

# Ilievski tinkering too much?

SPORTS REPORTER from Delhi

Bangladesh came to the SAFF Championship as one of the favourites, but the booters are already seemingly suffering from lack of confidence and motivation which was reflected on their performance against Pakistan in the first match.

Standing on the verge of the must-win situation against Nepal, the players yesterday looked dejected and lifeless, as if they have just come here only for participation. Reportedly the players can't even encourage themselves as the coach Nikola Ilievski keeps on experimenting with the squad.

Despite playing five to six practice matches, the Macedonian coach has yet to finalise his playing eleven and no of the players is yet to gain the faith of Ilievski.

"The coach is doing everything he thinks right regarding the eleven while we feel pressure as no one is sure whether he will be in the starting eleven for next match" said a member of the squad seeking anonymity.

"The SAFF Championship is a big tournament for us, yet we can't motivate ourselves due to the lack of coach's confidence on us," said the player.

Manager Arif Khan Joy also said the coach should first settle his playing eleven to grow confidence among the players like George Kotan did during the 2003 SAFF Championship triumph.

"Before the start of SAFF Championship in 2003, it was clear to all players who were going to play in the first eleven and they prepared themselves but that is absent here," said Joy, who was a member of that winning Bangladesh squad.

However, the coach himself took a different view on the issue, "You may be surprised to see the playing eleven but what I am doing is for finding the right combination."

# Booters' Nepal

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are also strong in left flank with number 7 (Bijoy Garung) penetrating the defence. That's why I need a speedy player like Mamun Mia from the beginning in the right back position," explained Ilievski.

Apart from Mamun's inclusion, the Macedonian coach is expected to bring three more changes to the starting eleven as he looks to adopt a defensive strategy in the first half. Striking duo Abdul Malek and Towhidul Alam are expected to start in place Zahid Hasan Emily and Shah Alamgir Anik while Atiqur Rahman Meshu is set to start the match as the left-back.

The 57-year old coach hinted that he would first defend his own territory and then go attack from the second half.

"I am certainly making the formation for win," Ilievski said. "I will try Emily and Mithun in the second half as I want the boys play together in the second half."

Nepal coach Graham Roberts is upbeat after the performance against Maldives and said they were only thinking of their own game.

"We played better football than Maldives and our motivation would be to repeat it against Bangladesh" said the British born coach.

Probable squad: Sahidul Alam Sohel (GK), Ariful Islam (captain), Rezaul Karim, Mamun Mia, Nasirul Islam, Atiqur Rahman Meshu, Mamunul Islam, Pranotosh Kumar, Abdul Baten Komol, Abdul Malek and Towhidul Alam.

# India held

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Mahesh Gowri, Belal finished clinically with a powerful right footer inside from the penalty area. India though levelled the margin five minutes later courtesy of a header from Sunil Chhetri, who only joined the training camp a few days ago after an unsuccessful trial at Glasgow Rangers in Scotland. Despite their best efforts, neither team managed to find the back of the net again.

Meanwhile, Sri Lanka defeated Bhutan 3-0 in second match of the group yesterday to take pole position in the group.

Mohamed Zain put Sri Lanka ahead in the 19th minute and Dewinga Bandara doubled the lead in 34th minute before he sealed the tie with his second goal in the 64th minute.



Manosh Chowdhury and Sonam Sultana Shoma pose with their trophies at the end of the 32nd AB National Table Tennis Championship at the Wooden Floor Gymnasium yesterday.

PHOTO: COURTESY

# Aussies call the shots

Cricket

AFP, Brisbane

Michael Clarke hit a charmed century while Ricky Ponting and Brad Haddin eased the pressure on their Test careers with half-centuries as Australia took charge of the first Test against New Zealand at the Gabba on Saturday.

Helped by sloppy Kiwi fielding, the Australians put themselves in a strong position with a commanding 427 in their first innings to seize a 132-run lead over the Black Caps.

The Kiwis lost the key wicket of Brendon McCullum, caught in the slips by Ricky Ponting off James Pattinson in the seven overs to stumps to be 10 for one and trail by 122 runs with two days to play.

Martin Guppitt was not out seven with nightwatchman Doug Bracewell yet to score. New Zealand's hopes of a first victory in Australia for 26 years faded after they dropped Clarke twice on his way to 139, while Haddin chipped in with 80 and former skipper Ponting hit 78.

