



Did U Know?

Ricky Ponting's 24th Test century -- 149 off 213 balls -- is his fifth in 13 Tests against West Indies.



Oliver Kahn

(German goalkeeper)
"I am torn, I do not know whether to play golf, go for a swim or do some dancing."

Reacting to coach Jurgen Klinsmann's decision to give him another break ahead of the friendly against France.



ESPN

Primera Liga
Real Madrid vs Real Zaragoza
Taped Version at 2:00 pm
Football Focus
Live at 5:00 pm
Sportscentre
Live at 8:30 pm

Injury worry for Vaughan

REUTERS, Lahore

England captain Michael Vaughan underwent a scan on Monday to find out if an old knee injury will keep him out of the first Test against Pakistan.

The 31-year-old Vaughan faced just one ball before retiring hurt in England's second innings against Pakistan.

A team spokesman said the results of the scan would be known either later in the day or on Tuesday.

Vaughan, who has played in 62 Tests, was taken to former Pakistan captain Imran Khan's Shaikat Khan hospital by England team doctor Paul Gregory.

A local official with the England team said Vaughan was struggling with an injury similar to the one which kept him out of a Test last year against New Zealand.

Sachin undergoes routine checkup

PTI, Ahmedabad

Sachin Tendulkar, who recently returned to form after nursing a tennis elbow injury, today underwent a detailed medical checkup at a private hospital in the city here, hospital sources said.

Tendulkar underwent a detailed but "routine" checkup at the radiology and MRI department of the Apollo hospital and was with experts for nearly two hours, the sources said.

"Sachin did visit the hospital in the morning. He was at the radiology and MRI department and was examined by the hospital's physiotherapist and radiologist," the sources said.

The sources, however, did not reveal if the tests were conducted in connection with any complaints that the batting legend had with his tennis elbow injury.

Sachin along with Irfan Pathan and Harbhajan Singh was rested for the fifth one-day international against Sri Lanka played here yesterday.

Cruciani shifts focus on SAFF C'ship

Football

SPORTS REPORTER

With the prelude already over, Bangladesh's Argentine coach Diego Cruciani now wants to concentrate on his real business -- the SAFF Football Championship which is just less than a month away.

The eight-nation meet kicks off in Karachi and Bangladesh will be under pressure to defend the title they won at home over two years ago.

The new coach would also feel the heat because he will have only a three-week camp before flying off to Pakistan. And the Argentine would love to have a tidy residential camp which starts at BKSP from November 12.

"I will start the camp with 23 players. I have 24 who made the Myanmar trip plus Rajani. I will have to drop two from this list," Cruciani told reporters yesterday.

Cruciani began his preparations for Myanmar just over a month ago but could use only two weeks properly due to inclement weather. He considered the four matches in Myanmar very valuable but admitted that there were works to do.

"First, I will talk with Rajani. If he can prove that he has recovered from injury, I will call him to the camp. I am satisfied with the half-prepared team's performance in Myanmar but I have not seen a few players in match condition," Cruciani told.

"I could not field Arman Aziz, who I think will be a strength and the perfect partner for Joy in the midfield, much. I need to play a few more matches to finalise a line-up and hope my boys will return from BKSP to play one match a week in Dhaka."

Many think that it would also be hard for Rajani, one of the best defenders of the country who led Bangladesh to win the SAFF title in 2003, to get into the side after Sujjan, Faisal and Nazrul's consistent showings in Myanmar.

Not only has Cruciani said that he would take only three central defenders in the side but also there have been complaints that Rajani is 'mentally not prepared' at this moment.

Players like Shahajuddin Tipu, Zahed Parvez, Faisal Mahmud and Parvez Babu also could not be tested although they travelled to Myanmar and it seems that young Zahed will be one of the two discarded players.

The 41-year-old Argentine, whose arrival has definitely given a Latin touch to the team's style, also ensured

that he will keep all three goalkeepers in the side.

"Both Aminul and Biplab were superb. Biplab played just one game (against India) but he impressed me. Whatever, I want to call in Tarek because I need to prepare a third keeper in case of an injury. I also have to think about the under-23 national team and those who won't make the final squad, would probably fit in the junior side."

