



Did U Know?

The very first Wimbledon Championship was in 1877 when it was watched by some 200 spectators. In 1999 it was broadcast to 174 countries, with an estimated global audience of 1 billion people.



TALK TURKEY



Syed Ashraf Huiq

(ACC chief executive)
"I am amazed at the level of cricket interest in common people and seriousness of the officials in China."



What to WATCH

DD Sports

TVS Cup Triangular Series
India vs New Zealand
Live at 3:00 pm

ESPN

West Indies vs Zimbabwe
First Test, Day Three
Live at 1:55 pm
Sportscentre Hindi
Sport News
Live at 9:00 pm

STAR Sports

English Premier Football League
Highlights at 9:30 am
Sportline Tonight
Sport News
Live at 8:00 pm
Football Mundial
Taped Version at 8:30 pm

Overwhelming England



SPORT REPORTER

England warmed up for the coming for the three-match one-day series with a convincing 167-run win over BCB Development Squad at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

The battle between men and boys provided a perfect preparation for seven England one-day specialists with Vikram Solanki the pack.

The right-hander from Worcestershire hammered a blazing 79 as England, put into bat, piled up a huge 328 before being all out in 49.3 overs.

The Bangladesh youths were never in the chase and ended up making 161 in 47.4 overs.

Solanki, who is set to open the innings with left-handed Marcus Trescothick when England start their

one-day series at Chittagong tomorrow, gave a glimpse of what lies ahead for the Khaled Mahmud's men with a flurry of shots all around.

The lone Indian-born cricketer in the current England one-day side set the momentum dominating the 146-run opening stand with Andrew Strauss inside the first 20 overs.

Solanki struck two towering sixes and a dozen boundaries in his 63-ball blitzkrieg. His thunder came to an end when Talha Jubair took a smart catch at long off.

Left-handed Strauss also created an impression in the mind of England coach Duncan Fletcher with a 57-ball 51 that featured six fours.

Solanki and Strauss, who is looking for his one-day debut, toyed with the inexperienced local bowlers in the absence of England captain Michael Vaughan and Trescothick. Both the regular openers sat out the match after a successful Test series that the tourists

won 2-0. Acting captain Andrew Flintoff also exhibited his trademark power play hitting two sixes and five boundaries in his 31-ball 43.

Another key member Ian Blackwell was among the runs. Actually the Somerset all-rounder hit the maximum number of over boundaries in the innings. The destructive left-hander smashed three sixes and six fours in his 62 made off only 43 balls.

The ravaged BCB bowlers only found success at the latter stages of the innings with right-arm seamer Talha and leg spinner Mohammad Ashraful bagging three wickets each.

Although Ashraful had some success with the ball the youngest Test centurion on debut failed to impress anybody in his first competitive match since coming back from Pakistan.

The hype surrounding the inclusion of the 19-year-old died down after a scratchy six. His faulty foot

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TIMBER: England's Paul Collingwood is bowled by Manjarul Islam during the practice match at BNS.

PHOTO: STAR

Nafees yet to arrive

SPORTS REPORTER

Nafees Iqbal could not join the Bangladesh one-day team in Chittagong yesterday as he missed the Dhaka-bound Biman flight from Karachi on Tuesday night.

The opening batsman failed to board the plane because he arrived late in Karachi due to a delay in a domestic PIA flight from Lahore.

Nafees, who led Bangladesh Under-19 team in a quadrangular tournament in Pakistan, was to reach the capital yesterday morning.

However, according to Bangla-desh Cricket Board advisor Mah-bubul Anam last night, Nafees will reach the city this morning via Dubai and then fly to Chittagong by the first available flight.

Only 3-0 will please Vaughan

SPORTS REPORTER

England captain Michael Vaughan expects nothing short of a clean sweep against Bangladesh in the three-match one-day international series that begins in Chittagong tomorrow.

"My goal is to win the series 3-0," said the England skipper while talking to the media at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday afternoon.

Vaughan, who was rested for Wednesday's practice game against the Bangladesh Cricket Board's Development squad, however had no doubt that they have to work as hard as they have done during the Test series if they hope to roll over the tigers.

"It won't be easy but again it's quite possible to win 3-0 if we really work hard," Vaughan said.

Vaughan was particularly impressed with the way England's one-day specialists dominated in the warm-up game which they won by 167 runs.

"It augers well for England because we need runs from (Vikram) Solanki, (Andrew) Strauss and (Andrew) Flintoff. It's important as this is a young team which is building for the future," said the England skipper.

Vaughan said he hasn't yet decided on team composition for the first one day.

"We are going to Chittagong tomorrow. We'll decide after seeing

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ICC has belief in Windies' ability

AFP, Barbados

International Cricket Council (ICC) chief executive Malcolm Speed says he has every confidence in the West Indies' ability to host the 2007 World Cup and hit out at reports that Australia has been lined-up as an alternative should the tournament be unable to be staged in the Caribbean.

