



## Did U Know?

First and only triangular Test series played in England in 1912, involving England, Australia and South Africa.

## What to WATCH

**ESPN**  
New Zealand vs Australia  
Second ODI  
Live at 7:00 am

**UEFA Champions League**  
Villarreal vs Lille  
Live at 1:30 am (Thursday)

**STAR Sports**  
UEFA Champions League  
Benfica vs Man United  
Live at 1:30 am (Thursday)

## TALK TURKEY



**Bob Woolmer**  
(Pakistan cricket coach)  
"Shoaib Akhtar is always an asset when he is fit and playing. He had some issues to resolve when he arrived and he had resolved them. He is now delivering and it is good for both the team and for him."

**DAY'S EVENT**

**National Cricket League (Four-Day) (Day Four)**  
Dhaka vs Chittagong  
Venue: Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium  
Rajshahi vs Sylhet  
Venue: Bogra District Stadium  
Khulna vs Barisal  
Venue: Khulna Div Stadium  
U-19 Tri-Series Cricket  
Bangladesh vs Sri Lanka  
Venue: BKSP

## U-19 CRICKET MEET Fernando gives SL an easy win

SPORTS REPORTER

Sri Lanka's Hans Fernando struck the third hundred of the under-19 tri-nation cricket tournament as his side scored an emphatic 60-run victory against winless England at the Fatullah Cricket Stadium yesterday.

After deciding to bat, Sri Lanka rode on his unbeaten 119 to amass 281-6 in their share of 50 overs.

Fernando capitalised on a good foundation laid by openers Dimuth Karunaratne (56) and Sameera Soysa (31) who put on 61 runs in 11.5 overs. The number four batsman blasted 15 boundaries in his 106-ball knock to raise the third century after local boys Tamim Iqbal and Raqibul Hasan.

Then Sachithra Sasinghe acted with the leather to dismiss the English boys for 221 in 45.1 overs. He captured four wickets for 53.

Captain Varun Chopra top scored with 77 off 106 balls.

The win was Sri Lanka's second in three matches after a 13-run victory against the same opponents while England suffered their third successive defeat.

Bangladesh, the only team so far to win all their games, will meet Sri Lanka today at the BKSP in Savar.

### SCORES IN BRIEF

**SRI LANKA UNDER-19:** 281-6 in 50 overs (Karunaratne 56, Soysa 31, Fernando 119 not out, Perera 22)

## All roads lead to Karachi

### Football

AL MUSABBIR SADI from Karachi

Diego Cruciani brings Latin flavour to South Asian football, but whether his charges materialise it or not against their neighbours would only be known when the fourth edition of the SAFF (South Asian Football Federation) Championship kicks off here today.

The 41-year-old Argentine will carry the weight of expectations of 140 million people when Bangladesh launch their title defence in the eight-team biennial event that has already turned into a battle of foreign coaches.

While Bangladesh go into action tomorrow against rank-outsiders Bhutan, last year's runners-up Maldives take on Afghanistan in today's opening match at the People's Football Stadium at 4pm (Bangladesh Time). Hosts Pakistan face Sri Lanka in the day's second Group-A match at 7pm (Bangladesh Time).

Only India -- two-time winners -- and Sri Lanka -- who had won the SAARC Gold Cup at home in 1995 before the launching of the SAFF Championship, have local coaches. Syed Nayeemuddin, a shrewd mind who last year coached Dhaka League champions Brothers Union, is back at the helm of Indian team after his success as a trainer in the inaugural SAFF Championship in Kathmandu in 1997.

With Indian inspirational striker Baichung Bhutia also back after missing the Dhaka event in 2003, Naimuddin would certainly be eyeing a second feather in his illustrious cap.

Sri Lanka are the other side to have local expertise with coach Sampath Perera, succeeding Brazilian coach Marcos Vicius Mot Ferreira -- the first ever Latin American import to the region -- whose attempt to raise the Lankan glory days have had no effect.

