



Did U Know?

Shivnarine Chanderpaul became the second captain after New Zealand's Graham Dowling (239 vs India at Christchurch in 1967-68) to have made a double hundred in his debut innings as captain.



Sven-Goran Eriksson

(England football coach)
"Football is hard work. It should be hard work and we won the game."
After the 2-0 victory over Azerbaijan in the World Cup qualifier.



TEN Sports

West Indies vs South Africa
First Test, Day Five
Live at 8:00 pm

ESPN

Primera Liga
Albacete vs Real Madrid
Same day Delay at 3:30 pm

Sportscentre

Live at 8:30 pm
New Zealand vs Sri Lanka
First Test, Day Two

Live at 4:30 am (Tuesday)

STAR Sports

Sportsline
Live at 8:00 pm



Ispahani Nat'l Cricket League

(One-day)
Sylhet vs Chittagong
Venue: Sylhet Stadium
Rajshahi vs Khulna
Venue: Rajshahi Stadium
Barisal vs Dhaka
Venue: Barisal Stadium

Clijsters' run continues

AFP, Miami

Kim Clijsters' resurgence continued here Saturday as the former world number one from Belgium defeated second-seeded Wimbledon champion Maria Sharapova 6-3, 7-5 to claim the WTA title at Key Biscayne. As she did at Indian Wells, California, last week, Clijsters made her championship run from the unseeded ranks, reconfirming her return from the wrist injury that sidelined her for much of 2004.

The 21-year-old shrugged off a rain delay of nearly an hour, then persevered as both players struggled to hold serve in a second set played in blustery winds under threatening skies.

After two exchanges of service breaks in the second set, Clijsters claimed a 4-3 lead with a remarkable break point, in which she managed to lob back a Sharapova overhead to keep the rally alive until the unsettled Sharapova missed.

Clijsters consolidated her advantage by holding her serve to love.

But her first chance to serve for the match came against the wind, and Sharapova was able to record another break for 5-5.

SA follow on

STAR SPORT DESK

South Africa were forced to follow on after being bowled out for 188 in their first innings shortly before lunch on the fourth day of the first Test against West Indies at Georgetown yesterday.

Glamour goes out

Round eight begins today



SPORTS REPORTER

The National Cricket League (NCL) will lose colour with the start of the eighth round of matches today as sides will be without top players.

The country's lone first class competition has already suffered in terms of appeal as a number of leading cricketers have missed majority of matches due to various reasons and some have only made fleeting appearances. There have also been enforced absences along the way, as players had to perform their national team duties in the middle of the league.

The latest situation has been prompted by Bangladesh Cricket Board's decision to not allow the 20 probables for the country's maiden tour of England to play in the NCL once their preliminary camp started. The Tigers' training begins today at the Army Stadium.

Besides, teams will also have to sacrifice young prospects who have

been selected to tour Australia with the Bangladesh Under-19 side. The youth squad leave Dhaka on April 6.

With the NCL reaching its climax, a badly weakened second placed Khulna meet leaders Rajshahi in the one-day match of the round at the Rajshahi Stadium. Khulna (10 points) have lost as many as six players including national captain Habibul Bashar, Mashrafe Bin Mortuza, Abdur Razzak, Manzarul Islam and Tushar Imran to the U-19s. Senior campaigners Sanwar Hossain and Al Shahriar are not playing for personal reasons.

Sylhet, level on points with Khulna, are at home against defending champions Chittagong. Sylhet are without Tapash Baisya, Rajin Saleh, Enamul Haque Jr, Nazmul Hossain and Nazmus Sadat.

They are hoping to secure the services of three first division cricketers from Dhaka's Eskaton Sabuj Sangha -- Zakwan, Rana Mia and Shohan.

Chittagong, who have won just one limited overs game and are virtually out of running in the longer version also, have to do without Nafees Iqbal and Aftab Ahmed.

WI pace puzzles SA



AFP, Georgetown

Fast bowlers Pedro Collins, Daren Powell and Reon King put the skids on South Africa's batting to tighten West Indies' grip on the first Test here on Saturday.

When bad light stopped play eight overs early, South Africa were 130 for six, replying to West Indies' formidable first innings total of 543 for five declared.

Collins, Powell, and King each snared two wickets to deliver some early, punishing blows to the South Africa's batting on a rain-shortened third day.

AB de Villiers has been South Africa's standard-bearer so far with 41, but Mark Boucher, not out on 32, and Nicky Boje, not out on two, will hold the key in deciding if the visitors can reach the follow-on target of

343. Following a three-hour delay to the start of the day's cricket because early morning showers had soaked the outfield, South Africa continued from their overnight position of two without loss, but were rocking early when three wickets fell in the space of five balls.

First, South Africa captain and opening batsman Graeme Smith was caught behind for two nibbling at a ball moving away outside the off stump.

Next over, Powell, who has earned a recall after three years in the wilderness, had left-hander Jacques Rudolph caught low at third slip for a first-ball duck.

