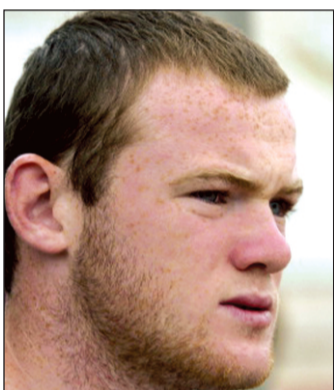




Did U Know?

The just concluded Old Trafford third Ashes Test between England and Australia was the 61st drawn Test out of 149 played in England.



Wayne Rooney

(English football star)
"I want to make sure I don't get booked for dissent. If you look at any match, every player's doing it. But it gets highlighted a lot more because of who I am. I'm looking to cut out the silly bookings."



Tendulkar has more practice

PTI, Mumbai

Sachin Tendulkar on Thursday had his second light practice session at MIG Club ground in suburban Bandra under the watchful eyes of Indian team physiotherapist John Gloster.

Tendulkar, who started having light practice sessions with a special ball (midway in hardness between a tennis and cricket ball) on Tuesday, faced balls thrown at him at a gentle pace, sources said.

Also present at the session was Zimbabwe-bound Ajit Agarkar, who has made the squad for the triangular series to be held from August 24.

Tendulkar has not played since undergoing surgery for his tennis elbow injury on May 27 in London and missed India's tour of Sri Lanka for a triangular limited-overs event that ended on August 9.

The master batsman is to miss the tri-series in Zimbabwe, for which the Sourav Ganguly-led squad is slated to depart on August 22, but has been provisionally named in the 15-strong squad for the two-Test series to follow from September 13 subject to getting fit.

GP pacer hunt Phase 3 starts September 2

BDNEWS, Dhaka

The third phase of the GreenPhone pacer hunt programme begins at the Bangladesh Krira Shiksha Protisthan (BKSP) on September 2.

The camp ends on September 8. The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) has requested all the players except Jahidul Hasan Khan and Wayaskarani Ahmed to join the camp.

Jahidul and Wayaskarani have been selected to participate in a two-week long higher training programme at MRF Pace Foundation. They leave for Chennai, India on August 21.

The other eight pacers are Imran Hossain of Khulna, Mohammad Abed Ali and Mohammad Mamun of Rajshahi, Mahbul Alam Robin of Faridpur, Sheikh Robiul Islam of Satkhira, Mohammad Azim of Dhaka, Kamrul Roy of Chittagong and Shuvashish Islam of Rangpur.

Oranges drown in Sky Blues

Abahani-3, Brothers Union-0

SPORTS REPORTER
Premier Bank Senior Division Football League

An inspired second half display saw Abahani crush defending champions Brothers Union 3-0 in a crucial Premier Football League encounter at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

Tipu, Ujjal and substitute Zahid scored one goal apiece as Abahani recorded their first victory against the Gopibagh outfit this season after losing all three previous meetings.

The three points might not help Abahani in the championship race but the result stopped Brothers from going clear of Mohammedan. Both teams are now level on 35 points after 15 rounds. Abahani's collection is 29 points from the same number of games.

With the cloud of match-fixing allegations hanging over them, Brothers were just a shadow of the side that had dominated earlier matches. Abahani, on the other hand, were enjoying the impressive backing of some 10,000 fans including those of bitter rivals Mohammedan. Both bands of supporters it appeared, have taken the stance of their respective clubs against Brothers Union to hear and a Brothers debacle was also the most sought after result from Mohammedan's point of view in terms of championship hopes.

The Sky Blues could have gone ahead in the fifth minute but Farhad's acrobatic effort near the

goalmouth failed to find the target. Although Abahani enjoyed superior ball possession much like the first-leg match which they had lost 2-1, it took them another half an hour to force a save from rival goalkeeper Tarek who kept out Ujjal's curling freekick from the line.

Just before the short whistle, Farhad brilliantly set an unmarked Tipu clear but the former national striker side volleyed over the bar from inside from the box.

Inclusion of Liton in the midfield after the break was expected to give Brothers some brief enterprise but the playmaker lost his way after picking up a yellow card just one minute after coming on and was lucky to be on the pitch even after pushing referee Mansoor Azad later.

Brothers' Abul got a half chance from a rare defensive error but the hard working midfielder fired a left-footer over the bar in the 55th minute. That was as good as it got for Brothers whose ageing trio in central defence was no match for a relentless Abahani.

Cameroonian medio Ndem used his strength to evade two defenders and his square-pass was controlled by Tipu who shrugged off his marker Siraji before slamming a spectacular right footer into the far corner from 20 yards in the 62nd minute.

