



Did U Know?

Australian captain Ricky Ponting scored 118 not out from 253 balls in the second innings of the first Test against Bangladesh. It was his thirty first century, first against Bangladesh.



TALK TURKEY



Shahid Afridi
(Pakistan all-rounder)

"There is too much cricket and you don't get time to spend with your family. Now in the next year I will spend time with my family and focus on one-day cricket."

While announcing his brief retirement from Test cricket.

What to WATCH

BTV & STAR Sports

Bangladesh vs Australia
2nd Test, Day One
Live at 10:00 am

BTV & BTV World

AFC Challenge Cup
FINAL
Sri Lanka vs Tajikistan
Live at 3:30 pm

ESPN

South Africa vs New Zealand
1st Test, Day Two
Live at 1:30 pm

STAR Sports

English Premier Football League
Aston Villa vs Birmingham City
Live at 5:00 pm
Blackburn Rovers vs Liverpool
Live at 7:25 pm

DAY'S EVENT

Bangladesh vs Australia
2nd Test, Day One
Venue: Chittagong Divisional Stadium
AFC Challenge Cup
FINAL
Sri Lanka vs Tajikistan (3:30pm)
Venue: Bangabandhu National Stadium

Lara to become captain again

BBC ONLINE, undated

Brian Lara is in line to become West Indies captain for the third time in his amazing career.

The record-breaking batsman is one of six players in contention to replace Shivnarine Chanderpaul, who quit after year in charge earlier this week.

The other players in the frame are wicketkeeper Denesh Ramdin, Chris Gayle, Daren Ganga, Sylvester Joseph and vice-captain Ramnareesh Sarwan.

Selectors say they expect to announce Chanderpaul's successor on Sunday.

"Ultimately we are looking for a leader on and off the field of play," said Chairman of selectors Joey Carew.

"We are looking toward the 2007 World Cup and trying to find a man who can take on the challenge of leading the West Indies to a World Cup triumph at home."

Chanderpaul resigned on Tuesday, winning just one of the 14 Tests he contested.

He had replaced Lara, who was captain from February 1998 to late 1999 and again from April 2003 to

2nd Test will be harder: Dav

BISHWAJIT ROY from Chittagong



CricketPhone
Lanka Test at Bangladesh

It might not be an exaggeration to say that Australia are a wounded side following the stern challenge that Bangladesh handed them in the first Test.

The heroic performance by the Tigers brought out a number of flaws and shortcomings of Australia in the Test at Fatullah.

There was no doubt that Bashar and his boys touched on a number of sore points in the Australian game and Ponting and co will be eager to come down hard on the Tigers to preserve their aura of invincibility.

Bangladesh coach Dav Whatmore was fully aware of Australia's vicious comeback which they had showcased on numerous occasions and said that this would make the second Test a bigger challenge.

"The second Test is probably going to be a little harder than the one in Dhaka because we gave them a scare and nearly won it. They're gonna come back pretty hard and it'll be a bigger Test for us," said the Sri Lankan-born Australian at a press conference yesterday.

"So we have got to guard against that and we need to forget everything that has happened in the first Test and go ahead and repeat as much of what we did well, which is

the batting," he added.

"If you are enjoying what you do then it co-relates very strongly into doing well into whatever you are doing and in our case it's cricket. So the boys need to enjoy this experience, enjoy playing Test match cricket which they showed in the first match," he said.

Captain Habibur Bashar also echoed his coach's sentiment.

"I don't think Australia took us lightly in the first match. Maybe because we played well in that game, people are now suggesting these things. As far as we are concerned we are not bothered with what Australia is thinking. I firmly believe that if we can play as good as we can, we can be very competitive in this Test too," said a confident Bashar.

The 33-year-old Tigers skipper was also not ready to take the fatigue issue into account behind the Australians' poor show in the first Test.

"We did not have a break also. We completed the series against Sri Lanka and then headed straight into the one-dayers against Kenya."

"We have to start and think afresh. The last Test is over. There have been many positives to come out of it and we will go with those positives into the second match. But we have to show that in the field. They are the number one so there is always extra motivation when you play against them," he added.

Bashar also said that the hot and humid conditions in the port city would play into their hands.

The skipper however lamented Enamul Haque's injury and also hoped that the fall would contribute more this time.

"Enamul has an injury with his bowling finger but we will wait till the last moment to see if he recovers."

Replying to a question Bashar said that there has been a change in the off-field relationship with the Australians.

"We haven't met them too much since the first Test but we came in the same flight. The relationship is not bad but there has been a change and that has happened in both camps," said Bashar with a satisfying smile.

TEAMS

BANGLADESH (from): Javed Omar, Shahriar Nafees, Habibur Bashar (captain), Rajin Saleh, Mohammad Ashraf, Aftab Ahmed, Khaled Mashud, Nafees Iqbal, Alok Kapali, Mohammad Rafique, Mashrafe Bin Mortaza, Shahadat Hossain, Enamul Haque, Syed Rasel and Abdur Razzak.

