



PHOTO: STAR

READY, SET, GO: Bangladesh coach Dav Whatmore (C) gives his charges fielding practice at the Maulana Bhasani National Stadium yesterday.

Did U Know?

Adam Gilchrist of Australia is the first wicketkeeper to dismiss six batsmen behind the wickets in one-dayers. This happened against South Africa at Cape Town on April 14 2002.

What to WATCH

ESPN
UK Domestic Cricket
Warwick vs Leicesters
Live at 9:00 pm
Sportscentre Hindi
Sport News
Live at 8:30 pm
STAR Sports
Soccer Soap
Dream Team
Repeat at 8:30 am
England vs South Africa
Third Test, Day One
Live at 3:45 pm
Sportline Tonight
Sport News
Live at 11:00 pm
Soccer Soap
Dream Team
Taped Version at 11:30 pm

TALK TURKEY

Saurav Ganguly
(India cricket captain)
"We are a tough opposition on home soil. They will face a tough time."
On the forthcoming home series against New Zealand.

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BFF at its last gasp



Football

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) has not yet given up their manoeuvre to hold the Super Six phase of the Nitol-Tata National Football League at the Bangabandhu National Stadium (BNS) despite Bangladesh Cricket Board's (BCB) refusal to spare the big bowl on Tuesday night.

The league committee of the BFF called an emergency meeting at its BNS office yesterday afternoon along with the representatives of the six participating clubs and decided to meet State Minister for Youth and Sports Fazlur Rahman this morning as the last-ditch attempt.

Although the meeting was called to set a venue and date for the Super Six, but all the three big clubs Mohammedan Sporting Club,

Abahani and Muktijoddha Sangsard remained firm over their desire to play the final phase of the meet at the BNS.

As discussions came to no solution, the meeting, chaired by BFF treasurer and league committee chairman Shah Alam Chowdhury, decided to take this matter to the minister.

"The meeting has been adjourned till 4pm Saturday. Before that, we are going to meet the state minister Thursday morning and seek his favour in this regard. However, whatever decision he gives, we will abide by that," said league committee secretary Manjur Hossain.

But his chairman Alam Chowdhury had informed the Star Sport before yesterday's meeting that they had agreed to play at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur after learning on Tuesday night that Bangabandhu would not be available.

Meanwhile, it was learnt from sources close to the BFF that there was a meeting between BCB president Ali Asghar, Alam Chowdhury and Prime Minister's Political Advisor Haris Chowdhury at the latter's residence till midnight on Tuesday. But as Asghar did not agree to spare the arena and it was decided that football would be played at Sher-e-Bangla.

However, yesterday's meeting once again looked reluctant to accept the idea and therefore they have once again opted to meet the state minister.

When contacted last night, Fazlur Rahman said that he knew nothing what football officials would ask for.

"I have given them an appointment tomorrow morning and that's all. I don't know what they want to discuss," said Rahman over phone. "Let's see what happens tomorrow," Rahman concluded.

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England bank on sleepless Smith



Cricket

AFP, London

England have been given a glimmer of hope ahead of Thursday's third Test at Trent Bridge by the revelation that South Africa captain Graeme Smith has been having sleepless nights.

Smith, at 22 South Africa's youngest captain, has been in supreme form, scoring 621 runs in three innings with two double centuries while his team, after an innings and 92 run win in the second Test at Lord's, are 1-0 up in the five match series.

But despite that personal and collective success Western Province left-hander Smith told Tuesday's Guardian newspaper: "I haven't slept well... Not even for one night. My mind is just too active.

"I fall asleep fine but I wake up around 4.30am and that's it, no more."

For England the lesson is clear: if Smith is struggling to sleep now just how much more difficult will it be for him to rest if his team are put under pressure.

But so far England have not looked like dismissing Smith let alone South Africa for a reasonable score. Their pace bowlers, Andrew Flintoff on occasion excepted, have lacked the discipline to contain Smith, a predominately legside player with a watchful defence.

Darren Gough's Test retirement following Lord's leaves England with an inexperienced attack whose novice look will be reinforced by the debut of either James Kirtley or Glen Chapple at Trent Bridge.