"We are required by our commercial partners and for insurance purposes to have a back-up in South Africa we had a back-up and I think it was Australia and New Zealand," said Speed who arrived here along with ICC president Ehsan Mani on a tournament progress visit.

"I think it is important to say that no decision has been made by the ICC as to which country will be the back-up venue and any suggestion that it is Australia is quite premature and inappropriate.

"At a time in the future the ICC will meet and nominate a back-up venue. That has not occurred as to when that will be somewhere around two years from the event but that has not been decided yet."



England's Vikram Solanki, who scored a whirlwind 79 against BCB Development squad, follows through on a sweep.

PHOTO: STAR

Russell, Badda in group semis

SPORTS REPORTER

Sheikh Russell Krija Chakra and Badda Jagarani Sangsad moved into the group semifinals of the Tibet Federation Cup Football Tournament beating their respective rivals yesterday.

Youthful Sheikh Russel managed a 2-1 victory over newcomers Bangladesh Under-20 at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur.

Forward Bulbul struck twice for the winners in the 46th and 88th minutes while Zahed scored for Bangladesh Under-20 in the 55th minute.

Sheikh Russel will take on Sadharan Bima Krija Sangstha in the semifinal tomorrow in Kamalapur.

At the Bir Shreshtha Shaheed Mustafa Kamal Stadium in Kamalapur, Badda Jagarani edged past Youngmen's Club Fakirerpool 4-1 in tiebreaker after regulation time's play ended goalless.

Badda face Rahmatganj Muslim Friends Society in the semis tomorrow.

Aminul, Joy fined

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) yesterday fined seven Premier Division footballers Taka 5,000 each for taking advance payment from two different clubs before the players' transfers.

The list of booters being disciplined includes country's number one goalkeeper Aminul Haque and international midfielder Arif Khan Joy. The other five are Monju, Kaiser and Khokon Das of Mohammedan, Shawkat of Abahani and Shahidul of Badda Jagarani.

The fine was imposed in an emergency meeting of the BFF at the Bangabandhu National Stadium.

Chaired by BFF president SA Sultan MP, the meeting was arranged to review a report of a special committee that was formed to probe into the allegations against those seven players.

Besides, the meeting also demanded formal apologies from Joy and Aminul for brining the game into disrepute.

"The special committee has proposed introduction of new laws in the by-laws so that we can take more stringent actions against players who will take money from two clubs in the future," said BFF assistant general secretary Manjur Hossain after the meeting.

Windies Heath struck



REUTERS, Harare

Heath Streak scored his maiden Test century to put Zimbabwe on top on the second day of the first Test against the West Indies on Tuesday.

Zimbabwe, who won the toss and chose to bat, were 463 for seven at tea with Streak 100 not out and Blignaut on 78 in an unbroken stand of 149.

Streak, who was on 16 overnight, blunted the West Indies' attack with resolute batting in his 297 minutes at the crease, facing 222 balls and hitting nine fours.

The more aggressive Blignaut blazed three boundaries from the first nine balls he faced. But they were the only fours in his third Test half-century, in which he showed the application he has lacked in other innings.

The West Indies took the new ball in the third over of the day, which Zimbabwe began on 284 for six.

But the home side's lower middle

order showed more grit than the frontline batsmen and West Indies' hopes of ending the innings quickly faded as the session wore on.

Tatenda Taibu took his overnight 75

Zim declare on 507-9

REUTERS, Harare

Zimbabwe declared their first innings closed on 507 for nine on the second day of the first Test against the West Indies in Harare on Wednesday.

Captain Heath Streak was not out on 127. Fidel Edwards took 5-133 for the tourists.

not out to 83 before driving at a delivery from fast bowler Fidel Edwards and being bowled off the edge in the 11th over of the day.

Taibu showed impressive determination for his career-best 83, and his effort was a major factor in Zimbabwe's recovery from 154 for five. He shared a stand of 81 with Streak, batted for more than three hours, faced 186 balls and hit nine fours.

The visitors bowled a tighter line and length than on the first day, but rarely threatened the batsmen on a flat pitch.

They were hampered by a lower back strain to fast bowler Jerome Taylor, who did not appear on the field in the two sessions.

Edwards went to tea with figures of four for 122.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard at tea on the second day of the first Test between Zimbabwe and West Indies on Wednesday:

ZIMBABWE: First innings (overnight 284-6)

Sibanda c Jacobs b Edwards 18
Gripper c Lara b Taylor 41
Vermeulen c Hinds b Edwards 8
Carlisle c Lara b Collymore 8
Wishart c Jacobs b Hinds 47

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Bangladesh national cricket team members do stretching as part of their practice session at the MA Aziz Stadium in Chittagong yesterday.

