



Did U Know?

Australian captain Ricky Ponting scored 196 runs from 319 balls in the first innings of the first Ashes Test against England at the Brisbane Cricket Ground on November 23. It was his thirty second century, sixth against England.



Sepp Blatter

(FIFA president)
"As long I am president, it will only be goal-line technology. Until I am no longer president, there will be no chance (for video replays)."

A morale booster



BISHWAJIT ROY from Khulna

The presence of a small crowd might have been frustrating for the home team in their maiden Twenty20 International -- International Cricket Council (ICC)'s new version of the game -- match captain Shahriar Nafees believes that their 43-run win here yesterday will work as a morale booster against Zimbabwe ahead of the five-match one-day series.

Hardly three thousand spectators enjoyed the match at the 15,000-capacity stadium in the northern part of the country and along with the many others, the left-handed opener was surprised by the poor turnout when tickets were almost sold out for tomorrow's first one-day at the same venue.

"I can't understand why people were reluctant to watch the match. It was little bit frustrating for us but in the end I'm happy with the outcome. I think it was a very important victory ahead of the one-day series," said the young batter.

He said that his side's all-round ability made the difference. "I think everybody contributed in the match which was very important. I always prefer team effort rather than one or two individual endeavours. And to me, every win is important whatever the character of the game," he said.

Nafees admitted that he had very little to do on the field as a captain because everything was settled

before the game. "We have decided everything in the team meeting, so there was hardly anything special for me to execute in the middle," he informed responding to a question whether there was any scope for a skipper to show his speciality in a Twenty20 match.

Mashrafe Bin Mortuza, who scored an explosive 46 off 19 balls just a day earlier here in a warm-up match against a local side, turned out to be the hero with bat and ball and he was elated after his match winning performance of 36 runs and one wicket.

"Though my main job is to serve the team as a bowler, I enjoyed batting most today because it was a totally different ball game," said Mashrafe, dubbed the 'Narail Express' for his bowling.

The lack of electrifying atmosphere in the stands was made up by chaotic ambience in the press box, interestingly named after former Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) president Ali Asghar, an ex-lawmaker of Khulna.

Although the board had financed the preparation of the press box in the newly-built stadium, many found the decision to name it after the ex-president naive.

Although there had been lot of expectations about media facilities for the series, the reporters had to struggle hard to watch the match properly from the box.

In the end, Bangladesh won the match convincingly but a big question hung over its status. Although

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THERE YOU GO: Bangladesh fast bowler Mashrafe Bin Mortuza celebrates the wicket of Zimbabwe dangerman Brendan Taylor during their first-ever Twenty20 International at the Bir Shrestha Shaheed Flight Lieutenant Motiur Rahman Stadium in Khulna yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

India: Win or bust

4th ODI against South Africa today



CRICINFO, undated

India have a perfect record of the wrong kind at Port Elizabeth -- three losses, including one to Kenya -- and with a fracture having ruled out Rahul Dravid, they face an unenviable task in trying to stay alive in the one-day series at St. George Park on Wednesday.

Virender Sehwag, who has not been one half the vice-captain that Dravid was for Sourav Ganguly, needs to start showing that he still belongs at this level, and India must hope that the responsibility of leading the side rouses him from the slumber that has characterised his one-day cricket for most of the past 18 months.

With both Yuvraj Singh and Dravid missing, the middle-order

batting looks as thin as the team sheet it's written on, and the current crisis might necessitate Sachin Tendulkar dropping down to No.4 to lend the middle some ballast.

In such a situation, Wasim Jaffer, whose one-day debut lasted all of three balls in Durban, will get another opportunity to play himself into limited-overs plans.

There will also be a change on the bowling front, with the extra pace and swing option offered by Sreesanth edging out the more skiddy option that Ajit Agarkar provides.

Zaheer Khan has come back a reformed individual, and with Munaf Patel likely to sit out the rest of the series with an ankle injury, he and Sreesanth will be asked to make early inroads into a South African batting line-up that has been as vulnerable against the moving ball in recent times.

And though the dry pitch won't be a raging turner, both Anil Kumble and Harbhajan Singh should play.

South Africa have brought Ashwell Prince into the squad, and his inclusion in the middle order will see AB de Villiers move up to open with Graeme Smith. Smith has looked woefully out of sorts with the bat in recent games, but with the team winning, it will be Loots

Bosman that sits out.

They will also have to pick two of three from Andrew Hall, Charl Langeveldt and a fit-again Andre Nel, with Robin Peterson's left-arm slow bowling unlikely to be risked against a line-up struggling so much against pace.