The 39-year-old Perera's sole intention would be to repeat their 1995 success with promising youngsters led by veteran captain Dudley Steinwall.

"My strategy will be to strengthen the ranks of the team by introducing talented young blood, while continu-

ing to depend on the experience of the senior players," said the 1995 Sri Lanka captain Perera after taking charge.

Pakistan pin hopes on Bahrain's Salman Ahmed Sharida to win their first-ever SAFF title and the home side have trained well. They have had their camp in Bahrain and would be boosted by the arrival of Fulham midfielder Zesh Rahman, the Birmingham-born who is expected to wear his first Pak cap today.

"Zesh played in Bahrain against

the local clubs and I believe he is a very, very talented player. I am sure he will be a motivating factor for the team," remarked the Bahraini coach.

"We played three games against local Bahraini clubs in Manama. We lost to Al-Muharraq 1-3, drew with Al-Najma 2-2 and lost to Al-Nadia Busteen 1-2. These games

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PHOTO: STAR

**LET ME FIX IT:** Bangladesh reserve custodian Biplob knots the tie of defender Nazrul at the BFF Bhaban prior to the departure of the national football team for Pakistan on Tuesday.

## Brothers lose points again

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Defending champions Brothers Union once again dropped points against a little known opponents when they were held to a goalless draw by Jamalpur Kacharipara Sporting Club in the Nitol-Tata National Football League at the Cox's Bazaar Stadium yesterday.

After launching the campaign with 2-0 victory over local Khulna Town Club in the second round opener, the Dhaka giants drew their next match goalless against Samabesh Club of Munsiganj in the Rangpur-leg.

Despite two disappointing outcomes, Brothers still led Group A table with five points from three outings, followed by Bangladesh Army, who trailed them by one point with one match in hand.

On the other hand, Kacharipara, who conceded a one-goal defeat to Army in Khulna, bagged their first point from two matches.

When Brothers frustrated the local crowd with a lacklustre performance, their inferior opponents

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## Booters off to Pakistan

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh national team left Dhaka yesterday to take part in the 2005 SAFF Championship in Karachi.

The team comprises of 20 booters and seven officials. The 11-day eight-nation meet will start with the match between Pakistan and Sri Lanka today.

Defending champions Bangladesh, under the supervision of Argentine coach Diego Cruciani, will start their campaign tomorrow against Bhutan.

**SQUAD GOALKEEPERS:** Aminul Haque, Biplob Bhattacharya.

**DEFENDERS:** Faisal Ahmed, Mohammad Sujan, Rajani Kanta Barman, Parvez Babu, Firoz Mahmud Titu, Nazrul Islam, Hassan Al-Mamun.

**MIDFIELDERS:** Arif Khan Joy (captain), Arman Aziz, Arman Mia, Matiuur Munna, Abul Hossain.

**FORWARDS:** Alfaz Ahmed, Mehdi Hasan Ujjal, Ariful Kabir Farhad, Shahajuddin Tipu, Rokonzaman Kanchan and Zahid Hossain Emily.



PHOTO: STAR

**WHEN APPEALS CONVINC:** Dhaka players shout in unison to win an lbw appeal from umpire Mesbauddin Ahmed (not in picture) against Chittagong batsman Ehsanul Haq at the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium on Tuesday. However, Chittagong supporters were not all too happy with Meshbauddin's three leg before decisions against their team.

## Ctg, Khulna on top



SPORTS REPORTER

Chittagong tightened their grip on Dhaka despite a blazing knock by former national captain Khaled Mahmud on the third day of their four-day National Cricket League match at the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium yesterday.

A feisty Mahmud hit a 86-ball 81 coming into bat at number nine but that was not enough for Dhaka to concede a crucial 74-run first innings lead against the visitors when they were bowled out for 303 chasing 377.

