

SPORTS

South Zone inch closer

SPORTS REPORTER



Both Mithun Ali and Shahriar Nafees fell agonisingly close to their respective three-figure marks as Prime Bank South Zone were bundled out for 385 in Chittagong on Day 2 of the final round of Bangladesh Cricket League yesterday.

In reply, Islami Bank East Zone finished the day on 159 for 3, with opener Shadman Islam unbeaten on 86.

Selectors would have breathed a sigh of relief as pacer Abul Hasan took three wickets yesterday. With Rubel Hossain and Shafiul Islam uncertain for the first Test, the selectors have been desperately looking for a replacement. While Abul is in the preliminary squad, the bowler hasn't been in the best of forms. However, his three-wicket burst yesterday might just help him gain the selectors' confidence.

While Abul may have taken wickets, the day however, belonged to young opener Shadman, who carried his bat throughout. East had crumbled to 93 for 3. However, Shadman remained composed at one end. He hit 13 fours and will be looking to reach yet another century this year.

The winners of this game will win the BCL title. However, at the moment the match is headed towards a draw. In case of a draw, the number of bonus points will come into play. Since South, who currently have secured 35 points and top the table, have scored 385 within 110 overs, as per the bylaws they will be awarded four bonus points. East, who currently have 32 points, on the contrary will receive three points for bowling out the opposition.

At the same time, South scalped three wickets in their second innings and as a result received another point. At the end of Day 2, South have a total of 40 points while East have 35. For East to remain alive in this game, they will not only need to take a lead but also score more than 400 runs within 110 overs and not lose more than five wickets.

At the moment, the scenario seems improbable and South are likely to walk away with the title.

The other game in Mirpur is bound for a more exciting finish as the match entered its third innings. With an overnight score of 278 for 8, Walton Central Zone could add only 11 runs to the score before being bundled out by BCB North Zone.

In reply, though, North were bowled out for just 287 right before stumps. Pacer Shahidul Islam scalped impressive figures of 4 for 55 while off-spinner Shuvagata Hom took a five-wicket haul.

SCORES IN BRIEF

SOUTH ZONE: 385 all out in 109.2 overs (Shahriar 96, Mithun 95; Abul 3-31, Nazmul 3-78) **v EAST ZONE:** 159 for 3 (Shadman 86 not out; Shohag 2-39)
CENTRAL ZONE: 289 and 20 for 2 (Abdul 10 not out; Delwar 1-2, Mahmudul 1-4) **v NORTH ZONE:** 287 all out in 71.5 overs (Sabbir 75, Farhad 67; Shahidul 4-55, Shuvagata 5-78)



Sabbir Rahman (L) and Taijul Islam put in key performances for BCB North Zone in the first two days of the final round of the Bangladesh Cricket League. While Sabbir scored 75, Taijul completed a five-wicket haul yesterday at Mirpur.

PHOTO: STAR

1st Pak-Zim ODI today

AFF, Lahore

After two nail-biting finishes in the Twenty20 series marking the return of international cricket to Pakistan, the hosts and Zimbabwe move to the three-match one-day series on Tuesday aiming to build for the future.

Pakistan won the Twenty20 series 2-0 Sunday in front of a packed audience of 27,000 at Lahore's Gaddafi Stadium, but will be far from happy over the manner of both wins which saw them nearly snatch defeat from the jaws of victory.

Bayliss set to become Eng coach

REUTERS, London

Australian Trevor Bayliss is set to become England coach ahead of compatriot Jason Gillespie, the Daily Telegraph reported on Monday.



Yorkshire coach Gillespie was widely expected to get the job but new England cricket director Andrew Strauss has opted for the 52-year-old Bayliss who led Sri Lanka to the 2011 World Cup final, the newspaper reported.

Bayliss has also coached Australian state side New South Wales and Kolkata Knight Riders in the IPL.

