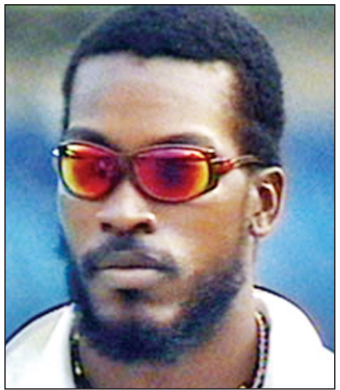




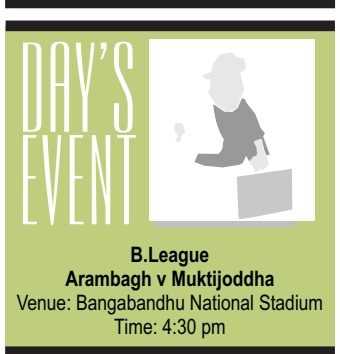
Did U Know?
Muhammad Ali won his heavyweight championships on three continents: North America, Asia and Africa.



Chris Gayle
(West Indies cricketer)
"The curfew is off tonight."
After West Indies won the one-day international series against England.



TEN Sports
Bangladesh v Sri Lanka
Third Test, Day 2
Live from 11:00 am
ATN Bangla
Arambagh v Muktiyoddha
B.League
Live at 4:30 pm



Tendulkar is the greatest: Cairns
PTI, Dubai

Sitting on piles of runs in both forms of cricket and with virtually every batting record in his pocket, Sachin Tendulkar is the greatest batsman of the modern era, according to former New Zealand all-rounder Chris Cairns.
Enjoying every bit of his stint with the Lashings World XI after an illustrious career with the New Zealand team, Cairns was asked to name the best batsman of his era and the Kiwi picked Tendulkar.
Among the bowlers, Pakistani great Wasim Akram was Cairns' choice.

Blessed with six-hitting abilities and lively pace, Cairns was hailed as one of the few genuine all-rounders of his era. The affable Kiwi, however, rates Ian Botham, Imran Khan and Kapil Dev as the three best all-rounders of the modern era.
"In my view Ian Botham tops the list. He has won more matches and could easily turn a match with his effort," Cairns was quoted as saying by Gulf News.
"Imran Khan is next as the Pakistani all-rounder could bat at number four and also used to open the bowling.

Amal clinches Dhaka Open title
UNB, Dhaka

Amal Roy clinched the men's singles title of the Dhaka Open tennis competition when he defeated Ranjan Ram in the final at the Ramna National Tennis Complex yesterday.
After an initial struggle, Amal dispatched his opponent as he won 7-5, 6-2.
But both the finalists saw their doubles hope crushed when they lost to the pair of Prithul and Tazmul 3-6, 6-3, 6-4 in the final.

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Shot-happy Nafees annoys Ashraful



BISHWAJIT ROY from Kandy

Cricket made sure that rain was back to the hill station that saw brilliant sunshine for the last couple of days. The weather is almost synonymous with the game here and that was the reason everyone said that 'it's a natural macha (big brother)' after the first day's play of the third Test was almost spoiled by rain at the Asgiriya Stadium yesterday.

And local people believed that it would be surprising if the match were not affected by further rain because June-July always brings heavy shower to the city.
But the problem for the usually vulnerable Bangladesh top-order furthered, as they had to bat in a stop-start situation, something that they are not used to. Bangladesh captain Mohammad Ashraful also believed that it could have been a much better first innings showing than the first two games if rain didn't halt play so often.

"The wicket was fantastic before rain started to play foul. Actually we are not used to playing under such conditions. After the break, the ball was skidding on the pitch and bowlers got extra bounce. That's why we lost the wicket of Bashir bhai. Actually it was hard to concentrate in this situation," said Ashraful, who was unbeaten on four.

But in the end, the new Bangladesh captain looked gloomy because opener Shahriar Nafees threw away his wicket although he looked well set in the middle. It seemed that Ashraful lost a small battle after Nafees

made the same mistakes he had committed in his previous knocks.

There were strong opinions in the team management that the left-hander deserved a break after he repeatedly made the same mistakes. In the last two games, Nafees got off to good starts but only to spoil those by playing wild shots. As a result, most members of the think-tank were in favour of giving him a breather but the captain stood by him.