Once the SAFF Championship is over, Cruciani will take over the U-23s to prepare them for the SA Games in Sri Lanka early next year.

Meanwhile, Cruciani's hopes to play the Asian Cup pre-qualifiers against Pakistan before the SAFF Championship is expected to be dented as the fate of the matches would be decided in AFC's meeting on November 28.

The two home and away games were scheduled for mid-November but the AFC has delayed the matches on request from Pakistan.

"Playing matches is very important for preparation," Cruciani said adding that he had already proposed the Bangladesh Football Federation to form a team with foreign booters available in Dhaka for practice matches.

Asian Under-18 hockey delayed

BSS, Dhaka

The Asian Under-18 Hockey Championship has been rescheduled for February-March next year due to shortage of participating teams.

The competition was originally scheduled to be held over November 20-28 in India.

As per the Asian Hockey Federation regulations, at least six teams should take part in junior meets.

However, only four countries -- Bangladesh, Uzbekistan, Sri Lanka and hosts India -- confirmed their participation which led to the delay, a Bangladesh Hockey Federation official informed yesterday.

Kaif, rookie pacer in India side

AFP, Ahmedabad

Middle-order batsman Mohammd Kaif and rookie fast bowler Vikram Rajvir Singh were on Monday included in India's squad for the last two one-day internationals against Sri Lanka this week.

Kaif, a limited-overs regular, returns after missing the first five matches of the current series due to a hamstring injury suffered in a domestic tournament last month.

Singh, a lanky 21-year from Punjab, is regarded by many as India's fastest bowler and forced his way in after a string of good performances in only his second first-class season.

The duo replace batsman Venugopal Rao and all-rounder Jai Prakash Yadav, who helped India gain a winning 4-1 lead in the seven-match series against the Sri Lankans.

There was still no place for former captain Sourav Ganguly, one of only four batsmen in one-day cricket to score 10,000 runs.

SQUAD

Rahul Dravid (captain), Virender Sehwag, Sachin Tendulkar, Gautam Gambhir, Yuvraj Singh, Mohammad Kaif, Mahendra Dhoni, Suresh Raina, Irfan Pathan, Ajit Agarkar, Rudra Pratap Singh, Sri Sreesanth, Harbhajan Singh, Murali Kartik, Vikram Rajvir Singh.

Inzy afraid of weather

REUTERS, Lahore

Pakistan captain Inzamamul Haq fears that the outcome of the Test series against England will be affected by a loss of overs due to fewer playing hours.

"The weather will be a problem in the Tests and a lot of overs are likely to be lost which will have a bearing on the results," Inzamam told Reuters on Monday.

The Pakistan cricket Board has scheduled all three Tests in the eastern province of Punjab in the cities of Multan, Faisalabad and Lahore due to security concerns expressed by England about playing at other venues.

The winter season, which has started in Punjab is expected to lead to reduced playing hours due to early morning fog and dew and murky light before sunset.

The first two Tests of the series have a starting time of 9.30 a.m. and the final one in Lahore is 30 minutes later but Inzamam had reservations that despite these measures, the teams would not be able to manage the scheduled minimum overs.

"The light gets bad 15 to 20 minutes before the scheduled sunset time in these cities. I also don't think a 9.30 start would be feasible because the early morning dew leaves the ground wet," he said.

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Watson out for two months?

AFP, Sydney

All-rounder Shane Watson will likely be out of the Australian team for two months after injuring his shoulder during the weekend win in the first Test against the West Indies, Cricket Australia said Monday.

Watson, 24, had already been ruled out of the second Test starting in Hobart on November 17 and an MRI scan Monday revealed that he had partially dislocated his left shoulder and would undergo arthroscopic surgery on the injury Tuesday.

Doctors will use the surgery to assess the extent of the damage and Cricket Australia said it could then offer a better estimation of his recovery time, "but at this stage it looks to be at least two months".



SIMPLY RED: Manchester United's Darren Fletcher (C) is the toast of his teammates after scoring against Chelsea at Old Trafford on November 6.

PREMIERSHIP

Chelsea bubble finally bursts

Football

AFP, Manchester

Darren Fletcher ended a turbulent week for Manchester United with a first-half header that sealed a 1-0 victory at Old Trafford on Sunday and ended Chelsea's 40-game unbeaten run in the Premiership.

