



Did U Know?

In the 2007 Wimbledon Championships 507 players representing 67 nations played 654 matches.



Kapil Dev
(Indian cricket legend)
"Every time people hope big things from Sachin Tendulkar but often it is only disappointment that we are left with. He is thought to be the backbone of the Indian team but many times he has not stood up to the occasion."



ESPN
Sportscenter India
Sports News
Live at 8:30 pm



B.League
Sk Russel v Abahani
Venue: Bangabandhu National Stadium
Time: 4:15 pm

Teams for Nehru and Merdeka tourneys

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) yesterday confirmed Bangladesh's opponents in the two international football tournaments to be played next month in Malaysia and India.

The BFF has decided to send the national team and the second string side to the two tournaments but it is still waiting to announce where the main team would go.

Apart from hosts Malaysia, the other teams to play in the Merdeka Cup (August 19-29) are Indonesia, Singapore, Myanmar and Maldives.

In Delhi, where the ONGC Nehru Cup will be held from August 16-28, Bangladesh will be playing alongside hosts India, Cambodia, Syria, Kyrgyzstan and another team yet to be confirmed.

The groupings will be done later.

Moeen urges clean sports arena

UNB, Tangail

Army chief General Moeen U Ahmed on Thursday called upon all to come forward to free the country's sporting arena from corruption, nepotism, politics and drugs.

The Army chief, who is the chairman of National Sports Council, made the call while addressing a meeting with Deputy Commissioners, Police superintendents and representatives of District Sports Associations of Tangail and five districts of the greater Mymensingh area at the Ghatail Shaheed Salahuddin Cantonment yesterday afternoon.

General Commanding Officer of Ghatail Cantonment Major General AKM Mujahiduddin, National Sports Council Secretary Aminul Islam and senior army officers were present.

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Real or rumour?



SPORTS REPORTER

After Wednesday's midnight drama that saw almost all the private TV channels prominently displaying a new ad-hoc committee of the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB), the government kept everyone guessing yesterday on whether it has really formed a new body of the most affluent federation of the country or not.

The Caretaker Government was set to form a new BCB after the en masse resignation of Mahbubul Anam-led executive committee save president M Abdul Aziz on Tuesday and Wednesday.

Although it was earlier learnt that the government would announce the new committee next week, drama late on Wednesday night saw it was apparently 'leaked' to the media.

In fact, what the TV channels showed was a 'probable draft committee' that was waiting for the approval of two most important individuals — Sports Adviser Tapan Chowdhury and NSC Chairman and Army Chief Moeen U Ahmed.

The 'elite panel' carried in the electronic media is: CGS Maj Gen Sinha Ibne Jamali (president); KZ Islam who served as board president and secretary and also pic-

neered school cricket in the 80s, former BCB secretary Tanvir Mazhar Tanna, Architect Mubashshar Hossain, industrialist and sports organiser Shafiqul Islam Kamal and Syed Fahim Munaim, press secretary to Chief Adviser of the CG (advisory board); former board officials Afzalur Rahman Sinha, Enayet Hossain Siraj, ASM Faruque, Shafiqul Islam Munna, Ahmed Sajjadul Alam Bobby, Khondokar Jamil Uddin and Reazuddin Al Mamun and ex-cricketers Gazi Ashraf Hossain Lipu, Tanjib Ahsan Saad and Shakil Kasem (members).

However, the National Sports Council (NSC), apex body of the country's sport, did not endorse the formation of any such committee. It also did not confirm to have sent any committee to the sports ministry for circular.

Meanwhile, the unconfirmed list evoked criticism among cricket lovers especially about the three members who belonged to the last executive committee, which has been blasted by different quarters as corrupt.

Afzalur Rahman's has been with the board under almost every committee while Mamun's political connection was behind his place in the board rather than his organisational skills. Jamiluddin, on the other hand, was not elected like his two colleagues but was a nominee of the

NSC, which later removed him.

Veteran cricketer ASM Faruque also had been a failure as national team manager during the 2003 World Cup in South Africa.

When contacted, a few names in the above mentioned list informed that they were in total darkness about the committee. They added that they have heard rumours and even saw it on TV but officially, they were not contacted.

Mubashshar, however, told The Daily Star he would like to see a workable committee.

"I do not know whether I am in or not but I appreciate the move. The government has repeatedly said it wants the whole sports arena let alone the cricket board free of corruption. It has also vowed to bring justice to the BCB's corruption and irregularities.

"However, if there are members of the last committee, how would we run investigations against our colleagues?"

"Also, I am against sitting with the members who ran the board with 'stay orders' after losing a legal battle with us in High Court," said Mubashshar, a member of the BCB board of directors, which was disbanded by the BNP-led government.

