



Did U Know?

South Africa, with three consecutive victories over New Zealand at Bloemfontein, Cape Town and Port Elizabeth, have now recorded their 12th successive win their best winning sequence in one-day internationals.



Michael Holding

(West Indies cricket commentator)

"People don't like to hear the truth, but this group does not possess the right attitude to win Test matches. I'm concerned about their general focus. They aren't focused on their game enough. They aren't focused on representing the Windies enough."

On the current West Indies cricket team.

What to WATCH

DD Sports

India vs Sri Lanka
Fourth ODI
Live at 9:30 am

ESPN

Football Crazy
Live at 5:00 pm
Sportscentre
Live at 8:30 pm

South Africa vs New Zealand

Fourth ODI
Live at 6:30 pm (Friday)

STAR Sports

ATP Masters
Third Round
Live at 2:00 am (Friday)
Australia vs West Indies
First Test, Day Two
Live at 6:00 am (Friday)

Sami likely to miss 1st Test

CRICINFO, undated

Pakistan's preparations for the Test series against England took another blow with the news that Mohammad Sami is likely to miss the first Test in Multan beginning from November 12.

Although cricket board officials weren't willing to rule him out just yet, Inzamamul Haq, Pakistan captain, has reportedly told a private news channel that Sami's groin injury will require two weeks to heal, thus ruling him out of the first Test.

Wasim Bari, chairman of the

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Sudden death to BFF dream

Myanmar clinch Grand Royal Challenge Cup

MYANMAR U-23 2: BFF XI 1



SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh's bid to repeat history ten years later on Myanmar soil was dashed when the hosts came from a goal down to beat Bangladesh Football Federation XI 2-1 in the final of the Grand Royal Challenge Cup football tournament yesterday.

The exciting match before a house-full crowd in Yangon was locked 1-1 in regulation 90 minutes but the Myanmar Under-23 team stole a 110-minute silver goal in extra time to lift the trophy and 15,000 US dollars prize money. The runners-up received 8,000 US dollars.

Bangladesh lifted their maiden

football trophy abroad in 1995 in Myanmar beating the home team and the class of 2005 looked on course to repeat the feat when midfielder Mehdi Hassan Ujjal, set by skipper and his Abahani teammate Arif Khan Joy, put them ahead in the 25th minute.

The visitors, who played impressive football throughout the tournament under new Argentine coach Diego Cruciani, went to the break with a 1-0 lead but tournament top scorer Yan Pine levelled the scores on the hour amid boisterous cheers from the home fans.

The Bangladeshi forwards, especially four-goal Farhad who had scored in every match prior to the final, failed to find the mark and a desperate Cruciani made three changes without any effect.

The match rolled into extra time and a shootout seemed inevitable when Kyang Yin slammed the match winner ten minutes from time.

Myanmar also won the league match against BFF XI by an identical margin.

Pine, who notched sixth goals in the tournament, received US dollars 1000 as top scorer and an additional 1000 dollars as the best player of the four-nation meet. Midfielder Aung Kyaw Moe was adjudged man of the match.

Bangladesh, who beat China 3-1 and India 2-0 in the league matches, will return home on Friday. They will soon start training after a brief holiday for the two Asian Cup pre-qualifiers against Pakistan and their attempt to defend the SAFF Football Championship in Pakistan in December.

The booters are expected to return home on November 4.

BFF XI line-up: Aminul, Hassan Al Mamun, Sujon, Faisal, Titu, Alfaz, Joy, Matiur Munna (Asad), Ujjal (Emily), Kanchan and Farhad (Abul).

Giles, Plunkett bowl England home



AFP, Rawalpindi

Ashley Giles and Liam Plunkett took four wickets apiece to scrape a victory by 52 runs for England in their tour opener against the Pakistan Cricket Board Patron's XI.

With England staring defeat in the face on their first outing since September's Ashes win, the pair defended a paltry 158-run target by dismissing their opponents for 105 in their second innings on the third and final day Wednesday.

Left-arm spinner Giles, who was sidelined by a stomach upset on Tuesday, bowled a superb line and length to take 4-39 and pacer Plunkett returned figures of 4-16.

The fightback will lift the tourists' morale ahead of their three-match Test series against Pakistan, which starts in Multan on November 12.

England had resumed the final day on a precarious 39-6, only 84 runs ahead with four wickets intact.

