



Did U Know?

Susanthika Jayasinghe is the first Sri Lankan woman to win a medal (bronze in 200m) in the 2000 Sydney Olympic Games.



Zlatan Ibrahimovic
(Inter Milan's Swedish star footballer)
"Herman Crespo is a great striker and always seems to score. It's easy to play alongside him, as he helps out the team in defence and attack."

What to WATCH
ESPN
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Harmison form no worry at all

BBC ONLINE, undated

Steve Harmison will be at the top of his form by the time the Ashes begin at the end of November, England bowling coach Kevin Shine has insisted.

The Durham fast bowler struggled with his rhythm in the ICC Champions Trophy in India and was dropped for the game against West Indies.

"I'm completely confident that come the first Test on 23 November in Australia, Steve will perform.

"He's the best bowler in the world," Shine told the Mail on Sunday.

"On form, he's a frightening proposition. Test match cricket is completely different from one-day cricket."

England arrive home on Sunday for a brief rest before heading out to Australia on 3 November.

Their first game of the Ashes tour is against a Prime Minister's XI in Canberra on 10 November.

Shine said England were building Harmison up to hit peak form for the Test series.

"I know how much Steve is looking forward to the Ashes," said Shine.

"Harmison bowls at 90mph. We need to look after him. He's a proven, nailed-on match winner. When you get fast bowlers like that, you've got to look after them."

England coach Duncan Fletcher said it was a hard decision to leave Harmison out of the final one-dayer.

"We don't take it lightly, we just felt he seemed to have lost his confidence and we probably needed Jon Lewis to tighten things up a bit," said Fletcher.

"He knows he bowls a lot better in the Test matches, we have got warm-up games in Australia, he goes into the tour a lot fitter for being here and it is now important he gets some overs in because he is a very dangerous bowler in Test cricket."

Clarke given Ashes hope

CRICINFO, undated

Michael Clarke could have the edge over Shane Watson in the fight for a place in the first Ashes Test, provided Australia's bowlers are in top form coming into the match.

However, Ricky Ponting said Watson might get the nod if there is any doubt over the fast men's form.

"It really could just depend on how I or our selectors feel the bowling group is going," Ponting

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Camp begins today

BCB reschedules CCL



SPORTS REPORTER

Although most of the cricketers were still confined to their respective homes across the country because of the political turmoil, Bangladesh national team's preparation camp for the upcoming home series against Zimbabwe will get underway today.

The national selectors disclosed a list of 23 probables on Sunday for the camp to prepare for the five-match one-day series against the southern African nation and asked the selected cricketers to report to coach Dav Whatmore at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur on Tuesday.

But this is unlikely to see all the

players reporting on the first day as most of the players may not return from their ancestral homes due to the Opposition-called blockade which was only withdrawn yesterday.

"Yes, it is unlikely to see full squad on the first day as most of the players cannot return to the capital due to unavailability of vehicles. But we will start the camp anyway," said chief selector Faruque Ahmed.

The Zimbabwe cricket team will arrive in Dhaka on November 23 to play a Twenty20 match and five one-day internationals against Habibul Bashar's men.

On the other hand due to the current political crisis, the tournament committee of the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) has rescheduled the remaining fixtures of the GrameenPhone Corporate Cricket

League (CCL).

As per the new schedule the last Group B match, which was billed for today, between Bangladesh Biman and Raju Fish Culture Limited will now be held on November 3 at the Fatullah Cricket Stadium.

The first semifinal between Acme Laboratories and Epyllion Group will take place at the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium on November 4 instead of November 3 while the second semi between Beximco and Partex has been rearranged for November 5 at the same venue.

The final of the season's curtain raiser tournament, which was scheduled on November 6, will be held on November 7.

The tournament committee has

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Pleased Ponting



REUTERS, Mohali

Australian skipper Ricky Ponting praised his team's complete display and said the six-wicket Champions Trophy victory over hosts India on

Sunday had been "reasonably easy".

"It was a pretty complete game for us," Ponting told reporters. "To lose the toss on that wicket and to get to the total was great."

"I thought our bowlers did a great job to restrict them. When we batted tonight we made it reasonably easy," he added.

World champions Australia restricted India to 249 for eight on a good batting pitch and then eased to victory reaching 252 for four with 4.2 overs to spare.

Damien Martyn top-scored for the second successive game with 73 not out, while Ponting (58) and all rounder Shane Watson (50) capped a splendid top-order show.

