



Did U Know?

Basketball is the only major sport entirely of American origin.



Vivian Richards

(West Indies cricket great)
"It was nasty ... nasty ... complete nastiness. We're watching something that is just totally ludicrous. Anybody who thinks that is a cricket shot, come and see me after."
On Darren Powell who played poor shots to get out in both innings of the fourth and final Test against England on June 19.

Shahadat or Sharapova?

SPORTS REPORTER from Colombo

Young Bangladesh paceman Shahadat Hossain has a habit of irritating opponent batsmen. And on Monday at the Sinhalese Sports Club ground the right-arm quick did enough grunting to evoke sharp reaction from Sri Lankan captain Mahela Jayawardene.

"It is unacceptable, you can't do that in international cricket," said the Lankan skipper while reacting to Shahadat's grunting.

A visibly disturbed Jayawardene even turned to the umpires to ask the paceman, who at times does it in domestic matches too, to stop grunting.

Shahadat indeed grunts while bowling, but it may not be as loud as Russian tennis star Maria Sharapova does. His teammates however thought that it was a ploy of the Sri Lankan captain to distract the right-armed, who bowled with aggression with the new ball. Shahadat took two wickets in his first two overs and had Mahala caught off a no-ball.

"I think Mahela reacted heavily because his side at that point was struggling at 14-2 and the aggressive fast bowler produced some fiery short balls at him," said a Bangladeshi player.

But on the day what was exceptional was the Bangladesh think-tank's idea about Shahadat's capability of handling champion off-spinner Muttiah Muralidaran better than Mashrafe Bin Mortaza.

Although everybody was guessing about the injury of Mashrafe, the team sources confirmed that they sent Shahadat ahead of Mashrafe because they thought he might have been successful against Muralidaran.



The combo picture shows Sri Lanka's champion off-spinner Muttiah Muralidharan on his delivery stride during a mesmerising spell; Bangladesh's young paceman Shahadat Hossain celebrates the fall of Kumar Sangakkara while Sri Lanka's opener Michael Vandrot sweeps left-arm spinner Abdur Razzak during his unbeaten knock of 87 on the eventful opening day of the first Test at the Sinhalese Sports Club (SSC) ground in Colombo yesterday.

Where has Mithu gone?



SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Olympic Association (BOA) yesterday officially confirmed that SA Games gold medalist hurdler Mahfuzur Rahman Mithu has gone missing from Italy.

Mithu, who won the 110m hurdles gold in the Colombo SA Games last year, was in Italy as part of his training at the Malaysia High Performance Sports Centre in a bid to get exposure and build competitive spirit.

A nine-member team including two Bangladesh hurdlers -- Mithu and Sumita Rani -- from the Malaysian sport centre went to Italy and were due to travel to France.

But Mithu and three athletes -- one each from Yemen, Sri Lanka and Pakistan -- did not make the tour to France, informed BOA chief operative officer (COO) Col (ret'd) Waliullah last night.

"Mithu has yet to contact any of the team from Malaysia. So it is certain that he is missing. We have talked with Sumita, who came back to Italy after a short trip to France, and she told us that Mithu was not with the team in France," told Wali.

"We have to wait and see. Unless he returns, we cannot take any action. If he is caught, he will certainly be punished," he added.

Mithu, a non-commissioned officer of the Bangladesh Air Force who hails from Noakhali, was sent to train in Malaysia for one and a half year and according to the COO of

BOA, he earned about Tk 65,000 per month. After the Europe tour, the team were expected to return to Malaysia on July 5.

"It is a disgrace. We wanted him to become a top athlete of Asia but he has downed us heavily."

Bangladesh has a long history of athletes defecting in abroad, especially in affluent countries, during competitions. The long list includes star athletes like Saidur Rahman Dawn, Bimal Chandra Tarafder and champion swimmer Karar Mizanur Rahman.

In 2002, swimmer Karar Samedul Islam showed some good judgment by returning after he had fled with four athletes from the Manchester Commonwealth

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Change imminent in BCB

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) general secretary Mahub Anam yesterday told that he had no idea about the news of disbanding the executive committee of the board.

Sources confirmed that Sports Adviser Tapan Chowdhury had a meeting at the ministry on Sunday, where the issue of the BCB was discussed along with reforms of the National Sports Council and other federations.

The Sports Adviser also told a local TV channel on Sunday that steps have been taken to reform sport bodies including the BCB and all corruptions will be looked into.

After a meeting of BCB's budget committee at the Dhaka Club yesterday, Mahub Anam told that he was not informed about this.

