

Blatter due in March

SPORTS REPORTER

FIFA president Sepp Blatter will be coming to Bangladesh for a one-day visit on March 6, confirmed in a press release from the Bangladesh Football Federation yesterday. The FIFA boss will fly from New Delhi on the morning and leave for Bhutan the following morning. However, the agenda of the tour will be finalised within a few days, said a source inside the BFF.

BFF president Kazi Salahuddin invited the FIFA president during his visit to the football governing body's headquarter in Zurich last year. The FIFA boss might inaugurate the Sylhet BKSP which has been leased to BFF. Sepp Blatter earlier visited Bangladesh to attend the opening ceremony of the inaugural AFC Challenge Cup in 2006.



YOU MADE MY DAY: Dhaka Gladiators' Mosharrar Hossain Rubel (R) signs a young boy's t-shirt as teammates Elias Sunny (L) and Nazmul Hossain look on at the Ashik Foundation in the city yesterday. These children are cancer patients who are at their last stage.

PHOTO: COURTESY

Women's h'ball league from today

SPORTS REPORTER

The Cute Metropolis First Division Women's Handball League begins today at the Handball Stadium when Azad SC take on Flames Girls Club in the opening match.

A total of nine teams, split into two groups, will take part in the first phase of the league organised by Bangladesh Handball Federation.

After the first phase the champions and runners-up of each group will play in the four-team super league which will begin on Feb 11.

State Minister for Youth and Sports M Ahad Ali Sarker will inaugurate the meet.

Div II football

SPORTS REPORTER

Euro Famous Club defeated Mutual Udoyan Sangsard by 2-0 goals in the lone match of the Destiny Group Dhaka Mahanagori 2nd Division Football League at the Birshreshtha Shahid Mostafa Kamal Stadium in Kamalapur yesterday.

Faisal Ahmed opened the scoring in the 17th minute for Euro Famous before Mohammad Ali sealed the victory with their second goal in the 26th minute.

Bevan arrives

FROM PAGE 16

the Barisal Burners in five matches. Earlier it was said that the Gayle will be available for only the first two matches but since he will be available till February 15, he can have an impact on the Burners' fortunes.

U-19s ease

FROM PAGE 16

series 4-2 in the last game, but Mosaddek Hossain and Al-Amin had other ideas.

The pair added 133 runs for the fifth wicket, shepherding the innings to a fine ending with both batsmen hammering half-centuries as the hosts finished on 237 for 5. Mosaddek was unbeaten on 79 off 96 balls (seven fours, a six) while Al-Amin fell run-out off the last ball of the innings after making 65 off 76 balls (three fours, a six).

Paceman Craig Overton took three wickets while leg-spinner Mohammad Abid picked up one wicket.

Barisal, Dhaka

FROM PAGE 16

They are now leading by 192 runs after bowling out their opponents for 215 runs. For BKSP, Jasim struck 130.

Dhaka South, who declared their first innings on 305-7, had half-centuries from Asif and Minhaz to help them put up a formidable score in the age-group tournament.

Jadeja strikes gold

Tamim remains unsold again

AFP, New Delhi



Young India all-rounder Ravindra Jadeja was sold for 2 million dollars at the Indian Premier League (IPL) auction in Bangalore on Saturday, but a host of big-name stars missed out.

Reigning IPL champions Chennai Super Kings, owned by Indian cricket chief Narayanaswamy Srinivasan, bagged the 23-year-old Jadeja after an intense bidding war with Deccan Chargers.

Jadeja joins Indian colleagues Gautam Gambhir, Yusuf Pathan, Robin Uthappa and Rohit Sharma in the 2-million-dollars-a-year bracket in the money-spinning Twenty20 league.

Just 25 of the 144 foreign and Indian players who had thrown their hat in the ring found favour with the franchises in the auction, which was restricted to players not already aligned to any team.

Among the chief gainers were Sri Lankan captain Mahela Jayawardene, bought by Delhi Daredevils for 1.4 million dollars, and Indian seamer Vinay Kumar, who fetched 1 million dollars from Royal Challengers Bangalore.

New Zealand wicketkeeper Brendon McCullum went to Kolkata Knight Riders for 900,000 dollars, while 41-year-old Australian spinner Brad Hogg was picked up by Rajasthan Royals for 180,000 dollars.

