



Did U Know?

Formula One legend Alain Prost originally wanted to be a football player.



Rahul Dravid

(Indian cricket captain)

"It is great to have Sachin (Tendulkar) back. His presence makes such a difference in the dressing room."



ESPN

South Africa v New Zealand
Third ODI, Live at 2pm
Spanish football
Betis v Real Madrid
Same day delay at 9.30pm

STAR Sports

English Premier League
West Brom v Newcastle United
Live at 10pm

Ashrafal Dhaka's 1st-class captain

SPORTS REPORTER

Mohammad Ashrafal will lead Dhaka Division in the first-class competition of the coming National Cricket League after skipper Khaled Mahmud's decision to quit first-class cricket.

"I have no chance of playing Test cricket. So I think it would be wiser not to play the four-day matches and let a young cricketer play instead of me," Mahmud told on Saturday.

"I have seen talents in Ashrafal and he has the quality to lead the nation in future. So it would be better if he hones his skills from now," added Mahmud, who will stay one-day captain of the side.

Welcoming the decision, Ashrafal said: "I would be delighted to prove my worth and capability as captain."

BCCI issues Eng dates

CRICINFO, undated

The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) has issued the schedule for England's tour during March and April 2006.

The three Test matches will be played in Ahmedabad, Nagpur and Mumbai, while the seven-match ODI series includes a game in Goa, at the Nehru Stadium, subject to the ground being cleared over alleged malpractices in 2001.

Goa Cricket Association are facing an inquiry over the ODI it staged with Australia and SK Nair, the BCCI secretary, said the match was allocated on the provision the ground was cleared.

"Goa will host a one-day international against England provided the report of the BCCI Disciplinary Committee exonerates it and the findings are ratified by the Board's Working Committee."

England's first Test will start on March 8 in Ahmedabad, followed

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Farhad not enough

MYANMAR-2, BFF XI-1

Football

SPORTS REPORTER

Arifur Kabir Farhad scored his third goal in the Grand Royal Challenge Cup football tournament in Myanmar but it was not enough for the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) XI to avoid defeat against the hosts on Saturday.

The Myanmar Under-23 team, who led the first half through an injury-time strike, defeated the BFF XI 2-1 in the second-round match in Yangon to book a berth in the November 2 final.

Bangladesh, who conceded the second goal on the hour, reduced the arrears through Farhad ten minutes from time.

Farhad scored twice on the opening day of the four-team meet in Bangladesh's 3-1 defeat of

China, who stayed in contention for a place in the final defeating India 3-1 in the day's other match.

However, the Chinese youth must beat Myanmar in tomorrow's last group match to keep their hopes alive.

Bangladesh face an under-strength India Under-20, who were brushed aside 11-0 by the hosts and have already bowed out of contention with two losses. A win will all but ensure their path to the final.

Bangladesh also lost to Myanmar in the group stage but defeated the hosts in the final to lift the trophy in their last trip in 1995 under German coach Otto Pfister.

Despite the loss, the Bangladesh team management was confident of playing in the final as they thought India would not be a big trouble.

According to a message from the Myanmar capital, the BFF XI -- a virtual national team -- were not impressive in the first half but came alive after the break against a strong side which boasted a num-

ber of national players and have been training for two years.

Team manager Sayeed Hassan Kanan informed over phone that Bangladesh played good football under Argentine coach Diego Cruciani and showed signs of getting habituated to Latin style.

"We are confident of reaching the final beating India in the last match," Kanan said.

After the match, coach Cruciani commented that to play at top level, the Bangladeshi booters needed to improve their fitness level more.

Although Cruciani had said before departure that he would use as many players as possible, he retained the same starting line-up.

BFF XI LINE-UP (4-3-1-2): Aminul, Hassan Al Mamun, Sujun, Nazrul, Titu, Arman, Joy, Matiuur Munna (Asad), Ujjal (Kanchan), Alfaz (Emily) and Farhad.

Tale of dream coming true

Football

SPORTS REPORTER

Youngsters live on dreams of becoming big. Shahedul Alam Shayed and Imran Miridha Rubel are no exceptions. These two Class X students are already in the camps of two heavyweights after their sterling performances in the recently concluded Dhaka Metropolitan School Football tournament.

