



Did U Know?

Allan Border of Australia appeared consecutively in a record 106 Tests.



Monty Panesar
(England left-arm spinner)
"He's an absolute magician."
On Shane Warne.



ESPN
English Premier Football League
Sheffield United v Aston Villa
Live at 1:55 am (Tuesday)

ESPN-Star ICC's global partner

REUTERS, Mumbai

ESPN-Star Sports have successfully bid to become the International Cricket Council's (ICC) global media and production partner from late 2007 to 2015.

"The decision was a unanimous one and the ICC will now seek to reach final agreement with ESPN-Star Sports," an ICC statement said on Saturday after the decision on the audio-visual rights was taken at a board meeting in Dubai.

The final figure on the agreement was not disclosed, although the sport's governing body said "it was significantly in excess of the previous commercial deal."

That deal with Global Cricket Corporation (GCC), for the period of 2000 to 2007, was worth 550 million dollars.

Two World Cups, a minimum of three Champions Trophy tournaments and the first two Twenty20 World Championships fall within the eight-year period agreed.

ESPN-Star Sports is jointly owned by News Corporation and the Walt Disney Company.

Pawar will not contest again

PTI, New Delhi

BCCI president Sharad Pawar has said he would not contest the cricket board elections after his current term ends as he wanted to help the game in a different way.

"After this tenure is over, I shall not take this responsibility. After this two-year tenure, I shall aid the game and other members," said Pawar currently serving his second term in the high-profile job.

Asked why he agreed to head the sports body when he was already actively involved in politics, he said, "I agreed to contest after requests from many people to take up the responsibility of BCCI."

"When I first stood the elections in 2004, I lost. I had only one problem at that time. The bowler and the umpire were same. And when you have an umpire-bowler combination, you are bound to lose your wicket. I lost my wicket," he told a weekly chat show programme of BBC Hindi, referring to his adversary Jagmohan Dalmiya.

"In the next elections, we prepared ourselves and won with unprecedented margins. And in recent elections, I won unopposed." Pawar stoutly defended coach Greg Chappell.

"He has worked as a coach, this impression has been given by all the players. I have spoken to all players many times and all have said his performance is good because he has helped improve their game quality." On whether Chappell's contract would be extended beyond the World Cup in March-April next year, he said, "it will be difficult to speak on his contract because this is the board's decision in the end."

Abahani take charge



SPORTS REPORTER

After several years in the wilderness of local cricket, Abahani has finally put together a team that will please their large number of supporters as the Dhanmondi giants signed some big names on the opening day of inter-club transfers of the Dhaka Premier Cricket League at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

They made use of the national pool very well, roping in Khaled Mashud, Tushar Imran and Mashrafe Bin Mortuza while also securing Khulna captain and all-rounder Manzarul Islam.

National wicketkeeper Mashud made the move from arch-rivals Mohammedan Sporting Club while Tushar Imran left his club of three years City Club for the former champions.

"I am back to my old team after a long time, and it feels good. It is a good team that is being put together and I hope we can vie for the championship," said the 30-year-old Mashud, who was rested for the final two one-day internationals against Zimbabwe this weekend.

His Tigers teammate Mashrafe, who transferred from Indira Road, also expressed his satisfaction over the move.

"It is good to play for such a big and popular club," said the man known as Narail Express.

Abahani also signed young batsmen Nazmus Sadat, Jahurul Islam, Mahmudullah Riyad, Naeem Islam, Talha Jubair, Ziaur Rahman and in-form fast bowler Mohammad Shahjada to complement the leading cricketers in the club.

Two-time defending champions Old DOHS roped in all their confirmed players including young Tigers opener Mehrab Hossain,

fresh from a satisfactory series against the Zimbabweans.

The young opener who played for City Club last season, cited the challenges that lie ahead with the club. He said: "It'll be big test as we are gunning for our third consecutive title."

But his old club confirmed the services of national vice-captain Shahriar Nafees, while Bangladesh Biman signed Forhad Reza from the national pool. They also kept embattled opener Javed Omar and pacesman Syed Rasel. The national airline carrier kept left-arter Mosharraf Hossain and also added Raqibul Hasan, Shafaq Al Jabir and Nafis Iqbal.

The team to beat for Abahani still remains Old DOHS who have also put together a formidable combination of players. Abdur Razzak, Mehrab Hossain and Shahadat Hossain are part of the

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More rest for Mashud Scotland due today



SPORTS REPORTER

Khaled Mashud has been dropped from Bangladesh's two one-day internationals against Scotland. The wicketkeeper was 'rested' for the last two games against Zimbabwe last week but remained in the 14-member squad while Mushfiqur Rahim took the gloves.

The selectors finally excluded the veteran stumper from the squad, bringing in hard-hitting young batsman Nadif Chowdhury, who gets his first call for the Tigers.