Fletcher, one of those players criticised by Roy Keane during his now infamous MUTV interview last week, clinched the win and restored United's battered pride when he headed home on 31 minutes.

Although both sides went into the game on the back of a defeat, United's need for a positive result far outweighed Chelsea's.

Last week's 4-1 hammering at

Middlesbrough, Keane's explosive comments and the midweek Champions League defeat against Lille in Paris prompted talk of a club in crisis and United simply had to deliver the goods against Jose Mourinho's men.

It was not going to be an easy task considering Chelsea's impressive record at Old Trafford.

The London club had lost just four league games at United since 1966-67, but United started the game in a determined mood and the events of the past week appeared to act as an inspiration.

Cristiano Ronaldo emphasised the attacking ambition within the United ranks when he fired a 30-yard strike over the crossbar within the opening three minutes, but Didier Drogha reminded the home side of the task they faced when he reacted to Frank Lampard's pass before seeing Edwin van der Sar save his close range lob five minutes later.

Having played so dismally against Lille, United had bite in the tackle and a purpose to their attacking play, with man-of-the-match Alan Smith and Paul Scholes in particular making life difficult for Chelsea in midfield.

And the home side were rewarded on 31 minutes when Fletcher

TOP SIX

Chelsea	12	10	1	1	28	7	31
Wigan	11	8	1	2	13	5	25
Man United	11	6	3	2	16	11	21
Arsenal	11	6	2	3	16	8	20
Tottenham	11	5	5	1	13	7	20
Man City	12	6	2	4	15	11	20

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Sri Lanka pull one back

Cricket

AFP, Ahmedabad

Sri Lanka finally tasted success in the limited-overs series in India with a five-wicket victory over their new-look rivals in the fifth international here on Sunday.

The tourists, playing for pride after losing the first four games of the seven-match series, successfully chased down India's 285-8 with 14 balls to spare in the day-night encounter here.

Tillekeratne Dilshan and Russel Arnold fashioned the emphatic victory with an undefeated partnership of 131 for the sixth wicket after Sri Lanka were reduced to 155-5 in the 30th over.

Dilshan top-scored with an unbeaten 81 off 67 balls, while Arnold provided able support with 49 not out.

With the series already in the bag, India rested key batsman Sachin Tendulkar and frontline bowlers Irfan Pathan and Harbhajan Singh for the match.

India's challenging total revolved around left-hander Gautam Gambhir's 103 on his first appearance in the series and skipper Rahul Dravid's identical 103 not out.

Sri Lanka were 73-3 in reply despite Kumar Sangakkara's 39 when captain Mahela Atapattu and Mahela Jayawardena retrieved the situation by adding 70 for the fourth wicket.

Atapattu gave spinner Murali Kartik a tame return catch after making 39 and Jayawardena, returning to the side after missing the previous match due to his marriage in Colombo, was run out for 37.

But Dilshan and Arnold silenced a sell-out crowd of 45,000 at the Motera stadium by leading their side to a much-needed win.

India's Gambhir, a regular Test opener who last played a one-dayer in

April 2003, smashed 13 boundaries and a six in his maiden limited-overs century.

Dravid overcame leg cramps to reach his 11th century off the penultimate ball of the innings, lofting Dilihara Fernando to the mid-wicket fence for his 11th boundary.

But the Indian captain did not take

the field in Sri Lanka's innings, leaving vice captain Virender Sehwag to lead the hosts.

Dravid and Gambhir added 128 for the fourth wicket after India, sent in to bat by Atapattu, were reduced to 69-3 by the 13th over.