Opener Marcus Trescothick, who hit a lifesaving 124 not out in England's first innings score of 256-9, again top-scored with 38 to help England to 112 all out in their second innings.

Giles, who did not bowl in Patron's XI's first innings score of 211, removed dangerous opener Yasir Hameed (30) and Bazid Khan (0) off successive deliveries to trigger a collapse which saw the home team slumping from 50-0 to 88-9.

Plunkett, who is fighting for a Test place against rival pacer James Anderson, removed Asher Zaidi (26), Asim Kamal (0), Faisal Iqbal (2) and Misbahul Haq (14) in a spell of seven overs to open the doors for England.

From the other end, Giles kept up the pressure by sending Shahzad Malik (3) and Khalid Latif (0) to the pavilion, while veteran off-spinner

Shaun Udal wrapped up the innings by claiming Yasir Arafat (4) and Zulqarnain (4).

Earlier Patron's XI seamer Yasir Arafat chipped in with 5-31 -- 9-76 in the match -- to dismiss England half an hour before lunch.

Arafat had Ian Bell (1), Ashley Giles (0) and Matthew Hoggard (0) to nudge the memories of Pakistan's selectors, who have forgotten him since he played two one-day matches three years ago.

Trescothick added an invaluable 56 runs for the seventh wicket with Paul Collingwood who made 34.

England's top order flopped twice in the match with opener Andrew Strauss, captain Michael Vaughan, Ian Bell and Kevin Pietersen failing to get much needed practice.

They have another three-day side match, starting in Lahore from Sunday, to sharpen up their act before the Test series.

Aussies go for pace

Gabba Test against Windies from today



AFP, Brisbane

Australia have matched an expected pace barrage by picking swing bowler Nathan Bracken over second leg-spinner Stuart MacGill for the opening cricket Test against the West Indies starting Thursday.

The Caribbean tourists, looking to rediscover their lost clout under Australian taskmaster Bennett King, are likely to unleash a four-pronged speed attack on the seam-friendly Gabba pitch.

The Aussies countered by going for 28-year-old left-arm seamer Bracken to add more firepower and variety to an attack launched by Brett Lee and Glenn McGrath and backed up by all-rounder Shane Watson and champion leg-spinner Shane Warne.

Selectors found Bracken's Gabba

form claims irresistible. With high humidity and the prospect of rain during the Test, he won the day over MacGill, who captured nine match wickets in his last Test against a World XI last month.

"Bracken has got a great record up here and he will bowl well on that wicket. There's still a bit of moisture in the surface and maybe a little bit of weather (rain) around, that's the way we've decided to go," skipper Ricky Ponting said Wednesday in announcing his lineup.

Bracken performs well on the Gabba pitch, taking 4-15 for his state New South Wales in a one-dayer against Queensland last month and claiming 6-27 and 2-54 to set up last season's Sheffield Shield final win over Queensland.

"Having done work with (former left-arm Test pacer) Bruce Reid in the past, he's helped me to perform better on wickets and conditions like

these," said Bracken, who captured 43 Shield wickets at 18.79 last season.

"I enjoy coming up here and the last three times I've come up here, I've got five, four and six (wickets), so I can't complain."

Ponting is also trying to get the most out of tearaway Brett Lee, whose 22 Test wickets over the last 12 months have come at a cost of 41.73 runs each.

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BCB announces U-19 home itinerary

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) on Wednesday released the itineraries of the visiting England under-19 team and the subsequent triangular tournament in Bangladesh involving the Sri Lankan youth team.

The England under-19s will arrive in Dhaka on November 14 to play a five-match one-day series against BCB High Performance team and thereafter they will play the tri-nation tournament.

The limited-overs matches between HP Squad and England Under-19 are billed for November 17, 18, 21, 24 and 25 at the Shaheed Chandu Stadium in Bogra, BKSP and Khulna Divisional Stadium respectively.

The Sri Lankan Under-19s will arrive in the capital on November 29 to play the triangular series, which kicks off with the Bangladesh-England match at BKSP on November 30.

BCB also announced a 14-member High Performance (HP) squad for the five-match one-day series against England.

They are Amit Majumdar, Raqibul Hasan, Shamsur Rahman, Nazimuddin, Farhad Hossain, Golam Rahman, Farhad Reza, Mahmudul Riyad, Nadif Chowdhury, Ashikul Islam, Israq Sonnet, Mosharaf Hossain, Shajullah Khadem and Sajidul Islam. Standbys: Shiran Sharif, Mah-mudul Hasan and Rezaul Islam.

