



Did U Know?

London's successful bid to host the 2012 Olympics means Wimbledon will host the tennis event for the second time. The only time Olympic tennis was played at Wimbledon was at the 1908 London Games.



Ricky Ponting

(Australia cricket captain)
"We will be a better team this time around. We've looked at ourselves closer than before the last Ashes. We've identified what might have held us back last time. I don't think there's going to be too much drastic change -- we just made a lot of mistakes last time."

What to WATCH

ESPN

India v South Africa
Second One-Day International
Live at 6:30 pm
Australia v England
First Test, Ashes Series
Live at 6:00 am (Thursday)

TEN Sports

Pakistan v West Indies
Second Test, Day 4
Live at 10:30 am
UEFA Champions League
Bremen v Chelsea
Live at 12:30 am (Thursday)
Inter Milan v Sporting Lisbon
Delayed at 2:45 am (Thursday)

Citigroup Cup Golf from tomorrow

SPORTS REPORTER

The Citigroup Cup golf tournament will begin tomorrow at the Kurmitola Golf Club.

Chief of Army Staff Lt Gen Moen U Ahmed will inaugurate the two-day event sponsored by Citigroup, a global financial services company.

More than 350 golfers from the city are expected to participate in the meet.



PHOTO: AFP

West Indies captain Brian Lara raises his arms upon reaching his century on the third day of the second Test against Pakistan in Multan yesterday.

Lara rips Pakistan apart

Equals Gavaskar's 34 centuries



AFP, Multan

Brian Lara hit a majestic undefeated 196 on the third day of the second cricket Test to put his team in a commanding position against Pakistan at Multan stadium here on Tuesday.

The 37-year-old Trinidadian, who became the fifth batsman to score century before lunch in Test cricket, blunted the Pakistan attack to take his team to 509-5 at close on the third day.

The tourists now have a lead of 152 runs over Pakistan's first-innings score of 357 and are in a strong position to press for a series-leaving win after losing the first of

three Tests by nine wickets in Lahore.

Lara reached his 34th Test hundred off just 77 balls with a pull off fast bowler Shahid Nazir for two runs in the penultimate over before lunch after 125 minutes of batting.

His century, studded with 12 boundaries and five sixes, is the ninth fastest Test hundred in terms of balls faced and overshadowed a brilliant 93 by Chris Gayle, 89 by Dwayne Bravo and 82 by Daren Ganga.

In his 366-minute stay at the crease so far Lara has hit 21 boundaries and seven sixes, putting the home bowlers into submission.

Lara said it would be important to keep the pressure on the home team.

"I am happy with the team's

performance today (Tuesday) but it is important to keep the momentum going and if we are able to put a couple of more partnerships then we would put Pakistan under pressure," said Lara.

"It was unfortunate that none of the other batsmen reached a century. I would have liked the younger batsmen reaching the three-figure mark."

The imperious left-handed batsman put on 200 for the fifth wicket stand with Bravo which erased West Indies' previous fifth wicket best of 183 against Pakistan set by Collie Smith and Everton Weekes at Bridgetown in 1957.

Pakistan finally dismissed Bravo in the dying minutes when he edged leg-spinner Danish Kaneria to slips. Lara scored his century in the extended two-and-a-half hour session. He took the field at the fall of Chris Gayle's wicket and made exactly a hundred runs in the session -- the criteria for a batsman to have hit a century before lunch.

This becomes Lara's fourth successive hundred against Pakistan after scoring two in as many Tests in the Caribbean last year and 122 in the first Test of the current series.

