

U-23s' final game today

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh U-23 National Team will be looking to restore some pride when they take on Maldives in their third and final match of the Mahindra Rajapakshe International Football Tournament in Nawalapitiya, Sri Lanka today.

Bangladesh have already been eliminated from the four-nation tournament with two successive defeats against Pakistan and hosts Sri Lanka and today's match is an academic affair as their opponents, Maldives, have reached the final on the back of two successive wins.

"The way we played in the tournament did not reflect our real strength but sometimes it happens in football. However, we will try our best to put up good show against Maldives," said Bangladesh coach Saiful Bari Titu on the eve of the match.

Maldives' Hungarian coach Estavan Urbiyani was upbeat about the tie and was in a relaxed mood ahead of the game.

"We will play our own game but we will also keep in mind that we have reached the final with a match in hand," said Urbiyani.

Super League lineup final

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The lineup of the Super League of Agrani Bank 23rd Youth Hockey Championship was completed yesterday with Rajshahi Division, Rajshahi, Faridpur and Chittagong moving into the eight-team field.

Rajshahi Division emerged Group E champions with a 7-0 win over Chittagong Division, Rajshahi district became Group G champions beating Gazipur 12-0, Faridpur became Group F champions with a 4-1 win over Mymensingh and Chittagong emerged Group H champions with a 10-1 win over Narail.

Dhaka and Dinajpur had earlier confirmed their Super League berths.

6 share lead

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Six players shared the lead in the Begum Laila Alam 6th Open International Rating Chess Tournament at the close of the second round at the Bangladesh Chess Federation hall room yesterday.

The six are WIM Shamima Akter Liza, WFM Nazrana Khan Eva, Sharmin Sultana Shirin, WFM Zakia Sultana, Jahanara Haque Runu and Mehnaz Ahmed Mithila. Each secured the maximum two points from as many matches.

Another poor

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He was followed closely by Thai youngster Thitiphun Chuayprakong, who finished the day in the second position, one shot behind the leader. Sweden's Daniel Chopra and Javi Colomo of Spain shared the third spot with rounds of five-under-par 67.

Siddikur endured a horrid front nine in which he had four bogeys -- on the fourth, fifth, seventh and ninth holes. The back nine was better as he hit birdies on the 10th, 13th and 17th holes, but the good work was ruined when he double-bogeyed the 14th.



England captain Alastair Cook celebrates his century by raising his arms on the second day of the third Test against India at the Eden Gardens in Kolkata on Thursday.

PHOTO: CRICINFO

Record-breaking Cook puts Eng in command

Cricket
BBC SPORT, Kolkata

Captain Alastair Cook set a record for England Test centuries with his 23rd as the tourists assumed control of the third Test against India.

The opener passed the mark of 22 held by Wally Hammond, Colin Cowdrey, Geoffrey Boycott and Kevin Pietersen.

Cook made 136 not out as England reached 216 for 1 in reply to India's 316 all out at the close of second day at Eden Gardens in Kolkata yesterday.

Cook, 27, also became the youngest batsman to reach 7,000 Test runs.

The Essex left-hander reached the milestone at the age of 27 years and 347 days, knocking Sachin Tendulkar off top spot.

The India great, who has a record 15,638 Test runs, was 28 years and 193 days old when he passed the 7,000 mark.

Cook, whose Test career began with a hundred against India in Nagpur in 2006, has now scored

centuries in all five of his Tests as captain.

He brought up his third ton of the series off 179 balls with a sweep for two off spinner Ravichandran Ashwin during an opening partnership of 165 with Nick Compton.

Cook also surpassed Andrew Strauss, the man he succeeded as Test captain before the India tour, to move up to ninth in the list of England's all-time highest run-scorers with 7,048. Graham Gooch holds the record with 8,900.

Cook was dropped by Cheteshwar Pujara at slip off the bowling of Zaheer Khan on 17 but did not offer a further chance in a confident and controlled innings featuring 19 fours and a six.

He and Compton, Strauss's replacement at the top of the England order, put the tourists in a strong position to go 2-1 ahead in the four-match series as they target a first victory in India since 1985.

Somerset's Compton batted circumspectly at first before opening up

after tea to reach his first Test fifty.

