



Did U Know?

Jean Genevieve Garnerin was the first female parachutist, jumping from a hot air balloon in 1799.



Ian Botham
(England cricket legend)
"It's a terrible blunder... appalling, pathetic and utterly predictable."
How he described the omission of Kevin Pietersen from the England Test squad to face Bangladesh.

PREMIER LEAGUE

Team watch: Mohammedan

Football

SPORTS REPORTER

If the signs are anything to go by, it is certainly not going to be Mohammedan's year unless they can conjure up a miracle and rise from the ashes like the Phoenix.

But despite a wretched start to the season -- their worst in years -- many believe that Mohammedan Sporting Club are one team who have the capability to recover from deep crisis and mount a challenge for the Premier League.

The Black and Whites, without any silverware in the past two years, went to the transfer market with a big budget and brought back former players Alfaz, Matiur Munna, Hassan and Nazrul. They also secured the services of the country's number two custodian Biplab. Sources close to the club said the five national stars cost them about 70 lakh Taka but apart from Alfaz, all the others have failed to live up to the expectations in competitions ahead of the Premier League.

Mohammedan were the number one team on paper and started their preparations under Korean coach Man Young Kang in December. But Kang was fired just three months after taking charge and the two South Korean booters he brought along with him were also told to pack their bags. The hard decision was prompted by Mohammedan's failure to reach the final of the Independence Day Gold Cup where they were knocked out in the last four.

Then came the Federation Cup and an earth-shattering 5-1 thrashing at the hands of arch rivals Abahani in a group game -- their biggest loss in the post-Liberation era.

With the side in chaos following allegations of indiscipline and lack of commitment and sincerity of the officials, the entire team management was re-shuffled before the Federation Cup semifinals and Kazi Jashimuddin Joshi was named

assistant coach to Golam Sarwar Tipu. Tipu eventually refused to take over.

Joshi saw his boys lose 1-0 to Muktijoddha in the semis and later, a depleted Mohammedan were ousted by Arambagh from the Independence Day football tournament's first round in Rajshahi.

But Joshi, a former national winger and an ever-faithful servant of Mohammedan, has found comfort in the fact that the start of the league has been delayed by eight days giving him some more time to



ALFAZ AHMED

prepare. "This extra week is a bonus for me. It will give me the chance to plan technical developments needed for the league. Also, it will help injured players recover," said the Mohammedan coach who holds a B-Licence in coaching.

"But we will need three quality foreign footballers to fill the gaps. We need a defender, a midfielder and a striker," said Joshi who added that defence remained his biggest headache.

The 19-time league winners -- they have won a dozen titles after the Liberation -- are also reportedly trying to bring Nigerian coach Emeke who played alongside Joshi in the 80s which makes Joshi's future uncertain. But for the ex left

winger who had speed like lightning, first things come first and his full concentration was on building a balanced side.

"Nazrul and Hassan both have failed to play the last defender's role. Nakib's absence due to injury has also created a vacuum in our attack. He is still a dangerous player in the penalty box."

With Munna not in form, the midfield which is full of makeshift players, has also failed to feed the forwards.

"I am enjoying this challenge and with Alfaz improving from injury and lack of form, I am hopeful he will lead the side properly once the foreigners arrive. We should be in the championship race but that will depend on the quality of our foreign players," said Joshi.

Two Nigerian booters are expected to arrive this week to strengthen the squad.

Mohammedan, who finished fifth last year, will have their work cut out from the very beginning. They open their campaign against bogey team Arambagh. Realistically, they have four rivals for the title -- Muktijoddha, Abahani, Sheikh Russel and Brothers -- and they have to deal with these clubs simultaneously from round 3 to 6.

"Winning the opening match will boost our confidence and although I am not that experienced as a coach, I hope to use my knowledge and learning," said Joshi who denied any lack of discipline in the present squad.

However, a recent return of all the old faces in the team management after they had been sacked has once again raised doubts of a Black and White comeback.

