



Did U Know?

Bangladesh, with their eight-wicket victory against Zimbabwe, recorded their biggest win in ODIs, bettering their six-wicket win over Kenya at Hyderabad on 17.5.1998.



Geraint Jones

(England wicketkeeper)

"There's only one Adam Gilchrist and he's set a real tough benchmark for wicketkeeper/batsmen. If I try to live up to him then I'll land myself in trouble. I just have to play my way."

On his new role as a one-day opening batsman.



STAR Sports

Australia v Pakistan

VB Series 1st Final

Live at 9.10 am

Sportsline

Live at 7.30 pm

VB Series

1st Final Highlights

Same day delayed at 11.30 pm

ESPN

South Africa v England

Third ODI

Live at 6.30 pm

Sportscentre

Live at 10 pm

Pakistan request Malik's acquittal

BBC ONLINE, undated

Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) has asked the International Cricket Council (ICC) to clear the bowling action of 23-year-old all-rounder Shoaib Malik on medical grounds.

PCB chairman Shaharyar Khan explained: "He was in a road accident two years ago.

"As a result he has lost control of a tendon in his bowling arm which is causing the problem."

A report from biomechanic specialists in Perth, Australia, has been sent to the ICC, along with a PCB report.

Shaharyar added: "We have also submitted the report of our committee on illegal bowling actions as we want them to clear his action at least before the tour to India later this month."

Malik, who bowls off-spin and bats in Pakistan's middle order, was reported for a suspect action in October 2004 during a tri-series final in Lahore.

It was the second time since 2000 his action had been reported to the ICC by match officials.

Since then he has undergone two test sessions in Perth under the supervision of biomechanics specialist professor Bruce Elliott and bowling coach Daryl Foster.

Malik, who has taken 80 wickets in 91 one-day internationals and eight in eight Tests, is playing for Pakistan as a batsman alone in the current VB Series in Australia.

Nat'l Jr chess

SPORTS REPORTER

Holder Mehdi Hasan Parag shared the lead with four other players in the BASIC Bank 26th National Junior (Under-20 years) Chess Championship at the end of the fourth round yesterday.

Parag beat Nazir at the BCF hall-room to extend his collection to maximum four points. The other players are Mohammad Ali, Golam Mostafa Bhuiyan, Nahid Parvej Sagar and Samiun Bashir.

Mahfuzur Rahman and Sani Biswash followed the leaders with 3.5 points each.

Ashraful to skipper in Duleep Trophy



SPORTS REPORTER

Mohammad Ashraful will lead the BCB (Bangladesh Cricket Board) XI which was announced yesterday for the Duleep Trophy in India.

This will be the first time a team from Bangladesh is taking part in an Indian first-class competition featuring five zonal teams.

The 14-member BCB XI, featuring only two non-Test caps -- wicketkeeper Sagor Hossain Pavel and left-arm spinner Abdur Razzak - will open their campaign against East Zone on February 25 at Nagpur. The visitors will take on Central Zone in their second and final group match at Jaipur from March 1.

The final -- a five-dayer unlike the four-day group matches -- between the two group champions will be held at Indore.

The selectors named Naimur Rahman for the tour but the former Bangladesh captain decided against joining the camp.

"I think I'm not mentally ready to

play at this level at the moment. If I start now, I'll have to begin from zero," Naimur told The Daily Star Sport yesterday.

"Having been out of international cricket for three years, I'm not looking forward to a return to the national side. Besides, I've recently started my own business so that has made it difficult for me to concentrate on cricket," he said.

"The second reason not to join is injury."

The all-rounder, the only recognised off-spinner able to compete at the highest level, showed fine form in the recent domestic competitions and was all set to be included in the national squad during the Zimbabwe series but a training ground injury put paid to the speculation.

"I talk to a local physio tomorrow

to know the extent of my injury."

Naimur, who led Abahani in the Premier Cricket League this season, missed the last four games due to a knee injury.

"The doctors advised me to take complete three weeks' rest. I was also told not to do any running for two months. I still don't feel okay," said Naimur adding that the selectors did not consult with him before announcing the squad.

The squad includes nine players who were part of the victorious Test or one-day squad that beat Zimbabwe last month. Only senior players, captain Habibul Bashar, his deputy Khaled Mashud, Khaled Mahmud and Javed Omar were not considered.

