Indies continued from their lunch total of 119 for five.

He triggered a collapse that sent the hosts crumbling to 152 for eight in the first hour after the interval.

He had Carlton Baugh Jr caught at silly point for 27 to end a sixth-wicket partnership of 45 with veteran left-hander Shivnarine Chanderepaul.

Sharma stepped in to have Sammy bowled for one, and Harbhajan had Chanderepaul caught at forward short leg for 23, the home team losing three for five in the space of 24 balls.

Edwards joined Rampaul, and prolonged the agony before Amit Mishra quickly took both his and Bishoo's wickets to end the West Indies' innings.

SCORES IN BRIEF

INDIA: First innings 246 WEST INDIES: First innings 173 (Barath 64, Bravo 18, Chanderepaul 23, Baugh 27, Rampaul 14 not out; Kumar 3-38, Sharma 3-29, Mishra 2-51, Harbhajan 2-51) INDIA: Second innings 91 for 3 (Mukund 25, Dravid 45 not out, Kohli 14 not out)

Afridi takes U-turn

AFP, Karachi

Pakistan's disgruntled former captain Shahid Afridi said he wants to make an international comeback Wednesday, but insisted that certain members of the national team management would first have to leave.

Last week the talismanic all-rounder appeared to have ended an ugly public spat with the Pakistan Cricket Board which followed his sudden retirement from the international game after he was dumped as one-day captain.

"I am not finished. I will come back in the team with respect but for that I will wait for the situation to improve and some people to be removed from the team management," Afridi said before leaving for England.

The all-rounder will play for Hampshire in England's Twenty20 tournament after the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) reinstated his approval to play abroad -- permission it had previously withdrawn.

The 31-year-old denied money was his only motive for playing county cricket abroad.

"To play for Pakistan has always been my priority," said Afridi, who still holds the world record for the fastest one-day hundred -- scored off just 37 balls against Sri Lanka in 1996.

"I get more money playing for Pakistan than in a county match, but money has never been my priority. I will come back but only if the situation improves."

Yuvraj fit for England tour

CRICINFO

Yuvraj Singh, who is missing India's ongoing tour of West Indies with a chest infection, has announced he is fully fit and ready for the England tour that gets underway on July 15.

"I am 100 per cent fit for the tour," Yuvraj said. "I am sure most of the other seniors who are battling respective injuries would be fully fit for the tour. I am really looking forward to the tour."

Yuvraj played a pivotal role in India's World Cup triumph, scoring 362 runs and taking 15 wickets to pick up player-of-the-tournament honours. He is one of several first-choice India players -- along with Sachin Tendulkar, Virender Sehwag, Gautam Gambhir and Zaheer Khan -- to sit out of the West Indies tour that follows a bloated Indian Premier League (IPL) season that began five days after the World Cup final.

TESTS THROUGH TIME



The Little Master

For a generation who grew up in the 1990s, Sunil Gavaskar was always the tidy voice that delivered forthright views, challenged England's doyen of batting Geoff Boycott, amazed the chirpy Harsha Bhogle and shared off-air jokes with former team-mate Ravi Shastri.

But before cricket was a regular fixture on television sets in the subcontinent, Gavaskar established himself as cricket's greatest opening batsman and the first true legend of Indian cricket. With his 10,122 runs from 125 Test matches (between 1971 to 1987), he was an institution unto himself, still remaining the highest scoring opener in the game's premier format.

And he did it without wearing a helmet, against the best bowling attacks in the world and playing for a team that depended a lot on him.

Nothing got to Gavaskar; his powers of concentration immense and his technique as solid as they come. His formative years were spent in the maidans of his beloved Bombay where he was taught the nuances of batting by uncle Madhav Mantri; the young Sunny looked up to West Indian batting great Rohan Kanhai as his idol.

It was in Kanhai's islands where Gavaskar made his Test debut and wanting to make a statement of intent on the international scene, the diminutive opener stamped his name in the best possible way.

After two half-centuries on debut, he struck four hundreds in three Tests including 124 and 220 in Port-of-Spain. His 774 runs is the most runs scored in a debut series, one that India won in the West Indies for the first time ever.

Though his next hundred came after three years, he went on to become captain in 1976, marking his first Test as skipper with a century in Auckland. The same year, the Little Master's 102 powers India to chase down a fourth-innings target of 403 for the loss of just four wickets in Port-of-Spain, an unheard-of notion in those days.