The port city team, batting for a second time, rode on an unbroken sixth wicket stand of 126 runs between Faisal Hossain and Dhiman Ghosh to post 235-5 at stumps and an overall lead of 309

going into the fourth and final day. Unlike the previous rounds, two other matches also rolled into the fourth day.

Discarded national spinner Jamaluddin Babu returned figures of 8-67 as Khulna took first innings lead against Barisal at the Khulna Divisional Stadium.

Away at the Shaheed Chandu Stadium in Bogra, Sylhet also ensured a 54-run first innings advantage against Rajshahi.

**DHAKA-CHITTAGONG**  
Dhaka were heading for disaster when Mahmudullah Riyad and Sajjad Kadir returned to the dressing room adding only seven runs to their overnight score of 190-5.

But veteran Mahmud launched a counterattack to reduce the gap with a stroke-filled innings that contained eight fours and two sixes. His innings however would not have started had he not been dropped by Sabbir on 0 and 1.

Spinner Yasin Arafat took two more wickets to his overnight tally to finish with 5-97 while paceman Waskrunee Palash claimed three for 69.

On the other hand, ace left-arm spinner Mohammad Rafique picked up two early wickets as Chittagong stumbled to 98-4 at tea. The visitors wrested back the initiative in the final session with Ehsanul Haque, Faisal and Dhiman scoring half-centuries.

Ehsanul scored 62 off 70 balls with the help of 10 boundaries before he became the third lbw victim of Rafique, the most successful Dhaka bowler with 3-89.

Left-handed Faisal, who hit 92 in the first innings, was not out on 61 while wicketkeeper-batsman Dhiman was batting on 72.

### KHULNA-BARISAL

Khulna took a decisive 105-run first innings lead when they bowled

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## Vaas destruction in draw

### Cricket

AFP, Chennai

Chaminda Vaas skittled India for their lowest total against Sri Lanka before the rain-ravaged first Test was consigned to a draw here on Tuesday.

The left-arm seamer grabbed 4-20 in 21 overs and off-spinner Muttiah Muralitharan claimed two wickets as India were shot out for 167 on the fifth and final day at the Chepauk.

Sri Lanka rode on Mahela Jayawardena's 71 to score 168-4 in reply before the match was called off after 14 wickets fell in the four sessions of play possible in the game due to inclement weather.

Leg-spinner Anil Kumble, India's most successful Test bowler and the main threat to Sri Lanka in the series, took three of those wickets to take his tally to 468 from 98 Tests.

The meaningless proceedings in the Test, where the first three days and two sessions of the fourth day were wiped out by rain, were lit up by a fiery exhibition of seam bowling by Vaas.

The new Sri Lankan vice-captain began the day with seven maidens on the trot and struck vital blows as India fell below their previous low of

180 against Sri Lanka in Galle in 2001.

Vaas, who had removed openers Virender Sehwag and Gautam Gambhir on Monday, had Indian captain Rahul Dravid caught behind for 32 and claimed a return catch to dismiss Kumble.

Muralitharan flattened Sachin Tendulkar's bid for a world-record 35th century, trapping the Indian star leg-before for a dour 22 that came off 126 deliveries.

India lost six wickets for 38 runs in the morning session on an under-prepared wicket with low bounce, which both coaches said was not conducive for good batting.

"I don't want to read too much into our batting because it was a difficult wicket to bat on," said Indian coach Greg Chappell.

"The Sri Lankans bowled well but we did not bat as well as we could. In the end, it was good practice for both teams for the remaining two Tests."

Sri Lankan coach Tom Moody said his team will take a lot of positives from the Test after being thrashed 6-1 by India in last month's one-day series.

"I am very pleased with the way the time available for cricket in this match went for us," Moody said.

"It was a remarkable effort by Vaas who has really worked hard at

his bowling. The batsmen also did well.

"This was just the start we needed because it brought back the confidence in the team after the one-dayers. We don't want to look back from here."

