



Did U Know?

The highest score in the 2007 Cricket World Cup was amassed by India when they played up 413-5 in 50 overs against Bermuda.



Kapil Dev

(ICL chairman)
"Our cricket will go ahead as planned. No one can stop cricket from being played in India."
While reacting against comments by BCCI chief.



ESPN

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U-19s take lead

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Under-19 cricketers won their rain-interrupted third limited-overs match against hosts Malaysia by eight wickets at the STC cricket ground yesterday.

The visitors took a 2-1 lead in the four-match series after losing the second game by three wickets after a massive ten-wicket success in the first match. Bangladesh U-19s will play the last game tomorrow after a Twenty20 match scheduled for today against the Malaysian national team.

Rubel Hossain claimed four wickets and Shubhashis Roy captured three as Malaysia U-19s were reduced to 108-8 in 35.2 overs before rain stopped play.

Bangladesh achieved the revised target of 102 (35 overs) just in 15 overs with the loss of two wickets. Mohammad Mithun scored unbeaten 41 and Rony Talukdar added 35.

Talat brands ICL 'Micky Mouse' cricket

PTI, Karachi

Pakistan team manager Talat Ali has laughed off attempts by the Indian Cricket League to rope in Pakistani cricketers, saying ICL was nothing more than 'Micky Mouse' cricket and lacked potential to tempt quality players.

"I use this word because even if it is held it is not official or serious cricket. It is a rebel series not involving countries and it would be more befitting if it was held in Disneyland instead of in a Test playing nation," Ali said.

ICL's efforts to rope in Pakistani players would not see the light of day, he claimed.

"I don't see this league tempting our players no matter what stage of their career they are in," he said.

Reacting to ICL's claims that it has been launched to scout talent, Ali said that was the responsibility of the respective cricket boards and not of private entrepreneurs.

"Even if someone wants to do something privately for the sport and young players they must have the blessings of the concerned cricket authorities and an example of this is the MRF Pace Academy in India or Intikhab Alam's academy in Muridke." But even as Ali came out with his strong statement against ICL, concerns are growing in Pakistan cricket over senior players Abdul Razzaq and Mohammad Yousuf failing to sign the new central contracts offered by PCB.

Razzaq and Yousuf are said to be among the seven Pakistan players who have been offered lucrative contracts by the ICL although Yousuf has denied getting any such offer.

Helal tenders resignation

Football

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) president SA Sultan yesterday confirmed that he has received the resignation letter of federation general secretary Anwarul Huq Helal.

It clearly looks to be the best kept secret as the news was broken to the press after daylong rumour that Helal would soon step down.

In fact, the veteran organiser had tendered his resignation on July 24.

Just after Sultan told reporters about the sensational news, Helal told The Daily Star that he had submitted his resignation letter to the BFF president last month.

"The reason is personal. I don't want to say any more," said Helal, who spent hours with journalists at his office last evening without nodding a single time when he was repeatedly asked about the rumour. It is expected that Helal, elected in 2003, will serve the BFF till his application is accepted.

Sultan also said that his chief executive has sighted personal reasons behind the decision.

"I have got it and talked with him but he did not say anything beyond personal reasons," informed Sultan.

The BFF boss had a sitting with

the federation members available in the capital yesterday and called an emergency meeting tomorrow to discuss the issue.

"Whether Helal's resignation is accepted or not would be decided in our executive committee meeting on Wednesday," added Sultan.

It was the second incident of a chief executive of a sport federation resigning after Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) general secretary Mahbubul Anam's resignation last



ANWARUL HUQ HELAL

month. However, it was followed by en masse resignation of the BCB members.

It had been reported earlier that the BFF president, a former MP of

the BNP-led government, himself was ready to step down.

Responding to Sports Adviser Tapan Chowdhury's repeated call to the unsuccessful federation officials to quit willingly, Sultan in July wrote a letter to the National Sports Council giving 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.

Sultan, who has repeatedly refused to admit his federation as 'a failure', reportedly showed no interest to continue as a member of the federation any further.

The BFF is already running on extra time after its executive committee, which expired last April, was given the responsibility by the FIFA and AFC to amend its constitution according to FIFA statutes before holding an election. The incumbent BFF executive committee was given a maximum time of one year to complete the job.

With the Caretaker Government firm to reform the sports federations, it would not be surprising if the BFF follows in the footsteps of its cricket counterpart.

Inter-ministerial meeting on WC held

SPORTS REPORTER

A routine inter-ministerial meeting on preparation for the ICC Cricket World Cup 2011 was held yesterday with Youth and Sports Adviser Tapan Chowdhury in the chair.

BCB ad-hoc committee members Ahmed Sajjadul Alam Bobby and Gazi Ashraf Hossain Lipu attended the meeting along with chief executive officer Mahmudur Rahman.

High officials of Home, Information, Commerce, Foreign Affairs, LGRD, Civil Aviation and Tourism, Finance, Health and Family Welfare and Telecommunications ministries were also present.

Bangladesh is one of co-hosts of the biggest cricket event and it will host the opening ceremony besides six matches and a few practice games during the carnival.

A lot of issues came to discussion including preparing the stadiums in line with the demands of the International Cricket Council (ICC).

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Dhoni India's T20 captain?

Cricket

AFP, New Delhi

Mahendra Singh Dhoni is almost certain to be named India's captain when the selectors meet on Tuesday to pick the squad for the inaugural Twenty20 World Championships in September.

The hard-hitting batsman and wicket-keeper is the preferred choice of the selectors after regular captain Rahul Dravid and senior pros Sachin Tendulkar and Sourav Ganguly opted out of the tournament.

