



Did U Know?

The legendary captain of the West Indies Clive Lloyd was the first captain to win 25 Test matches.



Jose Mourinho

(Chelsea manager)
"I don't like to use the word unstoppable, but he is great in every aspect of his game. I have never seen a better Drogba than now."
After Didier Drogba scored a hat-trick against Watford in the Premiership.



TEN Sports

Pakistan v West Indies

First Test, Day Four

Live at 10:30 am

ESPN

Sportscenter India

Live at 8:30 pm

STAR Sports

Tennis Masters Cup

Live at 5:00 pm

BCCI reveals WI, SL dates

AFP, New Delhi

India will host the West Indies and Sri Lanka for four one-day cricket internationals each early next year in the build up to the World Cup, the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) announced on Monday.

The West Indies, who host the World Cup in March-April, will play in India from January 21 to 30 followed by Sri Lanka's tour from February 8 to 17.

SCHEDULE

INDIA v WEST INDIES		
Jan 21	1st ODI	Nagpur
Jan 24	2nd ODI	Cuttack (D/N)
Jan 27	3rd ODI	Chennai (D/N)
Jan 30	4th ODI	Vadodara
INDIA v SRI LANKA		
Feb 8	1st ODI	Pune
Feb 11	2nd ODI	Rajkot
Feb 14	3rd ODI	Goa
Feb 17	4th ODI	V'patnam

New twist in Hair story

CRICINFO, undated

The International Cricket Council (ICC) might have washed its hands of Darrell Hair, but the elite umpire just won't go away as quietly as the mandarins in Dubai must have hoped he would.

A week after being told that he would not be allowed to officiate in another international match, rumours continue to rumble that Hair might be seriously considering suing for damages.

Hair's case appears to have been strengthened by leaked reports in Sydney's Daily Telegraph which state that he received an excellent rating from the ICC immediately before the infamous Oval Test last August.

The ICC report effectively ranked Hair as second best in the world, and on decision-making statistics alone, measured from video evidence, he was rated top, with 253 correct out of 263 -- a success rate of 95.5 per cent.

The newspaper claims to have a copy of the ICC's individual report on Hair in which states that "you do not shirk your responsibilities in this area, putting your faith in the process to get the correct outcome."

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Pro League transfer from tomorrow?



SPORTS REPORTER

The transfer of the inaugural Professional Football League is due to begin tomorrow with clubs and players both advancing to the new era with caution.

A total of 12 clubs -- eight from Dhaka and the remaining four from Chittagong, Khulna and Sylhet -- will be part of the Pro League, which is expected to kick-off in the latter half of December, provided the political situation remains calm.

The Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF), considering the countrywide blockade, will sit today to decide the course of the near future.

The rumour is rife that a couple of Dhaka giants, cash-starved as well as struggling to find players, are trying to bank on the political turbulence to delay the transfer, which has already been deferred

three.

It also seems that the BFF's today's meeting, with the league committee and executive committee members available in the city, has been influenced by verbal requests of the two club officials and the governing body of football could announce a further delay.

BFF general secretary Anwarul Haque Helal, however, told yesterday that the federation has received no such request.

"We will discuss the present situation in today's meeting and take a decision regarding the transfer," he said.

Many think it would be unwise to defer the transfer due to the political turmoil because it will last for one and a half months (Nov 15-Dec 31).

Heavyweights like Abahani and Muktijoddha Sangsad have all but shaped their squads at the expenses of Brothers Union and Mohammedan Sporting Club -- last year's Premier League and

National League winners respectively.

Having failed to win any major title in the last five seasons, Abahani have long before confirmed services of seasoned and up and coming national players like goalkeepers Biplab (Mohammedan) and Tarek, defenders Sujon, Nazrul and Siraji, midfielders Abul, Pranotosh and forward Emily (all Brothers).

The sky-blues, who have kept their entire squad from the previous season with Farhad being the only doubt, are also looking to have national team's last Argentine coach Andres Cruciani.

Muktijoddha, who retained most of their valuable ones including national number one custodian Aminul, Rajani, Titu, Hassan Al Mamun and Moni, have made deals with Mohammedan trio Alfaz, Maitur Munna and Arman Aziz apart from Brothers' Parvez Babu.

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Sylhet reach zonal final

SPORTS REPORTER

Sylhet moved into the zonal final of the National Cricket Championship with a 31-run victory over Jahangirnagar University in the day's lone match at the BKSP ground yesterday.

Sylhet scored 231 for nine wickets in the stipulated 50 overs before restricting Jahangirnagar University to 200 in 48.3 overs.

Meanwhile, the remaining matches of the ongoing championship have been temporarily postponed due to the non-stop blockade enforced by Awami League-led 14-party alliance.