Kirtley, England's long time reserve quick will feel his chance is overdue but Chapple, a seasoned

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Sunny smacks Dennis



Cricket

AFP, New Delhi

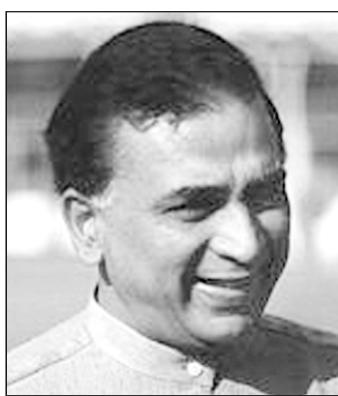
India's cricket great Sunil Gavaskar on Wednesday renewed his verbal rivalry with Dennis Lillee, blaming the Australian fast bowler for his infamous walkout from the pitch more than two decades ago.

"It was triggered by personal abuse on Lillee's part," said Gavaskar, the first batsman to compile 10,000 runs in Test cricket.

Gavaskar led his opening partner Chetan Chauhan off the field during the Melbourne Test in 1981, protesting against an umpiring decision after being adjudged leg-before-off Lillee.

A major crisis was averted by Indian manager Shahid Durrani, who met the pair at the gate and ordered Chauhan back to the middle.

"If you look at the video, I am walking towards the pavilion. I turned back only on hearing the abuse and then took Chauhan



SUNIL GAVASKAR

away," Gavaskar told the Times of India.

"Had there been no abuse, I

would have vented my anger out in the dressing-room. I expressed my regret about the incident then itself and again during the Cowdrey lecture."

Lillee had reacted sharply to Gavaskar's comments at the Colin Cowdrey memorial lecture at Lord's last month in which he had accused Australia for harming the game's image by their on-field sledging.

Lillee said: "I think it's funny coming from someone who took his bat and went home when an umpire's decision went against him."

"Sledging has gone on since WG Grace and it will go on as long as any sport is played, not just cricket. If they think it's too bad, the authorities are there to stop it."

Gavaskar warned the world that players might come to blows if personal abuse was not stopped immediately.

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'I never enjoyed Shoaib's bowling'



Cricket

BISHWAJIT ROY

When Bangladesh play their next series against Pakistan, the focus definitely will be on speedster Mashrafe-bin-Mortuza.

Dubbed the 'Narail Express' by the Australian press and public after the 19-year-old won over their hearts through his pace and aggression during Bangladesh's recent tour down under, Mashrafe has already earned the reputation as a fast bowler capable of worrying the best around the world.

Mashrafe may not still be among the fastest in business and he isn't interested either to be drawn into a personal battle with firebrand Pakistani paceman Shoaib Akhtar. Nevertheless, the Narail quick is determined to make his presence felt during the three Tests and five one-day internationals in Pakistan.

"He is not my role model. I never enjoyed his (Shoaib) bowling. He may bowl faster than anybody else, but the quality and variation is more important for me," Mashrafe said

during an exclusive interview with the Daily Star Sport yesterday.

"Rather I will miss the great Wasim Akram during the tour," he said adding it would have been a massive education for him had the legendary left-arm paceman been around during the series.

"At the moment I am not thinking of bowling faster. My focus is on bringing more accuracy to my bowling like Glenn McGrath, whom I admire most. I'm bowling at 137 kmph on an average and I won't mind maintaining that speed in Pakistan," said Mashrafe whose fastest delivery in Australia was recorded at 143kmph.

"I found my natural rhythm in Australia, where I re-discovered my original run-up. Moreover, my inswingers are coming out quite well," said Mashrafe whose natural delivery is the outswinger.

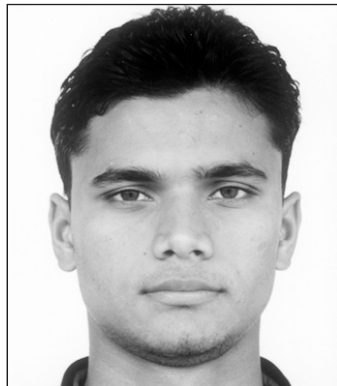
When asked about his target in Pakistan, Mashrafe said that he wanted to claim his first five-wicket haul in Test cricket there.

