



Did U Know?

The game we now know as baseball is a mix of very old games called "base" or "rounders." The basic rules of modern baseball were made official in 1845 by several amateur teams playing in New York.

What to WATCH

DD Sports & TEN Sports

India v Pakistan
First Test, Day Three
Live 10.30 am

ESPN

New Zealand v Australia
First Test, Day Two
Highlights at 7 pm
Sportscentre
Live at 8 pm
New Zealand v Australia
First Test, Day Three
Live 3.30 am (Saturday)

STAR Sports

South Africa v Zimbabwe
Second Test, Day One
Live at 2.30 pm
Sportsline
Live at 9.30 pm



Richie Richardson

(Former West Indies cricket captain)
"It's really sad. For some of our best players to be fit and not be represented on the West Indies team, is very disappointing and very disturbing."

Criticising the WICB for sacking seven senior players.



Ispahani Sixth Nat'l Cricket League
(Limited-overs competition)
Rajshahi v Barisal (RDSCS)
Khulna v Sylhet (KDCCS)
Chittagong v Dhaka (CDCCS)

'Give back the BNS to cricket'

SPORTS REPORTER

The out-of-office directors of the Bangladesh Cricket board (BCB) have blasted the government's decision to take cricket away from the Bangabandhu National Stadium.

The directors and councillors of the BCB, who are unable to attend office due to a court order, termed the move as 'illegal' as public opinion was not sought beforehand.

The directors and councillors held a 'special' meeting at a community centre in Dhaka yesterday to express their grievances. Later, 59 BCB councillors signed a protest press release demanding that cricket be returned to the BNS and the venue awarded to cricket permanently.

Div I hockey

SPORTS REPORTER

Dhaka Wanderers and Farashganj Sporting Club split points in the lone Super Four match of the Green Delta First Division Hockey league yesterday.

The match ended in a 1-1 draw at the Maulana Bhashani National Hockey Stadium.

Russell put Wanderers ahead on the stroke of the breather while Raju levelled the score for Farashganj eight minutes from time.

India take control

REUTERS, Mohali



Sachin Tendulkar missed out on a record 35th Test hundred by six runs after Virender Sehwag had piled on 173 to leave India in command of the first Test against Pakistan on Thursday.

India finished Day Three on 447 for six in reply to Pakistan's first innings 312 all out to lead by 135 runs.

An unusually subdued Tendulkar edged paceman Navedul Hasan to Asim Kamal at gully in the first over with the second new ball late in the day to fall short of beating compatriot Sunil Gavaskar's record 34 Test tons.

Earlier Sehwag, dropped on 15 and 82 overnight, went on to complete his ninth Test century in the second over of the morning session.

The aggressive 26-year-old batsman eagerly punished Pakistan for the let-offs, as he did during the first Test in Multan last year when he notched up 309 after being dropped before reaching his hundred.

Sehwag dominated the innings for nearly six hours, hitting 19 fours and two sixes in his 244-ball knock.

He also shared in a 118-run third wicket stand with Tendulkar, his third successive century partnership after he scored 103 with Rahul Dravid

(50) for the second wicket and 113 with Gautam Gambhir (41).

The opener has now scored a century in six of the last seven series, starting with his 130 at Mohali in the drawn first Test against New Zealand in 2003.

He was eventually dismissed after lunch, mistiming a lofted shot off Abdul Razzaq to mid-on.

Tendulkar, who had been struggling with a tennis elbow injury, appeared too anxious to set the record despite starting his innings strongly, smashing a number of his patent drives for a flurry of fours against Razzaq.

However, both he and captain Sourav Ganguly slowed to a crawl and India added a mere 59 runs from 29 overs in the afternoon session with Tendulkar scoring just 28.

Pakistan captain Inzamamul Haq's decision to persist with the old ball on a firm batting pitch paid off, backed fully by leg-spinner Danish Kaneria's tight, unchanged afternoon spell.

Kaneria had been unlucky not to dismiss Tendulkar for eight in the morning session when his appeal for a bat-pad catch in his first over was turned down by umpire Rudi Koertzen.