Sri Lankan seamer Farveez

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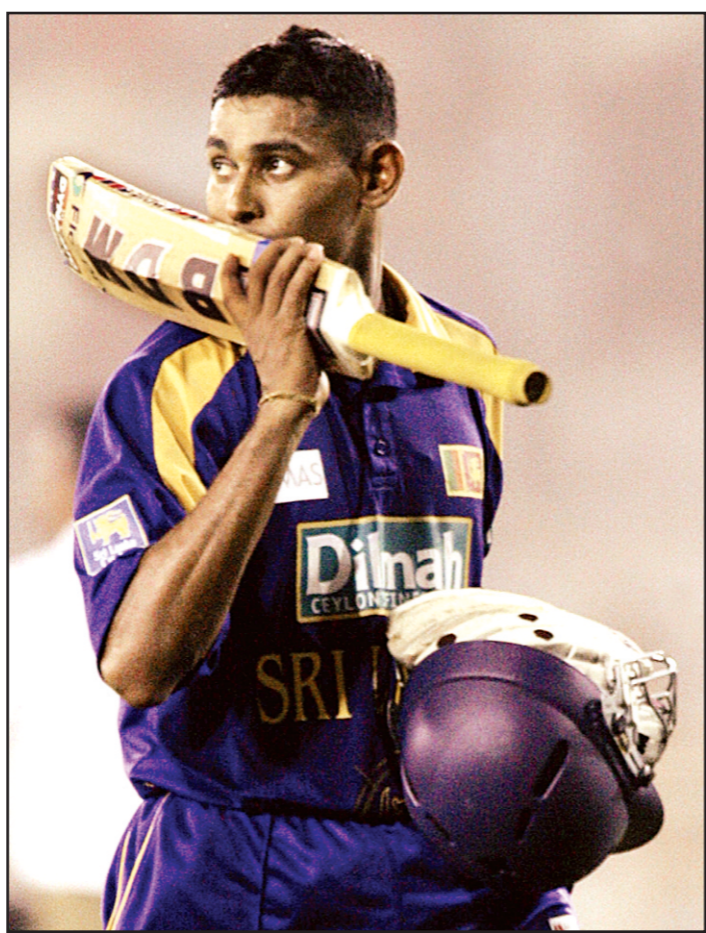


PHOTO: AFP

THANK YOU VERY MUCH: Sri Lanka's Tillekeratne Dilshan kisses his bat after guiding his side home in the fifth one-day international against India at Ahmedabad on Sunday.

SA keep it clean

Cricket

AFP/REUTERS, Centurion

South Africa completed a 4-0 series win when they beat New Zealand by six wickets in a rain-hit fifth and final one-day international at Centurion Park Sunday.

All-rounder Andrew Hall, captain Graeme Smith and wicket-keeper Mark Boucher were mainly responsible for South Africa's victory, which stretched their unbeaten streak in one-day internationals to 19 matches.

Hall had career-best figures of four for 23 as New Zealand were bowled

out for 215, failing to capitalise on a quick start after they were sent in to bat.

With a storm threatening, Smith made an aggressive 66 off 65 balls to put South Africa well ahead of the required run rate but his side had an anxious wait when lightning and imminent rain halted play when they were 105 for two in 19 overs.

Another over needed to be bowled to reach the minimum number for a result to be achieved. After a delay of more than an hour, South Africa had the simple task of making another 35 runs off 11 overs to reach a revised target of 140 off 30 overs.

Three more wickets fell before Boucher, playing in his 200th one-day international, sealed victory with an unbeaten 22 off 22 balls. Boucher earlier equalled the South African record by taking five catches. He also threw down the stumps at the bowler's end to run out Daniel Vettori.

New Zealand captain Stephen Fleming had no excuses for his team's 4-0 loss.

"We offer no excuses, we were

soundly beaten," Fleming told reporters. "They played extremely well, it was a massive series for them and they were very desperate. That's what got them home in the tight games."

Fleming said New Zealand's batting failures were a major factor.

"We haven't given the bowlers enough runs. The top-order batting was not consistent enough and so there was no platform," Fleming said.

South Africa captain Smith said the series win was sweet revenge for South Africa's 5-1 loss in New Zealand last year.

SCOREBOARD
Scoreboard in the rain-hit fifth and final one-day international between South Africa and New Zealand at Centurion Park on Sunday:

NEW ZEALAND: 215 all out in 49.3 overs (Vincent 66, Astle 37, McCullum 27; Hall 4-23, Langeveldt 2-36)

SOUTH AFRICA
Smith b Franklin 66
De Villiers c Fleming b Mills 11
Kallis c Fleming b Vettori 15
Princest McCullum b Vettori 9
Morkel c Astle b Styris 5

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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