His 137-ball knock was eventually brought to an end when he missed an attempted sweep at Pragnan Ojha and was trapped lbw.

Jonathan Trott then showed signs of playing himself into form, easing to 21 not out in an unbroken partnership of 51 with Cook.

Earlier, England made relatively light work of wrapping up the India tail as Monty Panesar had Zaheer Khan trapped lbw for six and then rearranged Ishant Sharma's stumps.

Captain Mahendra Dhoni smashed the England spinner for two sixes en route to a half-century before he was last out, fending a Steven Finn bouncer to Graeme Swann, who ran forward to take a low diving catch.

SCOREBOARD

INDIA: First innings (overnight 273-7)

Gambhir c Trott b Panesar	60
Sehwag run out (Finn/Prior)	23
Pujara b Panesar	16
Tendulkar c Prior b Anderson	76
Kohli c Swann b Anderson	6

Yuvraj c Cook b Swann	32
Dhoni c Swann b Finn	52
Ashwin b Anderson	21
Zaheer lbw b Panesar	6
Sharma b Panesar	0
Ojha not out	0
Extras: (b-5, lb-13, w-5, nb-1)	216
Total: (All out in 105 overs)	316
Fall of wickets: 1-47, 2-88, 3-117, 4-136, 5-215, 6-230, 7-268, 8-292, 9-296	

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Anderson	28	7	89	3
Finn	21	2	73	1
Panesar	40	13	90	4
Swann	16	3	46	1

ENGLAND: First innings

Cook not out	136
Compton lbw b Ojha	57
Trott not out	21
Extras: (nb-2)	2
Total: (For 1 wktn in 73 overs)	216
To bat: Pietersen, Bell, Patel, Prior, Swann, Panesar, Anderson, Finn	
Fall of wicket: 1-165	

A real belief

FROM PAGE 16 performance and get our processes right, a little bit better, like we did in Khulna," he added.

Contrary to popular opinion, the coach believed that while the toss would play a major role in the game, considering the huge amount of dew in the evening, the wicket however wouldn't write off the side bowling in the latter half of the game. "Lots of people are talking about the toss. But I think whatever we do with the bat and the ball we need to do it better. We did that in game 1 and 2, but we couldn't do it on Wednesday, we were close to doing it, but we couldn't. That's how I look at it," he said.

The coach also had good words for the newcomers in the team. The likes of Shohag Gazi and Anamul Haque have considerably boosted the hosts' overall performance. "All of them have fit in really well. These guys have come into the team with some confidence after playing domestic cricket and they just seem to be continuing," said Jurgensen.

Having reached the brink of victory, what stands ahead of the national team is more of a mental barrier than a deficiency in skill. Whether the hosts can overcome that block is a test that will be on show at the Sher-e-Bangla National stadium this afternoon.

India, Pakistan in semis

Hockey

PTI, Melbourne

India grimly hung on to an early lead to prevail 1-0 over Belgium to advance to the semifinals of the Champions Trophy at the State Hockey Centre in Melbourne on Thursday.

The goal that settled the fate of the quarterfinal contest came in the 13th minute of the first shot India had at the rival goal.

Nitin Thimmaiah capitalised on a rebound to send a firm shot into the right corner of the goal. The rebound had come to Thimmaiah on top of the circle following Gurmail Singh's try off a cross from Birendra Lakra.

Earlier in the day, Shakeel Abbasi scored two goals to help Pakistan pull off a surprise 2-1 victory over Olympic champions Germany and advance to the last four.

This is the first time since 2004 that the former champions, Pakistan have made it to the medal round of the competition. The Germans, meanwhile, have failed to enter the last four stage for the second successive year.

In the semifinals, Pakistan will take on Olympic Games silver medalists, the Netherlands, who posted a 2-0 win against New Zealand in the quarterfinals.

India had very few chances thereafter and were forced to fall back to defend stoutly as Belgians asserted strength in the midfield.

Belgium forced six penalty corners against India's one.

It was because of a fine display by defenders VR Raghunath and Rupinder Pal Singh, beside goalkeeper TR Potunuri, that India managed to maintain their lead.

Belgium had beaten India in their last two encounters -- in the final of the Champions Challenge last year and in the preliminary league of the Olympic Games in London.

