



Did U Know?

Australia's Charles Bannerman faced the first ball bowled in Test cricket history from England's Alfred Shaw.



Ricky Ponting
(Australia cricket captain)
"He's a very good player and he was thrust into the leadership role at a pretty young age, and I think he's grown into the role and probably learned a lot of lessons from his tour to Australia 12-15 months ago. He's a good competitor, that's for sure."
On South Africa captain Graeme Smith.

What to WATCH

BTV & SET Max

ICC World Cup 2007
Bermuda v Bangladesh
Live at 7:30 pm

Bangladesh in semis?

SPORTS REPORTER

Dhakaites believe that Australia will win the World Cup this year, according to a survey conducted by ACNielsen, the world's leading market research company.

The survey was conducted recently among more than a thousand Dhakaites aged from 15 to 59.

Australia got the majority of votes, 36 per cent, as the probable World Cup winners, followed by South Africa, West Indies, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh.

Buoyed by the brilliant performance of Bangladesh against India, 51 per cent of respondents are keeping their fingers crossed on seeing their beloved team in the Super Eight, with another two quarters almost equally divided between a semifinal and a quarterfinal appearance by the Tigers.

All-rounder Mashrafe Bin Mortaza, who got 34 per cent of the votes, beat dashing opener Tamim Iqbal, 16 per cent, to be considered the most promising of the Bangladesh players.

The voters also chose Australia captain Ricky Ponting, 32 per cent, as the probable top scorer in the tournament followed distantly by Herschelle Gibbs of South Africa, only 13 per cent.

'We still have a job to do'

TIGERCRIKET.COM, Port of Spain



Bangladesh captain Habibul Bashar is not prepared to take a Super Eight spot for granted. The Tigers only need a win against Bermuda in their last Group B match of the World Cup today to qualify. The job became straightforward following India's 69-run loss to Sri Lanka in a crucial game at the Queen's Park Oval on Friday but the skipper was cautiously confident.

"I have to say we are a little relieved. Relieved because if India had won then there would not have been any realistic chance of us progressing. Now we feel we have a genuine scope of making it," said Bashar who revealed that the team followed closely the proceedings at

the Oval.

"Someone was listening to radio commentary of the game at the practice ground and the players were constantly asking the score. When the training started we became busy but as the Oval was just across the road we could hear the crowd and whenever there was a cheer coming out it worried me because it meant Sri Lanka had lost a wicket," said Bashar.

"There was only partial coverage of the match available on television as the West Indies-Ireland game was being broadcast. At one time I was getting the news from Dhaka over phone. My wife hadn't slept even though it was very late at night and watched the entire game as our survival in the competition dependent on a Lankan win and I have heard that everyone back home followed the match on TV," added Bashar.

Bermuda have been swept aside by Sri Lanka and India in the group

matches and recently the Tigers thrashed them by eight wickets in a warm-up game in Antigua. But Bashar said the game against the ICC Associates would be a serious one for them.

"I'd be lying if I said that there is no pressure on us. Off course there will be pressure because a win would get us into the Super Eight of the World Cup. That is why I will sit with the players today to discuss our mental preparation for the match. For us the Bermuda match will be more of a mental test than a skill related one."

"What pleases me though is the fact that the boys badly want to play in the Super Eight. After not finding the Lanka-India match on TV some of the players and the coach went to the Oval to watch the game as they were very tense."

The Bangladesh team offered Juma prayers at the Nur Islam Mosque in downtown Port of

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Bangladesh fast bowler Mashrafe Bin Mortaza practises sprint drills under the watchful eye of senior team members and the coach during a training session at the St Mary's College Grounds on Friday.

PHOTO: TIGERCRIKET.COM

Joy-ride for Abahani

MSC lose Nakib's retirement match



SPORTS REPORTER

Arif Khan Joy scored the only goal in a dour clash of the titans yesterday to give Abahani a 1-0 win over Mohammedan in the B. League.

The sky-blues' first win in the professional league could have not tasted sweeter as it came against their archrivals after two goalless draws when skipper Joy put an end to their 223 minutes without scoring with a glancing header at the Bangabandhu National Stadium.

