

Day finds Pakistan ok

AFP, Karachi

Pakistan coach Dav Whatmore Sunday expressed satisfaction over his team's performance during their winning Asia Cup campaign, saying it would have been the icing on the cake to beat arch-rivals India.

Pakistan beat Bangladesh in a thrilling final by two runs in Dhaka on Thursday, lifting the Asia Cup for the second time.

It was Whatmore's first assignment since taking over earlier this month.

The former Australian batsman -- who guided Sri Lanka to the World Cup title in 1996 -- said his team had been consistent and competitive in all matches.

"It would have been the icing on the cake to have beaten India and go on to win the cup. We made some mistakes but were in the game late in the second 50-over block," Whatmore told AFP.

"It was just one of those games that makes you analyse more."

India's Virat Kohli smashed a career-best 183 to help India chase down a daunting 330-run target but India failed to make it to the final.

Whatmore, who also helped Bangladesh reach the latter stages of the 2007 World Cup held in the Caribbean, praised the Asia Cup hosts.

"Bangladesh had a really good Asia Cup. On the evidence of this tournament, everyone would agree they have improved. They need to be consistent now," he said.

Whatmore backed Misbah-ul-Haq after the Pakistan captain came under pressure over the team's 4-0 whitewash against England in a one-day series last month.

An uncalled

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of the fielding side and to any Governing Body responsible for the match, who shall take such action as is considered appropriate against the captain and player or players concerned." Neither Steve Davis nor Ian Gould thought the incident worth reporting and in truth the 'misdemeanour' itself was so minor, that reporting this seems distinctly un-gentlemanly from the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB).

The Tigers played well, exceptionally so, but it is the nature of the game, and life itself, that some days you maybe better but still will not come out on top. That is the beauty of cricket and also its flaw but that is why we watch and follow it as well. Nitpicking infinitesimal incidents and fixating on them as a means of projecting blame seems, forgive the adjective, a classless thing to do.

At the end, there is also to consider the consequences of what might happen if Bangladesh do get awarded these five runs and hence are announced as belated victors of the Asia Cup. What would the reaction be like then? The truth of the matter is that it would be at best a Pyrrhic victory for the Tigers, won in terms of 'legality' in paper and not out on the field of play.

No one wants that. At worst, it will gravitate into a slinging match of disrepute with Pakistan, who have already expressed their 'disappointment' at this action of the BCB. Such acts of mud-slinging will serve to do nothing but taint the efforts of the Bangladesh team in a tournament where they finally came of age. As the saying goes, why ruin a beautiful memory? The BCB should learn that at times, it is best to let sleeping dogs lie.

Tamim

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franchise, he will be the fifth Bangladeshi to play in the IPL after Abdur Razzak, Mashrafe Bin Mortaza, Mohammad Ashraful and Shakib Al Hasan, who will play this season for the Kolkata Knight Riders.

Retirement? No.



AFP, Mumbai

Sachin Tendulkar said Sunday he was focused on helping India fight their way back to the top of cricket rather than on personal records after recently achieving his 100th international century.

The 38-year-old brushed aside speculation about his retirement and said the Indian team had work to do if they were to regain the number one spot in the Test rankings that they lost to England last year.

"If you lose that then someone is playing better than you," Tendulkar told a press conference in his home city of Mumbai. "There's no doubt that yes, we have to perform better as a team and win because that is what we go out for."

With an extraordinary two-decade career behind him, Tendulkar said it was important during this "rough patch" for his side not to lose hope. "We can overcome this obstacle and for that it's going to require hard work."

He insisted that he just wanted to "enjoy the game"



India batsman Sachin Tendulkar speaks during a press conference in Mumbai yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

after setting a new record during the recent Asia Cup by completing an unprecedented century of centuries.

"I don't think I need to prove anything right now," said the world's leading scorer in Test and one-day cricket, when asked about his next milestone.

"The dream was to play for India and win the World Cup, and I've achieved them both."

Tendulkar admitted to testing times as the hype built over his 100th century, which took more than a year to achieve and finally came on March 16 against Bangla-

desh in Dhaka.

