



Did U Know?

Athletes entered during the closing ceremony on mass for the first time to signify the friendship in the 1956 Olympic Games.



Pablo Garcia
(Real Madrid's Uruguayan midfielder)
"El gordo walks around for 70 minutes, but he gets one chance and puts it away he always makes the difference."
On Brazilian super star Ronaldo who is affectionately called 'el gordo' (fatty) by his teammates.



ESPN
English Premier Football League
Fulham vs Man United
Live at 7:55 pm
Sunderland vs West Ham United
Live at 10:10 pm
STAR Sports
English Premier Football League
Preston vs Newcastle United
Live at 7:55 pm

Bashar to attend Test captains' meeting

UNB, Dhaka
Bangladesh captain Habibul Bashar will attend an ICC meeting of Test captains to be held in Sydney on October 12.

He will fly to Australia on October 9. Bashar said he would specifically raise the issue of "the benefit of doubt decisions" at the meeting.

"In my four years experience in Test cricket these decisions often go against the weaker teams," said the 33-year-old.

There's always room for Warne

AFP, SYDNEY

Shane Warne had plenty of cricket left and would command a place in the Australian cricket team as long as he was physically capable, captain Ricky Ponting said Friday.

The incomparable leg-spinner, who at times single-handedly wrestled with England's Ashes series challenge taking 40 wickets, has indicated he may not be around when the Ashes battle resumes in Australia late next year.

Warne, 36, has yet to confirm whether he will play in Australia's home Tests against the West Indies and South Africa this southern summer.

Ponting, speaking in Hobart, said he would have Warne in his team "every day of the week".

"You've just got to look at the way he performed in England," Ponting told reporters.

"Forty wickets in the series and some very handy runs as well... he was the best player on both sides, I think, right through the series."

Ponting said Warne would be in the Test team as long as he was physically able.

"There's no indication that he's slowing down yet," he said.

"He's bowled better in (the Ashes) series than he probably has in his whole career. As long as he keeps looking after himself with his pizzas and chips and that diet then I'm sure he can play till he's 40."

Warne, who returned home on Thursday from England, said his most important priority was to see his three children, who live in Melbourne with his estranged wife Simone.

Perform or bust: Faruque

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

Unhappy with the Tigers' recent showings, chief selector Faruque Ahmed issued a warning for the national cricketers that they would face the consequences unless they perform in the coming domestic season.

"There will be no room for non-performers. We will take this year's national cricket league and other domestic fixtures very seriously. The performance in those competitions will be the main criteria for selection in the main team," said Faruque on Thursday.

The former national captain, who has been leading the four-man selection committee for over two years, said he never felt as frustrated as with the Tigers' performance in Sri Lanka.

"I was upset when the team played bad cricket in England in the Test series but there was a reason to accept that considering the difficult condition and the strength of the opponents. But Sri Lanka was not as difficult. We need to narrow the gap between us and the other teams," said Faruque who agreed with the observation of Bangladesh captain Habibul Bashar that the players were not the only ones to blame for the Lankan misadventure.

"Yes, of course. The coach and selectors are also responsible for the poor showing of the national team. Everybody knows that in the end

players should implement everything on the field but we can not avoid responsibility as it is our duty to keep the team on the right track."

Faruque said the team should take the positives from their recent ODI triumphs over Australia and India into the longer version also.

"If you consider the number of ODIs we have won (seven out of the last 16) in the past ten months, you could say our performance was not so



FARUQUE AHMED

bad. But we should shift our attention to Test cricket because there has been rather average. Our real problem lies in our attitude towards longer version cricket."

Faruque believed that the only way to overcome this shortcoming was through the first class matches in domestic competitions.

"The time has come to realise that

we can rectify our mistakes only in the domestic competitions. Yes there are limitations with our only first class competition but I don't want to hear any excuses from the players. They should take it seriously if they want to get a place in the team.

"We have talked a lot about talent and potential. Without performance that talent means nothing. You should nurse your talent to be successful. I secretly wish the players, the officials, the media and the fans stopped talking about how talented an individual is."

