



Did U Know?

The Olympic hymn was first played at the 1896 Olympic Games in Athens but wasn't declared official by the IOC until 1957.



Andriy Shevchenko
(AC Milan's Ukrainian superstar)
"It is clear that Ronaldo needs a new stimulus and in my opinion he is certainly still an excellent striker. This is not an opportunity Milan should miss out on."
On the Italian club's interest in the Brazilian superstar.



STAR Sports
Bangladesh vs Sri Lanka
3rd ODI
Live at 8:45 am
English Premier Football League
Blackburn Rovers vs Arsenal
Live at 8:55 pm
ESPN
New Zealand vs West Indies
3rd ODI
Live at 7:00 am
English Premier Football League
Chelsea vs Portsmouth
Live at 8:55 pm
Newcastle vs Everton
Live at 11:10 pm



Bangladesh vs Sri Lanka
3rd ODI
Venue: Chittagong Divisional Stadium
7th Nat'l Cricket League
Four-Day Matches (Day Two)
Dhaka vs Sylhet
Venue: Sher-e-Bangla Nat'l Stadium, Mirpur
Barisal vs Rajshahi
Venue: Barisal Stadium
Chittagong vs Khulna
Venue: Khulna Divisional Stadium

Duffin named Zim captain

BBC ONLINE, undated

Terrence Duffin has been named as Zimbabwe's cricket captain for their home one-day series against Kenya. The left-handed batsman succeeds Tatenda Taibu, who resigned last November in protest at the way the game was being run in the country.

Duffin has played two Test matches but has never before been chosen for the limited-overs side.

The squad also includes youngsters Ryan Higgins and Keegan Meth, who recently played at the Under-19 World Cup.

Among the names missing from the squad is Andy Blythe, who claims he is still owed money for previous series.

The five-match series against Kenya, which starts on Saturday, is Zimbabwe's first since the government sacked the country's former cricket board.

SQUAD
Terrence Duffin (captain), Elton Chigumbura, Keith Dabengwa, Ryan Higgins, Anthony Ireland, Blessing Mahwire, Hamilton Masakadza, Keegan Meth, Waddington Mwayenga, Edward Rainsford, Piet Rinke, Gregory Strydom, Brendan Taylor, Prosper Utseya.

Bangladesh have a point to prove

Tigers make two changes for the decider

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh today have a point to prove when they clash with Sri Lanka in the series deciding third and final one-day international at the newly-approved Chittagong Divisional Stadium.

Are they capable of carrying on a success or go into a long hibernation as usual, would be the tag to be removed from the Tigers who have been very inconsistent in terms of winning.

It would only be known this afternoon whether Habibur Bashar's men have the mettle to build on their four-wicket victory against Sri Lanka in Bogra on Wednesday that levelled the series 1-1.

Tigers' maiden victory against Sri Lanka came after 15 abortive

attempts and they have had agonising experiences of repeating the same words that they had never been up to the mark against Sri Lanka in the past.

With that problem buried, captain Bashar pins hopes on his team's volte-face to make history and believe that they are very much capable of breaking the trend of a long losing streak after a victory.

"Yes, we have a record of falling back to bad patches after winning a game. We came to a similar situation when we equalled the series against India but lost the last match. But I feel that the team mentality has now totally changed. We are not complacent after the second match victory," said a confident Bashar after yesterday's practice session.

"I told you even after the first match defeat that the boys are confident and positive about the whole series and they are desper-

ately looking forward to win the series against Sri Lanka," said the 33-year old skipper.

He however said that they would need another team effort like Bogra rather than one or two individual successes to make the dream come true.

"We don't want to focus on one or two players rather our target is to play as a team to overcome the final hurdle. We should click in every department because Sri Lanka will be more conscious tomorrow. They will hardly give us a chance," said the most successful Bangladesh captain.

Commenting on the two changes from the winning combination, Bashar said that they made it because the situation demanded it.

"We felt that Nazmul (Hossain) was struggling a bit against the left-handers although he is a very good bowler. That is why we have

SEE PAGE 13 COL 6



PUT THE BAT ON THE GROUND: Bangladesh coach Dav Whatmore imparts some batting tips to Aftab Ahmed during a practice session at the Chittagong Divisional Stadium on Friday.

