



Did U Know?

The modern Olympic Games were held for the first time in 1896 at Athens and were then followed by the 1900 Paris Games. The Winter Games were added in 1924.



Greg Chappell

(India cricket coach)

"I've seen Ian Botham, Clive Lloyd and of course Adam Gilchrist, but Afridi's innings is up in the top group. No ground is big enough to keep him quiet. Our bowlers tried their best."

On Pakistani Shahid Afridi's hurricane knock of 103 at Lahore on Saturday.

What to WATCH

TEN Sports

India vs Pakistan
First Test, Day Four
Live at 10:45 am

ESPN

Sportscenter India
Sports News
Live at 8:30 pm

STAR Sports

Australian Open
First Round
Live at 6:00 am
Sportscenter India
Sports News Update
Live at 9:00 pm & 12:00 am



Aktel Premier Div Cricket League
Old DOHS vs City Club
Venue: Comilla Dist Stadium
Victoria vs Sonargaon
Venue: Fatullah Cricket Stadium
Biman vs Kalabagan
Venue: Bogra Dist Stadium
Abahani vs Orient
Venue: BKSP-1
Mohammedan vs Brothers
Venue: BKSP-2
Agrani Bank vs Indira Road
Venue: Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium

Sarfraz readies himself for Shabbir

REUTERS, Lahore

Pakistan cricket authorities have prepared video footage of pacer Shabbir Ahmed's modified bowling action in a bid to get his one-year ban lifted or reduced.

The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) has appointed former Test bowler Sarfraz Nawaz to work with Shabbir after he was suspended from bowling in international cricket last month by the International Cricket Council (ICC) for having an illegal action.

The ICC has formed a bowling review group to hear out Shabbir's appeal in Dubai on January 21, with former Indian pace bowler Javagal Srinath the only Test bowler on the panel.

"We have nearly completed a 30-minute video having footage of Shabbir's revised action after the work done on him by Sarfraz in the past two weeks," PCB director Saleem Altaf told Reuters.

"We are confident we can get the ban lifted or reduced on the basis of what the improvement we have seen in his action now," Altaf said.

SEE PAGE 13 COL 1

Cricketers return to action today

SPORTS REPORTER



Cricketers will return to action today after a weeklong Eid vacation when the eleventh and final round of the Aktel Premier Division Cricket League first-leg takes place at six different venues across the country.

The crucial round will determine who join defending champions and table-toppers Old DOHS, second-placed Victoria Sporting Club and Mohammedan Sporting Club in the Super-Six, which is expected to start on January 20.

The fourth place is crowded with runners-up City Club, Bangladesh Biman and big-spending Sonargaon Cricketers -- all level on 12 points. However, their last round outcomes will not make any impact about their places in the Super-Six if Brothers, the remaining contenders on 10 points, lost to Mohammedan at BKSP today.

The focus will also be on a big match between DOHS and City Club at the Comilla Stadium.

The star-studded DOHS, who lead the table with 18 points, will definitely try to bounce back from their first defeat, against Victoria in the previous round, while a win will guarantee City's place in the Super-Six phase.

The competition went to the wire before the Eid holidays when Victoria put an end to DOHS's

winning run with a 19-run victory at the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium.

Fresh from the encouraging win against the holders, the youthful Victoria will face Sonargaon at the Fatullah Cricket Stadium.

There was good news for two-time champions Victoria as they will get the services of two under-19 players Sakib Al Hasan and Mushfiqur Rahim today.

The national selectors have decided to allow the U-19 cricketers to play the last round although they were scheduled to join the national camp on the same evening.

Biman meet Kalabagan at the Shaheed Chandu Stadium in Bogra while Abahani, the giants missing the Super League for the first time, play against pointless Orient Sporting Club at BKSP. Agrani Bank will look for a win against Indira Road at Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium to avoid playing in the relegation league involving the three bottomers.

