



Did U Know?

The dimensions of a regulation football field are: 360 feet long and 160 feet wide.



Shane Warne
(Australian leg-spinning legend)
"I am starting to breathe again after the swell of the last two hours. I'll have a few drinks and a few smokes afterwards, and take it from there."
During his retirement announcement.



SAB TV
India v South Africa
Third One-Day International
Live from 3:45 pm
ESPN
England v West Indies
First One-Day International
Live from 3:45 pm
TEN Sports
Copa America
Brazil v Chile
Live at 2:05 am (Monday)
Mexico v Ecuador
Live at 4:20 am (Monday)



B.League
Rahmatganj v Mohammedan
Venue: Bangabandhu National Stadium
Time: 4:30 pm

Mauresmo, Sharapova in last sixteen
AFP, London

Defending champion Amelie Mauresmo and Russian second seed Maria Sharapova shrugged off a two-hour rain delay to storm into the Wimbledon last 16 on Saturday. On a cold, damp day at the All England Club, the fourth seeded Frenchwoman made up for lost time by taking just 57 minutes to dismantle the feeble challenge of Italian 28th seed Mara Santangelo 6-1, 6-2. Sharapova also scored comfortable 6-3, 6-3 win over Japan's Ai Sugiyama. The Russian startlet will face either Venus Williams or Akiko Morigami for a place in the quarterfinals.

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LOCAL SNIPPETS

SPORTS REPORTER

Defending champion Dhaka and Faridpur won in their respective matches of the Salton Pharmaceuticals 27th National Hockey Championship Super League at the Maulana Bhasani National Hockey Stadium yesterday. Dhaka powered past BKSP 3-1 while Faridpur won for the first time in the Super League when they crushed Rajshahi 4-0. Imtiaz Ahmed, Iqbal Nazir and Imran Ahmed scored one each for Dhaka while Syed Al Mamun netted the lone goal for BKSP. Dhaka's Moshir Rahman Biplob was adjudged as the player-of-the-match. In the second match of the day, Faridpur rode on a double strike

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Reflecting on Poson Poya



BISHWAJIT ROY from Colombo

Yesterday was Poson Poya day. The normally quite Sri Lanka capital Colombo turned even calmer with the second most important religious day in the calendar of the islands' Buddhists.

Millions of Buddhists visited the shrines across the country on the day, which according to their belief, is a good day for prayers under the full moon and most of the Sri Lankan cricketers were no exception as they enjoyed the day, also a weekly holiday, with their families.

But there was no respite for the visiting Bangladesh cricketers, though they also greeted the locals by saying 'poya day', as they were trying hard to bounce back from the disappointing performance in the first Test. The Tigers had an intense net session at the academy compound adjacent to the R Premadasa Stadium.

For former captain Habibul Bashar and left-handed opener Shahriar Nafees, the second Test which begins on Tuesday at the P Sara Stadium, is more of a personal challenge than any other member of the Tigers squad.

His second innings 38 gave a small indication that Nafees was set to get back his rhythm but the batsman himself was not ready to think like that.

"I can't say I got back to form after scoring 15 and 38 runs in the first Test but I am happy that I could

manage to do some of my basic batting in the second innings. I have to score big. Although I was dismissed by playing a bad shot, I am quite confident after the two innings," said the young opener after the training session.

Terming the Lankan bowling as the 'best attack' at the moment, Nafees has a different strategy about handling them, especially Muttiah Muralidaran, as he believes that only a defensive attitude is not the solution to be successful.

"To me, batting is all about scoring runs. We definitely should look to play safe cricket but that doesn't mean we always play defensively. I think the Sri Lankan bowling attack is the best in the world because every bowler is different from the other," explained Nafees.

"I had a plan in the second innings not to allow Murali to settle in his bowling like what I did against (the Australian great) Shane Warne in the Fatullah Test (in 2006). I played every shot that comes to me then. My personal opinion is that Murali takes wickets in the end no matter you defend against or attack him. I think it is important how much you score at the end of the day," he added.

Nafees pointed out that their second innings performance would serve as a benchmark for the side.

"I must say we learnt from mistakes but the problem is that we need more time to make it a habit. Our first innings batting performance (89) was an exception. I

believe that the way we batted in the second innings was what can be the standard," he said adding that it is always good to think about the positive things.

But the right-handed Bashar believed that they have to discuss on the negative issues or else it would be impossible to improve their performances.

"I must say that our benchmark was the third day performance. I don't believe that we have to talk about only with the positive outcomes rather we have to focus on the negative issues," he observed.

Bashar came here with a mission to rediscover his form and to silence his critics but his first Test performance was disappointing as he returned to the hut with only 2 and 17.

"I know how important my performance is as a senior player. I think our top-order should play their best otherwise we can't survive against this bowling attack," he said.