Long list for HP programme

SPORTS REPORTER



Dominated by a bulk of promising cricketers, a 22-member High Performance (HP) squad was announced yesterday in Mirpur. Beside the main squad, a list of players was also revealed under an 'elite programme' which will deal with pace bowling, batting, wicketkeeping and spin bowling.

The newly-designed HP programme will begin its journey in a bid to keep the players fit and ready for international cricket. The programme, which last took place between 2004 and 2007, is going to be revived after a gap of eight years.

Previously, the programme was operated under the game development committee; but this time it will be run by a separate standing committee headed by BCB vice-president Mahbub Anam. To run this programme for the 2015-16 season, a budget of 1 million dollars has been proposed.

Stuart Karppinen, who worked

as the physical performance manager of the Bangladesh Cricket Board for the last two years, has been named the general manager of the programme; a role similar to the one that Richard McInnes performed during the last stint.

Former English batsman Mal Loye, who will arrive in Dhaka this week, has been appointed as the HP team's head coach for the next two years while Paul Terry has been appointed as the director of coaching.

The coaches, who will run the elite programme, include Sarwar

Imran (fast bowling), Zafrul Ehsan (batting), Wahidul Ghani (spin bowling) and Mohammad Mortaza (fielding and wicketkeeping).

Describing the programme, Anam informed that the selected 22 players will train for four months from June to September, while the elite programme will run throughout the year.

The elite programme includes an 18-member pace bowling squad which has the names of all the well known pacers from Bangladesh's domestic circuit, including ODI skipper Mashrafe

Bin Mortaza and Rubel Hossain.

The 10-member spin bowling squad has witnessed the return of Shohag Gazi. However, there was no room for veterans Abdur Razzak and Elias Sunny. The 20-member batting squad includes the likes of Shahriar Nafees, Naeem Islam, Rokibul Hasan but ignored Alok Kapali, who has recently been in good touch.

"Let's start the programme first. There are still many things to be sorted out and the system can be improved. We may include more players if needed. It's not possible to take everyone. We have to focus on certain priorities," said chief selector Faruque Ahmed, who along with his two colleagues selected the players for the HP programme.

HP SQUAD

Rony Talukdar, Liton Kumar, Shadman Islam, Tasamul Haque, Mahmudul Hasan, Sabbir Rahman, Musaddek Hossain, Mohammad Mithun, Taibur Rahman, Jubair Hossain, Saqlain Sajid, Nihad Uz Zaman, Nasum Ahmed, Mustafizur Rahman, Abu Jayed, Shubashish Roy, Mehede Hasan Rana, Kamrul Islam, Dewan Shabbir Ahmed, Nurul Hasan, Jabid Hossain, Irfan Shukkur.



The head of the High Performance programme Mahbub Anam (C), general manager Stuart Karppinen (L) and director of coaching Paul Terry address reporters at Mirpur yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

AR Khan no more

SPORTS REPORTER

Dr. AR Khan, renowned astronomer and former general secretary of Bangladesh Chess Federation, passed away in the early hours of Monday at the Saint Mary Hospital in London. He was 84.

Born in 1932 at Bikrampur of then Dhaka, AR Khan completed his masters in Physics from Dhaka University in 1955 and started his career in the University. He joined the Cavendish laboratory in the Department of Physics at the University of Cambridge in 1960 as a Colombo fellow.

Later, he joined Imperial College of London in 1962 and completed his PHD there. He then became a teacher first in the physics department and then at the applied physics department



Two Bangladesh players attempt to block a smash from a Kyrgyzstan player during their Asian Men's Senior Volleyball Championship match at the Shaheed Suhrawardi Stadium in Mirpur yesterday. Bangladesh's efforts were not enough as they lost the match in straight sets.

PHOTO: STAR

Afghans fight for success

Hosts lose against Kyrgyzstan

SPORTS REPORTER



Some 10 Afghan students, studying in different universities in Dhaka, made the Suhrawardi Indoor Stadium their own as they cheered on the Afghanistan volleyball team during their Asian Senior Men's Volleyball Championship match against Turkmenistan yesterday.

