

Extra one-dayer for BD A

SPORTS REPORTER

An additional one-day match was added in the Bangladesh A team fixture in England as the second string Bangladesh side will play a limited-overs game against touring Antigua team today at the Whitgift School, Croydon.

The Bangladesh Cricket Board in a press release said that the additional fixture was arranged in an attempt to compensate for rain-interrupted matches involving Bangladesh.

The A team will play a three-day match against Kent that begins from August 16 at Canterbury before returning home on August 21.

2 GP Pacers for MRF Academy

SPORTS REPORTER

Oascomri Ahmed and Jahidul Hasan Khan, the two GrameenPhone pacer hunt winners, will attend a two-week long training programme in MRF Pace Foundation in Indian city Chennai.

The two young bowlers will leave Dhaka on August 21.

They are expected to train under the legendary Australian fast bowler Dennis Lillee.

The country's leading cellular company is sponsoring the two fast bowling prospects.

Shakil bags title

SPORTS REPORTER

FIDE Master Abu Sufian Shakil emerged as champion in the Smith and Williamson British Chess Championship that was concluded in Douglas, Isle of Man on Friday.

He bagged 8.5 points from 11 games while another Bangladeshi FIDE Master Khondokar Aminul Islam secured 7.5 points to finish third.

Shakil received one thousand pounds as a prize-money and Aminul got three hundred pounds.



Did U Know?

Michael Vaughan, who scored 166 on the opening day of the Old Trafford Test, posted his sixth century as captain -- three against West Indies and one each against Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Australia. Overall, Vaughan's 166 is his 15th -- fourth against Australia -- ton.



Geoff Lawson

(Former Australian Test paceman)

"It's almost beyond my comprehension how someone could take 600 Test wickets. I know how hard I had to work to get 187."

After Shane Warne became the first bowler to reach the landmark.

What to WATCH

ESPN

English Premier Football League

Arsenal vs Newcastle United

Live at 6:25 pm

Chelsea vs Wigan Athletic

Live at 8:55 pm

STAR Sports

Football Extra

Live at 9:00 am

England v Australia

Third Test, Day Four

Live at 3:30pm



YOU MUST BE KIDDING! Spectators, who came to watch the Mohammedan-Farashganj match in the Premier Football League, demonstrate outside the Bangladesh Football Federation office at the Bangabandhu National Stadium on Saturday. The League was postponed only two hours before the start of the game.

PHOTO: STAR

Premier League stopped

SPORTS REPORTER

Dhaka football came to a grinding halt on Saturday when the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) suspended the on-going Premier League for three days.

The ruling by the BFF came a day after Mohammedan Sporting Club reiterated their stubborn stand of boycotting the League until their allegation of match-fixing involving holders Brothers Union was not solved.

"We felt that we need to give a long look into the allegations made by Mohammedan, Abahani and Skeikh Russel, that's why we have suspended the League. We will meet the general secretaries or presidents of all clubs tomorrow to find out a solution. If the meeting fails to reach any conclusion, we will place the matter before BFF's executive committee meeting which is

scheduled for Tuesday," said BFF president SA Sultan, who was apparently looked helpless with the crisis.

The BFF boss admitted the existence of a secret committee to look into match-fixing issue but said: "The reality is that nobody wants to do the job."

Mohammedan were scheduled to play their return-leg match against Farashganj Sporting Club at the Bangabandhu National Stadium (BNS) yesterday. Followers of the Black and Whites did turn up in their hundreds at the 'Big Bowl', but they were more interested to support their club's demand. And for a second successive day, they were seen hand in hand with the fans of rival Abahani camp in a ceaseless protest in front of the BFF office at the BNS.

The Metropolitan Football League Committee (MFLC), which runs the Premier League, announced on Friday that they would not bow to the undue pressure from the big guns. But it caved in quickly only to rees-

tablish the worst kept secret that the local football was going to be dictated by the wishes of Abahani and Mohammedan.

Farashganj Sporting Club turned up at the BNS two hours before the scheduled kick off at 5pm only to learn the news of the sudden suspension.

"It is unfortunate that the League officials verbally informed us about the suspension merely an hour before the start of the match. It is a breach of bylaws where it is clearly written that the involved teams have to be informed about suspension of a game twenty-four hours before the kick off," said Farashganj coach Mir Mohammad Ali Faruque.

Mohammedan, on the other hand, considered the decision as a small victory but the club's general secretary Lokman Hossain Bhuiyan said that they would not play any further matches until those games in question involving Brothers were solved.

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Australia avoid follow-on

AFP, Manchester

Australia were 245 for seven in reply to England's first innings 444, a deficit of 199, having saved the follow-on, when rain stopped play at 1532GMT on the third day of the third Ashes Test at Old Trafford here Saturday.

Shane Warne was 67 not out and Jason Gillespie seven not out.

