

Premier Div B'Ball Gregarious' winning start

SPORTS REPORTER

The Gregarious made a winning start to the Citycell Premier Division Basketball League by beating Mohamadpur Basketball Club by 72-44 points at the Dhanmondi Basketball Gymnasium yesterday.

The Gregarious took a 34-17 point lead in the first half. Tojammel netted 20 and Mithun netted 17 points for the winners while Shams scored 16 and Mortasin scored 8 points for the losing side.

President of Bangladesh Basketball Federation Mostafa Jalal Mohiuddin witnessed the match.

Eng-SL only T20 today

AFP, Bristol

Stuart Broad, England's new Twenty20 captain, had a second injury scare ahead of Saturday's match against Sri Lanka in Bristol but insisted he would be fit to lead the team for the first time.

Broad suffered a bruised heel during the drawn third Test against Sri Lanka at the Rose Bowl concluded earlier this week, leading to concerns over whether he would be able to take up the reins in his first match as Paul Collingwood's replacement as skipper.

Indeed the injury led England to announce Eoin Morgan as vice-captain of the Twenty20 side.

But Broad, having overcome his heel problem, suffered an awkward looking tumble during fielding practice on Friday, falling over a medicine ball while taking a catch.

He received treatment on his ankle but said afterwards he was fit.

"It's fine, but it was a bit frustrating tripping over a medicine ball," he said.

"It seems to have pulled up quite well so it's not a concern and I'm really excited about the opportunity of captaining tomorrow (Saturday)."

NZ to host Zim, SA

AFP, Wellington

New Zealand will host Zimbabwe for the first time in 11 years as part of a home international schedule early next year that also features South Africa, officials said Friday.

New Zealand has long-standing travel sanctions on sports teams from Zimbabwe due to alleged human rights abuses by Robert Mugabe's government but agreed to waive them this month provided the political situation did not deteriorate.

New Zealand Cricket said Friday the Zimbabwe tour would take place from January 26 to February 14. It will include one Test, three one-day internationals and two Twenty20 matches.

South Africa will tour from February 17 to March 27, playing three Tests, three one-dayers and three Twenty20s.

"It will be a very challenging summer of international cricket and we are looking forward to taking on South Africa and Zimbabwe at home in front of our fans," Black Caps captain Ross Taylor said.

Camp for

FROM PAGE 16

session. The rest of the three Abahani players will join the camp after their last match against Brothers Union on Monday.

The players will return to Dhaka on June 28, just one day before Bangladesh's home match against Pakistan on June 29.

Bangladesh are scheduled to travel to play against Pakistan on July 3 though FIFA told BFF that they would make a final decision on shifting the game from Lahore next week.

Roddick sent packing

AFP, London



Three-time finalist Andy Roddick crashed out of Wimbledon in the third round on Friday as the American was beaten 7-6 (7/2), 7-6 (7/2), 6-4 by Spain's Feliciano Lopez.

Roddick had won all seven of his previous seven meetings with Lopez, but the last of those encounters on grass at Queen's earlier this month suggested the eighth seed wouldn't have it all his own way on Centre Court.

It had taken Roddick three tough sets to see off Lopez at the Wimbledon warm-up event and this time the Spaniard was finally able to break his losing run against the former US Open champion.

Lopez, twice a Wimbledon quarter-finalist, served brilliantly and stopped Roddick establishing his power-game as the world number 44 secured a tie against Gael Monfils or Lukas Kubot in the last 16.

Roddick, beaten by Roger Federer in an epic 2009 final, has now failed to get past the fourth round in three of his last four visits to Wimbledon.

The 28-year-old suffered one of the most comprehensive defeats of his career when he won just four games

against Andy Murray in the semi-finals at Queen's, but this early departure from his favourite Grand Slam will hurt even more.

"Even leading two sets to love I knew that he would still be a great fighter as he is such a great player," said serve-and-volleyer Lopez.