Two balls later, Powell struck again.

Jacques Kallis, who has one of the most enviable records against West Indies, was also bowled for a duck when he under-edged a pull at a short, rising ball.

More celebration was to come.

Fahim Muntasir in their clash against the hosts who are bottom in the one-day standings. Dhaka, who are four points behind Rajshahi, saw skipper Khaled Mahmud, Mohammed Ashraf, Javed Omer, Talha Jubair, Mohammed Rafique and Anwar Munir called up for the tour of England and had to let go youngsters Mahmudullah Riyadh and Mehrez Hossain Jr to the U-19s. Senior campaigners Sanwar Hossain and Al Shahriar are not playing for personal reasons.

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SETTING THE PACE: West Indies paceman Pedro Collins (L) celebrates with teammate Daren Ganga after sending South Africa captain Graeme Smith (R) on his way to the pavilion on the third day of the first Test in Georgetown on Saturday.

SUSPECT BOWLING ACTION ICC defends new tolerance levels

PTI, New Delhi

Australian biomechanics expert Bruce Elliott has revealed fresh information that questions the basis of International Cricket Council's (ICC) revamped Illegal Bowling Review process.

The ICC early this year approved changes in regulations dealing with suspect actions, and one of them was to relax the permissible level of straightening in a bowler's arm upto 15 degrees.

The game's world governing body claimed that this was the point at which straightening becomes visible to naked eye but Elliott said umpires on the field could see bending of much less degree.

Elliott also confirmed what has been spoken in hushed tones, that the new limit was adopted so as to allow majority of contemporary bowlers whose actions were suspect.

"The umpire can observe movements of 10-15 degrees. The 15 degrees was selected as it appeared to permit most bowlers, the great majority who have NOT been called, to continue bowling," Elliott told this news agency to a query by e-mail.

Asked specifically if there was any chance that straightening of less degree could be visible to the naked eye, Elliott said, "I think you can see 10 degrees but not five."

Ganguly to fight on



BBC ONLINE, undated

India captain Sourav Ganguly insists he will not step out of the firing line despite his recent slump in form.

Ganguly was dismissed first ball in the opening one-day international against Pakistan, after struggling in the Test series, but he says he will not take a rest.

"I need to play matches and get runs. I have to work on getting my form back and I won't get it back by sitting at home," the 32-year-old explained after winning the match by 87 runs at Cochin on Saturday.

"I've just got to keep trying to get out of the bad patch in the middle."

Ganguly is the third highest run-scorer in the history of one-day internationals, with 9,936 runs from 268 games.

He has not scored a one-day century since the World Cup semifinal win over Kenya in 2003, while his

Test form has also suffered recently. The left-hander made only 48 runs in five innings against Pakistan but he believes he can recapture his best form.

"I'm a little worried because I haven't scored runs for many innings now, but I know I'll get over it," Ganguly added.

"I'm disappointed but the only way out is to be positive."



SOURAV GANGULY

GM battle from tomorrow



SPORTS REPORTER

The Seventh United Insurance Grand Masters' Chess Tournament, which was scheduled to start today at the National Sports Council auditorium, has been deferred by a day to accommodate the arrival of some foreign players.

Already twenty Indian players including one Grand Master, one Women Grand Master and seven International Masters are in the city to take part in the country's premier international chess tournament.

About 50 rated players from seven countries including eight GMs, ten IMs and one WGM are expected to compete in the eleven-round Swiss League competition.

The tournament had to be deferred as two Uzbek Grand Masters Uldachev Saidali and Safin Shukrat, Russian GM Alexander Fominov of Russia and Philippines GM Antonio Rorelio Jr are expected to reach the capital today.

The Bangladesh Chess

Federation (BCF) as ever pinned its hopes on local players, especially three International Masters because they have a real chance to collect a GM norm after the federation revised the tournament format from being played on round robin league basis.

Refaat-Bin-Sattar and Abdullah

STANCHART CRICKET

Brilliant Billal

SPORTS REPORTER

A hurricane hundred by Billal Hossain propelled Sheikhdi Abdullah Mollah High to a massive 151-run win over Dhaka Collegiate in the Standard Chartered Young Tigers Under-17 National School Cricket Championship at the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium yesterday.

Billal hammered 15 fours and four sixes in his 66-ball 111 and Mohammad Hasan made 60 as Sheikhdi piled up 324-8 in 50 overs and then Mahmudul claimed four and Sajedul captured three wickets as Collegiate were bundled out for 173 in 39.3 overs.

At the Residential Model School ground, although Ibrahim fell four runs short of three-figures but his effort helped Rayer Bazar High (309-10) to outplay Shourav Smrity High (123-10) by 186 runs.

Elsewhere, Sunnydale, National Bahga and University Laboratory High earned comfortable victories.

