



Did U Know?

The very first Wimbledon Championships was in 1877 when it was watched by some 200 spectators. In 1999 it was broadcast to 174 countries, with an estimated global audience of 1 billion people.



Tirunesh Dibaba

(Ethiopian star sprinter)
"I'm very happy to make history. I'm planning to do that again next time." After winning the 5000m and 10,000m gold medals in the World Championships in Helsinki.



Zee Sports

Afro-Asia Cup
Asian XI vs African XI
First ODI
Live at 4:00 pm
ESPN
New Zealand vs Zimbabwe
Second Test, Day Three
Live at 2:00 pm
Sportscentre
Live at 9:00 pm



Premier Football League
Mohammedan v Farashganj (5pm)
Venue: Bangabandhu National Stadium

Three-member body to probe fixed-games

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) yesterday formed a three-member committee to probe match fixing allegations against Brothers Union and four other Premiership clubs but the football governing body of the country did not reveal any names.

BFF president SA Sultan told reporters after an executive committee meeting that the committee has been asked to submit their findings within 12 days.

"The championship will not be decided by then and we will have enough time to take action against the guilty," commented Sultan.

"We have given them advice and terms of references so that they can conduct the investigation properly. Whatever they find, every team will have to go by it."

"Meanwhile, the disciplinary committee will watch the remaining matches and report back to the federation if there is any anomaly. The BFF will also investigate other incidents if there are any," he added.

Mohammedan, Abahani, Muktiyoddha and Sheikh Russel alleged that Brothers not only played fixed matches against Farashganj, Arambagh, Youngmen's Club and Wanderers in the ongoing Premier League but also influenced match officials to bring results in their favour.

OTHER AGENDAS

The BFF in its meeting also decided that the fifth edition of the National Football League will be launched on September 15 with qualifying rounds scheduled across the country.

BFF general secretary Anwarul Hoque Helal said that the national football team's training camp will

GP makes BCB richer



SPORTS REPORTER

While other sports bodies of the country are struggling for survival, the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) continues to grow as the single-most money-spinning organisation.

The BCB on Tuesday struck a two-year deal with GrameenPhone, who has been the official sponsor of the national cricket team for the last two years.

But to strike an extended deal, the leading cellular phone operators ditched out Taka 3.5 crore, which is more than double the amount they had to pay last time, to be the proud associate of the increasingly impressive Bangladesh cricket team.

The national cricketers are now the hottest subject for any sponsor after their recent ODI triumph over world champions Australia in

England. The lucrative deal of GrameenPhone, whose first two-year contract in June 2003 worth Tk 1.5 crore, has also offered a financial boost for the national team ahead of the Sri Lanka tour later this month.

"We will continue to maintain the policy to disburse fifteen percent of the amount to the national players," said BCB's chief executive Macky Dudhia at a press briefing in connection with the new signing.

The Zimbabwean however said that the players have to wear GrameenPhone ties in any official ceremony.

BCB president Ali Asghar, who was also present at the press-meet, attributed the raise of the sponsorship deal to the improved showing of the cricketers.

"Bangladesh have been playing good cricket in the recent months and that's why our partner in development came up with a better deal," said

Asghar. He said that after the one-day victory against India at home followed by one-day and Test series wins and finally the glorious one-day triumph against world champions Australia in England had opened the window for them to bargain with three contenders for the sponsorship right.

"GrameenPhone has always been in the forefront in supporting the development of cricket in Bangladesh over the years. The company has supported BCB in many other areas in the past like Pacer Hunt Programme. We will continue our support in future," said Erik Aas, the managing director of GrameenPhone.

"We will also provide the cricket team with world-class dress, travel kit and 45 mobile phones for the use of players and BCB officials," said GrameenPhone's director of marketing Kafil HS Mueyed.

Pacers hit back for BD A

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh A new-ball pair Shahadat Hossain and Syed Russel hit back against Kent on the opening day of their final three-day match in the tour of England yesterday.

The two pacemen tore apart the Kent batting in their fiery first spells as the second string Bangladesh side, who were all out for a moderate 185 after electing to bat first at the St Lawrence Ground in Canterbury, reduced the home side to 75-7 shortly before close of play.

