



Did U Know?

The first NBA player to score 38,000 points was Kareem Abdul-Jabbar in 1989.



Ian Bishop

(Former West Indies fast bowler)
"The board have to take the lead, their job is to lay a platform for potential success. Quite frankly, they have failed to do that. They have mismanaged and bungled too many simple issues."

While backing Chris Gayle's outburst against the West Indies Cricket Board.

What to WATCH

STAR Sports
Wimbledon Championships
Third Round
Live from 4:30 pm
TEN Sports
Copa America
Bolivia v Uruguay
Live at 2:05 am (Sunday)
Venezuela v Peru
Live at 4:20 am (Sunday)



Mixed day for Bangladesh U-12s

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh held defending champions Reunion Island 0-0 in their opening match of Group B on the inaugural day of the Danone Nations Cup in Lyon, France yesterday.

Bangladesh, who then lost 1-0 to Morocco in their second match in the three-day under-12 competition, were pitted against Bulgaria and Portugal last night, according to BFF online.

Bangladesh are among eight new entries including Chile, Cameroon, Saudi Arabia, Namibia, Hungary, Kenya and Uruguay in the meet of 40 countries, who are split into eight groups.

Reunion Island also won the second edition of the tournament in 2001 while other winners are hosts France, Argentina, South Africa, Spain and Russia.

Dyson applies for India job?

CRICINFO, undated

The Indian board has restarted the process of searching for a national coach, according to a report in The Times of India. The national daily reported that three new candidates had applied for the job following Graham Ford's refusal, on June 11, to be the next Indian coach.

The report says John Dyson, the former Sri Lanka coach, Terry Oliver, the Queensland coach, and Dave Nasworthy, the Canterbury coach, have sent in their applications to the BCCI.

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Learning the hard way

Cricket

BISHWAJIT ROY from Colombo

The early finish in the first Test of the three-match series gave Bangladesh team an additional day off. But the team management had arranged a video session for the players to evaluate their performances of the match held at the Sinhalese Sports Club.

Sri Lanka won the match by an innings and 234 runs on the fourth morning, throwing a lot of questions to the Tigers ahead of the second Test which starts on July 3 at the P Sara Stadium here.

The realisation of everyone, however, is that video sessions will not find solutions for the disappointing show. The problem is rather deep-rooted and here the preparation for the longer version game for our players has to be evaluated.

Test cricket is not a grooming ground rather it is usually the stage for seasoned players although there can be exceptions made for those with special talent.

However, there is no denying the fact that without a proper first-class structure and experience of tough

grind in domestic first class games it is very difficult to survive at Test level.

Left-handed middle order batsman Shakib Al Hasan is discovering this reality the hard way. The 20-year-old from Magura has made an impressive start to his one-day career and boasts a healthy average of 43.80 in 31 matches.

His one-day success has been so eye-catching that the selectors just had to bring him to the Test fold at the first opportunity. But after just three Tests the youngster now knows it will be a long and hard road ahead.

"I am still finding my feet but what I could understand is that Test cricket is much more tougher than one-day cricket," said Shakib while talking about his brief Test experience, where he has made 96 runs in five innings.

It is natural for someone like Shakib to be in this situation and to adapt to the temperament of the five-day game. Before coming into the Test fray he had played only 13 first class games.

"I'm not sure whether it would have been more helpful for me if I had played more four-day games before playing Test cricket. I think a

lot of our senior players also did not play that many first-class games and you will not mind too many with 30 or more first class games behind them. I believe there is a lack of competitiveness in our first-class cricket which makes it difficult for cricketers to maintain intensity," he explained.

In the current squad, opener Javed Omer with 42 has appeared in the highest number of first class matches.

"Actually I am learning from every passing game. What I have learnt is that shot selection is of paramount importance in Test matches. One should also be technically skilled enough and that helps in handling the pressure," said Shakib.

Shakib's tendency to flash outside the off-stump, which he gets by with in the shorter-version game, has landed him in trouble in Tests.