AUSTRALIA (from): Matthew Hayden, Mike Hussey, Ricky Ponting (captain), Damien Martyn, Michael Clarke, Andrew Symonds, Adam Gilchrist, Jason Gillespie, Mitchell Johnson, Stuart Clarke, Stuart MacGill, Nathan Bracken and Daniel Cullen.

'We'll bowl, bat better'

SPORTS REPORTER from Chittagong



CricketPhone
Lanka Test at Bangladesh

Australia captain Ricky Ponting, still haunted by Bangladesh's dominance in the first two days of the first Test, was confident of a better showing this time around.

"Australia will attempt to bowl and bat better than the first two days in Dhaka, we are looking forward to the second Test," said the Aussie skipper following his side's brief training session at the Divisional Stadium here yesterday.

The 31-year old skipper, who smashed a brilliant match-winning hundred in the first game to avert their worst defeat since the Ashes surrender, however, said that Bangladesh will go into the match with confidence.

"Bangladesh will take a lot of confidence from the performance of the first Test. But we will be a fresh side tomorrow as we have been resting at the hotel for the last two

days," he said.

The pitch at the Fatullah Stadium surprised many as it held together even on the fifth day, so the Chittagong pitch has become the subject of much debate.

"Having seen the wicket today I would say it is going to take more spin than Dhaka," observed Ponting.

"We will have to wait until we see (Shane) Warne bowl to determine

the team," he said when asked about the maestro's chances to make the team.

Australia team manager Steve Bernard said that his side would not take Bangladesh lightly in the second Test.

"I think we'll be wary of them because they have proved to be a pretty good team and they have some good players. If the last Test is any indication we expect this one to be hard," Bernard told reporters, also stating that they had done some video homework on the Bangladeshi players.

"We didn't have any footage of them last time to have a look at. But most of these guys were in Cardiff last year so they are aware that Bangladesh were quite capable on their day of causing an upset."

"This time around we've seen a little more footage of them playing and that has made it a little bit easier for us to do some preparation," said Bernard admitting that most of the Tigers players were an unknown quantity and the Aussies were in a way "learning as we go along."

Test tickets available in Ctg

SPORTS REPORTER

Tickets for the second Test between Bangladesh and Australia are available at all branches of the City Bank Limited in Chittagong.

Tickets will also be sold from the counters at the Divisional Stadium in the port city before and during the match.

Young Indians crush Eng

Cricket

REUTERS, Indore

A sparkling 86 by debutant Robin Uthappa guided India to a seven-wicket victory over England in the seventh and final one-day international on Saturday.

The hosts won the series 5-1. The fifth match was washed out.

Uthappa, a 20-year-old opener, hit 12 boundaries and a six as India chased down a challenging target of 289.

He shared in a 166-run opening wicket stand with skipper Rahul Dravid, who made a controlled 69 for his 70th ODI fifty.

England had posted 288 after a commanding 64 by Kevin Pietersen and supporting half centuries by Paul Collingwood (64) and Geraint Jones (53) after the touring side were asked to bat.

India fast bowler Shanthakumaran Sreesanth took six for 55.

When the home side batted, in-form Yuvraj Singh (63) and Suresh Raina (53) scored half centuries and put on 115 for the third wicket.

Yuvraj, who recorded his 23rd fifty, clinched India's victory with five balls to spare. India beat Pakistan 4-1 in a one-day series in February.

Uthappa began confidently and chose paceman James Anderson for special treatment, pulling him for six and hitting two fours in the same over.

Dravid was content to play second fiddle, driving and cutting nine boundaries.

The openers, both suffering from cramp, fell at the same score of 166. Uthappa was run out, failing to ground his bat at the wicket-keeper's end on the second run after driving left-arm spinner Ian Blackwell forcefully to Anderson at long-off.

Fast bowler Sajid Mahmood dismissed Dravid lbw the following over, the first of his second spell.

Yuvraj, named man of the series, hit six fours while also crossing 4,000 ODI runs.

Raina notched up his third half-

century before being bowled by paceman Kabir Ali while giving the charge.

Sreesanth struck twice early before Pietersen, who hit 111 runs and a six in a fine display of power and timing, triggered a recovery.

Pietersen, recording his third fifty of the series, took the pressure off in a two-over blitz.

He hit fast bowler Vikram Rajvir Singh for four fours and a six in one

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India's young paceman Shanthakumaran Sreesanth (C) celebrates taking the wicket of England's Matt Prior (L) during the seventh and final ODI at Indore on Saturday.



FLY FLY AWAY: Bangladesh players stretch during a training session at the Chittagong Divisional Stadium on Saturday. The second and final Test between Bangladesh and Australia begin here today.