POINTS TABLE

Teams	M	W	T	AB	L	Pts
DOHS	10	9	0	0	1	18
Victoria	10	8	0	0	2	16
MSC	10	7	0	0	3	14
Biman	10	6	0	0	4	12
City	10	6	0	0	4	12
Sonargaon	10	6	0	0	4	12
BU	10	5	0	0	5	10
AL	10	4	0	0	6	8
Kalabagan	10	4	0	0	6	8
Agrani	10	3	0	0	7	6
Indira	10	2	0	0	8	4
Orient	10	0	0	0	10	0

SA take first honours



APP, Brisbane

South Africa drew first blood in the battle of the world's two best one-day cricket teams after a late flourish by Justin Kemp and Mark Boucher carried them to a five-wicket win over Australia in the tri-series match on Sunday.

In a finish tinged with drama, the umpires took the two teams off the Brisbane Cricket Ground after rain started falling with the South Africans needing just five runs to win with 10 balls remaining.

The covers were brought on but the players soon returned to complete formalities after the victory target remained unchanged.

It was a just reward for the South Africans who had earlier restricted Australia to a modest 228 off 49.5 overs after destroying their top order batting. In reply they managed 231-5 off 48.5 overs.

The Proteas came into the match as underdogs following the host nation's crushing win over Sri Lanka in the series opener on Friday and after losing key strike bowlers Andre Nel, Charl Langeveldt and Makhaya Ntini to injury.

But veteran pacer Shaun Pollock, later named man of the match, stepped up to the plate to claim the first three Australian wickets, including openers Adam Gilchrist and Simon Katich for ducks to finish with 3-30.

He was well supported by all-rounder Andrew Hall who took 3-43.

It seemed South Africa would struggle to chase down the runs, with some brilliant fielding by the Australians.

But Boucher and Kemp belted 17 runs off Brett Lee in the 46th over to help see their team home, with the former finishing unbeaten on 63 and the latter not out on 29.

The Australians had no excuses with Ricky Ponting conceding they had simply not batted well enough in the conditions, which were good for most of the match.

"You can't get 229 on that sort of wicket and expect to be competitive," Ponting said.

"We are going to have a look at the way we were dismissed and the way we played some of the shots we played early on in our innings."

The skipper, who made 33 before becoming the prize scalp of newcomer Monde Zondeki, said the Australians had been well prepared.

"We had a very good hit-out as far as skills were concerned a couple of days ago so we were 100 percent ready and ripe for this game," he said.

While it was Boucher and Kemp who carried their team to victory, the Proteas' batting performance

was held together by a defiant Boeta Dippenaar who notched 74 off 115 before being run out.

His knock came at the right time after captain Graeme Smith's poor summer with the bat continued. He was dismissed for 12, caught by Simon Katich after he attempted to pull a rising ball from Glenn McGrath to square leg with the South African score on 27.

Dippenaar remained at the crease, but initially did his team few favours when four balls later he

SEE PAGE 13 COL 8



South Africa batsmen Mark Boucher (R) and Justin Kemp celebrate winning the tri-series one-day international against Australia at the Gabba on Sunday.

PHOTO: AFP

Sania's Grand Slam dream



APP, Melbourne

Indian tennis sensation Sania Mirza oozes confidence and is even daring to dream that she will one day win a Grand Slam, motivated by being Asia's great new hope.

The 19-year-old knows she is carrying the expectations not just of her country but the whole of the region as she prepares to open her campaign at the Australian Open, the first Grand Slam of the season.

"I think as an athlete, not only as a tennis player, expectations come with the package," she said.

"I think it just in a way motivates me because I know there are so many people backing me. Before it was just India, but now it's the whole of Asia that's backing me."

Mirza's star has risen rapidly since she won a wild card for the Australian Open last year.

The teenager built on the break to turn 2005 into a phenomenal year, becoming the first Indian woman to win a WTA tour event and soaring more than 100 spots in the rankings to finish the year at 34.

It has made her a role model to countless young girls in India and attracted lucrative endorsement deals.

The experience she has gained has already given her an old hand on young shoulders, and she talks with a confidence that belies her years.

"I'm no longer a rookie," she said, making clear that she is lapping up the attention, but she still can't quite believe she is fielding questions about the possibility that she can one day win a Grand Slam.

"Winning a Grand Slam is definitely a dream. It is what we all play for but it is hard to say if I'm going to win one or when," she said.

Former Indian great Vijay Amritraj has already tipped her as a future Grand Slam champion, saying she "is on her way", praising her attitude and work ethic.