It is the seventh time in the last eight seasons that Australia has amassed 400 runs or more in the first innings at their Gabba fortress, where they remain unbeaten for 23 years. Clarke rode his luck to claim his 17th Test century after he was dropped at 85 and 105 and bowled off a no-ball on Friday.

# Rampaul a batsman!

Cricket

AFP/PTI, Visakhapatnam

Virat Kohli smashed a robust 117 to power India to a five-wicket win over the West Indies in the second one-day international on Friday despite Ravi Rampaul's record tail-end knock.

Rampaul cracked 86 not out, the highest score by a number 10 batsman in one-dayers, to help the tourists post a challenging 269-9 in the day-night match in Visakhapatnam.

India were struggling at 84-3 before passing their opponents' total with 11 balls to spare for a 2-0 lead in the five-match series, with Kohli hitting 14 fours in a 123-ball knock for his eighth one-day hundred.

The previous highest score by a number 10 batsman in one-dayers was an unbeaten 73 by Pakistan's Mohammad Aamer against New Zealand in Abu Dhabi in 2009.

Rampaul may have surprised one and all but the West Indies new-ball bowler himself isn't surprised about his record-breaking feat.

The speedster feels that a stoppage of 44 minutes was very important in the context of the match as he feels that it broke their momentum.

But the Windies looking for an elusive win on Indian soil hoped to pick their first win of their tour soon.

On his ruthless approach against India off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin, he said: "I just played as per merit."

He made the Black Caps pay dearly as he shared in a 108-run sixth wicket stand with Haddin for Australia to take control of the match.

It was Clarke's fourth Test hundred against the Kiwis and second in his last five Test innings after scoring 151 against South Africa in the first innings of the Cape Town Test last month.

Clarke was out on the fourth ball after tea, caught at deep backward square by Tim Southee off Martin, ending his 368-minute stay which included 19 fours and a six.

The Kiwis made it easier for Clarke, with wicketkeeper Reece Young and Jesse Ryder spilling catches, both off the luckless paceman Doug Bracewell.

Clarke on 85 edged straight into Young's gloves only for the wicketkeeper to fumble the chance and after lunch Ryder dropped a high two-handed catch at third slip when the Australian skipper was on 105.

Clarke was also bowled off an inside edge on 23 late Friday only to get a reprieve when Bracewell was found to have overstepped for a no-ball.

Ponting and Haddin both took the heat off their Test spots, with Haddin's innings including two sixes and six boundaries.

Ponting, whose last big innings was 209 against Pakistan in Hobart in January last year, hit 12 boundaries off 140 balls and put on 86 runs for the fourth wicket with Clarke.

# Intriguing

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The Mirpur venue before yesterday's second ODI and came across some people lined up with their faces painted with Pakistan flags and with posters and banners that said "Boom Boom Afridi" and the like.

Among them, a Mirpur businessman named Munir said he was a Bangladeshi but supported Pakistan because of Shahid Afridi.

"I like Pakistan because of [Shahid] Afridi," he said but didn't want to elaborate and walked away. The same applied to student Shihab, who had a Pakistan flag wrapped around him.

"I support Pakistan because they play awesome cricket. I like Bangladesh too but Pakistan just a bit more. I don't think we should bring in politics or what happened in the past. This is just a sport," said Samiha, a fourth year university student, who claimed that supporting a foreign country where the national side is also playing was perfectly fine.

But it is not perfectly fine for those with unbridled nationalistic pride.

"I'm going to support Bangladesh no matter what. How can people who are citizens of this country support Pakistan when they're playing against Bangladesh? This is really strange behaviour," expressed Shama, another university student, who regularly watches cricket matches.

"I actually find it quite unacceptable that some people can claim to be forward-minded by supporting Pakistan. I think they are just shallow," she said.

# Pakistan take

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right technique to bat on this kind of surface. All of their top order batsmen first made the adjustment with the condition and then tried to play the shots.

Shafiu Islam gave the early breakthrough by removing Imran Farhat, but Hafeez (37) and Younis Khan (37) played sensibly by rotating the strikes to steady the ship. Umar Akmal was the only batsman who scored a fifty. Akmal made 59 off 54 balls with five fours and a six.

In the end a small and vital cameo came from dashing Afridi who hit 27-ball 42 that contained three boundaries and two sixes but the right-hander was lucky as Shafiu failed to clutch a return catch when he was on 8.