WC FINAL ISSUE Pawar talks to Ashraf

PTI, New Delhi

The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) on Monday sought to douse a potential conflict with its Pakistani counterpart over allotment of 2011 World Cup matches with president Sharad Pawar himself taking the initiative to resolve any dispute over the table.

Pawar held a long telephonic discussion with Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) chairman Nasim Ashraf during the day in the wake of reports that PCB was unhappy over the allotment of matches for the mega event to be jointly hosted by four Asian countries.

"There is no question of any confrontation with the PCB over the allotment of World Cup matches or on any other issue," BCCI's media and communication committee convenor Rajiv Shukla told PTI.

"BCCI president Sharad Pawar will resolve the issue with Ashraf across the table," he asserted. Shukla said after having consultations with former PCB chief Shaharyar Khan, Pawar had signed some agreements, but now if there was any communication gap or misunderstanding, it would be sorted out amicably.

India wait on Yuvraj

BBC ONLINE, undated

India hope to have Yuvraj Singh fit for the World Cup despite the all-rounder's ongoing left knee problems.

Yuvraj's knee will be reassessed in late December, but doctors hope to rule out surgery, giving the player the best chance of making a quick recovery.

"The plan is to follow a conservative rehab path, with constant ongoing reassessment," said India cricket official Niranjan Shah in a statement.

Yuvraj injured ligaments in the knee during Champions Trophy training.

Shah said: "At approximately the eight-week post injury point a thorough clinical appraisal of the overall stability of the knee will be undertaken."

"At this point, depending upon the findings, we will either pursue conservative management or opt for surgical intervention."

"We would anticipate that at this point Yuvraj will have returned to running activities."

India's first World Cup fixture is on March 17, against Bangladesh.

Justine triumphs at Madrid

AFP, Madrid

Justine Henin-Hardenne hammered home her status as world number one by beating defending champion Amelie Mauresmo of France to claim the season-ending WTA Tour Championship for the first time here on Sunday.

The 24-year-old Belgian, who takes the world number one spot from Mauresmo who drops to number three on Monday, won 6-4, 6-3 in her third major showdown with the Frenchwoman this year.

Mauresmo, 27, beat Henin-Hardenne in the Australian Open, when the Belgian retired through illness, and at Wimbledon.

"It's a lot of emotion for me because I know how hard it is to come back," said Henin-Hardenne, making her comeback after two months out with a calf injury.

And she said she had learned from her loss to Mauresmo in Friday's pool match.

"I looked at what I did then and today I just tried to do something else. It's unbelievable. I didn't expect to win the title here. I wanted this win so much. I gave it everything."

Henin-Hardenne never allowed her opponent to get the upper hand in a tie which saw nine breaks in total of which six were in the Belgian's favour.

Mauresmo, who was also

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BCB running out of time



SPORTS REPORTER

Another day passed by, but still Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) was kept waiting for the much-needed government clearance to complete the formalities of the lucrative TV deal for the next six years.

The BCB high-ups were pressed for time as they believed any further delay could result in back-out of the highest bidder Nimbus Sports International, leaving the country's cricket incur a huge financial loss.

The BCB officials, however, were expecting two letters by today from the Ministry of Youth and Sports -- one with the approval about the deal and the other a likely removal circular of its president Ali Asghar, who was appointed chief of the country's most affluent sports body by the BNP-led four-

party alliance.

And the board is expected to take hard-line if they did not get the clearance within the next 24 hours as it has decided not to press the ministry further for the go-ahead signal.

"Now the ball is in the ministry's court because it will decide whether it protects the financial interest of Bangladesh cricket or not. We are very much transparent about the issue that's why there is no scope to bargain with them and make people believe there is something wrong behind the deal," said an enraged Khondokar Jamiluddin, a member of the BCB.

BCB general secretary Mahbub Anam, however, remained diplomatic, mentioning that both the parties are very much concerned about the time factor.

"We are eagerly waiting for a reply to strike the final deal. We are very much aware about the essence of times. I think the sports adviser (CM Shafi Sami) is happy

with the procedures so far. We have submitted all the papers regarding the deal and I can assure you that there is nothing to hide," said the bearded organiser.

Mahbub warned that the board would face serious consequences if it fails to overcome the crisis and make the contract final with Nimbus, which is also waiting for BCB's reply as it has another big assignment of catching the International Cricket Council (ICC) TV deal.

"If we fail to strike the deal then there will be two options open for us. Either we have to go back to ESPNStar Sports for a new deal and definitely for much less money, then we can call a re-tender. We will also suffer a financial loss if we fail to arrange this month's Zimbabwe series for current crisis. Except security reasons, you have to pay money if you fail to host a team in their return series," explained Mahbub.