Recently Bashar said that giving under-19 players Test caps and taking it back after a short exposure was not a good practice but Faruque had an explanation over the issue.

"I agree, but you should understand our position. When we played as an associate member of the ICC, the fitness issue was not as important as it is now. The under 19s have the best level of fitness in our country so considering the intensity of the games you have to pick them from time to time especially when senior players have fitness problems."

Despite the frustrations Faruque believed that it was still possible to get things back on track in a short period.

"We have no scope to look back because we are in the elite club. But we should rethink our strategy to improve the performance graph. I can assure you that I will discuss with my colleagues to rectify our mistakes in the selection procedure also."

Sudanwa lifts boy's crown

SPORTS REPORTER

Sitaram Sudanwa of India clinched the boy's singles crown in the Sheltech Asian Under-14 Tennis Series defeating Athore Mansingh in straight sets on Friday.

Sudanwa, who had eliminated Hutaruk Farulian of Indonesia in the semifinals, beat his compatriot Mansingh 6-2, 6-3 at the Ramna National Tennis Complex.

Hosts Bangladesh's hopes of winning a title were dashed when Bhabna and her Indian partner Adnyaa Naik -- the singles champion -- lost the girls' doubles final to Indonesians Ysidora Grace Sari and Frederika Nadia.

It was sweet revenge for Sari, who finished runner-up in the singles competition but denied an Indian sweep.

Meanwhile, the all Indian boys' doubles final between Sudanwa and Manuja Ronak and Mansingh and Paranjape Sameer was washed out. The organisers were yet to set a time for the match.

Bangladesh Olympic Association's acting secretary general Kutubuddin Ahmed distributed prizes among the winners.

Sachin fit to return

BBC ONLINE, undated

Indian batting star Sachin Tendulkar is ready to play again after undergoing surgery on his elbow.

The 32-year-old will make his comeback in a domestic one-day tournament in Mohali, which runs from 10-13 October.

"He is playing. He has been cleared by his doctor," said India's chief selector Kiran More.

Tendulkar, who last played for India in April, is hoping to prove his fitness for a forthcoming home series against Sri Lanka.

He has played 123 Tests and 348 one-day internationals since making his debut in 1989 and is still rated by many the game's premier batsman.

But the grind of a long international career has taken its toll on his body and he has also had hand, foot, back and ankle problems in the past six years.

The injury to the extensor tendons of his elbow, suffered while batting in the nets ahead of a one-day tournament in The Netherlands in August 2004 was, however, the most serious.

And he will be closely supervised by team physio John Gloster during the Challenger Trophy tournament.

Residential Model get justice

SPORTS REPORTER

Residential Model School and College might have lost a battle but they certainly won the war when the Metropolitan School Football tournament committee overturned the result of the Pran-Cola School Football semifinal.

Residential, who were ousted by Dolairpar High in a penalty shoot-out on Wednesday, but immediately lodged a protest claiming that their rivals had used illegal players.

The league committee on Thursday, scratched Dolairpar from the tournament and handed the old-Dhaka school a further one-year ban from all school competitions under the Bangladesh Football Federation after they were found guilty of fielding three outsiders.

Residential, who were declared winners 2-0, will play Emarat Hossain High in the October 4 final.

Ashrafal visits Sisimpur show

PRESS RELEASE

Characters from Sisimpur, the children's TV show, performed live at American Centre for local school children in the city on Thursday.

Over 70 children watching an episode of Sisimpur on a giant screen were delighted to see the real characters appear to talk to them. National cricketer Mohammad Ashrafal paid a surprise visit to the children and answered their questions. Later in the day Nayanara Communications filmed at the library for use on a future TV programme. Charge d'Affaires Judith Chammis visited the library to speak with the puppeteers and crew.

The live show will familiarise children with the new American Centre Library, particularly the Children's Corner. American Center's Sisimpur day will tell

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Lara hopes to tour down under



AFP, Melbourne

Brian Lara said Friday he was hopeful a protracted sponsorship dispute would not stop him taking part in the West Indies' Australian tour starting in November.

