



Did U Know?

The first cover of "Sports Illustrated," in 1954, showed National League baseball umpire, Augie Donatelli, behind the plate with two major-league stars: catcher Wes Westrum, and batter Eddie Mathews.



Mark Ramprakash
(Surrey and ex-England batsman)
"People pay their money but some feel it gives them the right to shout abuse to different players. Perhaps that is a bit of football mentality coming in and as a player that is not particularly nice."

Joining in the debate on crowd behaviour at Twenty20 matches.

What to WATCH

STAR Sports
Wimbledon Championship
Men's Singles Semifinals
Live from 4:30 pm
ESPN
Sportscentre India
Sports News
Live from 8:30 pm

Bangladesh eves leave for ACC tournament

UNB, Dhaka

An 18-member Bangladesh women's cricket team left for Bangkok yesterday on way to Malaysia where they will participate in the first ever ACC Women's Cricket Tournament from July 11.

Tazkia Akter is leading the Bangladeshi eves, who are expected to play two limited-overs preparation matches in the Thailand capital on July 6 and 7.

The team, including four officials, will leave Bangkok for Malaysian city of Johor Baru on July 9.

Bangladesh are placed in Group B with United Arab Emirates, Singapore and China while Group A comprises Hong Kong, Nepal, Thailand and hosts Malaysia.

Bangladesh will play UAE on the opening day, Singapore on July 13 and China on July 15.

The semi-finals are scheduled for July 17 and the final on July 18.

GrameenPhone, the country's leading telecom company, is sponsoring the tour.

Squad: Tazkia Akter (captain), Salma Khatun, Reshma Akther Aduri, Panna Ghosh (vice captain), Irene Sultan, Shuktara, Ayesha Akther, Shafira Zaker Jessie, Chameli Khatun, Shamima Akther Pinky, Tithi Rani Sarker, Papiya Haque Babu, Champa Chakma and Mina Khatun (wicketkeeper).

Officials: Hamida Begum (manager), Zafar Ehsan (coach), Parveen Nasima Nahar (trainer) and Farzana Akther Bhuiyan (physio).

India-England Test series on STAR Cricket

PTI, New Delhi

ESPN-STAR Sports' new channel STAR Cricket will telecast live the three-Test cricket series between India and England starting July 19.

The channel will also broadcast India's warm-up matches against county sides Sussex and England A, a statement said on Thursday.

India will play a four-day match against Sussex followed by a three-day match against England A before the start of the Test series.

Next month, India will play a one-dayer against England A.

Mahela sceptic

SPORTS REPORTER from Colombo

When all the praises showered on Mohammad Ashraful at the end of the second Test for his brilliant unbeaten hundred, Sri Lankan skipper Mahela Jayawardene however reminded everybody that despite the match was finished within three days.

"Ashraful's unbeaten 129 was the best knock under the conditions but Bangladesh were not under pressure then. They probably knew the outcome and Ashraful just played himself in. But you don't forget that the match finished within three days. Don't you think there is need for more competitiveness in Test cricket?" responded Jayawardene in his own way after his Bangladesh counterpart took the limelight.

He was also critical over the position of Mohammad Ashraful who batted at number six.

"The thing is Ashraful batted at number six. When you do that the side is gone and I must say the best player should be batting up in the order and take more responsibilities. But the credit should go to Ashraful and the other guys."

Not surprised by Bangladesh's fightback in second innings of the both games, he said, "We knew they have the talent. Even in the first Test's second innings their top order batted really well. It was for us to create pressure and opportunities. When we do that we get wickets but sometimes when we don't get those half chances going our way and not creating opportunities you have to be patient and wait for it to happen," he said.

Despite the comfortable series victory he said that they are always trying to improve in every game and looking forward to the third and final Test.

"If you are not put under pressure it's quite easy for us to take things easy. But if we focus on us improving ourselves challenging individually to be better cricketers, we will always push ourselves to

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PHOTO: AFP
RUNNING TOWARDS RECORD: Bangladesh captain Mohammad Ashraful (L) and wicketkeeper-batsman Mushfiqur Rahim run between the wickets on the third day of the second Test against Sri Lanka at the P Sara Stadium in Colombo yesterday. The pair put up 191 runs for the sixth wicket which is a new Bangladesh record for any wicket.