"Believe me, I am not frustrated with the first Test performance. We have two more Test matches in our hand which I think is an advantage for us to show that we are not as bad as people are saying after the first Test," said a confident Bashar, the highest Test scorer for Bangladesh.

"I don't agree with those who say that we made no improvement in the five-day game. We pushed Australia and Sri Lanka at home but the 14-month break hampered our progress severely," he remarked.

NCA looks to youth



SPORTS REPORTER

With both eyes on the near future, Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) selected twenty players as the second batch of scholarship holders of the GrameenPhone National Cricket Academy yesterday.

The yearlong programme of the Academy will have more focus on specific training drills so that the players' development in their specialised skills -- batting or bowling -- gets more attention, said former Bangladesh captain Khaled Mahmud who is the manager and assistant coach of the Academy team.

Chief selector Faruque Ahmed announced the squad in a press conference at a local hotel where BCB general secretary Mahub Anam, vice-president Aziz Al Kaiser and GrameenPhone media manager Moeen Tariq were present among others.

It was also announced that the leading mobile phone operators

GrameenPhone will sponsor the side and provide 150,000 US dollars each year, for the next five years.

According to the former allrounder, due to the emphasis being more on specific training, the squad has been kept with almost all players, excepting stylish left-hander Nasiruddin Faruque (who is 24), under the age of 23.

Mahub said, "The Academy stint for a player will be the time between his graduation from being an under-19 player to the time the player becomes a national team regular."

He also informed that the team will play in the Crocodile Cup and the Institution Challenge Cup in Darwin, Australia this August and the South Africa Cricket Academy will be touring Bangladesh next April. He mentioned that apart from the tri-nation involving academies from Sri Lanka and Pakistan this year, England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) would host the Academy next summer.

"Contracted players from both national and the A team will be

training at the Academy if they are not touring or involved with their teams. As the Academy is for fine-tuning the players, these players would be asked to join the Academy whenever there is a specific training going on," said the long-serving general secretary.

According to the chief selector Faruque, the squad was trimmed from 26 (as it was last year) to 20 so that complacency doesn't creep into the players.

"So that none of the players take it easy, we have decided on a quarterly evaluation which would allow us to change the make-up of this team," added the former national captain.

Among the serious points highlighted by the High Performance Fitness Advisor Shane McDermott, emphasis would also be put on speaking in English.

The team, made up of players who at some point or the other have played for the national under-19 side, is definitely youthful but

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PHOTO: STAR

Players of GrameenPhone National Cricket Academy pose with their coaches and other BCB officials at a local hotel yesterday.

Roddick bankrupt!

AFP, London



reason than most to pray for better weather.

Roddick, the world number three, has been spending time between matches at the All England Club by playing cards with his coach Jimmy Connors and has been losing on a regular basis.

While the American is an expert at sending down aces, he obviously finds it harder to win with them at cards. And with the former US Open champion's practice schedule on Saturday disrupted by the rain, Connors had plenty of time to take his money at blackjack yet again.

Roddick, a two-time Wimbledon runner-up, joked that he has amassed such big debts that he needed to win his fourth round match against France's

Paul-Henri Mathieu, worth a guaranteed 88,550 pounds prize money, just to pay off Connors.

"Seems like most things I do with Jimmy turn into a competition," Roddick said.

"But I don't want to talk about us playing cards because it hasn't been good for me this week. I have to win my next round just to...Never mind."

"I like playing poker but he's realized that's a losing proposition there. We've been playing more blackjack and I haven't been getting many blackjacks."

There's little prospect of Roddick getting back his losses from Connors on the golf course either.

"Man, here's the deal with golf," he said. "Every time I play golf, I have to buy a new set of clubs. It's not relaxing for me. I go mental."

"The ball's not even moving and I can't hit it right. I haven't reached the point in my life where I have the patience level it takes to play golf. And I don't have the pants."

Bangladesh down Italy

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh striker Mohammad Shumon scored the winning goal against Italy in the place-deciding match of the Danone Nations Cup in the French city of Lyon yesterday.

After failing to qualify from the group stages despite two tiebreaker wins over Bulgaria and Portugal, Bangladesh faced the Italian boys at the Stade de Gerland where they dominated proceedings from the onset.

After losing to Reunion Island on tiebreaker and Morocco 1-0, Bangladesh defeated Portugal, who qualified to the next stage with Reunion Island, 4-3 and then went on to beat Bulgaria, the other European nation in group B, in which Bangladesh were fourth having collected three points. A drawn game, even though decided later on penalties, yields a single point.

According to BFF Online, Bangladesh were pitted against South Pacific island Vanuatu in their next classification match last night. After being eliminated from the latter stages of the tournament, the team will return to Dhaka on July 3.



PHOTO: AFP

India superstar Sachin Tendulkar negotiates a rising delivery during his match-winning 93 against South Africa during the second one-day international at the Civil Service Cricket Club ground at Stormont in Belfast on Friday.

