

Manas Open TT champion

SPORTS REPORTER

Manas of Sheikh Russel emerged champion in the Lotto Open Table Tennis competition after beating Hasib of Cicerone in the final at the Shahid Tajuddin Indoor Stadium yesterday. Manas won the match in five sets (6-11, 11-6, 7-11, 13-11, 12-10). Rocky of Cicerone finished in third place beating Mahub of Mahub of Sheikh Russel 11-5 11-6, 11-8, 11-7. General secretary of Bangladesh Cycling federation Intiaz Ahmed Babul distributed prizes among the winners after the matches.

It must be noted that the other four events of the tournament were decided in July while the final of this event was deferred indefinitely.

Fed Shield kicks off

SPORTS REPORTER

Rahmatganj MFS, Khulna Abahani KC and Bangladesh Police won their respective matches on the opening day of the Grameenphone Federation Shield yesterday. At the Bhasha Shaheed Salam Stadium in Feni, Rahmatganj thrashed hosts Rampur Boys Club 4-0, thanks to goals from Atiq, Sujon, Rintu and Rajib.

At the Jessore Shamsul Huda Stadium, Khulna Abahani KC edged past BKSP 1-0, courtesy of a solitary goal from Mamun in the 82nd minute.

In the day's other match, Bangladesh Police defeated Jessore DFA 2-0 at the same venue. Wasim Chowdhury and Amirul Islam netted one each for Bangladesh Police in the 39th and 56th minutes respectively.

Div-I hockey

SPORTS REPORTER

Mukta Bihanga defeated Bangladesh Police by a solitary goal in the opening match of the Green Delta Insurance First Division Hockey League match at the Maulana Bhasani National Hockey Stadium yesterday. Robin scored the only goal of the match, a field goal, in the 15th minute of the match.

Earlier, tournament sponsors Green Delta Insurance's additional managing director Nasir A Chowdhury inaugurated the tournament where officials of the Bangladesh Hockey Federation were also present.

Two matches will take place today at the same venue. Bachelors Club will take on Barnak Samaj while Shishu Kishor Sangha will play against Victoria SC in the two matches.

Pathan blows

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India are in Group A with England and Afghanistan while Sri Lanka are in Group C with South Africa and Zimbabwe. The top two teams from each group advance to the Super Eights round.

In another practice match in Colombo, Brad Hogg took three wickets to bowl Australia to a 56-run win over rivals New Zealand.

The 41-year-old spinner finished with 3-23 off four overs as Australia dismissed New Zealand for 83 after scoring 139-6.

Pacemen Shane Watson, Clint McKay and Pat Cummins each bagged two wickets for Australia.

Australia are in Group B with the West Indies and Ireland, while New Zealand are in Group D with Pakistan and Bangladesh.

In the last match of the day, Afghanistan beat Sri Lanka A by 51 runs in other warm-up games.

The World Twenty20 starts on Tuesday.

Booters lost

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10:50am today. Bangladesh will be playing two exhibition matches against the Nepal national side, the first of which is scheduled for September 18 and the second for September 20.



Sri Lanka batsman Kumar Sangakkara, who won the ICC Cricketer of the Year, Test Cricketer of the Year and People's Choice Awards, shows off his trophies to the media during the ICC Awards in Colombo yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

Siddons asks Kiwis to mind Tigers spinners

ANI, Wellington

New Zealand can have serious problems against the left-arm spinners in the Bangladesh team, who along with Pakistan complete the strongest group in the Twenty20 World Cup, according to former Bangladesh coach, Jamie Siddons.

New Zealand come into this edition of the World Twenty20 in Sri Lanka ranked fifth, and there are high expectations from the team, but Siddons believes the likes of Shakib Al Hasan and Abdur Razzak could prove to be their biggest hindrance in winning the trophy.

"Against our New Zealand boys, they [Bangladesh] are going to be very competitive with their left-arm orthodox [bowlers],"

stuff.co.nz quoted Siddons, as saying.

"History shows you that there's a little bit of an issue with the left-arm offies and Bangladesh will be chock-full of them," he added.

Shakib and Razzak have both caused New Zealand trouble in the past and were part of the Siddons-coached Bangladesh team which beat the Black Caps 4-0 in a one-day series not so long ago.

Siddons added: "They'll be competitive Bangladesh; they've got a good history in Twenty20 cricket and have a played a lot lately. They've got some dangerous players in Tamim Iqbal, Shakib and Mushfiqur [Rahim] the wicketkeeper. They're world-class Twenty20 players and big hitters."

