



Did U Know?

Former England fast bowler Allen Hill took the first-ever Test wicket against Australia in 1877.



Felix Magath

(Former Bayern Munich coach)
"I'm keen on a move abroad. I want to go to a country which has a lot of teams qualified for the Champions League, such as England, Italy or Spain, because one day I want to win the Champions League."



ESPN
England v West Indies
First Test, Day One
Live at 4:00 pm

BCB to increase players' fees

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) is looking forward to increase salaries of the national and age-group cricketers, it was decided at a meeting of the Cricket Operations Committee yesterday.

BCB general secretary Mahbub Anam informed that the board is going to introduce match fee for Twenty20 internationals and also raise the match fees for Test and ODIs.

Cricketers playing for the Academy side could also come under the payroll, headed.

The board has also drafted a rough calendar for the 2007-08 season with eyes on giving priority to the 'ignored' domestic competitions to make sure the schedules do not clash much with international fixture.

The selectors' renewal of contract was also discussed without reaching any conclusion.

Super League resumes tomorrow

SPORTS REPORTER

The Kai-Altech Premier Cricket Super League will resume tomorrow as the Cricket Committee of Dhaka Metropolis (CCDM) decided to continue the league without further interruption.

Leaders Abahani and a few other clubs appealed to delay the league due to players' crisis through injury, national duty and the ongoing HSC Examinations but their request was turned down in CCDM's yesterday's meeting

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Akhtar ready for Afro-Asia Cup

CRICINFO, undated

Shoaib Akhtar, the Pakistan fast bowler, is available for the Afro-Asia Cup to be held in Bangalore and Chennai in June.

Akhtar was thinking of opting out of the tournament, which comprises three ODIs and a Twenty20, because of family commitments but announced his availability after consulting his doctors and family members.

"I am available and I am keen to play and do well," Akhtar told PTI. "The series is a good platform for

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Youngsters raring to go

SPORTS REPORTER from Chittagong



Chittagong was back under full sunshine as both Bangladesh and India enjoyed full-fledged training sessions here yesterday to

bid goodbye to the cyclonic weather that dominated the port city for the last few days.

The frustration of the washed-out final one-day international began to evaporate as the two teams prepared for a new battleground, the Test series which begins at the Chittagong Divisional Stadium tomorrow.

While India spent around three hours at the venue in the morning, the Tigers went for the nets after lunch.

"So far my performance is not bad in the ODIs. That is why I am confident that I can do well in Tests," told middle-order batsman Shakib, whose left-arm spin will give the side an additional bowler.

"I cannot be sure about bowling in Tests but I bowled well in first-class matches and got a few wickets

too."

Shakib, who usually bats at four in the one-day team, was not sure where he would be placed in the longer version game. "I do not think I will bat at number four like the one-dayers. It would be either five or six, that is not a problem for me.

"Test match is totally different than ODIs. There will be more close-in fielders. That is why it is difficult to pick up singles and doubles easily. Most of the runs come through boundaries."

Most of Shakib's 13 first class matches were for the 'A' team and he said that he feels comfortable in both versions.

"We did not play Test cricket in the last 13 months. So it will be challenging for us, no doubt. But we are working hard and really looking forward to the Test series. I think it will be a good contest."

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Test-ing time for Tigers

AFP, Chittagong



Bangladesh play their first Test series in 13 months this week hoping to take their newfound confidence in one-day cricket to the traditional game.

Bangladesh, who face India in the first Test here from Friday, are still considered novices in the five-day format despite making rapid strides in the shorter version of the sport.

Having finished seventh in the recent World Cup, their best ever showing at the cricket's one-day showpiece, Bangladesh want to

prove they are equally adept at playing Tests despite a poor record.

They have won just one of their 44 matches so far since gaining Test status in 2000, against a struggling Zimbabwe in 2005.

Their record against other Test nations besides Zimbabwe is dismal -- 35 losses in 36 games with one draw.

"We are still learning the art of Test cricket," said captain Habibul Bashar, who has played in 42 of his country's 44 matches and is their leading scorer with 2,838 runs.

"It's only been one-day cricket for us over the past year. We have not played Test matches in that period and it will be tough to adjust quickly. But we will do our best."

Bangladesh's last Test series was in April 2006 when they hosted Australia for two matches. They

lost both although Bashar's men almost pulled off an incredible win over the world champions during the first Test.

Bangladesh made 427 batting first and reduced Australia to 93-6 before Adam Gilchrist hit a century to take the total to 269.

Australia, set a victory target of 307 after dismissing the hosts for 148 in the second innings, were struggling at 231-6 before captain Ricky Ponting's unbeaten century gave them a three-wicket win.

In 2003, Pakistan collapsed to 205-8 chasing a target of 261 in the Multan Test before Inzamamul Haq guided them home in the company of the last batsman.

"The players are still not versatile enough because they bat well in the first innings, but not in the

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PHOTO: STAR

The Bangladesh team practice slip catching during a training session at the Chittagong Divisional Stadium yesterday.

Sourav seeks a century

PTI, Chittagong

After consistently hitting half-centuries since his comeback, Sourav Ganguly Wednesday said he would try to convert his fifties into hundreds if he got a chance in the two-Test cricket series against Bangladesh.