"It is a dream for any bowler to take five wickets and I will try my best to achieve the feat in Pakistan."

Mashrafe was aware that the conditions in Pakistan would be

totally different than what he had enjoyed on the lively Australian wickets but he believed that his Australian experience would help him and his team to do better in Pakistan.

"I think no team is comparable



MASHRAFEE-BIN-MORTUZA

with Australia at the moment, so Pakistan will be a relatively easier tour," he said.

Mashrafe, who has had an injury-plagued time since he walked into international cricket, said that

he was happy with his present fitness level and wants to stay that way.

"Injury has done me a lot of damage. I don't like to be sidelined," he said adding that he had learned some basic techniques to remain injury-free from the three master Australian pacemen.

"The Australians suggested me to carry on with my natural bowling and not try anything special in order to avoid unnecessary injury."

Mashrafe said the Australian experience was an eye-opener for him.

"There was an amazing contrast between the two sides of the world champions. The are tremendously aggressive on the field but off it there couldn't be kinder human beings," Mashrafe observed.

"I have learned many things from the tour about my bowling, especially how to bowl at the right places. Another important thing Bret Lee taught me was how to take advantage of the condition. He showed me how to use the wind to get swing in Cairns," he said.

"I enjoyed every bit of the

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Rajin surprise?

SPORTS REPORTER

The national selectors finalised a 15-member Bangladesh team last night for the three-Test series against Pakistan.

The newly formed selection committee led by former Bangladesh captain Faruque Ahmed also made the final list for the five-game one-day international series.

The selectors and national coach Dav Whatmore sat in absolute secrecy at the Bangladesh Cricket Board's management office in Gulshan to pick the squad from 22 probables. The team will be disclosed today after Whatmore has had a conversation with those who missed out. The Tigers were scheduled to fly off to Karachi on Saturday evening.

After the meeting, chief selector Faruque Ahmed said that their first selection sitting went ahead smoothly where everybody participated. But he declined to give any hints regarding the composition of the Test and ODI squads.

"I can only tell you that there were slight changes from the team that toured Australia. As the squad did reasonably well in the Tests down under, we decided not to experiment with it too much."

Meanwhile, speculation is ripe that attacking opener Shahriar Hossain Biddyt was all set to earn a Test recall after his unceremonious exit from the national fold after the country's inaugural Test against India in November 2000. If that happens, the axe is surely going to fall on middle order batsman Al-Shahriar who failed to do justice to his obvious talent in Australia.

The major talking point could be an unexpected inclusion of middle-order batsman Rajin Saleh, who could be rewarded for his impressive showing in Sri Lanka with the under-23 squad recently.

Others likely to be dropped are pacemen Anwar Hossain Munir and Tarek Aziz Khan. Munir's replacement might be veteran medium pacer Hasibul who had joined the one-day side in Australia following the Test series. That in effect, will close the door on ex-Bangladesh skipper and off-spinner Naimur Rahman's dreams of making a comeback.

After the Test series in Pakistan, opener Javed Omar and left arm seamer Monjurul Islam are likely to return home. Their possible replacements could be middle order Tushar Imran and all-rounder Mushfiqur Rahman.

Ex-WI spinner Noreiga dies

BBC ONLINE, undated

Jack Noreiga, the only West Indies cricketer to take nine wickets in a Test innings, has died at the age of 67.

The Trinidadian off-spinner, who died after complications from stomach surgery, played in four Tests against as stand-in for an out-of-form Lance Gibbs in 1971.

His career highlight was a return of 9-95 in the second Test of the series against India, at his home ground the Queen's Park Oval.

The achievement remains the best by a West Indies bowler and the 13th best ever in Test cricket.

"Lance was going through a bad patch at the time and Jack filled the gap tremendously," said Sir Garfield Sobers, who was Noreiga's captain.

"He was a very useful bowler. He flighted the ball, had good control over line and length and turned it."



