

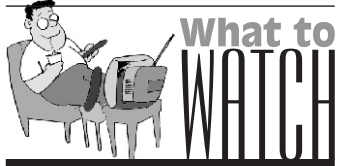


Did U Know?

Ron Clarke, the Olympic torchbearer for the 1956 Olympics, was a virtually unknown 19-year-old at the time he carried the torch into the stadium at Melbourne. Clarke went on to become the world's finest distance runner in the 1960s.



**Dulip Mendis**  
(Sri Lanka cricket chief executive)  
*"We are naturally disappointed that a player of this calibre will not be playing, but at the same time we have to consider what he has said."*  
**After Muttiah Muralitharan's decision not to tour Australia.**



**ESPN**  
Sportscentre  
Sport News  
Live at 8:30 pm  
Euro 2004  
Preview Show  
Live at 9:30 pm  
England vs Switzerland  
First Round  
Live at 9:55 pm  
Euro 2004  
Preview Show  
Live at 12:00 am (Friday)  
France vs Croatia  
First Round  
Live at 12:40 am (Friday)

**STAR Sports**  
Sportline  
Sport News  
Live at 8:00 pm

**Star WHIZZ KID COMPETITION 213**  
Tick the correct answers, post to The Daily Star  
Win attractive prizes  
Competition closes at 8 pm June 25, 2004 and draw

1. Who became man-of-the match in the second and final Test between Bangladesh and West Indies?	Sarwan	Bashar	Lara
2. How many Test matches has Michael Slater played?	74	82	75
3. What was the result of the WC-qualifier between Japan and India?	7-0	5-2	4-3
4. What is the name of the Euro 2004 ball?	Roteiro	Futi	Euroca
Name .....			
Class. ....	Roll No. ....		
School Address .....			
Phone: (If any) .....			

Div II kabadi

UNB, Dhaka

Shaheed Muzzafar Hossain Smriti Sangsad moved into the semifinal of the Second Division Kabadi League outplaying Manda Sangsad 55-34 at the Outer Stadium kabadi court yesterday. The winners dominated the first half 40-12. The day's other match between

Vision Bangladesh

Football

SPORTS REPORTER

The Vision Asia has called for restructuring the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) for the development of the most global sport in the country.

The nearly 150-page report, prepared by Vision Asia, a development project of the Asian Football Confederation (AFC), also observed that the game in this country was still dwelling in the mediaeval age and suggested a professional approach.

The prescription came at a time when the governing body of local football is struggling to find a way out to stop the gradual decline of football, which has lost its popular appeal due to lack of proper planning and acute financial shortage.

And BFF general secretary Anwa-rul Haque Helal said that this report would certainly be a guideline for them to regain the lost glory of the game in Bangladesh.

"This is a very good prescription

and I think if we get the necessary logistic support we can implement it," said Helal.

"It may look over ambitious in certain areas, but since there is no time limit to reach the targets, it is not impossible. I think a few changes here and there would make the report more effective for our country," added the seasoned football organiser while talking to the reporters at the BFF office yesterday.

The report was based on the findings of a group of experts who came to Dhaka in January this year to experience first-hand the existing situation of Bangladesh football.

It observed that Bangladesh football was light-years away from the advanced level and only languishing in the basic stage which is the club structure. Even the clubs are not based on strong financial footing.

They were more critical of the infrastructure, staff management and financial condition of the BFF. It also lamented that the ground and training facilities, stadium maintenance are below the basic line.

It also found 'no existence' of women's football and Futsal, a fast growing indoor version of the game, in Bangladesh.

The report termed the 21-member executive committee too big and less effective when it comes to developing the game at divisional levels. It has suggested that the federation should reduce the size of the executive committee and the number of 14 sub-committees.

It proposed for only three standing committees -- administrative committee, marketing and competition committee and the Vision Bangladesh.

The reports suggested that the National Football League should be given a professional look and there would be minimum 18 clubs.

The only positive the report observed was the strong fan-base of major clubs. But it found it surprising that the clubs play only for four months.

The Asia Vision also stressed on the having youth (Under-14, 16, 18) tournaments on regular basis. Besides, it said that Bangladesh national football team must play more international games.