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1ST BD-SL TEST SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard at stumps on the opening day of the first Test between Bangladesh and Sri Lanka at the Sinhalese Sports Club ground in Colombo on Monday:

BANGLADESH: First innings				
Omar c P Jayawardene b Vaas	8			
Nafees c P Jayawardene				
b Malinga	15			
Saleh lbw b Muralidaran	3			
Bashar lbw b Fernando	2			
Ashraf c Wamapura b Fernando	7			
Shakib lbw b Muralidaran	16			
Mashud not out	12			
Shahadat c Muralidaran				
b Fernando	1			
Mashrafe st P Jayawardene				
b Muralidaran	1			
Rafique lbw b Muralidaran	11			
Razzak st P Jayawardene				
b Muralidaran	4			
Extras: (lb-2, nb-7)	9			
Total: (All out in 32.3 overs)	89			
Fall of wickets: 1-28, 2-28, 3-32, 4-43, 5-50, 6-61, 7-64, 8-69, 9-85				

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Vaas	7	3	8	1
Malinga	7	0	31	1
Fernando	11	2	33	3
Muralidaran	7.3	3	15	5

SRI LANKA: First innings				
Warnapura lbw b Shahadat	0			
Sangakkara c Mashud b Shahadat	8			
M Jayawardene retired hurt	93			
Silva c Mashrafe b Razzak	1			
Dilshan not out	27			
Extras: (b-6, nb-5, w-2)	13			
Total: (For 3 wickets in 51 overs)	227			
Fall of wickets: 1-1, 2-14, 3-187				
To bat: P Jayawardene, Vaas, Muralidaran, Malinga, Fernando				

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Mashrafe	6	0	27	0
Shahadat	8	0	53	2
Razzak	14	1	47	1
Rafique	11	1	46	0
Shakib	5	0	19	0
Ashraf	7	0	29	0

Toss: Sri Lanka.
Umpires: Asad Rauf and Suresh Shastri.

A disappointing start



BISHWAJIT ROY from Colombo

When Mohammad Ashraful walked into the Sinhalese Sports Club (SSC) ground on Monday for the toss of the first Test against Sri Lanka, he started a demanding assignment.

A new captain but there was nothing new in his helm because of the Tigers' same old pathetic batting display on the opening day.

It has been repeatedly told in the last few days that this time the Bangladeshi batsmen felt more confident to face the rich Sri Lankan attack as they went through special batting sessions during preparation under the guidance of interim coach Shaun Williams.

But after being dismissed for their third lowest score (89) in 47 Test appearances, it proved that anything has hardly changed in their approach to the longer-version of the game.

"It's really disappointing the way I started my captaincy. We have had high hopes of making something good this time after we worked hard in the nets but ultimately, we failed to translate our efforts into form," the

new Bangladesh captain said while expressing his frustration after the day's play.

"We just did the same old things," he admitted.

There seemed to be no ghost in the pitch although home skipper Mahela Jayawardene invited the Tigers to bat first under brilliant sunshine in a calm and quite atmosphere at the city's prestigious ground.

As expected, there was bounce but hardly any movement off the pitch. And interestingly, the bounce at SSC is always being considered as supportive of batting. Staying for only one and a half hour in the middle actually made no sense in a five-day game.

The Bangladeshi batsmen agonisingly failed to apply the basics and common sense, which saw them take lunch at a precarious 64-7.

Ashraf was most vocal about his side's realisation about shot selections but it was hard to believe, especially after what he did.

The right-hander, who has a memorable record of becoming the youngest test centurion on debut at this very venue, came to bat with his side struggling at 32-3 and the situation demanded to play carefully and halt the disaster. But he was adventurous enough to pull Dilhara

Fernando only to sky the ball to backward square-leg for a simple catch by debutant Malinda Warnapura.

"I was the only batsman who threw away the wicket but I think most of the guys were dismissed by good deliveries. I don't want to give any excuses because the wicket was perfect for batting and we should have survived against a quality bowling at this level," he said.

The talented batsman was not sure after spending six years at the highest level about where the problem actually lies after his side's painful batting in the first innings.

"This innings definitely reflected that we are not skilled enough to handle quality attacks but I am not sure whether we have any technical problem in batting."

Ashraf was aware of the fact that it is almost impossible to come back in the match after the home side's healthy 138-run lead with seven more first-innings wickets in hand.

"It is very tough but we have to try our best in the second innings. Our bowlers should try to restrict them from quick scoring," he observed.

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Illness strikes India

First ODI against South Africa today



AFP, Belfast

India have been struck down by illness, with more than half of their 14-man squad suffering, on the eve of their opening one-day international against South Africa at Stormont here Tuesday and have had to call up reinforcements for their tour of the United Kingdom.