"It's a very important win. I was a little nervous towards the end as it's always difficult to close out a match."

Roddick, who was eliminated by Lu Yen-Hsun in the fourth round last year, had won his first two matches here without dropping a set. But he spent the first set trying in vain to make an impact on Lopez's left-handed serve.

For once it was Roddick's usually formidable serve that failed him in the tie-break and Lopez took advantage to seal the opening set.

Roddick had no more luck unsettling Lopez in the second set. He had to save a set-point at 5-6 but that was only delaying the inevitable.

Again it was Lopez who dominated from the baseline and the Spaniard easily took the tie-break to establish a two-set lead.

Roddick's rather one-dimensional approach -- relying mostly on brute force -- was exposed again in the third set as Lopez broke to move 2-1 ahead

and served out the win.

On Thursday, Roger Federer raced into the third round, swatting aside French journeyman Adrian Panatta in straight sets 6-2, 6-3, 6-2.

The six-time champion was forced to wait until nearly 8:00 pm (1900 GMT) local time before his match against the 22-year-old world number 55 could get under way on a covered Centre Court.

But Federer was clearly in no mood to hang around, dispatching the outclassed Panatta with a minimum of fuss in less than 90 minutes.

Two quick breaks gave him the first set 6-2 in 25 minutes before he soon took control of the second set, which he wrapped up in just over half an hour.

Federer, who is bidding to equal Pete Sampras's record of seven Wimbledon titles, was soon in control of the third set, breaking Panatta in the first and fifth games to take a 4-1 lead which he never looked like relinquishing.

The only minor impediment to victory came as Federer prepared to serve for the match, when he waited patiently for the Centre Court crowd to finish several boisterous laps of Mexican Wave.

Federer, who finished with an extravagant leaping smash, now faces 2002 runner-up David Nalbandian for a place in the last 16.



State minister for youth and sports Ahad Ali Sarker leads out the Olympic Day Run in front of the National Sports Council building yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

WI get boost from Dhoni

Cricket

AFP, Kingston

India captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni gave West Indies' team a boost after their 63-run first Test defeat by suggesting they could push the visitors in the remainder of the series.

India successfully defended a victory target of 326 to dismiss West Indies for 262 in their second innings on the fourth day at Sabina Park on Thursday.

However Dhoni said West Indies had a side that was India's equal in talent, if not in their ability to seize the crucial moments.

"I will not make the mistake by saying that this opposition is not good enough," he said.

"Every batsman can score runs. Their first seven batters have the talent which equally matches the one of the current Indian team."

West Indies leg-spinner Devendra Bishoo also received words of encouragement from the World Cup and Indian Premier League winning captain.

Some observers felt that Bishoo had bowled better than the Indian pair of Harbhajan Singh and Amit Mishra, picking up seven wickets in the match.

"Bishoo kept bowling in the right areas," said Dhoni. "There was a fair degree of turn in the first innings, but as the game progressed, that turn was not there."

"The Indian spinners found it a bit difficult because of the strong breeze across the field. But as the game went on, they adapted well and began bowling better."

Dhoni reserved special praise however, to some of the players that played crucial roles in his side's victory other than Man-of-the-Match Rahul Dravid and Test newcomer Praveen Kumar.

"Our lower half batsmen for the past year and a half have been contributing well," he said.

"We were 85 for six in the first innings before Harbhajan, along with Suresh Raina, bailed us out. In the second innings, Mishra made a telling contribution."

Harbhajan and Raina added 146 for the seventh wicket in the first innings to help India reach 246.

Mishra and Dravid put on 56 for the ninth wicket, taking India to 252 in their second innings, and leaving West Indies to chase 326 for victory.

"But for that stand (Raina and Harbhajan), we could have been all out for 150," he said.

"We were able to get more runs and thus gather a handy lead. Then in the second innings, we could stretch the lead to 300 plus."