His 99th international ton came against South Africa in the World Cup at Nagpur on March 12 last year.

"I asked God what wrong did I do, why did it take so long?" he said.

Tendulkar, a god-like figure himself to Indian cricket fans, told a young man in the audience to "chase your dreams" when asked for a few tips.

"Don't find shortcuts, there will be difficult phases also, don't worry about that. Just enjoy the game, have a big heart and look at life positively."

Losses for top

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it wasn't enough and despite a late try by Shakib Al Hasan, who made 33 off 29 balls at No 7, they ended up losing.

For the Dhanmondi outfit, Arafat Sunny and the newly-married Shamsur Rahman took three wickets each.

GAZI-ABAHANI

Batting first, Gazi Tank rode on a 111-run fourth wicket stand between skipper Alok Kapali and Usman Salahuddin, both of whom hammered half-centuries. From 43 for three the pair took the total to a solid base in the 38th over. Another 45 runs were added between the 21-year-old Pakistani international and Mominul Haque, who then provided the final flourish with Nazmul Hossain.

Abahani were on track through an 82-run fourth wicket stand between Farhad Hossain and Mahmudullah Riyad but they failed to capitalise and it was a late-order collapse, mostly inflicted by four-wicket hero Alauddin Babu, that sealed the deal.

SCORES IN BRIEF

OLD DOHS: 254-7 in 50 overs (Anwar Jr 52, Ziaur 51, Adnan 51; Noor 2-40, Wahid 2-21, Naeem 2-57).

MOHAMMEDAN: 257-5 in 48.5 overs (Babar 72, Naeem 63; Shuvogoto 2-39).

Result: Mohammedan won by five wickets.

SHEIKH JAMAL: 287-6 in 50 overs (Mushfiqur 114, Mahmudul 74; Mosharrarf 2-48).

VICTORIA: 278 all out in 49 overs (Sajid 50, Jahurul 44; Shamsur 3-42, Arafat 3-40).

Result: Sheikh Jamal won by nine runs.

GAZI TANK: 239-5 in 50 overs (Kapali 77, Usman 65; Mominul 31 not out; Hasan 3-69).

ABAHANI: 234 all out in 50 overs (Riyad 78, Farhad 51; Alauddin 4-61, Haldar 2-26, Asif 2-26).

Result: Abahani won by five runs.

PCB unhappy

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and everyone praised Bangladesh for their fight and their decision to appeal is just an afterthought after the result.

"The fact of the matter is that no match umpire or referee complained about this to Pakistan management and Bangladesh's complain will spoil a wonderful final which everyone enjoyed," said Alam.

BCB said it would seek five penalty runs for deliberate obstruction and a reversal of the result in their favour.

"We have seen video footage of the incident repeatedly. It is clear that Cheema blocked Riyad deliberately," Enayet Hossain Siraj, chairman of the BCB operations committee, told reporters.

"We will lodge a written appeal to the ACC very soon and will also give a copy to the International Cricket Council."

Squad named for AHF Cup

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Hockey Federation picked 16 players for the upcoming AHF Cup Hockey Competition which gets underway in Bangkok on April 16. Mohammedan striker Russel Mahmud Jimmy was retained as captain while Mamunur Rahman Chayan was made his deputy. The travelling team includes six officials including the coach Mahbub Harun. Four players have been kept in the stand-by list.

SQUAD

Zahid Hossain (GK), Rafiqul Islam, Moshir Rahman, Mamunur Rahman, Imran Hassan, Tapash Barman, Issa Mia, Assaduzzaman Chandan, Kamruzzaman, Shahidullah Titu, Sheikh Nannu, Jahid Bin Taleb, Russel Mahmud Jimmy (C), Hasan Jubaer, Iqbal Nadirm, Krishno Kumar.

Young Tigers Cricket

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangpur

Rajshahi and Barisal won the two-day matches of the Young Tigers U-16 Cricket Tournament in Rangpur yesterday.

