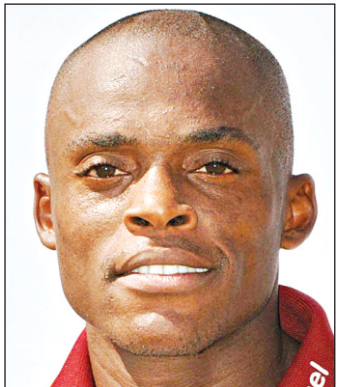




Did U Know?

The world's first roller coaster opened in 1884 at Coney Island, New York. It was designed by LaMarcus Thompson, an inventor and businessman from Ohio.



Daren Powell

(West Indies fast bowler)
"It was a big relief because we'd been losing, and we didn't want to be going home with our heads down. For the past year or so, I've been saying that I really want to come home from a series with my head up, smiling -- and it's so good that we beat England, you know, it was a real good one. When we travelled down on the bus to London, I spent some time looking at everyone on the bus...and it was just completely changed, a different bunch of players. Happy, joking, laughing and having a nice time. It's good to see everyone smiling, happy about what we did, and how we felt."



ESPN
Sportscenter India
Sports News
Live at 8:30 pm

Shah, Strauss shine on Day 3

CRICINFO, undated

Two batsmen who had missed out in the first innings, Andrew Strauss and Owais Shah, managed good batting practice on the third day of the tour game against the Indians at Chelmsford. Andrew Strauss's well-compiled 80 and Owais Shah's confident 43 not out entertained a sparse crowd before bad light stopped play with 43 overs to go. Early-morning showers and a rainy forecast suggested that play could be called off before the scheduled close.

Strauss shed some rust against a bowling attack that bowled a full length to him. He eased into his drives and made a determined effort to hang in there. The ball did beat his bat occasionally but he overcame the jitters with clean drives either side of the wicket. After lunch, he brought out his flowing drives and reached his fifty with a clean strike down the ground, one that had the non-striker running for cover. He fell trying to sweep an offbreak from Ramesh Powar but his 155-minute stay at the crease would no doubt boost his confidence ahead of the Lord's Test, in three days' time. Shah too was fluent in his stay and set himself up for a big one.

India's bowlers struggled on a featherbed of a pitch and unlike in the first innings, struggled to make early inroads. Zaheer Khan and Sreesanth pitched the ball up but were regularly driven down the ground and Ishant Sharma's no-ball malady continued. They will only be too happy if the light further deteriorates and the umpires call off play.

Earlier, Stuart Broad had brought the Indian innings to a close at 383 on the final day of the three-day game at Chelmsford.

Broad celebrated his call-up to the England Test side with a five-for, taking all three wickets that fell this morning. He was into his stride straight away and struck twice in his third over, inducing edges from Zaheer Khan and Sreesanth. He was at the receiving end of Dhoni's violent swishes; one swat down the ground nearly injured him before running away for four, but eventually uprooted his off stump. Dhoni, however, managed some useful practice ahead of the first Test, scoring 84-ball 76 in an innings that included seven fours and two sixes.

Nafees to stay



BISHWAJIT ROY from Colombo

A half-century in his final Test innings in Kandy seemed to come as a blessing for Shahriar Nafees as the Bangladesh opening batsman was retained for the one-day series against Sri Lanka after being told to return home just two days earlier.

Nafees, Habibul Bashar, Rajin Saleh, Khaled Mashud and Mohammad Sharif were the five players to be sent home on conclusion of the Test series but the team management's eleventh hour decision was to keep left-hander Nafees.

"Nafees looked to be in good touch," said national selector Akram Khan, who is touring with the team, yesterday after their return to the Lankan capital from Kandy.

"We are uncertain about (Mohammed) Rafique's return and thought an extra batsman would help," added the former national skipper.

Rafique will return to Dhaka for personal reasons and is due to come back but the team manage-

ment hinted that the ace left-arm spinner may not be available for the three ODIs in Colombo.

"If we think about future, keeping Nafees means sensible. Also, the way Javed (Omar) batted in his last innings, we are not impressed," Akram said.

The Tigers, whitewashed 3-0 in the Test series, will play a limited-overs warm-up match here on Wednesday in build-up to the one-day series.

Nafees made 64 in his last innings and captain Mohammad Ashraful believes that the left-handed batsman has showed signs of returning to form.

"Javed has given us partnerships consistently. But any captain would choose Nafees for a one-day match if he were in form.

"He is getting better and it's just a matter of time he gets a big score," said Ashraful with confidence.

Although the members of the team management, who opined that Nafees needed a break to realise how does it feel to be out of the team, could not give any satisfactory explanation over the sudden change of heart.

"I had packed my bags for the trip home. My omission (from the

one-day squad) was not unexpected. But this latest development is really surprising. Now my focus would be on getting among runs," said a surprised Nafees.

