



Bangladesh coach Dav Whatmore (L) holds up a cricket ball to illustrate a point as his charges look on during a training session at the Chittagong Divisional Stadium on Friday. The first ODI against Australia will be held at the same venue tomorrow.



Did U Know?

Shane Warne took 5/113 in the second innings of the second and final Test against Bangladesh at Chittagong Divisional Stadium. It was the thirty sixth time that he has taken five wickets or more in an innings, first against Bangladesh.

What to WATCH

- ESPN**
English Premier Football League
Arsenal vs Tottenham
Live at 5:40 pm
Newcastle vs West Brom
Live at 7:55 pm
- STAR Sports**
English Premier Football League
Everton vs Birmingham
Live at 7:55 pm
FA Cup



Bobby Charlton
(England football legend)
"I'm looking forward to the World Cup because I believe Wayne Rooney could be one of the major finds in world football."

Malik to undergo corrective surgery

Pakistan all-rounder Shoab Malik is to undergo a shoulder operation in South Africa next week to try to improve his suspect bowling action. The 24-year old has twice been reported due to problems caused by the after-effects of two road accidents which have limited the mobility of his arm extension. Malik, who has played in 15 Tests and 117 one-day internationals, has twice been reported in the last two years. "Malik's problem is that due to those two accidents his arm tendons

Ponting blasts schedule

Australian cricket captain Ricky Ponting has labelled the increasingly hectic international Test schedule "unacceptable" and has demanded more recovery time between matches. Ponting's side completed a 2-0 series clean sweep against Bangladesh Thursday but only after the Test minnows came close to a shock win in the first match against an out-of-form Australia. The Australian captain blamed the unconvincing performance on a punishing schedule that included three Tests in South Africa immediately before the Bangladesh series. "It has been an incredibly difficult last few months for us," Ponting said in remarks reported in the Australian media Friday. "The Test cricket has been quite demanding and the program has been very demanding. "We certainly have to have a

look at the amount of time between Tests. We played five in five weeks, and in pretty extreme conditions here. That is, as far as I am concerned, unacceptable." Ponting's frayed nerves were evident in the second Test in Chittagong, when he was fined 25 percent of his match fee for dissent when he disputed a not out decision that was subsequently overruled. He said more time was needed between Tests for the Australians to perform at their best. "We would like more time between the Test matches, that's the big thing," he said. "We just didn't have a break. A two-day break between Test matches we just played is nowhere near enough. I think we saw the effects of that on day one in the first Test in Dhaka. "We had guys who, if we were fair dinkum (honest), probably shouldn't have played. Shouldn't have taken the field because they were totally exhausted and fatigued." Cricket Australia chief executive James Sutherland defended the schedule earlier this week and said it was the players who wanted back-to-back series against South Africa and Bangladesh. "They wanted to get straight into it," he said. "They felt that they were in Test match mode and the appropriate course of action was to go straight there (Bangladesh) and get home sooner rather than later, so that people could enjoy a break then."



RICKY PONTING

Jonty set for Pak role

Pakistan are set to hire former South Africa international Jonty Rhodes on a short-term basis to help improve their fielding, the Pakistan Cricket Board said on Friday. "The Rhodes are good that we will get Rhodes on a short-term contract. We should be able to have him in Pakistan in May," a PCB official told Reuters, speaking on condition of anonymity. The 37-year-old Rhodes played 52 tests and 245 one-day internationals between 1992 and 2003 and is recognized as one of the most outstanding fielders in modern cricket. The official said that the aim was to get Rhodes on a short-term assignment to train the Pakistan senior and 'A' team players. "We want him working with our senior players before they tour England in June and then train our younger players at the National Cricket Academy," he added.

PCB worried about India overkill

each other too much and the marketing returns are lower when we first played in 2004." The Board of Control for Cricket in India recently sold media rights for a series of planned off shore games against Pakistan and other countries for 217 million dollars. The Abu Dhabi games were the first instalment of this package, though the proceeds were donated to the victims of last year's earthquake in Pakistan and India. "Every corner of the world wants to host India and Pakistan matches but for us finance is not the only consideration," Shaharyar said. "We will be very selective about our future matches with India at off shore venues. We have already told them we don't want to play at neutral venues in the year we play a bilateral series," he added. Pakistan are scheduled to tour India in 2007 for a full series after hosting their rivals this year. "Already we are playing against

Nat'l school soccer on

The banglalink Tiger Trophy school football tournament kicked off nationwide yesterday amidst a sea of goals. In Patuakhali, Gachanee High School XI beat Betagi High School by a 4-1 scoreline. Riden scored two goals and Ripon and Saiful bagged one each for the winners. In the other match of the day Government Boys School of Jhalakathi got a walkover as their opponents, Kakora MK High School failed to appear. There are 10 teams from 5 districts taking part in the Barisal Division of the tournament. Over in Mymensingh, the inaugural match of the day saw Islamia Government High School beat Ramizuddin Cantonment School and College by a 5-0 scoreline.

StanChart nat'l school cricket

Kurmitola High School crushed Bangladesh Bank Adarsha High School by 251 runs in the second round match of the Standard Chartered Young Tigers Under-15 School Cricket tournament at Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium on Friday. Winning the toss, Kurmitola chose to bat first and piled up 346 runs losing all wickets in 49.5 overs. In reply, Bangladesh Bank Adarsha were bundled out for 95 runs in 37.3 overs.

