



Did U Know?

Once called mintonette, volleyball was renamed after a demonstration game of the sport in 1895, when a spectator commented that the game involved much 'volleying' and the game was renamed volleyball.



Buddhadev Bhattacharya
(Chief Minister of West Bengal)
"If you want to call it a 'jihad', go ahead and write it."
As he vows to dethrone Jagmohan Dalmiya from Cricket Association of Bengal presidency.



BTV & STAR Sports
Bangladesh v Zimbabwe
Fourth ODI
Live at 1:30 pm
TEN Sports
Sri Lanka v South Africa
Second Test, Day 1
Live at 11:00 am
ESPN
England v Pakistan
Third Test, Day 1
Live at 4:00 pm

SLC's U-turn on Dambulla

AFP, Colombo

Sri Lanka's cricket chiefs have cancelled plans to hold some matches of the upcoming tri-series against India and South Africa in the central town of Dambulla, an official said on Wednesday.

"We have given up the idea because both South Africa and India had some concerns," Sri Lanka Cricket (SLC) chief executive Duleep Mendis told AFP. "All matches will now be played in Colombo."

SLC had said earlier on Wednesday it wanted Dambulla to host the first four matches of the August 14-29 series and Colombo the remaining three games.

The matches will now be played at the Premadasa stadium and the Sinhalese sports club in the Sri Lankan capital.

The Indian team, led by Rahul Dravid, is scheduled to arrive on August 10 for the series, in which each team plays the other twice in the league before the final.

South Africa are currently engaged in a two-Test series in the Sri Lankan capital. The second Test starts at the Sara Oval on Friday.

Lara says sorry

BBC ONLINE, undated

Brian Lara looks set to remain as West Indies captain after issuing a public apology for criticising his own board during the recent series against India.

The 37-year-old issued a letter of apology after meeting the WICB committee investigating the matter. In the letter Lara said he "broke the confidence placed in me as West Indies captain by my overreaction during and after the fourth Test against India".

Lara had been unhappy with the pitch and team selection against India.

He had threatened to "revisit" his decision to become captain for the third time but indicates a change of heart in his written apology.

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Unhappy booters give ultimatum

Football

SPORTS REPORTER

Frustration and uncertainty once again drove the footballers of the country to seek assurance of their near future from the governing body of football.

Having had no transfer for the last 20 months, the booters - who have apparently lost confidence on the top brass - expressed their worries both to the press and the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) yesterday.

They submitted a memorandum to the BFF president and had a meeting with BFF's deputy general secretary Manzoor Hossain Malu at the BFF House, demanding quick action.

They also vowed to stop all football activities if the transfer does not begin on schedule.

The BFF has announced a two-month long transfer for the inaugural Professional Football League from September 1 after two delays. But the footballers fear that the latest

date could well be postponed as they have not seen any real momentum yet.

"We are afraid that the transfer could again be delayed. But this is our only source of income and we have been patiently waiting for nearly two years. If we are betrayed again, we will go for all out action. We don't have any other way but to revolt and stop playing," told national football captain Arif Khan Joy.

"We have handed over the memorandum to the deputy general secretary and he has ensured us that the BFF will begin the transfer process in due time," Joy added.

"That leaves us with no other choice but to wait till September. We have been playing for the national teams and in domestic tournaments but club football keeps us alive. We have to think about all the footballers of the country who are on the verge of breaking down," lamented the shaven-headed defensive midfielder who recently shelved his retirement decision to serve the national team.

"Malu (bhai) has told us to concentrate on playing football and

prepare for the transfer. We will do that but if the federation fails again, we will go our own way," warned Joy.

The last transfer was held in December 2004 and this is the second time the footballers had to go this far to discuss the issue with federation officials but the BFF deputy general secretary thinks it would not happen again.

"We've had to delay the transfer due to the unavailability of the Bangabandhu National Stadium (BNS), where the Pro league will be launched in November," said Malu dismissing accusations that a certain club have influenced the BFF in doing so.

"I tried to make the players understand the situation and I believe they are convinced now that there is no ill intention about the delays. The transfer is not only for the players but it is also the requirement of the day for clubs and organisers. Everyone is victimised.

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Footballers hand over a memorandum to Bangladesh Football Federation deputy general secretary Manzoor Hossain Malu (2nd from R) at the BFF Bhaban yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

Strauss wary of Pak wrath Headingley Test starts today

Cricket

AFP, Leeds

England captain Andrew Strauss told his side they must maintain the standards they'd set for themselves at Old Trafford if they also wanted to win the third Test against Pakistan starting at Headingley here Friday.

England's crushing innings and 120-run second Test victory, completed inside three days at Old Trafford, left them 1-0 up in the four-match encounter and on the brink of a series victory.

"I'm always wary of the match after games like that because it's easy psychologically to take your foot off the gas a little bit and that is something we need to address and

make sure doesn't happen to us this week," Strauss told reporters at Headingley here Thursday.

"If you are in form you need to get hundreds and likewise if you are in form with the ball it's a great time to take a five-for."

England's last visit to Headingley, just over a month ago, saw them go down to an eight-wicket, one-day hammering by Sri Lanka, who completed a 5-0 series rout after a world record opening stand of 286 between Sanath Jayasuriya and Upul Tharanga.