Ganguly made 21 before he was out to a bat-pad catch off Kaneria, who toiled to keep the run flow in check.

He bowled a marathon 32-over spell lasting over four hours, spanning all three sessions, finishing with two for 121.

Mohammad Sami took the first wicket to fall when he had Dravid caught by Kamal at gully.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard at stumps on the third day of the opening Test between India and Pakistan at Mohali on Thursday:

PAKISTAN: First innings 312 (Kamal 91, Inzamam 57, Umar 44; Balaji 5-76, Pathan 2-68, Kumble 2-76)

INDIA: First innings (overnight 184-1)

Gambhir c Naved b Kaneria	41
Sehwag c Youhana b Razzaq	173
Dravid c Kamal b Sami	50
Tendulkar c Kamal b Naved	94
Ganguly c Butt b Kaneria	21
Laxman not out	33
Karthik c Naved b Sami	6
Pathan not out	1
Extras: (b-1, lb-5, nb-21, w-1)	28
Total: (For 6 wks in 131 overs)	447
Fall of wickets: 1-113, 2-216, 3-334, 4-381, 5-417, 6-444	
To bat: Zaheer, Kumble, Balaji.	

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Sami	31	6	103	2
Naved	27	1	110	1
Razzaq	26	1	107	1
Kaneria	47	11	121	2



CLOSE BUT NOT CLOSE ENOUGH: Star Indian batsman Sachin Tendulkar executes a trademark paddle sweep on the third day of the first Test against Pakistan at Mohali yesterday. The little master missed what could have been a world record 35th century for just six runs.

Nafees, Aftab, Nazmul on BCB payroll

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) has given rookie contract to three young cricketers following their commendable performance in international series recently.

The new faces are opening batsman Nafees Iqbal, his fellow Chittagong batsman Aftab Ahmed and pace bowler Nazmul Hossain.

The decision was taken at a Board meeting on Wednesday. It also decided to extend Enamul Haque and Manzarul Islam's rookie contract for one year.

All senior national cricketers also saw their contracts with the Board extended for one further year except for Mushfiqur Rahman, Alok Kapali and Hannan Sarkar.

The three out-of-form cricketers, now not in the mainstream, were given just six months, which expires this March.

The contract period starts from October, 2004.

The Board also has decided to fix

BD A win a thriller



CRICINFO, Bulawayo

Bangladesh A kept their series hopes alive after edging out Zimbabwe A in the thrilling fourth one-dayer at the Queens Park Sports Club here on Wednesday.

The second string Bangladesh side levelled the five-match series for the second time with a nerve-racking two-run victory. The series now stands at 2-2 with the decider scheduled for tomorrow.

The visitors were wobbling at 61 for four after being sent in, but a strong display from the lower order boosted them to 271-8 in 50 overs.

The total proved just out of reach of Zimbabwe A, who have been bolstered by the return of a number of rebel players.

Shamsur Rahman spearheaded the Bangladesh innings. His solid 63 at number four steadied the ship and set the platform for an assault down the order which was duly delivered by Mahmudullah Riyad (34), wicketkeeper Mushfiqur Rahim (58)

and captain Sanwar Hossain (38 not out).

Zimbabwe's opening bowler Wadlington Mwayenga was the leading wicket-taker for his side, but his three wickets came at a price as he went for 75 runs from his ten overs.

Zimbabwe's reply got off to a jittery start too as they found themselves on 12-2 after Terrence Duffin fell for one and Vusi Sibanda for four.

But they recovered to give Bangladesh A a fright with Greg

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SCORES IN BRIEF

BANGLADESH A: 271-8 in 50 overs (Dhiman 13, Russel 16, Tushar 5, Shamsur 63, Raqib 10, Riyad 34, Mushfiqur 58, Sanwar 38 n.o., Wasel 2, extras 32, B Strang 2-41, Mwayenga 3-75, Ewing 1-33, Dabengwa 2-44).