"Three hundred was always going to be a difficult score to chase in the fourth innings. They were off to a flyer, but wickets always slow down the momentum, and we were able to apply pressure on their middle order."

Dhoni was also fulsome in praise for Dravid's batting in the second innings, and the bowling of Kumar in both innings.

"Dravid has been an exceptional batsman for India," he said. "That he played over 250 deliveries showed he was very patient. He made the bowlers pitch in his areas, and was brilliant."

"Praveen is a very skilful bowler and can swing it either way. He doesn't have the pace, but he can swing the ball, and confuse the batsmen if they needed to play or leave a delivery."

"He showed great character after having been stopped from bowling in the first innings. When you are switching from the 10-over format to 20 to 25 overs in an innings, you have to be careful."

"Importantly, he backed his strength and picked up wickets in the second innings as well."

Upul handed 3-month ban

CRICINFO

Upul Tharanga, the Sri Lanka opener, has been handed a three-month suspension from all cricket and cricket-related activities by the ICC for failing a drugs test during the 2011 World Cup. The ICC accepted the offence was not deliberate and the suspension was back-dated to begin on May 9 2011, which means Tharanga will be eligible for selection from August 9.

"I apologise to the fans and followers of Sri Lanka cricket for inadvertently committing an offence," Tharanga said after the verdict was announced. "I hope my fellow sportsmen will learn from my experience and be more vigilant when taking medical treatment, so that their careers do not suffer in the way that mine has."

Tharanga had provided a urine sample as part of the ICC's random in-competition testing programme after the World Cup semi-final between New Zealand and Sri Lanka in Colombo on March 29. His sample was tested by a WADA accredited laboratory and found to contain Prednisone and Prednisolone, which are 'Specified Substances' under WADA's prohibited list and are banned from being used in-competition "when administered by oral, intravenous intramuscular or rectal routes."

BCCI firm on SL T20 ban

AFP, New Delhi

Sri Lanka's sports minister has failed to persuade India's cricket board to revise its ban on players participating in the inaugural Sri Lankan Premier League, a report said Friday. Mahindananda Aluthgamage took part in a telephone conference Thursday with officials from the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI), the Mumbai-based Daily News and Analysis said.

"We made an attempt to convince them, but the BCCI told us that it cannot reverse its stand," the newspaper quoted the minister as saying. "It is their decision and we cannot force them to change," he added.

Fast bowlers Praveen Kumar and Munaf Patel were among 12 Indian players who had sought permission to play in the T20 tournament in Sri Lanka starting in mid-July. The BCCI had initially indicated that Indian players could participate, but changed its mind amid media reports that the tournament was being organised by a Singapore-based company with alleged links to Lalit Modi, the sacked former boss of the Indian Premier League.