Strauss, who captained England throughout that series in the absence of the injured Michael Vaughan and Andrew Flintoff, admitted: "That was a pretty bleak day and the drive back to London that evening.

"But we take a lot of heart and a lot of confidence from what went on in at Old Trafford," the opening batsman added.

"Winning a Test match without Fred (Flintoff) was important for us just to prove to ourselves and others that there is life without Fred."

England have scored six individual hundreds in two Tests against Pakistan this series with Alastair Cook and Ian Bell each twice reaching three figures.

Cook, 21, has now scored three hundreds in his first seven Tests including 104 not out on debut against India in Nagpur in March when he was flown in as a late replacement from the A team's tour of the West Indies.

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Abahani to observe Kamal's birth anniversary

SPORTS REPORTER

Abahanai Samorthok Gosthi will organise a two-day programme, starting today, to observe the 57th birth anniversary of Late Sheikh Kamal, the founder of the popular club.

An art competition for children (Kindergarten to Class II and Class III-IV) will be held at 4pm today at the club premises. It will be followed by discussions and prize distribution.

On the concluding day tomorrow, Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina will distribute the Sheikh Kamal Gold Medals.

GMG Open Squash from tomorrow

SPORTS REPORTER

The GMG Open Squash tournament will begin tomorrow at the Gulshan Club squash court.

The competition will be held in five categories with the top eight players participating in the Premiership, informed Bangladesh Squash Racquets Federation general secretary Sohail Hamid at a press briefing at the NSC conference room yesterday.

The other categories in the August 5-14 meet are divisions A, B, C, under-18 and above 40 years. Erfan Haque, general manager of sales, GMG, was also present.

Sponsors GMG will provide Tk one lakh for the tournament.

India to host tri-series

PTI, Mumbai

India will host a tri-series, likely to feature Sri Lanka and the West Indies, ahead of the 2007 World Cup, the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) on Thursday.

"It's expected to feature Sri Lanka, who have confirmed to take part, and the West Indies after they finish their tour of Pakistan and is likely in January-February," BCCI Secretary Niranjan Shah told PTI over phone from Rajkot.

The series will fall after India's full tour of South Africa in November-December.

The World Cup is to be held in the West Indies in March-April.

Meanwhile, the proposed tri-series in Singapore and Malaysia would be tentatively from September 15 to 29, Shah said.

"The series, involving seven matches, would need around 15 days to complete and it would commence not later than September 15 and end before the end of the month," he said.

The series, part of the BCCI's scheduled off-shore neutral venue ties, will feature India and Australia while a confirmation was awaited from the West Indies.

"The West Indies board officials have sought two or three more days grace period from us to confirm whether they can take part after talking to their players," Shah explained.

"A final decision would be taken before the end of this week. There are other teams who are willing to take the place of West Indies in case they are unable to come," the BCCI secretary said.

Proteas in Murali's den Final Test from today

Cricket

AFP, Colombo

South Africa are set for another agonising battle when the second and final Test against Sri Lanka starts on Friday at off-spin wizard Muttiah Muralidaran's home club.

The Sara Oval at the Tamil Union Club, where Muralidaran plays his domestic cricket, is regarded as a spinners' haven tailor-made for the prolific star.

That won't be good news for the beleaguered Proteas, already reeling under Muralidaran's 10-wicket haul in the first Test at the Sinhalese Sports Club (SSC) which Sri Lanka won by an innings and 153 runs.

The hosts will be further boosted by the return of experienced left-arm seamer Chaminda Vaas, who missed the first Test with a hamstring injury suffered on the recent England tour.

"Vaas is a class act and it is great to have him back," said Sri Lankan captain Mahela Jayawardene of his leading seamer, who has captured 306 wickets at an average of 29.2.

"We missed him in the first Test because of the pressure he applies on batsmen from one end. He is a superb wicket-taking bowler."

Sri Lanka are expected to leave out Farveez Maharoof to accommodate Vaas, but leg-spinner Malinga Bandara may also be considered if the wicket promises turn early in the match.

Seasoned all-rounder Shaun Pollock returns for South Africa after opting out of the first Test following the birth of his second daughter.

Pollock, who is six wickets away from becoming the first South African to reach the 400 mark, will lend experience to a squad missing captain Graeme Smith and all-rounder Jacques Kallis because of injuries.

Pollock watched from the sidelines as Sri Lanka ran up 756-5 declared at the SSC due to Jayawardene's brilliant 374 and his world record stand of 624 with

Kumar Sangakkara (287).

"With Shaun back, we will go into the Test with greater confidence," said stand-in captain Ashwell Prince, who may use Pollock as a stock bowler after giving the new ball to Makhaya Ntini and Dale

Steyn.

Pollock, who is likely to replace Andre Nel, said he did not expect to reach 400 wickets in this Test but stressed that was not his main

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Sri Lanka paceman Chaminda Vaas in his delivery stride during a practice session at the Sinhalese Sports Club ground in Colombo on Thursday.

PHOTO: AFP



ASHAMED! Paceman Mashrafe Bin Mortaza (R) walks off dejected as Zimbabweans (L) celebrate their last-ball victory over Bangladesh in the third one-day international at the Harare Sports Club ground on Wednesday.

PHOTO: AFP

Ad