The Black Caps meet Australia in a warm-up game in Colombo on Friday.

Choking is past: AB

CRICINFO, Colombo

Anybody daring to ask Graeme Smith why South Africa routinely choked in major competitions was best advised to first check their life insurance. The word was on South African cricket's banned list during last year's World Cup and, when it was uttered, Smith bristled in a manner that suggested the conversation was best left unfinished.

"So you have been out in the middle?" Smith railed. "You understand all that? Every time we walk into a press conference, it's the question we expect to get."

It made no difference: South Africa were thrashed by New Zealand in the quarterfinals in Mirpur, Smith retired as one-day captain, as he had always planned, after eight years in the job, and even such a redoubtable leader had failed to lead his shrewd, methodical and talented team to a major one-day prize.

AB de Villiers, Smith's replacement as one-day captain, tried a different tack as South Africa arrived in Colombo. Superficially at least, he does not possess Smith's air of defiance, but he could not wait to face down South Africa's past misdemeanours, so much so that if somebody had asked him about the price of mangoes in Pettah Market he would probably have said: "Ah, I know you are secretly referring to choking, and there is something I want to say about this..."

Few cricket writers know the price of mangoes in Pettah Market but, rightly or wrongly, most think South Africa chokes are ten a penny.

The question was framed innocently enough: "South Africa is a powerhouse when it comes to cricket but, when you enter big

tournaments, does it play on your mind that the major trophy remains elusive?"

De Villiers's eyes narrowed. "I am going to be very honest with you," he said. "I am going to put it out there straight up front. We have choked in the past and we know about that -- if that's the word you are looking for. It is as simple as that. We have had some really bad experiences in the past but I would like to emphasise that it is past."

"We come in with a whole new look in this team. We have worked really hard with a whole new management team, who have given us a lot of energy and new ideas. We will approach this tournament differently and we would like to win the pressure situations. We are going out there to do exactly that."

Colombo was the scene of one of South Africa's most bewildering defeats of all. Ten years ago, they faced India in the semi-final of the Champions Trophy and were 192 for 1, needing 70 from 14 overs, when Herschelle Gibbs retired with cramp in both hands. The game was theirs, but cramp spread to the entire batting line-up and they lost by 10 runs.

Study a list of South Africa's defeats in major one-day tournaments and there have been as many pseudo chokes as real chokes. Sometimes they have just been outplayed by a better side and the cliché has been levelled at them anyway. There seemed little appetite for bringing the subject up again. Then de Villiers did it anyway.

Smith has surely never felt as much hurt as he did after that New Zealand defeat. He looked mentally and physically broken. "Hopefully in the future somebody will go all the way," Smith said then. That hope now rests with de Villiers. But nobody will really believe it until they see it.

Shakib, Ashraf

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hiccups with a half-century stand. The pair guided Bangladesh home with 10 balls remaining.

Ashraf, whose 25-ball 38 held the core of the Bangladesh innings claimed that the wicket was a touch on the slower side. "It would have been better if we had won with more wickets in hand but it is a satisfying result nevertheless. It was not an easy wicket and we had to work quite hard in the middle," he said.

Earlier, the Zimbabwean batsmen found life difficult after they were put in to bat by Mushfiqur. The slow-left arm bowling combination of Abdul Razaq and Shakib yielded three wickets for only 37 runs. Zimbabwe were in trouble right from the word go as they lost their star batsman Hamilton Masakadza and their captain Brendon Taylor within the first ten overs.

Opener Vusi Sibanda, who had managed to create a launching pad of sorts with a steady 40, failed to kick on as he was caught by Abdul Razaq of Mashrafe Bin Mortaza in the 19th over. Some late hitting at the end by Craig Ervine and Elton Chigumbura ensured that Zimbabwe helped Zimbabwe put up a defensible total.

Bangladesh will play their second warm-up game against Ireland tomorrow at the same venue.

SCORES IN BRIEF

ZIMBABWE: 134 for 6 in 20 overs (Sibanda 40, Taylor 21; Razaq 2-21, Shakib 1-16).
BANGLADESH: 135 for 5 in 18.2 overs (Ashraf 38, Shakib 28; A Cremer 2-10, Chigumbura 1-8)

It's anyone's tournament: Muralidaran

ANI, London

Legendary off-spinner Muttiah Muralidaran has said the teams from the subcontinent would have an edge over other teams in the Twenty20 World Cup due to their familiarity with the pitches and conditions.

