



Did U Know?

Sports command the biggest television audiences, led by the Summer Olympics, FIFA World Cup and Formula One racing.



Duncan Fletcher

(England cricket coach)
"I'm not applying for anything. I think England have been very good to me, and as far as I'm concerned I'm staying within the bubble of English cricket."
Dismissing rumours that he is to apply for the vacancy as South Africa's coach.



ESPN

South Africa v England
 Seventh ODI
 Repeated at 10 am
 Sportscentre
 Live at 8.30 pm

STAR Sports

Primera Liga
 Osasuna v Real Madrid
 Repeated at 10.30 am
 English Premier League
 Everton v Chelsea
 Taped version at 12.30 pm
 Sportsline
 Live at 8 pm
 English Premier League Highlights
 Taped version at 11.30 pm
 World Tennis Championship
 First Round
 Live at 12.30 am (Tuesday)

More bad news for Hayden

CRICINFO, undated

Already struggling to overcome his poor form, Matthew Hayden's chances of getting back among the runs was dealt a blow when he was termed a doubtful starter for the one-day series in New Zealand.

Hayden is suffering from a severe chest infection and might not fly with the Australian team on Wednesday.

"He's got a viral chest infection and he wasn't well enough to play (for Queensland in a one-dayer against Western Australia on Friday)," Trevor James, the Australian team doctor, told The Sun-Herald.

"These things are not totally predictable. Our expectation is that he'll be fit to go, but sometimes these things can take more like a week to clear up, so that's where there's a bit of doubt. It's really how he is by Tuesday that will determine whether he goes or not, but we are 90 per cent sure that he'll still go."

Earlier, Dean Jones, who has been working with Hayden on his batting, painted a more grim picture

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Safina lifts Paris Open

REUTERS, Paris

Russia's Dinara Safina upset hot local favourite Amelie Mauresmo to win the Paris Open with a 6-4 2-6 6-3 victory on Sunday.

Safina, who was beaten by the Frenchwoman in the Australian Open second round last month, took advantage of Mauresmo's weak serve to clinch her third WTA title in two hours and 19 minutes.

Second-seeded Mauresmo, a winner in Paris in 2001, has now lost three finals in the Pierre de Coubertin hall after two previous defeats by Serena Williams in 1999 and 2003.

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Cricket for a purpose

SPORTS REPORTER

A week-long Cricket Carnival kicks off today at the Bangladesh Krira Shikkha Protisthan (BKSP) in Savar with a view to instilling leadership among young cricketers and fostering communication and cultural exchange between countries.

The event jointly organised by the British Council and Bangladesh Cricket Board, also aims to give the youngsters first-hand experience of team management and learning to take responsibilities.

BKSP Director General Mohammad Ali Mondol will declare the programme open at 9 am, speakers said at a press conference yesterday at the Bangabandhu National Stadium conference room.

British Council Director Dr June Rollinson, cultural science programme officer Syed Masud Hossain, BCB Development Committee vice-chairman Khondokar Jamuluddin, BCB Game Development manager Shaun Williams and director development and planning Carlton Bernadas were spoke on the occasion.

"The event will build better relations between two organisations who have been working together for three years," said Jamuluddin referring to British Council's collabora-

tion with the Board since 2002.

"The British Council is involved in similar development programmes in other countries through different sports, especially in Africa," informed June Rollinson.

The British Council has been helping the BCB development committee to establish better communication and education for the cricketers at age-group and national level. Also, it helped the Board send ten promising cricketers to England to play in the Surrey League.

The attraction of the Carnival will be the participation of six young English cricketers who will join the six divisional teams -- Dhaka, Chittagong, Khulna, Rajshahi, Barisal and Sylhet -- competing in the Super 8s meet.

The English cricketers -- Andrew Colquhoun, Steven Coleman, Simon Roberts, Paul Radley, Jonkheer van Bange and Shaun O'Brien -- have already arrived in Dhaka. They were picked from the Young MCC Cricketer's programme.

The visitors will experience life as a developing cricketer in Bangladesh. Each English cricketer will also help the team captain taking decisions on and off the field. Each team will also have to make a presentation on the respective histories of

the divisional teams to the guest players.

The teams, all including seven local players from the U-17 and U-19 development squads, have been picked by divisional coaches but the cricketers will be on their own during the competition.