Cruciani unhappy

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh national football team returned home yesterday from Uzbekistan and will get back to training today for their second match of the 2007 Asian Cup qualifier against Hong Kong at home on March 1.

Bangladesh suffered a 5-0 defeat to Group F favourites Uzbekistan in the opener in Tashkent on Wednesday while Hong Kong went 3-0 down to Qatar.

Coach Diego Cruciani, whose aim was to concede as fewer goals as possible against the eighth-ranked Asian side, was reportedly disappointed over the team performance.

Cruciani, serving a two-match provisional ban by the Asian Football Confederation (AFC), had to watch the match from the gallery and he thinks that his boys forgot the manual.

"The coach is unhappy because they made silly mistakes which cost us at least three goals. Otherwise it would have been a 2-0 loss for us. We knew we were not going to win but 2-0 would have been an acceptable result," told manager Sayeed Hasan Kanan yesterday.

SEE PAGE 13 COL 1

'Sourav has to sort it out'

Cricket

PTI, New Delhi

Former Indian cricket captain Sourav Ganguly must sort out his standing with the Indian team. The news of Ganguly being dropped is hitting the headlines too often. It does not do any good to his cricket as well to Indian cricket.

A senior player like him should meet the selectors and few senior cricketers to get a good picture on his utility to the side. He cannot be treated like Gautam Gambhir, who could be dropped disdainfully and picked at the same time.

If Ganguly should be matured enough and meet the people concerned, the decision makers should also come out saying how much cricket is left in Ganguly. The whole thing is leaving a bad taste in the mouth.

We need to take a leaf out of Australian and English cricket to know how to handle such issues.

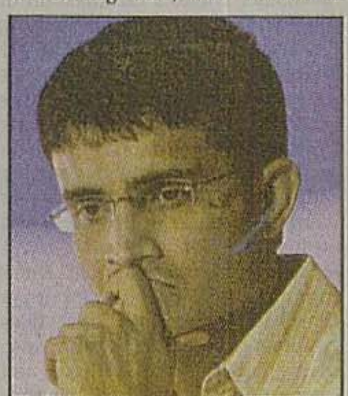
Selection of Indian team for the first Test against England did not throw up any surprise. Ajit Agarkar and Zaheer Khan, were obviously overlooked to accommodate youngsters like Sri Sreesanth the VRV Singh. In my opinion, the only way for Zaheer to get back in the team is to bowl at an average speed of 135 kmph.

Though Munaf Patel may consider himself a bit unlucky, VRV

Singh could be the answer for Indian pace requirements. Six and half foot tall, he possesses all the ingredients of a true fast bowler. Since spinners usually call the shots here, it would be interesting to see who partners Irfan Pathan with the new ball against England.

England, despite suffering a humiliating defeat against Pakistan, continue to enjoy the status of heavyweights in the forthcoming series against India. They earned this status after winning the Ashes in the home series last summer.

At the backdrop of that colossal win, which was a hard earned and deserving one, the defeat in



SOURAV GANGULY

Pakistan could be construed as Englishmen's irrational fear of many things on Pakistan soil,

England, while analysing the Indian team, would consider India's recent mix results in Pakistan as well as their reasonable success in the previous tour of India.

What perhaps worry England is not their batsmen struggling on Indian wickets but their bowlers' inability to contain the home team batsmen from scoring huge runs. The first casualties on the subcontinent wickets are always the fast bowlers. The hot and humid conditions along with lifeless tracks can make them feel negative and paranoid about things around them.

Lack of success could sow the seeds of injuries, sickness, moaning and complaining. With all these things being a possibility, England's preparations, particularly for this tour, is noteworthy.

Troy Cooley, now the name behind the success of English bowlers, admitted that the tour of India would be his greatest challenge. In fact, he wants to finish his contract with the ECB after trying his skills and luck on this tour.

Troy is not new to India. He has had a few stints under Dennis Lillee at the MRF Pace Foundation. Most of his belief comes from Dennis Lillee's understanding of bowling sciences.

