



Did U Know?

John Boland of Ireland won the first Olympic tennis gold in 1896.



Imran Khan
(Pakistan cricket legend)
"I am as surprised as anyone in the public how Pakistan lost. I don't agree that players were tired due to a long tour, some of them were fresh and did not play in Tests."



ZEE Sports
India v West Indies
Tri-Series, 2nd ODI
Live at 12:30 pm

Miandad slams Abbas ousting

REUTERS, Karachi

Former captain Javed Miandad has slammed the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) for removing team manager Zaheer Abbas in the wake of last month's Oval Test fiasco.

Pakistan forfeited the fourth Test against England following their refusal to play after tea on the penultimate day, in protest of a decision by umpires Darrell Hair and Billy Doctrove to penalise the side five runs for alleged ball-tampering.

At a committee meeting on Tuesday, the PCB removed former captain and respected figure Zaheer for next month's Champions Trophy in India and replaced him with Talat Ali.

The appointment of Ali, who played Test cricket for Pakistan and worked as a match referee, is regarded by some former players as a move to reduce the authority of captain Inzamam-ul-Haq.

"I am really angry at the way the board has humiliated Zaheer," Miandad told Reuters on Wednesday. "He didn't deserve to go this far."

Punter shocked at Freddie nod

AFP, Kuala Lumpur

Captain Ricky Ponting is surprised Andrew Flintoff got the nod to lead England in the Ashes but sees nothing in their squad to force Australia to alter its preparations.

"It doesn't really matter whatever squad they have named. It won't change what we do at all," he said in the Malaysian capital, where Australia are playing a triangular one-day series with the West Indies and India.

"We've just got to get out there and, when it is Test time, try to play Test cricket again."

"We're alright at the moment. We've got a fair bit of one-day cricket to focus on and look forward to -- and when November comes around we will start thinking about the Ashes."

Flintoff was the hero of England's 2-1 home Ashes triumph with 402 runs and 24 wickets, and he beat off competition from Andrew Strauss to captain them in their defence of the famous urn in November.

Ponting said he was surprised to learn the 28-year-old Lancashire all-rounder got the job.

"I did think that Strauss would get the nod but obviously it hasn't gone that way -- I don't know why. We will have to wait and see what

CCL getting sick



SPORTS REPORTER

There had been a lot of buzz when Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) introduced a new competition to its domestic calendar named the Corporate Cricket League (CCL).

After its launching in the spring of 2004, the CCL has gradually lost its weight and is practically far off from taking a real shape as an important tournament.

The three-day players' transfer for the season's curtain-raiser will begin tomorrow at the Bangabandhu National Stadium but the fact remains that most of the players are in wilderness to make their appearance. The 12-team meet kicks off on October 1.

"The interesting fact is that nobody knows who actually are going to make half of the teams in the competition. The old corporate houses have already confirmed their desired players but the problem lies with the newcomers. Most of the players are simply begging for a team and they requested us to find a house for them but we are also not aware of who are running the show for new teams," said a national cricketer.

"They (board) had high hopes with the competition but ultimately it has turned into a nothing tournament. Actually the board has little planning with the domestic competitions. They are just making fun with the meet and the tournament only creates an opportunity for some little-known corporate houses to use it as a platform for advertising," he added.

"I have lost hope of getting a team because the known teams have stuck to their old players and I don't know any official of the new houses. There is a massive communication gap and the absence of national players also make the situation

difficult for players like us," said Reshadur Rahman, who played for Security Air Express last year.

"If the national players played the tournament, they could have made teams with these new houses and that would have eased most of the problems," he explained.

The Tigers will miss the CCL as they will be in India to play the ICC Champions Trophy next month.

The situation is also bitter for the development players as the tournament committee suddenly made a u-turn from the decision to field a BCB development team. The youngsters, now to choose their individual teams, are getting nowhere.

Member secretary of the CCL Ali Hossain also admitted that an estimated number of players are yet to get any offer.

BCB frustratingly failed to pursue the big corporate houses but at

the same time inspired the new ones -- as many as six, raising many eyebrows.

The presence of the cellular companies in the first version of the competition brought the excitement but they lost their interest following the board's decision to make it a Twenty20 event, although they returned to the 50-over-a-side affair last year.

But the cellular companies along with the other big names were reluctant to get back into the groove of things as BCB hardly has any plan with the tournament.

Even BCB general secretary Mahbul Anam was indifferent about the meet.

"It is wise to ask the tournament committee chairman if you have any inquiries. I'm not ready to give wrong answer to a wrong question," said the bearded organiser, the main man of the elected body.

PFL in dire straits



SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) will disregard the clubs' demand to postpone the proposed October transfer for the inaugural Professional Football League.

The clubs in a joint statement on Tuesday insisted that the tournament committee, which had announced the date of transfer without the participating clubs' consent, should delay the transfer until the Bangabandhu National Stadium is ready. They also

demand resignation of the committee if it fails to make the announcement by September 15.

