



Did U Know?

The World Cup (1958) took place for the first time without its founding father Jules Rimet. The Frenchman died in Paris on October 16, 1956 at the age of 83.



Jose Mourinho
(Chelsea football coach)
"I feel the career (Arsene) Wenger has behind him, he deserves to win the Champions League one day. I felt sorry."

Tendulkar the silent crusader

PTI, Chennai

Sachin Tendulkar is a silent crusader when it comes to charitable works undertaken by him. Reluctant at first to open up on this aspect of his life, lest it appears as a publicity hunting stunt, Tendulkar says he has been involved in humanitarian deeds since quite some time and would continue to do his bit to help the underprivileged. Successor to Dr. A P J Abdul Kalam in the Board of CARE Hospitals, Tendulkar says the hospital has been of great help to the needy, especially sportspersons of the state. "It was an honour for me when our President, Dr Abdul Kalam suggested my name to be in the Board of CARE Hospitals in Hyderabad in his place when he became the first citizen of India," said Tendulkar.

Tendulkar has been instrumental in the hospital taking care of total expenses for treatment of even state level sportsmen and women. "This includes even by-pass surgeries, besides different problems faced by sportspersons. The hospital authorities keep me posted about their work towards sportspersons," he told PTI after the initial hesitation to disclose his charitable deeds. Tendulkar has also been lending a helping hand to the downtrodden in Tardeo in Mumbai for over 11 years now by providing clothes and other necessities to 250 children besides taking care of their complete education, including books, notebooks, shoes and school uniforms.

India to warm up at Antigua

AFP, St John's

India will prepare for next month's first Test against West Indies with a two-day fixture against Antigua and Barbuda. The Antigua Barbuda Cricket Association announced on Saturday that Rahul Dravid's team would face the national side in an unscheduled tour match on May 30 and 31 at the Police Recreation Ground just outside the Antigua Barbuda capital. Sylvester Joseph, who has appeared in four Tests and 13 ODIs for West Indies, is expected to lead the Antigua and Barbuda side into battle. The first Test between West Indies and India will be played from June 2 to 6 at the Antigua Recreation Ground, which is likely to host its last Test. The Sir Vivian Richards Stadium, a new international venue under construction to host matches for the 2007 ICC World Cup in the West Indies, is expected to replace the ARG for international matches. The future of the ARG, where Sir Vivian scored one of the fastest hundreds in Tests, and current West Indies captain Brian Lara twice broke the World record for the highest Test score, is yet to be decided.

Zimbabwe confirm Tigers' tour in July



SPORTS REPORTER

Zimbabwe Cricket (ZC) has finally agreed to host Bangladesh in July-August for a five-match one-day series. Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) received the confirmation letter from their Zimbabwe counterpart on Saturday after a disagreement about scheduling over the last few days. It was long before decided and included in the recently revealed ICC (International Cricket Council) six-year future tour programme (FTP) that the Tigers would visit in July for five one-dayers but Zimbabwean authority was pressing to host the series in September citing some internal problems. But Zimbabwe Cricket (ZC) gave the go-ahead following BCB's strong stance to play the series on schedule. The BCB had recently sent a pressing letter to the ZC. The tour was earlier expected to start in mid July but they now expressed their desire to start it from last week of the month. It was learnt that BCB was not totally satisfied with the itinerary forwarded by the Zimbabweans

termining it a tight one and they will request them to extend the gap between the matches. Declining to comment on the proposed schedule BCB general secretary Mahbubul Anam confirmed that Zimbabwe agreed to host the Tigers in July-August. "We got the confirmation letter and now we will work on that. We will also send a letter to Kenya Cricket within next few days to settle the issue about playing some one-day matches before the Zimbabwe trip," Anam said. As per the proposed fixture the first two ODIs of the five-match series will take place at Bulawayo on July 29 and 30 while the remaining matches will feature on August 2, 4, 5 in Harare. Bangladesh, who will miss Test cricket for next one year, will launch their campaign in the new FTP with this tour against the Southern African nation. Meanwhile, chief selector Faruque Ahmed informed that the national camp for the tour is likely to start from June 2 which was actually scheduled to kick off on May 22 but had been postponed due to dilly-dally of the Zimbabwe Cricket.