On rest days the cricketers from the two countries will attend various community activities such as visiting Centre for the Rehabilitation of the Paralyzed apart from being involved in junior coaching clinics for girls' cricket.

"There will be no coaches to guide them and the players will be responsible for all their acts and decisions. Even they will have to pick a substitute player in case a player is injured," said BCB's Sri Lankan official Bernadas.

The match format will be the exciting Super 8s, with eight players representing each side in 16-overs a-side matches. All players will have to bowl two overs including the wicketkeeper.

A batsman who scores six runs with a boundary and eight for an over-boundary, will have to retire after reaching 30. But can return to bat later as all eight batsmen have to be bowled out to complete an innings.

SEE PAGE 14 COL 4

Pietersen fireworks on



AFP/REUTERS, Centurion

Kevin Pietersen continued his run spree against South Africa and led an England batting recovery in the seventh and final one-day international at Centurion Park Sunday.

Pietersen hammered 116 off 110 balls, his third century of the series, to enable England to reach 240 all out. They had been floundering at 68 for six after being sent in on a slow pitch with uneven bounce.

The South African-born Pietersen was relatively subdued as he and Ashley Giles dug England out of trouble. It took him 72 balls to score his first 33 runs but he switched back into the bludgeoning mode which has characterised his performances in South Africa when he hit left-arm spinner Nicky Boje for two sixes over mid-wicket in three balls.

They were the first of six sixes for

Pietersen, who also hit 10 fours. It took him 80 deliveries to reach 50 but he only needed 28 more to notch his century.

Pietersen, 24, who was not originally included in England's squad but was called up after an impressive debut in Zimbabwe earlier in the season, finished the series with 456 runs in six innings at an average of 152.

He faced only 430 balls in a consistent sequence of clean-striking, quick-scoring innings.

Giles made a career-best 41 as he helped Pietersen put on 104 off 114 balls for the seventh wicket, while Kabir Ali, who made a breezy 25, shared a 53-run stand off only 27 balls for the eighth wicket.

The hosts made early inroads into England's batting when Marcus Trescothick prodded the second ball of the match, from Shaun Pollock, to point before Makhaya Ntini bowled Michael Vaughan for one off the first ball of the second over.

Geraint Jones (14) and Andrew Strauss (15) put on 31 for the third wicket before they were both removed by Andre Nel.

Graeme Smith then caught Vikram Solanki (five) at short fine-leg from Boje and ran out Paul Collingwood (10) with a direct hit.

The hosts, however, failed to ram home their advantage with Pietersen and Giles, who hit five fours, launching their savage late onslaught.

South Africa, holding a 3-1 lead, clinched the series when the sixth match was rained out in Durban Friday.

They brought back Boje, with all-rounder Andrew Hall moving up to open the batting in place of Adam Bacher, who was dropped.

Hall ended Pietersen's innings when the batsman swung across the line in the 48th over. Hall picked up two more wickets in the final over

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British Council director Dr June Rollinson (C) explaining the concept of the week-long Cricket Carnival yesterday at the Bangabandhu National Stadium. The event starts at the Bangladesh Krira Shikkha Protisthan today.

Top players on course

SPORTS REPORTER

Top names of local chess stayed on course for qualifying for the 31st National Chess Championship winning their respective matches at the BCF hall-room yesterday.

At the end of the third round qualifying matches, ten players shared the lead with three points. They are IWM Rani Hamid, FM Sheikh Nasir Ahmed, FM Aminul Islam, FM Rezaul Haque, junior champion Mehdi Hassan Parag, Syed Mahfuzur Rahman Emon, Aminul Islam Palash, Mainuddin Ahmed, Hasan Emam and women's champion Shamima Akter Liza.

In yesterday's games, Nasir beat Sohel, Amin beat Shabana Parveen Nipa, Parag beat Mohammed Ali, Hasan beat Saifuddin, Emon beat Rashed, Palash beat Amir, Hossain, Reza beat Shamsul Haque, Rani Hamid beat Nure Alam, Mainuddin beat Hafizul Islam, Liza beat Monjur Alam and Debaraj drew with Khroshed Alam.

Mamun propels Gazi Tank



SPORTS REPORTER

An unbeaten century by Al Mamun enabled Gazi Tank to score a seven-wicket victory over Azad Sporting Club in the First Division Cricket League at BKSP in Savar yesterday.