Shayed, a midfielder of Emarat High School of Dakshinkhan who was adjudged the player of the tournament, is now a member of Abahani's training camp for the coming National Football League.

While Rubel, the Residential Model School striker who was the top scorer of the tournament with an unparalleled 21 goals, wins the Brothers hearts.

Their joining in the country's top clubs is certainly a boost for other budding talents across the country to try their skills and fulfil their dreams of attiring the famous shirts like the Sky Blues, Black and Whites, Orange or all Reds.

The good news is that the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) has found a financial partner in spreading the game in a systematic way across the country after a successful tournament involving Dhaka schools early this year.

The BFF on Saturday announced that they would host the first-ever National School Football

Championship in February next year. Not only that, Aktivision, the new development partner of BFF, has agreed to provide the funds for the national championship for the next three years.

The lucrative deal amounting more than Taka one crore was arranged by BFF's marketing agent Leisure Sports Management (LSM).

"Aktivision will provide Tk 35 lakh for the first edition. They will increase the amount by 15 per cent each year," told BFF general secretary Anwarul Hoque Helal at a press briefing yesterday.

"Initially, we will hold the qualifiers in 16 zones with 130 schools participating. The champions and runners-up of each district from the inter-district school championship organised by the Sports Ministry and the two teams from Dhaka Metropolis will play in the qualifiers," informed Helal.

"The 16 zonal winners will play in the final round. We will try to hold it outside Dhaka to attract more spectators," the BFF general secretary added.

While a cash-starved BFF considered the new deal as a step towards rejuvenating football at the grassroots level, Aktivision has decided to portray Shayed and Rubel as their ambassadors to promote the game as well as attract sponsors.

"We want to focus those two players to inspire the kids in the whole country. Their exposure will encourage others," said Shakib Lohani who also said his organisation would take responsibility to

create hype and gather huge crowd in the stadiums.

"A number of corporate houses have already showed interest to sponsor the event and we are confident we will have the best one to promote school football in the country," he added.

Aktivision is no doubt innovative in their endeavour and it created unbridled sense of joy among Shayed and Rubel, who know little about what present day techniques are all about.

"We don't know what we will have to do. But we are excited to learn that we will be travelling," said the youngsters.

But they were more interested to talk about their experience in camps of Abahani and Brothers.

"The senior players have been encouraging me and I have been treated as a full member during training. I know it is difficult for a young boy like me to make a place in the first team but I am learning fast. I am confident that I would earn my place," told Shayed, who now eyes to wear the famous sky-blue shirt even in his teens.

"I am attending camp from my home but it is great to train with so many great players," said Rubel, who is now in the camp of Brothers Union.



PHOTO: STAR

School football stars Shayed (2nd from left) and Rubel (2nd from right) are flanked by BFF general secretary Anwarul Hoque Helal and Shakib Lohani (L), COO of Aktivision, after a press conference at the BFF Bhaban on Saturday.

Samuels puts WI on top

Cricket

AFP, Brisbane

The West Indies were in a winning position in their four-day tour cricket match against Queensland after Marlon Samuels hit a record-breaking 257 here on Saturday.

After the third day's play, Queensland were 52 for one and still needing another 236 runs to make the tourists bat a second time.

The Caribbean tourists held a 288-run first-innings lead when they declared at a ground record 612 for nine following the end of Samuels' 304-ball knock in the last session at the Allan Border Field.

The Jamaican's innings, which included 34 boundaries and eight sixes, eclipsed the 250 scored by Queensland's Martin Love against

England three years ago.

The inconsistent Samuels was a contentious selection in the 15-man tour squad and was not expected to play in next Thursday's first Test before Wavell Hinds broke his finger on day one.

"Usually I'm not getting the opportunity and I got the opportunity today so I grasped the opportunity with both hands," Samuels said.

"Cricket is a glorious game of uncertainty so you never know what happens... and when Wavell broke his finger I was here to fill that gap."

The 24-year-old has played only 19 Tests in five years, averaging 29, but believes he will improve after building his physical and mental strength under Australian coach Bennett King and trainer Bryce Cavanagh.

Rating the massive total a "very special team effort", Samuels warned Australia would face a

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SAMUELS...record 257



PHOTO: AFP

EFFORT GOES IN VAIN: New Zealand's Lou Vincent, whose man-of-the-match knock of 90 could not win the match, cuts a delivery from South African fast bowler Shaun Pollock (L) during their second ODI at Sahara Park in Cape Town on Friday.