The response of the BFF, however, was indifferent.

"We will discuss the issue in our executive committee meeting on September 16," informed BFF general secretary Anwarul Hoque Helal yesterday.

"The situation looks grave and personally, I am worried about the future of the Professional League," he told The Daily Star. "If nobody wants to help us, how can we proceed?" questioned Helal.

"We have yet to make any marketing plan about the big event. If

SEE PAGE 18 COL 1



Indian spinner Harbhajan Singh (L) speaks to Sachin Tendulkar and coach Greg Chappell (R) during a practice session at the Kinrara Oval in Kuala Lumpur on Wednesday.

Eve's football from today

UNB, Dhaka

Narayanganj will take on Shariatpur in the opening match of the first Inter-district women's football tournament at the Dhanmondi Women's Sports Complex today.

A total of eight districts -- Dhaka, Narayanganj, Rajshahi, Gaibandha, Shariatpur, Bandarban, Khagrachhari and Rangamati -- will take part in the nine-day meet organised by the Bangladesh Women's Sports Association (BWSA).

The participating teams will receive Tk2,000 each, informed BWSA general secretary Quamrunnaha Dana at a press conference at the BFF conference room yesterday.

The player of the match will receive Tk 500, said Dana adding that 30 footballers will be selected after the meet for a two-month training course.

BWSA president KJ Hamida Khanam and vice-president Zinat Ahmed were also present.

Sunnydale on fire

SPORTS REPORTER

Sunnydale continued their good form as they put 19 goals past hapless Shishu Palli in the Sunnydale-Bexi Fabrics fourth Mini Handball tournament at the Women's Sports Complex in Dhanmondi yesterday.

The Dhanmondi-based school, which led 9-0 in the first half, ended Shishu Palli's misery at 19-2 scoreline.

South Breeze also had a good outing as they beat South Point School

11-1 while BAF Shaheen School completely outplayed Hope International School 16-0.

In the other matches, BIS, Dhanmondi Tutorial, Green Herald School, Ansar & VDP School, Rahmatullah Model High School, Scholastica, Siddiqui International School and Summer Field School won their respective matches in the meet.

ATF U-14 TENNIS Bangladeshis bow out

SPORTS REPORTER

Chee Marcus of Malaysia upset top-seed Sinha Vishvesh of India 6-0, 6-3 in the boys' singles quarterfinal of the Sagufta ATF Under-14 Tennis Series at the Ramna National Tennis Complex yesterday.

Vishvesh, seventh in the ATF U-14 boys' ranking, earlier beat Bangladesh's Rezwana Ahsan 6-3, 7-6 in the last 16.

All five Bangladeshi players were eliminated from the round of 16. Apart from Marcus, Nuttorn Tanchainant of Thailand, Noh Sang-woo of South Korea and Munshaw Vaidik of India made it to the semifinals.

The girls' top-seed, Rana Shweta of India who is third in the ATF U-14 ranking, cruised to the singles semis beating her compatriot Prathana Thombare 6-3, 6-3. Agarwal Aishwaraya of India and Koreans Lee Se-won and Han Na-lae also reached the last four.

Only way is to win

India begin season today against Windies at KL



CRICINFO, undated

After the false start in Sri Lanka, India's season should finally get underway in the soothing surroundings of Kuala Lumpur's Kinrara Oval on Thursday afternoon.

A decent crowd, consisting mainly of expatriate Indians, is expected to watch the game, though anything would be an improvement on the few dozen kids and handful of others that witnessed a gripping contest between Australia and West Indies in the Malaysian capital.

For India, it's imperative that they start the season in the right fashion.

Two years ago, they never really got going at the Asia Cup in Sri Lanka, and the rest of the season followed that same mediocre path. Last year, though they lost a tri-series in Zimbabwe, thumping wins at home against Sri Lanka restored the morale and set the team up for

an outstanding season, at least in the limited-overs form of the game.

With the World Cup looming, and a dress rehearsal in the shape of the Champions Trophy before that, a slow start cannot be countenanced, even if the team management says that they're treating these games as preparation for the bigger events ahead.

After the lemming act against Australia on Tuesday, Brian Lara spoke of how important it was to maintain his team's psychological hold over India. He was of course referring to the recent series in the Caribbean, when West Indies overcame a loss in the opening match to sweep the remaining four games.

His counterpart, Rahul Dravid, scoffs at any talk of psychological advantage, but Lara's words may yet serve to gee up the Indians when they step on to the park on Thursday.

What sort of combination they play is open to question. If the evening net session was any indicator, Sachin Tendulkar and

Rahul Dravid may well open, as they did in Colombo (for 22 balls anyway). Mahendra Singh Dhoni and Virender Sehwag also batted a fair while, and there was a good stint too for Suresh Raina, who may yet edge out Dinesh Mongia's all-round talents as the team seeks a replacement for the indisposed Yuvraj Singh.