Speedster Shahadat clean bowled O'Brien to give the visitors an early breakthrough and Russel joined the party soon as Kent crashed to 15-4, losing three top batsmen on the same total.

After sharing the first four wickets evenly, left-handed Russel took two more wickets with Kent on 40. Russel's figure was 4-27 from nine overs and Shahdat's 2-14 from seven. The remaining wicket to fall went to Talha Jubair.

Earlier, Tushar Imran continued his impressive run in the tour to salvage Bangladesh A to 185 with a strokeful 86. Having lost opener Nafees Iqbal with just three runs on board, one-down Tushar put on 59 runs for the second wicket with skipper Shahriar Nafees (30) to repair the damage.

However, Alok Kapali and Mehrab Hossain's departure on the same score of 84 once again put Kent on the top.

Tushar, who cracked 16 boundaries in his 90-ball knock, did not break under pressure and maintained his assault during another half-century stand with Nazimuddin, whose 27 was the only other double-figure in the innings.

In-form Tushar, who has scored two first-class centuries in the tour so far, was the fifth man out and his teammates managed to add only 26 more runs before Martin Saggers mopped the tail, finishing with 5-48 from 14 overs.

BCB POLLS

Tension continues

SPORTS REPORTER

The pro-establishment panel was yet to calm the rebels down last night for the coming Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) election to be held on August 27.

The high-ups of the panel reportedly met with the members of the district sports forum to reach an agreement but it was learnt that there were hot exchanges during yesterday's meeting.

A forum member informed that some former BCB officials came up with lot of promises but the forum was determined to get one vice-president and 12 members.

It is believed that the so-called vote bank of the forum has more than sixty councillors to make their presence felt and a number of its members bought nomination papers after being ignored by the panel.

The election scenario will be partly clear after the submission of the nomination papers today.

The councillors will be able to withdraw their candidature on August 20 and the election commission will publish the final list of the candidates the next day.

Afro-Asia Cup starts today

REUTERS, Centurion

Sri Lanka's Kumar Sangakkara is predicting a great spectacle when Asia take on Africa in the inaugural Afro-Asia Cup this week.

The limited-overs three-match series begins in Centurion on Wednesday before moving to Durban on Saturday and Sunday.

"The concept of combined teams has really taken off since the tsunami, which brought the cricketing community together," Sangakkara told a news conference on Monday.

"The tsunami has changed players' outlooks radically and we now realise that cricket is more than just a sport that is there to entertain. "So this series should be a great experience and a great spectacle for the spectators because there will be a wide array of talent in one place."

A benefit game in aid of the December 26 Asian tsunami took place in Melbourne in January between a World XI and Asian XI.

This week's series is a fund-raising initiative to help grassroots development of the sport in each continent.

Sangakkara added the players would have no difficulty being motivated for the three matches.

"As long as we are professionals, we will always take it seriously because spectators are paying money to watch us. The intensity will be there even though we are not playing for our country, but a region," he said.

SEE PAGE 13 COL 1

McGrath, the No. 1 No. 11



AFP, Manchester

Australia fast bowler Glenn McGrath proved his worth with the bat at Old Trafford where his match-saving effort in the third Ashes Test made him the greatest No.11 in history.

McGrath, once regarded as a

hopeless, 'bunny' batsman, broke former West Indies paceman Courtney Walsh's record of 553 Test runs scored at no.11, his resilient five not out in the down-to-the-wire draw against England taking him to 555 runs in the position.

"I think I've been pushing my whole career to get out of the No.11 spot and to finally have the most runs at 11 in the history of the game, I guess it's good in one respect and

bad that it probably still batting at No.11," McGrath told reporters after Monday's thrilling finish.

McGrath was only declared fit for the match on Thursday morning, after missing the second Test at Edgbaston with a freak ankle injury sustained when he trod on a cricket ball just over an hour before that match was due to start.

The 35-year-old joined Brett Lee with four overs remaining in the match and England needing a single wicket for a victory that would have put them 2-1 up with two to play.

But McGrath was defiant in his nine-ball, 15-minute stay against the might of fast bowlers Stephen Harmison and Andrew Flintoff.

He faced the first three balls from Harmison in the final over, after Lee's shot off the last ball of the penultimate over went for four.