Cricketers give ailing Osman Tk 86,300

SPORTS REPORTER

The national cricketers handed over Tk 86,300 to ailing ex-national coach Osman Khan for his treatment on Saturday.

The Tigers who were part of Bangladesh's tour of Sri Lanka in August-September, donated their one day's pocket-money from the Sri Lanka trip which amounted Tk 71,300. They added the rest from their benefit fund for the cause, informed Bangladesh captain Habibul Bashar.

Bashar and his deputy Khaled Mashud, also a former national skipper, Khaled Mahmud visited their old guru to hand over the money.

Osman, who has been suffering from critical liver disease, has been improving very slowly and is likely to be taken to India for further treatment.

ASIAN YOUTH C'SHIP U-17 booters to play qualifiers against SL

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh under-17 football team will play home and away qualifiers against Sri Lanka for next year's Asian Youth Championship final rounds.

The qualifiers were scheduled to be held in Dhaka from November 13-17 but Bhutan, the other team in the group, have withdrawn their name at the last moment.

The winners will play in the finals to be held in Singapore next year.

The BFF will request the Asian Football Confederation to set a date for the two qualifying matches after November 18 to avoid the rush during the SAARC Summit in Dhaka.

Happy birthday to Vaughan

AFP, Islamabad

England captain Michael Vaughan celebrated his 31st birthday poolside in the Pakistani capital on Saturday with hugs and cheers from his teammates.

"All the team players gathered at the swimming pool of their hotel and gave Vaughan best wishes (and a) birthday card as the captain cut the cake," team media manager Andrew Walpole told AFP.

England is in Pakistan for a 58-day tour starting on November 12. They will play three Tests and five limited-overs internationals.

The tour comes after England claimed their first Ashes victory in 16 years, beating Australia 2-1 earlier this year.

The Yorkshire batsman's calm leadership has been credited with lifting England's performance which culminated in the Ashes victory.

Since taking over as captain from Nasser Hussain in 2003, Vaughan has led England in the same number of Tests as his age.

Under Vaughan, England have won 19, drawn seven and lost just five Tests.

SA's 11th on the trot

Cricket

AFP, Cape Town

New Zealand batsman Lou Vincent made a sparkling 90 but could not stop South Africa gaining their 11th successive win in the second one-day international at Newlands Friday.

Vincent looked set to guide the Kiwis to victory before he was eighth man out, with 37 runs still needed,

when Makhaya Ntini returned to the South African attack in the 43rd over.

Ntini took three for 29 and Charl Langeveldt three for 35 as New Zealand were bowled out for 182 in reply to South Africa's 201 for nine.

South Africa's 19-run win gave them a 2-0 lead in a five-match series and extended their unbeaten record to 16 matches, which include a tie and a no-result.

Their 11 consecutive wins put South Africa level with the West Indies team of 1984 to 1985 in second place

on the all-time list, behind the 21 successive wins achieved by Australia in 2003.

Vincent blazed to his half-century off just 37 balls, taking advantage of fielding restrictions and the hard new ball, then played an anchor role as stroke-play became more difficult on a tricky, two-paced pitch.

Vincent, 26, faced 109 deliveries in total as he improved a mediocre career record. In 68 previous one-day internationals he had averaged just 24.33 with an innings of 172 against lowly Zimbabwe in August his only score above 60.

New Zealand lost two early wickets before Vincent and Scott Styris put on 64 for the third wicket off 53 balls to put the touring team comfortably ahead of the required scoring rate.

But the runs dried up while wickets fell at regular intervals before substitute James Franklin joined Vincent in an eighth wicket stand of 28. Vincent started to struggle with cramp and called for a runner shortly before he pulled Ntini to Ashwell Prince at midwicket.

Earlier Styris put New Zealand in a good position with his medium-pace bowling.

The medium-paced Styris, who missed the first match in Bloemfontein Sunday with a hamstring injury, took wickets in both his first two overs and conceded only seven runs in his first six overs. He finished with two for 29.

Opening bowler Kyle Mills, benefiting from some desperate hitting by the South Africans in the closing overs, took four for 44.

Jacques Kallis top-scored for

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Dear Readers
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-- Sports Editor