At the Gulshan Youth Club ground, Sunnydale (201-10) posted a 65-run victory against Maniknagar Model High (136-10), National Bangla (130-5) defeated Willes Little Flower (126-10) at the City Club ground, Titas Gas (124-5) beat St Joseph's High (123-10) by five wickets at the Residential Model High School ground and University Laboratory (187-5) managed five-wicket win against the Dr Mohammad Shahidullah School (183-10) at the Dhanmondi Club ground.

Independence Day hockey final tomorrow

SPORTS REPORTER

Independence Day hockey tournament finalists Blue Berry and Old Dhaka Hockey Development Board warmed up for tomorrow's final with big wins yesterday.

On the final day of the league phase, Rafiqul Islam Kamal slammed a double-hatrick as Old Dhaka brushed aside Bangladesh Police 10-0 at the Maulana Bhasani National Stadium.

Former national striker Kamal scored his first three goals inside 26 minutes of the start and struck further three in the second half after Mamun and Chandan had scored one goal apiece.

Prince made it 9-0 while Mamun sealed the victory with his second goal two minutes from time.

Blue Berry dumped Barnak Samaj 7-1 after leading 4-0.

Shuva slotted a brace of goals while Asif, Shamim Reza, Prashanta, Sumon and Faruk all hit the scoresheet for the winners. Soheli scored a consolation goal for Barnak.

In the day's other match, two-goal Sirajul helped Bangladesh Army blank Bangladesh Navy 4-0. Thuiinu Marma and Sanwar shared the remaining goals.

BASKETBALL

Dharmketu Club and Bangladesh Navy advanced to the final of the Independence Day Basketball Championship yesterday. Dharmketu defeated Josephites Club 67-61 points in the first semifinal while

Bangladesh Navy outplayed Bangladesh Army 90-57 points in the second semifinal at the Dhanmondi Basketball Gymnasium.

The final takes place at the same venue on Wednesday.

Kiwis aim to fly

First Test against Sri Lanka starts today



AFP, Napier

Shattered by the recent thrashing by Australia, New Zealand cricketers are under pressure to restore some pride going into the two-Test series against Sri Lanka starting here Monday.

And Sri Lankan coach John Dyson said that could work to his side's advantage, despite the turmoil in their ranks with their one warm-up match washed out and the distraction of having the Colombo government dissolving the Sri Lanka Cricket board.

New Zealand captain Stephen Fleming "would be feeling the pressure of not having a great series against the Aussies, but he's not alone. There are a number of them that had very ordinary series, so I think there's pressure on all of them."

In addition to a feeling of despondency after being whipped by Australia, New Zealand have suffered a further setback with ace spinner Daniel Vettori ruled out through injury, but there remain several factors in their favour.

Sri Lanka are without their spin magician Muttiah Muralitharan and useful pacemen Nuwan Zoysa and Diihara Fernando -- all out with injury -- and haven't played a Test since last October when they drew a series 1-1 in Pakistan.

After losing the first one-dayer to New Zealand on Boxing Day, the tsunami tragedy saw that tour postponed, and this Test series will be their first international matches since.

The sport is in chaos in Sri Lanka with the cricket board recently dissolved by the government for the third time in six years, and the Sri Lankan batsmen were all denied an innings in the washed-out tour opener.

While Fleming has talked up the tourists he has added cautious optimism for his under-strength bowling attack.

TEAMS

NEW ZEALAND: Stephen Fleming (captain), James Marshall, Craig Cumming, Hamish Marshall, Nathan Astle, Lou Vincent, Brendon McCullum, Kyle Mills, James Franklin, Paul Wiseman, Chris Martin.

SRI LANKA (from): Marvan Atapattu (captain), Sanath Jayasuriya, Kumar Sangakkara, Mahela Jayawardene, Tillakaratne Dilshan, Thilan Samaraweera, Shantha Kalavithigoda, Upul Chandana, Chaminda Vaas, Farveez Maharoof, Nuwan Kulasekara, Lasitha Malinga, Ruchira Perera, Rangana Herath.

Umpires: Darrell Hair (Australia) and Steve Bucknor (West Indies).

Lanka's 5 India ODIs called off

AFP, Mumbai

Sri Lanka's cricket tour of India for five one-day internationals has been postponed, a top Indian official said here on Sunday.

Joint secretary of the Board of Control for Cricket in India, Gautam Dasgupta said the five-match series, scheduled to begin on April 22, was put off as they had not received a confirmation from their Sri Lankan counterpart.

"In view of Sri Lanka Cricket's inability to confirm the itinerary and the recent developments there, we felt the matches should be postponed to a mutually convenient date," he said.

Last month, Sri Lankan Sports Minister Jeevan Kumaratunga sacked the country's cricket governing body amid allegations of financial irregularities.

Sri Lanka are currently touring New Zealand for a two-Test series.



Bangladesh Chess Federation general secretary Syed Sujauddin Ahmed (C) addresses a press conference at National Sports Council's conference room yesterday.