Rajshahi defeated Khulna by 105 runs at the Carmichael College Ground while Chittagong defeated Barisal by six wickets at the Rangpur Cricket Garden. Mitul of Rajshahi and Shaif of Chittagong were declared man of the match in their respective matches.

Malaysian GP Alonso's

AFP, Sepang

Ferrari's Fernando Alonso claimed his first victory in eight months in thrilling style at the rain-interrupted Malaysian Grand Prix on Sunday.

Alonso survived a lengthy rain suspension, a rash of spins and mishaps and a strong challenge from Sauber's Sergio Perez to finish ahead of the Mexican driver, with McLaren's Lewis Hamilton third.

Spain's Alonso, a two-time world champion, was no one's pre-race favourite in the clunky F2012, but he emerged from the chaos caused by torrential rains at the head of the pack and doggedly clung on for victory.

Perez pushed hard for his first win and looked set to steal victory from Alonso until he overshot a turn on lap 50. However, he still managed his maiden trip to the podium.

Alviro, JP hit tons



AFP, Wellington

Centuries from Alviro Petersen and JP Duminy gave South Africa an iron grip on the weather-affected third Test against New Zealand on Sunday in Wellington.

South Africa declared their first innings at 474 for nine in the final session at Basin Reserve and at stumps New Zealand were 65 without loss with Daniel Flynn on 35 and Martin Gupitll on 28.

It was a sound start by New Zealand, who face an uphill battle to win the Test and level the three-match series, which South Africa lead 1-0. The first two days were both hit by rain delays.

South Africa resumed Sunday at 246-2 and moved to 362-3 at lunch but the dis-

missal of Petersen for a career-high 156 started a collapse that saw six wickets fall before skipper Graeme Smith declared.

But the tourists' hopes of claiming at least one wicket before stumps against an untried New Zealand opening pairing failed to materialise despite the hostile approach of the bowlers.

Middle-order batsman Flynn, recalled after two years in the wilderness and thrust in as a novice opener, took several hits to the body before deciding the best defence was attack.

SCOREBOARD

SOUTH AFRICA: First innings (overnight 246-2)

Smith c Van Wyk b Bracewell	5				
Petersen lbw Martin	156				
Amla c van Wyk b Gillespie	63				
Duminy c Taylor b Gillespie	103				
De Villiers b Martin	38				
Rudolph c Van Wyk b Gillespie	11				
Boucher c Williamson b Gillespie	46				

Steyn c Gupitll b Gillespie	0				
Philander c Flynn b Gillespie	29				
Morkel not out	10				
Extras: (b-6, lb-1, w-3, nb-3)	13				
Total: (For 9 wickets in 148.4 overs)	474				
Fall of wickets: 1-13, 2-106, 3-306, 4-362, 5-381, 6-388, 7-404, 8-459, 9-474					
Did not bat: De Lange					

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Martin	28	5	95	2
Bracewell	30	3	106	1
Gillespie	33.4	7	113	6
Vettori	42	11	98	0
Brownlie	2	0	20	0
Williamson	13	1	35	0

NEW ZEALAND: First innings

Flynn not out	35				
Gupitll not out	28				
Extras: (lb-1, nb-1)	2				
Total: (For no loss in 25 overs)	65				
To bat: McCullum, Taylor, Williamson, Vettori, Van Wyk, Brownlie, Bracewell, Gillespie,					

Eng have a point to prove

First Test against Sri Lanka starts today



AFP, Galle

England captain Andrew Strauss on Sunday urged his world number one Test side to bounce back against Sri Lanka after the morale-sapping loss to Pakistan.

England, who took over the top mantle after a 4-0 rout of India at home last summer, crashed to an embarrassing 3-0 series whitewash by Pakistan in the United Arab Emirates in January and February.

The failure of Strauss's men to adjust to spin-friendly wickets in Dubai and Abu Dhabi raised questions about their ability to win away from the seaming conditions at home.

Sri Lanka will offer little respite for the tourists, whose challenge to master the slow, turning wickets will be compounded by the oppressive heat and humidity prevailing on the island.