Lara, here with the ICC World XI to play Australia in three one-dayers and a Test match, sat out last July's tour of Sri Lanka along with several other leading players over the wrangle.

The dispute, involving the team's former sponsor Cable and Wireless and current sponsor Digicel, also led to Lara and others skipping the first Test in South Africa in March.

"It's sad that the West Indies is playing. I'm fully fit, (Ramnaresh) Sarwan is fully fit, Chris Gayle is fully fit and we (were) not out there playing, hopefully that can be sorted out," Lara told reporters here Friday.

"I just want to play cricket really. It's very important for me and for West Indian cricket that I'm out on the field playing."

Lara and Gayle, who is also part of the world squad, said they were uncertain about the state of negotiations to resolve the dispute.

West Indies Players Association president Dinanath Ramnarine is attempting to broker a resolution with the West Indies Cricket Board.

The West Indies are scheduled to play a three-Test series in Australia starting in Brisbane on November 3.

"I think Ramnarine, the players' representative, and the board, are actually working behind the scenes

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PHOTO: CRICINFO

PERFECTION: Brian Lara shows off a textbook forward defence during training at the Junction Oval in Melbourne on Friday. The West Indies superstar will play for the World XI against Australia in the Super Series.

Nat'l swimming from today

SPORTS REPORTER

The Keya Cosmetics 21st National Swimming Championships will begin today at the National Complex in Mirpur.

Bangladesh Swimming Federation president and the Chief of Air Staff Rear Admiral M Hasan Ali Khan will declare the four-day meet open at 9 am.

About 400 swimmers from 44 teams are expected to take part in the meet.

Nat'l hockey semis today

SPORTS REPORTER

The semifinals of the ABS Group National Hockey Championship will be held today at the Maulana Bhasani National Hockey Stadium.

Last year's runners-up Faridpur will take on title contenders Dhaka in the first semi at 1.30pm while holders Bangladesh Army force Rajshahi in the second at 4pm.

Pressure not on Flintoff's list

Cricket

REUTERS, Sydney

All-rounder Andrew Flintoff, man of the series in England's Ashes victory over Australia, says he is not under any extra pressure to reproduce that form in the World XI's matches against the same opposition.

Flintoff, who has been short-listed for the International Cricket Council's (ICC) player of the year award, arrived in Melbourne on Friday to prepare for three one-day games against the world champions next week.

The 27-year-old is also in the World XI test squad for a six-day match in Sydney starting on October 14.

"I won't be putting pressure on myself," Flintoff told reporters in Melbourne.

"I'll just try and go out there and do what I do.

"I'm a cricketer. I enjoy playing cricket -- that's what's got me here and I'm not going to lose sight of that.

"I still knock about with the same lads back home I enjoy having a pint with so not a great deal's changed on that front."

Awarded the freedom of his home town Preston after capturing 24 wickets at 27.29 and scoring 402 runs at 40.02 against the Australians, Flintoff said he was keen to face them again at Melbourne's Docklands Stadium on October 5 in the first of three one-dayers.

"It's going to be great to be honest," he said.

"Obviously I'm very pleased to be involved in it.

"Two or three years ago, I probably never had thought I'd be here playing in this game so it is a good opportunity to play against Australia again in Australia and will hold all the same challenges it has done this summer."



PHOTO: STAR

Bangladesh's Bhabna (R) and her Indian partner Adnyaa Naik in action against Indonesians Ysidora Grace Sari and Frederika Nadia in the girls' doubles final of the Sheltech Asian Under-14 Tennis Series at the Ramna National Tennis Complex on Friday.

'Ganguly must overcome flaws to stay skipper'

Cricket

PTI, Jalandhar

Former cricketer Navjot Singh Sidhu believes skipper Sourav Ganguly was in an immediate need to overcome his weaknesses in the upcoming two home series against Sri Lanka and South Africa, if he wanted to retain the reins of the national team.

"The weakness of Ganguly that he cannot play a short ball is now widely known in international cricket and his performance in the recent series was also not up to mark," Sidhu said here on Thursday.