It was at Port Elizabeth that South Africa embarked on a remarkable unbeaten run in February 2005, after a period where they had lost 12 of 13 games, with the lone win coming against Bangladesh. Smith's 105 led the way that day as South Africa chased down 268, and Sehwag will need to deliver a performance of similarly epic proportions if India are to even get started in this series.

PROBABLE TEAMS

SOUTH AFRICA: Graeme Smith (capt), Loots Bosman, Jacques Kallis, Herschelle Gibbs, Ashwell Prince, Mark Boucher, Justin Kemp, Shaun Pollock, Andre Nel, Charl Langeveldt, Makhaya Ntini.

INDIA: Virender Sehwag (capt), Wasim Jaffer, Mohammad Kaif, Sachin Tendulkar, Dinesh Karthik, Mahendra Singh Dhoni, Irfan Pathan, Harbhajan Singh, Zaheer Khan, Anil Kumble, Sreesanth.

Korea blank Bangladesh

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh conceded a 3-0 defeat to mighty South Korea in their opening group match of the 15th Asian Games yesterday at the Al-Gharrafa Stadium in Doha.

After Korean World Cupper and captain Lee Soo Chun, the 15-year-old from Ulsan, opened the account in the second minute, Bangladesh put on a stiff resistance against mounting Korean pressure to keep the scoreline slim at the break.

However, the five-man defence cracked on the hour when Park Chu Young doubled the lead and added his second in the 74th minute to complete the rout.

Bangladesh, who failed to take a single shot on rival goal, will face Bahrain on December 1.

25 more leave for Doha

SPORTS REPORTER

The second batch of Bangladesh's contingent for the 15th Asian Games left Dhaka last night for Doha with hope of at least winning one medal.

The Asiad begins at the Qatar capital on December 1.

The second batch, consisted of 25 members from six disciplines (swimming-4, shooting-5, kabaddi-11, chess-3, judo-1 and weightlifting-1), included the kabaddi team who will be the country's only hope to win a medal during the December 1-15 event.

Bangladesh have so far won two silvers, the last being in Busan, South Korea four years ago.

The whole kabaddi team, like other members of the disciplines, are not travelling together as the Bangladesh Olympic Association (BOA) could not make the travel plans properly and in time due to lack of funds.

The football team were the first to leave and another 25-member squad including the hockey team will depart today.

Four members of the athletics team and the one-off taekwondo are due to leave on team will leave on December 4 followed by the lone golfer on the next day.

BFF condoles death of Hanif

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) yesterday condoned the death of its ex-president and former Dhaka City Mayor Mohammad Hanif.

Hanif, who passed away on Monday, was the BFF president from 1996-2001.

BFF president SA Sultan, general secretary Anwarul Hoque Helal and all its executives and employees prayed for the salvation of the departed soul and expressed their heartfelt sympathy for the bereaved family.

Ganga repairs Gul wreck



AFP, Karachi

Daren Ganga anchored the West Indies' innings in the third and final Test after Pakistan fast bowler Umar Gul removed the top order at the National Stadium here on Tuesday.

The 27-year-old Trinidadian posted a battling, unbeaten 77 to help the tourists recover from a precarious 51-3 to finish the second day at 191-6, still trailing by 113 runs to Pakistan's first-innings total of 304.

Gul dismissed opener Chris Gayle for 40, took the prized wicket of Brian Lara for nought and also got Ramnaresh Sarwan out for no score before Ganga repaired the damage with a patient five-hour stay at the crease.

He has so far hit nine boundaries during his 214-ball knock.

Ganga, who made 82 in the second Test, added 63 for the fourth wicket with Shivnarine Chanderpaul (36) and another 39 for the fifth with Runako Morton (21).

Smart catches close to the wicket by Imran Farhat off leg-spinner Danish Kaneria's bowling removed both men.

Gul finished with 3-49 while Kaneria chipped in with 3-48.

Pakistan lead the three-match series 1-0 following their nine-wicket win in the first Test at Lahore.

Gul, who took nine wickets in Pakistan's first Test win at Lahore, initiated the damage by removing the top order in his incisive second spell to leave the West Indies tottering in the second session.

Gul had Gayle caught off an uppish drive by Abdul Razzaq, who first juggled with the ball before taking the catch. Gayle, who was dropped off Gul by Farhat before lunch on 12, hit six boundaries.

Two balls later Gul produced a beautiful in-swing which beat the forward push of Lara's bat and sent his off-stump cartwheeling. West Indies had high hopes for Lara, who hit a brilliant 216 in the drawn second Test at Multan.