# BD-PAK SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard of the second one-day international between Bangladesh and Pakistan at the Sher-e-Bangla stadium in Dhaka on Saturday:

Pakistan	
Hafeez (l m r) b Rubel	32
Farhat c Nasir b Shafiu	4
Younis lbw b Razzak	37
Misbah c sub (Reza) b Sunny	37
Akmal c Shafiu b Shakib	59
Malik c Rahim b Rubel	17
Afridi c Mahmudullah b Shafiu	42
Sarfraz not out	12
Tanvir not out	0
Extras: (lb-5, w-17)	22
Total: (For 7 wks in 50 overs)	262
Fall of wickets: 1-12, 2-69, 3-93, 4-176, 5-193, 6-222, 7-261	

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Shafiu	10	0	50	2
Rubel	10	0	58	2
Shakib	10	0	27	1
Razzak	10	0	58	1
Sunny	7	0	46	1
Nasir	3	0	18	0

Bangladesh	
Tamim c Younis b Gul	4
Imrul c Misbah b Hafeez	6
Nafees lbw b Hafeez	7
Mushfiq c Hafeez b Gul	1
Shakib c and b Ajmal	34
Nasir c Farhat b Gul	100
Mahmudullah not out	20
Razzak b Gul	0
Sunny not out	0
Extras: (lb-5, w-8, nb-1)	14
Total: (For 7 wks in 50 overs)	186
Fall of wickets: 1-8, 2-16, 3-19, 4-19, 5-125, 6-185, 7-186	

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Hafeez	10	2	15	2
Gul	9	1	36	4
Tanvir	7	0	26	0
Afridi	7	0	49	0
Ajmal	10	1	33	1
Malik	7	0	22	0

Result: Pakistan won by 76 runs

# Nasir brings

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good enough to put his more illustrious colleagues in shame. He however put a positive spin to this angle.

"I am the junior-most member of this team. If they see that I'm doing well, maybe they would think that they can also do well," he said, though he was quite aware of perspectives in this cruel sport.

"Ultimately though, this century is of no value to the team. I didn't raise my bat after the fifty because the match was already," he added.

# CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS	DOWN
1 Actress Gardner	1 Fire residue
4 Vine-covered shelter	2 Compete
9 Owns	3 \$ dispenser
12 Perch	4 Soak aperture up
13 Wilkes-—, Pa.	5 Knocking sound
14 Everything	6 Lingerie item
15 Sur-geons' devices	7 Lawn-care brand
17 Reason to say "alas"	8 Vacation mecca
18 — constrictor	9 Detectives "Friends" role
19 Addicted	10 Lotion additive
21 Unisex garb	11 Coaster
24 Spheres	16 Kimono sash
25 — carte	
26 "Hum-bug!"	
28 Giggly sound	
31 Columns' crossers	
33 AAA job	
35 Play area	
36 Playful water critter	
38 Dowel	
20 Do what you're told	
21 Poi root	
22 Coin	
23 Author Nathaniel	
27 Jump	
29 Historic times	
30 Whirlpool	
32 Prognosticator	
34 Women's shoes	
37 Jennifer's "Friends"	

Solution time: 24 mins.

A	S	S	S	L	A	P	C	J	J	O		
L	E	I	W	I	N	O	A	T	O	P		
P	A	L	A	B	E	L	S	A	V	E		
S	T	O	R	M	W	E	A	T	H	E		
S	P	A	C	A	T	H	E	R				
G	R	A	V	Y	Y	A	K	L	O	B		
Y	E	L	P	J	O	T	H	I	D	D		
M	O	E	W	O	K	B	I	D	D	E		
N	O	S	G	E	L							
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# Done in by offies

MOHAMMAD ISAM



The Bangladesh batsmen's struggle against off-spin during this series has been staggering. Mohammad Hafeez, Saeed Ajmal and Shoaib Malik have dominated proceedings like three gung-ho fast bowlers have often done over the last two decades.

Hafeez has consistently bowled a superb opening spell while Ajmal has been tight as ever. Malik too has picked up wickets, mainly for using the unexpected bounce from the Mirpur surface.

The trio, of whom two are all-rounders, has not been dealt with properly, begging the question whether the Tigers were preparing for Ajmal alone, though he too has been hardly dictated. It was expected that the visitors would use all of their off-spinning brigade due to the number of left-handers in the Tigers' line-up, which also shows the disintegration of skills on their part while dealing with bowlers other than medium-pacers and left-arm spinners.

While all the concentration over the years has been on tackling pace, bounce and swing against every bowling attack, the perception has often been that being a team from the sub-continent, Bangladesh are capable of playing

spin properly. To an extent, spin has often been a form of relief after the torrid spells of fast bowling.