The shaven-headed holding midfielder's indefatigable performance under sweltering heat was not only better than his teammates but also earned him a deserved goal when he shrugged off his markers on the edge of the seven-yard box to nod home a low corner by Ujjal from the left.

Mohammedan's Nigerian defender Peter Odafé's effort to stop the ball on the line at the near post went down the drains as the 44th minute strike ensured their second successive defeat in four games. The black and whites stuck to four points but second-from-bottom Abahani moved up with five points from three games.

While the celebrations went on, Mohammedan captain Imtiaz Ahmed Nakib left the ground in tears

in the first-half injury time after his last appearance in a competitive football match.

The successful striker, one of three local players to have scored more than 100 goals in the Dhaka League, bid football goodbye after an illustrious 18-year career. Famous for his headwork, Nakib -- almost hidden in flowers -- was given a rousing farewell by ex-players and football officials from all corners after Joy had escorted him out of the field. His last goal -- number 107 in Dhaka league -- came in the second round of the ongoing competition in Mohammedan's 1-1 draw against Sheikh Russel on March 13.

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PHOTO: STAR

Abahani midfielder Ujjal hugs captain and teammate Arif Khan Joy (3rd from left) after the latter scored the only goal of their B. League encounter against archrivals Mohammedan at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

Ponting 7th in 10,000 club

AFP, Basseterre

Australia captain Ricky Ponting on Saturday became the seventh player to make 10,000 runs in one-day cricket.

Ponting reached the landmark when he hit a six off Andrew Hall over long on in the World Cup clash against South Africa at Warner Park here.

India's Sachin Tendulkar leads the group with 14,847 runs from 384 one-dayers ahead of Inzamamul Haq (11,739), Sanath Jayasuriya (11,675), Sourav Ganguly (10,632), Brian Lara (10,217) and Rahul Dravid (10,125).

Ponting went into the game on 9,992 runs in 272 appearances.

Mohammedan meet Sonargaon in final

SPORTS REPORTER

Mohammedan Sporting Club will meet Sonargaon Cricketers in the March 26 final of the Independence Cup after an emphatic six-wicket victory against Victoria Sporting Club in the last league match at the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium yesterday.

An unbeaten 65 by Ehsanul Haque guided Mohammedan to 212-4 in 40.2 overs in reply to Victoria's 211 all out in 48.3 overs.

Golam Mabud and Gazi Salahuddin gave Victoria a bright start by associating in a 60-runs stand in 11.3 overs after opted to bat but Rezaul Islam captured four wickets for 28 and former national skipper Khaled Mahmud picked up 3-50 to dash their hopes of putting on a fighting total.

Salahuddin top scored 37 off 44 balls with the help of five fours and a six and Mabud added 29 off 38 balls that featured two fours and a six.

Mohammedan, who lost their first game against Sonargaon by 52 runs, also got off made flying start when Rashedul Haque (32 off 56 balls) and Junaid Siddiquee (35 off 31 balls) shared 51 runs in 7.4 overs for the opening stand.

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Pak team to head home

Bob's body to remain in Jamaica; players finger-printed

AFP, Kingston



Pakistan's cricketers, shaken by the murder of coach Bob Woolmer, which followed their ignominious

World Cup exit, were to head home Saturday as Jamaican police hunted for clues about the killing.

Forensics experts took DNA samples and fingerprints from the players, but police and Pakistani cricket officials downplayed any suggestion they may be suspects in the murder of their 58-year-old coach.

"Our priority is to take the players back to Pakistan," team manager

Talat Ali said.

"Everyone in Pakistan is looking forward (to their return), especially the families of the players. They want the boys back in Pakistan as soon as possible."

No arrests have yet been made in connection with the strangling of Woolmer, a former England international who had coached the Pakistan team since 2004.

Woolmer died in hospital on Sunday after being found unconscious in his hotel room, just one day after a stunning loss to Ireland knocked Pakistan, the 1992 World Cup champions, out of the tournament.

Jamaican police said Woolmer was strangled, and believe he may have known his killer or killers, amid swirling rumours about the possibility that match-fixing gangs could

have been involved.

