



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, he added.

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.

Test-ing time for Tigers

APP, Chittagong



Bangladesh play their first Test series in 13 months this week hoping to take their new-found 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

Apart from Tushar Imran, who joined the squad on Monday night and was running a temperature, all the cricketers including Mohammad Ashraful trained for a couple of hours as the camp looked set to put aside the attacks of seasonal fever.

However, Shakib Al Hasan and Mehrab Hossain were under the spotlight in anticipation of making Test debut.

Both the youngsters expressed their optimism to do better for the team if picked for the first Test, Bangladesh's first five-day game in 13 months.

"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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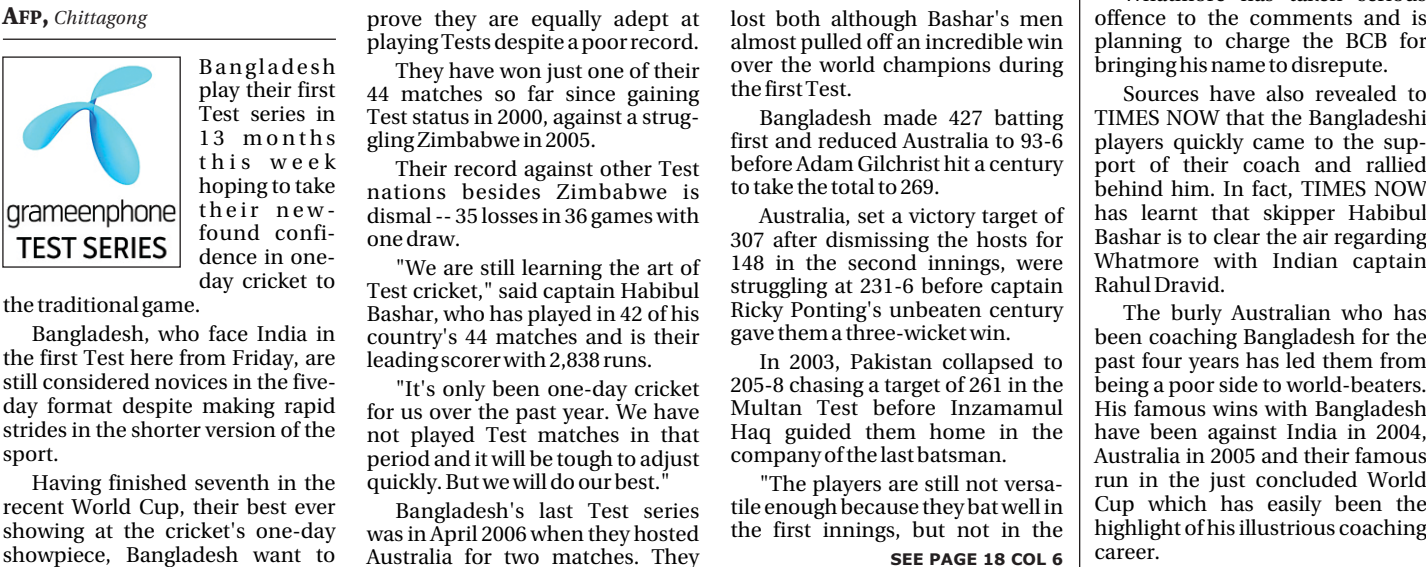


PHOTO: STAR

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

the team and what the situation demanded," he said when asked if he would bowl in the Test. About opening the innings, he said "that is again up to the team management. If they deem fit I'm game."

On 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 special."

At nets Ganguly looked a picture of concentration when Rudra Pratap Singh, Romesh Pawar and three local bowlers bowled at him. Initially, he looked a bit tentative, but later his form returned. He also stepped out a few times to lift the spinners. Cricket manager Ravi Shastri stood all along watching Ganguly. At first, he stood at the umpire's position and then watched him from the point region. Ganguly also bowled at the nets to Wasim Jaffer and Sachin Tendulkar.

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

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Battle of problem sides

First England-Windies Test from today



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 the West Indies, this opening match of a four Test series will be their first since the retirement of former captain Brian Lara, Test cricket's leading run-scorer.

It also represents a chance to restore some pride after the team's lacklustre performances during the recent World Cup in the Caribbean compounded for many fans by reports of ill-disciplined player behaviour.

As a result, officials have imposed an 11.30pm local time (2230GMT) curfew on a squad now captained by Ramnaresh Sarwan.

For all that opening batsman Chris Gayle dislike the move -- the fact a curfew has been imposed says much about the collapse in personal standards, although whether it will reverse a trend that ought to start and end with the players' themselves remains to be seen.

But stand-in coach David Moore, who succeeded Bennett King after his fellow Australian was axed following the World Cup, was

Whatmore to sue BCB?

TIMES NOW, New Delhi

Two days after this TV channel reported strained relations between outgoing Bangladesh coach Dav Whatmore and Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB), Whatmore has decided to take legal action against BCB for questioning his coaching skills.

BCB chief executive officer, Mahmudur Rahman had told TIMES NOW that, "Whatmore being an Australian approaches things the Australian way, whereas the players in the sub-continent are an emotional lot. Dav is not used to giving explanations."

Rahman's comments in essence put a question mark over the man-management skills of Whatmore, who is a likely candidate to replace Greg Chappell in Team India.

After TIMES NOW aired the story where BCB had expressed their reservations about his coaching skills, sources close to the 53-year-old Australian coach revealed that the comments had not gone down too well with Whatmore.

Whatmore has taken serious offence to the comments and is planning to charge the BCB for bringing his name to disrepute.

Sources have also revealed to TIMES NOW that the Bangladeshi players quickly came to the support of their coach and rallied behind him. In fact, TIMES NOW has learnt that skipper Habibul Bashar is to clear the air regarding Whatmore with Indian captain Rahul Dravid.

The burly Australian who has been coaching Bangladesh for the past four years has led them from being a poor side to world-beaters. His famous wins with Bangladesh have been against India in 2004, Australia in 2005 and their famous run in the just concluded World Cup which has easily been the highlight of his illustrious coaching career.



PHOTO: STAR

Abahani striker Emily (L) and Sheikh Russel's Moroccan defender Burdif 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 Mohammedan 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 Mohammedan climb up from the ashes to steal the first leg honours with 20 points.

Needing 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.

Muktijodha 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 Mohammedan, who blanked Dhaka outfit Arambagh 2-0 at home also yesterday for their fifth win. Liberian debutant Zubah Chris Momolu 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

POINTS TABLE

Teams	M	W	D	L	GF	GA	Pts
Mohammedan	10	6	2	2	22	7	20
Russel	10	5	4	1	12	4	19
Abahani	10	5	4	1	10	3	19
Muktijodha	10	5	3	2	16	7	18
Ctg MSC	10	5	2	3	8	6	17
Brothers	10	4	3	3	15	10	15
Arambagh	10	4	1	5	9	10	13
Khulna Abahani	10	3	1	6	11	19	10
Farashganj	10	2	4	4	8	12	10
Ctg Abahani	10	3	0	7	7	19	9
Rahmatganj	10	0	2	8	5	26	2

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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.

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