PHOTO: ZOABER HOSSAIN SIKDER

Suddenly Manjarul



SPORTS REPORTER

Another little known player joined the Bangladesh one-day squad when the selectors picked Khulna left-arm spinner Manjarul Islam yesterday for the three-match series against England starting tomorrow.

His inclusion came about following injury to Bangladesh's highest wicket-taker in the two Tests Mohammed Rafique, the left-arm spinner who claimed 10 wickets against England.

Rafique injured his knee and is rated 50-50 to play in the first match at Chittagong. If he fails a fitness test then Manjarul will be an option for the selectors for the opening limited-overs match. Manjarul is the second surprise from Khulna in the one-day squad after off-spinner Jamal Uddin.

The inclusion of the 19-year-old means a 14-member Bangladesh squad containing three specialist spinners two pacemen, as many all-rounder and seven batsmen.

Rafique didn't take part in the training session for last two days but captain Khaled Mahmud informed that he has a slim chance to play in the first game.

"Actually Rafique's knee injury is not that serious but we don't want to take any risk unless he is hundred per cent fit," said chief selector Faruque Ahmed while watching a practice match at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

Faruque felt that the inclusion of the slow left-arm bowler would lend support in both departments. Manjarul was the best all-rounder in the National League last season. He also played a pivotal role for Khulna to clinch their maiden first-class title and was the inspiration behind Victoria Sporting Club's title defence of the Premier Division.

He took highest 27 wickets and scored 390 runs at the average of 48.75 in six matches of the first-class competition early this year. He also proved to be just as useful in the abridged version taking 18 wickets for his home team.

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Mazharul Haque cuts one on way to scoring 41 against England during the one-day practice match at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

Future looks bright



REUTERS, Dhaka

Just eight months ago, when they were outshone by Kenya and even outsiders Canada and the Netherlands at the 2003 World Cup, there were cries that Bangladesh deserved to be stripped of their full Test status.

But the small south Asian nation, perhaps even more cricket-crazy than neighbouring India, has shown greater promise since then by scaring Pakistan, pushing England and managing to go to Australia without being humiliated.

Coach Dav Whatmore, regarded as one of the best minds in the game and recognised as the man responsible for inspiring Sri Lanka to the 1996 World Cup victory, says the team needs support.

"This is not the time when we need

people to say we're terrible," the former Australian Test player said after Bangladesh lost to England by 329 runs at Chittagong last weekend.

But sarcasm and criticism have been more forthcoming than support so far for the "Tigers", a nickname that cricket fans often find ironic.

In terms of pure statistics, Bangladesh have lost 25 of their 26 Tests, 15 of them by an innings. The only draw was when rain saved them against Zimbabwe at Dhaka two years ago.

But experts, including England skipper Michael Vaughan, are finally saying that Bangladesh's maiden Test win cannot be far away.

The main reason for hope is a bowling attack capable of taking wickets, especially on a turning track such as the Bangabandhu stadium in Dhaka.

Left-arm spinner Mohammad Rafique has emerged as a potent force in the last two series, picking up 17 wickets

in Pakistan and 10 in two Tests against England.

He does not favour flight but maintains a good line. His lethal arm ball, which shoots straight through, is extremely tough to read as Rikki Clarke found out the hard way in Dhaka, bowled not offering a shot to a ball pitched outside off-stump.

But it is a surprise that Rafique, who has 36 wickets at an impressive 27.69, has played only eight Tests. The selectors have often preferred Enamul Haque Snr (18 wickets in 10 matches at a pedestrian average of 57) in the last three years.

Mashrafe-bin-Mortuza, 20, is the other world-class option.

The "Narail Express" is fast and nippy and his late movement is always a threat. He proved his worth at Chittagong last week, grabbing a career-best four for 60 to restrict England to 326 after they had seemed set for a huge

total. But the injury-prone Mortuza, who missed most of last year due to back trouble, fell over clutching his right knee in the second innings.

He was rushed to hospital and returned with a suspected ligament tear, ruled out for five weeks with his leg in a cast.

With Rafique and Mortuza in the line-up and with steadily improving fielding the hallmark of any Whatmore outfit the Bangladeshis can now hold their own in the park.

But batting remains a serious cause for worry.

Bangladesh notched up 400 in their first match, against India three years ago, but on 31 occasions since then they have been bowled out for less than 200.

The batsmen score quickly but

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CAB XI 198-4

BSS, Faridpur

Visiting Cricket Association of Bengal (CAB) Under-17s were 198 for four at close of play on the first day of a three-day match against BCB Under-17s at the District Stadium here yesterday.

Batting after winning the toss, the CAB XI skipper Debapradra Das was leading the way with an unbeaten 67. He was well supported by Arivinda Ghosal, who made 60.

Ilyas Sunny was the most successful local bowler with two wickets for 26 runs off 23 overs with 11 maidens.