



Did U Know?

Formula One legend Alan Prost originally wanted to be a football player.



Jason Gillespie

(Australian fast bowler)
"If another bomb did go off here in England, there would be serious questions asked, I think, about the tour because I know a lot of the guys are quite nervous."



ESPN

NatWest ODI Series
Australia v Bangladesh
Highlights
Repeated at 10.30 am
Sportscentre
Live at 8.30pm

STAR Sports

England v Australia
Second Test, Day 2
Live at 3.30 pm



Premier Football League

Brothers Union v Sheikh Russel
(5.00pm)
Venue: Bangabandhu National Stadium.

India to tour Zim in August

CRICINFO, undated

India will play two Tests in Zimbabwe after participating in a one-day competition with the hosts and New Zealand in a month-long tour starting August 24. The Tests were added to the itinerary after the proposal was made by the Zimbabwe Cricket Union in May.

Now, after the one-day series, India will loosen up for the longer format with a practice game before the Tests begin on September 13.

India last toured Zimbabwe in 2001 and won the first Test but lost the second, to leave Zimbabwe with a superior record; Zimbabwe have won two of the four Tests played against India at home, and lost only one.

The one-day series will begin two days after the Afro-Asia Cup in South Africa, in which four Indians are likely to play.

The Indian cricket board secretary, SK Nair, said that Rahul Dravid, Virender Sehwag, Anil Kumble and Irfan Pathan would join the rest of the team directly in Zimbabwe if they were selected.

The two Tests have added to a heavy workload which include the Indian Oil Cup in Sri Lanka, the Afro-Asia Cup, the Super Series in Australia, a home series against Sri Lanka, and a tour of Pakistan -- all before the end of February.

ITINERARY

ODI Tri-Series

Aug 24 Zim-NZ Queens Sports Club
Aug 26 India-NZ Queens Sports Club
Aug 29 Zim-India Harare Sports Club
Aug 31 Zim-NZ Harare Sports Club
Sept 2 India-NZ Harare Sports Club
Sept 4 Zim-India Harare Sports Club
Sept 6 Final Harare Sports Club

Tests

Sept 13-17 1st Test Queens Sports Club
Sept 20-24 2nd Test Harare Sports Club

MSC escape with a draw

MOHAMMEDAN-2, ARAMBAGH-2

SPORTS REPORTER

Premier Bank
service first
Senior Division Football League

Arambagh striker Mujibur Rahman Ritu set up two goals for his teammates but let Mohammedan Sporting Club off the hook with a couple of near misses in the dying moments of yesterday's Premier Football League match at the Bangabandhu National Stadium.

With the scoreline tied at 2-2, Ritu latched onto a right side cross by Juku in the 84th minute but the ball came off the Mohammedan crossbar before custodian Biplab gathered it in at the second attempt. Ritu was once again left unmarked by the rival defenders just before the end of regulation 90 minutes but this time, he completely mishit the ball from six yards with only the hapless goalkeeper to beat.

Mohammedan's second draw in three second-leg matches and overall fourth stalemate, meant the Black and Whites stayed top of the table with 31 points at the start of the

13th round. But defending champions Brothers Union now threaten to overtake the leaders if they can collect full points against last year's runners-up Sheikh Russel in today's crucial match.

Arambagh, who are just ahead of the relegation zone, increased their collection to 12 points with the valuable point.

Arambagh, who also held local giants Abahani in the 11th round but failed to keep it up against Brothers before going down 2-1 in their previous outing, went ahead after 25 minutes. Morshed stabbed the ball into the near post after two Mohammedan defenders fumbled to clear a low left-side centre by Ritu.

But the Black and Whites made a spirited comeback, going ahead with two goals in the next seven minutes. It was defensive midfielder Arman Aziz who drilled in a first-time volley in the 27th minute after Arambagh goalkeeper Shakil punched a lob by Kamal out of their area.

Mohammedan, who won their first-leg meeting 3-1, looked like repeating their victory when Alfaz's

dazzling 30-yard run down the middle inspired them to take the lead five minutes later. The Mohammedan skipper, who raced into the box with a through from Manju, saw his powerful left-footed drive spectacularly blocked by Shakil while Ritu's dropped-volley from ten yards was parried by a diving Biplab six minutes after the restart.