"I have to learn how to leave the ball otherwise opponent teams would work on this weakness. This had happened in the second innings against Malinga (Lasith)," admitted the young man.



PHOTO: AFP
India paceman Rudra Pratap Singh (2nd from L) gives wicketkeeper Mahendra Singh Dhoni a high five as teammates celebrate after he bowled Jacques Kallis of South Africa during the second one-day international at the Civil Service Cricket Club ground at Stormont in Belfast yesterday.

Henin, Krajicek move on Security up at the All England Club

AFP, London

Anna Chakvetadze suffered a final set meltdown as the eighth seed crashed out of Wimbledon against Michaela Krajicek on Friday.

Chakvetadze, 20, had admitted she often struggles to keep her composure during key moments and she was unable to stay cool as Dutch teenager Krajicek served out her impressive victory.

Justine Henin's bid to win Wimbledon for the first time remained on course as she advanced to the fourth round with a

crushing victory over Elena Vesnina.

The world number one eased past the unseeded Russian, winning 6-1, 6-3, and now faces either 15th seed Patty Schnyder or Ukraine's Aliona Bondarenko for a place in the quarterfinals.

Wimbledon is the last unconquered frontier for Henin. The Belgian has savoured Grand Slam glory at the French, Australian and US Opens, but success on the grass courts of south-west London has been tantalisingly out of reach.

Henin lost in the 2001 final to Venus Williams and fell at the final hurdle again last year against Amelie Mauresmo.

But the reigning French Open champion has the game to win at the All England Club. She strolled through her first two matches with the minimum fuss and she was in charge immediately against Vesnina.

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BCB's last meeting today!

SPORTS REPORTER

With speculations rife about disbanding the executive committee of the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) early next month, it's meeting today is likely to be the last of the elected body.

The executive committee meeting, which will approve the budget of its different sub-committees after discussion last week, is also expected to set interview dates for foreign coaches.

The meeting will start at 12 noon at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur.

Khulna Abahani host Russel today

SPORTS REPORTER

Title aspirants Sheikh Russel look forward to return to winning ways during their Khulna trip as they meet local Abahani in today's lone B. League match.

Russel, who blanked Khulna Abahani 3-0 at home in the first leg, share the second place in the table with Muktijuddha - level on 27 points - after drawing their previous game against Brothers Union.

A high flying Mohammadmedan, who crushed their Chittagong counterparts 7-0 last week and come fresh following a welcome rest in Round 16, will face bottom-table Rahmatganj tomorrow with hopes of refreshing their title chase.

The Dhaka black and whites, who humiliated Rahmatganj 7-1 in their earlier meetings, will catch leaders and archrivals Abahani in the table if they can repeat their first leg success.

All eyes would be on the Dhaka derby between Brothers and

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Inzamam eyes county cricket

AFP, Lahore

Former Pakistan captain Inzamam Haq said Friday that he wants to play English county cricket in a bid to improve his fitness and keep his place in the national Test side.

"At times, we didn't do a good enough job holding the ball," Bradley said. "We just started trying to beat their defence with one pass.

"For me it's a great honour to equal the number of goals by Diego," Crespo said.

The loss was the first for the United States since a 2-1 defeat to Ghana on June 22 last year in Germany, which eliminated the

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Van Wyk rescues SA

Cricket

AFP, Belfast

Morne van Wyk's career-best innings and a late rally from Mark Boucher helped South Africa reach 226 for six against India in the second one-day international at Stormont here Friday.

28-year-old van Wyk struck 82 while wicketkeeper-batsman Boucher followed up with a run-a-ball 55 not out as the Proteas scored 60 runs in the last 10 overs.

India's part-time spinner Yusuf Singh took three for 36 after some fine new-ball bowling from fellow left-armers Zaheer Khan and RP Singh.

The Proteas had been in trouble at seven for two and 46 for three after losing the toss in seam-friendly conditions.