The Board selection will face a young Central Zone side led by Mohammad Kaif and a more experienced East Zone featuring Debang Gandhi, SS Das, Rohan Gavaskar and Mahendra Dhoni.

The cricketers have been requested to report to coach Dav Whatmore at the Bangabandhu National Stadium at 9 am on February 15. The team will leave Dhaka on February 19.

SQUAD

Mohammad Ashraful (captain), Al Shahriar, Naimur Rahman, Rajin Saleh, Nafees Iqbal, Aftab Ahmed, Alok Kapali, Manzarul Islam, Sagor Hossain Pavel, Abdur Razzak, Talha Jubair, Nazmul Hossain, Tareq Aziz and Anwar Munir.

High drama before tie



REUTERS/AFP, Bloemfontein

England took three wickets in a dramatic final over to force a tie in the second one-day international against South Africa on Wednesday.

The home side, chasing England's 270 for five and hoping to level the seven-match series at 1-1, looked firm favourites on 263 for five and needing eight to win off fast bowler Kabir Ali's final six balls.

The over had started with the home side needing eight runs with five wickets in hand. Ali bowled a high full toss which was called no-ball and hit for four by Boucher.

But Boucher hit the next ball, another full toss, to Ashley Giles at deep mid-wicket.

Shaun Pollock took a single but Ashwell Prince was run out off the first ball he faced as he fed the strike back to Pollock. Another single from Pollock left new batsman Andrew

Hall facing the last delivery.

Ali bowled it full and just outside off stump, Hall missed and Geraint Jones made a stumping as Hall stepped out of his crease.

Ali's first seven overs had cost 49 runs. The result meant England stayed 1-0 ahead in the seven-match series.

Jacques Kallis (63) and Herschelle Gibbs (78) had put on 134 for the third South African wicket to give their side a chance of victory.

Gibbs passed 5,000 runs in one-day international cricket but the home side still needed 82 off the last 10 overs and 36 off five.

Gibbs fell to a fine catch by Darren Gough at backward square leg off Matthew Hoggard but Justin Kemp, Boucher and Pollock waded with some big hitting at the death before their hopes were dashed by Ali.

Earlier, powerful right-hander Kevin Pietersen, born in South Africa before moving to England to improve his chances of international

cricket, scored an unbeaten maiden century, finishing on 108 from 96 balls.

Many of the spectators, in an orchestrated move, had turned their backs on Pietersen as he walked back to the pavilion after his innings.

Pietersen came in with England struggling on 67 for three and he and Vaughan consolidated with a stand of 80 off 110 balls.

Vaughan was watchful in scoring his 42 off 82 deliveries, before he was run out by AB de Villiers during an attempted second run to third man.

Paul Collingwood made a brisk 40 in a partnership of 92 with Pietersen, whose unbeaten 108 included six fours and two sixes.

England go into the third game of the seven-match series on Friday in Port Elizabeth.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard of the second limited-overs international between South

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PHOTO: AFP

WE'VE CHOKED 'EM AGAIN! An ecstatic England team celebrate their dramatic tie against South Africa in the second ODI at Blomfontein on February 2.

ICC in a dilemma over 'Super Test'



BBC ONLINE, undated

World cricket bosses will decide next month whether to give official status to the Super Series matches between Australia and a Rest of the World side.

The International Cricket Council (ICC) board had decided against using October's three one-day matches and six-day game in international records.

But it then gave full status to two Tsunami Appeal matches, involving a World XI and an Asian invitational side.

ICC chief executive Malcolm Speed said there was a "strong view" the idea should be proposed

again.

Sides named "Rest of the World" have played five-day matches in England and Australia before, but Test status has so far only applied to games between national teams.

Meeting in London, the ICC chief executives' committee also discussed proposals to overhaul the system to deal with bowlers with suspected illegal actions.

No decision was taken on the issue, which will be discussed again on Friday.

The committee will also consider a review of alternatives to the Duckworth-Lewis system for dealing with rain interrupted matches.

And there will be discussions on Twenty20 cricket, which has until now been a rare feature at international level despite its domestic success.

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PHOTO: STAR

COWS ARE MORE POWERFUL THAN FOOTBALL! The National Sports Council-owned football ground adjacent to the newly built Bangladesh Football Federation Bhaban at Arambagh in Dhaka has been allegedly taken over by some influential local people who use it to keep their cattle, rickshaws and buses. An Asian Football Confederation (AFC) representative is scheduled to arrive in Dhaka on February 12 to have a look at and around the BFF building which has been built with funds provided by FIFA. AFC president Mohammad Bin Hammam's possible arrival in Dhaka to inaugurate the BFF Bhaban in April will depend on the representative's assessment report.