SQUAD

Biplab, Bijan, Kamal (goalkeepers), Hassan, Nazrul, Arafat, Biplab, Rony, Kamal, Mintu (defenders), Munna, Sentu, Faisal, Asad, Pintu, Zahid, Kaiser (midfielders), Manju, Nakib, Alfaz (forwards).

Tigers' final warm-up from today

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh will be without their skipper Habibur Bashar when they play their final three-day match against Northamptonshire.

The last warm-up game for the Tigers ahead of the first Test at Lords' will start at Northamptonshire today. Bashar, who was struck on his face while batting against Sussex on Monday, is reported to have feeling the pain on his bruised forehead. But the team management confirmed that the 32-year-old batsman would walk alongside his English counterpart Michael Vaughan for the toss of the historic first Test at Lords' on May 26.

Vice-captain Khaled Mashud, who was rested in the previous game against Sussex that the tourists suffered an embarrassing innings and 226-run defeat, will lead the team that might see both left-arm spinners Mohammad Rafique and Enamul Haque playing together.

But the team management has decided to rest fast bowlers Mashrafe-Bin-Mortuza and Shahadat Hossain when they announced a list of 13 probables for the game against Northants.

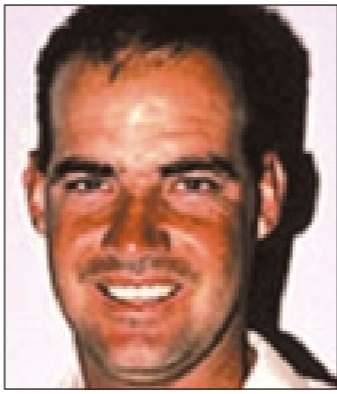
Although it is important for the Tigers to put up a good show against the English county after that embarrassing defeat, the think-tank apparently decided not to burn out its frontline fast bowlers before the first Test.

Young wicketkeeper batsman Mushfiqur Rahim, who was only notable performer against Sussex, has a bright chance to play despite the return of an indispensable Mashud.

'Mighty Mickey' new SA coach

AFP, Johannesburg

Former South Africa "A" and Warriors coach Mickey Arthur was appointed Thursday as the coun-



MICKEY ARTHUR

try's new national coach, saying he wanted to create a platform to take the Proteas to the top of the world rankings.

"After various recommendations Mickey was appointed and we have endorsed the process. I now want to present to you Mickey Arthur our new coach," United Cricket Board of South Africa chief executive Gerald Majola said.

The 37-year-old Arthur, known as "Mighty Mickey" in cricketing circles for his success with the country's "A" squad last year, as well as moulding the East London-based Warriors into a formidable team to reach the final of the Pro20 series first time up this year.

"It's an incredible honour and privilege and I feel that I can really step up to the breach and make a difference," Arthur told reporters at a news conference.

"I am here to create a platform and an environment for our players to perform. My long-term goal is to ultimately become the best in the world," he said.

