



Did U Know?

When Germany beat Portugal to finish third in the 2006 World Cup, it marked the third time that the Europeans had picked up the bronze medal. This is the most for any nation in the World Cup.



Jose Mourinho
(Chelsea manager)
"If he stays in England, I think he can turn things around. I think football players should play a lot and talk very little. He should keep quiet and do his job."
On Cristiano Ronaldo.

BHF names 24 for SA Games

The Bangladesh Hockey Federation (BHF) yesterday shortlisted its 32-member preliminary squad to 24 players for next month's SA Games in Colombo.

The selected 24 will attend the second-phase camp for the second ever hockey competition in the history of the Games. Bangladesh won bronze in 1995 in Madras, the only previous time hockey was held in the then SAF Games.

Although all the events of the August 18-27 Games will be held in the Sri Lankan capital, hockey will be staged at the hill station of Matala, some three hours drive from Colombo.

Only 18 players will make it to the final squad.

The squad: Rasel Khan Bappi, Zahid Hossain, Mahbubullah Shakil, Issa Mia, Shamsuddin Tuhin, Mashiur Rahman Biplab, Mamunur Rahman Chayan, Hedayetullah Rajib, Mustafizur Rahman Dinar, Yamin Hossain, Merajul Ahsan, Musa Mia, Khondokar Hassan Ahmed, Shahidullah Titu, Ashiquzzaman, Asif-e-Noor, Mahbub Ehsan Rana, Mosharrar Hossain Jimmy, Zahidul Islam Rajan, Mazharul Islam Moksed, Maksud Alam Habul, Ariful Haque Prince, Zahid Bin Talib.

2011 WORLD CUP New Delhi may stage the final

AFP, New Delhi

New Delhi has emerged as the strongest contender to host the cricket World Cup final in 2011, an Indian official said on Monday.

The showpiece match will, however, not be held at the Ferozeshah Kotla, the Test venue in the Indian capital, but at a new stadium to be constructed by the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI).

"We are zeroing in on New Delhi for the final," said the official who attended a meeting related to the World Cup in London last week.

"If all goes well, the match will be staged at our own stadium. The BCCI has already acquired land for it."

The 2011 event will be co-hosted by South Asia's four Test nations - India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh - who

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Academy to bridge the gap



SPORTS REPORTER

It had been told over and over again that Bangladesh cricket has a lack of back-up players for the national side. And there is hardly any planning for the Bangladesh A team to make it a real supporting block for the senior side.

Another issue that also has been discussed time and again is the Bangladesh Cricket Board's (BCB) lack of planning to help out-of-favour recover form at all levels.

To solve these very urgent problems, BCB, however has taken an initiative recently. The game's governing body in the country has formed an Academy under its name

on temporary basis and the authority is dreaming to give it a real shape within short time.

In its first step, BCB has recently appointed former Bangladesh captain Khaled Mahmud as its operations manager and the former all-rounder was very excited and optimistic with the new venture.

"I think the board has taken a very important initiative which will definitely play a big part in Bangladesh cricket in future. I have seen how out-of-favour but talented players drifted away from the scene after being dropped from the national or under-19 sides. I think the Academy could be a solution to keep them in track," said Mahmud.

"The concept is that we can make a bridge between the senior and junior teams with the academy

side. As per our plan a number of selected players will continue their practice and get necessary opinions from experts during their long stint in the academy. I think it will also open a window for the locals coaches," he added.

BCB has already announced a 27-member academy squad with a mix of discarded national and young players who has been practising together and played three matches against the national side.

"BCB has recently set up an office to run the show and rented a house for the players in Dhanmondi area. The most encouraging thing is that the board is not worried about expenses to run the show. We have a plan to tour

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Razzak for African trip

SPORTS REPORTER

Left-arm spinner Abdur Razzak was finally included in the Africa-bound squad as its sixteenth member.

National selectors had originally announced a 15-member squad for the Zimbabwe and Kenya tours where it seemed that Mohammad Rafique has been given the job to shoulder the responsibility of the spin attack with only debutant left-arm spinner Sakib Al Hasan as backup.

There was whispering that the Faruque Ahmed-led selection panel had to weaken their spin department because of the dubious inclusion of young wicket-keeper cum batsman Mushfiqur Rahim.

But Faruque dismissed the allegation saying that they have taken the tour as an opportunity to look at the young prospects and it would be unwise to smell rat in the selection.

"I agreed that naming two wicketkeepers for one-day series is a bit unusual. But what we thought that Khaled Mashud has been serving the team for long and the time has come to find a backup. And the stage is perfect if we want to make any experiment," explained Faruque.

"The circumstances have changed after rearrangement of the schedule that's why we picked up Raj (Abdur Razzak). We had a plan to include him after the Kenya tour as we have seen spinners dominating the A team series in Zimbabwe," he added.

Faruque praised Bangladesh A's performance in Zimbabwe and said that he was delighted by the performance of out-of-favour Tushar Imran and young Mehrah Hossain Jr.

"We overlooked Tushar (Imran) just for team combination and to have a look at the young guys. I am really impressed by the perfor

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England's Andrew Strauss celebrates reaching his century on the fourth day of the first Test against Pakistan at Lord's in London on Sunday.

Strauss makes history



SPORTS REPORTER

Andrew Strauss's love-affair with Lord's continued here Sunday when he marked his first Test as England captain with a century that left Pakistan already needing a ground record-equalling 342 to win the opening Test match.

England, at the fourth day's close, were 258 for seven in their second innings after Strauss had scored 128.

Pakistan's Test record fourth innings total to win was the 315 for nine they achieved against Australia at Karachi in 1994-95.

And the equivalent Lord's record was West Indies' 344 for one, requiring 342, set 22 years ago.