Manju, the league's top scorer with eight goals, must rue a golden chance to make it 3-1 for Mohammedan on the hour when his placing shot on a chip from Munna was smartly stopped one-handed by substitute keeper Al Amin.

Arambagh lost their goal-scorer Morshed through injury four minutes before the break but his replacement Rintu finally pulled off

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PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Mohammedan's Sierra Leone recruit Donald Robert (Extreme R) gives Arambagh goalie Shakil no chance as he nets the second goal for his side.

BFF promises Cruciani a free hand



Football

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) will give new national team coach Diego Andres Cruciani absolute freedom, said National Team Management Committee (NTMC) chairman Kazi Salahuddin after Cruciani and his fellow Argentine trainer Victor Ariel Colman signed a one-year contract at the BFF Bhaban yesterday.

It ended the federation's two-and-a-half year run without a coach for the national side. Cruciani's primary task during his one-year stint will be to build a strong squad for the SAFF Championship in Pakistan in December.

"My job here isn't different from my work elsewhere. I want to work here as I did in the past," said the 42-year-old at a press conference.

"I have seen only one match here yesterday and my first impression of Bangladesh football is that the

players lack technique and tactical awareness."

Cruciani, who is the tenth foreign coach appointed by the BFF, succeeds Austrian George Kottan who quit in February 2003.

"I have witnessed both the good and bad sides but with hard work, these can be improved. I know there is a gulf between Latin and Asian styles but I will try to apply what I have in my head.

Cruciani, who has a daughter but is separated from her and his wife for three years, will receive 4,000 dollars per month as salary while Colman will get 2,000 dollars. The BFF will also provide the duo with local hospitality.

"The Brazilians and Argentines play touch-football but to do that you need great skill. I will give emphasis on training and fitness first. But before that, I will have to see the players with whom I will work.

"For me, (Cesar Luis) Menotti is the master of all. I have learned a lot from him during my days at the Independiente club," said Cruciani, who worked with the Argentine 1978

World Cup winning coach and football philosopher who had changed the face of South American football, helping it regain control from their European counterparts in the 70s.

Cruciani, who was Menotti's assistant in 1998-99 at the Buenos Aires club, also claimed that at under-19 level, he played against living football legend Diego Maradona in one match.

The appointment of the new coach definitely elated the BFF high officials and president SA Sultan, who handed over the contract signed by the two Argentines, BFF general secretary Anwarul Hoque Helal and Salahuddin, termed it as fulfilling their promise of bringing a coach from Latin America.

Former national footballer Salahuddin, arguably the best striker the country has ever produced, told that it was a new beginning for football.

"Coaches have come and gone but we don't want to dwell in the past. We will extend their contract if they are successful. They will look

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PHOTO: STAR

Argentine Diego Andres Cruciani (R), shakes hands with Bangladesh Football Federation president SA Sultan after signing the contract to become the national team coach at the BFF Bhaban on Thursday.

AFRO-ASIA CUP

Mashrafee in Asian XI

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh speedster Mashrafee Bin-Mortuza was on Thursday included in the Asian XI for this month's Afro-Asia Cup to be held in South Africa after Pakistan's Rana Navidul Hassan was declared unavailable for the three-match series against an African XI.

Mashrafee, Bangladesh wicketkeeper Khaled Mashud and Sri Lankan captain Marvan Atapattu were kept in the standby list after a four-man selection panel had announced a 15-member Asian squad with only one Bangladeshi player in Mohammad Ashraf.

Mashrafee, who had earlier expressed his disappointment after being left out of the original squad was understandably happy with the sudden call-up.

"It is a surprise for me. I would have been happier if had I been included the first time. But still, it is an achievement," said the man dubbed 'Narail Express'. Mashrafee was on his way to his hometown Narail when he received the news on his cellphone.

"I am more interested in playing the matches rather than just being a part of the squad. If I get the chance, it would be great for the country. If I perform well, it will enhance our image."

Mashrafee and Ashraf will leave for South Africa on August 14 to take part in the series.

Tushar blooms for BD A

SPORTS REPORTER

Tushar Imran hit a superb century as Bangladesh A fought back gallantly against Yorkshire on the second day of their three-day match at Headingley, Leeds yesterday.