BFF kept waiting

SPORTS REPORTER

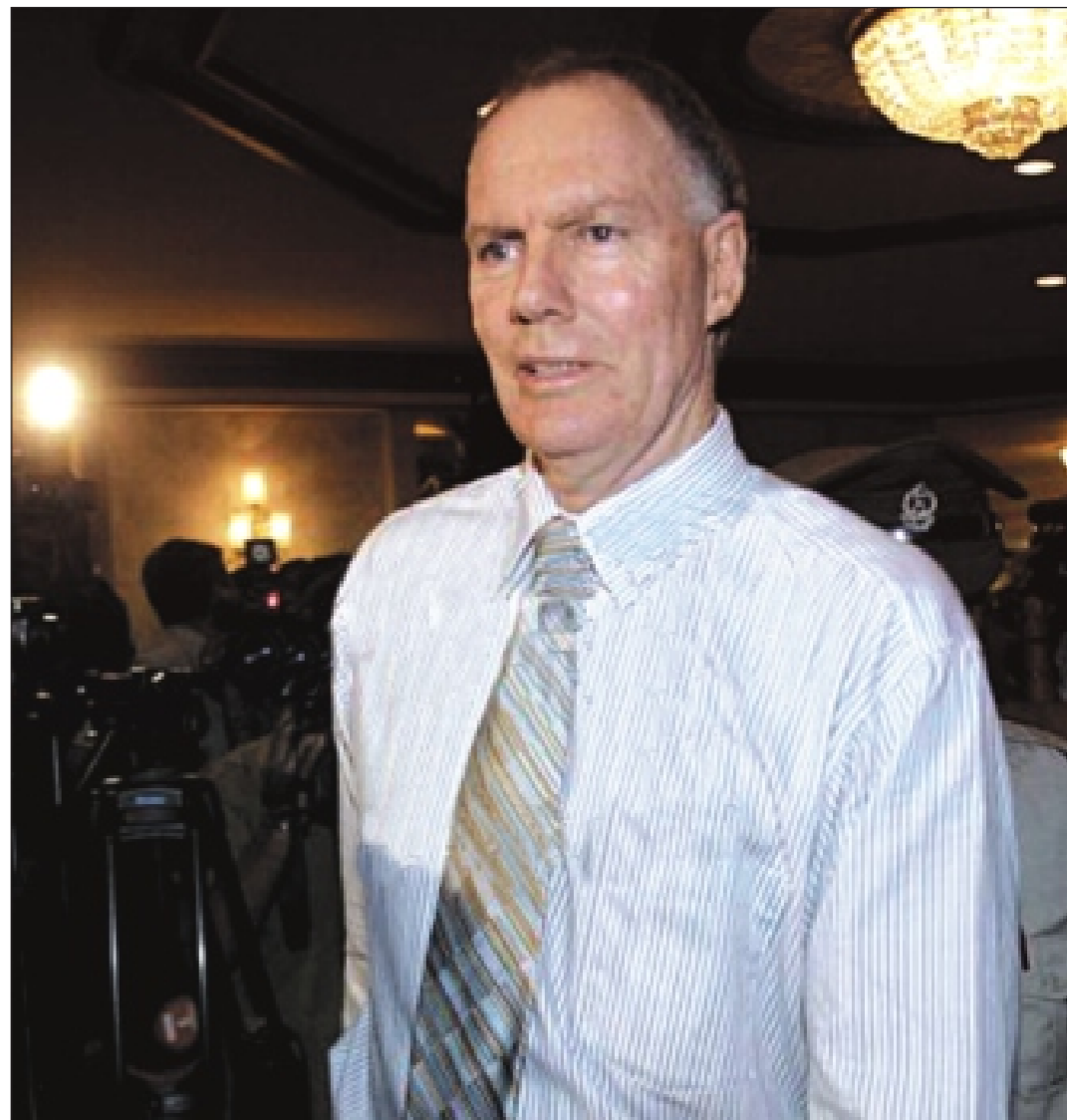
The Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) has been kept waiting for the sponsorship deal of the Senior Division Football League.

BFF general secretary Anwarul Hoque Helal and assistant general secretary Manzoor Hossain Malu met with officials of Banglalink, a cellular phone operator, yesterday.

"We discussed the matters and it looks positive. But they have asked for some time to settle the deal," said Helal yesterday.

"Tomorrow is holiday and so is Sunday. Due to hartal on Saturday, it will take three days. Actually, we will get an answer from them on Monday," the BFF general secretary added.

The First Division League has already started but the main attraction, the Premier League, will begin on May 28.



Australian Greg Chappell arrives at a New Delhi hotel for interview with the Board of Control for Cricket in India on Thursday.

Chappell, Moody top favourites

BCCI begins coaches' interview

Cricket

AFP, New Delhi

India on Thursday began interviews for the next cricket coach amid unprecedented media frenzy on John Wright's likely successor to one of the sport's most high-profile and demanding jobs.