In the 73rd minute Ujjal doubled the lead from a quick counter attack. Tipu released the ball after Ndem's run down the left and Ujjal raced past two centre-backs and took a

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BEGINNING OF THE ROUT: Abahani's Shahajuddin Tipu (lying on the ground) is the toast of his teammates after the striker had scored the first goal for the Sky Blues in their Premier Bank Premier Football League clash against Brothers Union at the Bangabandhu National Stadium on Thursday.

PHOTO: STAR

U-17 cricketers off to Malaysia

UNB, Dhaka

A 14-member Bangladesh Under-17 cricket team left Dhaka last night to take part in the International Golden Hope Challenge triangular one-day series beginning in Malaysia on Sunday.

Coach Shahidul Alam Ratan said the team have some players with good potential, both in batting and bowling.

"We hope to bring some good news for the local fans from Malaysia," he said at a press conference yesterday.

National selector Athar Ali said: "Our main objective is to promote young cricketers so that we can get talented players in future for the national team."

Saqib Al Hasan of BKSP has been named captain with Suhrawardy Shuvo, also from BKSP, as his deputy for the eight-day three-nation meet also involving Sri Lanka and the hosts.

Bangladesh will play Malaysia in the opening match on August 21 at Bayuemas Oval and meet Sri Lanka on August 22 at the same venue.

In the reverse matches, Bangladesh will take on Malaysia and Sri Lanka on August 24 and 25.

Rupchanda Soyabeen Oil general manager Lee Pang Kwang and business deputy executive Ankur Chawla and Team Operations Manager Alister de Winter were also present at the press conference.

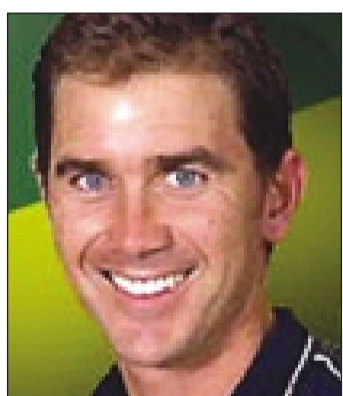
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'We must tackle English swing'

Cricket

AFP, London

Australia believe the key to keeping the Ashes is to solve the mystery of



JUSTIN LANGER

England's reverse swing.

The ability of pacemen Andrew Flintoff and Simon Jones to swing the ball has caused all sorts of headaches for the tourists with the problem coming to a head in the nail-biting third Test at Old Trafford on Monday.

Opening batsman Justin Langer has admitted that coach John Buchanan and skipper Ricky

Ponting, who made a match-saving, seven-hour 156 in Manchester, have formed a brains trust to find an answer.

"We are talking a lot about it and there is some really healthy discussion going on amongst the batsmen," said Langer on Wednesday. "For the senior players it is a great challenge, people say that too often and it is a well-used cliché, but this really is. It is like trying to solve a puzzle."

"When a ball reverse swings, rather than be instinctive and go for your shots, you have to tighten up a little bit more and wait until the ball is further down the wicket before making your decision because you are not sure which way it is going to swing."

The rare art of gaining vicious aerial movement with a roughed-up ball was perfected by Pakistan pair Wasim Akram and Waqar Younis in the early 1990s and while others have dabbled to good effect, it is unusual for a bowler to arc deliveries both into and away from batsmen.

Langer, who was 'enthralled' watching opening partner Matthew Hayden attempt to combat Flintoff in Manchester, added: "We have not cracked it yet but that is the exciting thing about cricket, if we said we had it would be a pretty boring game."

"We have been facing reverse

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BD A's tour ends with defeat

CRICINFO

Kent recovered from another wobbly batting performance to secure a three-wicket win against Bangladesh A on the second day at Canterbury.

Led by a half-century from Neil Dexter and 47 from Michael Carberry, Kent overcame another menacing performance from Bangladesh A's new-ball pairing of Shadhat Hossain and Syed Rasel, who shared three wickets apiece, with Rasel completing the impressive match figures of 10 for 91.

Kent were indebted to their lower-order in each innings of the match. Resuming on a shaky 123 for 8, Kent stretched their score to 153, thanks to Martin Sagggers' 44, then set about denting Bangladesh's hopes of a decisive lead by bowling them out for 155 in reply.

Shahriar Nafees opened and top-scored with 58, but no-one else could pass 15, as Robert Joseph whipped through the innings with 5 for 19.

Chasing 188 for victory, Kent were shaken by two early blows from Shadhat, and then lost four for 29 as the middle-order imploded. But the 17-year-old wicketkeeper, Paul Dixey, combined with David Stiff to secure the win with three wickets standing.

The match completed Bangladesh's month-long tour of England. The side is expected to return home today.

FA Cup to taste Bangla passion

Football

AFP, London

Amateur footballers Sporting Bengal United will become one of the first Asian sides to play in the FA Cup this weekend, the world's oldest football knockout tournament.

The London-based side face Ware in the extra preliminary round of the tournament which is celebrating its 125th year.

"Our participation in this year's competition is truly a historic moment for the Asian community in this country," said Sporting Bengal chairman Suroth Miah.