Tigers try to be tougher

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

In a world of high professionalism there is hardly any scope for enjoying leisure and nobody realises it better than the modern day cricketers do.

Under the supervision of Australian coach Dav Whatmore Bangla-desh cricketers are also trying to get accustomed to the pressure of busy international schedule and the Tigers could enjoy only a three-day break between a month-long West Indies tour and preparations for next month's Asia Cup in Sri Lanka.

The opening day's training at the Bangladesh Kriira Shikkha Protish-than (BKSP) was specially a tough one for the players who came from outside Dhaka like vice-captain Rajin Saleh, Tapash Baisya and Mushfiqur Rahman.

All 14 members of the squad except left-arm spinner Mohammad Rafique, who arrived later because of confusion about the timing, joined the camp in the morning and nobody was in a vacation mood once they started training.

No one had any complaints about their returning to business

so quickly and even all-rounder Mushfiqur Rahman, who got married barely a week before the Caribbean tour started, responded with a big smile.

This kind of attitude impressed their 50-year old Australian coach Whatmore and boosted his confidence ahead of the Lankan trip.

"We are improving in many ways and the team is now in very good shape. That's why our opponents shouldn't take us lightly," said the delighted coach.

The Bangladesh coach has set his target to move into the second round in the regional competition which will be confirmed if they win the tournament opener against lowly Hong Kong, one of the two associate members participating in the six-team meet. Bangladesh will play their second group match against reigning champions Pakistan.

"Although my first objective is to move into the second phase, I am still not thinking anything about result. My main concentration is rather on to improve in different areas like running between the wickets, fielding and catching. I am not going to be distracted from my initial target when I took over the team," he said.

Whatmore was not much worried about the bitter fact that his boys had dropped as many as ten

easy catches in the Caribbean.

"The boys were guilty of dropping catches, but it was also true that they were brilliant in ground fielding. It can happen sometimes even for players of the big teams," he said in defence of the Tigers.

When asked about Mushfiq's performance as an all-rounder, he said he is a very worthy member of the Bangladesh one-day squad and has the ability to serve the team in time of need.

"He did not have a good tour in the West Indies, but I am confident he will come back soon."

He expects a better show from his boys in the Asia Cup because they are going to take intense preparation for the tournament.

"We will get enough time to be familiar with the Sri Lankan conditions because we will fly fifteen days before the tournament kicks off. We will also play three practice matches."

Meanwhile, Sri Lankan batting coach Owen Mattou is again expected to join the team after the Tigers arrive in the island nation. And Whatmore believed that the assistance of Mattou would be fruitful once again. Many believe it is because of Mattou that the Bangla-desh batting was showing signs of improvement, especially the tail-end.



PHOTO: STAR

**YOU HAVE TO BE A 'MAAN' NOW:** Bangladesh captain Habibul Bashar (L) and recalled opener Javed Omar (R) try to make batsman Mohammad Ashraful understand something while walking to the gym at BKSP yesterday.

Lanka in Murali's grip

Cricket

AFP, Colombo

World record-smashing Sri Lankan spinner Muttiah Muralitharan may have been described as a "bio-mechanical mess", but the champion bowler has more lawyers than physiotherapists to help him out.

The controversial spinner, 32, put Australian Prime Minister John Howard on the defensive after announcing Tuesday he would boycott next month's tour of Australia after the premier called him a "chucker."

Howard denied Wednesday his description of Muralitharan as a "chucker" led to the off-spinner's decision to snub the tour.

Asked in a radio interview Wednesday if his comments influenced Muralitharan's decision, Howard replied: "I don't believe so."

"I made it very clear at the time that he was very welcome to ... come," he said.

"He's very welcome to come and he claims that there are personal reasons why he doesn't want to come and I tend to believe that and that's the information I have," Howard said.

The Australian prime minister could be getting off lightly considering the army of lawyers backing Muralitharan had already threatened to take former Indian spinner Bishan Singh Bedi to court over similar allegations.

Sri Lanka Cricket (SLC) has no objection to Muralitharan's law-

yers taking action against anyone making disparaging comments about him as long as the player himself is not distracted.

"He would be having a team of lawyers doing this work and we hope it will not distract Murali," SLC president Mohan de Silva said.

"We hope he remains focused on cricket."