Former Pakistan international Azhar Mahmood, who now holds a British passport,

will play for Kings XI Punjab for 200,000 dollars. A bigger surprise, however, was the list of players who missed out.

There were no takers for England's James Anderson, Graeme Swann, Ian Bell, Matt Prior and Ravi Bopara, despite their team being the number one Test side and also the reigning world Twenty20 champions.

Meanwhile, dashing Bangladesh opener Tamim Iqbal went unsold for the second time in two years.

Veteran Indian batsman Venkatsai Laxman, struggling to retain his place in the Indian Test team, was also unsold. Even in-form Australian fast bowler Peter Siddle was ignored.

Jadeja, Jayawardene, Kumar and McCullum belonged to the now-defunct Kochi Tuskers franchise, which played in last year's tournament before it was thrown out of the IPL in September for non-payment of dues.

The franchises used the auction to fill their quota of 11 foreign stars in the 33-man squads allowed for each club ahead of the fifth edition of the IPL which will be played between April 4 and May 27.

Much depended on the availability of the players for the seven-week 76-match tournament.

England's international players will not be available for more than a month, since their tour of Sri Lanka ends on April 7 and is followed by a home series against the West Indies starting in mid-May.

The leading Australians can join the IPL only after their tour of the West Indies finishes on April 27.

Aamer faces uncertainty

Cricket

AFP, Karachi

Teenage Pakistan paceman Mohammad Aamer faces an uncertain future following his release from jail this week after serving half of a six-month sentence for his role in a spot-fixing scandal.

The 19-year-old's burgeoning career was cut short when he pleaded guilty to charges of corruption in a scandal that surfaced in August 2010 and rocked the sporting world.

Aamer, once considered the hottest property in international cricket after a rapid rise from village boy to famed bowler, now knows nothing about what life has in store for him.

He emerged on the scene in 2009, regarded as a better left-arm paceman than the legendary Wasim Akram at the same age. With 51 wickets in just 14 Tests, Aamer was on the verge of getting the ICC emerging player award in 2010 -- but his career and life then derailed.

The charges were related to bowling

deliberate no-balls by Aamer and pace partner Mohammad Asif in a Lord's Test against England, contrived with then captain Salman Butt and trio's agent Mazhar Majeed in return for big money.

The International Cricket Council (ICC) banned the trio for a minimum of five years while a UK court last year sent Aamer to jail for six months, Asif for 12, Butt for 30 and Majeed for 32.

As soon as Aamer was released from prison on Wednesday, speculation started about whether his career can be reignited.

Aamer's former lawyer, Shahid Karim, believes the paceman can appeal against the ICC ban in the Switzerland based Court of Arbitration for Sports, however some experts believe his pleading guilty means he cannot.

Former Pakistan paceman Waqar Younis backed a reduction in the ban but there is no such provision in the ICC code in which the minimum penalty is a five-year-ban.

Former England captain Mike Brearley, also part of ICC's Task Team on Pakistan, showed sympathy for Aamer.

Younis props up Pakistan

FROM PAGE 16

But after lunch, Younis opened up once England captain Andrew Strauss introduced Jonathan Trott, smashing the occasional bowler to square-leg boundary to bring up Pakistan's 100.

Earlier Abdul Rehman took 5-40 -- his second five-wicket haul after a career-best 6-25 in Pakistan's 72-run win in the second Test in Abu Dhabi.

Resuming at 104-6, England lost nightwatchman Anderson in the first over of the day when he missed a sharp turning delivery from Rehman and was bowled.

Two overs later, Rehman's spin partner Saad Ajmal

trapped Stuart Broad (four) and after captain Andrew Strauss's fall wrapped up the innings when Swann (16) holed out in the deep.

Ajmal finished with 3-59.