What annoyed them most was Nafees's attitude as it was learned that he defended his tendency of playing too many shots during the team meeting. Many were irritated by his arrogance, as they believed that confidence is good but over-confidence always invites trouble, a problem that was found in Hannan Sarker previously.

"It is frustrating because he looked so good. The way he got out was really frustrating but this can happen. I also made the same mistakes in the first Test so I am not sure whether confidence or over-confidence played a role behind the suicidal effort," said Ashraful.

"But I still believe that he is in good touch and only needs a big score to get back to his rhythm. We still have an innings in hand, so it would be unwise to say anything about him," he added.

The 23-year old Bangladesh skipper was however optimistic about his team's turnaround in the first innings.

"I think it is still possible to make a decent total. I am hopeful because we still have three specialist batsmen who are to bat tomorrow," said Ashraful, who slammed a century in the second innings of the second game at the

P Sara in Colombo.

Nafees however said that he went for the sweep shot to release the pressure against Muttiah Muralitharan.

"It's really frustrating the way I got out after making another good start. Actually I struggle to defend against Murali so I went for a sweep shot which was ultimately mistimed," he explained.

But the fact was that he failed to pay back his captain's confidence on him in his first challenge.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard at stumps on the first day of the third and final Test between Bangladesh and Sri Lanka at the Asgiriya Stadium in Kandy on Wednesday:

BANGLADESH: First innings
Omar lbw b Malinga 8
Nafees c De Silva b Muralidaran 29
Bashar c P Jayawardene 18
b Maharoo
Saleh c M Jayawardene 0
b Muralidaran
Ashraful not out 4
Imran not out 6
Extras: (b-4, lb-1, nb-1, w-1) 7
Total: (For 4 wkts in 29 overs) 72
Fall of wickets: 1-10, 2-50, 3-61, 4-64

To bat: Rahim, Mashrafe, Shahadat, Rafique, Rasel

Bowler O M R W
Malinga 6 2 22 1
De Silva 4 1 8 0
Maharoo 6 2 21 1
Muralidaran 9 5 10 2
Dilshan 4 1 6 0

SRI LANKA: M Jayawardene, Tharanga, Vandort, Sangakkara, Silva, Dilshan, P Jayawardene, Maharoo, Muralidaran, Malinga, De Silva

Toss: Sri Lanka.

Umpires: Rudi Koertzen and Suresh Shastri.



PHOTO: AFP

Bangladesh opener Shahriar Nafees sets himself to pull the ball on the opening day of the third Test against Sri Lanka at the Asgiriya Stadium in Kandy yesterday.

Sultan ready to go out?

SPORTS REPORTER

It seemed that Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) president SA Sultan is ready to respond to Sports Adviser Tapan Chowdhury's repeated calls to the unsuccessful federation officials to step down willingly.

A source at the National Sports Council (NSC) yesterday confirmed that it has received a letter from the BFF boss which provided a formula to hold a free and fair election at the football governing body of the country within a short time under the FIFA guidelines. The source added that Sultan also showed interest not to continue as a member of the federation in his letter, which came to hand a couple of days earlier.

The BFF is running on extra time after its executive committee,

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Marcus back in Eng fold



AFP, London

Marcus Trescothick was named Wednesday in England's provisional 30-man squad for the International Cricket Council (ICC) World Twenty20 tournament in South Africa in September.

The 31-year-old Somerset opening batsman has not played international cricket since September last year having flown home from the Ashes tour of Australia last November before the first Test with a recurrence of a stress-related illness.

Also included are two players yet to feature at any international level -- Sussex all-rounder Luke Wright and Essex batsman Mark Pettini. Meanwhile there was a surprise recall for Surrey leg-spinner Chris Schofield.

England, in common with all other sides, must trim their squad to a 15-man party by August 11 -- which should give Trescothick enough time to consider if he is ready to return to international cricket.

"We've decided to name him in this provisional squad in order to give us more flexibility should it be decided that Marcus is ready to return to international cricket before the tournament takes place," said England's chairman of selectors, David Graveney.