"I wish the steps of the government to reform doesn't get stained because the presence of some persons who ran the board illegally," he added.

Khulna Abahani break Mohammedan heart



SPORTS REPORTER

Khulna Abahani did a favour to their more illustrious Dhaka wing when the bottom-table side held visiting Mohammedan to a 1-1 draw in yesterday's crucial B. League match at the Khulna Stadium.

The result heavily dashed Mohammedan's title hopes in the inaugural professional football league, pushing top-of-the-table Abahani within a whisker of clinching the trophy.

Abahani's match against Sheikh Russel yesterday in the capital was postponed due to inclement weather and the sky-blues will need just two points from their remaining two matches.

The Abahani-Russel fixture has been revised for today and even if Amalesh Sen's league leaders miss out full points today, they will get another chance against Muktiyoddha in their league finale on July 30.

Only if Abahani lose both their matches, Mohammedan can win

the title on the final day of the competition provided they beat neighbour Arambagh on August 1.

Mohammedan, who raised their tally to 39 points, are still two points adrift of their archrivals Abahani. The draw was their sixth in 19 outings but Shafiqul Islam Manik's side were unfortunate not to get full points as their Nigerian striker and captain Mwach Ukwu Paul wasted a first-half penalty.

Mohammedan got the golden chance in the 35th minute but the league's second highest scorer (14 goals) Paul's feeble shot from the spot gave local goalkeeper Iran Sheikh no trouble at all.

There was chaos when some spectators used abusing remarks against Paul but the incident did not

hamper the proceedings.

The black and whites, who had thrashed Khulna Abahani 6-1 at home in the first leg, went into the break 0-0 after Paul's missed opportunity but conceded the lead two minutes after resumption.

It was striker GM Mamun, who got his maiden national cap earlier this month, put the hosts ahead with a header past a bemused Himel at the Mohammedan goal after rival defender Arif and midfielder Zahid hesitated to clear a long ball inside their area.

Mohammedan dominated the rest of the show and created numerous chances but managed just the equaliser on the hour when veteran Ariful Kabir Farhad took a right-side pass to beat Iran, who was brilliant under pressure throughout the second half.

Mohammedan coach Manik told The Daily Star over phone that they should have won the match after opening up the rival defence now and again.

"We created around ten chances in the second half but unlike the earlier matches, when we used to score one or two from four-five chances, we failed. Iran played superb but Paul's penalty was like a

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PHOTO: AFP

Superstar Sachin Tendulkar directs a teammate as the Indian team begin practice at the ECB Academy in Loughborough on Thursday.

Tigers return tomorrow

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh cricket team will return from their shambolic tour of Sri Lanka on Saturday evening.

After being whitewashed in the 3-match Test series, the Tigers were also thrashed in the one-day series that followed, as it yielded the same scoreline.

The Mohammad Ashraful-led squad will arrive in Dhaka on a Qatar Airways flight which will take them to Doha for a stopover before they make their way to the capital.

CSA gets players on board

CRICINFO, undated

Cricketer South Africa (CSA), the South African Cricketers Association (SACA), and the country's six professional franchises have agreed on a business model expected to make professional players "genuine stakeholders in the game." The agreement includes standardised contracts and benefits for players and regulations on the number of playing contracts.

"The Memorandum of Understanding provides for salary minimums and salary caps and for

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England wary of backlash Second Test starts today



AFP, Nottingham

India's much lauded middle-order quartet may have failed to score a fifty between them during the drawn first Test but England fast bowler Chris Tremlett believes that could change come the second match of the series, starting at Trent Bridge here on Friday.

There had been much talk leading up to the enthralling contest at Lord's as to how England would cope without the 'fab four' of Stephen Harmison, Matthew Hoggard, Simon Jones and Ashley Giles, their bowling quartet that reigned the Ashes in 2005, in what was the hosts first Test without any of them since that dramatic series win against Australia.

But after the recalled James Anderson, who took a Test-best five for 42 in the first innings, led an attack featuring left-arm quick Ryan Sidebottom, debutant Tremlett and left-arm spinner Monty Panesar to within a wicket of victory, the attention switched to India's 'fab four'.

India captain Rahul Dravid, Sachin Tendulkar, Sourav Ganguly and VVS Laxman managed just 192 runs between them at Lord's. However, it was a similar story

during India's last tour of England in 2002 when a modest opening Test tally of 259 was followed by the quartet compiling a further 1,294 runs between them in the next three Tests including five hundreds and five fifties.

Tremlett, a late call-up for the injured Matthew Hoggard at Lord's, was England's most successful bowler in the second innings with three for 52 before bad light and rain ended play just before tea with India nine wickets down.

