

# SPORT

## FLABBER-GHOSTED

A Pakistani cricketer on tour in New Zealand was hit for six when he saw what he believed was a ghost haunting him in his hotel room, the team manager said Tuesday. Haris Sohail was convinced a "supernatural" presence was haunting him when he awoke Saturday night to find his bed moving, team manager Naveed Cheema said. Cheema told Fairfax media that Sohail called a member of the coaching staff who arrived to find the 26-year-old all-rounder "visibly shaken". Sohail, a left-arm spinner and middle-order batsman, spent the rest of the night in the coach's room at the Rydges Latimer hotel in Christchurch.

-- AFP



## Who you want to bat against?

SPORTS REPORTER

The Tigers began their down under journey yesterday and enjoyed their first day of training, which was an eventful one. The batsmen practised in simulated match scenarios at the Allan Border Field; a small cricket ground in Brisbane.

The simulation technology offers batsmen the luxury of choosing animation or video of a certain bowler with his natural bowling speed, style and variations. The machine throws the ball on the specific speed and type selected by batsman. The weather there is different from home -- according to team manager Khaled Mahmud it was hot -- which also gave the Tigers a different taste except for all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan, who has already acclimatised with the conditions after playing in the Big Bash League.

"The boys enjoyed every bit of moment of the three-hour training," informed Mahmud over phone from Brisbane. The pacers however had an easier time. "As we had a long flight the team management decided to give them some comfort on the first day," said the former national skipper. "A beautiful gym and swimming pool made the players happy," continued Mahmud.

Meanwhile the team management has once again hired Brisbane-based sports psychologist Phil Jauncey for nine days.

Mahmud also informed that 10 net bowlers including two spinners were used as the batsmen batted in nets and on the central wickets. Opener Tamim Iqbal however was not part of it yesterday as the left-hander took an injection in his left-knee yesterday in Melbourne.

"Tamim will join the team tomorrow [Wednesday]," informed Mahmud.

During their Brisbane stint, the Tigers will play two unofficial practice matches on February 1 and 3 against a Cricket Australia XI before moving to Sydney, where they will play their two official practice matches against Pakistan and Ireland.



Coach Chandika Hathurusingha (C) briefs his charges prior to their first training session in Brisbane at the Alan Border Ground yesterday afternoon. They are scheduled to play two warm-up games next week.

PHOTO: BCB



PHOTO: BCB

Batsman Nasir Hossain uses a batting simulator while practising in the nets during the Tigers' camp at Brisbane yesterday. Using the device was a comparatively new experience for the Bangladeshi cricketers.

## Clarke, CA at odds!

GUARDIAN.COM



Australia's attempt to win next month's World Cup and, potentially, the forthcoming Ashes in England, appears to be being threatened by a bitter, behind-the-scenes fallout between Michael Clarke and Cricket Australia.

Clarke, the national team's captain, is facing a race to recover from a torn hamstring in time for Australia's second game of the World Cup against Bangladesh in Brisbane on February 21. That is the deadline handed to him by the governing body and given that Clarke's camp are said to have previously, and privately, agreed a return date for the team's fourth match of the tournament, many are interpreting that as his superiors setting the 33-year-old up to fail.

Clarke is said to be adamant he

will be back for the Bangladesh game. Many, though, think that to be unlikely. Meanwhile, uncertainty over their captain's participation is an unwanted sideshow for the tournament favourites.

The genesis of Clarke's feud with Cricket Australia officials -- including the national team's coach, Darren Lehmann -- are believed to be the long-running issues he has had with back and hamstring injuries. Indeed, back in November Clarke was set to be dropped for the first Test against India, with Phillip Hughes in line to replace him in the team.

However, the tragic death of Hughes, who was felled by a bouncer at the SCG shortly before that India series was originally scheduled to start, and the admirable way Clarke handled the aftermath, including a moving speech at his late teammate's funeral in Macksville, led to the wind changing briefly. Clarke, who had public



sentiment and goodwill behind him, led Australia in the first match following the Hughes tragedy, the rearranged opening Test against India in Adelaide, where he scored a century but tore a hamstring.