Bashar, Saleh, Mashud and Sharif will fly out of Colombo this morning while their replacements Aftab Ahmed, Tamim Iqbal, Mahmudullah Riyad and Forhad Reza joined the rest of the team yesterday.

Meanwhile, chief selector Faruque Ahmed told The Daily Star in Dhaka that he received the request of the team management to keep an additional player in Nafees.

"I had a talk with the captain (Ashraful) and he told me that the tour management wants to keep Nafees. I checked with the board whether there is any logistic problem in keeping an extra player in Sri Lanka. The board gave me the green signal and I agreed to the management's proposal of having a 15-member squad," Faruque told.

The first one-day will be held at P Sara on July 20 followed by the next two matches at the Premadasa Stadium on July 23 and 25.

Sachin feeling fine



AFP, Chelmsford

Sachin Tendulkar said he felt both very good and relieved after warming-up for next week's first Test at Lord's with 171 against England Lions.

The 63rd first-class hundred from the batsman nicknamed the 'Little Master' revived India from the depths of 14 for three but, arguably even more importantly, gave Tendulkar invaluable time in the middle ahead of Thursday's start of the opening match of a three-Test series.

"I was a little apprehensive. I wanted to go out and spend some time in the middle in a match situation," Tendulkar said after Saturday's innings, which saw India end the second day of this three-day fixture on 336 for seven in reply

to the 'A' side's 413 for eight declared.

"I'm feeling quite relieved that I've managed to play more than 200 balls," said Tendulkar, who in total faced 236 balls with one six and 26 fours.

The 34-year-old, Test cricket's leading century-maker with 37 in 137 matches, added: "I'm feeling very good. I wanted to get in plenty of good, quality practice before Lord's."

"I had gone a couple of weeks without playing any kind of cricket, so this innings was important for me. It brought me back to reality, and I'm excited about the Test match coming up," said the India batsman, who scored his first Test hundred as a 17-year-old at Old Trafford in 1990.

One member of the Lions attack could find themselves included in the England Test squad due to be named on Sunday after fast bowler

Stephen Harmison suffered a recurrence of his hernia injury.

However, Tendulkar, on what will probably be his last tour of England, refused to be drawn on who was best placed to be called up.

"I leave that to the English selectors," he said.

Graham Onions took three wickets for 69 runs and Stuart Broad two for 54. Chris Tremlett, who had Tendulkar dropped on 39 and 53, finished the day with one for 40 while all-rounder Tim Bresnan -- who'd earlier made a career-best 126 not out, had none for 45.

Broad, who has played nine one-day internationals, said he'd tried not to be distracted by talk of a Test call.

"I always aim to take wickets in every innings that I bowl, whether

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PM salutes beloved son



AFP, Kandy

Sri Lankan President Mahinda Rajapakse saluted Muttiah Muralidaran as the strife-torn nation on Sunday celebrated the spin wizard's incredible feats.

Muralidaran, 35, became only the second bowler after Australian Shane Warne to claim 700 Test wickets on Saturday as Sri Lanka hammered Bangladesh by an innings and 193 runs to sweep the three-match series.

Rajapakse, who was in Kandy town on official business, threw an informal celebratory dinner for Muralidaran at the presidential palace on Saturday night attended by both teams and officials.

Muralidaran, a Tamil, received a plaque from the president as tributes poured in for the master bowler

who needs just nine more wickets to overtake the retired Warne's world record of 708 wickets.

Sri Lankan captain Mahela Jayawardene hailed Muralidaran as the best bowler in the world, a view shared whole-heartedly by the rest of the cricket-mad island nation.

"We were not surprised at all that Murali got to 700," said Jayawardene. "He is, after all, the best bowler in the world and is sure to set new landmarks by the time he quits."

"We will remember Murali not only for his record-breaking feats but also for the man he is. He remains as humble as before and is someone to be treasured for ever."

Muralidaran reached the 700-wicket mark the same day Tamil Tiger rebels killed at least 16 government soldiers in heavy clashes in northern Sri Lanka.

The rebels are fighting for an independent homeland for the Tamil

minority on the Sinhalese-majority island, a 35-year-old conflict that has claimed more than 60,000 lives.

Muralidaran, meanwhile, set his eyes on taking 1,000 Test wickets and hopes to play for Sri Lanka till the 2011 limited-overs World Cup to be hosted in the Indian sub-continent.

"It is a big achievement but I think I can achieve a little bit more," Muralidaran said.

"I anyway knew I was going to get to 700. The challenge is whether I can take 1,000 Test wickets before I retire. I am now thinking about playing until the next World Cup."

Muralidaran, a veteran of 113 Tests who made his debut against Australia in 1992, said he had worked hard over the last 15 years to become one of the most feared bowlers in the game.

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PHOTO: AFP

Sri Lankan President Mahinda Rajapakse (L) shakes hands with spin wizard Muttiah Muralitharan at a hotel in Kandy on Saturday night after the bowler took his 700th Test wicket during the final Test against Bangladesh.