The dashing right-hander scored 116 after the home side had buried the visitors under an avalanche of runs on the opening day. Yorkshire declared their first innings at 357-2.

The second-string Bangladesh team resuming the day on 25-1 thrived on Tushar's ton and an impressive 60 by Nazimuddin to close on at 325. Yorkshire, with 32-



TUSHAR IMRAN...116

run first innings lead, fell into early strife losing two wickets for 12 runs after six overs. Pacemen Shahadat and Russel grabbed a wicket each.

It was Tushar's second century of the tour after his career-best first-class knock of 119 against Gloucestershire on July 21.

The man in form celebrated his fifth first-class hundred after his match-winning 93 against Lancashire in a limited-overs match on August 1.

Starting the day from the scratch, Tushar held one end up in his 198-minute vigil at the crease before becoming the fifth batsman out at 232. His 164-ball knock featured 18 boundaries.

He put on 77 runs for the second wicket with his captain Shahriar Nafees, the left-hander who scored a defiant 41.

Tushar was then involved in a 78-run stand with Alok Kapali (33) for the third wicket.

Nazimuddin took over from where Tushar had left off and the young right-hander was responsible for taking the tourists past the 300-mark. His 94-ball innings contained 11 fours and a massive six.

Yorkshire left-arm paceman Lucas took five wickets for 49 runs.

England 407 all out

SPORTS REPORTER

England were all out for 407 on Day One of the second Test against Australia at Edgbaston yesterday.

After openers Marcus Trescothick (90) and Andrew Strauss put on 112 runs for the first wicket, Australia hit back taking three quick wickets before the hard-hitting pair of Andrew Flintoff and Kevin Petersen combined to wrest the initiative again.

Flintoff made a quickfire 68 off 62 balls with help of five sixes while his in-form partner slammed a 76-ball 71.



PHOTO: AFP

DOWN AND OUT! Australian pace ace Glenn McGrath lies on the ground while team physio Errol Alcott checks his condition after McGrath tore ankle ligaments before the start of the second Test at Edgbaston on Thursday.

Flintoff leads assault



Cricket

AFP, Birmingham

Andrew Flintoff kept the pressure on Australia as England continued their Ashes fight-back with some blistering batting on the first day of the second Test at Edgbaston here Thursday.

At tea, England were 289 for four. Flintoff was 68 not out off 60 balls with five sixes and six fours.

Together with Kevin Pietersen, 40 not out, he shared a run-a-ball stand of 102, the aggressive pair hitting form together for the first time in either one-day or Test cricket as England capitalised on the freak absence of spearhead fast bowler Glenn McGrath.

Michael Kasprovicz, only playing after McGrath was ruled out of the game with a right ankle injury sustained in the pre-match warm-up, took two wickets in four balls after lunch.

England, who resumed on 132 for one, slumped to 187 for four before the middle-order duo counter-attacked.

At lunch, Marcus Trescothick was 77 not out and captain Michael Vaughan unbeaten on one.

But 10 runs short of what would have been his first Test century against Australia, left-handed opener Trescothick hung his bat out at a wide delivery from Kasprovicz and edged through to wicketkeeper Adam Gilchrist.

Trescothick faced just 102 balls with two sixes and five fours.

And three balls later Ian Bell, on his Warwickshire home ground, fell to the same combination for six after a good length ball nipped away off the pitch and took the outside edge.

Vaughan advanced to 24 before his skied hook off Jason Gillespie was well caught by Brett Lee at fine leg to give the fast bowler his first wicket of the series.

England had lost three wickets for 23 runs in 32 balls and Australia were back in the game.

But Flintoff, whom Shane Warne thought he had caught at short leg on four, struck the leg-spinner for three sixes, the first over long-on, the second over mid-wicket and the third clearing long-off as England continued to score at more than five

runs an over.

Fast bowler Brett Lee, whose 11 overs cost 72 runs, almost had Flintoff out when a top-edged hook fell just short of the diving Kasprovicz at fine leg.

Next ball, despite taking his eye off the delivery, Flintoff hooked the ball out of the middle of the bat for six, a shot made famous by another England all-rounder, Ian Botham, during the 1981 Ashes series.