The recall of leg-spinner Schofield caps a remarkable revival in a senior career that appeared to have come to an end.

He was one of the first players handed an England central contract back in 2000 and he played two Tests against Zimbabwe.

But his career stalled and a bitter departure from Lancashire three years ago -- when he won a

BCB calls up thirty for T20 squad

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) yesterday announced a 30-member preliminary squad for the first Twenty20 World Championships to be held in South Africa this September.

There was a first time call-up in any national camp for all-rounder Nazmul Hossain Milon and batsman Nayeem Islam.

Milon, who bowls wrong-footed, earned this big break at the back of brilliant big-hitting displays last season, highlight of which was a hurricane 89-ball 144 when he brought back Dhaka from the dead in the National Cricket League one-day finale against Rajshahi in April. Nayeem on the other hand had an impressive season during which he played several big knocks.

Apart from the entire national squad, the selectors kept most of the players from the recently announced National Cricket Academy players as well as some from the A-team.

Experienced wicketkeeper Khaled Mashud was excluded from this squad, citing an end to his limited-over foray while only Dhiman Ghosh was named alongside Mushfiqur Rahim as the two wicketkeepers.

PRELIMINARY SQUAD

Mohammad Ashraful, Aftab Ahmed, Shahriar Nafees, Tamim Iqbal, Tushar Imran, Shakib Al Hasan, Mashrafe Bin Mortaza, Forhad Reza, Mohammad Sharif, Tapash Baisya, Alok Kapali, M o h a m m a d R a f i q u e, Mahmudullah Riyad, Mushfiqur Rahim, Abdur Razzak, Junaid Siddique, Jahurul Islam, Nazmus Sadat, Nazimuddin, Nadif Chowdhury, Suhawardi Shuvo, Syed Rasel, Nayeem Islam, Nazmul Hossain Milon, Dhiman Ghosh, Shahadat Hossain, Dolar Mahmud, Mohammad Shahjada, Ziaur Rahman and Gazi Salahuddin.

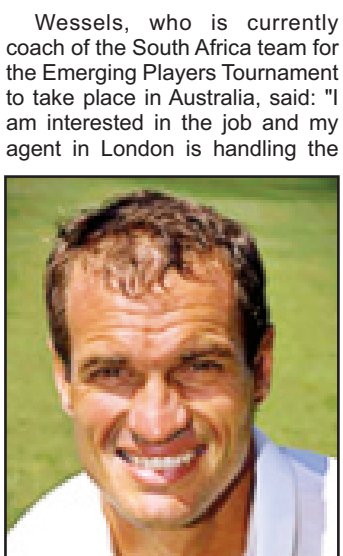
Wessels interested in coaching India



CRICINFO, undated

Kepler Wessels, the former South Africa captain, is believed to have expressed his interest in the job of India coach. A report in the Times of India said Wessels contacted the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) indirectly, his agent speaking to the BCCI through a senior member of the Indian team.

This would take to four the number of people -- the others being Australian John Dyson, Terry Oliver, the current Queensland coach, and New Zealand A coach Dave Nosworthy -- associated with the job since Graham Ford turned it down. The position has been vacant since Greg Chappell's exit after this year's World Cup.



KEPLER WESSELS

on my behalf. He was supposed to contact the Indian board. I have left everything to him."

Wessels's agent, David Ligertwood, informed the Times of India, "We manage a few Indian cricketers and one of them spoke to the board about Kepler. The answer was that the board would be interested in speaking to him. I have not heard anything after that, but will follow up shortly."

Ligertwood works for Athletes 1, the same agency that manages a few Indian players and has even secured county contracts for the likes of Sourav Ganguly and Harbhajan Singh.

Wessels has been the coach for Northamptonshire, while Dyson has earlier been in-charge of the Sri Lankan team.

The BCCI has so far not issued any statement.



PHOTO: STAR

Abahani defender Nazrul Islam (L) asks the rival fans to keep quiet after scoring their match winner against Brothers Union in yesterday's B. League match at the Bangabandhu National Stadium.

Abahani cross Brothers hurdle



SPORTS REPORTER

Veteran centre-back Nazrul Islam converted a second half penalty to give Abahani a 1-0 win against Brothers Union yesterday as the sky-blues consolidated their position in the B. League table.