"I was getting ready and Stuart MacGill raced out with the message. He said 'bat two metres out of your crease'. I was like, 'oh, against a guy bowling 90 miles an hour with the wind?' I thought well, 'it's going to hurt a bit more'."

However, McGrath's response caused frantic worry amongst his teammates who feared they might lose the game to an hour.

"The first ball was down the leg side. I think Geraint Jones (the England wicketkeeper) backhanded it at the stumps and I scrambled back in," McGrath said.

"Next ball, so I'm told, it sort of got to the keeper and he threw it to Matthew Hoggard, who was in the vicinity of the stumps while I was just about taking leg again, about two metres out of my crease."

"And he just passed it on to Harmison. The boys reckon it would have been run out if he took the balls off, but I just think it was a dead ball."

Cricket's Law 23, 'Dead Ball' states that the ball can become dead when "it is finally settled in the hands of the wicket-keeper or the bowler."

It adds: "The ball shall be considered to be dead when it is clear to the umpire at the bowler's end that the fielding side and both batsmen at the wicket have ceased to regard it as in play."

Either way, it would certainly have been an interesting decision.

SEE PAGE 13 COL 5



PHOTOS: CRICINFO

DRAW SUFFICES! Australia's last man Glenn McGrath (R) gets a congratulatory pat from Brett Lee after they ensured a draw in the third Ashes Test against England at Old Trafford on Monday.

Cricket kicks soccer out

AFP, London

England is going crazy for cricket, with newspapers pushing football coverage off the celebrated back pages Tuesday to agonise over the country's dramatic draw against Australia in the third Ashes Test.

The centuries-old game is enjoying a massive revival thanks to the heroics of England captain Michael Vaughan and his teammates who are battling to beat the Australians in an Ashes series for the first time in nearly 20 years.

Even the start of England's treasured football Premiership over the weekend failed to trim columns of press commentary on what is being billed as the most exciting Ashes Test in living memory.

"It's agony," groaned the Daily Mail newspaper after Australia clung on for a draw to deny England victory with just one wicket standing in a thrilling finish to the third match in the five-part series at Old Trafford on Monday.

The Mail pictured Andrew Flintoff, England's favourite bowler, despairing after Australian leg-spinner Shane Warne survived one of his fearsome bowls.

"The Ultimate Test," declared the left-wing independent on page one.

"So near ... and yet so far," the newspaper added across its back page, with a photograph of Flintoff

taking Matthew Hayden's wicket next to one of fast bowler Stephen Harmison clutching his head in anguish after failing to finish off Australia before a sell-out crowd in the Manchester stadium, north England.

The match even won a prime front-page spot with pictures in the Financial Times under the headline "Test proves a big draw as Ashes catches fire."

Newspapers noted how Old Trafford, which shares its name with the nearby home of football club Manchester United, attracted twice as many people than its 23,000 capacity.

More than 20,000 fans, many of whom had camped outside overnight to buy one of the final day tickets, were turned away and had to make do with watching the nail-biting action on a television screen, The Times newspaper said.

"Interest in the game, which for much of the past decade has been as unfashionable as (former prime minister) John Major, is starting to eclipse even that of football," it said in an editorial.

"The opening of the Premiership season has been nothing like as exciting as this Test series," the right-leaning newspaper said.

"Each ball during the final hour provided another serving of almost unbearable tension. Each player was an actor in a remarkable

drama."

The England cricket team has been growing in strength and popularity for the last couple of years, but wild dreams of beating Australia suddenly became a feasible reality when the team won the second Ashes Test on August 8 by just two runs -- the closest victory in Ashes history.

Both sides will go into their fourth Test at Trent Bridge in Nottingham on August 25 on level pegging -- 1-1 -- leaving a guaranteed riveting climax at the Oval in London next month.

Surging interest in the game will likely equal more lucrative commercial deals for players and the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) on top of sponsorship contracts with corporate giants such as Vodafone.

John Perera, the ECB's commercial director, was quoted in the Financial Times as saying that the board expected to get "a lot more interest from new commercial partners wanting to talk to us about cricket", while it hoped to start a "big licensing programme for the sport" before Christmas.