SCOREBOARD

PAKISTAN: First innings 99 (Shafiq 45; Broad 4-36, Anderson 3-35)
ENGLAND: First innings (overnight 104-6) Strauss st Adnan b Strauss 56
Cook c Adnan b Gul 1
Trott lbw b Gul 2
Pietersen lbw b Rehman 32
Bell st Adnan b Ajmal 5
Morgan lbw b Rehman 10
Prior b Rehman 6
Anderson b Rehman 4
Broad lbw b Ajmal 4
Swann c Rehman b Ajmal 16
Panesar not out 0
Extras: (b-1, lb-4) 5

Total: (All out in 55 overs) 141
Fall of wickets: 1-5, 2-7, 3-64, 4-75, 5-88, 6-98, 7-106, 8-121, 9-133

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Gul	7	1	28	2
Cheema	4	0	9	0
Ajmal	23	6	59	3
Rehman	21	4	40	5

PAKISTAN: Second innings
Hafeez lbw b Panesar 21
Taufeeq c Strauss b Anderson 6
Azhar not out 75
Younis (not out) 115
Extras: (lb-4, nb-1) 5
Total: (For 2 wkts in 82 overs) 222

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Anderson	16	5	24	1
Broad	12	3	38	0
Panesar	33	7	84	1
Swann	19	2	58	0
Trott	2	0	14	0

Abahani take on Gazi Tank today

SPORTS REPORTER

The Premier Division Cricket League resumes today at three different venues after the sudden break.

Abahani take on Gazi Tank at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur, Mohammadan Play Brothers Union at the Fatullah Cricket Stadium and Old DOHS meet with Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club at BKSP in today's tenth round matches.

The first round matches will be completed on February 8, a day before the opening ceremony of the Bangladesh Premier League T20 tournament.

Khulna make it to top six

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jamalpur

Khulna became champions in the final round of the 2nd National Women's Cricket Championship when they beat Dhaka by 39 runs at the Jamalpur Stadium yesterday.

Khulna scored 128 runs before they were all out in their stipulated 30 overs. Shuktara hit 31 runs in 53 balls while Shailla Sharmin contributed 25 off 44 balls.

Sathira Jakir and Tithi captured two wickets each.

In reply, Dhaka finished their 30-over quota for just 89 runs. Ayesha Akhter made 34 off 58 balls and Mahmuda Khan added 14 off 46 balls.

Dhaka, Tangail, Narail, Khulna, Bogra and Moulavibazar will now be split into two groups took part in the competition.

'Aussies favourites'

Tri-series begins in Melbourne today

Cricket

PTI, Melbourne

Australia cricket captain Michael Clarke on Saturday declared his team as the favourites to win the ODI tri-series but conceded that it will have to produce its best to nail down world champions India in the opening game at Melbourne on Sunday. The series features Sri Lanka as the third team.

"We have to play at our best to beat both these teams. They were both in the final of most recent world cup. We're the number one one-day team in the world so I'd like to think we are favourites," Clarke said today ahead of the opening match.

India, blanked 0-4 in the Test series, finally got something to cheer about when they won the second Twenty20 match against Australia at Melbourne on Friday night. Clarke praised the effort put in by the beleaguered team.

"India is a very good team...the way they fielded last night is how you need to field in cricket. Fielding is a big part of our game and I certainly wasn't surprised by how they fielded. They are a very good outfit, there are some really good athletes in that team."

"That's the game. Unfortunately, you can't win every single game." Clarke said if people were excited about the one-day series, there were enough reasons for it.

"When you're playing two very good opposition teams, Sri Lanka and India, if I was a fan, I would love to get out there and watch it so I'm expecting people to continue to turn out."

"It's probably going to be a little bit harder for the Melbourne people tomorrow considering they have just played a Twenty20 last night. People have got only so much money so a lot of families can't afford in one weekend to go and watch two big games."

"We'll wait and see. If any city is going to turn out, it's Melbourne though. They're very supportive of Australian cricket and of sport," he said.

There were 62,000-plus crowd at the MCG to see India beat Australia by eight wickets in the second Twenty20 here last night.

Despite the continuous failures of wicketkeeper Brad Haddin and batsman Shaun Marsh, now omitted for ODIs, Clarke continued to support their credentials, insisting they could force their way back into the team.

"The team has been picked for the first three games so I think the selectors will talk before they select the team for the next group of matches."

"Hads [Haddin] just need to get back to scoring runs and keeping well. There's been a lot of talk about it, I don't think Brad's that bothered by it. He knows what he has to do, put numbers on the board and I'm sure he will get another opportunity."