Sri Lankan Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapakse assembled a team of top lawyers to defend Muralitharan after the International Cricket Council (ICC) had outlawed his 'doosra' delivery.

He then dropped plans to sue the ICC and began lobbying other Test-playing nations to help change the rules to end the controversy over

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PHOTO: AP

**THE ACROBAT!** Dutch ace Ruud van Nistelrooy (L) sends the ball towards the net under extreme pressure from a German defender at Oporto on June 16.

Thai govt backs out of L'pool bid

ANN, Bangkok

The government of Thailand yesterday confirmed it had pulled out of the bid to buy a major stake in Liverpool, after Thailand's biggest entertainment company, GMM Grammy PCL, vowed to lead a private consortium to pursue the trouble-plagued deal with the popular English football club.

"The prime minister is giving up the idea to buy the Liverpool stake under the name of Thailand after the private sector has offered to do it in the name of a consortium," said the government's chief negotiator, Deputy Commerce Minister Pong-sak Ruktapongpisal.

It was the most unequivocal statement from the Thaksin administration that it has ended its controversial efforts to own a 30 per cent stake in Liverpool, following public uproars and serious legal and constitutional dilemma over how to fund the deal.

Grammy chairman Paiboon Damrongchaitam said yesterday the consortium could include "like-minded" partners as Samart Corporation and Siam Sport.

Youth hockey Dhaka reach group semis

UNB, Dhaka

Dhaka moved into Group B semifinal of the 21st National Youth (Under-18) Hockey Championship with a massive 8-2 win over Patuakhali at the Maulana Bhashani National Hockey Stadium yesterday.

The winners led the first half 2-0.

Rubel and Ranjan scored two goals each while Shohag, Faisal, Rajib and Mushtaque netted one goal apiece for Dhaka.

In Group B, Narayanganj overwhelmed Sylhet 9-0 after taking a 5-0 first-half lead.

Munna slotted scored four, Sumon and Arafat two goals each and Omar Faruq for the winners.

Rajshahi defeated Barisal 4-1 with Ahmed Ali Milon netting twice. Bappi Kumar and Mohan Kumar shared the rest. Barisal skipper Imran scored a consolation goal.

Gazipur eliminated Jhenidah 1-0 in the tiebreakers after their match ended in a goalless draw in regulation time.

'Muralitharan 'thin-skinned'

REUTERS, Melbourne

Shane Warne has described world record Test wicket-taker Muttiah Muralitharan as "thin-skinned" for withdrawing from Sri Lanka's tour of Australia.

"I think it is the wrong decision not to tour," Warne was quoted as saying by Melbourne's Herald Sun newspaper on Wednesday.

"He should keep doing what he loves doing and that's playing cricket. He has a lot of critics, particularly in Australia, but you can't afford to let the critics get to you."

The Australian leg-spinner said Muralitharan's decision was "thin-skinned" and added that he hoped the Sri Lanka had not been influenced by his controversial former captain, Arjuna Ranatunga.

"Hopefully, he has not been listening too much to Arjuna, but he

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Ruud class saves Dutch



AP, Oporto

Ruud van Nistelrooy rescued the Netherlands with an acrobatic goal nine minutes from the end on Tuesday to give his team a 1-1 draw with archrival Germany in their opening Euro 2004 Group D match.

Andy van der Meide won the ball near the right corner and sent a perfect cross into the box, where Van Nistelrooy, with his back to goal, connected with his right foot to put the ball behind German 'keeper Oliver Kahn.

Germany took a 1-0 lead in the 30th on Torsten Frings' angled free kick, which flew through the six-meter box and went in off the post.

"When you are up for so long, the draw is frustrating, especially since we played very well in the first half and had the Dutch under control," said Germany coach Rudi Voeller, whose team kept its record perfect of never losing an opening

match in the European championship.

"We retreated a little bit too far back in the second half. But I must compliment my team, this is the stuff a tournament team is made of. We came out with a lot of confidence and in the end all that was missing was another goal."

The Czech Republic rallied to defeat Latvia 2-1 in Tuesday's other Group D match to go top of the group.

Frings' goal -- an angled 30-meter (yard) free kick -- bounced off the ground in front of Dutch 'keeper

Edwin van der Sar and went into the net off the far post. Van der Sar seemed to lose sight of the curling shot as Dutch and German players rushed into the area.