But Mirza knows that to have a chance of realising her dream, she must avoid the injuries that are increasingly striking down players.

"There are a lot of things that count in winning a Grand Slam, or even for that matter staying at the position where I am."

"The amount of injuries that we have, the amount of pressure we're

putting on our bodies -- it is a very hard sport. I really don't want to put a timeframe on when I want to win a Grand Slam," said the Hyderabad native.

"The first goal for me is to pass the first round."

Mirza shouldn't have a problem there, having drawn a qualifier, Victoria Azarenka of Belarus, in the opening round here.

In preparation for the Open, she has spent time with in-demand Australian coach Tony Roche in Sydney, and even warmed up with world number one Roger Federer.

"I worked with Tony the whole of December and made some changes to my game. You know, I'm back fresher. I'm really excited," she said.

"We worked on my serve and changed my action a bit, and also worked on my volley to get some variation in my game."

With the rise of her star has also come negative publicity, with religious conservatives attacking her for wearing short skirts. One cleric accused her of being "half-naked".

SEE PAGE 13 COL 1

South Asian WC bid submitted

PTI, Lahore

The Asian countries on Sunday submitted their bid for the 2011 World Cup but said it was conditional since they had reservations over some of the financial policies of the International Cricket Council (ICC).

A Letter of Intent, signed by Pakistan Cricket Board's director of operations Saleem Altaf on behalf of India, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh, was dispatched this morning. The ICC will make the decision on the host country for the 2011 World Cup in its June meeting in Dubai.

The countries have clarified in the Letter of Intent that they would not accept all the terms and conditions of ICC pertaining to hosting of the World Cup, a top PCB official said.

"We have informed the ICC that we have reservations on many issues like its financial model and exemption from certain government taxes," the official said.

"At this point of time, we can assure the ICC that we could provide them stadiums for sponsors' hoardings, excellent facilities for the teams and officials, and security. But at this point of time we can't assure the ICC on immigration, visa policies and exemption from taxes as the event is five years from now," he said.

"Besides, the formula for the allocation of earnings for the host boards from the profits is also not acceptable to us," he said.

Woolmer sees a draw ahead

REUTERS, Lahore

Pakistan's coach Bob Woolmer has refused to blame the groundsman for the flat track that has produced a plethora of runs in the first Test against India and appears headed for a dull draw.

"It is obviously frustrating to have weather like this. But you can't blame it on anyone. Neither would I blame anyone for this pitch," Woolmer said.

Woolmer pointed out that winter weather conditions in the lead-up to the series had hampered the work of the groundsman.

"We all didn't know what we would get because of the cold weather. You need a couple of days of hot sun to allow a pitch to make it turn a bit," he said.

"Every Test team has to put up with what it gets. And I don't think groundsman get a proper opportunity to prepare a sporting track."

The former England player denied that he or captain Inzamamul Haq had any role to play in the preparation of the pitch.

"My view is clear on this. I give my views but don't like to interfere in anyone's work. I have always stressed on having sporting tracks for Test cricket, one which supports both batsmen and bowlers," he said.

"We had three good Test pitches against England and it led to good cricket. You need good pitches for good Test matches. I hope the second Test one is more supportive."

Manu no more

SPORTS REPORTER

Freedom fighter, sports organiser, former joint secretary and director of Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) Mahmudul Haque Manu died of cardiac arrest while sleeping yesterday morning at his residence. He was 50.

Manu, who had been the general secretary of Eskaton Sabuj Sangha since 1991, left behind his wife, two sons, relatives and well wishers to mourn his death.

The prominent organiser, who joined the cricket board in 1992, was member-secretary of the Cricket Committee of Dhaka Metropolis from 1996-98 and served as BCB joint-secretary from 1998-2003.

Former sports minister Obaidul Quader, ex-BCB president Saber Hossain Chowdhury, BCB general secretary Mahubub Anam, CDM chairman Khondokar Jamiluddin, ex-BCB director Dewan Shafiqul Arefin Tutul, former national cricket captains Faruque Ahmed and Minhajul Abedin Nannu, current and former board officials, selectors, cricketers and footballers attended his namaj-e-janaja at the Bangabandhu National Stadium.

His second namaj-e-janaja was held at Aminbagh Jame Mosque before he was laid to rest at the Mirpur Martyred Intellectual graveyard.