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THE CLOBBERS' CLUB

CRICINFO, undated

Following are the most number of runs scored in a single over in Test cricket:

Runs	Batsman	Sequence	Bowler	Venue	Year
28	B Lara	466444	R Peterson (SA)	Jo'burg	2003
27	S Afridi	666621	H Singh (Ind)	Lahore	2005
26	C McMillan	444464	Y Khan (Pak)	Hamilton	2000
26	B Lara	406664	D Kaneria (Pak)	Multan	2006
25	A Roberts	46266b	I Botham (Eng)	PoS	1980

BHF revises Asiad squad

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Hockey Federation (BHF) yesterday revised its squad for the Asian Games but still, Ariful Haque Prince was not picked by the selectors for the December 1-15 mega event in Doha.

Head coach Kamran Ashraf had included four players outside the preliminary list but in the end, the BHF did not get the approval of the Games organising committee to include the new names: Mahbubullah Shakil, Mosharrar Hossain Kuti, Mostafizur Rahman Dinar and Zahid Bin Talib Shuvo.

The BHF replaced them with Zahid Hossain, Hedayetul Islam Rajib, Shamsuddin Tuhin and Mazharul Islam Moksed.

Mohammedan striker Prince, in good touch during the Club Cup and the postponed Premier League, could not find a place as Pakistani coach Kamran is looking forward to form a tight defensive unit as Bangladesh face strong teams in their group.

Bangladesh, led by new captain Musa Mia, start their campaign

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Sehwag likely for 2nd ODI

PTI, Durban

India's struggling batting line-up on Tuesday received a big boost with opener Virender Sehwag likely to play in the second cricket one-day against South Africa here today, having almost recovered from a finger injury.

Sehwag, who sustained a finger injury before the warm-up game against South Africa A in Benoni on November 16, has recovered well and coach Greg Chappell is confident that the hard-hitting batsman would be ready for the day-night encounter.

"Veeru (Sehwag) got a few more days to recover from his injury. Some stitches have come off and some more are still there, the finger too is sore but he would be alright for Wednesday's game," Chappell said.

Sehwag had suffered a gash in the right ring finger before the start of a warm-up game in Benoni. He needed four stitches to close the gaping wound and did not play the warm-up match which the visitors lost by 37 runs.

Winning starts for Bangladeshi GMs

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladeshi Grandmasters Niaz Mursheed and Ziaur Rahman both got off to auspicious starts beating their Indian opponents in the Commonwealth Chess Championship 2006 in Mumbai on Monday.

In the first round, Zia beat Iyer Prasanna while Niaz defeated Dheraj Kumar.

A total of 164 players including 13 Grandmasters, 18 International Masters and seven Women's Grandmasters from hosts India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Singapore, Namibia, South Africa, England and Malaysia are taking part in the 10-round Swiss League competition.

Whatmore takes guard



SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh coach Dav Whatmore yesterday dismissed allegations that he alone had anything to do with the exclusion of ace batsman Mohammad Ashraful from the national squad for the first three one-dayers against Zimbabwe.

The Sri Lankan-born Australian, apparently saddened by media outburst on the Ashraful issue, also categorically rubbished the widespread whisperings that he has developed bitter relationship with the 22-year-old batter.

"It's a committee decision. I am pretty sure you know this. It's sad

they had to say what happened in any committee. We all have different ideas from time to time. We advance our arguments. At the end of any issue after speaking and giving a good hearing and good discussion, on any issue, then we have to make a decision," told the under-fire Bangladesh coach while talking to reporters during the Tigers' practice session at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

He, however, was diplomatic when asked whether he had any personal mission to convince the panel to take the tough decision.

"Once a decision is made, whether it is selection decision or anything else, it's a committee decision...in any discussion, some will say yes, some will say no, some

not sure. How did this come about? This is a committee decision and everyone should stand by at the end of the day," he responded.

"I would be very wrong to now having said what I said. I'm a part of this committee and Faruque Ahmed is our spokesman as a chief selector. He came and gave it to you," he added.

The Bangladesh coach was not ready to make a direct comment when asked whether it was ethical to leak the details of selection committee meetings.