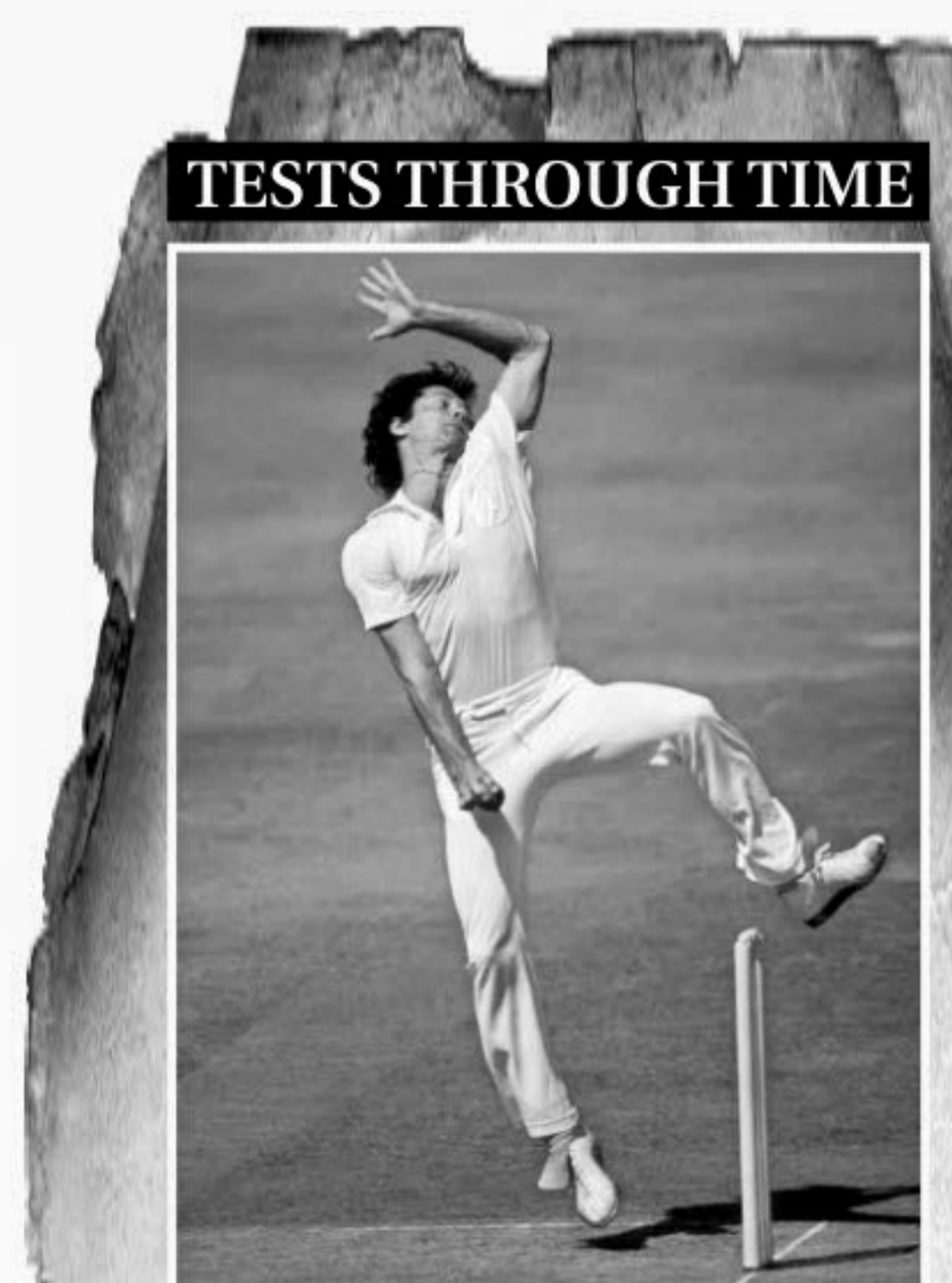
Modi faces criminal charges, including false accounting, and accusations by the BCCI that more than \$106 million was misappropriated during his three-year tenure as IPL chairman. Although disappointed by India's position, Aluthgamage denied any damaging rift over the dispute.

"The BCCI continues to be our friend," he said. Aluthgamage has already denied that the London-based Modi was involved with the tournament.

Styris quits

FROM PAGE 16

"Not being on the international circuit means more time at home and I'm really looking forward to spending more time with my family." Styris played 29 Tests and 188 one-day internationals, the last of which was New Zealand's World Cup semi-final loss to Sri Lanka in Colombo in March. He nominated New Zealand's ICC Champions Trophy victory in 2000 and a century against the West Indies on his Test debut in 2002, which helped secure the Black Caps' first series win in the Caribbean, as career highlights.



King of Pakistan

In the winter of 1983, Imran Khan was at the peak of his powers. A decade after his inauspicious debut, he had taken up the captaincy just six months ago; the all-rounder was well on his way towards greatness.