England had a huge boost before play began when miserly bowler McGrath, man-of-the-match with nine for 82 in Australia's 239-run series opening victory at Lord's last month, was ruled out after treading on a stray cricket ball on the outfield.

Nevertheless, Australia captain Ricky Ponting chose to field first on a pitch softened by tornado-induced rains last week.

Trescothick and fellow left-handed opener Andrew Strauss saw England off to a flying start with a flurry of boundaries.

Then Warne, Test cricket's leading wicket-taker, saw Strauss -- whom he dropped at first slip on four -- loft him for a boundary.

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McGrath's misfortune



Cricket

AFP, Birmingham

Australia fast bowler Glenn McGrath was ruled out of the second Test here Thursday following a freak injury that left him with torn ankle ligaments and a major doubt for next week's third Test at Old Trafford.

The spearhead of Australia's attack trod on a stray cricket ball during the warm-up on the Edgbaston outfield as he caught a rugby ball and had to be helped into a groundsman's buggy after being helped in by his teammates.

His place in the side was taken by fellow seamer Michael Kasprovicz. McGrath, 35, who took nine wick-

ets for 82 in the first Test win at Lord's, was carried off on a buggy and was later taken to a local hospital for X-rays.

"There's nothing obvious in the X-rays regarding bone abnormalities but we are awaiting further expert reports from a radiologist this (Thursday) afternoon," said Australia physiotherapist Errol Alcott.

McGrath, who suffered a grade two tear of his lateral ligaments, returned to the dressing room where his foot was elevated while the injury was being iced.

Australia captain Ricky Ponting, after winning the toss and electing to field, said: "I guess the good thing about it is that Kasper took five wickets in the tour game during the week (against Worcestershire) so he's in

pretty good touch as well and I'm looking forward to seeing him bowl."

This was the second time in the last three Ashes Tests that McGrath had been out of action after missing the final match of the 2002-03 series in Sydney where England won by 225 runs.

At Lord's, where Australia won the first Test by 239 runs, McGrath -- a veteran of 110 Tests -- became the fourth bowler to take 500 Test wickets.

He joined teammate and leg-spinner Shane Warne, retired West Indies quick Courtney Walsh and Sri Lanka off-spinner Muttiah Muralitharan as the only men to have reached the landmark.

Australia, winners of the last eight Ashes campaigns, are now 1-0 up in the five-Test series.

Courage his forte



Cricket

REUTERS/AFP, Colombo

From the moment he made his India debut as a cocky teenager nearly 14 years ago, Sourav Ganguly has faced criticism for both his game and attitude.

He has bounced back each time but the combative player appeared to be finally running out of luck after a prolonged batting slump was compounded by a lengthy ban in April for his team's slow over rate.

The six-game ban was reduced by two after a second appeal by the International Cricket Council last week but Rahul Dravid was named captain for the Sri Lanka one-day series to trigger a media debate over the regular captain's future.

Ganguly, 33, found reason for

cheer on Wednesday on return after the ban, completing 10,000 one-day runs to become only the third batsman to achieve the feat against the hosts.

He emulated his compatriot Sachin Tendulkar and Pakistan's Inzamamul Haq, eventually making 51 for his 60th one-day fifty.

The effort could not come at a better time.

The absence of a Test or one-day hundred since 2003 and fitness worries had led to uncertainty over India's captain since 2000.

Some critics felt batting woes were affecting his captaincy, particularly in one-dayers where India have not won a series featuring more than two teams since 2002.

Prior to Wednesday's knock, Ganguly had hit only nine fifties in 42 one-day innings since his 111 not out against Kenya at the 2003 World Cup in South Africa.

Ganguly's career almost ended before it began.

He made a forgettable start, discarded after his India debut as a teenager in 1991-92 with critics blaming his poor attitude.

He made a superb comeback in 1996, scoring hundreds in his first two tests on debut in England, going on to seal his place as one half of the most successful one-day batting pair alongside Tendulkar.

Ganguly's batting stood out for his flowing off-side shots, but opposing bowlers soon began to exploit his weakness against short-pitched deliveries aimed at his rib cage.

He became captain in 2000 after Tendulkar abruptly quit the job following a 3-0 Test series rout in Australia. His batting inconsistency was papered over as he added steel to the side.

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