The Afghans didn't have the last laugh though as they suffered a 2-3 sets defeat to the Turks. However, Afghanistan coach Sadeq Mohammad Yousuf was happy with the way his team fought till the end, especially considering the limited facilities they have back home.

"It is tough for us to prepare back in Afghanistan amid an uncomfortable situation. When the players come to practice from their homes, they have to often come through gun shots," rued the Afghanistan coach.

A suicide bomber killed 45 people during a volleyball match in Yahyakhail district in eastern Afghanistan just last November.

Yousuf informed that they don't have any volleyball league in place. Expressing his regret, the Afghanistan coach said they don't have systematic facilities like Bangladesh

despite the popularity of the game among all groups of people. According to the coach, Afghanistan played six tournaments in Iran, China, UAE, Kazakhstan and Philippines in last four years.

Despite losing against Turkmenistan, Yousuf is hopeful his side can reach the semifinals by virtue of better points scored during their two matches of the group phase.

Yousuf also believes Bangladesh team have good prospect of become the best team in South Asia as there are good players here.

The hosts, though, suffered their first defeat in their second match against Kyrgyzstan in straight 0-3 sets (19-25, 27-29, 18-25) yesterday. Now the hosts need to beat Nepal in today's match to have any chance of qualifying for the last four.

"Losing the second set was the turning point. If we could have won the second set, the scenario could have been different. Besides, we lacked combination in today's match," said captain Saeed Al Jabir.

Bangladesh coach Emdadul Haque believes his charges came back in the second set but their poor blocking gave away points to the opponents.

"We don't have any alternative but to beat Nepal tomorrow (Tuesday) and we are confident about doing that," said Emdadul.

Super Stokes trumps Kiwis

AGENCIES



Ben Stokes followed up his record-breaking century with a brilliant three-wicket haul as England completed a stunning 124-run win over New Zealand at Lord's yesterday.

In the last session of Tea England needed five wickets to wrap up the innings. However, with BJ Watling and Corey Anderson, stroking their way to a century stand for the sixth wicket, it seemed as though the hosts would be kept at bay.

However, once Watling was caught behind in the 51st over, New Zealand stumbled. Anderson fell three overs later and the rest of the

tail was swept with 9.3 overs remaining on the final day.

At tea on the fifth and final day, New Zealand were 134 for five.

They needed to bat through the final session to force a draw and prevent themselves going 1-0 down in this two-match series.

However, the gritty Watling and the dashing Corey, with their sixth-wicket stand revived the Black Caps.

New Zealand, who had earlier collapsed to 12 for three, found themselves 61 for five when Stokes, who on Sunday had scored the fastest Test-hundred at Lord's, off 85 balls, struck twice in his third over.

Kane Williamson, who made 132 in the tourists' first innings, fell for 27 when he guided Stokes to Joe Root in the gully.

And next ball New Zealand captain Brendon McCullum played on to a Stokes inswinger.

Given a roar by the crowd worthy of Ian Botham or Andrew Flintoff, Stokes, the New Zealand-born son of former Kiwi rugby league international Ged Stokes, who came to England as a 12-year-old, charged in again.

But Anderson survived the hattrick delivery, allowing the ball to pass his stumps.

Anderson, in Stokes-like fashion, later pulled the Durham all-rounder for six.

Deciding attack was the best form of defence, Anderson completed a 44-ball fifty in which 46 of his runs - 10 fours and six - came in boundaries.

New Zealand were rocked from the very start of their chase, losing

both openers for ducks without a run on the board in a match where, for the most part, they had been on top.

The second ball of New Zealand's innings saw Martin Gupthill caught in the slips by Gary Ballance off James Anderson.

Gupthill's exit left Anderson just one wicket shy of becoming only the 12th bowler and first from England to take 400 Test wickets.

Earlier, England were dismissed for 478 after resuming on 429 for six.