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Czech Republic's (L-R) Tomas Galasek, assistant coach Miroslav Beranek, Pavel Nedved, Vladimir Smicer and Karel Poborsky warm up during the first training session in Seefeld on Saturday.

Chittagong in final round

SPORTS REPORTER

Brilliant bowling by Ripon helped Chittagong move to the final round when they coasted to a seven-wicket win over Laxmipur in the Dhaka Bank Under-19 National Youth Cricket Championship at the Comilla Stadium yesterday. Laxmipur batted first and were bundled out for 122 in 44.1 overs. Ripon was the wrecker-in-chief as he bowled a tight spell to take 2 for 19. Pacemen Kamrul and Asif also took a couple of wickets each. Tamim Iqbal then took matters into his own hands. He slammed a rapid 49 off only 29 balls that included twelve boundaries. Robin also scored at run-a-ball rate but seemed much sedate than Tamim, his opening partner. Ripon was adjudged as the man-of-the-match.

BCB calls up 55 for camp

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) yesterday called up 55 young cricketers for a camp at BKSP. The camp gets underway at the lone sports institution of the country in Savar on May 21 and

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WI clinch a thriller



AFP, Kingston

In the twinkling of an eye, Dwayne Bravo was transformed from villain to hero, when he bowled Yuvraj Singh with the third last ball of the second one-day international on Saturday at Sabina Park to hand West Indies a heart-stopping one-run victory. Expensive in his three previous overs, Bravo was entrusted with the final over of the Indian chase. Tailender Munaf Patel stole a single to fine leg to bring Yuvraj into strike and left-hander hit successive boundaries -- a top-edged cut over the head of diminutive keeper Carlton Baugh Jr. and a searing drive through cover. Bravo later acknowledged that on the advice of Chris Gayle, he decided the next delivery would be a slower ball. It was simply too good for Yuvraj, whose 93 from 121 contained eight fours and one six and was the top score in the India

innings. The left-hander was completely bamboozled by the delivery and was left shattered when he heard the stumps rattle behind him. As the West Indies erupted into massive celebrations, Yuvraj was a forlorn figure on his knees in the middle of the pitch, sobbing at his miscalculation. Ramnaresh Sarwan, later named man-of-the-match, had been the hero of the West Indies innings. He was left stranded agonisingly close to his third ODI hundred, a painstaking, undefeated 98, as India restricted West Indies 198 from nine from their allocation of 50 overs. Sarwan faced 138 from balls, and struck seven fours and one six, after West Indies started disastrously losing their openers inside the first three overs and never recovered after being sent in to bat. Irfan Pathan was India's most successful bowler with three wickets for 45 runs from nine overs. India then laboured to 60 for

four in the 17th over, as the three West Indies fast bowlers Ian Bradshaw, Fidel Edwards and Jerome Taylor put them under early pressure. Bradshaw had Rahul Dravid, a century maker in the first ODI, caught behind for 11 to leave India 37 for two in the 10th over. With little fanfare, Yuvraj and Raina steadied the ship for India after the loss of Pathan and Mohammad Kaif. They played within their limitations, and continued to turn the strike over with well-judged running between the wickets and peppered with boundaries. Three wickets in the space of 22 balls put the monkey on India and left them jittery on 134 for seven. Following Thursday's match, India's coach Greg Chappell had said that West Indies had forgotten how to win, but fortunate for Brian Lara's side, they got their memories back in the nick of time. The third ODI will be played next Tuesday at Warner Park in

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Asia Cup now in 2008

AFP, Karachi

The Asia Cup had been postponed for another two years as hectic international cricket schedules did not allow the biennial event to be held in Pakistan this year, the Asian Cricket Council said Sunday. "It was said that the ninth Asia Cup had to be postponed but the executive board meeting has agreed to host the event in the second week of April in 2008," ACC chief executive Ashraf Huq told AFP from Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. The six-nation limited-overs tournament was originally scheduled to be held in February this year in Pakistan but was put off at India's request to enable their players to rest between two important series against Pakistan and England. "We honoured India's request despite suffering financial losses but we hope the event will now be held regularly," he said. Defending champions Sri Lanka, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, the United Arab Emirates and Oman will take part in the Asia Cup 2008. Pakistan has never hosted the event due to political tensions with India but had been given the hosting rights after both countries resumed their bilateral cricketing ties in 2004. Huq said the second edition of the Afro-Asia Cup will be held in Africa in June next year. "We might host the event either in Malaysia or in Singapore as cricket is gaining popularity in these countries," Huq said.