"It is not a difficult series, so we have decided to rest him for these two matches. It would also give us a chance to test the young players," said chief selector Faruque Ahmed adding that he has conveyed the

message to Mashud by phone.

The Tigers, fresh from a 5-0 triumph over Zimbabwe, will leave for Chittagong today while Scotland arrive in Dhaka this morning to play the two matches as part of their preparation for next year's World Cup in the West Indies.

After a warm-up match on December 13 in Chittagong, the ICC associate members will play the first ODI in the port city on December 15 and return for the last match in the capital to be held on December 17.

The two teams have faced each other only once in an ODI -- in the 1999 World Cup -- with Bangladesh winning in Edinburgh. The Scots squad, who will play their first ODI on foreign soil is led by Craig McIntyre and include Dougie Brown and Gavin Hamilton, both of whom have played for England.

SQUADS
BANGLADESH: Habibul Bashar

(captain), Shahriar Nafees, Mohammad Rafique, Mohammad Ashraf, Mashrafe Bin Mortuza, Abdur Razzak, Aftab Ahmed, Shahadat Hossain, Syed Rasel, Farhad Reza, Sakib Al Hasan, Mushfiqur Rahim, Mehrab Hossain Jr and Nadif Chowdhury.

SCOTLAND: Craig McIntyre Wright (captain), Rana Omer Hussain, Hajid Haq, Douglas Robert Brown, Johan Dewald Nel, David Fraser Watts, Ross Thomas Lyons, Navdeep Singh Poonia, Neil Francis Ian McCallum, Colin John Ogilvie Smith, Gavin Mark Hamilton, Douglas Ross Lockhart, Paul Hoffmann, Ryan Robert Watson, John Angus Rae Blair;

Officials: Peter Drinnen (coach), Euan James McIntyre (manager), Andrew Lawson (physio), Roderick Charles Smith (CEO), Stuart Alexander Cox (fitness trainer).

Easy win for Pakistan



AFP, Lahore

Opener Imran Farhat hit an aggressive half-century and paceman Navedul Hasan took 3-37 to help Pakistan beat the West Indies by seven wickets in the third one-day match here on Sunday. The dashing left-hander hit five boundaries and two sixes in his 72-ball 58 to help Pakistan achieve a revised target of 191 with eight deliveries to spare and take an unassailable 2-0 lead in the five-match series.

Pakistan won the second match at Faisalabad by two wickets after the first match was washed out due to rain at Rawalpindi.

Lendl Simmons hit an attractive

70 before bad light stopped play and technical problems with floodlights caused an hour's delay. It forced the West Indies innings to end at 207-7 after 46.3 overs.

The Pakistan Cricket Board said internal faults disrupted the power supply. The home team's target was revised under the Duckworth-Lewis formula to 191 from 35 overs.

Pakistan, without their captain Inzamamul Haq, who injured his left little finger while fielding in the morning, got the start they needed with 64 through Farhat and Mohammad Hafeez (31) by the 13th over.

Off-spinner Chris Gayle dismissed Hafeez and then Kamran Akmal (24) but Farhat was in a rampaging mood, hitting and driving to perfection. He was caught off Corey Collymore with 43 needed off

9.5 overs. Mohammad Yousuf (28) and Shoaib Malik (21) remained unbeaten when the target was achieved.

Inzamam said the target was not easy.

"Chasing 191 runs was not easy but we had a good start and especially Farhat played well. It was good practice on a seaming wicket because we have to tour South Africa next where we can encounter such tracks," said Inzamam.

West Indian captain Brian Lara blamed his bowlers for conceding too many extras.

"After Farhat's innings, extras let us down," said Lara, whose team conceded 31 extras with 17 wides.

"We didn't really bowl well because a target of 191 was in our

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Avahan Bazakova of Kyrgyzstan performs the ball in the rhythmic gymnastics individual all-around final at the Asiad in Doha on Sunday.

PHOTO: AFP

Now A teams lock horns

SPORTS REPORTER

Having been whitewashed by the Bangladesh national team in the 5-match one-day series, Zimbabwe cricketers regroup in the form of an A team in a bid to have practice in the longer version of the game from today.

Zimbabwe are in self-exile from Test cricket till the end of this year but to gain experience for the young side, the A team will play a three-day match against Bangladesh A at the Sher-e-Bangla Mirpur National Stadium.

Their second match, a four-day, will also be played in Dhaka, from December 15.

The second string Bangladesh side, led by Tushar Imran, could also be considered very strong with ten players who have Test experience. Gazi Salauddin, Mahmudullah Riyad and Mohammed

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Bangladesh tame violent Oman

SPORTS REPORTER



come-from-behind 5-3 win over Oman in their final Pool B encounter in Doha yesterday.