But a fourth-wicket stand of 85

between van Wyk, picked in place of injured captain Graeme Smith, and youngster Jean-Paul Duminy (40) repaired some of the early damage after the experienced duo of Jacques Kallis and Herschelle Gibbs fell cheaply.

It wasn't until the fourth over, with a RP Singh wide; that South Africa had their first runs but, next ball, and India had their first wicket.

Van Wyk set off for a single but stopped with non-striker AB de Villiers well down the pitch. The bowler Singh reacting quickly, gathered the ball and threw to the non-striker's end where David took off the bails and de Villiers, ruled not to have grounded his bat by third umpire Aleem Dar, was out for nothing.

Kallis, who'd made 91 not out in the Proteas' four-wicket win in the opening fixture of this three-match series on Tuesday, scored the first of the innings in his second over.

It was Khan who captured the prized wicket of Gibbs when the batsman drove his third ball back powerfully off the backfoot straight to Dinesh Karthik at cover.

Young legspinner Piyush Chawla, who impressed with figures of three for 47 in the first ODI, saw Van Wyk loft him for the first six of the innings in his second over.

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Cricket

CRICINFO, undated

West Indies put their tour blues behind them as they outperformed England in every department to win by 15 runs in the first of two back-to-back Twenty20 internationals at a packed Oval.

Two Smiths -- Devon the batsman and Dwayne the bowler -- finally gave the tourists something to smile about, even if the Man-of-the-Match award went to Paul Collingwood for his 79 in a losing cause.

Winning the toss and batting on a perfect pitch, West Indies smashed 208 for 7 thanks to a blistering 61 from 34 balls from Devon Smith and a 26-ball half-century from Marlon Samuels that included one of the biggest hits ever seen at The Oval. And with the ball they didn't allow England to move out of second gear until it was too late -- Dwayne Smith reducing the tempo to perfection with 3 for 24. It was hard to believe that England were the side with heaps of Twenty20 know-how and West Indies were the novices.

England were behind the eighth ball at the half-time pause-for-breath. Poor bowling had let West Indies off the leash and allowed them to climb, for once, into the box seat, and they took full advantage. England started too slowly but Twenty20 is like a one-lap Formula One race -- get behind and there's no time to catch up.

There were moments of excitement for the 23,000 capacity crowd as the evening gloom descended. Matt Prior briefly looked dangerous, but their best hope was snuffed out when Kevin Pietersen was well beaten by a throw from third man to what appeared the safe non-striker's end.



PHOTO: AFP
West Indies' Devon Smith lofts the ball over long-on for a boundary on way to scoring 61 against England in the first Twenty20 international at the Brit Oval in London on Thursday.

Flying start for Argentina

AP, Maracaibo

Hernan Crespo struck twice while Pablo Aimar and Carlos Tevez added late goals as hot favourites Argentina began their Copa America campaign with a 4-1 win against a youthful United States 4-1 here Thursday night.

Back in the Copa America after 12 years, USA could only watch the two-time world champions fly by in the second half.

Eddie Johnson put the US ahead with a penalty kick in the ninth minute, but Crespo scored in the 11th and 64th minutes for fifth-ranked Argentina, who increasingly outplayed the Americans as the game progressed.

Aimar connected in the 78th

minute and Tevez scored in the 85th, six minutes after entering.

"We came down here to win. We didn't come here to walk around with our tail between our legs and pray for the best," said defender Jimmy Conrad, one of the few regulars to play for the Americans.

"Ultimately, win or lose, it's a great learning experience for our team, and I think our programme will become better because of it," Bradley said.

With Diego Maradona looking on in a national team jersey, Crespo raised his national team goals total to 34, matching the former captain's career total.

"For me it's a great honour to equal the number of goals by Diego," Crespo said.

The loss was the first for the United States since a 2-1 defeat to Ghana on June 22 last year in Germany, which eliminated the

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Smiths make WI smile

Paul Collingwood, in his first match as captain, kept the flame flickering and the PA pumping with some crisp straight hitting, smacking two sixes and a four off Samuels

and then a six and a four off the next over from Darren Sammy. Even

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