"We want to take the whole community forward by being successful and push Asian players into mainstream football."

"To win this game would be fantastic - we have been drawn home in the next round, and it would be great for the local community to host an FA Cup game at Mile End stadium."

Sporting Bengal United was established in 1996 by British Bangladeshis, Sylhetis to be precise, to push forward Asian football in England, and was awarded senior status in 2003.

"Everybody is aware that some ethnic groups, such as those from an

Asian background, are still under-represented in the game, but the progress being made by this club is of tremendous importance," said the Football Association's (FA) ethics manager Lucy Faulkner.

"Its another step towards football becoming fully representative of our society, not to mention a fantastic new ground for the oldest cup competition in the world."

The FA aren't the only ones impressed by the club.

In 2003, the team, which draws its players from the east London borough of Tower Hamlets, were crowned UK Asian football champions for the second time.

"That tournament was played at Celtic's famed Parkhead stadium in Glasgow and former Scotland skipper Paul McStay liked what he saw from the skillful Bengal side."

"The tournament (which featured eight teams) highlighted just how committed and passionate everybody in the Asian community is about football," said McStay.

"The technique and ability on show was a joy to watch. All it takes is just one Asian player to make the breakthrough and then this problem - or this myth - of how Asians cannot play football will be challenged."

BCB election challenged

SPORTS REPORTER

With elections for the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) only a week away, the affluent federation is likely to face another legal battle after an unconfirmed source revealed that two of its councilors have sought an embargo on the polls yesterday.

It was learnt that Iqbal Yousuf Chowdhury and Hafizur Rahman Joarder filed a petition with the Fifth Joint District Judge's Court challenging the formation of the councilors' list for the August 27 election of the BCB. They argued that the nomination of councilors from services teams, ex-national cricketers and organisers with less than three years experience was a gross violation of Clause Nine's sub-clauses 7, 13 and 14 of the BCB Constitution 2003.

Upon hearing the petition the Judge served a show-cause notice asking the Board why the election should not be stopped in seven days time.

Iqbal is a councilor of CCS while Joarder represents Gopibagh Friends Association.

The Board has fought a legal battle with the deposed board of directors for more than two years until a recent ruling paved the way for elections under a new constitution.

ORIENT BREAD H'BALL BDR, Police in final

BDNEWS, Dhaka

Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) and Bangladesh Police reached the final of the Orient Bread Federation Cup handball tournament on Thursday.

The final will take place at the outer stadium handball court on Sunday instead of Saturday at 3 pm. The third place play-off is today.

In the first semifinal, BDR outplayed Narinda Progoti Boys Club 26-12 after leading the first half 16-4.

Police defeated Rajshahi City Corporation 33-20. They took a 21-12 lead at the break.

Gillespie ready for the axe

BBC ONLINE, undated

Australia bowler Jason Gillespie said he would accept it if he was dropped for the fourth Ashes Test against England after a poor run from

He has only taken three wickets, at 100 runs apiece, in three matches so far.

The 30-year-old said: "You don't have to be a rocket scientist to see I haven't been bowling well."

"I don't know what's going to happen in the next game but if I don't play I will understand," said Gillespie who has taken 250 Test wickets.

The series is evenly poised at 1-1 after three Tests with the Trent Bridge Test beginning on August 25.

Gillespie is fighting for his place with Mike Kasprovicz or 22-year-old uncapped fast bowler Shaun Tait.

Gillespie added: "It is disappointing when you are not making the contribution you want to. At the end of the day the statistics don't lie - I haven't been taking wickets and been going for too many runs."

Left dazed by Danes

Football

AFP, Copenhagen

England skipper David Beckham believes England's World Cup dream is still on course despite their humiliating 4-1 defeat to Denmark on Wednesday's friendly here.

England face Wales in Cardiff on September 3 in their next World Cup qualifier but Beckham insists Sven-Goran Eriksson's men can bounce back from their worst defeat in 25 years.

"This scoreline does no damage for the future but at the moment it's hard to take because we are prepared for qualifying games which are important to the country," said the skipper.

"We can't let it affect our confidence. We have two weeks before the next game. It's a hard defeat to take but it's a friendly game."

England were level 0-0 at half-time against the Danes but Charlton striker Dennis Rommedahl, former Newcastle and AC Milan hitman Jon Dahl Tomasson and substitute Michael Gravgaard all scored in a seven-minute period in the second half to give the Danes the advantage.

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GETTING INTO DIFFERENT SWING: Australian fast bowler Jason Gillespie tees off at the Gleneagles Golf Course in Scotland on Wednesday.

PHOTO: CRICINFO



WHAT'S HAPPENING? England captain David Beckham (C) and teammates Michael Owen (L) and Wayne Rooney despondently look at each other after conceding yet another goal in the 4-1 loss to Denmark on Wednesday.

PHOTO: AP