ZIMBABWE A: 269-9 in 50 overs (Duffin 1, Chibhaba 21, Sibanda 4, Strydom 52, Ervine 89, Nkala 24, Dabengwa 34 n.o., Chinyoka 1, B Strang 7, extras 21, Russel 3-44, Shahadat 1-81, Wasel 2-44, Riyad 1-48).

Marshall makes NZ's day



AFP, Christchurch

Hamish Marshall scored a maiden Test century and Craig Cumming added 74 as New Zealand dominated Australia to reach 265 for three on day one of the first Test here Thursday.

Marshall, in only his third Test innings, and Cumming on debut, restored some pride in the fragile New Zealand side which was white-washed 5-0 by Australia in the recent one-day series.

At stumps Marshall was not out 103 with Nathan Astle on 29 as Australian skipper Ricky Ponting was left to ponder the wisdom of two pre-match decisions.

The first was the extraordinary move to leave out Brett Lee, who had terrorised New Zealand in the one-day matches, and then after winning the toss Ponting chose to bowl for the first time in his captaincy on a placid pitch.

As the New Zealand innings progressed and the partnerships grew, the batsmen gained in confidence, making a target of 400-500 seem achievable.

"It would be nice if the guys who are in now and the (Craig) McMillans and (Brendon) McCullums could add the runs that we need to be competitive in this Test, and there is some way to get to the total we need to put some pressure on them," skipper Stephen Fleming said.

Marshall showed a maturity beyond his international experience as he steered the ball to all corners of the ground in an innings that so far includes 14 fours and an immaculate six over Shane Warne's head.

"It was a brilliant innings from him. He's had a great summer. He plays the ball so late in good areas, and along with Craig Cumming who deserves a mention it was a good day for a couple of youngsters," said Fleming.

Opener Cumming overcame his lack of international experience to reach 74 in 231 minutes at the

crease, falling just three overs before the tea break.

He was given one let-off on 43 when Warne dropped a comfortable chance at first slip off Glenn McGrath, and was eventually dismissed when he mistimed a pull shot off Michael Kasprovic and it flew to Jason Gillespie at mid-wicket.

Relishing Australia's surprise decision to leave out speedster Lee, Cumming and Fleming looked comfortable against the new-ball attack of Glenn McGrath and Jason Gillespie.

They cruised to 56 before the breakthrough for Australia came

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MARSHALLING BLACK CAPS: New Zealand batsman Hamish Marshall celebrates his maiden Test century on Day 1 of the first Test against Australia yesterday.

Pervez invited to watch a cricket match

AFP, Islamabad

The Indian government has invited Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf to watch a cricket match between the two countries during their current series, officials said Thursday.

"We have been contacted by the Indian government and we are looking at the schedule of the president," foreign office spokesman Jalil Abbas Jilani told AFP.

Newspaper reports said Musharraf may travel to watch the second Test between the two teams at Kolkata starting on March 16.

The Pakistani president was quoted as telling the Al-Arabiya television network that he would consider going to India to watch his country's cricketers if invited.

"I love watching sports and I also love cricket, but I would not go anywhere where I am not invited. If I am invited to watch cricket, I would

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Top players back for fifth round

SPORTS REPORTER

The fifth round of the Ispahani Sixth National Cricket League starts today with all teams at near full strength following the return of some of the leading players of the country from their Duleep Trophy mission in India.

First up will be the fifth round of one-day matches which will be followed by the four-dayers. Dhaka visit defending champions Chittagong, Rajshahi host bottom team Barisal while Khulna welcome Sylhet. Dhaka, Rajshahi and Khulna are sharing the one-day lead with six points.

All eyes however, will be on the top of the table four-day clash between Dhaka and Chittagong at the Chittagong Divisional Stadium starting Saturday. Both sides have 18 points and are expected to field full strength sides.

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Nat'l athletics on

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Athletics returned to the port city after two decades when the 30th edition of the National Champ-championships began at the MA Aziz Stadium yesterday. PHP is sponsoring the three-day competition.

State Minister for Youth and Sports Fazlur Rahman inaugurated the meet as the chief guest and also took salute from the march-past of the participating teams.

Chittagong hosted the National Championship three times in the past in 1975 and 1979. The last one was staged here way back 1985.