"If the captain wants to protect his dominance in the team, he will have to overcome his weakness and for the same the coming series are very crucial for him," he said.

Coach Greg Chappell had alleged in

his recent e-mail to the BCCI president that Ganguly shied away from facing the new ball in the Mutare practice match in Zimbabwe which gave way to a controversial row between the coach and the captain.

The former opening batsman said even if the recent Ganguly-Chappell appeared to have been resolved it had dented the country's image in the international cricket.

"Whatever happened between Chappell and Ganguly was not good for Indian cricket.

"Although the (Indian Cricket) Board's managed to patch up between the two but the question regarding continuance of Ganguly as the Indian team's captain was still open as he will have to prove his mettle in the coming series to protect his career.

"Now the cricketers and Board should look forward to improve the

game as well as image of the country after burying the past," he said.

Meanwhile, Ganguly said that he had been vindicated as he had done nothing wrong.

"In a way I feel I have been vindicated because I hadn't done anything wrong. The review committee gave me a patient hearing and I put my point of view across to them," Ganguly is quoted as saying in the Deccan Herald.

"I think they were reasonably convinced with my replies and I am very happy the matter has been settled now... You could say I am happy and relieved in equal parts," the left handed batsman said.

Asked whether it was possible for him and Chappell to work as a team, he said: "I don't see any reason why we cannot. After all, both of us are interested in the welfare of the team and Indian cricket."

A boot worthy of him

Football

REUTERS, Barcelona

Ronaldinho may not have won the golden boot award last season but he will be taking to the Nou Camp wearing the real thing when Barcelona host Real Zaragoza in the Primera Liga on Saturday.

The Brazilian, who scored a hat-trick in his side's 4-1 Champions League win over Udinese on Tuesday, has been given two pairs of special boots containing eight ounces of 24-carat gold estimated by manufacturers Nike to be worth \$6,000.

The gold has been applied to the tongue, heel and the Nike "swoosh" on the side and is the same as the material used on athlete Michael Johnson's all-gold spikes he wore at the Sydney Olympics in 2000.

The boots also feature an embossed letter "R" and the number 10, the shirt Ronaldinho wears for Barcelona, while the heel of the boot is embossed with five gold stars in honour of Brazil's five World Cup

wins.

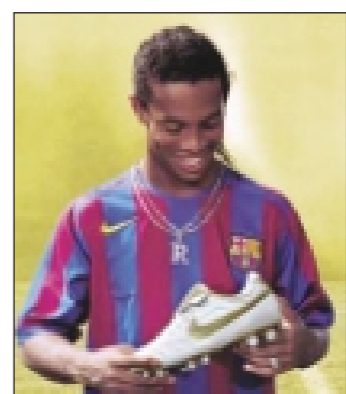


PHOTO: REUTERS

Barcelona superstar Ronaldinho admires his new Nike boot containing eight ounces of 24-carat gold at an undisclosed location on September 29.

"We were wondering how to give the boots a personal touch," said Ronaldinho. "So they copied the

design of my neck chain to reproduce the "R" and added my number 10. I was very happy to take part in the gold design, so they are completely personalised."

Ronaldinho, 25, joined Barcelona from Paris St Germain two years ago, scoring 14 league goals and inspiring them to a 17-match unbeaten run that saw them finish in second place in the title race in his first season at the club.

Last season he scored nine to help Barcelona lay their hands on their first league title in six years.

Part of Brazil's World Cup winning side in 2002, Ronaldinho was named FIFA World Player of the Year last December and was voted FIFPro World Player by fellow professionals last week.

Personalised boots have become all the rage among footballers in recent years with many of the leading players having their names and numbers emblazoned on the side.

David Beckham, who is contracted to Nike's rivals Adidas, has the name of his three sons, Brooklyn, Romeo and Cruz, woven in gold thread into the three stripes on his boots.



PHOTO: COURTESY

Bangladesh cricket star Mohammad Ashrafal chats with Sissimpur TV puppets during the show at the American Centre Library on Thursday.