India captain Rahul Dravid told reporters at Stormont that wicketkeeper batsman Mahendra Singh Dhoni, the first to fall ill, fast bowler Shanthakumaran Sreesanth, medium-pace Agit Agarkar, off-spinner Ramesh Powar and left-arm quick Rudra Pratap Singh were all suffering from viral fever and 'flu.

Dravid added he too was feeling unwell as were batsman Yuvraj Singh and left-arm pace bowler Zaheer Khan.

"Quite a few boys in our team are suffering from viral fever and 'flu,'" and symptoms of that kind," Dravid explained. "Sreesanth, Agit Agarkar, Dhoni, RP Singh and Ramesh Powar have not come to practice today (Monday)."

"There are other guys like Yuvraj Singh, myself, Zaheer Khan and Robin (Singh, the fielding coach) who are feeling a bit down."

Uncapped 28-year-old Baroda pace bowler Rakesh Patel, who has been playing club cricket in Liverpool, north-

west England, has been called up to India's one-day squad.

"In consultation with the board and the chairman of selectors we have called up Rakesh Patel from one of the leagues here as back-up for the fast bowlers because with Sreesanth and Agit unlikely to play tomorrow (Tuesday), Zaheer a bit doubtful, we were a bit light in that department," Dravid said.

Meanwhile 18-year-old quick Ishant Sharma, who has played one Test, and uncapped seamer Ranadeb Bose, both due to join the Test squad later this tour, have been drafted in with a view to being available for the second of three one-day internationals against South Africa at Stormont on Friday.

"It's not an ideal situation for us to be in," said Dravid. "There's not much we can do about it. Hopefully we can get 11 guys fit on the park and play a good game of cricket."

Experienced batsman Dravid added some thought had been given to moving Tuesday's match to Wednesday but said such an idea was ultimately impractical.

"We did look at that option but obviously there are a lot of things that go into organising a one-day game."

"It involves television, tickets, spectators, catering and a last minute decision to move the game by a day was proving quite difficult so we decided to go with what was there and play tomorrow (Tuesday)."

"It's a viral fever and there's not

much we can do. Dhoni was the one who got it first and it just spread across the team."

"But if we can get 11 guys on the park we believe anyone is capable of playing some good cricket. Irrespective of the situation, South Africa was obviously going to be a tough game."

And Dravid added the current situation opened up possibilities for inexperienced players such as teenage leg-spinner Piyush Chawla to take a leading role. "It's a good opportunity for some of these young guys, to test themselves against good opposition in conditions they are not really used to."

London-based Nitin Patel will provide cover for injured India physiotherapist John Gloster who tripped over a boundary rope at Stormont last Friday and broke his hand.

India and South Africa are set to complete their series on Sunday. After that series, India play arch-rivals Pakistan in a one-day international in Glasgow on July 3.

They then face England in three Tests and seven one-dayers from July 19-September 8.

India opened their tour with a nine-wicket win in a one-day international against Ireland at Stormont on Saturday where specialist keeper Dinesh Karthik, in the original one-day squad, played instead of Dhoni.

What to WATCH

TEN Sports

Bangladesh v Sri Lanka
First Test, Day Two
Live at 11:00 am

ATN Bangla

Brothers Union v Sk Russel
B.League
Live at 4:30 pm

STAR Sports

Wimbledon Championships
First Round
Live from 4:30 pm

ESPN

Sportscenter India
Sports News
Live at 8:30 pm

TEN Sports

Copa America
Uruguay v Peru
Live at 3:55 am (Wednesday)
Venezuela v Bolivia
Live at 6:50 am (Wednesday)



AFP, London



soggy start that has become as traditional as strawberries and cream at the biggest tournament in tennis.

Although southwest London was expected to be spared the worst of the weather, the rain was still heavy enough for the scheduled 1100 GMT start to play to be put back by several hours.

World number one Roger Federer, due to start his bid to match Bjorn Borg's run of five straight titles on centre court, was among the dozens of stars kicking their heels in the locker rooms of the All England club as organisers fretted over a looming scheduling headache.

"It looks like we could have a sticky two or three days," admitted the tournament referee Andrew Jarrett.

"All we can do is hope for the best and prepare for the worst. The weather is the one thing we have no control over."

For the handful of home fans shivering under umbrellas on the newly roofless centre court, the miserable weather compounded the gloom generated by British number one Andy Murray's late withdrawal from the tournament.

With the feisty Scot having decided not to risk aggravating a wrist injury and former number one Tim Henman badly out of form, local bookmakers were offering short odds on Britain being without a single representative in the second round of either the men's or women's singles.

Federer, unbeaten in his last 48 matches on grass, was due to face



PHOTO: AFP

A tennis fan seeks shelter from the rain at the Wimbledon Tennis Championships in Wimbledon in south London yesterday. The start of the 121st Wimbledon tennis championships was delayed on Monday because of rain.