

Top four fight today

BD A-WIHP 1st one-dayer today

SPORTS REPORTER

Fresh from their spin-inspired 52-run victory in the recently concluded four-day match over the touring West Indies High Performance team, Bangladesh A are set to take on the same opponents in the first of three one-dayers at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur today.

The second-string Bangladesh side have retained the same squad they named before the four-day match. There are some injury concerns surrounding the Bangladesh A team, as Mominul Haque suffered a finger injury during the four-day game while Shahriar Nafees is also doubtful, having been injured at a training session last week which forced the batsman to sit out of the four-dayer.

Siddikur's solid start

STAR SPORT DESK

Ace Bangladesh golfer Siddikur Rahman got off to a reasonable start in the Mercuries Taiwan Masters at the Taiwan Golf and Country Club yesterday.

The 27-year-old golfer, who had missed two cuts in a month alone largely due to bad starts in windy conditions, overcame his demons yesterday to finish the round in joint 13th position after a parscore of 72.

But the day's success story came from unheralded golfer Lien Chi-wei of Chinese Taipei, who pulled off an astonishing six-under par 66 in windy conditions to run away with the lead. The big surprise was the four-stroke difference between Lien and the five players tied for second spot -- Hsieh Chi-hsien, Wang Shih-jui, Lin Wen-tang from Chinese Taipei; Baek Seuk-hyun of Korea and Antonio Lascuna and Angelo Que of the Philippines -- each of whom finished with two-under-par 70.

In light of the big difference between the first- and second-placed players, Siddikur's first round finish of an even-par 72 should give cause for optimism that he is perhaps dealing with the windy conditions better than he had in the recent past.

Lien's extraordinary performance may not be repeated over the following rounds and there may be changes to the leaderboard positions, but Siddikur will have to keep battling the conditions if he is to turn around a season that has derailed a bit of late.

AUSTRALIA INDIA
Played: 54 Played: 38
Won: 28 Won: 20

In 2012 In 2012
Played: 9 Played: 7
Won: 5 Won: 4

HEAD TO HEAD
3:3

KEY PLAYERS

SHANE WATSON Matches: 32, Runs: 823, Average: 29.39, 50s: 8, 4s: 62, 6s: 53, Highest: 81, St rate: 150.18, Wickets: 29, Bowling Average: 20.48,

Virat Kohli Matches: 13, Runs: 368, Average: 36.8, 50s: 3, 4s: 47, 6s: 6

PAKISTAN SOUTH AFRICA
Played: 60 Played: 49
Won: 36 Won: 32

In 2012 In 2012
Played: 10 Played: 9
Won: 6 Won: 7

HEAD TO HEAD
2:3

KEY PLAYERS

MOHAMMAD HAFEEZ Matches: 36, Runs: 735, Average: 21.61, 50s: 2, 4s: 86, 6s: 14, Highest: 71, St rate: 111.36, Wickets: 27, Bowling Average: 24.55,

AB DE VILLIERS Matches: 41, Runs: 723, Average: 22.59, 50s: 4, 4s: 53, 6s: 23



Shane Watson (L) can any day turn a game on its head and Australia will be looking for one of those days today when they face India in a crucial World Twenty20 match in Colombo. PHOTO: AFP

for this tournament, to the extent that we are ready for even the Super Over if that becomes necessary.

The Super Over -- where teams scoring more runs in six balls from an opposition bowler win -- comes into play if a match is tied.

The South African captain's main worry ahead of Friday's clash against Pakistan was how his team will cope against prolific off-spinner Saeed Ajmal.

Asked if his batsmen had been able to understand Ajmal's action, de Villiers said: "Not really but there are not many batsmen who can read Ajmal."

"We have studied him closely and analysed his action. The important thing will be to watch the ball closely."

Indian captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni agreed the real battle in the tournament will begin with the Super Eights.

"We have enjoyed the tournament but the importance of the matches ahead multiplies," said Dhoni, whose team faces Pakistan on Sunday and South

Africa next Tuesday. "You can't afford to have a bad day really."

Pakistan skipper Mohammad Hafeez insisted his team was not even thinking about the game against India, the first T20 international between the arch-rivals since the 2007 World Twenty20 final.

"We take it match by match," said Hafeez. "Our immediate focus is on how we are going to tackle a strong side like South Africa. We will think about the others later."

