



Did U Know?

England have not recorded a series win over Australia after winning the series 2-1 in 1986-87 under.

What to WATCH

BTV

Sri Lanka v Bangladesh
Second ODI
Live at 9.45pm

ESPN

India v New Zealand
Fifth ODI
Live 1.30pm

TEN Sports

US Open
Live at 5am and 9pm
Sri Lanka v Bangladesh,
Second ODI
Live at 9.45pm

Fingers crossed for Mashrafee



AL MUSABBIR SADI from Colombo

Watching the game from the bench is painful for any athlete. It is more upsetting if you can't even take part in the preparation on the eve of a game.

That is the reason the Sri Lankan tour has become unbearable for someone like Mashrafee bin Mortuza who loves to be in the thick of things.

A back pain has already sidelined the premier Bangladesh fast bowler and it looks certain that he will not be available for the remaining two one-dayers against Sri Lanka.

While his teammates went through hard training at the Nondescript Cricket Club ground on Thursday, he was sitting quietly on a bench with his chin resting on his palm, wondering why wasn't he out there with his mates.

"I don't know whether I can play in the one-day series. I'm even doubtful for the Test series as well because the pain has not eased,"

said Mashrafee, who got the nickname 'speedster' for his wild motor-bike rides in his hometown Narail even before making it to the international scene as the quickest Bangladeshi bowler.

Mashrafee, who has been doing personal workouts to relieve the pain, certainly misses the action and rued his luck. While walking restlessly in the team hotel, he informed that a scan in the afternoon would determine the extent of his injury.

He was expected to bowl at the nets in the morning but after just four shadow deliveries under the guidance of physio Paul Close, he had to pull up.

"I am not a person who likes to sit out. I want to be in the middle but I have been not able to that after bowling just one over in the practice match," said Mashrafee.

When asked about his chances, Paul Close thought Mashrafee was improving.

"He is moving well, he is running, he is doing all the rehabilitation work. Just when it comes to bowling, he feels a little bit of pain. "As a precautionary measure,

we are going to take him and have a scan performed so that we can get any extra information. It's only been four days since the injury and I'm not concerned. I said initially it would take anywhere between three to ten days to recover," the physio told.

"He is certainly not playing tomorrow. We have to wait and see. We will get the reports by tomorrow. He is a very important player to us and we are not going to take any risk," he added.

SQUADS

SRI LANKA (from): Marvan Atapattu (captain), Sanath Jayasuriya, Upul Tharanga, Kumar Sangakkara, Mahela Jayawardene, Russel Arnold, Tillakaratne Dilshan, Chaminda Vaas, Farveez Maharoof, Muttiah Muralitharan, Dilhara Fernando, Upul Chandana.

BANGLADESH (from): Habibul Bashar (captain), Javed Omar, Shahriar Nafees, Aftab Ahmed, Mohammad Ashraful, Mohammad Rafique, Khaled Mashud, Tushar Imran, Syed Raseel, Tapash Baisya, Manjarul Islam, Nazmul Hossain.



NO STRANGER TO TIMES LIKE THESE! Injured Bangladesh fast bowler Mashrafee bin Mortuza sits alone at a corner of the Nondescript Cricket Ground in Colombo while watching his mates train on the field on Thursday.

Cold & flu hit India Play NZ today

PTI, Harare

India seem to have ridden over the fitness crisis to two of their key batsmen ahead of the critical Videocon Cup cricket tri-series clash against New Zealand here on Friday.

Captain Sourav Ganguly and Virender Sehwag, the two openers, might be feeling weak from the effects of cold and flu but there is good news for the two experienced players as they are expected to be declared fit for the crucial tie.

Sehwag and Ganguly have not been in the best of form but both would be required to come to terms with Shane Bond's blistering pace and movement which has given him figures of 6 for 23 and 4 for 17 in the last two games.

Bond is lethal and even when he is mild does not go for many runs. India would be looking to emerge with least damage against the outstanding paceman at the peak of his powers.

The Indian camp is cautiously optimistic it would not have to miss out on either of the two stars. It leaves too much of work to do for Rahul Dravid, Yuvraj Singh and Mohammad Kaif in the company of youngsters such as MS Dhoni, Suresh Raina and Venugopala Rao.

The youngsters in the team are secure in the knowledge that coach Greg Chappell is willing to give them that extra leeway to allow them to gain roots in the team.

7-star Brothers

BU-7, DIPALI-0

SPORTS REPORTER



Victor Edwards slammed a hat-trick as defending champions Brothers Union displayed a trail of strength ahead of their title-deciding match against Moham-medan Sporting Club with a 7-0 thrashing of relegation-bound Dipali Juba Sangha yesterday.

The men in Orange swaggered into their penultimate Premier League match at the Bangabandhu National Stadium to insure full three points so that they could start the unofficial final against the Black and Whites on September 9 on an equal footing.

There was however little doubt of a smooth Brothers sail against the new boys in the top flight. But not many people had expected such a goal-feast especially after their heart-breaking 1-2 defeat against Muktiyoddha in the previous match.

Brothers confirmed an easy passage even before the lop-sided affair reached the halfway mark. They took a 2-0 lead at the breather with Liton, who returned to action after serving a one-match ban, opening the floodgates in the 19th minute. Parvez Babu drove in the second goal five minutes before the short whistle.