"I don't want to make any comment. I am here to do a job. I am part of this committee. I have my say where I can have a say. I can be forceful as I want or otherwise. Any issue that has been discussed as

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Sharif blows Ctg away



SPORTS REPORTER

Mohammad Sharif continued his brilliant form as he helped revive Dhaka's fortunes on the opening day of the four-day match against Chittagong in the Ispahani Mirzapore 8th National Cricket League at the Chittagong Divisional Stadium yesterday.

Dhaka thwarted the hosts' superb start to bowl them out for only 238 in the first innings with the medium pacer taking four wickets.

At the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium, Khulna's young paceman

Dollar Mahmud grabbed five wickets but Barisal endured a terrible start to post 245 for seven at stumps.

In another match of the third round, pace trio Mohammad Shahjada, Mushfiqur Rahman and Alamgir Kabir each took three wickets as Rajshahi folded the Sylhet first innings for 181 at the Rajshahi Divisional Stadium.

Sylhet opener Imtiaz Hossain fought a lone battle, scoring 97 in more than three hours but his teammates failed to cope with the Rajshahi seam attack.

CHITTAGONG v DHAKA
Openers Tamim Iqbal and Masumuddin Hossain gave Chittagong

the best possible start as they added 144 runs in the opening stand. Both batted solidly and their stroke-making frustrated the visitors for three hours before Masum, having scored 57 off 137 balls, fell to left-arm spinner Mosharrar Hossain Rubel.

His younger partner Iqbal, who hit twelve fours and a six in his 131-ball 84, was bowled by Sharif soon after. Their dismissals sparked a collapse as Mosharrar, Sharif and Talha went on to destroy Chittagong's solid middle-order.

Previous match centurion and hosts' skipper Ehsanul Haque did not trouble the scorers as he fell lbw

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PHOTO: STAR

Bangladesh vice-captain Shahriar Nafees knocks in the nets during the Tigers' practice session at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

Thorpe signs off



AFP, Sydney

Australian Olympic superstar Ian Thorpe, regarded as one of the greatest swimmers of all time, announced Tuesday that he was retiring from his record-breaking career at the age of 24.

The powerful "Thorpedo", who won legions of fans around the world as he raced in his trademark black bodysuit to nine Olympic medals and 13 World Championship medals, said he had realised there was more to life than swimming.

After facing injury, illness and questions about his motivation ahead of the Beijing Olympics in 2008, Thorpe said a training stint in Los Angeles this year had focused his mind on his future as a man, rather than as a swimmer.

"As I got fit physically my mind also got fit. I started asking a lot of questions. I started looking at myself not only as a swimmer but as a person," he told a news conference.

"Another way to look at it is you can swim lap after lap staring at a black line and all of a sudden you look up and see what's around you. That's what it feels like to me."

Thorpe, who stands 195 cm tall and has massive flipper-size 17 feet, won three gold and two silver medals at the Sydney Olympics in 2000 when he was just 17.

Magnificently built and admired for his powerful grace in the water, he was the pin-up of the games and later did a catwalk modelling stint for Armani.

He went on to win two Olympic golds in Athens in 2004, in his favoured 200 and 400 metres freestyle, and over his career broke an astonishing total of 13 world records.

He won 11 gold medals, one silver and one bronze at three FINA World Championships and 10 Commonwealth Games gold medals.

Thorpe, looking relaxed and cheerful, said he had realised that he now viewed his swimming career very differently to how he had seen it in the past and had wrestled for some time over his decision to retire.

The legendary swimmer has not competed at a major international meet since the 2004 Athens Olympics, with his bid to come back following a year out of competition ravaged by illness and injury.

He was ruled out of the Melbourne Commonwealth Games

last March because of glandular fever and he has struggled to shake off the energy-sapping illness.

Thorpe, who has an interest in fashion and his own underwear line, said he had not yet made any decision about his future, but would retain "some role" in swimming and was involved in plans for an Australian television show.