National cricket captain Habibul Bashar, vice-captain Khaled Mashud and Enamul Haque Junior paid a visit to his residence. Most of the cricketers failed to attend the namaj-e-janaja because of their club duty.

Bangladesh Cricket Board, Bangladesh Sports Journalist Association, Sammilito Krira Parishad

SEE PAGE 13 COL 1



India opener Virender Sehwag plays a straight-drive off Pakistan pacer Navedul Hasan (R) during the third day of the first Test at the Gaddafi Stadium in Lahore on Sunday.

PHOTO: AFP

Sehwag shines in gloom



APP, Lahore

Virender Sehwag defied Pakistan's pace attack in murky weather to keep India's hopes alive of saving the first Test here on Sunday.

India, needing 480 runs to avoid the follow-on after Pakistan amassed 679-7 in their first innings, closed the truncated third day's play at 145 for no loss.

Sehwag, 36 overnight, galloped to 96 off 89 balls with the help of 20 boundaries, while captain Rahul Dravid was unbeaten on 37.

Play, which began 45 minutes late due to bad light, lasted only 12 overs in the morning session and just three more overs were sent down after lunch before umpires Darrell Hair and Rudi Koertzen abandoned proceedings for the day.

"It is unfortunate we could not get much of a game today but the Test is not over by any means," said Pakistan captain Inzamamul Haq.

"Hopefully the weather will be better on the fourth and fifth days because we have the runs on the board and can keep India under pressure."

"If we can get a few early wickets tomorrow, we will have a chance to

press for victory." India coach Greg Chappell was delighted with his openers.

"It is not easy to go out there against a 650-plus total but Sehwag and Rahul played really well despite the inconsistent light."

"It was good to see Sehwag timing the ball so well. And Rahul was solid as ever. Hope they go on in the same vein on Monday."

The belligerent Sehwag scored 60 of the 80 runs made by India as he cut and drove his way out of trouble against the three-pronged Pakistan pace attack of Shoaib Akhtar, Mohammad Sami and Navedul Hasan.

The easy-paced wicket on which the Pakistani batsmen prospered over the first two days played true to form to assist the Indian reply despite the poor visibility.

Sehwag, who scored India's first triple century during India's last tour of Pakistan two years ago, appeared to find his batting touch after a lean home series against Sri Lanka.

Sehwag on-drove Naved, then twice slashed Akhtar to the point boundary before taking three fours in one over off Naved. He reached his half-century with two consecutive boundaries off Akhtar and Navedul Hasan.

SEE PAGE 13 COL 5

Time for Australian Open

Can Davenport cash in on Clijsters injury



APP, Melbourne

With Kim Clijsters struggling to beat a hip injury, Lindsay Davenport can sniff an opportunity to win the Australian Open, but she has her work cut out in a strong field.

Clijsters, the second seed, started the season in tremendous form, defeating world number one Davenport in Hong Kong before a hip injury forced her out of the Sydney International last week and upset her Open plans.

She is still trying to overcome

the pain but remains confident she can start her first round match against South Korea's Cho Yoon-jeong on Tuesday.

"I had my first hit this morning," she said Sunday. "Hopefully, it will get better. I guess it's just a little wear and tear from over the years. I'm very happy I got a Tuesday start, that's helped me out a little bit more."

Clijsters, 22, hit the best form of her career in 2005, claiming a WTA-best nine tournaments, pushing her up to second in the world rankings and making her a favourite in Melbourne.

Her injury is good news for Davenport, although the strength of women's tennis is such that any

one of half a dozen players are able to confidently consider themselves in with a serious shout.

All the top 20 stars are here with no major injury casualties outside of Clijsters, with defending champion Serena Williams saying she is fine despite pulling out of the Champions Challenge in Hong Kong with an inflamed left knee.

Many will be dreaming of a fairytale comeback for triple champion Martina Hingis, but a more realistic achievement for the Swiss Miss would be to make it into the second week.

Hingis is upbeat ahead of her opening game Tuesday against 30th

SEE PAGE 13 COL 1



India's tennis sensation Sania Mirza hits the ball during a practice session on the eve of the Australian Open in Melbourne on Sunday.

PHOTO: AFP