MA JABBAR TENNIS BKSP rule the roost

Bangladesh Krira Sikkha Protisthan (BKSP) established their supremacy in the MA Jabbar Memorial Tennis Tournament by lifting titles of different events in Dhaka Friday. Tajmul Islam Robin of BKSP beat Delwar Hossain 6-1, 6-2 in the final to become champion in the boys' 16-years age group while Hasibul of BKSP was crowned champion in the boys' 13-year age-group defeating Arif Hossain from NTC. Ma Hi Ching was another BKSP talent to claim the girls' 16-years age-group title. Ho Jo Hosako and Ruma were the BKSP pair to snatch the women's team event beating Ha Hai Ching and Masuma. Meanwhile, Amol Roy and Ranjan Ram Raju also moved to the men's singles final.

South Asia's 2011 WC bid faces competition

The Pakistan Cricket Board said on Friday the joint South Asia bid to host the 2011 World Cup was facing stiff competition from Australia and New Zealand. Pakistan, India, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh submitted their bid on Thursday to the International Cricket Council (ICC) who had given them an extension from February in the deadline for the submission. "The ICC has acknowledged our bid but Australia and New Zealand are very keen to host the 2011 World Cup and are insisting it is their turn to stage the competition," a board spokesman told Reuters. Australia and New Zealand have jointly hosted the World Cup only once before in 1992. Pakistan and India last staged the tournament in 1996 with Sri Lanka. The spokesman said ICC Executive Board members would meet in Dubai on the April 30 to debate the two bids. England hosted the 1999 tournament and Southern Africa the 2003 edition. West Indies stages the event in 2007.

H'ball training ends

A month-long handball training camp ended on Thursday at Matiranga in Khagrachhari. Khagrachhari Zilla District Office organised the month-long camp for 12-16 years secondary school students from March 21 to April 20. More than 35 girls and boys participated and received training and were later handed out certificates.

BITS AND BOBS

Germany Parreira's choice

Brazil coach Carlos Alberto Parreira believes hosts Germany rather than his own team are favourites to win the World Cup. "I think Germany and Italy are just as much favourites as we are," he said in an interview with the Folha de Sao Paulo newspaper on Thursday. "In fact, I think Germany are bigger favourites. They've played in seven finals, including three in a row (1982, 1986 and 1990) and they have the fans on their side." Parreira added that his players had to forget about their celebrity status and work hard if they were to keep the trophy they won for a fifth time in 2002. "Talent is not enough at a World Cup. We have to have emotion, an amateur spirit, and play with our hearts," he said. "The players must forget that they are celebrities, with good contracts. We have to make them understand that here in Brazil, there are nearly 200 million fans. "People want Ronaldinho to do the same for us that he does for Barcelona, but they have to remember that we haven't seen him for eight months," said Parreira.

Makaay, Seedorf left out

Netherlands coach Marco van Basten has left Roy Makaay and Clarence Seedorf out of a 33-strong pre-World Cup squad named here on Friday. The former AC Milan and Holland striker will trim another ten names from the squad which will be announced definitively on May 15. Seedorf, currently a midfielder for AC Milan, has never been picked for the national team by van Basten but had harboured hopes of travelling to Germany for the June 9-July 9 tournament. Bayern Munich striker Makaay appears to have paid the price for his recent mediocre performances.

Kaka sponsors SuperPippo

Brazilian ace Kaka has told Italy boss Marcello Lippi to select teammate Pippo Inzaghi for the World Cup Finals. The striker hasn't appeared for the Azzurri in over two years and never during the reign of his former Juventus mentor Lippi. But Inzaghi has made a late push for a place on the German bound plane with a scintillating 2006 so far. "I believe that Inzaghi deserves

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A photograph taken through a magnifying glass shows an offer for the sale of tickets for the final of the FIFA 2006 World Cup in Berlin, on an internet auction site.

WC grounds will be ready on time

Grenada. "Of course we have a back-up plan in place and it is currently being reviewed by the ICC. That plan will only be implemented if absolutely necessary. At present, there is no one country that is being earmarked to 'take' matches currently assigned to another host venue. "If a decision were to be taken to relocate matches from one host venue to another, it could only be taken by the organisers. This is not a decision that can be made by anyone outside." Dehning explained that it was "critical to the overall success of the tournament, at this time every country is expected to meet its obligation to host matches. Each

Sachin on the recovery trail

Sachin Tendulkar's recovery from a shoulder operation is on track, the Indian board has announced. Tendulkar, who had surgery in London last month, is at the end of the second phase of a three-step rehabilitation which should take eight weeks in all. But although Tendulkar is progressing as expected, he is still likely to miss the one-day segment of India's tour of the West Indies, which starts on May 12. "He has progressed at a rate anticipated by both the surgeon and myself to this point," Niranjan Shah, the BCCI's secretary, said in a statement. "He will now move into phase three of his rehab program which will involve increasing further ranges of shoulder movement as well as commencing strengthening activities as tolerated." Tendulkar, 32, was reviewed by John Gloster, the Indian team's physio, three weeks after the operation. The BCCI stated that Tendulkar has continued to improve as far as his range of active movement, tissue healing, and day-to-day functions are concerned. It was also revealed that the level of pain felt by Tendulkar has decreased. The third and final phase runs up to May 1, after which Tendulkar is expected to begin batting practice with a light bat.



Australian spinner Brad Hogg is about to play a delivery during a practice session at the Chittagong Divisional Stadium on Friday.

Aussies value Ashes most

A Cricket Australia opinion poll has confirmed what has been evident Down Under since last September -- the Ashes loss to England hurt Australians more than any other sporting defeat. The survey of 1,200 sports fans conducted by pollsters NewsPoll found 63 percent regarded the Ashes as the nation's most coveted sporting trophy, well ahead of the nearest contender, football's World Cup, on eight percent. Cricket's World Cup was next on seven percent, followed by tennis' Davis Cup (six percent) and the Rugby World Cup on five percent. "When it comes to Australian team sporting prizes, it's clear that the public considers the Ashes to be the pinnacle," Cricket Australia chief executive James Sutherland