MSC, Brothers play AFC Cup ties Tuesday

SPORTS REPORTER

Local giants Mohammedan Sporting Club and Brothers Union will be engaged in international commitment when they play home and away matches in the AFC Cup on Tuesday.

National League champions Mohammedan leave Dhaka today for Jordan to play their opening Group C match against Al Wihdat. This is the only group where two teams are competing for a berth in the quarter-finals.

It would be Wihdat's debut in the continental competitions after winning the league title nine times including back-to-back victories in 2004 and 2005.

In Group A, Federation Cup and Dhaka League winners Brothers host Al Ahd of Lebanon at the Bangabandhu National Stadium. Brothers, bottom of the four-team group with one point, lost to Bahrain's Al Muharrag 2-0 in the opener and drew 2-2 with India's Mahindra United at home last month.

The Lebanese club are expected to arrive in Dhaka today.

Cruciani likely to take over U-23s soon

SPORTS REPORTER

National coach Diego Cruciani is expected to take charge of the under-23 team soon to prepare them for the SA Games in Colombo this year.

After Bangladesh's premature exit from the ongoing AFC Challenge Cup following a 6-1 crushing to eventual finalists Tajikistan, there were rumours that the coach would be homebound.

But the National Team Management Committee is eager to give the Argentine coach a chance to fulfil his one-year contract, which ends in mid-August. With the eight-nation SA Games to be held in September, the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) will have to renew the contract with Cruciani - which looks uncertain at this stage - to have him as coach during the competition.

The national team will go into action on August 16 when they host Qatar in the 2007 Asian Cup qualifiers in Dhaka. Cruciani, however, has been banned by the AFC for Bangladesh's remaining four qualifying round games.

It was learnt that the BFF is going to cut the coach's authority after his 'failure' despite enjoying absolute freedom in team selection.

Youth cricket's start delayed

BDNEWS, Dhaka

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) pushed back the kick-off of the 23rd national youth cricket tournament from April 17 to May 10.

"We would like to give the tournament a new look, for which we need money," coordinator of the tournament committee Ali Hossain told BDNEWS yesterday.

He revealed that a cell phone company has come up to sponsor the tournament. "We have been looking for sponsors. I think everything will be finalised before the new date," Ali Hossain added.

According to the BCB official, they are going to introduce longer-version of the game from the second round of the tournament.

Tajikistan-Sri Lanka final today

SPORTS REPORTER



Sri Lanka will carry South Asia's hopes to keep the inaugural AFC Challenge Cup in the region when they take on Tajikistan in the final today. The grand finale of the 16-nation tournament will kick-off at 3:30 pm at the Bangabandhu National Stadium.

The final will not only be a conflict of contrasting styles but also the first chance for both sides to triumph at continental level as they had never reached a final of a tournament of such magnitude.

Tajikistan, third-ranked in the competition and now favourites after exit of top seeds India and Palestine, have yet to win any trophy in their Central Asia neighbourhood after joining the Asian Football Confederation since the disbandment of the Soviet Union.

Underdogs Sri Lanka, however, tasted success at a smaller scale when they won the SAARC Gold Cup, the South Asian regional tournament, in 1995 at home.

Tajikistan, who grew up learning the tricks in European style, have lost one match - to Kyrgyzstan where the result had no effect on their qualification to the knockout phase - in the group stage but their opponents are still unbeaten.

Sri Lanka coach Sampath Perera is convinced his boys will show the good work in the final. "I know it's difficult because they are a very strong team. They have also beaten teams like Kyrgyzstan and

Bangladesh comfortably, and mind it they beat the hosts 6-1," said Perera, whose side played all their matches in Chittagong.

"We have come here as the best team from Chittagong and let's see what happens," said the 36-year-old Sri Lankan, a bit worried about change of conditions.

"Having played all our games in the port city, it could be a disadvantage to play the final in Dhaka. It's a new ground and the weather is different here. The opposition is already familiar to these but for us, it could take some time."

"So our strategy would not be the same as in Chittagong," added Perera, whose side eliminated

Nepal 5-3 in the tiebreaker after an absorbing 1-1 draw in the semifinal.

"We have included nine new players after losing all matches in the SAFF Championship in Pakistan last December. We now have a totally different team and the changes have been working. Senior players like captain Dudley, Izzadeen, Channa, Jayasuriya and specially goalkeeper Thilakartne, have been inspirational for the young ones," he added.

Sharif Nazarov's Tajikistan, who scored 14 goals in five games, have conceded just two goals and the 60-year-old coach will rely on his full firepower.

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TILL WE MEET AGAIN: Sri Lanka captain Dudley Steinwall (L) shakes hands with Tajikistan skipper Aslidin Khabibuloev as Sri Lanka coach Sampath Perera (2nd from L) and Tajik coach Sharif Nazarov look on after a press conference on Saturday ahead of their AFC Challenge Cup final.