Leg-spinners Danish Kaneria (three for 73) and Shahid Afridi (one for 59) kept hopes of a successful chase alive with tight bowling on a wearing pitch.

Left-handed opener Strauss, leading the side because of Andrew Flintoff's ankle injury, became only the third England player, after Archie MacLaren in 1897/98 and Allan Lamb in 1989/90, and first at home, to score a hundred in his debut Test as England captain.

His ninth Test century was also his third at his Middlesex home ground after he's scored 112 here on debut against New Zealand at Lord's in May 2004 and 137 against the West Indies two months later.

"It was a tricky situation as we were losing wickets at important times and we couldn't push on," said Strauss.

"We needed someone to stick around and fortunately I was able to do that."

"I've had a frustrating time this year, getting 20s and 30s isn't good enough for Test cricket. It was a case of overcoming that, the wicket here was flat and it was nice to get to three figures."

Strauss said that he will sleep on a decision on whether or not to declare first thing on Monday, the final day of the match.

"The wicket is flat so we have to take that into consideration. We'll have to bowl well. The ball bounced a little for their spinners today. Hopefully (off-spinner) Monty Panesar can get that and be a threat."

"The new ball is when the variable bounce is at its greatest. If it's going up and down Steve Harmison is going to be hard work."

Meanwhile Pakistan coach Bob Woolmer said England were favourites to win.

"I don't think any of our team play to survive," the former England batsman told reporters.

"They'll play the way they play best and if England bowl badly and we get off to a flyer, who knows?"

"But I'm not going to suggest a target of 340-360 is easy on the last day of any international match."

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Colman gone, how long for Cruciani?



SPORTS REPORTER

The national football team's last leg preparation for next month's SA Games will be without a specialised physical trainer after Argentine trainer Ariel Colman saw his one-year contract with the Bangladesh Football Federation end on Saturday.

Colman, who joined the BFF with fellow Argentine coach Diego

Cruciani, was due to leave Dhaka last night by a Malaysian Airways flight.

The BFF did not renew Colman's contract but extended Cruciani's rein till the end of the SA Games.

It seems that failure at the under-23 competition in Sri Lanka next month would lead to Cruciani's exit too, although the Argentine had injected new hopes adding different style and above all -- Latin flavour -- to the country's football.

However, payment seems to be the major problem for not extending the Argentine duo's contract.

The members of the National Team Management Committee (NTMC) has been paying the Argentine duo and they are still responsible for providing the salary of the coach as BFF washed off their hands from the beginning.

Although the NTMC kept faith in Cruciani for another tournament, different quarters have been impatient, demanding his removal

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Panesar strikes shake Pakistan

AFP, London

Monty Panesar struck twice, including capturing the prize wicket of Mohammad Yousuf, as England gave themselves hope of victory on the final day of the first Test against Pakistan at Lord's here Monday.

Pakistan at tea were 151 for four in their second innings, still needing a further 229 to reach their record victory target of 380.

England, meanwhile, knew they had a minimum of 32 overs left to get the six wickets they needed to go 1-0 up in the four-Test series and, if that was more likely than a win for their opponents, the draw was still favourable.

But survival would be no straightforward task against left-arm spinner Panesar, who at tea

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B'ball refs' clinic on

SPORTS REPORTER

The FIBA-Asia Basketball referees' clinic began at the Dhanmondi Basketball Gymnasium yesterday under auspices of the Bangladesh Basketball Federation.

FIBA Sports Director Lubomir Kotleba will conduct the two-day event.

A total of 30 referees from India, Nepal, Malaysia, Korea and hosts Bangladesh are taking part in the clinic.

Rebrov Ukrainian player of the year

REUTERS, Kiev

Dynamo Kiev striker Serhiy Rebrov, a member of Ukraine's World Cup side, has been named the Ukrainian Premier League's player of the season for 2005-2006, the club said on Monday.

Rebrov, 32, is the top scorer in Dynamo's history with 106 goals in 216 matches. He scored against Saudi Arabia in Ukraine's first appearance at the World Cup finals in Germany.

He played for Dynamo from 1992 to 2000 and returned to the club in 2005 after a spell in England with Tottenham Hotspur and West Ham United.

Dynamo won the cup last season but lost the league title to arch rivals Shakhtar Donetsk in a playoff after the two sides had finished level on points.

Dynamo beat Shakhtar 2-0 at the weekend to win the Supercup, the season curtain-raiser.



Francesco Totti is expected to be the force behind Roma's Scudetto challenge.

PHOTO: INTERNET

Lesser lights set to shine



INTERNET, undated

With the verdict finally out, and some of the biggest clubs in Italy no longer in the top division, or thrown out of Europe due to point penalties, there is now a chance for some of Serie A's lesser lights to shine on the European stage.

Milan, Fiorentina and Lazio

have all had their finishing positions from last season taken away, and with it their place in the cash cow competition that is the Champions League.

Roma suffered a stuttering finish to their season, allowing Fiorentina to snatch the fourth place in the competition in the final weeks, with Luciano Spalletti's men eventually having to make do with a spot in the UEFA Cup.

However, Roma are now unofficially in second place after the Calciopoli scandal and now move straight into the group stages of the competition. Coach Spalletti is insistent that this represents a large slice of luck that his Giallorossi deserve.

"If the decision holds, I'll be delighted," smiled the Florentine-born coach.

"The players and fans deserve this on the strength of last season. However, I do really feel for the fans of the clubs that have been punished as they're suffering and it's not their fault."

Inter and Roma take Italy's two

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FC Dynamo Kiev players celebrate with the Super Cup of Ukraine in Odessa on Sunday. Dynamo beat Shakhtar Donetsk to claim the title.

PHOTO: AFP

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