Last chance for Czech old guard



AFP, Prague

A clutch of Czech stars are intent on proving that life begins at 30 when the World Cup gets underway next month. For the best part of a decade, Pavel Nedved, Karel Poborsky and Vladimir Smicer have been household names in European football. But the Czech stalwarts have never played at the World Cup - until now. And despite their advancing years, they are determined to make a lasting impression in Germany. "We are going to Germany to

win. If not, it would not make any sense," said Poborsky, 34, the most capped player in the history of Czech football with 112 appearances. Poborsky, along with Nedved and Smicer, made a sensational impact on the international football scene at Euro 96 in England. The unfancied Czechs created the surprise of the tournament when they qualified for the final against Germany, only to be beaten 2-1 by a golden goal. Bolstered by fresh young talent such as Chelsea goalkeeper Petr Cech, Borussia Dortmund midfielder Tomas Rosicky and Aston Villa striker Milan Baros, the team again attracted praise during the Euro 2004 in Portugal. Though some of the shine evaporated when the Czechs were

beaten 1-0 after a lacklustre performance in the semifinals against eventual winners, Greece. Despite the bullish optimism of Poborsky, some Czech veterans have wondered whether the World Cup is a tournament too far. Former international Zdenek Nehoda, a member of the Czechoslovakia team that won the European Championships in 1976 said he feared that the Czechs might suffer in the next few years for not clearing out the old guard sooner. "It is clear that the next renewal of the generations risks resulting in a step back, we may even see ourselves denied a place in Euro 2008," said Nehoda, who now earns a living as Nedved's agent. Nehoda is also worried that

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Donovan has a point to prove



AFP, Washington

US playmaker Landon Donovan, a disappointing Bundesliga flop last year in a three-month stint at Bayer



LANDON DONOVAN

Leverkusen, has something to prove when he returns to Germany next month for the World Cup. The 24-year-old midfielder insists he carries no personal grudges into the global football showdown, instead championing the American team's desire to show that a 2002 quarterfinal run at South Korea was no fluke.

"I'm not going there to prove I can play and I'm good enough to be there," Donovan said. "Germany, South Africa or Antarctica - I couldn't care less. It's about our team gaining respect. "Then again, maybe things will change when I get there."

Sporting Dravid

AFP, Kingston

India's captain Rahul Dravid admitted that Saturday's dramatic one-run defeat to West Indies hurt in the second one-day international, but there was plenty for his side to gain from the experience. Chasing a modest 199 to win, India needed 11 runs off the last over with the last pair of Yuvraj and Munaf Patel at the crease. "At one stage, we did not look like we would have gotten this close because we were struggling at one stage," Dravid told reporters after the match. "It does hurt to lose, but we have to accept these things. We are going to lose a few games, but we have to pick ourselves up, and go into the next game and do better. We have done really well so far, so there is no reason to panic because we lost. "I do not think it is totally disheartening for anyone in the dressing room. The guys know we can do better and there are areas in which we can get tighter and keep improving. This has been our goal all the time and it will be something that we'll try to keep doing."

Donovan has been willing to make personal sacrifices for team gains. US coach Bruce Arena has moved Donovan from the forward line into midfield. He has been yanked between both roles with no complaint, serving where necessary. "I love winning. Any team I'm on I expect to win," Donovan said. "I don't think I could have said that 10 years ago." Donovan was captain in a 1-1 draw with Jamaica last month and will be a pivotal leader for the US World Cup squad, evolving from his impressive two-goal showing at the 2002 World Cup. "He's older and has a lot more experience," Arena said. "He responds well to the captain's armband." In February of 1999, Donovan signed with Leverkusen at age 16, the youngest US player ever to sign with a European club. But Donovan was unable to crack the starting lineup and Leverkusen loaned him to the San Jose Earthquakes. Improving his game, Donovan

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'Germany has respect for England'

"Germany always has great respect for England, comparable with Brazil, Italy and Argentina. The strengths of the English midfield are well known but, given that, the people of Germany would always look forward to England playing Germany. It is always a big game. It is a duel and we will look forward to renewing that duel."
-- German captain Michael Ballack
AFP, London