India, visiting Pakistan for the third time, were crushed by an innings in the second Test. Imran had taken 8-60 in the second innings and now in Faisalabad, he would make it his most comprehensive display of all-round abilities.

After taking six first innings wickets, he was one of four Pakistani centurions. Battered for 652, India were again hit by Imran. This time, the proud Pathan took five wickets to become only the second man (at the time) to take more than ten wickets and score a century in a Test match (and end the 6-Test series with 40 wickets).

Imran would play another decade and not only better his record as a player but also make his mark as a truly brilliant captain. During his 48-game tenure between 1982 and 1992, he performed better both with bat and ball as a comparison with his career average would clearly tell.

His captaincy was not just on the field. He would inspire his men off it: his urge to take laps around the National Stadium in Karachi after the end of play during a Test match is a legendary story that depicted his idea of a great leader. Imran also had an eye for great talent and he would nurture it in his unique way. Abdul Qadir, though they had a bitter-sweet relationship, swore by him as did Wasim Akram and Waqar Younis, his discoveries. Even in the later years, Aqib Javed and Inzamamul Haq are among many whom Imran promoted to the national team and backed up till they were established.

But it was Imran the player that stoked the fire among ordinary Pakistanis. He made fast bowling fashionable: the long run-up, the leap and the powerful follow-through. He inspired a generation to bowl fast on the dust bowls and featherbeds because he also taught them how to move the ball in the air and off the wicket.

In his early days, Imran was a batsman inspired by cousins (and Pakistan captains) Majid Khan and Javed Burki. He sometimes bowled medium pace and was in fact picked as a fast bowler to play against England in 1971. Imran bombed and his teammates inspired little confidence. In his own words, the Australian Dennis Lillee instigated the animal inside him to bowl quick. His formative years were in England and he developed into a genuine all-rounder there.

It was not until the 1976-77 series before he hit the big time with three five-fors against Australia before he began his work on the West Indies. His record against the mighty Caribbeans puts him in a different class and it all started with his 25-wicket haul in 1977.

Pakistan, during the next decade, seriously challenged West Indies' dominance and it was through Imran's sheer magnificence. He averaged 21 with the ball against them and took four 10-wicket hauls, the only bowler to do so.

Imran knew how to swing the ball both ways, setting up batsmen with the ball that sharply cut back in and also the one that slightly left them. He was deadly with the old ball and his yorker ruined many a bat and crushed innumerable toes.

He clearly had an edge over another legend, Sunil Gavaskar, who was out to Imran 11 times while Dilip Vengsarkar fell 10 times. The great West Indian opening pair of Gordon Greenidge (nine) and Desmond Haynes (seven) were also terrorised by his searing pace and movement.

Critics say his batting average flattered him but he did want to be a batsman at first and towards the twilight of his career, he was a dependable middle-order batsman for Pakistan.

Imran is the greatest cricketer to emerge from Pakistan and arguably the world's second-best all-rounder after Garry Sobers simply for his tremendous record against the mighty West Indies.

With his leadership, he also took a middle-of-the-road side and transformed them into world-beaters, leading them to the World Cup title in 1992 and inspiring many others with his superb skills and ever-present style.

-- Mohammad Isam

Ilievski ready

FROM PAGE 16

"First I will observe the players in the camp to see their characteristics and then choose the formation of the game. But I am confident about winning the match on June 29," said Ilievski, who represented Yugoslavia in the 1982 World Cup.

The Macedonian said he prefers to play attacking football in either 4-2-3-1 and 4-4-2 formations and sees Brazilian Luiz Felipe Scolari and Swedish Sven Goran Eriksson as idols.

Ilievski informed that he had guided Macedonia in over 50 international matches and his success rate was nearly sixty percent.

Ilievski started his playing career as a striker and played in that position for seven years before turning into a midfielder in the twilight of his career.

Ilievski has not set any specific target during his stay in Bangladesh but said that progress is an ongoing process which takes place step by step.