"As for Shaun [Marsh], It will be no doubt good for him to go out and try and score some runs. I've said for some time he's a wonderful player and he needs to be scoring runs in all forms of the game. I'm pretty confident Shaun will turn that around."

"Guys have been picked on performance. They have performed either for their state or Australia. They've been given an opportunity and in the back of your mind you do need to continue to look forward but it's important especially against these two teams that we play our best cricket and concentrate on what's in front of us."

Clarke said he was in no position to advise how to spread the Twenty20 games across the country especially now that he is not part of set up.

"Obviously I'm not involved in the Twenty20s. So if there is more Twenty20 cricket, then I wouldn't be required. I'll get a longer break after the Test series."

'India fear Pakistan'

Cricket

AFP, Dubai

Pakistan cricket chief Zaka Ashraf said Saturday that his side's recent resurgence in form had left arch-rivals India afraid to take them on.

The neighbours have not played a Test series since 2007, with sporting ties frozen after the terrorist attacks on Mumbai in November 2008, which New Delhi blamed on Pakistan-based militants.

There were hopes of a thaw after the sides met in the World Cup semifinal last March and they are slated to play each other under the International Cricket Council's Future Tours Programme this year.

But they have struggled to find a slot because of India's hectic schedule, prompting Ashraf, who took over as Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) chairman in October last year, to accuse India of running scared.

"Maybe the way our team is performing and the way their team is performing in Australia, they look like afraid, for them losing to Australia is not that much emotional, but its more emotional losing to Pakistan," Ashraf told reporters.

India were routed 4-0 in their Test series in Australia last month -- to record eight consecutive defeats away from home after their whitewash in England by the same margin last year.

In contrast, Pakistan under Misbahul Haq are on a roll, having not lost a series since

August 2010 and enjoy an unassailable 2-0 lead over world number one England in their three-Test series in the United Arab Emirates.

The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) has said it needs government approval to revive the ties, but Ashraf said they were worried about how supporters would react to being beaten by Pakistan.

"Indian cricket fans will get after their cricket board, so I think the way we are performing they are afraid," said Ashraf, whose request to meet his BCCI counterpart Narayan Srinivasan in December last year was also turned down.

Ashraf said all PCB's requests to revive cricket relations had been unsuccessful.

"I don't know what's in their heart, but we have requested them a lot of times," he said.

He said both the Indian and Pakistani prime ministers -- who attended the World Cup semifinal together -- had asked for a resumption of games between the two countries, but nothing had happened.

"We are ready to play any time against them. If they say yes today we can play against them here in UAE after the England series... but the ball is in their court whether they want to play," Ashraf said.

"When their prime minister is saying, when Srinivasan is saying he also wants to see India Pakistan play, maybe their selectors and those working in their team management are afraid of our team's morale and preparation."

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS	35 Eat noisily	54 Neap and ebb	13 Frock
1 Wobbly dessert	39 Forsaken		18 Mythical flier
6 Recapitulate	40 Plant prickle	DOWN	21 Criminal
11 Major work by Virgil	42 Belligerent deity	1 Scoffed	23 Palatal dangler
12 Made level	43 White House nickname	2 Group of nine	27 Grafton's "— for Ricochet"
14 Gondola city	44 Dye-and-wax art	3 Mainlander's memento	29 Life, to Sally Bowles
15 Facade	46 Hot tub setting	4 Defeat	31 Martini garnish
16 Anger	47 Merchant	5 Classical theater	32 "Monopoly" pieces
17 "M*A*S*H"	49 Forgivable	6 A bunch of	33 Rut
19 Milwaukee product	51 Performance extension	7 Eye part	34 Screwball
20 Emblem on Canada's flag	52 Earl of Sandwich, e.g.	8 Chaps	36 Bearlike
22 Neither partner	53 Bed cover	9 Discomfort	37 Settles a debt
23 Manipulates		10 KP gadget	38 Choral rendition
24 Calculating snake?		11 St. Teresa's birthplace	41 Rosie's fastener
26 Skulptors			44 Cause ennu
28 Varnish ingredient			45 French military cap
30 Actress Lucy			48 Buck's mate
31 Easy-chair accessory			50 Wynken and Blynken's pal

Solution time: 27 mins.

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