"I was the highest run getter in Tests in South Africa recently. The good thing is I have been consistent. Here if I get to the eighties I will surely try to convert them into 100s," Ganguly told reporters after the nets.

Asked how he was feeling on his "comeback", Ganguly said "I don't think of it as a comeback. We (Sachin Tendulkar and he) were not dropped, but officially rested. This also gave a few youngsters to perform."

Ganguly said he had no preferences for batting order or bowling during the Test. "I always work hard at the nets. It's the decision of

Battle of problem sides

First England-Windies Test from today

Cricket

APP, London

England and West Indies head into the first Test here at Lord's from today with some tricky problems still to be solved.

For his huge popularity in Bangladesh, Ganguly said, "I don't consider Bangladesh as a different country. I captained in my first Test here. So, Bangladesh will always be

part of my life. I will try to convert his fifties into hundreds if he got a chance in the two-Test cricket series against Bangladesh.

"I was the highest run getter in Tests in South Africa recently. The good thing is I have been consistent. Here if I get to the eighties I will surely try to convert them into 100s," Ganguly told reporters after the nets.

Ganguly also vehemently denied that he was linked with the breakaway Indian Cricket League and also lashed at the media for being irresponsible with their

in unapologetic mood.

"Everyone needs to improve their work ethic in this team."

"I think there's a level we've been used to, and we are eighth in the world -- so we've got to do something better to get higher in the world."

"We want to get through this tour not just by the skin of our teeth -- but with some very good results -- and leave the coach, whoever it may be, with something to work on."

West Indies preparations for a match that comes barely a fortnight after the end of the World Cup were not helped when two days of the scheduled three-day encounter against Somerset, their only warm-up game before the first Test, were washed out.

During the 48 overs that were possible, Runako Morton scored a century that came after a worrying top-order collapse that saw West Indies slump to 44 for four.

West Indies haven't won a Test against England, home or away, since 2000 -- something that would have been regarded as unthinkable during their glory days of the 1970s and 1980s.

England's 3-0 and 4-0 successes in the Caribbean owed much to the form of fast bowler Stephen Harmison.

Durham quick Harmison, who during the course of England's 5-0 Ashes thrashing in Australia announced his retirement from one-day cricket and so missed the side's woeful World Cup campaign, has been in fine form at the start of the county season.

England though still have problems of their own.

All-rounder Andrew Flintoff has suffered a recurrence of his ankle injury and is doubtful for Thursday's match where West Indies will look to Gayle, Sarwan and the experienced Shivnarine Chanderpaul to bolster the batting.

Meanwhile, Michael Vaughan will be at Lord's for new coach Peter Moores's first game in charge since replacing Duncan Fletcher even though the captain, who hasn't played a Test for 18 months, is injured once again.

Vaughan, who had a poor World Cup with the bat, sustained a broken finger sustained while batting for Yorkshire against Hampshire's Australia quick Stuart Clark.

One consolation for Vaughan is that this injury does not appear to be as serious as the knee and hamstring problems that sidelined him for so long and he hopes to be fit for

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PHOTO: AFP
England all-rounder Andrew Flintoff bowls in the nets under the close supervision of team physio Kirk Russel during a training session at Lord's on Wednesday.



PHOTO: STAR

Abahani striker Emily (L) and Sheikh Russel's Moroccan defender Burdi leap in the air to take control of the ball during their B.League match at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

MSC first-leg champs

Abahani-Russel draw, Ctg MSC win



SPORTS REPORTER

Abahani and Sheikh Russel shared points in a goalless draw yesterday to serve the B. League top spot to Mohammadmedan in a platter at the end of the first leg.

Having exchanged the top position throughout the competition between them, it was a disappointing first session finale for the two contenders who saw Mohammadmedan climb up from the ashes to steal the first leg honours with 20 points.

Need a win to topple the black and whites and become the midway-through champions, neither Abahani nor Russel showed any thrust for victory as they remained at second place with 19 points each.

Mukti Jodha had finished on 18 points to settle for fourth place in

what has turned to be a tight championship race.

They are closely followed by the inaugural professional league's surprise package Chittagong Mohammadmedan, who blanked Dhaka outfit Arambagh 2-0 at home also yesterday for their fifth win.

Liberian debutant Zubair Chris Momoh put the port city side

ahead on the hour while Noor Hossain Daulat sealed the victory seven minutes later at the MA Aziz Stadium.

At the Bangabandhu National Stadium, sky-blues coach Amalesh

midfielders in skipper Joy and Pranotosh with Ujjal and Zahed playing at the flanks. The ploy virtually killed the organised game they had played under Argentine coach Diego Cruciani till the eighth round.

Both were not lethal neat passes through the middle -- the trademark under Cruciani who has been relieved -- and all efforts to break down the wings were stopped by a five-man Russel

defence led by Moroccan centre-back and captain Burdi.

With no crosses coming in, striking duo Emily and Ibrahim hardly threatened to score but the latter's solo efforts gave Abahani a slight edge. Emily's only notable touch of the ball after a rival lapse set Ibrahim free after 19 minutes but the Ghanaian fired the ball wide from 20 yards.

In the next minute, Russel's first counter attack almost paid off when Burdi's long freekick got behind central defenders Nazrul

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