



Did U Know?

Brett Lee of Australia took 5 for 69 in the first innings of the second Test against South Africa. It was the seventh time that he has taken five wickets or more, second against South Africa.

What to WATCH

DD National

India vs England
1st ODI
Live at 9:30 am

TEN Sports

Sri Lanka vs Pakistan
First Test, Day Three
Live at 10:30 am

ESPN

New Zealand vs West Indies
3rd Test, Day Four
Live at 4:30 am

South Africa vs Australia
2nd Test, Day Five
Live at 2:00 pm

UEFA Champions League
Arsenal vs Juventus
Live at 12:30 am (Wednesday)

STAR Sports

UEFA Champions League
Benfica vs Barcelona
Live at 12:30 am (Wednesday)



Rajin Saleh

(Bangladesh batsman)
"No doubt it is my best innings because the first century is always special. I was included in the playing side after a five-match gap, that's why I tried my best and thankfully I was successful."
After scoring an unbeaten 108 against Kenya in the fourth and final ODI.

Third day abandoned

AFP, Napier

Rain and a wet outfield forced match officials to abandon all play on the third day of the third and final cricket Test between New Zealand and the West Indies here Monday.

The Napier region has been hit by rain for the past week turning parts of the McLean Park outfield into a sodden mess.

The West Indies are currently 256 for four with Runako Morton on 70 and Dwayne Bravo on 22.

Because of rain and poor light disruptions, only 78.1 overs have been bowled so far in the Test and with further rain forecast it is unlikely to produce a result.

New Zealand lead the three-match series 2-0.

Sania to lead India

PTI, New Delhi

Sania Mirza will lead India's campaign in the Fed Cup women's team tennis competition to be played in Seoul, Korea, next month.

Shikha Uberoi, Ankita Bhambri and Isha Lakhani are the other members of the team that will be captained by Enrico Piperno, All India Tennis Association said in a release today.

Hosts Korea, Australia, Chinese Taipei, New Zealand, Philippines and Uzbekistan are the other teams in the fray in the Asia-Oceania Group 1 zonal qualification tie.

Sania was included in the team but did not play a match as she recovered from an ankle injury last year when the competition was held in Delhi.



National Cricket League's one-day and first-class champions Rajshahi team.

PHOTO: STAR

Rajshahi's delightful double



SPORTS REPORTER

Rajshahi Division's pensive 24-hour wait was finally over yesterday afternoon when Chittagong crashed to a six-wicket defeat against Barisal only to confirm their maiden first-class title on the final day of the Ispahani Seventh National Cricket League.

Rajshahi, who recorded a ten-wicket win over outgoing champions Dhaka with a day in hand in the four-day match on Sunday, became the first team to complete a rare double by winning both the one-day and four-day trophies in one season.

Rajshahi ended on 40 points after six outright wins from ten rounds while runners-up Chittagong, who had a two-point lead after nine rounds, finished with 36 points. Chittagong also finished runners-up in the limited-overs competition by virtue of a better net run-rate after finishing on equal 12 points with Dhaka.

The victory in the tenth round

gave Barisal third place -- their best finish ever in the league -- with 33 points while Khulna, who lost to Sylhet by nine wickets, were bottom of the table with 15, 13 points adrift of Dhaka and Sylhet.

CHITTAGONG-BARISAL
Set to score 145 to win, Barisal lost their third wicket with the addition of only nine runs to their overnight 39-2 in the final morning at the Barisal Stadium. But that was all the excitement Chittagong could produce in a bid to keep their slim title hopes alive as the home side coasted to the target before lunch.

Nasiruddin Faruque, who resumed the day on nought, saw the side home with a responsible 45 not out but it was Marshall Ayub whose cameo unbeaten 17-ball 32 that finished the match just inside 27 overs on the day.

Hannan Sarkar, who scored a century in the Barisal first innings, was adjudged man-of-the-match for his captain's knock.

SYLHET-KHULNA
At the Rajshahi Divisional Stadium, Sylhet also wrapped up victory inside a session when they rattled 151 for one in 19.5 overs after

dismissal Khulna for 231.

Overnight 198-8, Khulna batted another 12 overs before being bundled out, setting the opposition a simple 151-run target. Both the wickets went to Hasibul Hossain, who followed up his first-innings 5-79 with 5-57 in the second for his second ten-wicket haul in the competition. The former national pacer also claimed highest 49 wickets including six 5-wicket hauls in this season's first-class league.

Golam Rahman made a run-a-ball 63 not out and Imtiaz Hossain smashed 61 off 54 balls during a 134-run opening stand to help Sylhet notch their fourth outright win.

Sylhet's one-day batsman Golam Mabud, not out on 16, took the man-of-the-match award for his 122 in the first innings.