BD A 235-9

SPORTS REPORTER

A fine 70 by Shamsur Rahman steered Bangladesh A to 235 for nine in 50 overs in their second one-day match against the United Arab Emirates at the Sharjah Stadium yesterday, according to a message received in Dhaka.

In reply, UAE were 11-1 after six overs.

Opening batsman Shamsur was dismissed for one in the first match on Wednesday, which the second string national side won by eight wickets.

However, stand-in captain Shahriar Nafees stole the show with a hurricane 20-ball 40 to help the side post a challenging total in the day-nighter. Raqib Al Hasan made 34.

Left-handed Nafees made 55 off 91 balls the previous night as Bangladesh A stormed to 133-2 in 37.2 overs in reply to UAE's 132.

Mohammad Sharif, playing his first international match after a two-and-a-half-year lay-off due to injury, was adjudged man-of-the-match for his 6-24 from eight overs in the first match.

The third game of the four-match series will be held at the same venue tomorrow.

Nafees' new opening partner

SHAHIDUL ISLAM, Chittagong

Bangladesh opening batsman Nafees Iqbal began a new innings yesterday when he was engaged to Taslima Makim Iva, the daughter of businessman Abdul Makim, at a local community centre in the port city.

According Nafees' mother Nusrat Iqbal, no wedding date has been set yet.

The simple ceremony over, both Nafees, who is the eldest son of late cricketer Iqbal Khan and nephew of former national captain Akram Khan, and Taslima posed for photographs. He just turned 20 on January 31, the day on which the Tigers won the five-match one-day series against Zimbabwe.

Taslima is studying for her BA honours degree in English at Chittagong College. She is also a

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Finals begin today

Inzy lucky to escape ban: Ponting

AFP, Melbourne



Australia captain Ricky Ponting Thursday said his Pakistani counterpart was fortunate to be playing in the triangular VB Series finals

after escaping a ban for slow over-rates.

Speaking ahead of the best-of-three limited-overs final series starting here Friday, Ponting said Inzamamul Haq was "pretty lucky" to be taking the field after being sanctioned for the second time in 12 months.

"I know I'm constantly asking the guys to get through the overs quicker and bowl their overs quicker if they can," said Ponting, who has previously used spinners to speed up his side's overs.

"One-day cricket can be decided by a run or a couple of runs here and there and if I can't bowl the bowlers that I want to, when I want to, that makes it harder."

Inzamam was fined his match fee for a slow over-rate against the West Indies on Tuesday by match referee Chris Broad.

The International Cricket Council (ICC) said in a statement issued in London that because it was his second offence in a year, the charge

should have been upgraded to a Level 3 breach, which carries an automatic ban of between two and four Test matches or four and eight one-day internationals.

Match referee Broad later admitted he had failed to look at Inzamam's record.

"In applying the provisions of the ICC code I neglected to consult Inzamam's past record," Broad said.

"It was an honest mistake and the matter has been dealt with."

The ICC confirmed Inzamam would not be banned retrospectively, meaning the skipper is poised to continue his good form with the bat, having struck four half-centuries in the six pool matches this series.

Pakistan came into the match after two successive morale-boosting wins following the 30-run victory on Tuesday and a three-wicket defeat of Australia on Sunday.

But for the Australians, there is a great deal of speculation about who will fill the opening batting position with Adam Gilchrist following Matthew Hayden's recent poor form.

Ponting was adamant Hayden should be maintained ahead of the rising star Michael Clark, who has stood in with enormous success, but said it would be up to selectors to decide.

"It's going to be a tough selection and as far as I'm concerned, Matthew is our best opener when he's at his best," Ponting said.

"Quite often the really tough selections around this team, I think it's only fair that selectors make those calls.

"I'll get my point across to the team that I want to have, but if there's something that the other four selectors see differently, then they'll make that call."

There was a further selection issue for the Australians with three bowlers competing for two spots. Pacemen Michael Kasprovicz and Brett Lee are both vying for a start, as is left-arm wrist spinner Brad Hogg.

Although he took 5-32 in his last one-day match at the MCG, forecast thunder storms could count against Hogg.

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