India are now in the hunt for their first medal since their lone Champions Trophy bronze in 1982. This will also be India's highest finish since 2004 when they had lost the bronze medal match to end fourth.

In the semifinals, India will take on the winner of the other quarterfinal match between four-time defending champions Australia and England.

Germany took the lead in the ninth minute through veteran Moritz Fuerste, who is one of the only three players from the London Olympic winning squad in the new-look German side.

Pakistan created a lot of openings, but were trailing by a goal at half-time.

Abbasi scored the equaliser in the 39th minute when he capitalised on an opening following the penalty corner. He was again on target in the 50th minute to put the team ahead.

But the match-winning goal was awarded only after a video referral went in Pakistan's favour.

The Netherlands and New Zealand encounter was a replay of last year's bronze medal tie, as the former had won then also. The Dutch opened the scoring in the 13th minute through a penalty corner conversion by Jeroen Hertzberger.

Italy embassy win trophy

SPORTS REPORTER

The first "Europcar Volleyball Embassy Champions Trophy 2012" concluded in the city on Wednesday.

The Russian Embassy, Italian Embassy, Japanese Embassy and Indian High Commission participated in the four-day tournament. The tournament took place at the International Club.

The final was played between the embassies of Italy and Russia and was won by the Italians. The chairman of Europcar Bangladesh, Syed Khaled Masud handed over the champion's trophy.

Khulna, Dhaka

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league with both bat and ball. So far, he has an average of 43.70 with the bat and with 33 wickets is the third-highest wicket taker of the competition.

In the other games, Sylhet play Dhaka Metro at the Rangpur Cricket Garden, and Chittagong will take on Rangpur at the Sylhet Divisional Stadium.

WI waiting on Gayle force

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Pollard, another player who is yet to contribute for the visitors was seen at an extended training session in Mirpur yesterday.

With seven of the ten Bangladesh wickets in the third ODI going to the West Indian spinners the visitors, like in their previous game, will want to bowl first. "With the dew the toss could be really important. The ball was skidding last night, the fielders were sliding around, for the bowlers it's not easy to keep wiping the ball all the time, takes away your concentration, so in some ways the toss is important," said Radford.

The series so far has been a disappointment for a majority of the West Indian players. However, with the visitors in pursuit of a dramatic comeback, the game today sets up an ideal platform for the likes of Gayle and Pollard to fire.

Ricky to be honoured

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international cricket but he will still be available to play for the Hobart Hurricanes and the Tasmanian Tigers this season.

"Ricky has been the greatest batsman to play for Australia behind Don Bradman and that is an absolutely fantastic achievement," Cricket Tasmania chairman Tony Harrison said.

"A tribute to his career at the home of Tasmanian cricket is something that we were always hoping to confirm.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

- Baccarat
- Having Y chromo-
- Shade
- Formerly
- British
- Say
- Tosses in
- Too
- Leg joint
- Ocean swimmer's worry
- Receives
- Verifiable
- Aid
- Watch
- Attila, e.g.
- Memo-randa
- "A mouse!"
- See
- Down or Lincoln

DOWN

- Heche or Hathaway
- Was a passenger
- Nervous
- Sternward
- Zodiac sign
- Lascivious
- Glide
- In
- Moray, e.g.
- out a living
- Mad king of literature
- Piano lineup
- Deli bread
- My "bad"
- Biblical pronoun
- Squabble
- With 36-
- Across, finis
- Skedad-dle
- Likely loser
- Rock group, Kings of —
- Measured in grams, e.g.
- Rosters
- Prompt
- Rainout need
- Garfield's pal
- Certain
- Poi base
- Holly-wood clashers
- Land-lord's due
- Essence
- Society newbie

Solution time: 21 mins.

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

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50				51	52	53				
54				55			56			
57				58			59			

CRYPTOQUIP

V M W T H L M N C H Q M A M S V M T O
O E T O M Q M D N U H S P Q J O E M
O E P S U D C Q O E . P J H M L L N C H
E T A M T D T S W E - Q M D M L P L .

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: IF I WERE TO SAY "HER PHYSIQUE IS QUITE FABULOUS," I SUPPOSE I WOULD BE USING BODY LANGUAGE.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: O equals T