The holders came with more vigour after the break that saw their Russian forward Victor hammering four goals in what was the second

biggest margin victory this year after Sheikh Russel's 10-0 whitewash of Fakirpool Youngmen's Club.

Victor struck in the 55th, 70th, 81st and 84th, minute to make sure

that the golden boot for the highest scorer would belong to him. The fleet-footed Russian now leads the individual scorer's list with 11 goals.

SEE PAGE 13 COL 5



IN MARAUDING MOOD: Brothers Union's Russian striker Victor Edwards (L), who scored four times, is fighting for possession with Dipali Juba Sangha goalkeeper Samir Dutt during their Premier Bank Premier Football League clash on Thursday.

Benaud's swan song in Eng

CRICINFO, undated

Richie Benaud will commentate his last Test in England at The Oval next week.

Benaud, who has been cricket broadcasting's most comfortable armchair for the past 42 years, will hang up the microphone when Channel 4's contract with the ECB expires after the fifth Test. He has ruled out a switch to Sky, which controls the rights from next season.

"It is time to say goodbye because I won't be doing any more television in the United Kingdom," Benaud, 74, told CricInfo in an exclusive interview. "I'll still be doing free-to-air in Australia. I've got a three-year contract with Channel 9 which will probably be extended."

Tait fit for final Test

AFF, London

Australia paceman Shaun Tait is undergoing treatment for a shoulder problem but has been cleared for next week's final Ashes Test against England.

The 22-year-old, who made his five-day bow in the fourth Test loss to England at Trent Bridge, has been cleared of serious injury after undergoing scans at a London clinic.

Moody eying whitewash



AL MUSABBIR SADI from Colombo

After posting an 88-run win over Bangladesh in the three-match one-series opener, the Sri Lankan cricketers were given a day's rest on Thursday to get fresh for the second match.

Training was optional and most of the senior cricketers spent time inside their hotel.

Muttiah Muralitharan arrived at the dining hall for a late breakfast with his newly wed wife, whose beauty and aura even overshadowed the master off-spinner's presence.

Veteran Sanath Jayasuriya, who is trying to recover from a shoulder injury and was replaced by supersub Upul Chandana during the home side's fielding in Wednesday's game, was giving time to his daughter.

Chaminda Vaas could not avoid local journalists while those who were not picked in the first match, had light training.

Although most of his charges were relaxing, coach Tom Moody was thinking about whitewashing Bangladesh in the ODI series.

"We certainly don't want to go

lightly because we can't take any risks against a side like Bangladesh. We've got faith in all 15 guys in the squad, but our aim is to win all three matches and with that in mind we don't want to weaken the side," said the tall Australian.

"There are few areas we would like to improve on and we hope to work on them during the next two matches."

"One of the areas we want to do well is to make sure that we score maximum runs during the powerplays. We didn't score as many as runs that we would have liked to score in the first game, but we are still learning like any other team."

Talking about Bangladesh's win over Australia, he said: "The bottom line is that that game in Cardiff highlighted that it's a two horse race. You should prepare well and if you don't you are going to come the second best."

"We would like to see consistency with the ball and then we have observed that the top order gets starts, but don't go on to make those three figure scores. We would like to change that."

In reply to a question, Moody said that they might go for one or two changes but that will not change their focus to go all out and take an invincible 2-0 lead.

SCHOOL SOCCER

Easy victories for Titas, St Joseph's

BDNEWS, Dhaka

Titas and St Joseph's recorded huge victories in the Pran-Cola school football tournament on Thursday.

Titas Gas High defeated Wari High School 8-0 while St Joseph's High beat Shaheed Abu Taher High by the same margin.

Elsewhere, Mannan High outplayed Shah Noori Model High 2-1, Mirpur Bangla High defeated Maniknagar Model High 6-1, Armanitola Govt High drew goalless with Rahmatullah Model High and Segun Bagicha High beat Collegiate Government High 4-0.

Cute handball

BDNEWS, Dhaka

Bangladesh Rifles continued their winning spree when they beat arch-rivals Bangladesh Police 35-20 in the Cute Premier Division handball league on Thursday.

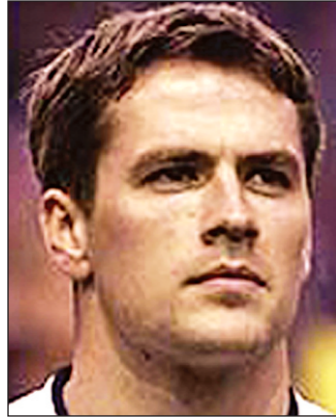
The winners led the first half 20-8. Saiduzzaman netted the highest 13 goals, followed by Qamrul with 6, Khairuzzaman 5. Nur-e-Alam scored nine goals for the Police.

In the other match of the day, Dhaka Mariner Youngs Club beat Old Ideals 12-4 after leading the first half 9-4.

DAY'S EVENT

Premier Football League
Abahani v Dhaka Wanderers (5pm)
Venue: Bangabandhu National Stadium

TALK TURKEY



Michael Owen

(England striker)

"Alan (Shearer) was a great help throughout and instrumental in my decision. He even offered to give up his number nine shirt, but I've declined."

On the role Shearer played in his move to Newcastle.