Hafeez said Pakistan's game plan revolved around spinners Shahid Afridi

and Ajmal, saying the duo were capable of restricting the best batting line-ups.

Australia's trump card, according to skipper George Bailey, was their top all-rounder Shane Watson, who was man of the match in both the preliminary matches.

Watson, who opens both the batting and bowling, hit 51 and took 3-26 against Ireland and then made 41 not out and claimed 2-29 in the second game against the West Indies.

"He plays such a key role, and he is so versatile that he would be one of the most feared players in the competition," Bailey

said of Watson. "His power is second to none but he just does not go out there and blast from ball one."

"And in terms of his bowling, he has set a really good example for some of our younger guys."

Bailey conceded it was an open group but remained confident his team was capable of winning the one major title that has eluded Australia.

The other group, which comprises defending champions England, New Zealand, the West Indies and hosts Sri Lanka, open their Super Eights round later on Thursday.

AFP, Colombo



Four top contenders for the World Twenty20 title resume battle on Friday, looking for ways to emerge unscathed from the toughest of the two groups in the Super Eights round.

Top-ranked South Africa take on Pakistan and India clash with Australia in a sold-out double-header at the Premadasa Stadium in Colombo to launch the opening skirmishes in group two.

All four teams showed their prowess by winning both matches in the preliminary league and now face a fight to finish to book two semifinal spots from the group.

"It is a tough group," South African captain AB de Villiers said on Thursday. "Any of the sides can beat each other on any given day, so it is going to be a great challenge."

"But if we play good cricket, we will be difficult to stop. We have prepared well

NSF ad-hoc committee formed

SPORTS REPORTER

The National Sports Council (NSC) yesterday formed an eight-member ad-hoc committee of the National Shooting Federation (NSF) of Bangladesh to replace the elected committee, which was declared illegal by a high court bench.

Major General KM Mominur Rahman has been retained as the head of the committee, which has been asked to hold the elections of the shooting federation within two months from the date of the formation of the ad-hoc committee.

Abdus Salam Khan, a councillor of Patuakhali Rifles Club, filed a writ petition challenging the legality of the elected NSF committee and its councillor list. A High Court bench in July declared the committee illegal and ordered the authorities concerned to form a three-member election commission to hold the election within two months.

The elected committee had to battle with different cases and internal matters rather than concentrate on the improvement of shooting, which is deteriorating day by day despite having a bright reputation at international level.

Take a long

FROM PAGE 16 cricketer says that there is no pressure for places. He no doubt has the best interests of Bangladesh cricket at heart and can say it because the whole world knows it to be true.

It is well past the time that Bangladesh started focusing on the longer versions of the game, for that is where progress and success lie, even though the trends and the call of the times is T20 cricket. But that is precisely why a cricket board exists -- to sometimes ignore trends and think of long-term benefits. They did not strike when the iron was hot, one can only hope that it has not gone cold yet.

LOCAL snippets

SPORTS REPORTER

Sabina Khatun slammed six goals as Satkhira posted a massive 11-1 win over Narsingdi in the opening match of the KFC Women's Super League at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

Apart from Sabina's six goals, Suriya slotted four goals while Bipasha netted the other goal for Satkhira. Mahmuda Akter scored a consolation goal for Narsingdi.

Jessore also followed in the footsteps of Satkhira to record a comprehensive 9-0 win over Rangamati at the same venue with Sharmin Akter and Rehana Akter slamming a treble each. Khaleda, Laboni and Bilkis netted one goal each.

Away, at the Birshreshtha Shaheed Mostafa Kamal Stadium, Tangail defeated Narayanganj 1-0 with Ferdose Rikta striking the decisive goal.

Div I Hockey

Dhaka Wanderers Club and Combined SC won their respective matches of the Green Delta Insurance First Division Hockey League beating their respective rivals at the Maulana Bhasani Hockey Stadium yesterday.

Dhaka Wanderers thrashed Mukto Bihango 13-1 with Mohsin scoring seven goals including a treble while Nitin Kumar struck five goals including a hat-trick.

Combined Club defeated Uttara Hockey Club 2-1, thanks to a brace from Nizamuddin Shimul.