The tourists ended the second day at 210 for seven, still needing 31 runs to avoid the follow-on.

The five-Test series is level at 1-1.

Ganguly the best choice: Seh wag

PTI, New Delhi

Sourav Ganguly's resurrection as skipper of the Indian cricket team was on Saturday given the thumbs up by Virender Seh wag who said he was the "best choice" for the post.

"I think he is the best choice," Seh wag told reporters at a press conference here to announce the launch of his food court -- 'Seh wag's Favourites'.

The national selectors on Friday handed back the captaincy to Ganguly for the tour of Zimbabwe, capping intense speculation over the Bengal southpaw's future both as captain and international cricketer owing to his recent indifferent form with the bat.

"It is not easy to comment on this issue. However, I think whatever the selectors have decided is based on past performance and while taking into account what is best for the team," Seh wag said.

"Ganguly has been the most successful skipper for India, this speaks for itself," the Delhi player said.

Asked to comment on insinuations that there were rifts in the Indian team, the flamboyant opener said, "there is no division in the team. The team is the same, a change in captaincy does not change things much. There is no rift in the team."

A fighter in every sense



SPORTS REPORTER

Ask what Mashrafe-bin-Mortuza thrives on? 99 per cent of the time the Bangladesh fast bowler will respond with the reply: "I always love to rise to a challenge."

This might be an understatement from the Narail quick who has had both knees operated. Seeing Mashrafe still bowling with same aggression on his face one would wonder what willpower could do for someone whose career looked all but over only a year ago.

His appearance gives you the feeling of a street fighter and his teammates always appreciate his whole-hearted effort on the field. Any captain would love to have a bowler like Mashrafe in his side. And the forthcoming inaugural Afro-Asia Cup to be held South Africa from August 17-21 will be no exception for the 21-year-old right-armed, who initially was selected as a stand-by in the Inzamamul Haq-led Asian Eleven side.

"This is a different sort of challenge for me because I want to prove a point. I want to show that I've

earned my call-up," said confident Mashrafe, who along with fellow national teammate Mohammad Ashraful will fly to South Africa today.

There is a chance he might share the new ball with the Pakistani quick Shoaib Akhtar in the series but the Bangladesh paceman was little



MASHRAFEE-BIN-MORTUZA

concerned about the prospect.

"I've been told by many people in the last few days that it would be an wonderful experience for me to share the new ball with arguably the fastest bowler in the world. But this may sound strange I'm not his

greatest fan," said Mashrafe, who is dubbed the 'Narail Express'.

"There is doubt Shoaib is show-stopper because his incredible bursts of speed. But I enjoy swing bowling because that is the real beauty of fast bowling," he added.

Like Ashraful, the leading Bangladesh bowler, who represented Bangladesh in 18 Tests and 24 ODIs so far, was also focusing on the upcoming challenge in Sri Lanka.

"To play for Bangladesh is something different for me. I'm looking forward to the Sri Lanka series because it is very important tour for us after the England tour. Especially, I want to be one of the best performers in Sri Lanka," said Mashrafe, who always stood head and shoulders above his teammates during any tour.

He, however, believed that the three-match one-day series would be extremely helpful for them.

"We're going to play the one-day series first in Sri Lanka that's why a good performance in the Afro-Asia competition will lift our morale. We can also share experiences with some great players," he added.

Bangladesh captain Habibul Bashar said yesterday during the

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Isinbayeva scales new height again



AFP, Helsinki

If Thursday was America's day then Friday was definitely Russia's as led by extraordinary pole vaulter Yelena Isinbayeva they won three titles at the World Championships.

The 23-year-old broke her own world record for the ninth time this year -- vaulting 5.01 metres - as she effortlessly added the world crown to the Olympic one she won last year.

Like her compatriot in the 20 kilometres walk, Olimpiada Ivanova last Saturday, she also walked away with 160,000 dollars in prize-money and bonus for breaking the world record.

Russia added a second walk title as Sergey Kirdyapkin led from virtually start to finish in the 50km marathon to land his first senior title. The Russians also took second through his training partner Aleksey Voyevodin.

Olga Kuzenkova continued the Russian revival adding the world hammer title to her Olympic crown seeing off defending champion Yipsi Moreno of Cuba.

However, the Russians didn't have everything their own way as their women's 4x100m relay team came to grief on the final handover of their heat.

Elsewhere two other champions evoked nostalgic memories.

France's Ladji Doucoure won the men's 110m hurdles beating Olympic champion, and joint world record holder Liu Xiang of China, and four-time world king Allen Johnson of the United States, to become France's first global champion in the event since Guy Drut won Olympic gold in 1976.

America's Olympic champion Jeremy Wariner, coached by world record holder Michael Johnson's former mentor Clyde Hart, coasted to victory in the 400 metres.