Only last month, as a part of the preparation for the Indian tour, Troy did bring a few ECB contracted bowlers to MRF to acclimatise

SEE PAGE 13 COL 5

Murali & co arrive

SPORTS REPORTER

Six Sri Lankan cricketers including champion spinner Muttiah Muralitharan arrived in Dhaka yesterday to join the visiting Test team.

After a more-than-six-hours transit at the Zia International Airport, the Lankans flew for Chittagong where the first Test will begin on February 28.

Among the players to depart at the end of the one-day series is star batsman Sanath Jayasuriya.

TEST SQUAD

Mahela Jayawardene (captain), Kumar Sangakkara (vice-captain), Upul Tharanga, Michael Vandort, Tillakaratne Dilshan, Chamara Kapugedera, Prasanna Jayawardene, Muttiah Muralitharan, Malinga Bandara, Farveez Maharoof, Dammika Prasad, Lasith Malinga, Dilhara Fernando, Thilan Samaraweera and Sajeewa Weerakoon.

PCB eager to have Ahmed for Eng tour

PTI, Islamabad

Banned pacer Shabbir Ahmed on Friday returned to a rehabilitation camp as Pakistan Cricket Board is keen on getting his action cleared from the ICC ahead of the England tour following doubts over the fitness of speedster Shoaib Akhtar, Umar Gul and Navedul Hasan.

Shabbir, who was banned for 12 months last December, and ICC Bowling Action Review Group (BRG) also rejected his appeal last month, joined the camp in Lahore under the supervision of former Test pacer Sarfraz Nawaz.

"Obviously, with Shoaib Akhtar's situation not clear and with doubts over the fitness of Umar Gul (back problem) and that of Navedul Hasan (shoulder injury), we are looking at the possibility of having Shabbir available for the England tour. If the ICC clears his action he could be a very important bowler in the English conditions," a PCB official was quoted as saying by the News.

Despite ICC's BRG has rejected his appeal once, PCB has the option of filing another appeal because of which it extended Sarfraz's contract for another three months to help the young bowler modify and correct his action.

The official said the PCB was looking at filing another appeal on behalf of Shabbir sometime in May while the England tour is slated to start in June.

"Until then we've ample time to work on his action. He'll also be sent to Australia for final biomechanics tests before his action is reviewed by the ICC," the official said.

Shabbir, who has taken 51 wickets in 10 Tests and 33 in 32 One-day internationals, has remained Pakistan's one of the most potent bowlers until he was reported twice for a suspect bowling action last year -- in the West Indies and then after the first Test against England at Multan.

Advantage Rajshahi

ISPAHANI MIRZAPORE TEA 7th National Cricket League

SPORTS REPORTER

One-day leaders Rajshahi looked set to stay on top of the first-class table as well when they took the driving seat on the first day of their four-day match in the Ispahani Seventh National Cricket League yesterday.

Having bowled out hosts Barisal for a modest 168 in the first innings, the visitors wiped out 134 of those runs at cost of three wickets at stumps on the opening day.

Joint-leaders Dhaka also saw their opposition from Sylhet fold for 203 but the home side's reply was not satisfactory as they were reduced to 30-2 at close of play at the Sher-e-Bangla Stadium in Mirpur.

Away at the Khulna Divisional Stadium, the hosts lost the last six wickets for 13 runs to lose the initiative against Chittagong after a pair of centuries by Nazmus Sadat and Sahagir Hossain had put them in control.

RAJSHAHI-BARISAL

After Rajshahi opted to field first, the pace bowlers dominated the

show by booking the home side on the stroke of tea. Alamgir Kabir led the pack with three wickets while Shafaq Al Jabir and Mushfiqur Rahman each chipped in with two as Barisal lost batsmen at regular intervals in the 53.4-over essay. However, the only spinner used by Rajshahi -- Kamrul Islam -- returned with the best figures of 3-29 from 8.4 overs.

Number seven Nafiq Chowdhury was the only player to show some resistance during a quickfire 45 off 48 balls featuring six fours and one six.