In his absence, the form of Steve Smith, Clarke's stand-in as captain, has been extraordinary, with hundreds in four successive Tests, during

which he broke a record held by Don Bradman for the most series runs scored against India by an Australian.

Smith, named on Tuesday Australia's player-of-the year at the Allan Border Medal ceremony in Sydney, has been a hugely popular leader. The players have seemingly moved on from Clarke, a position that is believed to have become more entrenched since their captain took his position in the Channel 9 commentary box for the Melbourne and Sydney Tests against India, with his discussion of on-field strategies and critiquing of team-mates said to have gone down like a lead balloon.

In an echo of England's travails with Kevin Pietersen, Clarke's future appears a ticking time bomb. If, as seems likely, it goes off during the World Cup, the fallout could not only pollute Australia's hopes in the tournament but linger long into the English summer.

## Narine pulls out of World Cup

CRICINFO, Port of Spain

If the dropping of Dwayne Bravo and Kieron Pollard followed by the one-sided ODI series defeat in South Africa were not enough, West Indies' worries ahead of World Cup 2015 have intensified with their premier spinner Sunil Narine deciding to pull out of the squad on Tuesday. Mystery



spinner Narine decided to give himself more time to work on his bowling action, which was reported as suspect in successive matches during last year's Champions League T20 where Narine represented Kolkata Knight Riders.

Following that, Narine had told the WICB that he would take care of his rehabilitation on his own. It is understood that Knight Riders were heavily involved in helping Narine during the time. After more than three months away from competitive cricket, Narine was instrumental in Trinidad & Tobago winning the domestic one-day competition on Sunday, with a six-wicket haul.

Despite that successful comeback, Narine admitted that he was not completely confident about returning to international cricket. "Playing for [T&T] Red Force and winning the NAGICO Super50 has been a big boost, but going in to the World Cup is a little too much too soon and, after consulting the WICB, for both West Indies' and my sake we have decided to delay my return to international cricket until I am 100% confident in all that I do," Narine said in a WICB media release. "Whilst I am very happy with the progress made to date with my action, and I express my thanks to the coaches working with me in Trinidad and Dr Daryl Foster in Perth, Australia, I am withdrawing from the World Cup."

## Smith sweeps most Border medals

AFP, Melbourne

Steve Smith on Tuesday capped a remarkable season by sweeping the main awards at the annual Allan Border Medal ceremony, including Australian player of the year.

The prolific batsman, who was promoted to national captain in the absence of the injured Michael Clarke, also took out the one-day and Test player awards.

He was a runaway winner for the Allan Border Medal -- judged on performances in Tests and one-dayers throughout the season -- by polling 243 votes, ahead of David Warner (175) and Mitchell Johnson (126).

He is only the third player to win the trifecta in the 10 years it has been running, following in the footsteps of Ricky Ponting in 2007 and Shane Watson in 2011.

Other Allan Border Medal winners include Glenn McGrath, Steve Waugh, Adam Gilchrist, and Clarke.

The 25-year-old smashed 1,756 runs in 22 matches last year at an average of 67.54 including eight 50s and seven hundreds.

## Dhaka drown Barisal

SPORTS REPORTER



The stark contrast in the first round of the National Cricket League continued on the third day as centuries poured in from one end while wickets fell at the other. Barisal was on the wrong end of this spectrum, which resulted in a heavy innings and 413-run defeat against Dhaka at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday; the largest margin of defeat in domestic competition.

Dhaka broke Rajshahi's previous record of the largest margin defeat -- an innings and 207 runs -- against the same team in 2006-2007.

Promising Liton Kumar Das, Taiabur Parvez and experienced Mehrab Hossain joined the three-digit party in this round, but it was spinner Shuvagoto Hom who hogged the spotlight on the day by taking six wickets to wrap up Barisal's second innings for 99 runs.

After Rony Talukdar's double hundred and Rokibul Hasan's hundred, Taiabur hit an unbeaten 106 as Dhaka declared their first innings on 651. Then Shuvagoto and

pacer Shahadat Hossain, who captured three wickets, took charge to make the Barisal batting crumble in the second innings.