Sourav Ganguly, returning to international cricket after being sacked as captain and dropped 35th century, lapped the Indian star leg-before for a dour 22 that came off 126 deliveries.

Ganguly ran out Venkatsai Laxman after refusing his call for a single and was then himself dismissed for five, caught at point by Tillekeratne Dilshan off Dilhara Fernando.

"I won't read too much into Sourav's failure because the entire team scored only 167," said Chappell, who had slammed Ganguly for his "indifferent attitude" in a leaked e-mail to cricket chiefs in September.

Sri Lanka were awarded five penalty runs when an edge off Jayawardena's bat went through Mahendra Singh Dhoni's legs and struck the helmet lying on the field behind the wicket-keeper.

The second Test will be played in

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## India's Pakistan tour put back

REUTERS, Lahore

Pakistan has readjusted the itinerary for the Indian team's tour early next year with the Tests now scheduled to begin from January 14.

Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) chairman Shaharyar Khan told a news conference in Karachi on Monday that some requests of the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) had been accepted and the itinerary had been adjusted.

Shaharyar made a flying visit to Mumbai to meet officials of the newly elected BCCI board.

"However, the finalisation of

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## No surprises in seedings



REUTERS, Leipzig

Hosts Germany and defending champions Brazil were named among the top eight seeds for the World Cup finals as expected on Tuesday, along with England, Spain, Mexico, France, Argentina and Italy.

FIFA decided the rest of the draw, which takes place on Friday, would group teams in pots according to their geographical locations rather than their current world ranking or

previous World Cup performances.

FIFA created a special pot so they could avoid having any groups with more than two European teams.

Jim Brown, FIFA's Director of Competitions explained: "The seedings were based on FIFA rankings for the last three years and the last two World Cup finals."

"Germany will be seeded in slot A1 in the draw and Brazil in F1, and there were economic factors involved in this decision as those teams are guaranteed to play in larger stadiums."

One team from each pot will be drawn into the eight groups in the first stage of the finals in Germany which run from June 9 to July 9.

### SEEDINGS

**POOL ONE:** Germany (hosts), Brazil (champions), Italy, France, Argentina, Spain, Mexico, England

**POOL TWO:** Australia, Angola, Ghana, Ivory Coast, Togo, Tunisia, Ecuador, Paraguay

**POOL THREE:** Croatia, Czech Republic, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Sweden, Switzerland, Ukraine

**POOL FOUR:** Iran, Japan, Saudi Arabia, South Korea, Costa Rica, Trinidad & Tobago, United States

**SPECIAL POT:** Serbia & Montenegro

The full draw for the finals takes place in Leipzig on Friday.

## Vaughan missing Pak ODIs

### Cricket

AFP, London

England cricket captain Michael Vaughan will miss the one-day series against Pakistan as he undergoes an exploratory operation on his injured knee.

Vaughan, who suffered the recurrence of a cartilage problem at the start of the recent Test series, returned home from Pakistan at the weekend and saw a specialist in England on Monday.

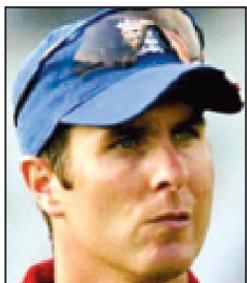
The England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) confirmed Tuesday that he is to have an "arthroscopic assessment" on the injury, which forced him to miss last month's first Test in Multan.

Vaughan, 31, is still awaiting the birth of his second child and will have the operation as soon as possible after the birth.

"I'm bitterly disappointed to be missing the one-day matches against Pakistan but surgery really

is the only option for me at the moment," Vaughan said.

"I hope I can make a full recovery in time for the tour to India in the early stages of next year."



MICHAEL VAUGHAN

England lost the first Test by 22 runs and drew the second at Faisalabad before being thrashed by an innings and 100 runs in the final match at Lahore.