In one-day cricket however, four spinners are among the top five wicket-takers against Bangladesh with Ray Price (a left-arm spinner no less) leading the pack.

Muttiah Muralidaran and Prosper Utseya are also in this list. The presence of the Sri Lankan legend is not unusual but the Zimbabwean offie has always held a stranglehold on the Bangladesh batsmen. Among off-spinners, Saqlain Mushtaq, Tillekaratne Dilshan, Steven Tikolo, Malik and Sachin Tendulkar have more than ten wickets against the Tigers in ODIs.

While some of the part-timers' success is negligible and greats' success predictable, the lack of quality off-spinners in the domestic game is also a major reason for this constant difficulty against the slow men.

Another contribution to this problem has been the absolute refusal of the previous regime to prepare against different types of bowlers. Maybe the focus was on getting techniques corrected while playing fast bowling but as professional cricketers, one has to be prepared for every sort of attack.

This is perhaps yet another bullet point in Stuart Law's ever-lengthening to-do list.

# LOCAL snippets

## Satkhira breeze into final

SPORTS REPORTER

Satkhira rode on Sabina Khatun's hat-trick to book a place in the KFC Women's Super League final as they thrashed Narayanganj 5-1 in the semifinal at the Birshreshtha Mostafa Kamal Stadium in Kamalapur yesterday.

The national team's prolific striker Sabina scored two goals within the first 20 minutes as the southern district took control of the game. Asia Khatoon Bithi gave Narayanganj hope with a 46th minute strike but Sabina restored the lead with her third seven minutes later.

A goal apiece from Tumpa Moni and Fatema Tuz Zohra, in the dying minutes, ensured a comfortable victory for the southern district.

Satkhira will take on the winner of December 5 semifinal between Ansar & VDP and Jessore in the final which is slated for December 7.

## Manosh, Soma win TT crown

Manosh Chowdhury and Sonam Sultana Shoma won the men's and women's singles title respectively in the 32nd AB National Table Tennis Championship at the Wooden Floor Gymnasium yesterday.

Manosh beat Mahabub Billah in straight 3-0 sets while Shoma (beat 3-0 Moumita Alam by the same margin.

Hasib & Rocky pair emerged men's doubles champion defeating Manosh & Hemlet pair in 3-2 sets.

The mixed doubles crown was captured by Mahbub Billa & Moumita Alam pair who beat Rana & Snigdha pair in 3-0 sets.

## Sonali Bank RC kabaddi champs

Sonali Bank Recreation Club emerged champions in the First Division Kabaddi League beating Maniknagar Unnayan Samity 29-13 with two creditable 'Iona' in the final at the Kabaddi Stadium yesterday. The winners led the first half 22-2.

M Badsha Mia of Sonali Bank Recreation Club was adjudged the best player of the tournament.

M Mahbubur Rahman, managing director of Tung Hai Group, was the chief guest of the final and distributed the prizes.

## Div I chess

Muktijoddha Sangsad lead the points table in the First Division Chess League with six points from three rounds. Fire Service are in second position with five points followed by Farshaganj in third with five points as well.

In the third round matches at the Chess Federation hall room yesterday, Muktijoddha beat Sultana Kamal by 3.5-0.5 points in this round while Farshaganj beat Swaran Chess Club 3-1 and Faith Chess Club beat Agrani Bank 3-1.

## National cycling from tomorrow

NCC Bank 35th National Cycling Competition begins tomorrow at the Banabandhu National Stadium in Dhaka.

A total of 19 teams, including champions of the last three editions Bangladesh Ansar & VDP will compete in 20 different events during the three-day competition, it was informed at a press conference at the National Sports Council auditorium in this connection yesterday.

Sponsors NCC Bank will provide 4 lakh taka out of the 15.5 lakh taka budget for the event. The event will be inaugurated by Zahid Ahsan Russel MP, the president of the parliamentary

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		41			42		43		44		
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48				49		50			51	52	53
54				55					56		
57				58					59		

## CRYPTOQUIP

G J K W - G T N W H Q L - Q J Z V J W D L

H G J H ' E G R M T N Z C L C R N J V

J U L K M Q E D F L K E D K C L N D F T :

H G T U D N Q J R P T T - H J N P D T .

Saturday's Cryptquip: ANNUAL OBSERVANCE DURING WHICH VERY SAINTLY PEOPLE GET TOGETHER AND CELEBRATE: ALL HALOS EVE. Today's Cryptquip Clue: H equals T