There are options on the bowling side too. There wasn't enough sharp turn to justify playing two slow bowlers, and that means Ramesh Powar could well miss out. In any case, India have enough back-up for Harbhajan Singh, with Sehwag and Tendulkar both capable of going through a few tidy overs.

The pace complement will be just as keenly watched. Ajit Agarkar and Irfan Pathan are certain to play, and it will be a toss-up between Sreesanth, Rudra Pratap Singh and Munaf Patel for the third seamer's lot if the team decides to

reinforce

SEE PAGE 18 COL 1



HIGH-FIVE: Five-goal wonder Taekema of the Netherlands' (L) celebrates one of his strikes with teammate Timme Hoyng during the hockey World Cup match against India in Moenchengladbach on Wednesday.

Dutch dump India

Aussie mauling for Kiwis



AFP, Monchengladbach

Australia thrashed their trans-Tasman neighbours New Zealand 7-1 to gain the first semifinals berth in the men's field hockey world Championship here on Tuesday.

In other Pool A action Japan upset Argentina 4-3.

Pool B remains wide open after Germany defeated South Africa 5-0, and the Netherlands overwhelmed India 6-1.

Spain are expected to move to the top of Pool A if they beat Japan on Wednesday while Australia are assured of going forward as they can lose to Pakistan and still take second place.

The top two places in Pool B are undecided as South Korea, the Netherlands and Germany all have 10 points.

Germany play South Korea in the last Pool B match and a draw will ensure the Dutch are out of the semifinals as both Germany and South Korea will have 11 points.

The Netherlands' fate is in the hands of Germany and South Korea as a win to Germany will put South Korea out of the semifinals and Netherlands through with a better

goal difference.

But German coach Bernhard Peters stressed: "We want to win every match and that is my clear statement."

Barry Dancer, Australia's coach, was not satisfied with the 7-1 win over New Zealand.

"Our defence needs to be tighter and our penalty corner conversion rate needs to improve so we have work to do in the coming days before the semifinals."

Kevin Towns, New Zealand's coach was philosophical.

"Obviously our old rival had the measure of us today (Tuesday)," Towns said.

New Zealand will play off for fifth to eighth place and will probably play England in the first classification match.

Japan surprised by defeating Argentina 4-3 after the South Americans had destroyed Pakistan's hopes by winning 1-0 on Monday.

Argentina coach Sergio Vigil said his side could not blame the gruelling match schedule for the defeat.

"Japan played better than us in the second half and the hard game on Tuesday is no excuse for the loss," he said.

Japan will stay at the bottom of Pool A unless they can pull off the upset of the Championship by beating Spain on Wednesday.

China next station: Huq



AFP, Kuala Lumpur

China is the next frontier in cricket's expansion and the world's most populous country is ready to take a giant leap forward, according to Asian Cricket Council chief executive Syed Ashraf Huq.

And only when it does will the

game become truly global, he believes.

While most kids in the country of 1.3 billion people still prefer football, cricket is taking a grip.

Authorities have drawn up a comprehensive development plan with coaching, funding and facilities in place to fast-track China into being ready to play one-day games.

International Cricket Council (ICC) chief executive Malcolm

Speed will be in Beijing next week to find out how far it has come.

"China has just started to play cricket. It has hosted its first schools tournament in Beijing and the Chinese state has unveiled a plan which will establish cricket as part of the national sporting curriculum," Ashraf Huq told AFP.

"Once China comes on board in a significant manner, then cricket will truly be a global game. China's presence will encourage other countries to try harder to make an impact."

Cricket was almost unknown to the Chinese before 2005 but it has since seen 90 sports teachers become professional coaches and referees.

The country was admitted into the Asian Cricket Council in 2004 and membership of the ICC came the following year.

Since then, the China Cricket Association has unveiled a strategic plan that has 60,000 schoolchildren playing cricket in three years and 150,000 in five years, with Beijing, Shanghai and Dalian the hubs for promoting the game.

Mandarin editions of the Laws of Cricket are now available in China while Australian cricketing officials have visited the country to conduct coaching courses.

"Developing a cricket culture takes time, but one thing we can be sure of is that China is now ready, willing and able to make the great leap forward into cricket," said Ashraf Huq.

"Their Olympic athletes impressed us all in Sydney and then Athens, and they have emerged as champions in a very short space of time."

"Looking ahead, China is the next frontier for the games expansion."

"Coaching, funding and facilities are in place to fast-track China into playing one-day matches against ICC Affiliates and Associates within the next few years."

"They very much want to be a

SEE PAGE 18 COL 5



Lee Se-won of South Korea hits a forehand return against Reddy Yamini of India in the quarterfinals of the Sagufta ATF Under-14 tennis tournament at the Ramna National Tennis Complex yesterday.