Strauss, asked if the number one ranking was justified, insisted he preferred to concentrate on the job at hand -- that of beating Sri Lanka.

England have not won a series in Sri Lanka since 2001, when Nasser Hussain's men fought

back after losing the first Test to win the remaining two matches for a creditable 2-1 scoreline.

The tourists drew a blank on their last two visits to Sri Lanka, in 2003 and 2007, as the hosts won both three-Test series by 1-0 margins.

Strauss's men began the current tour well by winning both practice matches in the capital Colombo, the first by an innings and 15 runs and the second after chasing down a target of 359 in 60.4 overs.

The second and final Test will be played at the P Sara Oval in Colombo from April 3.

TEAMS

SRI LANKA (likely): Mahela Jayawardene (captain), Tillakaratne Dilshan, Lahiru Thirimanne, Kumar Sangakkara, Thilan Samaraweera, Dinesh Chandimal, Prasanna Jayawardene, Suranga Lakmal, Chanaka Welegedara, Suraj Randiv, Rangana Herath.

ENGLAND (from): Andrew Strauss (captain), Alastair Cook, Jonathan Trott, Ian Bell, Kevin Pietersen, Ravi Bopara, Samit Patel, Matt Prior, Stuart Broad, James Anderson, Tim Bresnan, Steven Finn, Monty Panesar, Graeme Swann.

Cricket before Liberation

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two decades saw very few games each year.

It began on December 14, 1970 with the Under-19 tournament match between Dacca Under-19s and the Dacca Education Board Under-19s. Jahangir Shah Badshah, the most talented of all-rounders from that first generation of Bangladesh cricketers, scored 36 runs and took three wickets in the first innings.

In the final, the match is said to have been a draw between East Pakistan Sports Federation and Lahore Under-19s with such luminaries as Imran Khan, who scored 116 in the first innings though he was given two lives early in his innings, and Wasim Raja for the Punjabi side.

Between January 15 and 30, 1971, the matches of the BCCP Trophy were also held with many Pakistani top stars; and several of the local boys who went on to play for Bangladesh in the next few years took part.

Roquibul was also selected for the match between the Pakistani cricket board and an International XI. But there was a day of amazement for him in the BCCP Trophy games during that season.

"It was the first time I saw Hanif Mohammad bat. I was fielding at third slip and I noticed everything that he did beginning from his footwork while playing strokes. I am sure I would have dropped him if it came my way," he said.

But on the first day of March, Pakistani president Yahya Khan indefinitely postponed the pending National Assembly session. Two Quaid-e-Azam Trophy games were scheduled to be played in Dhaka but they were lost in the ensuing chaos and were given to the West Pakistani sides (PIA-B given points on both occasions). "I don't remember any such matches but it could have been scheduled," said Roquibul.

As if nothing was going wrong in the country, the tournament continued in West Pakistan with home side Punjab University taking on Lahore in a first-class that began on March 25.

It sounds cruel, but on this day 41 years ago the other part of the country was up in flames and the cricketers here were fending for their lives; the oppressors up in the West had to look normal, no matter how abnormal they were.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

1 Man of

morals?

6 English-

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12 Fleet

13 Trick-

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14 Not quite

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15 Punish by

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16 Deck

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19 Listener

20 Ms. Lane

22 Archery

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24 Massage

27 Many

29 Frat party

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32 Not as

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35 Initial

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36 Neighbor-

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37 Adversary

38 Earl Grey,

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4 Idol's

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5 Geo-

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6 Suitor

7 Gin —

8 "Rocks"

9 Diverted

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10 Killer

whale

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12 Request

18 On

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21 Journalist

Nellie

23 Greek H

24 Nipper's

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25 Coffee

vessel

26 At war

28 Body

frame-

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30 Sticky

stuff

31 Chopper

33 Last letter

34 — de

cologne

39 Sports

venue

41 Blue gem

42 Auction-

eer's

cry

43 Hodge-

podge

45 Cold War

abbr.

47 Dalmatian's

name,

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48 Troubles

49 Retainer

51 Victory