"I can tell that we will disclose all

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India captain Rahul Dravid (R) addresses a press conference as coach Greg Chappell looks on in Mumbai on Monday.

India off to South Africa

Dravid wants key players to stand up and deliver



AFP, New Delhi

India leave for South Africa Monday night praying their key cricketers deliver on the tough tour, after a string of below-par performances in recent one-day internationals.

"I think we need to get performances from a lot of our key players," India captain Rahul Dravid said before the team's departure for the two-month tour, that includes five one-dayers and three Tests.

"For the last two or three series we have not been able to get consistent performances from most of our key players. That is something we need to correct," he said.

India's performance has been disappointing since losing 4-1 in the West Indies in May. They failed to qualify for a triangular series final in Malaysia in September against Australia and the West Indies.

The worst came when Dravid's Indians were eliminated in the league phase of the recent Champions Trophy at home. They have lost eight of their last 12 one-day internationals.

"We have to adjust to the bouncing ball in South Africa. The batsmen have to show patience. I think the courage and character of the team will be tested," said Dravid.

India have won just three of their 16 one-dayers in South Africa since 1992, but Dravid said his side had the talent to give a good account of themselves this time.

"We have not done well in South Africa in the past and we'd like to put in good performances this time. That will give us a lot of confidence going into the World Cup (in the West Indies next year)," he said.

Dravid said the return of veteran leg-spinner Anil Kumble would help the team on the difficult tour.

"Obviously, his experience and knowledge will help us. We always had him in our plans, but we need to

manage him in terms of the amount of cricket he plays," said Dravid.

Kumble, 36, has not been considered for limited-overs cricket since August 2005, despite being the most successful Indian bowler in both forms of the game, with 533 Test and 329 one-day wickets.

But India suffering a setback when hard-hitting batsman Yuvraj Singh was ruled out of the tour due to a knee injury.

"Yuvraj had a great run for the last one-and-a-half years, but we cannot do anything about injuries. It will give another youngster an opportunity to put in some good performances," said the Indian captain.

Indian coach Greg Chappell said the boys had it in them to do well in South Africa where the wickets would help strokeplay.

"We have some players who

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Pakistan batsman Mohammad Yousuf (R) raises his bat to acknowledge the crowd's applause upon reaching 150 on the third day of the first Test against the West Indies at the Gaddafi Stadium in Lahore on Monday.

Hosts in sight of victory

Yousuf misses double ton by a whisker



AFP, Lahore

Mohammad Yousuf missed a masterly double century by eight runs but guided Pakistan to a winning position against the West Indies in the first Test here on Monday.

Yousuf's 192 helped Pakistan score 485 in their first innings, before they caught the tourists napping at 74-3 at close on the third day at Gaddafi Stadium. The West Indies had made 206 in their first innings.

The Windies, who need another 205 runs to avoid an innings defeat with seven wickets in hand, now look to their captain Brian Lara who was unbeaten on 28 at close with nightwatchman Fidel Edwards not out on five.

Lara, whose first two scoring shots were boundaries, survived some anxious moments before bad

light stopped play 20 overs early.

The West Indies had a disastrous start to their second innings when Daren Ganga failed to break a throw by Imran Farhat from square leg after being sent back by Chris Gayle in the fourth over.

Gayle followed his fellow opener as he edged paceman Umar Gul to wicketkeeper Kamran Akmal after scoring just 11 to leave the West Indies tottering at 20-2.

Lara and Ramnaresh Sarwan took the score to 56 when Gul struck again by trapping Sarwan in front of the wicket for 23. However, television replays showed Sri Lankan umpire Asoka de Silva again faltered with the ball hitting the batsman high on the pads.

Earlier Yousuf, who was unbeaten 107 overnight, continued his good batting form to pile the agony on the tourists.

Yousuf hit 24 boundaries and a six in his 20th Test hundred and added 139 runs for the fifth wicket

with Shoaib Malik (69) and another 148 for the seventh wicket with Akmal (78).

His eight-hours and 21-minute-long innings finally ended when he missed a flighted delivery from off-spinner Gayle and was stumped by wicketkeeper Denesh Ramdin.

Resuming at 265-4, Shoaib Malik was caught at short mid-wicket off a miscued on-drive for 69, and in the next over Abdul Razaq (five) edged Taylor for a regulation catch behind the stumps to leave Pakistan at 285-6.

Malik, who missed Pakistan's tour of England earlier this year with an elbow injury, hit ten boundaries in his 155-ball knock and provided able support to Yousuf after Pakistan lost their way at 140-4 on Sunday.

West Indies applied pressure

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Belgium's world number one Justine Henin-Hardenne celebrates after beating France's Amelie Mauresmo in the final of the end-of-season WTA Tour Championship in Madrid on Sunday.

PHOTO: AFP