Russel Mahmud Jimmy fired twice including a penalty for Bangladesh, which snatched victory with two goals in the last four minutes at the Al-Rayyan Hockey Stadium.

Oman led 2-1 at the break in a violent match that ended in Bangladesh player Mamunur Rahman being stretched off the field after being hit by rival player Hossam Hassan's hockey stick.

"The Omanis were rubbish, they played a horrible game and were only interested in hitting our players instead of going for the ball," said Bangladesh captain Musa Mia.

Match technical officer Mudassar Asghar of Pakistan said he was going to report the incidents to the tournament committee.

"I have never seen anything like

this," he said. "Someone could have been seriously injured out there."

Bangladesh's first win in the tournament left Oman last in the group without a point.

Bangladesh managed to enter the classification matches for 5th-8th places where India are the surprise inclusion following a 3-2 upset to China and yesterday's 1-1 draw against group leaders South Korea.

Bangladesh, who finished fourth, will play Pool A's third finisher Malaysia tomorrow. India play Taipei in the other classification match. The winners will meet in the 5th-place playoff and the losers will fight for seventh and eighth places.

Bangladesh went ahead after nine minutes when defender Issa Mia converted a penalty corner but Khatar Rajab levelled for Oman in the 19th minute before Omar Balushi gave the middle-east nation lead three minutes later.

Bangladesh reasserted as the match came alive with five goals in the last 12 minutes. Striker Jimmy scored a field goal in the 58th minute while defender Shahidullah Titu sent home a penalty stroke but Oman equalised again in the 65th

minute through Khatar Rajab's second goal of the match.

With the scores 3-3 five minutes from time, Bangladesh showed more maturity and midfielder Zahidul Islam Rajan and Jimmy ensured victory with strikes in the 66 and 68 minutes.

Bangladesh's athletics began with Sumita Rani Das, a silver medalist at the 10th South Asian Games last August, finishing seventh out of eight competitors in the women's 100m hurdles.

In the final at the Khalifa Stadium, Sumita clocked 14.54s, worse than her personal and season best of 14.30s, to finish ahead of Syria's Fadwa Al Bouza.

Jing Liu (12.93s) and Yun Feng of China won gold and silver while the bronze went to Korea.

Fouzia Huda Jui was taking part in women's long jump last night.

On Saturday, Bangladesh lost to unfancied Turkmenistan -- a team without a Grandmaster or an International Master -- 2.5-0.5 in the fourth round mixed team classical chess event with IM Enamul Hossain Rajib securing a draw against Meylis Annaberdiyev. India led the table with ten points while Bangladesh were on 4.5 points.



(L to R) Tushar Imran, Manzarul Islam, Mashrafe Bin Mortuza and Khaled Mashud put pen on paper for Abahani on the opening day of club transfers of the Dhaka Premier Cricket League at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

Indian hockey in dire straits

AFP, Doha



champions facing an uncertain future in a sport they once ruled the world.

India drew 1-1 with South Korea at the Al Rayyan stadium in a match they had to qualify for the semifinals and now face a real threat of missing the Olympics for the first time.

Both goals came in the second half as India's Vokkaliga Raghunath equalised in the 57th minute after penalty corner specialist Jang Jong-Hyun had put the Koreans ahead in the 41st.

South Korea, the defending champions, topped Pool B with 10 points, one more than China who

took the other semifinal spot. India finished with seven points.

India had made it to the Asiad gold medal clash on 11 of the past 12 occasions since field hockey was introduced at the Tokyo Games in 1958, winning the title twice in 1966 and 1998.

The only time India missed the final was at Seoul in 1986 when they claimed the bronze behind South Korea and Pakistan.

The eight-time Olympic champions now face a potentially hazardous qualifying route to the 2008 Beijing Games. The eventual finalists here will gain a direct entry.

India will contest one of the three Olympic qualifying tournaments to be held in Chile, Japan and New Zealand in early 2008 and need to win it to make the trip to Beijing.

The task will not be easy for the Indians, who finished 11th out of 12 teams at the World Cup in Monchengladbach, Germany in

September.

Indian coach Vasudevan Bhaskaran, whose yearlong tenure ends after the Asian Games, said the failure to reach the semifinals was a setback.

But he praised the team for putting up a brave fight against the Koreans.

"It was an equal game that could have gone either way," said Bhaskaran, who was captain when India won the last of its eight Olympic golds at the western-boycotted Moscow Games in 1980.

"I think it was our best match of the tournament but a few chances were missed which cost us victory.

"The defeat against China proved vital. It was our only loss in the tournament and that denied us a place in the semi-finals."

India, who lost 3-2 against China last Tuesday, beat Bangladesh 6-0 and Oman 9-0 in their other matches before the draw against the Koreans.