Authorities in Jamaica, one of the Caribbean nations hosting World Cup matches, ordered that a coroner's inquest be held before a jury as soon as possible, meaning that Woolmer's body would stay put.

They said Woolmer's family had been notified of the decision to keep the body in Jamaica until the inquest is concluded.

Pakistan has dispatched a senior diplomat from Washington to liaise with Jamaican police. Meanwhile, team physiotherapist Darryn Lifson and trainer Murray Stevenson, both South Africans, said they would remain in Kingston.

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LOCAL SNIPPETS

SPORTS REPORTER

Smarting from a heavy defeat in the first match, Bangladesh Ago into the second and final four-day Test against their Sri Lankan counterparts at the Colts Cricket Club ground in Colombo today.

The home team lead the two-match series 1-0 after an emphatic 283-run success in the first game at the same venue.

The Tushar Imran-led second string Bangladesh side will have to show a better batting performance in the last game if they want to salvage the series.

DIVICRICKET

Rana smashed 79 as Bangladesh Boys earned an exciting two-wicket victory against Uttara Sporting Club in the Kai-Altech First Division Cricket League at BKSP yesterday. Bangladesh Boys scored 218-8 in 34.5 overs in reply to Uttara's 217-10 in 48.1 overs.

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PHOTO: STAR

A tearful Mohammedan captain Imtiaz Ahmed Nakib is adorned with flowers in his last appearance in domestic football against Abahani at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

Challenge beyond imagination

REUTERS, Basseterre



A centuries-old game developed in the public schools of Victorian England is facing a challenge almost beyond imagination with the murder of Pakistan coach Bob Woolmer at the cricket World Cup.

This expected celebration of cricket and carnival in the West Indies has been overshadowed by the news that Woolmer was strangled in his hotel room in Jamaica after his team were unexpectedly beaten by debutants Ireland.

Ten years ago the news would have been equally shocking. But the conspiracy theorists would not have immediately leaped to the conclusion that match-fixing was at the heart of the killing.

The cricket world changed irrevocably in 2000 when South

Africa captain Hansie Cronje tearfully confessed to taking money from bookmakers to influence the result of matches.

Judicial and police inquiries in several countries revealed unsuspected depths of corruption in the sport and as a result Pakistan captain Salim Malik and his Indian counterpart Mohammad Azharuddin joined Cronje in international exile when all three were banned for life.

Last year was particularly fraught for the game of cricket, its players, officials and followers. Once again Pakistan were in the eye of the storm.

For the first time in the game's history a match was forfeited when Pakistan refused to take the field after tea on the fourth day in the fourth test against England at The Oval in London after they were penalised for tampering with the ball.

In fact, they were later cleared of that cricketing crime.

Then drugs, a cancer in sports such as athletics, cycling and weightlifting, where speed and strength are paramount, hit the headlines when Pakistan fast bowler

Shoaib Akhtar and Mohammad Asif tested positive for steroids.

They were the first international cricketers to test positive for performance-enhancing drugs.

Notwithstanding a troubled six months for cricket, those lamenting a decline in standards from a mythical golden age are misguided.

In common with all sports, cricket does not stand apart from society but reflects the standards of the day. Bookmakers openly plied their trade at Lord's, the spiritual home of cricket, in the 18th century.

The bodyline series of 1932-3, when the English professional fast bowlers under the command of an amateur captain bowled deliberately at the bodies of the Australian batsmen, threatened diplomatic relations between the two countries.

On the positive side the code of the game developed in the Victorian public schools of the 19th century and exported to the empire had genuine merits.

Umpire's decisions were not questioned, success and failure, Rudyard Kipling's twin impostors,

were treated with equal modesty.

Times have changed and cricket with it. International cricketers are well paid and not so well behaved.

The game, though, as the one-day version at the World Cup reveals, has never been more attractive and the skills on display at the Caribbean will rival those in any sport.

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TODAY'S MATCH

Team	Time	Venue
Bermuda v Bangladesh	7:30 pm	Trinidad and Tobago