At the Fatullah Cricket Stadium, Rangpur rode on Liton's 150 to brighten their chance of winning the match against Chittagong, who finished the day 336 runs behind the target, with seven wickets in hand.

Liton toyed with the opposition bowlers during his 142-ball knock, which saw 19 boundaries and four sixes, helping Rangpur declare their second innings for 257 runs. Chasing 419 runs, Rangpur finished the day at 83-3.

At BKSP, Rajshahi were on the brink of defeat against Dhaka Metro as they lost six wickets for 101 runs at stumps, in chase of a mammoth target of 460 runs. Left-hander Mehrab Hossain powered the Metro in the second innings, hitting 108 runs as Metro amassed 375 runs.

In another match at BKSP, Khulna are only three wickets shy of securing a massive victory against Sylhet. Sylhet's batting woes continued in the second innings as left-arm spinner Abdur Razzak picked up four wickets.

## SCORES IN BRIEF

**BARISAL:** 139 and 99 all out in 29.4 overs (Al-Amin 36 not out; Shuvagoto 6-22, Shahadat 3-40)

**DHAKA:** 651 for 5 in 143 overs (Rony 227, Rokibul 145, Taiabur 106 not out)

**Result:** Dhaka won by an innings and 413 runs.

**KHULNA:** 536 for 8 declared in 156

overs (Tushar 177 not out, Mithun 57, Nurul 115; Sadiqur 3-108, Kapali 3-76)

**SYLHET:** 184 all out in 60.2 overs (Sayem 44; Murad 3-27, Robiul 2-7) and 137 for 7 (Nazmul 24; Razzak 4-49)

**DHAKA METRO:** 302 and 375 all out in 92.5 overs (Mehrab 108, Asif 66;

Saqlain 6-120)

**RAJSHAH:** 218 and 101 for 6 (Forhad 44; Saykat 4-34, 2-22)

**RANGPUR:** 269 and 257 for 5 (Liton 150; Faisal 2-51)

**CHITTAGONG:** 107 and 83 for 3 (Mahabubul 32; Sohrwardi 1-15, Sajedul 1-25)

## Tragic

PTI, Karachi

In another tragic incident on the field, 18-year-old Zeeshan Mohammed died after being struck on the chest by a cricket ball.

Doctors at the Orangi Town general hospital said that Mohammed died from a heart seizure after he was struck by the cricket ball during a club match in Orangi town on Sunday.

"He was brought to the hospital but was pronounced dead on arrival," doctor Samad at the hospital said.

"We have been told he was hit on the chest by a fast bowler while batting and collapsed on the pitch," he said.

The incident comes few months after Australian batsman Phil Hughes died in a hospital after being hit on the head by a short pitched ball during a Sheffield Shield match by pacer Sean Abbott.

## Watto in doubt for tri-series final

AFP, Sydney

All-rounder Shane Watson said Tuesday he was unsure if he would be fit for Australia's one-day international final against England or India but has no intention of missing the upcoming World Cup.



## TIGERS' VENUES DOWN UNDER



NAJMUN NOOR

We don't quite know how the venue selections are made but the Black Caps are meeting all of their opponents at a home ground. Meeting Bangladesh on March 13 in a home ground is not any different, either. In this case it is Hamilton's Seddon Park. New Zealand have lost to Bangladesh in ODIs on two occasions. Yet the one element that Bangladesh will do good to avoid is the slightest bit of complacency...justifiably so, against a side rocking in glory having edged out Sri Lanka and Pakistan just recently and that, too, abroad. The Black Caps' victory pattern here far outweighs their losses. We're not a whole interested on the Seddon Park being a tourists' mecca but this day-night will be packed to capacity. The Black Caps and their home crowd will be out to avenge defeats either on the ground or mentally. Our Tigers will look to prevent just that and underscore the fact that two Bangla-washes at home were just not statistical anomalies.

The author is a marketing professional from the airline and telecommunications industry. He is a former Bangladesh national cricket player.