Women's Kabaddi

Azad Sporting Club registered a 26-15 win over Singna Shingha in the Walton Refrigerator Women's Kabaddi League at the Kabaddi Stadium yesterday.

In the day's other match, Janata Jurain Club overwhelmed Matuail Milon Smriti Sangsad 46-19 points.

School Handball

Viqarunnisa Noon School and College and Dhanmondi Tutorial moved into the final of the Igloo U-12 Girl's School Handball Tournament after beating their respective rivals in the semifinals at the Shaheed M Mansur Ali

National Handball Stadium yesterday. Dhanamondi Tutorial defeated Summerfield 2-1 while Viqarunnisa thrashed Banani Biddyaniketan 15-1 to set their final clash tomorrow.

In the boy's section, Scholastica defeated Dhaka International College 12-3 to set their final clash against

Super over Sri Lanka's

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in the match, showed delight at the win.

"It's nice to have a win under your belt so the pressure eases down," said the Sri Lankan captain. "Judging by Taylor's reaction on the last ball we thought we had won but it needed a super over."

Taylor said he was proud of his team's fightback.

"To lose tight matches is always disappointing," said Taylor. "But from the situation we were in I thought we fought back very hard and never gave up. I am proud of my team."

New Zealand owed their total to a career best fifty by opener Rob Nicol.

Nicol hit Ajantha Mendis for three sixes in

the 15th over during his 40-ball 58 after New Zealand won the toss and batted.

The 29-year-old, who in all hit four sixes and three boundaries, put on a brisk 57 for the opening wicket with Martin Guptill (38) and 42 for the second with Brendon McCullum (25) before he fell in the 16th over.

Nicol's previous T20 highest was 56 against Zimbabwe at Hamilton earlier this year.

Mendis, who took 6-8 in the first round match against Zimbabwe to register the best bowling figures in all Twenty20 internationals, went for 48 runs for his only wicket in four overs, his last costing 24.

In contrast newcomer Akila Dananjaya took 2-32. Taylor chipped in with a brisk 23.

WI-ENG SCOREBOARD

WEST INDIES	R	B	4	6
Charles c Bairstow b Dernbach	84	56	10	3
Gayle c Finn b Swann	58	35	6	4
Samuels c Morgan b Broad	2	8	0	0
Pollard c Wright b Finn	1	5	0	0
Bravo not out	11	8	2	0
Sammy b Broad	4	3	0	0
Russell not out	10	5	2	0
Extras: (b-1, lb-7, w-1)	9			
Total: (For 4 wks in 20 overs)	179			
Did not bat: Patel, Broad, Swann, Finn, Rampaul, Badree				
Fall of wickets: 1-103, 2-118, 3-128, 4-154, 5-158				

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Finn	4	0	26	1
Dernbach	4	0	38	1
Broad	4	1	26	2
Swann	3	0	32	1
Patel	4	0	38	0
Wright	1	0	11	0

ENGLAND	R	B	4s	6s
Kieswetter c Pollard b Rampaul	0	2	0	0
Hales st Ramdin b Samuels	68	51	5	2
Wright c Gayle b Rampaul	0	1	0	0
Bairstow c Pollard b Gayle	18	29	2	0
Morgan not out	71	36	4	5
Buttler not out	1	1	0	0
Extras: (b-1, lb-1, w-4)	6			
Total: (For 4 wks in 20 overs)	164			
Did not bat: Patel, Broad, Swann, Finn, Dernbach				
Fall of wickets: 1-0, 2-0, 3-55, 4-162				

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Rampaul	4	1	37	2
Badree	4	0	20	0
Narine	4	0	33	0
Sammy	1	0	13	0
Gayle	4	0	27	1
Samuels	3	0	32	1

AFP, Tokyo

World number one Victoria Azarenka and number two Maria Sharapova crashed out of the Pan Pacific Open tennis tournament in contrasting styles on Thursday.

Azarenka, from Belarus, pulled out citing fatigue, while the French Open champion from Russia went down to Samantha Stosur of Australia 4-6, 6-7 (10/12) in the quarterfinals.

But defending champion and world number three Agnieszka Radwanska of Poland safely went through beating 2010 Tokyo champion Caroline Wozniacki of Denmark 6-4, 6-3.

One and two gone

AFP, Tokyo

Bring on Bhajji: Mike

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ways, and counselled his younger teammates to remain true to themselves in dealing with any verbal confrontations.