Hockey

SPORTS REPORTER

Ajax Sporting Club virtually confirmed a Super Five berth in the Green Delta Premier Division Hockey League with a hard-fought 2-1 victory over Dhaka Railway at the Maulana Bhasani National Stadium yesterday.

The important win helped Ajax increase their tally to 13 points from eight matches. They can seal their Super Five spot with only a draw in tomorrow's outing against Sonali Bank, who so far have secured 13 points from seven matches.

On the other hand, the defeat almost confirmed Railway's exit from the race as they have only eight points from as many matches.

After a barren first-half, Hasan Rony put Ajax ahead in the 47th minute with a field goal and scored another field goal in the 61st minute. Sarvan Balla was on the score-

sheet for Railway but it was too late for them as the Indian reduced the margin minutes before the long whistle.

BIMA-7: WARI-2

In the other match, riding on a hat-trick by Murad, promotees Sadharan Bima kept their Super Five hopes alive with a massive 7-2 victory over Wari Club.

Bima extended their tally to ten points from eight matches and take on Sonali Bank in their last encounter on August 18. Meanwhile it was the seventh defeat for the old city club in eight outings.

Murad scored four goals while Ismail, Mamun and Sadeq one each for the winners.

Nadim and Jasim scored for the losers.

TODAY'S MATCHES

Abahani KC vs Bangladesh SC (2:15pm)

Mohammedan SC vs Usha KC (4:15pm)

College b'ball underway

SPORTS REPORTER

Mastermind came from behind to edge past Khulna College 44-43 in the inaugural match of the Europa First College Basketball Championship at the Dhanmondi gymnasium yesterday.

The losers led the first-half 23-18.

Nabil caged highest 24 and Ayon 8 for Mastermind while Arman scored 13 and Khalid 11 points for Khulna College.

A total of twelve teams, split into two groups are taking part in the first ever college tournament.

GROUP A: Mastermind, Chandpur Government College, Rajuk Uttara Model College, The Aga Khan College, Dhanmondi Tutorial and Khulna College.

GROUP B: Scholastica, Saint Joseph's College, BAF Shaheen College, BN College, Academia and Notre Dame College.

Fletcher repulses



Cricket

AFP, London

England coach Duncan Fletcher has said criticisms of his management style by Geoffrey Boycott were a "combination of the curious and unfair" after the former Test opener accused him of "destroying" county cricket.

Clearly stung, Fletcher whose position has come under increasing scrutiny in recent times took the unusual step of writing a column in Thursday's Daily Telegraph the same British broadsheet newspaper where Boycott berated the former Zimbabwe captain Monday.

Boycott said that Fletcher, by taking James Anderson out of county cricket was denying the 21-year-old Lancashire quick the

chance to bowl himself into form in the way that England fast bowlers of his era such as Fred Trueman had done.

But Fletcher said Anderson had "played non-stop county cricket up to the first Test against Zimbabwe".

He added: "With the volume of cricket coming up, he needed time to rest and recuperate."

He also tackled Boycott's assertions that he had "brainwashed" former captain Nasser Hussain and was himself an "invisible coach".

"Hussain is a strong-minded individual and perfectly capable of making his own mind up in cricketing matters. In fact I think Nasser brainwashes me at times!"

"Boycott also criticised my management style, suggesting that I am not 'fronting up' or being 'seen to help'."

"I do not seek to be high-profile,

whether we win or lose, but prefer an active, thoughtful and level-headed behind-the-scenes management role."

Boycott was dismissive of England's decision to employ Australian Troy Cooley, who had an undistinguished first-class career with Tasmania, as a bowling coach and said that when it came to the batting the team should consult him or fellow England great Graham Gooch.

"Great players don't necessarily make great coaches," Fletcher said. "I never saw Troy Cooley bowl, but I know he is a fine bowling coach and he came highly recommended by Rod Marsh who has played a lot of Test cricket."

"As for a batting coach, I like to think I have made an impact here,"

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PHOTO: STAR

Scene from the Green Delta Premier Division Hockey League encounter between Wari Club and Sadharan Bima Krira Sangstha at the Maulana Bhasani National Stadium yesterday.