SCORES IN BRIEF
CHITTAGONG: 266 and 259
BARISAL: 381 and 145-4 in 32.4 overs (Imran 20, Bashar 10, Faruque 45 n.o., Shahin 26, Marshall 26 n.o., Yasin 1-42, Ilias 1-34, Dhiman 1-39).

SEE PAGE 13 COL 1

Akhmedov for lively football

SPORTS REPORTER

Indian youth coach Islam Akhmedov hopes his young side would make a semifinal appearance in next month's AFC Challenge Cup in Bangladesh, according to the AFC website.

The All India Football Federation (AIFF) has decided to send its youth team for the 16-nation meet in order to give them exposure ahead of the AFC Youth Championship at home in October-November.

The Uzbekistan coach feels that his talented youngsters are ready to give any opponents a tough time.

"I think it will be very difficult for us to win the tournament as the players are very young. They are good but tend to be inconsistent and that is the only thing I am worried about. I am sure on our day, we can beat any team," he told.

"We would be very happy if we

SEE PAGE 13 COL 1

Alo returns with team

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladeshi shooter Towfiqur Rahman Alo, who was arrested in Melbourne on Saturday during the 18th Commonwealth Games for sexually harassing a 24-year-old Australian girl at the Games Village,



TOWFIQUR RAHMAN

was expected to return home with the contingent in the early hours today.

Alo was bailed out but he was summoned to the court on Monday. It was learned that Alo, found guilty, was fined 1,000 Australian dollars for his misdemeanour.

"We are shocked," said Bangladesh Shooting Federation general secretary Nazimuddin Chowdhury to the Daily Star yesterday on phone.

"We have heard that he has been fined and was returning home with the team. It means he was found guilty. He is a senior shooter and never before has he been accused of something like this," stated Nazimuddin.

"We are going to take severe action against him if he is guilty. But we have to wait for the team manager's reports and his version. The federation will act according to its rules."

"It is a prestige issue for the whole community and we cannot just sit back," he added.

It was the second incident at the Games that rocked Bangladesh contingent after athlete Towhidul Islam fled the camp.

Sachin admitted to hospital

PTI, London

Star cricketer Sachin Tendulkar was admitted to the Hospital of St. John and St. Elizabeth here on Monday for undergoing a shoulder surgery.

The surgery will be done by Dr. Andrew Wallace who had earlier successfully performed an operation to cure the master batsman of tennis elbow.

Suzi Butler, a spokeswoman for the hospital, confirmed that Tendulkar had been admitted to the hospital today but said no other information would be given to the media for the moment.

"In line with the hospital's policy to protect the privacy of all of its patients, no one will be allowed access into the building or to interview Sachin Tendulkar," she said in a statement.

Tendulkar has been ruled out of the seven match one-day series against England commencing tomorrow because of the injury, diagnosed as a posterior labrum tear of the right shoulder with an associated para-labral cyst.

The champion batsman had been experiencing problems in throwing since the Test series against Sri Lanka last December. The problem aggravated of late, necessitating the surgery.

Tendulkar, who holds the record for scoring the maximum number of centuries in Tests (35) and one-days (39), was earlier sidelined for six months after undergoing surgery for the tennis elbow in May 2005.

Hosts ready for AFC challenge

SPORTS REPORTER



Challenge Cup begins here next week.

"We are proud that the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) has chosen Bangladesh as hosts of a very big event. I can assure you that when the inaugural edition of the tournament involving the emerging nations of Asia begins everything will be perfectly in order," said Fazlur Rahman yesterday at a press briefing at the BFF Bhaban.

Rahman, also the co-chairman of the local organising committee, informed that major renovation works of Bangabandhu National Stadium, one of two venues for the 16-nation meet, have been completed.

"You will find everything ready on the morning of April 1 and I hope the guests will enjoy new facilities at the Bangabandhu National Stadium which will be able to host a capacity 36,000 crowd," assured the sports minister.

AFC vice-president and FIFA development officer Monilal Fernando, who is leading an

advanced party to see the progress of preparation, said that FIFA president Sepp Blatter will grace the opening ceremony of the biggest football festival to be held in Bangladesh since the Asian Youth Championship way back in 1978.

Blatter will arrive in Dhaka on Friday night from Zurich by his personal jet while AFC chief Mohammad Bin Hammam will arrive on the same morning from Doha. Blatter is expected to call on President Dr. Prof Iajuddin Ahmed

Saturday morning.

However, it has yet to be decided who would open the 16-nation meet.

The visit of Blatter is important for other reasons too.

"The FIFA president will discuss about the second goal project to be given to Bangladesh. He will also hand over the tsunami fund donation for structures to be built in coastal areas in Cox's Bazar and Barisal," Monilal told adding that the AFC will spend about 2.5 million

SEE PAGE 13 COL 1



AFC vice-president Monilal Fernando (L) addresses a press briefing in connection with the AFC Challenge Cup at the BFF Bhaban in the city on Monday. State Minister for Youth & Sports Fazlur Rahman (2nd L) is also seen.