With their tenth win in 16 matches, Abahani returned to the top with 35 points, opening up a two-point lead over Muktiyoddha -- who have played a match more -- and three ahead of 16-match Mohammedan.

On the other hand, Brothers' fifth loss in 16 games ensured that the defending two-time champions of the now-defunct premiership have crashed out of the title race completely as they stuck to 23 points.

The Oranges, who held Abahani to a goalless draw in the first leg, suffered early blows as fullback Lajuk, getting a start after a long break, picked up an injury two minutes after kick-off at the Bangabandhu National Stadium.

Indian coach Syed Nayee-muddin soon changed to a flat four-back system from 5-3-2 but it

seemed that it was not a day for the future Bangladesh national coach as striker Tapu began to limp after ten minutes. He was eventually replaced by Manju midway through the first half when Brothers had to weather a sky-blue storm.

Abahani, however, failed to make most of the early pressure despite loud cheers from a 5,000-strong crowd.

An overlapping fullback Siraji played one-two with Ibrahim to make the first break but his low drive was blocked by Nizam at the Brothers goal after seven minutes. In the next minute, Ibrahim was unfortunate to see his powerful shot come off his teammate Emily before Nizam smothered on a long-range effort by Ujjal.

As Brothers regrouped, league's top scorer Junior caught Abahani central defender Pradip napping in the 19th minute but the Nigerian failed to keep his shot from 12 yards on target.

With Abahani's domination fizzling out, Hicham Inani let fly a 30-yarder but the Moroccan midfielder's shot skimmed the upright much to the relief of Abahani custodian Biplab.

Abahani, who had only one foreigner in the line up in Ibrahim, enjoyed superior ball possession after the break and it was the Ghanaian striker who won the penalty on the hour.

The robust forward, who went clear of the last defender inside the box with a quickly-taken low freekick by Ujjal, was tripped from behind by Brothers rightback Rony as referee Abdul Hannan pointed to the spot.

Nazrul, however, needed two shots to get a legitimate goal. The national defender, who had scored an injury-time match winner in their 1-0 first-leg win against Rahmatganj and struck home a penalty against the same side in the 7-0 second-leg demolition, put the ball beyond the keeper from the spot but he was asked to re-kick for reasons unknown.

Nazrul made it even better the second time, sending Nizam the wrong way to seal the victory with his third league goal.

Amalesh Sen's decision to send

POINTS TABLE							
Teams	M	W	D	L	GF	GA	Pts
Abahani	16	10	5	1	25	7	35
Muktiyoddha	17	9	6	2	28	13	33
Mohammedan	16	9	5	2	35	10	32
Russel	17	7	8	2	19	29	29
Brothers	16	6	5	5	24	23	23
Farashganj	17	5	6	6	15	21	21
Arambagh	16	6	2	8	15	16	20
Ctg MSC	16	5	4	7	20	19	20
Khulna Abahani	16	3	3	10	16	34	12
Ctg Abahani	17	3	3	11	15	33	12
Rahmatganj	16	2	3	11	11	41	9

striker Tipu in place of Abul and pushing Ibrahim back to the midfield at one stage looked suspect as the tired Abahani legs failed to cope with the new positions.

The Oranges took control but they lacked the cutting edge, allowing their rivals from Dhanmondi to hit back with another series of attacks without any avail.

Ibrahim set Emily with a superb square pass on the edge of the area in the 83rd but the leading Abahani scorer placed the ball just wide despite Nizam was wrong-footed.

Emily made amends to the mistake in the next minute when he cut the ball from right for an unmarked Tipu, whose side-footed shot hit the sidebar.

Brothers got a half chance to equalise four minutes from time when the Abahani defenders half-cleared a ball but Mamun's low drive outside from the area was kicked out by Nazrul to safety, as Biplab was not required to make any serious save in the end.

Yellow cards: Biplab, Emily, Ibrahim (Abahani) and Masud Rana (Brothers).

TEAMS

ABAHANI: Biplab, Siraji, Nazrul, Pradip, Wali (Mintu), Zahed, Joy, Abul (Tipu), Ujjal, Ibrahim and Emily.

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