PHOTO: TIGERCRIKET.COM

Bangladesh batsmen Shahriar Nafees (L) and Mehrib Hossain relax on the team bus on way to Colombo from Kandy yesterday.

Women crush China

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh beat China by 87 runs yesterday as they kept their big-win habit intact in the ACC women's cricket tournament at the PT Ibrahim Institute ground in Johor.

Opting to bat first, Bangladesh were bowled out, for the first time, for 108 runs in 29.5 overs with Panna Ghosh top-scoring with 26 runs.

China batted for 22 overs but only could muster 22 runs before being bowled out in the face of some devastating bowling from Panna Ghosh, who took four wickets, and Titli Rani, who captured three.

After topping group B, Bangladesh play Hong Kong in the semifinal tomorrow.

Sharif, Saif stay on top

SPORTS REPORTER

Two local players and two from India are on top of the StanChart 9th National Schools Chess tournament at the BCF conference room yesterday.

Sharif Hossain of Nakhlapara School, Abdullah Al Saif of Quality Education School and Prantik Roy and Sayantan Das from Kolkata have four points at the end of the fourth round in the Class VI-X section.

In the girls section, Indian pair of Shaati Mazumder and Pritika Taya are in joint lead with four points while in the Reshma Jebun is in second position with Arna, Shaiy, Nishat and Tahmina.

Shayan Majumder of Kolkata and Mainuddin Ahmed Asif of Hazrat Shah Ali school are jointly leading with four points each in the class KG to V section.

Afridi backs free-hit rule

PTI, Karachi

Flamboyant Pakistani all-rounder Shahid Afridi on Sunday said he favoured the International Cricket Council's new rule of awarding a free hit to batsman after a no ball delivery in one-dayers, saying it would make the game more entertaining and exciting.

Afridi said he understood the apprehensions of fast bowlers

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Dhaka lift kabaddi title

SPORTS REPORTER

Dhaka clinched the inaugural women's Kabaddi competition when they beat Tangail in the final at the outer stadium Kabaddi court yesterday.

The home team won 33-26, including one lona, as they capped off their successful campaign.

Sports Adviser Tapan Chowdhury distributed prizes among the winners of the event, sponsored by Spectra Group.

During the game, the sports boss gifted Tk 15,000 to the men's Kabaddi team of the 15th Asian Games who won bronze while he presented Tk 10,000 to the women's team that won bronze in the SA Games.

Abahani back on top



SPORTS REPORTER

It was a day of revenge for touring sides as the B. League completed its 18th week yesterday.

Title contenders Abahani crushed their Khulna namesakes 5-1 away at Khulna Stadium to wipe out memories of a stunning 2-1 loss in Dhaka in the first leg.

In Dhaka, visiting Chittagong Mohammedan upset struggling giants Brothers Union 2-1 to settle scores of a 1-0 home loss in late April.

Abahani consolidated their position atop the table after their 11th win in 17 matches, opening up a three-point lead over archrivals Mohammedan.

The day began for the Dhaka sky-blues brightly. Unlike their first-leg clash, when they had stormed the Khulna Abahani goal but wasted a series of chances in the first half hour before eventually losing, Amalesh Sen's league leaders went ahead after three minutes with Ghanaian forward Awudu Ibrahim scoring in the third minute.

After a rather quiet first half, the game came alive after the break with four goals inside 20 minutes. Ibrahim got his second of the match -- his fifth in the league -- ten minutes after resumption but Khulna Abahani reduced the arrears a minute later through midfielder Tajul Islam.

But the visiting side took absolute control with goals by winger Abdullah Parvez and forward Tipu, in the 61 and 75 minutes, putting the result beyond doubt.

Emily sealed the victory one minute from time with his eighth strike in four games, the inform Abahani No. 10 taking his tally to ten goals.

Khulna Abahani remained bottom of the table along with Rahmatganj and fellow Abahani from Chittagong, all three on 12 points.

Chittagong Mohammedan, meanwhile, brightened their chances of a top-half finish when they came from a goal down to beat Brothers at the Bangabandhu National Stadium with goals from substitutes Rashedul Alam Dipu and Kamrul Islam Pavel.

Brothers dominated the first period but Mamun's shot midway through the first half was saved by goalkeeper Raju, who was substituted due to injury. Jalaluddin fluffed an easy chance on the stroke of halftime when he sideheaded a Masud Rana cross over the bar.

Junior came close to level scores in time added on but his powerful freekick from 30 yards was kept out by Titu for a corner.

Chittagong Mohammedan increased their collection to 22 points, just one behind Brothers after both have played 17 games.

TOP SCORERS
15 goals: Junior (Brothers)
14 goals: Paul (Mohammedan)
10 goals: Emeka (Mohammedan), Emily (Abahani)
8 goals: Alfaz (Muktijoddha)
7 goals: Robin (Farashganj)

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PHOTO: STAR

Dhaka players celebrate their triumph in the Spectra Group inter-district women's kabaddi tournament final at the Outer Stadium kabaddi court yesterday.