PHOTO: STAR

Sehwag boost for India



AFP, New Delhi

Under-pressure India enjoyed a timely boost when aggressive opener Virender Sehwag was declared fit for the opening one-day against a resurgent England in the capital on Tuesday.

Already without world record-holder Sachin Tendulkar, India were in danger of losing both regular openers after Sehwag suffered back spasms during the third and final Test against the tourists at Mumbai.

Sehwag finally batted at number seven in the second innings at Mumbai, where England posted a crushing 212-run victory to square the series 1-1 last week despite missing key players.

The hard-hitting batsman, with 4,220 runs in 141 matches, also missed three one-dayers in Pakistan last month due to a shoulder injury.

His opening partner, Tendulkar, has been ruled out of the seven-

match series due also to a shoulder problem. Tendulkar is the world's leading run-getter in one-dayers -- 14,146 with a record 39 centuries.

"He (Sehwag) went through the practice drills and did everything that was expected of him. He has looked pretty good so far and he should be fit to play," Indian skipper Rahul Dravid said on the eve of the match.

"But losing Tendulkar is tough. He did a great job for us in Pakistan. It is not only his batting but also his bowling that has been an important part of the team over the years."

Sehwag returns to the squad just when India need an improved performance from their batsmen to tackle Andrew Flintoff's Englishmen in a series they need to win to keep intact an impressive record.

India have not lost the last three one-day series, but their batting pride was severely dented by a disciplined England attack in the Tests. The worst came at Mumbai when they were shot out for 100 in the second innings.

"Our top-order batsmen have not done well in Tests, but they have been performing well in one-dayers," said Dravid.

"The 2007 World Cup (in the West Indies) is our goal. There is going to be a few ups and downs. But we have a few youngsters who have done well for us recently and the next eight months will provide them the experience."

The Indian captain said he expected stiff resistance from England.

"They are a very good fielding side and they have played very good cricket in the Test series," he admitted.

England captain Flintoff was all praise for his youngsters in the Test series in the absence of senior players.

"Events in Mumbai were fantastic and we are now looking forward to the one-day series," he said.

"Young players have come in and done a great job in the absence of senior cricketers. They have shown the strength of character. We

SEE PAGE 13 COL 8

Asif helps Pak gain edge



AFP, Colombo

Paceman Mohammad Asif and spinner Danish Kaneria shared seven wickets as Pakistan dominated the second day of the first Test against Sri Lanka here on Monday.

Asif bagged 4-41 and leg-spinner Kaneria 3-44 to help dismiss Sri Lanka for a meagre 185 in overcast conditions.

Pakistan were 124-4 in reply with skipper Inzamam-ul Haq (30) and Abdul Razzaq (one) the not out batsmen after opener Imran Farhat produced a stroke-filled knock of 69 with 13 fours.

But the day belonged to their bowlers. Asif grabbed three scalps in the first session and Kaneria found success in the second to seize the initiative for Pakistan, who elected to field after the first day was washed out.

Sri Lanka looked set for even worse but a determined century stand between Tillakaratne Dilshan (69) and Farveez Maharoof (46) pulled them out of deep trouble.

Dilshan and Maharoof added 111 for the sixth wicket after seamers Asif and Umar Gul struck telling early blows. Dilshan continued his fine form, striking 10 boundaries during his seventh half-century.

Dilshan, who scored 48 not out and 46 in his only two innings of a preceding three-match one-day series that Pakistan won 2-0, found good company in Maharoof who struck six fours.

Both batsmen were caught by Younis Khan in the slips.

Maharoof slashed at a ball from Asif and was caught at second slip. Dilshan followed him soon after when he edged a ball from Kaneria, who was bowling round the stumps.

Earlier, Asif struck in the first over

of the match when he trapped opener Upul Tharanga (zero) leg-before with his fourth delivery and then bowled another left-hander Kumar Sangakkara (eight) with a ball that came in sharply.

Thilan Samaraweera (four) was bowled shouldering arms to Asif and

with Gul striking twice, Sri Lanka were reduced to 32-5.

Gul bowled veteran opener Sanath Jayasuriya (six) and then Mahela Jayawardene fished outside the off stump to give him his second wicket.

SEE PAGE 13 COL 2



Australian captain Ricky Ponting is about to play a shot off Nicky Boje on the fourth day of the second Test against South Africa at Kingsmead in Durban on Monday.

PHOTO: AFP



Pakistan fast bowler Mohammad Asif bowls on the second day of the first Test against Sri Lanka in Colombo on Monday.

PHOTO: AFP