Australia's fast bowlers, led by Glenn McGrath, kept a leash on the Indian innings after skipper Rahul Dravid elected to bat.

The win meant Australia reached the semifinals of the biennial event, the only major tournament they have not won, for the third successive time.

Australia will play New Zealand in Mohali on Wednesday. South Africa meet holders West Indies in the other last four clash in Jaipur on Thursday.

"We just managed to take wickets at regular intervals which didn't allow India to get away," Ponting said.

"I thought our bowling in the last six or seven overs was really great today. We didn't give any freebies away so that was really pleasing for us."

He praised Watson, who has eased into the role as Adam Gilchrist's opening partner in the tournament and has been impressive bowling seam in the middle overs.

"He's got a great future, he adds flexibility to the team," Ponting said. Indian skipper Rahul Dravid hoped his young side would learn from the defeat.

"I won't be too critical on this inexperienced side," he said. "They came up against a very good attack and it was a good experience for them."

"We got them off to a flier," Dravid said in reference to Australia's opening partnership from Watson and Adam Gilchrist of 61 in 8.5 overs.

"Once you got there, it was a fight with our backs to wall. The way they batted, even 270 would not have been enough," he said.



Australia batsman Damien Martyn leaps into the air to celebrate the victory against India in the group match of the Champions Trophy in Mohali on Sunday.

PHOTO: AFP

India lambasted



REUTERS, Mumbai

Former players and the media rounded on the Indian cricket team following Sunday's defeat to Australia, a result which saw the hosts exit the Champions Trophy after the group phase.

The six-wicket defeat to the world champions was their second loss in four-team Group A and India had only a win over England to show in an event they were touted as one of the favourites.

"Oh, woe India: that Kangaroo kick again," the Times of India newspaper ran on its front page on Monday, pointing out that India had not beaten the world champions in a one-day international since January 2004.

India, opting to bat, posted a competitive 249 for eight in the must-win contest with a return-to-form 65 by opener Virender Sehwag on a true Mohali pitch.

But their bowling came unstuck as Damien Martyn guided Australia to victory with an unbeaten 73 after opener Shane Watson and skipper Ricky Ponting scored fifties.

"In case the exit door of the Champions Trophy had a 'mettle'

detector, the Indians would have walked out without a blip," said the Indian Express newspaper in a scathing attack.

India's exit meant a sub-continent team would not feature in the semifinals of a major ICC tournament for the first time since the inaugural World Cup in 1975.

In the semifinals, Australia take on New Zealand in Mohali on Wednesday while South Africa meet holders West Indies in Jaipur on Thursday.

Former players have criticised the team for their poor displays, blaming coach Greg Chappell's experiments with the batting order.

India lost a one-day series in the West Indies 4-1 and failed to reach the final of a tri-series tournament in Malaysia last month.

"I was quite expecting it, once the team begins to do badly they go from bad to worse," said former Test captain and selector Ajit Wadekar.

"I will squarely blame it on experimentation as it had left the players in a 'discomfort zone' not knowing what their exact roles are, what number in the batting order and in which match."

The collective loss of form of the batsmen is a major cause for concern for India before the World Cup in the Caribbean next year.

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Roger's dream comes true

AFP, Basel

Roger Federer fulfilled his boyhood dream with a first career title at his home Swiss Indoors on Sunday, thrashing out a 6-3, 6-2, 7-6 victory over Chile's Fernando Gonzales.

The world No. 1 came good on his third try for the trophy after losing the 2000 final to Swede Thomas Enqvist and going down a year later to Tim Henman.

The emphatic win was Federer's 24th in a row and marked his fourth consecutive trophy performance this season (US Open, Tokyo, Madrid), carrying the classy dominator of the sport to 11 titles so far in 2006.

That total has duplicated his showings from each of the last two seasons, with chances to increase the bounty coming at next week's Paris Masters and the season-ending Masters Cup in Shanghai from Nov. 12.

"It's a dream to finally win my home tournament," said the former Basel ballboy, now 87-5 this season with 44 career titles. "This is an exciting moment."

The 25-year-old, recalling his days as a kid on court at the St Jakobshalle, advised the current ballboy: "Don't go away, there's pizza coming for you later."



Demonstrators at the Khokhra circle in Ahmedabad burn an effigy of India's cricket coach Greg Chappell on Monday, the day after the team lost to Australia to get knocked out from the Champions Trophy.