"I have a number of different

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THE HUMAN FISH AT A GLANCE

AFP, Sydney

The following is a list of key facts and career landmarks in the life of Australian Olympic legend Ian Thorpe, who on Tuesday announced his retirement from professional swimming.

* Ian James Thorpe, also known as the "Thorpedo", "Thorpie" or the "Human Fish" was born in Sydney on October 13, 1982.

* Over a nine-year career, he won nine Olympic medals -- including five gold, three silver and a bronze, becoming Australia's most decorated Olympian -- and

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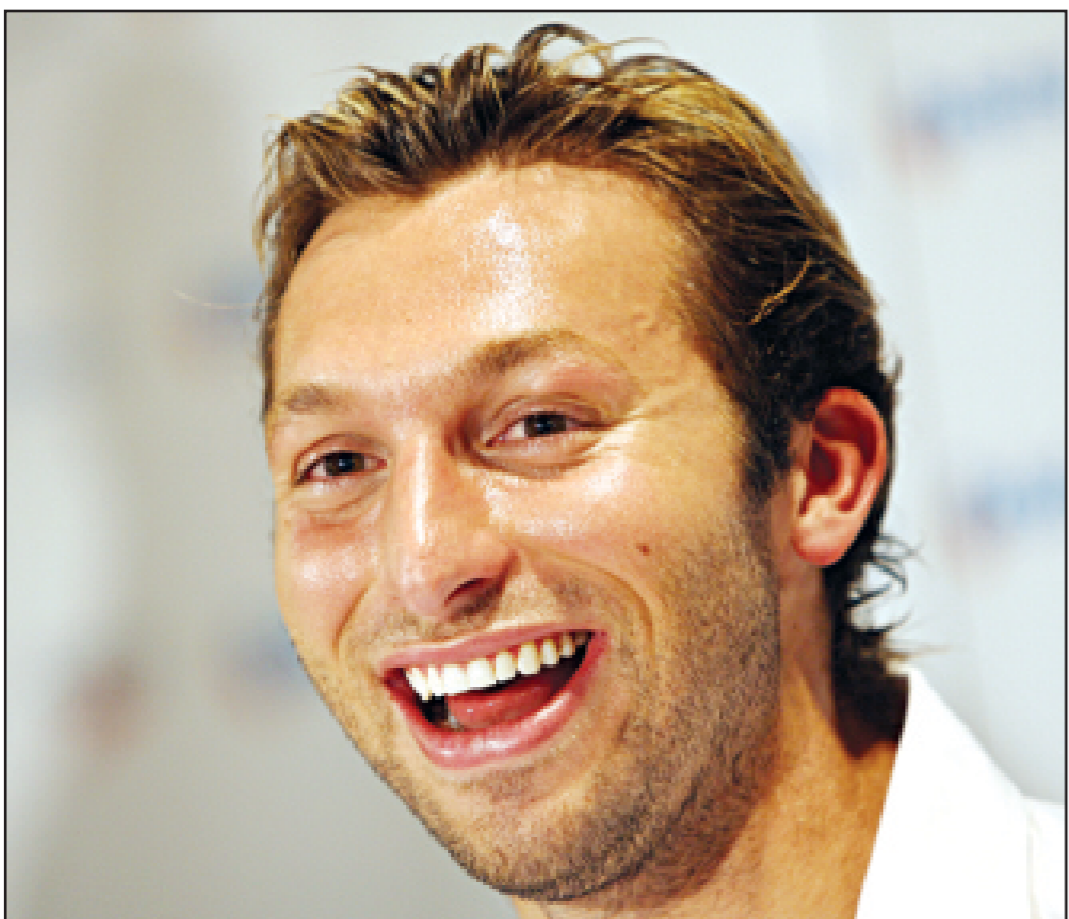


PHOTO: AFP

LEAVING WITH NO REGRETS: Australian swimming superstar Ian Thorpe is all smiles during a press conference where he announced his retirement in Sydney yesterday.