The free kick was set up when Dutch captain Philipp Cocu was shown a yellow card for needlessly upending Germany's Philipp Lahm.

The Netherlands had a chance to win the game in the 86th through Cocu's powerful header from a corner but Kahn punched it away.

The Dutch comeback in the final 10 minutes went contrary to the other 80 in which Germany -- a three-time European champion -- was almost always in control following a spotty series of results leading up to the championship.

Substitute Fabian Ernst, shortly after coming on, carelessly allowed himself to be robbed of the ball, leading to the Dutch goal.

"It was an unlucky loss of possession in the corner. Van Nistelrooy made a super shot," said Kahn, who turned 35 on Tuesday.

"In the first half, it was our best game in a long time. We can be happy with our performance as team. Only a second goal was missing."

The Germans came out aggressively, using a crowded midfield to stifle the Dutch game, and produced the kind of performance that allowed them to reach the final of the 2002 World Cup.

The teams shared possession in the first 20 minutes, an open spell i

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PREVIEW ENGLAND v SWITZERLAND

Test of English mettle



REUTERS, Lisbon

England can vent four days of pent-up frustration when they face Switzerland on Thursday after their heart-wrenching opening Euro 2004 loss to France.

England were heading for victory over the European champions

Live on ESPN at 9:55pm

until defensive blunders enabled Zinedine Zidane to score twice in injury time and secure France's stunning 2-1 win.

Coach Sven-Goran Eriksson has made it clear he expects the enormity of the disbelief and disappointment to be converted into a steely determination to come good in Coimbra.

"We have to put the last three

minutes behind us, and play as we did against France not only on Thursday but for the rest of the tournament," the coach said.

"It's up to us show that, okay, we lost that game...but we are England and we are going to perform."

Eriksson has mixed news on the injury front, with John Terry back

from the hamstring injury which ruled him out of the France game but Paul Scholes possibly missing out with a twisted ankle.

Terry should return alongside Sol Campbell in central defence at the expense of Ledley King, who was outstanding against France.

England's problem role on the left of midfield which playmaker Scholes had been shoe-horned into will probably go to Owen Hargreaves, who did well as his replacement against France. Kieron Dyer should also get a run out.

Desperate for points and knowing that defeat would knock them out of the tournament, England will attack from the middle with Frank Lampard and Steven Gerrard leading frontal assaults in support of Wayne Rooney and Michael Owen.

The 18-year-old Rooney celebrated his first taste of tournament football with a fizzing display against France, but Owen needs to improve on a lacklustre performance.

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PCB sacks Miandad

Cricket

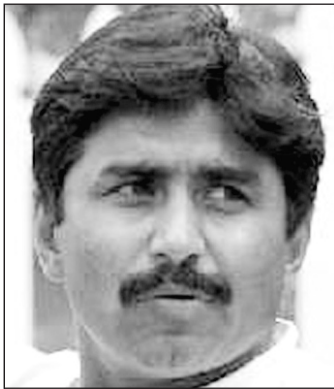
AFP/REUTERS, Karachi

Pakistan sacked cricket coach Javed Miandad Wednesday following the first ever home series defeat against India, the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) announced on Wednesday.

Former South Africa coach Bob Woolmer replaces Miandad, the board said.

PCB chairman Shaharyar Khan told a news conference that the new coach would take charge on July 2.

"He is one of the finest and most respected coaches in the cricket world and we are hoping he will bring about a positive change in the performances of our team. We are looking at him as a long-term



JAVED MIANDAD

investment," he said.

Shaharyar added that Miandad had asked to be released from his two-year contract, which had 11

months to run.

"His contract has been terminated," Shahryar told the press conference.

"We offered him to serve as national cricket advisor but he has declined," the PCB chief said.

In April India capped their first tour across the border for 15 years with maiden 3-2 one-day and 2-1 Test series wins on Pakistani soil.

The Pakistan defeat sparked severe criticism over the team's management while players were accused of lacking discipline.

It was the third time that Miandad had been replaced as national coach since 1998.

Woolmer, who played Test cricket for England, will be Pakistan's seventh coach in the last 10 years and

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