"They are obviously great players and it would be stupid to say they are losing their touch," said Tremlett.

"I played for England Lions (the national A side) against India and Sachin made a hundred and he looked class," explained the 6ft 7in seamer, set to be a member of an unchanged England side.

"He still looks a very good player," added Tremlett, who modestly omitted to mention that he had had Tendulkar, who went on to make 171, twice dropped off his own bowling, on 39 and 53, during that warm-up match at Chelmsford which took place the week before the Lord's Test.

Not that Tremlett was overawed by the prospect of facing four of the world's best batsmen again, in the second of a three-Test series, after being part of arguably England's

best collective bowling display since 2005.

The fast bowlers guided by South Africa pace great turned England bowling coach Allan Donald, were rewarded for adhering to the old-fashioned virtues of line, length, late swing and well-directed hostile bowling.

"As a group in this Test we were very aggressive and worked together as a team. We did get in their faces. We didn't make them feel comfortable," Tremlett said.

Ganguly gave India an injury scare when he took no part during Wednesday's practice session because of a back problem that hampered the left-hander at Lord's.

Yuvraj Singh, the most likely replacement for the former India captain, said he expected a much improved batting performance at Trent Bridge.

"The last time we toured here all our batsmen got big runs. We know what to do. We are prepared. We just need to go out and perform."

England's batsmen looked fallible against India left-arm quicks Zaheer Khan and Rudra Pratap Singh and it was only thanks to Kevin Pietersen's second innings 134 that the tourists were put on the backfoot.

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Fleming, Bond approached Langer, Martyn reject ICL



AFP, Sydney

New Zealand Test captain Stephen Fleming has been approached to play in a multi-million dollar rebel Twenty20 series in India later this year, an Australian media report said Thursday.

The Australian newspaper reported that Fleming may retire as New Zealand skipper to take part in the breakaway Indian Cricket League (ICL) being bankrolled by the country's largest listed media group Zee Telefilms.

The newspaper cited unnamed cricket sources in New Zealand, India and Australia as saying that Fleming was being sought to captain one of the six teams in the competition.

Competition organisers are reportedly offering Fleming a three-year deal worth 500,000 dollars (440,000 US) annually.

They have already signed up West Indian great Brian Lara and sources close to organisers in India have told AFP Australian spin legend Shane Warne and a host of other international players were on the verge of signing up.

The Australian newspaper says recently-retired Australian fast bowler Glenn McGrath is among those in negotiations but his former teammates Damien Martyn and Justin Langer have rejected offers.

Fleming is the first current Test player to be speculatively linked to

the competition, all the others have retired.

Fleming, 34, is playing currently county cricket in England.

He retired from one-day cricket after the World Cup but is due to lead the New Zealand Test team to South Africa in late October and November, when the first ICL Twenty20 tournament is due to be played.

Cricinfo adds: ICL seems to be gaining momentum with marquee names like Shane Warne and Glenn McGrath most likely to join Brian Lara for the inaugural multi-million dollar Twenty20 tournament being funded by Zee Telefilms.

"Yes, they (Warne and McGrath) are on the verge of signing and they are working out the last few details", Kapil Dev, chairman of the executive board, told Cricinfo. "We should release the news within the next 24 hours."

Dean Jones, one of the executive directors on the ICL board, speaking from Sydney told Cricinfo that by next week a few more big names are expected to join the ICL which could have a snowballing effect, convincing many others who have been thinking twice before signing up. "I have spoken to a lot of players over the last month and the interest has been high," Jones said. Although refusing to commit to the names of Warne and McGrath, Jones said that by next week everything will be out in open. "We plan to announce a few big marquee names that will generate further interest from

others who have been thinking about the offers."

Fleming is one of the other names doing the rounds. His compatriot Shane Bond is also said to have been approached, along with the recently-retired Sri Lanka batsman Russel Arnold and the former Australia allrounder Ian Harvey.

Meanwhile, Jones confirmed that the Western Australian duo of Justin Langer and Damien Martyn have decided to not play for the moment. "Yes, they have decided not to take the offer for this year."

The ICL is a Twenty20 series proposed to be held around October in India featuring six teams comprising four international players and two Indian stars, with the rest made up of younger players.

"Potentially what we're about is trying to find young Indian kids to represent India, as well as potential young players from Kenya and Zimbabwe and maybe some Under-19s boys from Australia," Jones told Australian. "They're better off playing in this sort of league than playing club cricket for a month."

Kapil said the new league gave an opportunity for players to exploit the fact that India generated most of the revenue in world cricket. He termed the ICL "the most exciting thing," to happen to world cricket in recent times.