The selected players have been asked to report on November 10 at BKSP at 5pm.

Meanwhile, the board has decided to allow the members of the youth side, which will play the Under-19 World Cup in February in Sri Lanka, to compete in the Dhaka Premier Division Cricket League from December 25 to January 9. Besides, the board also decided to allow the selected players in the HP Squad to play for their respective clubs in the GrameenPhone Corporate Cricket League only in the semifinals and final.

The fixture of the triangular tournament
Nov 30: Bangladesh vs England at BKSP
Nov 31: Sri Lanka vs England at FCS
Dec 3: Bangladesh vs England at FCS
Dec 4: Bangladesh vs Sri Lanka at BKSP
Dec 6: Sri Lanka vs England at FCS
Dec 7: Sri Lanka vs Bangladesh at BKSP
Dec 9: England vs Bangladesh at FCS
Dec 10: England vs Sri Lanka at BKSP
Dec 12: Sri Lanka vs Bangladesh at FCS
Dec 14: Final at BKSP

Sachin won't be given rest

PTI, Pune

Coach Greg Chappell on Wednesday said there were no plans to rest Sachin Tendulkar and that the Indian team will look to continue its domination of Sri Lanka and wrap up the seven-match one-day series with a victory in the fourth encounter here on Thursday.

"There is no such move (to rest Tendulkar). As long as he's fit and well, he would play. We missed his presence in Sri Lanka," Chappell said on the eve of the match at the Nehru Stadium.

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Arjuna fears whitewash

Fourth Indo-Lanka ODI in Pune today



AFP, Pune

Sri Lanka's former World Cup-winning captain Arjuna Ranatunga on Wednesday predicted a 7-0 sweep for resurgent India in the current one-day series unless the tourists quickly stop the rot.

Sri Lanka, beaten in the first three games, must win the fourth one-dayer at the Nehru Stadium here on

Thursday to stay afloat in the seven-match series.

Ranatunga, who led Sri Lanka to victory in the 1996 World Cup, believes poor tactics and lack of commitment by Marvan Atapattu's men had placed the world's second-ranked side in a precarious position.

"I am disappointed with a few of our tactics," Ranatunga wrote in his column for the Press Trust of India. "The bowling and fielding have been unimaginative and routine."

"If the team is honest they would

admit Kumar Sangakkara and Mahela Jayawardena alone have been leading the batting charge in recent months.

"Others need to pull their weight. This Indian side can only be subdued by 11 charged and committed men, marauding like a hungry pack of wolves."

"Otherwise, I suspect a 7-0 drubbing, so much has Sri Lanka fallen behind in the present series," Ranatunga wrote.

In a further blow to the tourists vice-captain Jayawardena will miss Thursday's crucial match, having been granted leave to fly home to Colombo to get married.

He will return in time for the fifth match in Ahmedabad on Sunday.

Ranatunga has been impressed by India's remarkable rise under new captain Rahul Dravid and coach Greg Chappell after losing two one-day finals - to Sri Lanka and New Zealand - earlier in the season.

India thrashed the Sri Lankans by 152 runs in the first match in Nagpur and won the second by eight wickets in Mohali. They then rode on Mahendra Singh Dhoni's brilliant 183 not out to surpass a challenging target of 299 for the loss of only four wickets in the third game in Jaipur on Monday.

"It is time to take a serious note of India," Ranatunga wrote.

"They did not panic or change their approach in Jaipur. They came out swinging and showed the surge of belief which is running through their veins."

"A seriously good team is in the making now. Batting is flexible and is being groomed to adapt to different situations and different slots."

"The opposition will struggle to plan in advance. Bowling and fielding are both on the mend. India's rise has taken the world by surprise."

Ranatunga said the reason for India's success was the competition for spots in the team.

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PHOTO: AFP

ANOTHER SPARKLING SHOW? India wicketkeeper-batsman Mahendra Dhoni, who smashed a record 183 in Jaipur on October 31, honing his skills during a practice session in Pune on Wednesday.

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU

Dear Readers

As The Daily Star approaches its 15th anniversary, the Star Sport team would like to know your feedback on how to make the pages more attractive. So, for the next two weeks send us your suggestions, comments and even criticisms within 200-250 words to sports@thedailystar.net. We intend to publish them and wish your valuable views will enrich your favourite pages. The last date for submission of your comments is November 15.

-- Sports Editor