In the 1978-79 season, Gavaskar twice did the "double" (scoring hundreds in both Test innings) in the space of three months against Pakistan and West Indies.

His epic 221 at the Oval got India nine runs short of the 438-run target and as the centuries poured in, so did Gavaskar's stock rise.

In due course of time and runs, he became a symbol of his country's ambitions. A proud man, he was prone to the odd fit of anger and his near walkout after being given LBW against Dennis Lillee in 1981 is well-documented (just like his tortoise 36 in the 1975 World Cup opener).

He took 94 balls for his 29th Test hundred to equal Don Bradman in 1983, then became the highest run-getter in Tests a month later and after 45 days, struck his 30th ton.

In 1987, he missed a Test for the first time after 106 Tests, and soon crossed the 10,000 run mark with a tap down the leg-side on March 7 that year.

But he saved the best for last. Against a superb Pakistan bowling attack on a deadly Bangalore pitch, Gavaskar batted masterfully for 96 in a fourth innings chase, that was to be his last-ever Test knock.

It underlined his genius and after his retirement at the age of 38, India went without a proper opener for nearly two decades until another genius began opening the innings.

--Mohammad Isam

Venus survives a scare

AFP, London

Venus Williams survived a huge scare before advancing to the third round at Wimbledon here Wednesday, downing Japanese veteran Kimiko Date-Krumm 6-7 (6/8), 6-3, 8-6 in a marathon three-hour battle.

Five-time champion Williams, seeded 23 after a recent return from a lengthy injury lay-off, needed all of her experience to subdue the 40-year-old world number 57 before a Centre Court crowd shielded from the rain by the closed roof.

"It was important to keep battling and playing every point," said Williams, who will now play either Spain's Maria Jose Martinez Sanchez or Romania's Monica Niculescu for a place in the last 16.

"My movement was a lot better than last week in Eastbourne and, surprisingly, I didn't feel my injury at all."

Date-Krumm, who reached the semi-finals here in 1996 before later taking a 12-year sabbatical from the sport, got off to a blistering start, racing into a 5-1 first set lead as Williams struggled on serve.

But a Williams fightback got under way in the seventh game as the American gradually began to roll out the heavy artillery on serve.

Her first two aces and another thunderous

effort made it 5-2, before an attack of the jitters from Date-Krumm -- which saw her double fault twice -- pulled Williams back to 5-3.

Williams was given a huge let off in the next game, saving two set points and holding serve for 5-4 as Date-Krumm's precision deserted her.

Date-Krumm squandered another set point as she served in the 10th game before Williams cranked up the power to break the Japanese star for the third time.

An imperious service game from Williams -- sealed with an ace -- put the American ahead for the first time at 6-5.

Yet just as it seemed that Date-Krumm's game had gone into meltdown, she conjured up a service break to force a tie-break.

Improbably Date-Krumm then surged into a 6-2 lead in the tie-break only for Williams to reel off four points to level at 6-6.

The decisive moment came on the very next point however, when a Date-Krumm return floated down the tramlines and was called in.

Williams challenged but Hawk-Eye vindicated the line judge's call to give Date-Krumm her eighth set point, which she duly converted when her opponent sank a return from the back of the court into the net.

Something like normal service resumed in the second set, with Williams breaking early and holding to make it 3-2.

Dharmika in for Dilhara

AFP, Colombo

Sri Lanka Cricket on Wednesday called up bowler Dharmika Prasad to replace the injured Dilhara Fernando for the upcoming limited-overs series with England.

Prasad, 28, last played a one-day match for Sri Lanka in 2009 when Pakistan toured Colombo. Since making his ODI debut in 2006, he has taken five wickets in five outings giving away 217 runs.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

Crossword puzzle grid with clues for Across and Down words.

Cryptoquip puzzle grid with numbers 1-56.

CRYPTOQUIP

S HEAT YOUZSQSYOZSMD SM ZCTFT QOZZHT-QOZQCSD QEGYTZSZSEMF REN QENHP FOR S'G UEPTPE-OQZSAT.

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: WHICH CLEANING SESSION WON'T YOUR BABY PUT UP A BIG FUSS ABOUT? THE BATH OF LEAST RESISTANCE. Today's Cryptoquip Clue: S equals I