With the outcome, Gazi Tank joined leaders Kalabagan and Sonargaon Cricketers on 24 points from 16 matches but they have played one match more than the two contenders.

Left-arm spinner Suja Irfan captured five wickets for 25 as Azad were bundled out for 167 in 49.3 overs. Kabir Rumman made 58 off 97 balls.

In reply, Gazi Tank reached 171-3 in 31.3 overs, thanks to opener Al Mamun's unbeaten 105. Mamun hammered 12 fours and six over boundaries in his 96-ball blitzkrieg.

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PRIDE OF INDIA: Rising tennis star Sania Mirza leaps for joy after winning her first WTA Tour event on February 12.

PHOTO: AFP

Nadif, Riyadh to join MCC course

SPORTS REPORTER

Young cricketers Nadif Chowdhury and Mahmudullah Riyadh will join Young MCC Cricketer's programme from Bangladesh this year.

Nadif, a left-arm spinner and Riyadh, a middle-order batsman-cum medium pacer, will leave Dhaka in mid-April for a two-month leadership course under the MCC's annual programme.

Shahriar Nafees was originally selected for the trip but the left-handed batsman had to withdraw his name for exams.

Last year, Saqib Ali Hasan was chosen by the Bangladesh Cricket Board but he failed to make it because his age was below requirement.

SA widen the gap

BBC ONLINE, Centurion

South Africa edged to victory in the seventh and final one-day international to lift the series against England 4-1 here yesterday.

They won in Centurion by three wickets as England once again failed to score.

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NZ handicapped by injuries to cricketers

AFP, Wellington

New Zealand cricket coach John Bracewell faced a series of injuries to key players as he began Sunday the delicate balancing act of picking a fit side to face Australia.

Bracewell named a predictable squad of 13 for Thursday's tour-opening Twenty20 match in Auckland, but delayed naming his side for Saturday's first one-day international in Wellington before assessing various niggles.

Included in the 13 were injury-troubled bowlers Kyle Mills (Achilles tendon), Jeff Wilson (shoulder), Daniel Vettori (back) and Scott Styris (knee). Along with frontline pacemen Chris Cairns and Daryl Tuffey they all missed Sunday's State of Origin match as a precaution.

Wilson was the notable inclusion, having made an encouraging return from rugby to the black cricket uniform in last month's World 11 series.

Having not played a one-day international since 1993, also against Australia, it seems Wilson is destined to add another leaf to his glittering sporting career.

New ball bowler Mills faces a fitness test Monday before Bracewell names the one-day side as he tries to nurse his bowlers through the next two months.

"This is an exceptional season now, playing five one-dayers and then five Tests on the trot, there'll be

SEE PAGE 14 COL 4

Mirza creates Indian history



AFP, Mumbai

Sania Mirza became the first Indian to win a WTA title when she defeated Alyona Bondarenko of Ukraine 6-4, 5-7, 6-3 in the final of the Hyderabad Open here on Saturday.

Mirza kept her cool in front of a boisterous home crowd to beat her ninth seeded opponent, who was also gunning for her maiden WTA crown.

The 18-year-old continued her fine run after having made the third round of the recent Australian Open, the only time an Indian woman has gotten past two rounds of a Grand Slam event.

Nerves seemed to get the better of Mirza at the start of the match as she double-faulted three times to allow Bondarenko to go 2-0 up, but the Ukrainian could not hold on in the face of some probing returns of serve.

A volley of powerful groundstrokes helped Mirza clinch the first set but she lost the second, which was replete with service breaks.

Mirza then ran up a 5-1 lead in the third set and the end of the match saw some high drama with Mirza celebrating victory after serving what she thought was an ace at 40-30 in the seventh game.

Mirza lost her concentration and conceded the game to Bondarenko, who followed it up by holding serve. Mirza had to wait for the ninth game to wrap up the match.

"This win has made me believe more in myself and I can now hope to do better in the coming days,"

Mirza said.

"I wanted to win this tournament very badly since it was in my hometown."

Bondarenko, who got a walkover in the semifinals from injured second seed Anna-Lena Groenefeld of Germany, conceded that she was not at her best.

"I was really nervous in the final and did not play very well but I enjoyed the tournament and will surely be back here next year," she said.