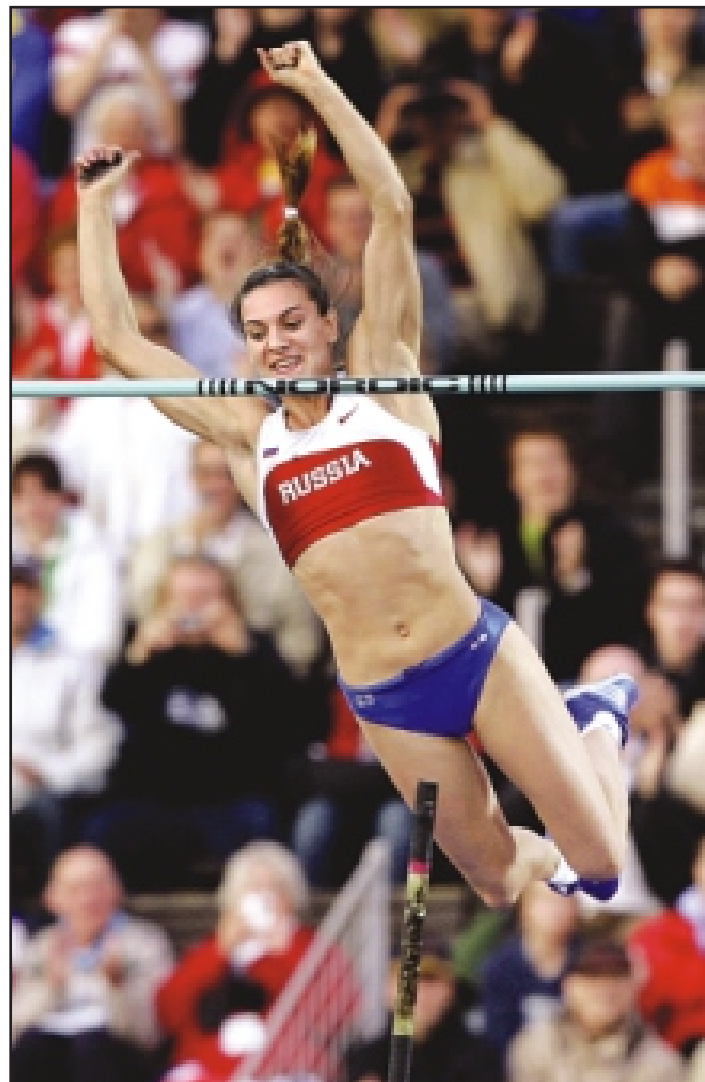


PHOTO: AFP

READY FOR TAKE-OFF: Russian pole-vaulter Yelena Isinbayeva on her way to breaking her own world record in Helsinki on August 12.

Martyn's is a Giles special



REUTERS, Manchester

England spinner Ashley Giles said he had not bowled many better deliveries than the one which dismissed Damien Martyn on the second day of the third Ashes Test on Friday.

"It's up there," Giles told a news conference. "I don't bowl them every day."

Giles finished with three wickets for 66 as Australia, chasing England's first innings of 444, slumped to 210 for seven by the close. The five-match series is tied at 1-1.

He laughed off any comparison with Shane Warne's "Ball of the Century", bowled in 1993 to dismiss Mike Gatting at the same venue, but added: "Today I thought it came out very well. My control was very good."

"When you bowl one of those you hope it spins past the bat and hits off stump. Many times, it doesn't."

Martyn, batting at four, had made 20 when he lunged forward at the delivery, which pitched on leg stump

and hit off for a classic left-arm spinner's dismissal.

Giles said he had dismissed Brian Lara of West Indies and Chris Cairns of New Zealand with deliveries of equal quality last season.

The 32-year-old was heavily

have handled it very well. I have done nothing amazing. I have done what Ashley Giles can do.

"It gets to you at times but it's water under the bridge. I have to go on."

Giles said he could not compare with Warne -- "I haven't taken 600 Test wickets, I haven't taken 600 first-class wickets" -- but said he enjoyed a tussle with Australia's leg spinner, who reached his Test milestone on Thursday.

"Shane is the best that's played the game, in my eyes."

Australia coach John Buchanan argued that his players perhaps had been over-anxious to impress but also gave credit to England.

"At key times they have taken wickets or we have lost them," he said.

Asked about Giles and Simon Jones' performance on Friday, he smiled. "Bloody terrible," he said. "From our point of view."

"Everyone talks about (Steve) Harmison and (Andrew) Flintoff and these two rabbits come along and take three wickets each."

"Giles troubled the left-handers a

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PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

WHATMORE'S BALLET TROUPE: Bangladesh coach Dav Whatmore (standing, R) oversees a stretching session of his charges at the indoor facilities of the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur on Saturday.