Tendulkar sees India home



AFP, Belfast

Sachin Tendulkar became the first man to score 15,000 one-day international runs as India beat South Africa by six wickets in the second one-day international at Stormont here Friday.

Tendulkar top-scored with 93 as India, chasing 227 for victory, finished on 227 for four with five balls to spare, and so levelled the three-match series at 1-1.

But India, after a top-order collapse, needed an unbroken fifth-wicket stand of 85 between Yuvraj Singh, who'd earlier taken three for 36 with his part-time left spin, and Dinesh Karthik to see them home.

Yuvraj was 49 not out and Karthik 32 not out.

"It is a satisfying and wonderful moment," Tendulkar told reporters after stumps. "It's obviously a happy feeling, especially when we ended up on a winning note."

South Africa's total of 226 for six

featured a career-best 82 from opener Mome van Wyk, which revived the Proteas after they'd collapsed to seven for two having been sent into bat on a seaming pitch, and a run-a-ball 55 not out from wicketkeeper Mark Boucher.

"I think we were 20 to 30 runs short," said Jacques Kallis, the Proteas' captain, who lost the toss in conditions favouring pace bowling.

"But it was a fantastic effort from the guys to take it to the last over. "Sachin set the game up and Yuvraj finished it off."

India, cruising to victory at 134 without loss, then lost four wickets for eight runs in 28 balls.

Their reply began with a blizzard of boundaries from Tendulkar.

The 'Little Master' hooked Makhaya Ntini for four and when Charl Langeveldt dropped short and wide outside off-stump, Tendulkar square cut him for four.

And when Andre Nel, South Africa's quickest bowler, pitched short, Tendulkar pulled him for six to go to 49.

Tendulkar, who'd needed

exactly 50 runs to reach the 15,000 mark when he began his innings, completed his half-century with a single off Nel which became a five after four overthrows. Tendulkar's 79th fifty at this level, in his 387th match, had come in 64 balls with one six and nine fours.

And with Ganguly going well, Tendulkar was in far more dominating form than he had been while making 99 in South Africa's four-wicket win in Tuesday's series opener.

Off-spinner Thandi Tshabalala, in only his second one-day international, felt the full force of Tendulkar's bat when driven for a textbook six and four off successive balls.

But then came the collapse. Ganguly was caught by Herschelle Gibbs off Langeveldt at backward point off for 42 and India captain Rahul Dravid was caught and bowled by Langeveldt.

Man-of-the-match Tendulkar once more fell in sight of a hundred when he bottom-edged an

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15,000-up Sachin bats away critics

AFP, Belfast

Sachin Tendulkar, after becoming the first batsman to score 15,000 one-day international runs, could be forgiven for wanting to scream "Who says I'm finished?" just as an angry Sebastian Coe did after winning his second straight Olympic 1500 metres title at the 1984 Games in Los Angeles.

Former Australia captain Ian Chappell was typically blunt when assessing Tendulkar's future after a wretched World Cup in the Caribbean.

The 'Little Master' managed just 64 runs in three matches, including seven and nought in the defeats by Bangladesh and Sri Lanka respectively which sealed India's shock first round exit in March.

"At the moment he looks like a player trying to eke out a career," Chappell wrote in Mid-Day, an Indian newspaper based in Tendulkar's home city of Mumbai.

"If he really is playing for that reason and not to help win as many matches as he can for India then he is wasting his time and should retire immediately," added Chappell, the brother of former India coach Greg Chappell.

Tendulkar, who made 93 in India's six-wicket win over South Africa at Stormont here Friday, having required 50 runs at the start of his innings to reach the 15,000 mark, didn't follow Coe's example when invited to respond to his critics.

But his message was equally clear. "It is their job to have opinions. When I hold a cricket bat in my hand it's a far tougher and bigger job."

Few would dispute Tendulkar's claim to just such an occupation in being persistently landed, however unfairly, with the prime responsibility for the success or failure of the national side in cricket-crazy India, the world's second most

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BCB plan to spend more

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) yesterday announced a bigger budget for the fiscal year 2007-08.

In a meeting held at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur, BCB proclaimed Tk 93.83 crore, an increase from last year's Tk 85.49 crore.

Breaking down the budget, BCB general secretary Mahub Anam mentioned that a doubled budget for development and an extra Tk 2.5 crores given to tournament committee were the main reasons for this growth in budget.

The tournament committee's decision to financially revamp the National Cricket League made the BCB delegate more money. Apart from this, a shift of office from Bangabandhu National Stadium will give the administration committee a further Tk 1.5 crore.

Budgeted expense for Cricket Committee for Dhaka Metropolis (CCDM) has gone up by 20 per cent

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PHOTO: BFF ONLINE

A Bangladesh under-12 player carries the ball during their Danone Nations Cup match against Morocco in Lyon on Friday.