India, meanwhile, rose in applause to applaud Mirza as firecrackers resounded across cities and towns.

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Sania-mania!

REUTERS, Mumbai

Indian tennis fans are still celebrating after teenager Sania Mirza became the nation's first female winner of a WTA Tour singles event on Saturday.

"Simply Superb, Sania," said a headline in the Hindustan Times daily on Sunday, while The Times of India splashed a big picture of Mirza with the heading: "Mirzaah! She's Magic".

Fans danced on the streets in the southern Indian city of Hyderabad on Saturday night in a country where such sporting reactions are normally reserved only for cricket.

"You've turned us from cricket to tennis," said one banner.

Mirza's victory is being hailed as a giant leap forward for women's tennis in India.

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Nawaz fears spin-wash



AFP, Islamabad

Former pacer Sarfraz Nawaz Sunday said he feared India's spin bowlers would whitewash Pakistan in their upcoming cricket tour.

"India will spinroll Pakistan on their turning tracks because they play with three regular spinners, with Virender Sehwag and Sachin Tendulkar as two added tweakers and have the habit of finishing a Test in three days," Nawaz told AFP.

"Pakistan's kitty is empty with just one spinner in Danish Kaneria, the other two spinners they have were reported for illegal action and if

they go without Shoaib Akhtar it would be a 3-0 win for India."

Pakistan will play three Tests and five one-day games from February 25 to April 9 on their first tour of India for six years.

A final schedule is still awaited with a stalemate following Pakistan's refusal to play in the western city of Ahmedabad, the scene of a proposed venue for the second Test where at least 2,000 people died in Muslim-Hindu riots in 2002.

Nawaz said Pakistan's cricket hierarchy seemed indifferent to the all important tour.

"Pakistan is under pressure after their 3-0 defeat in Australia but it's surprising there seems no planning, no vision and no preparation for the India tour," Nawaz said.

He criticised coach Bob Woolmer, who is having knee surgery in South Africa, and the Pakistan trainers for going on holiday ahead of the tour, and ridiculed skipper Inzamamul Haq for appearing in an Indian advertisement.

"How would foreigners be interested in Pakistan's progress, they would muster the wealth and go away."

"Our captain doesn't act on the field and is acting in Indian advertisement which is a mockery of the preparation and no one is bothered what they are doing."

Nawaz, acclaimed as the pioneer of reverse swing during a career of 55 Tests for Pakistan, taking 177 wickets, said only seamers could turn the tables on India.

SEE PAGE 14 COL 5

Inzamam warns India



CRICINFO, undated

Inzamamul Haq has sent out warning signals to the Indian camp ahead of the tour, saying that his team should not be underestimated.

The Pakistan captain admitted that they were a young and inexperienced side, but they had the same spirit and determination to do well as previous Pakistani teams.

Before he left for India to act in a commercial, Inzamam spoke his thoughts on Pakistan's chances in India in an interview.

"It is going to be a tough tour for us," The News reported him as

saying, "and we know our people have a lot of expectations from us when we play India. We will be going to India with a mindset we can beat them at home."

"I don't want to make predictions about the series. But I know this much we have a good young side who are learning to play as a team and that would be our key to success in India."

He admitted that one of Pakistan's problems during the tour of Australia had been an inability to sustain pressure. It was a mistake that Pakistan would attempt to avoid against India.

"We had Australia on the ropes several times but we let them get away. Against India we can't afford to do that. If we have the advantage

we have to maintain it till the result is in our favour."

The Times of India quoted him as saying that a positive attitude was required for success in India.

"My team has a lion's heart and that's what you require to excel in countries like India. We have also managed to find some positives in defeats in Australia which will help us in India."

The thread that bound Pakistan teams of the past with this one, Inzamam believed, was that they all wanted to fare well in India.

"The common thing between the 1987 and 1999 teams and the present team is the spirit, determination, commitment and ambition to do well in India."



PHOTO: AFP

GLADIATORS! Indian captain Sourav Ganguly (L) and Pakistan skipper Inzamamul Haq posing for a photo sporting traditional warrior costumes while making a commercial in Kolkata on February 12. The Pakistani captain is now in India for the commercial shoot and to offer prayers in Ajmer ahead of his side's tour across the border.