Murali said defending champions England could find the oppressive heat and humidity in host nation Sri Lanka as their biggest obstacle to win the T20 crown for the second time in a row.

"Anything can happen in this format, so it really is anyone's tournament. A wicket here, a good over with the bat there -- the game can change so quickly," the Sun quoted Murali, as saying.

S'kara player of the year



CRICINFO, Colombo

Kumar Sangakkara won three awards, including the prestigious Cricketer of the Year and Test Cricketer of the Year at the annual International Cricket Council (ICC) Awards ceremony in Colombo on Saturday. Sangakkara also won the People's Choice prize, an honour he had received last year as well. For Cricketer and Test Cricketer of the Year, Sangakkara was chosen ahead of South Africa's Hashim Amla and Vernon Philander, and Australia captain Michael Clarke.

He was prolific in both Tests and ODIs during the 12-month voting period ending in early August: in 14 Tests, he compiled 1,444 runs at an average of 60.16, including five centuries and five half-centuries, highlighted by a match-saving 211 against Pakistan in Abu Dhabi; in 37 ODIs, he scored 1,457 runs with three hundreds, and also completed 39 catches and three stumpings as a wicketkeeper.

"This is an amazing honour and I've seen the people who have won it before me and the nominees too, to be named alongside them is wonderful," Sangakkara said after receiving the Sir

Garfield Sobers trophy for Cricketer of the Year from ICC president Alan Isaac. "I admire them greatly and even more so when I looked up at their records on the screen this evening. It's great to be amongst them but now to receive this honour this evening, is simply fantastic."

Previous winners of the Cricketer of the Year award include Rahul Dravid (2004), Andrew Flintoff and Jacques Kallis (joint winners in 2005), Ricky Ponting (2006 and 2007), Shivnarine Chanderpaul (2008), Mitchell Johnson (2009), Sachin Tendulkar (2010) and Jonathan Trott (2011).

West Indies legend Brian Lara presented Sangakkara with the Test Cricketer award.

Sangakkara missed out though on a third major gong when Virat Kohli was named ODI Cricketer of the Year, an award Sangakkara had won in 2011. During the period under consideration, Kohli played 31 ODIs and scored 1,733 runs at an average of 66.65, including eight hundreds and six half-centuries.

Among the other winners were West Indies off-spinner Sunil Narine, who was named Emerging Cricketer of the Year. His hard-to-read variations quickly led to him being labelled a mystery spinner, and he was instrumental in West Indies' series wins over

New Zealand in all three formats in July-August.

Another mystery spinner, Ajantha Mendis, missed out on Twenty20 Performance of the Year, which was won by South Africa opener Richard Levi, for his record-breaking 45-ball century against New Zealand.

New Zealand's Daniel Vettori received the Spirit of Cricket Award for his sporting recall of a Zimbabwe batsman during a tense Test in Bulawayo.

Ireland left-arm-spinner George Dockrell took home the Associate and Affiliate Player of the Year prize, becoming the second Irishman to win the award after William Porterfield in 2009.

Women's cricket had two prizes for the first time, with the ICC awarding the ODI Cricketer and T20I Cricketer of the Year, instead of having a single honour. Last year's winner West Indies' Stafanie Taylor won the ODI gong, while England's Sarah Taylor took the T20 award.

Besides Sangakkara's three prizes, Sri Lanka won one more: umpire Kumar Dharmasena taking the Umpire of the Year award. That ended a three-year winning run for Aleem Dar and left Pakistan, already unhappy at off-spinner Saeed Ajmal's exclusion from two top award shortlists, without a

BCCI discards Deccan

AFP, New Delhi

Indian cricket authorities have terminated Indian Premier League (IPL) side the Deccan Chargers for failing to comply with a deadline for overdue player fees, the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) said Saturday.

The decision, the BCCI said in a statement, was "only due to the absolute inability of the franchise to effectively run the team".

The BCCI added due to the "stated position of the Deccan franchise to refuse to rectify the various defaults including payments to players... a decision was taken to forthwith terminate the Deccan Chargers franchise".

Since May the board said it had "received repeated assurances that the overdue player fees would be paid; all of these promises have been unfulfilled".

Deccan Chronicle Holdings, a media company that bought the team for 107 million dollars before the inaugural IPL in 2008, sought to sell the cash-strapped Hyderabad-based team this week, having placed advertisements in newspapers inviting bids.

It received just one proposal when bids opened Thursday, which it rejected "on the basis of the payment terms offered by the bidder", the BCCI, which owns the IPL, said at the time.