The four candidates -- Australians Greg Chappell and Tom Moody, India's Mohinder Amarnath and Desmond Haynes of the West Indies -- will appear separately before a high-powered selection panel of the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) at a local hotel here.

The selection panel comprises

former captains Sunil Gavaskar, Ravi Shastri and Srinivas Venkataraghavan, current BCCI president Ranbir Singh Mahendra, secretary Karunakaran Nair and former chief Jagmohan Dalmiya.

The BCCI has not set a date for naming the new coach since the man nominated by the selection panel will have to be approved by the BCCI's decision-making working committee.

Television cameras and journalists crammed the venue. Some even followed Chappell, Moody and Haynes from the moment they stepped out of the airport early Thursday to keep their appointment

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India seek legal opinion over Ganguly ban

CRICINFO, undated

The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) has suggested that it will seek legal opinion over the six-match ban imposed on Sourav Ganguly for India's slow over-rates in the one-day series against Pakistan.

"We are getting the issue legally examined," Ranbir Singh Mahendra, the BCCI president, was quoted by Indo-Asian News Service. "We will do as our counsels advise."

Ganguly was handed the ban by Chris Broad, the match referee, after India fell behind in the over-rates during two consecutive matches of the one-day series, at Jamshedpur and at Ahmedabad.

He then lost his appeal against the verdict when Michael Beloff, the ICC appeals commissioner, ruled that Broad's decision was justified. Ganguly missed the last two games of the series, and will miss most of the triangular tournament in Sri Lanka in August if the decision stays.

Still Pakistan win

Cricket

AFP, Kingstown

Pakistan silenced a capacity holiday crowd and heaped more scorn on West Indies, when they completed a workmanlike, come-from-behind 59-run victory in the first one-day

international. West Indies, chasing a modest 193 to win from their allocation of 50 overs, were dismissed for 133 in 45.2 overs to give the Pakistan a 1-0 lead in the three-match series.

Abdul Razaq, who had a delayed departure from Pakistan because of illness to his mother-in-law, snared four wickets for 29 runs

from nine overs to be the pick of the Pakistan bowlers and earned the man-of-the-match award.

Dwayne Bravo with 27 from 66 balls and Chris Gayle with 22 from 21 balls were the leading lights for West Indies, who have now lost all except two of the ODIs they have contested, since winning the ICC Champions Trophy in Britain last year.

Shabbir Ahmed, Navedul Hasan, and Shahid Afridi all supported Razaq with two wickets apiece.

But it was a huge disappointment for the crowd. In 15 matches at Arnos Vale, they have become accustomed to seeing West Indies win, since the home team has lost only once here, coincidentally to Pakistan 12 years ago.

The crowd had seen West Indies bowl steadily and field alertly to dismiss the Pakistanis for 192 in 44.3 overs, after they were sent in to bat on a hard, true pitch under sunny skies.

But the multitude was still settling down from the interval, when Xavier Marshall top-edged a hook and was caught behind for three off Naved in the fifth over.

Two overs later, Gayle again got carried away and he too, top-edged a hook and Kamran Akmal again obliged Naved to leave West Indies 26 for two.

Runako Morton, playing his first ODI in almost three years, joined Ramnareh Sarwan and they calmed things down with circumspect, if not flourishing batting until the 18th over.

Thereupon West Indies continued to bleed wickets and, in a purple patch for Pakistan, five fell for 34 runs in the space of 10 overs to give the visitors a firm grip on the match.

Earlier, opening batsman Salman Butt hit three fours in the top score of 43 from 63 balls for Pakistan, and added 42 for the third wicket in the biggest stand of the innings with Yousef Youhana, who scored 30 from 46 balls.

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What to WATCH

ESPN
Sportscentre
Live at 8:30 pm
STAR Sports
Sportsline
Live at 8:00 pm

Winning start for Dhanmondi in First Division

SPORTS REPORTER

A first half strike by Anwar Parvez gave Dhanmondi Club a solitary goal win over BRTC in their First Division Football League opener yesterday.