Next over, Gul yanked Sarwan, knocking the middle stump out of the ground.

Shivnarine Chanderpaul hit his first ball for four, then Ganga hit three boundaries in the next Gul over as the tourists launched a fight back.

Chanderpaul, who played his 100th Test at Multan, hit seven boundaries before his sharp on-drive was smartly snapped at silly mid-on by Farhat.

Morton and Ganga took the score to 153 before Morton hit

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TEN Sports

Pakistan v West Indies

Third Test, Day Three

Live at 10:30 am

ESPN & STAR Sports

South Africa v India

Fourth ODI

Live at 6:30 pm

Zim bring in bowlers

CRICINFO, undated

Less than a week after arriving in Bangladesh, Zimbabwe's selectors have drafted two more players into the squad, calling up fast bowler Eddie Rainsford and legspinner Graeme Cremer. The pair are expected to arrive in Dhaka today.

Rainsford was left out of the original squad that left last week after he cracked his thumb taking a catch during a practice match. Sources say the doctor's note stated that he was going to be fit two hours before the team's scheduled flight, prompting the selectors to leave him out.

It appears Rainsford, the only genuine quick bowler among the current crop of Zimbabwe bowlers has high chances of playing in the five-match one-day series but will miss the series opener scheduled for Khulna on Thursday.

His return puts pressure on Anthony Ireland and Christopher Mpfu who are likely to take the new ball for Zimbabwe. Ireland did duty with Rainsford during the Champions Trophy in India while Mpfu was recently handed an international recall after more than a year on the sidelines.

Cremer, a legspinner with an ability to bowl long spells, has been called up for the additional two first-class matches that have been added to Zimbabwe's tour.

Zia, Niaz stay alive

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladeshi pair Niaz Murshed and Ziaur Rahman kept their slim little hopes alive in the Commonwealth Chess Championship when both the Grandmasters won their respective matches in Mumbai on Monday.

Zia defeated Thejkumar of India while Niaz beat Indian International Master Shudhakar Babu in the eighth round.

With two rounds left in the 10-round Swiss League competition, Zia and Niaz each was 1.5 points behind leader Nigel Short, the GM from England.

'Tendulkar must bat like Lara'

PTI, Port Elizabeth

Legendary Pakistan bowler Wasim Akram has suggested Sachin Tendulkar to show the same aggressive approach to his batting as West Indies' great Brian Lara.

The former left-arm speedster said now that Tendulkar had nothing to prove, he should take bowlers to task by his attacking strokeplay.

"I have been watching Sachin. He has achieved everything. Now he should be toying around the bowling like Lara does. People say

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Indian left-arm seamer Irfan Pathan (C) listens intently as his coach Greg Chappell (L) makes a point during a training session on Tuesday at St. George Park Cricket Stadium in Port Elizabeth ahead of the 4th ODI against South Africa today.

PHOTO: AFP



CARTWHEEL: West Indies captain Brian Lara is bowled by Pakistan paceman Umar Gul (not in picture) as wicketkeeper Kamran Akmal starts to celebrate during the second day of the third Test match at the National Stadium in Karachi on Tuesday.

PHOTO: AFP

Manzarul stars for Khulna



SPORTS REPORTER

Sabbir Khan captured four wickets to keep Barisal at bay on the second day of the four-day Ispahani Mirzapore Tea 8th National Cricket League match at the Chittagong Divisional Stadium yesterday.

Barisal were struggling at 233 for eight at stumps, replying to the hosts' fighting total of 313 all out.

At the Rajshahi Divisional Stadium, Rajshahi spinner Suhrawardi Shuvo took five for 58

as Dhaka added only 92 runs before being bowled out for 286 runs. The hosts were firm in their first innings, scoring 150 for four at stumps.

Khulna all-rounder Manzarul Islam struck his first hundred of the season at the Dhamondi Cricket Stadium, his 120 giving his side a likelihood of a first innings lead with a total of 306. Sylhet were on 168 for four at the end of the day.

RAJSHAH v DHAKA

Young batsman Marshall Ayub only reached his half-century when he was caught out off paceman Mohammad Shahjada. But his

overnight batting partner Mosharraf Hossain stuck around to score a painstaking 15, forcing a late-order revival along with Mohammad Sharif.

Sharif, in brilliant all-round form, batted for almost two hours to score 47 with a six and five boundaries. That gave Dhaka bowlers something to look forward to, but the stern approach from the hosts blunted them.

Opener Jahurul Islam batted solidly to score 30 but was trapped lbw to left-arm spinner Mosharraf Hossain. Two more wickets fell, but

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