The independent television station Channel 4, which currently has the rights to broadcast the Test series live, has enjoyed winning

SEE PAGE 13 COL 1

Premier League returns to action today

SPORTS REPORTER

The Premier Division Football League will resume today after a four-day break with second placed Mohammedan Sporting Club taking on Farashganj Sporting Club in the first match of the 15th round at the Bangabandhu National Stadium.

The league was halted for four days on August 12 after Mohammedan, Abahani, Muktiyoddha and Sheikh Russel Kriya Chakra brought match-fixing allegations against leaders and reigning champions Brothers Union and four other clubs and threatened to boycott the competition unless the authorities took action. Following assurance from the BFF of a sincere probe into the allegations the aggrieved clubs

decided to return to action.

On 32 points, Mohammedan are three points behind Brothers with four rounds left and the Black and Whites will face all the top names after today's meeting against Farashganj who have one of the tightest defences this season.

Mohammedan will face archrivals Abahani in their next

match on August 22 and Muktiyoddha on August 27.

To stay in contention, Mohammedan need a big change of form, especially after three draws in five second-leg games that saw them slip from the top of the table.

Brothers on the other hand, can relax against bottom-table Dipali but before that, they will play crucial matches against Abahani tomorrow and Muktiyoddha on August 23.

With the title race virtually confined between Brothers and Mohammedan -- who meet on the final day of the championship on September 5 -- it looks certain that Abahani and Muktiyoddha will be happy with a third-place finish. Last year's runners-up Russel, in spite of playing lively football in the second leg, are still struggling to stay ahead of Farashganj in the middle of the table.

SEE PAGE 13 COL 4

POINTS TABLE

Teams (last year)	M	W	D	L	GF	GA	Pts
Brothers (1)	14	11	2	1	32	11	35
MSC (5)	14	9	5	0	28	10	32
Abahani (3)	14	7	5	2	23	14	26
Muktiyoddha (4)	14	8	1	5	23	19	25
Russel (2)	14	5	4	5	23	11	19
Farashganj (9)	14	5	3	6	15	16	18
Arambagh (6)	14	2	6	7	15	22	12
Wanderers (7)	14	2	6	6	15	28	12
Youngmen's (8)	14	3	2	9	17	39	11
Dipali (10)	14	0	2	12	18	40	2



PHOTO: REUTERS

KEEP THIS IN YOUR PHOTO COLLECTION: Football legends Diego Maradona (L) and Pele play a game of ball controlling with their heads during the first edition of Maradona's show 'La Noche del Diez' (The Night of Number 10) aired by Channel 13, in Buenos Aires on Monday.

Astle ambushes Zim Fleming rewrites Kiwi history



REUTERS, Bulawayo

Nathan Astle struck an unbeaten 116 to put New Zealand in command against Zimbabwe after the second day of the second Test at Queens Sports Club on Tuesday.

Astle's 11th Test century helped the tourists reach the close on 454 for seven in reply to Zimbabwe's first innings of 231.

The 33-year-old hit 19 fours in 192 balls in a well-paced knock while opener Lou Vincent's 92 and captain Stephen Fleming's 65 were the other main contributions in New Zealand's batting performance.

Fleming became the first New Zealander to reach 6,000 Test runs during a third-wicket stand of 137 with Vincent.

Heath Streak, Blessing Mahwire and debutant Keith Dabengwa took two wickets each for Zimbabwe.

New Zealand, who lead the two-



FLEMING...6,000 Test runs

Test series 1-0, resumed on their overnight 48 for two and piled up a further 406 runs on a flat pitch against a mediocre Zimbabwean attack.

Fleming, who started the match 15 runs short of the 6,000-run mark, reached the milestone with a classy on-drive off fast bowler Streak in the ninth over of the day.

The New Zealand captain was fortunate not to be given out leg-before to Streak for 18 when he failed to move significantly forward against a delivery that pitched on his middle stump and held its line to strike the front pad.

Umpire Darrell Hair decided the ball would not have hit the stumps. Fleming and Vincent seemed destined to reach their centuries after cruising through a morning session that yielded 132 runs.

However, they were separated 14 balls after lunch when Fleming,

SEE PAGE 13 COL 6



PHOTO: STAR

Managing director of GrameenPhone Erik Aas talks to reporters during the 'Meet the Press' at Sonargaon Hotel on Tuesday.