Parvez slammed the match in the 32nd minute in the day's lone match at the Birshreshtha Shaheed Mostafa Kamal Stadium in Kamalapur.

The league resumed after a two-day break but it failed to break out from identical 1-0 results from the first two games.

Rahmatganj MFS will take on Mohakhali Ekadash in today's match.

THIRD DIVISION

The Third Division League also resumed after a couple of days with

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WOMEN'S HANDBALL Usha, Mariner win openers

SPORTS REPORTER

Usha Kriya Chakra and Mariner Youngs Club got off to bright starts on the opening day of the Tibet Women's Handball League yesterday.

Mariner handed a massive 25-5 defeat to Viqarunissa at the Dhanmondi Women's Complex in the morning while Usha beat Vikrampur SC 24-11 at the Dhaka Stadium handball court in the afternoon.

Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Barrister Moudud Ahmed declared the 9-team meet open in the afternoon.

OPEN RATING CHESS Rajib shares lead with Ali

SPORTS REPORTER

International Master Enamul Hossain Rajib and Mohammad Ali shared the lead in the Open FIDE Rating chess tournament with maximum five points.

In the fifth round, Rajib defeated FIDE Master Reza while Ali beat FIDE Master Nasir at the Bangladesh Chess Federation hall room yesterday.

IM Abdullah Al Rakib, FM Khondokar Aminul Islam, Monir Hossain, Delwar Hossain and Nasiruddin Mahmud were following the joint leaders with 4.5 points.

CSKA write Russian history

UEFA CUP

AFP, Lisbon

Three second-half goals ensured CSKA Moscow became the first Russian side to win a European football trophy here on Wednesday as they beat Sporting Lisbon 3-1 in the UEFA Cup final.

The Russians - who were giving Chelsea owner and the major shareholder in their sponsors Sibneft Roman Abramovich consolation for his English side not winning the Champions League - came from 1-0 down to take the title.

Rogério had given the Portuguese side a deserved lead in the first-half before CSKA replied through three second-half goals from Alexei Berезutsky, Yuri Zhirkov and their record 8million euro signing Brazilian striker Vagner Love.

It was a happy ending to Love's European campaign which had threatened to turn sour when in January he had said he wanted to leave because of the cold weather.

CSKA's coach Valery Dassayev said victory had proved his critics wrong.

"As we have won I think one can say that the coach can't be as bad as all that!"

"The players held their nerve and we corrected several things in midfield from the first-half and got the reward we deserve."

"I hope now that this victory will

prove a catalyst for other Russian clubs in the club competitions."

His Portuguese counterpart Jose Pezoso, who failed to give Portuguese clubs their third European trophy in as many seasons after FC Porto took the UEFA Cup and then the Champions League last year, said the crucial factor had been not turning their first-half dominance into goals.

"It is probably that which gave CSKA a glimmer of hope in that they could turn it around," he said.

"We still dominated them in the second-half but we lacked luck and luck is important in football."

"Defeat always teaches you things that you should improve on, but one thing I will not alter and that is my attack minded tactics," he added defiantly.

Sporting started brightly and forced three corners in the opening six minutes but the Russians were able to clear them.

Their Brazilian playmaker Fabio Rochemback - who was calling all the shots in midfield - had their first effort at goal in the eighth minute but it drifted wide.

Sporting's veteran captain Pedro Barbosa was booked by Graham Poll, the first Englishman to take charge of a European final since Philip Don in 1994, for deliberate obstruction on CSKA's Daniel Carvalho, but from the resulting freekick Alexei Berезutsky - playing alongside his twin brother Vassily in defence - sent his header wide of the post.

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PHOTO: INTERNET SOURCE

THERE GOES THE CUP: Sporting Lisbon custodian Ricardo can only watch as Vagner Love of CSKA Moscow scores his team's third goal at the Jose Alvalade Stadium in Lisbon on Wednesday.