Five hundred athletes including 100 women from 72 districts and service teams are taking part in eleven track and field disciplines. However, no athlete from four teams - Chittagong University, IBAIS, AIUB and Manikganj -- were not seen in the official march-past.

The opening ceremony also

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Sachin miss saddens hosts



REUTERS/AFP, Mohali

India are disappointed Sachin Tendulkar narrowly missed the record for most Test centuries in the first Test against Pakistan, swash-buckling opener Virender Sehwag said on Thursday.

Sehwag hammered 173 to leave India on top after the third day at 447 for six in reply to Pakistan's first innings 312.

Tendulkar, however, failed to eclipse compatriot Sunil Gavaskar's record of 34 Test hundreds when he was out for 94.

"All of us in the dressing room were eagerly waiting for the world record," said Sehwag. "We were all dejected, so was Sachin. Maybe we will see him score a century in the next match."

Nearly 30,000 spectators skipped a heartbeat when Tendulkar drove seamer Navedul Hasan upishly to Asim Kamal, who held a brilliant low catch at gully to deny the master batsman a world mark.

Tendulkar also fell 27 short of becoming only the fifth batsman to complete 10,000 Test runs after Australians Allan Border and Steve Waugh, compatriot Sunil Gavaskar and West Indian Brian Lara.

Delhi batsman Sehwag, however, was pleased with his own effort.

"It was a good knock," he said. "We lost a lot of time yesterday and with my pace of scoring we have made it up."

More than three hours of play was lost due to rain on Wednesday.

Sehwag, who hit 309 in the first Test in Multan last year when India won their maiden series in Pakistan, was not disappointed he did not

score more. "When I play my natural game which involves lot of shot making, you are bound to be dismissed at some point."

Sehwag defended India's slow scoring in the last two sessions after he was out soon after lunch.

India went to lunch on 318 for two on a good batting pitch then added just a further 129 runs before the close.

"They didn't take the new ball," he said. "The old ball was very soft and it was difficult to score quickly."

He said India were aiming for a lead of between 250 to 300 to push for victory.

"I still don't think the match will end in a draw," he said. "It will be difficult for Pakistan to bat for two days."

"Hopefully the pitch will break on the fifth morning and we can capitalise on that."

Proteas seek repeat act



REUTERS, Centurion

South Africa would replicate the intensity and ruthlessness that were displayed in their comprehensive first Test victory over Zimbabwe when the second Test begins on Friday, captain Graeme Smith said on Thursday.

"We'll certainly be concentrating on getting the same intensity and the same will to win and ruthlessness," Smith said of the first Test that lasted just two days. "It will be difficult to re-enact a two-day win, but it will be superb if we can."

South Africa go into the second Test without opening bowlers Shaun

Pollock and Makhaya Ntini. Andre Nel, Charl Langeveldt and Monde Zondeki will spearhead the attack at Centurion.

"We'll be looking for them to excel in their three different fields. Andre Nel is back and he looked really good in the nets. He's big and strong and gets pace and bounce."

"Charl Langeveldt is coming back from injury and it's important he gets long spells out in the middle. He might not have the same pace as the other two, but he swings the ball."

"Monde Zondeki has also had an up and down time this season with injury, but he's always had the talent and the pace. His pace is his strength and it's important for him to

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BCF Polls Sujauddin won't seek re-election

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Chess Federation (BCF) general secretary Syed Sujauddin Ahmed confirmed yesterday he would not seek re-election in the forthcoming federation polls.

Sujauddin, who has served two terms as general secretary, told the council meeting of the BCF at the National Sports Council (NSC) that it would be better for the chess body to be run by a new face.

It was understood that most of the 51 councillors present tried to convince the successful general secretary, who is also the Sports Secretary, to run for a third time but Sujauddin stuck to his guns.

The council meeting, presided over by Prof. Jahangir Chowdhury, also decided to request the NSC to fix a date for the polls in early April.



Tribal dancers perform during the opening ceremony of the PHP 30th National Athletics Championships at the MA Aziz Stadium yesterday.