PHOTO: AFP

Ricky predicts few changes for WC

CRICINFO, undated

Australia's one-day squad will undergo few, if any, changes before the World Cup begins in March, according to the captain Ricky Ponting. He said the 14 players in India for the Champions Trophy would be the basis of the line-up, although injuries and form lapses were unpredictable.

"I think the make-up of our team at the moment is pretty close to what it will be for the World Cup," Ponting told the Courier-Mail. "I don't see there's going to be many, if any, changes to our squad. The squad is looking really good. We've got lots of flexibility, we've got lots of experience and a little bit of youth around, which is obviously important going into world cups. But the World Cup is a long way off yet and lots of things can happen."

Ponting said he was thrilled with the balance of Australia's team in India. The young fast bowler Mitchell Johnson has bowled impressively, taking the key wicket of Virender Sehwag against India, and collecting 3 for 40 against England.

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An Asian headache



AFP, Mohali

The failure of the four Asian teams to make the semifinals of the Champions Trophy indicated trouble lay in store at the World Cup, experts said Monday.

India joined Pakistan and Sri Lanka on the sidelines after being thrashed by world champions Australia by six wickets here Sunday night, while Bangladesh failed to progress beyond the qualifying rounds.

This was the first time since the inaugural World Cup in 1975 that an Asian team had failed to enter the semifinals of a major multi-nation tournament -- that, too, in their own backyard.

The first semifinal here Wednesday pits Australia against their trans-Tasman rivals New Zealand. On Thursday, South Africa clash with defending champions the West Indies in Jaipur.

"I still can't believe it," said legendary all-rounder Kapil Dev, who captained India to their lone World Cup triumph in 1983.

"We are supposed to be masters in our conditions, the same applies to Sri Lanka and Pakistan. It's like going for a wedding minus the bride and the bridegroom."

"I don't even want to contemplate what will happen at the World Cup. It's going to be tough, very tough."

Sri Lanka breezed through the qualifying round against the West Indies, Bangladesh and Zimbabwe before falling at the first major hurdle against a depleted Pakistan in Jaipur.

Mahela Jayawardene's Sri Lankans bounced back to beat New Zealand in Mumbai, only to lose the crucial game against South Africa at Ahmedabad that sent the islanders crashing out of the tournament.

Few gave Pakistan a chance after inspirational captain Inzamam-ul-Haq was banned for four matches over the Oval Test fiasco and pace spearheads Shoaib Akhtar and Mohammad Asif were recalled home a day before their first match due to failed drug tests.

Yet the Pakistanis stunned Sri Lanka, but could not put it across New Zealand and South Africa on seaming wickets in the northern town of Mohali.

Hosts India, often referred to as tigers at home and lambs abroad, went out with a whimper after losing

Ashraf arrives as advisory hockey coach

UNB, Dhaka

Newly appointed advisory coach of Bangladesh hockey team Kamran Ashraf has said the main problem of the Bangladeshi players is their lack of confidence, a malaise they will have to be rid of for better results.

Ashraf, a former Pakistan star, arrived in the city on October 26 to work as the advisory coach of the national side for the Doha Asian Games over December 1-15.

Talking to the reporters yesterday, the coach said: "I played with the Bangladeshi players and know they have potential."

"In my short period here, my focus will be to identify the weaknesses of the players and to help them come out of these," he said.

During his stay here, Ashraf will assist the two local coaches of the national team -- Mahbub Harun and Abdullah Piru.

This is not the first visit for Ashraf to Bangladesh. Earlier, in 1996, he played here for the first time with the PIA Eleven. He also played here for Mohammedan SC in 1998 and 2002.

Earlier, another Pakistani hockey international Qamar Ibrahim worked as the Bangladesh national coach before Tahir Zaman worked as the advisory coach in the Asian Games Qualifying Round Hockey Tournament last April in Dhaka.

International Hockey Federation (FIH) helped Bangladesh Hockey Federation (BHF) to obtain the services of Ashraf as the advisory coach. He will remain with the Bangladesh team till the Asian Games, according to a BHF source.

Ashraf retired from international hockey in 2002 and did the FIH Coaches' Course in 2004. He also worked as assistant coach to Tahir Zaman in the 2005 Junior Hockey World Cup for Pakistan.



World No 1 Roger Federer kisses the trophy after winning the final against Fernando Gonzales of Chile at the Swiss Indoors ATP tournament in Basel on Sunday.

PHOTO: AFP

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