The company has been ordered by banks to reduce its debts, according to

KP saga in Colombo too

REUTERS, Colombo

England captain Stuart Broad may have thought travelling to Sri Lanka for the Twenty 20 World Cup would offer respite from the Kevin Pietersen saga but it dominated his first news conference.

Pietersen has been frozen out of the England set-up since allegedly sending "provocative" text messages about his own team mates to players in the South Africa side last month.

Even at a distance of 9,000 km from home the controversy surrounding the 32-year-old batsman continues to stalk Broad and his players as they prepare to defend their world title.

The England skipper was bombarded with the words "Kevin Pietersen" as he faced his first question from the media on Friday and the topic is unlikely to go away anytime soon.

Broad tried to bat away the issue diplomatically, reminding reporters that England had started planning for life after Pietersen several months ago.

The South African-born batsman had announced his retirement from limited overs cricket earlier this year before making himself available again in August.

"I think it was the second of June when KP retired from the one-day and Twenty20 format so we have had a bit of time to plan without him," Broad said of the player who was named 'man of the tournament' when they won the Twenty20 World Cup two years ago.

"We've been planning for a while, and the 15 guys who are here are really excited to be here and have the opportunity to represent England in a 'World Cup'."

"That's what you want, and it's an extremely proud moment to lead those guys on to the field of play."

Broad is confident his squad, including eight of the triumphant 2010 team, will produce the kind of performances that will make the fans back home forget about the

Pietersen affair.

"We have a bowling unit that can restrict the opposition well," all-rounder Broad said.

"We've got some talented players here, we've played some really good Twenty20 cricket over the past year, we've got match-winners in the side."

"We saw Jos Buttler completely change the game the other night in one over against South Africa at Edgbaston and that's the sort of thing you need in Twenty20 cricket."

"It's hugely encouraging coming here. We've got to adapt to the conditions very quickly. It's a great challenge for us all -- we're hugely excited to be here."

"There are not many guys who have played in ICC World tournaments -- they're amazing occasions, you have the best players in the world here."

"I think eight of us were involved in the World Cup win in 2010 and hopefully we can share that experience and learn quickly."

England begin their title defence in Colombo with Group C games against Afghanistan on September 21 and India two days later.

Enjoying the opener's

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since the tour in Trinidad and Tobago. "I have been opening the innings for a while now and have made some important contributions while batting with Tamim. I obviously would love to play a bigger innings but we have not batted on the best of Twenty20 wickets in recent times," he said at the end of yesterday's warm-up game.

"Hopefully the tracks for the main tournament games will be more batting-friendly and I will try to take this form into those games," he added. He further stated that the team, despite the hot and sultry conditions, played with a lot of intensity and never relaxed throughout the match.

Appreciating the way the middle order batsmen played yesterday, he said, "This is an extremely balanced side. The way Ziaur Rahman and Mahmudullah batted despite the loss of three or four wickets is an example of the confidence in this side," said Ashraf.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

- ACROSS**
1 Throws in
5 Tatter
8 Wound cover
12 Tide type
13 Compass dir.
14 Corn concoction
15 Severe decline
17 Dermatologist's case
18 As found
19 Singer Sophie
21 Youngster
22 36-Across segment
23 Blue
26 "Char-lotte's --"
28 Make into law
31 Old portico
33 Homer's interjection
35 Arizona river
36 Variety show
- DOWN**
1 Opposed
2 Campus bigwig
3 Raised platform
4 Divided
5 Considered
6 Blackbird
7 Fellows
8 What "thisclue" needs
9 Mixed drink
10 Boleyn or Bancroft
11 "Cheers" serving
16 Pack away
20 Guitar's cousin
23 Georgia's ex-status (Abbr.)
24 Chowded down
25 Overlap
27 Marsh
29 Roman 151
30 Spigot
32 Within earshot
34 Outing on a wagon
37 Id counterpart
39 False god
42 Go in
44 Possibly will
45 Crow's nest cry
46 Sandwich treat
48 Neighbor of Cambodia
49 Sicilian spouter
50 Ante-lope's playmate
53 Whatever amount

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CRYPTOQUIP

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A U E T B Z X E M Q M R, C X M W L L B R
Q ' K U I E U B G U S B T N Z L G U E .

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: SINCE THIS ENGINE IS BEEFED UP BY USING A EUROPEAN FLATFISH, YOU COULD CALL IT TURBOT-CHARGED.
Today's Cryptoquip Clue: K equals V