Rajshahi, who began their innings in the final session, were reduced to 11-3 by the fifth over but Farhad Hossain (46 batting) and Nayeem Islam (77 batting) repaired the damage adding 118 runs for the unconquered fourth wicket. Nayeem was particularly harsh on the opposition attack, smashing 17 boundaries in his 92-ball knock.

DHAKA-SYLHET

Smarting over a one-wicket loss in the limited-overs fixture on the previous day, Dhaka used six seamers on a green-top wicket and five of them bagged at least one wicket to bowl out Sylhet in 69 overs.

Hero of the one-day victory with the ball, Rezaul Haque topscored 64 against a hostile home pace attack. His three-hour vigil was studded with ten boundaries in 112 deliveries. Talha Jubair was the pick of Dhaka attack with 3-53.

Uttam Kumar and Kamrul Islam were the two Dhaka batsmen to return to the pavilion, leaving Anwar Hossain (11) and night-watchman Anwar Munir (0) at stumps.

KHULNA-CHITTAGONG

Opener Nazmus Sadat made 103 off 169 balls (4x15) and number four Sahagir Hossain 101 from 151 deliveries (4x13) during a 140-run stand for the third wicket as Khulna headed for a massive total.

But comfortably placed at 223-2, they ended with just 292 on the board in their first innings as Chittagong off-spinner Sabbir

SEE PAGE 13 COL 5



Sylhet's Rana Mia goes on the front foot to play a cover-drive during his side's National Cricket League match against Dhaka at the Mirpur Stadium on Friday.

England not panicked yet

Cricket

AFP/REUTERS, Vadodara

England will not be asking for immediate reinforcements ahead of next week's Test series against India despite the 16-man touring squad being wrecked with injuries and illness.

Captain Michael Vaughan was given a cortisone injection to speed up the recovery of a recurring knee injury in time for the first of three back-to-back Tests starting in Nagpur on March 1.

Star batsman Kevin Pietersen is suffering from a back strain, fast bowler Simon Jones and off-spinner Shaun Udal are recovering from stomach bugs and all-rounder Paul Collingwood has been afflicted with a backspasm.

With just five days to go for the first Test, England are in danger of not being able to field 11 fit men, but coach Duncan Fletcher refused to panic.

"We can't make a decision over replacements just yet, we have to give

it some more time," Fletcher said on Friday.

"Simon Jones could wake up and be fine in two days, while if the injection works, Vaughan could be alright by next week. We'll just have to fiddle things about for the moment."

Vaughan remains in serious doubt for the first Test, just as he was in Pakistan late last year when the knee injury flared up in a practice match at the start of the tour.

The England captain missed the one-dayers in Pakistan to have his third surgery in six years on his right knee in December.

The 31-year-old was forced to sit out of the ongoing three-day match against the Indian Board President's XI here and team doctor Peter Gregory hoped the cortisone injection will work wonders.

"It's got to be a concern when your captain can't play in the match before the first Test, but he has a chance for next week," Gregory said.

"A jab normally starts to work after 48 hours, but you can't expect the full effect for about two weeks."

Vaughan said he would have to wait 48 hours to see if his injured knee

has improved sufficiently for him to play in the first Test. He had light nets on Friday to test the troublesome injury.

"I had a light net session today to test out the knee," he said. "It is still too early to say whether the injection has had an effect."

"We'll just have to wait and see if it responds over the next 48 hours," he told reporters.

He was later seen wearing an ice-pack and a team spokesman said Vaughan's prospects for playing the first Test would be assessed after the three-day game ends on Saturday.

Pietersen, 25, retired hurt for 47 after injuring his back on Thursday. See page 13 coldest despite being strapped up on the field by team physiotherapist Kirk Russell.

"He just tweaked it and we took him off as a precautionary measure," said Fletcher. "I hope it gets better in the next couple of days."

"We wanted to make sure it didn't get any worse before the first Test."

England will play three Tests and seven one-day internationals during the two-month tour.



Indian Board President's XI opener Gautam Gambhir hits a boundary on way to scoring a century on the second day of their three-day practice match against England in Vadodara on Friday.