"I prefer to walk away and not worry about it," Hussey said. "If he [Harbhajan] wants to use his energy up sledging and carrying on, that's fine. Some other guys really thrive on it. Davey Warner, he likes a little bit of interaction out there and it gets him going."

"So I don't think there is a right way or wrong way to handle it but I think it's up to the individual to know he's going to try these tactics so you've got to be ready for it, and be sure it doesn't affect your concentration but handle it in your own way. I just think let him [Warner] go, let him play his way. That's what has given him success so far."

The match against India is the first of a testy trio that also features South Africa and Pakistan, leaving Hussey to reason that a first-up victory would ease a great deal of pressure from the team's shoulders.

"If we can win that first one

in the Super Eights, it does give you that confidence and that little buffer that you know you just need one out of the last two to get through," Hussey said. "It's pretty much an early grand final really in the context of the tournament. But that relaxed attitude is important as well. We need to make sure we're not too tense."

"All the [batsmen] are playing well in the nets and they've got a lot of confidence, and that's a big part of Twenty20. You need to have no doubts in your mind or fears, you've got to trust yourself and let your instincts take over."

The coach Mickey Arthur treated Australia's player to two days off after their qualification for the next phase, though he then extracted a measure of recompense by pushing the players through a decidedly rigorous Tuesday training session.

"We have had a few relaxing days but I expect that's all about to end," Hussey said. "Training yesterday [Tuesday] was very long and pretty intense and a welcome back to reality really."

The pressure and tension are only going to rise as we get closer to that India match because it's a huge game."

Chess bids

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Affairs of Standard Chartered Bank, said, "Yes, we recently sat with the members of the new committee but the things are in the preliminary stage. We will decide whether to go back to sponsor the school chess after seeing their plans."

The newly-elected committee has already brought all five grandmasters under an umbrella and declared a hectic schedule in next three months with school championship, junior championship, national championship, women's national championship, premier division league and first division league to be completed by December 15.

Shamim also informed that the initial contacts with the rest of those sponsor have been set up but the real discussion has not started yet in a bid to reinstate their previous relationship.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS	35	Soon, in verse	DOWN	21	Eager		
1	Eastern	potentate	36	Crazy bird	22	Finished	
5	Musical symbol	37	Mix fabric	2	Cattle call?	23	Hold two jobs
9	Do some lawnwork	38	Khaki (Fr.)	3	Hostel	24	Employer
12	Scoop holder	40	Call meat (Fr.)	4	Stunk	26	Cereal choice
13	Verdi opera	42	Tatter	5	Arrived	27	Prot. or Cath.
14	Indivisible	43	The Who drummer	6	49-	28	Shakespeare's river
15	Newly-weds' trip	44	Ordinal suffix	7	Tokyo's old name	29	Repair
17	"— Town"	49	"Born Free" heroine	8	Splays	31	Bent
18	Acute	50	Pleasant	9	Back-woods' beverage	34	A billion years
19	Feel	51	Drenched	10	Burden	35	Bryn Mawr graduate, e.g.
21	Madison Avenue types	52	Use a rotary phone	11	"The Way We —"	37	Scrooge's cry
24	Marshy tracts	53	Saxophone range	16	Longing	38	Staff
25	Suitable			20	Early bird?	39	Loathe
26	Horse-drawn carriage					40	Passport endorsement
30	Yoko of music					41	And others (Lat.)
31	Top of a wave					44	Inventor Whitney
32	"— Got a Secret"					45	Lubricate
33	Army bigwigs					46	Autumn mo.
						47	Ultra-modern

Solution time: 21 mins.

B	E	A	D	F	I	R	C	O	R	E
A	R	R	O	G	A	T	E	O	R	A
H	A	M	M	E	R	E	D	H	E	C
A	L	E	E	B	O	O	K	S		
P	L	A	I	T	B	E	A	R		
H	O	R	N	H	A	M	S	T	E	R
I	C	E	S	O	R	E	S	T	E	A
H	A	M	M	O	N	D	S	U	N	S
S	M	A	R	T	S	A	T	E		
M	E	R	I	E	H	A	M	I	L	L
E	R	I	E	O	V	E	R	T	O	N
W	E	A	L	T	E	N	S	T	E	W

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12				13					1	