Ash on an Ash day

Cricket

BISHWAJIT ROY from Colombo

On his day Mohammad Ashraful is as good as any batsman in the world. And there was no exception yesterday when the pocket-sized dynamo struck his fourth Test hundred on the third day of the second Test against Sri Lanka at the P Sara Stadium.

Ashraful on song is a delight for cricketers and spectators alike. His unbeaten 129, though in a lost cause, was certainly something to behold. However, the problem is that it has rarely happened during the talented right-hander's six-year career.

After a duck in the first innings, Ashraful with this brilliant innings also answered back to the critics who believe that Bangladesh are an ugly sister in the elite Test his first assignment as skipper.

The 22-year-old became the first Bangladeshi batsman to score four Test hundreds, three against Sri Lanka, but he said that it could have been much better.

"It should have been more than four. I am not satisfied with the number. I'm now hungry for more because I believe that I have got the quality to contribute more for my country," said Ashraful, who also holds the record of the highest individual score by a Bangladeshi (158 not out India at Chittagong).

"I was desperately looking for a big score to silence the critics who thought captaincy put a burden on me as a batsman," he said.

Ashraful also informed that he always loved to play the Lankan bowlers and that's why he scored

maximum hundreds including his maiden one on Test debut at the Sinhalese Sports Club ground in 2001.

"I love their bowling. I can easily pick Murali. Besides, they create a lot of noises all around which give me special inspiration to do something better. I played a couple of bad shots today otherwise I felt like could do everything I wanted to do," said the stylish batsman, who scored 114 and 136 against Sri Lanka before yesterday's success.

He also urged the millions of fans to keep faith on the team.

"We have been trying our best to play the Test cricket as it should be played. We have failed at times but I request everybody to be patient because it is impossible to do anything overnight. We need some time to get the reward of our hard work," he hoped.

"It could have been fantastic had we pushed the game into the fourth day. I think Mushfiqur's dismissal spoiled everything but I must praise his effort. What a fantastic knock it was! The way he played was not so common in our cricket and he just took the pressure off me. My intention was not

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India given lone warm-up game in Australia

PTI, Melbourne

India will play just one practice game before the first match of a four-Test cricket series against Australia starting December 26 here.

The visitors will play a three-day game against Victoria, from December 20 at the St Kilda Cricket Ground, to warm-up for the first Test, Cricket Australia said in a statement yesterday.

The three-day match is the only chance the Indians will get to adapt to local conditions before the traditional Boxing Day Test.

The Indians will round out the Test series with matches in Sydney, Perth and Adelaide from January 2 to 24.

In between the Sydney and Perth Test, India will play a three-day match against an Australian Capital Territory Invitational XI at Manuka Oval in Canberra from January 10.

The two teams will then clash in the Commonwealth Bank ODI tri-series, also involving Sri Lanka, from February 3.

Rahul Dravid's men will take on the hosts in the series-opener at the Gabba.

Prior to the Test series against India, Australia will face Sri Lanka

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Shiv ton suffices WI

Cricket

AFP, Birmingham

Shivnarine Chanderpaul's unbeaten century set up West Indies' 61-run win against England in the second one-day international (ODI) at Edgbaston here Wednesday.

Left-hander Chanderpaul, batting at No 3, made 116 not out in a total of 278 for five after West Indies, who levelled the three-match series at 1-1, lost the toss.

England set 279 to win, were bowled out for 217 with four overs to spare. Fast bowler Ravi Rampaul led the attack with four for 41.

Chanderpaul had moved up from seven overs after Alastair Cook holed out to mid-off against Daren Powell and Ian Bell, on his Warwickshire home ground, was bowled out to Rampaul although the ball appeared to be going over the top.

Matt Prior and Kevin Pietersen played some typically aggressive shots as England reached 61.

But when dangerman Pietersen was out for nine, bowled middle-stump by Rampaul as he aimed legside, England were 64 for three.

Prior completed a 71 ball-fifty, his best at this level, with one six and three fours.

But two balls later, on 52, he

chipped Daren Powell to Devon Smith, running round from mid-wicket in gathering gloom.