SCORES IN BRIEF

ENGLAND: 389 and 478 (Cook 162, Stokes 101; Boulton 5-85, Henry 2-106)

NEW ZEALAND: 523 and 220 all out in 67.3 overs (Anderson 67, Watling 59; Broad 3-50, Stokes 3-38)

Result: England won by 124 runs

IN A NUTSHELL

New coach decision soon: Thakur

INTERNET

Indian cricket board secretary Anurag Thakur has said the board is yet to make a decision about the next coach of the Indian cricket team, amidst heavy speculation that former India captain Sourav Ganguly is being considered.

"It will be worth waiting and whatever will be decided will be in the interest of the Indian cricket. Give us some time on that," he said after attending the IPL governing council meeting.

Thakur, who was expected to meet BCCI president Jagmohan Dalmiya yesterday afternoon, said that an announcement on the support staff would be made soon.

"We have already picked the team for the Bangladesh tour and as far as coach and support staff is concerned, we would soon make the announcement," he said.

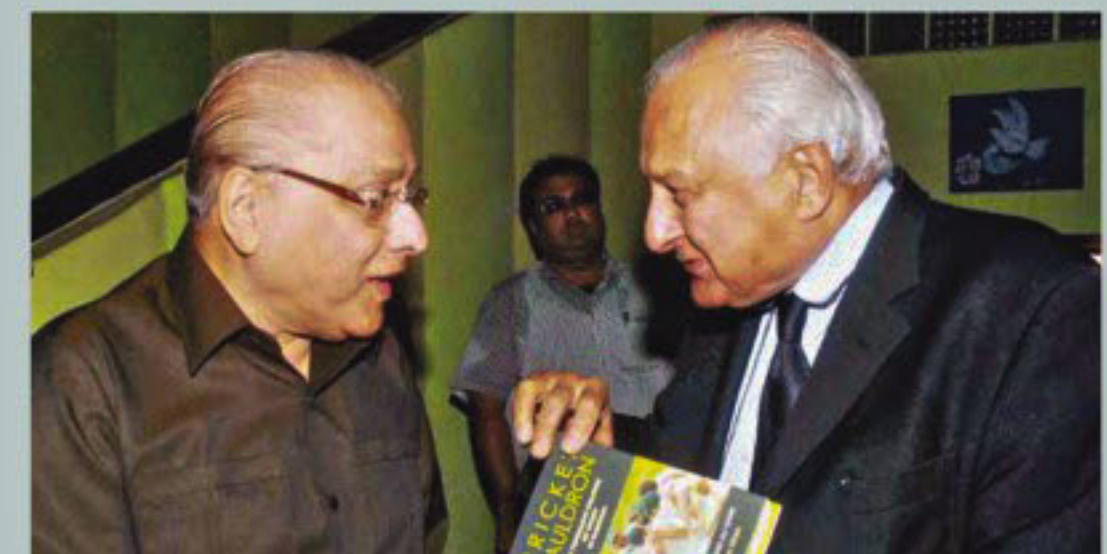
PCB committed for series in UAE

INTERNET

The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) has said that it was committed to hosting a full India-Pakistan series in December this year in the UAE, and rejected reports that it was ready to revive the bilateral series on Indian soil.

The PCB issued this statement in response to the report published in the Indian publication which claimed that PCB chief Shaharyar Khan had agreed to organise the series on Indian soil as it would be more cost-effective and would like to make India their home, the Dawn reported.

The statement issued by PCB said that they would like to clarify that the board remained committed to the MoU signed with BCCI in which India had



agreed to play the first Pakistan-India series in UAE this December.

The PCB release went on to say that no alternative venue had been proposed by the BCCI, nor had the issue been raised with Shaharyar by BCCI president Jagmohan Dalmiya or secretary Anurag Thakur during the PCB chairman's recent visit to India.

It also said that the PCB remained resolute in expecting BCCI to abide by the rules.

The Pakistan-India tour will comprise three Tests, five one-dayers and two Twenty20 games.