Eight balls afterwards England were 117 for five. Collingwood, who'd just avoided a Fidel Edwards bouncer the previous delivery, was lbw for one to a full-length ball from the quick in an intelligent piece of bowling.

Owais Shah and Yardy shared a stand of 54 without threatening the run-rate before the latter pulled Dwayne Bravo to Dwayne Smith at deep square leg.

And the game was up for England when, five balls later, 171 for six became 172 for seven after Shah, on 45, edged a pull of Rampaul to wicket-keeper Denesh Ramdin.

Earlier, Chanderpaul's hundred was only his seventh in 219 ODIs.

The 32-year-old Guyanese had been a thorn in England's side during the hosts' 3-0 Test series success, averaging 148.66, and this was another example of his ability to pace an innings after he took 10 balls to get off the mark.

In all he faced 122 balls with three sixes and 10 fours.

But Chanderpaul was unable to field after straining a right ankle ligament.

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Sheikh Russel's stand-in captain Ighir Mohammad slices through Arambagh pair Sharif (L) and Nicodemus (R) during yesterday's B.League match at the Bangabandhu National Stadium.

Russel fluff again



SPORTS REPORTER

Sheikh Russel's slim title hope was further dented yesterday when they slumped to their third consecutive draw in the B. League, sharing points with Arambagh in a scoreless draw at the Bangabandhu National Stadium.

Russel, who had suffered their first defeat to the same side in the first leg -- a 1-0 loss with Ugandan attacker Iddi Badambuze scoring the loan goal for Arambagh -- were without Moroccan skipper Bourdif and striker Younes and never looked like the team to beat in a dour match.

However, Noureddine Zaim got the first real chance for Russel but the Moroccan striker's sliding effort on a low cross by Kaiser missed the mark after six minutes.

Russel, who remained at fourth place with 29 points from 17 games

Russel goalkeeper Zia then punched out a header by Arambagh top-scorer Nicodemus in the 20th minute after the Kenyan met a cross by right fullback Monu.

Zia once again denied Nicodemus a shot on goal eight minutes after the break when the Russel custodian came out of his area to kick the ball. However, Kenyan midfielder Domenic, who picked up the clearance, failed to keep his effort on target from 30 yards out of goal.

Two minutes later, Russel right fullback Aminul released a superb centre which missed the rival backline and his teammates to come off the far post with no one taking the rebound.

Russel, who remained at fourth

place with 29 points from 17 games

three points adrift of leaders Abahani who have a couple of matches in hand -- again survived midway through the second half.

Nicodemus, who had only the keeper to beat, failed to properly connect a high cross by substitute Ridon, who played most of his half hour on the pitch with a bandage on

head following an injury.

Russel also had two limping booters on the field after making all three changes but came close to snatching a late winner when Zaim got the ball off Kaiser during a melee.

But the Moroccan's shot from 12 yards went just wide in the 89th minute, ensuring Arambagh's second draw which pushed their collection to 20 points after 16 games.

There will be no matches today and the competition will resume tomorrow with Chittagong's Mohammad hosting Farashganj of Dhaka at the MAAZ Stadium.

Yellow cards: Mishu (Russel) and Ridon, Ratan (Arambagh).

TEAMS

RUSSEL: Zia, Aminul, Hassan, Saadane (Bulbul), Zahirul, Mishu, Ighir (Pappu), Saad, Tanvir (Rikta), Kaiser and Zaim.

ARAMBAGH: Monu, Ratan, Biketi, Akram, Sharif, Morshed (Ridon), Zuku, Domenic, Iddi (Nurul) and Nicodemus.

Referee: Mansoor Azad.

Miandad's advice to PCB

PTI, Karachi

Former Pakistan skipper Javed Miandad has suggested that Pakistan Cricket Board should utilise money for strengthening the grassroots level cricket rather than wasting it on hiring foreign coaches.

"If your base is strong, things will automatically improve in our cricket set-up. There is no shortage of talent at all. Australia is number one because their base is strong and they have never depended on foreign coaches."

"They have opted to strengthen their own coaching system in the country. Why can not we do the same," Miandad told PTI.

Miandad, who played 124 tests, said if foreign coaches were indeed a sure shot recipe for success than Dav Whatmore would have achieved wonders with the Bangladesh cricket team.

"He was with them (Bangladesh) for more than four years

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