Dhoni, 26, is David's deputy in one-day cricket and is regarded as one of the most exciting batsmen in the game with a penchant for hitting sixes.

Aggressive opener Virender Sehwag, left-arm seamer Irfan Pathan and off-spinner Harbhajan Singh, who were axed for the ongo-

ing tour of England, are also set to make the 15-man squad.

India, who initially opposed the game's new format that has proved popular with audiences worldwide, have played just one Twenty20 international so far, against South Africa in Johannesburg last December.

The Indians won that game by a flattering six-wicket margin, chasing down South Africa's 126-9 with one delivery to spare.

The 12-nation world championships will be played in three South African cities, Johannesburg, Cape Town and Durban, from September 11-24.

India are drawn with Pakistan and Scotland in Group D of the preliminary league, with the top two advancing to the Super Eights round.

The tournament features the nine nations currently playing Test cricket along with Zimbabwe, Kenya and Scotland.

Freddie back in Eng fold

Cricket

AFP, London

Andrew Flintoff was named Monday in both England's squad for the upcoming one-day international series against India and next month's inaugural World Twenty20 in South Africa.

The 29-year-old all-rounder returned to county duty with Lancashire last week after a third bout of ankle surgery in two years.

He is now set to make his international comeback during the seven-match one-day series at home to India, which starts on August 21.

Also included is fellow all-rounder Ravi Bopara, one of England's few successes from their disappointing World Cup campaign in the Caribbean.

He missed the home one-day series against the West Indies, which England lost, earlier this season because of a thigh injury.

But England Test captain

Michael Vaughan and Test opener Andrew Strauss have been omitted.

"Our squad for the NatWest Series against India contains the majority of the players chosen against West Indies earlier this summer," said England's chairman of selectors, David Graveney, who announced the squad at The Oval.

"We are pleased to welcome Ravi Bopara and Andrew Flintoff back to the squad and we will continue to monitor Andrew's rehabilitation from his ankle injury closely in the run-up to the tournament against India.

"India will be tough opponents in the 50-over game and the challenge for the team will be to demonstrate greater consistency in

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ANDREW FLINTOFF

Sports united for flood victims

SPORTS REPORTER

The country's sports arena yesterday donated over Tk 38 lakh to the Chief Adviser's relief fund for the flood victims.

Army Chief and chairman of National Sports Council (NSC) General Moeen U Ahmed along with presidents of Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB), Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF), Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB), National Shooting Federation (NSF) and others handed over a cheque to Chief Adviser Dr Fakhruddin Ahmed yesterday afternoon.

The fund was raised by different sport federations and organisations with BCB donating highest Tk 10 lakh, BFF Tk 5 lakh and the NSC Tk 2 lakh.

The NSC has also decided to donate its staff salary of one day to the relief fund in the wake of the ongoing flood situation.



PHOTO: AFP

Russian star Maria Sharapova is all smiles as she displays her trophy after winning the San Diego Classic by beating Patty Schnyder in the final in California on Sunday.

GP delight for disabled

SPORTS REPORTER

Grameenphone came forward to stand beside the disabled athletes of the country when the cellular phone operators signed an agreement with Special Olympics Bangladesh at a local hotel yesterday.

Grameenphone will sponsor the Bangladesh team in next year's Special Olympic Games to be held in Shanghai, China from October 2 to 11 apart from continuing financial support till 2011 under its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) programme.

It will not only bear all expenses of the tours but also as an extension of its support, Grameenphone plans to assist in developing the capacity of Special Olympics as well as its athletes by organising regional and national competitions to search for new talents and train them for the future.

Bangladesh have been participating in the Special Olympics Summer Games since 1995 and they have bagged 37 gold, 22 silver and 19 bronze medals from the last three meets.

This time, a total of 49 athletes

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Letter motivated Lawson

Cricket

AFP, Sydney

Australian Geoff Lawson says a personal letter from Bob Woolmer's widow is a comfort and a reassurance that there is no reason to fear his new position as Pakistan's cricket coach.

Lawson, 49, last month succeeded former England batsman Woolmer, who died during the World Cup in the Caribbean five months ago. He edged out two other short-listed Australians, Dav Whatmore and Richard Done.

A former Australian Test fast bowler, he said he could not see a downside to what is arguably the most volatile job in international cricket.

For every congratulatory message Lawson has received since his appointment, he said friends have bombarded him with references to stranglings, suicide bombings, flaming effigies and the whereabouts of Osama bin Laden.

Yet Lawson, who leaves for Lahore on August 21, denies having any doubts about his new role.

He said he had already decided to accept the two-year post when he received a letter from Woolmer's widow, Gill, who lives in South Africa.

"It's a lovely letter about how he loved coaching Pakistan, loved the people and she wished me all the best," Lawson told a Sydney newspaper.

"It comforted me in the fact (Woolmer's family) gave me their support and they don't have any concerns whatsoever."

A bungled investigation into Woolmer's death at this year's World Cup began as a murder case but concluded, months later, that he died of natural causes.

There are wider security issues in Pakistan. The Australian field hockey team has withdrawn from the Champions Trophy in Lahore in December following last month's bloody military siege at the Red Mosque in Islamabad.

A Cricket Australia delegation has returned from a security mission to Pakistan, confident Australia's first tour of the country in 10 years will proceed next March.

Lawson said he was shocked by what he described as an extraordinary misunderstanding of safety in Pakistan.

"The amount of people who have said to me congratulations, but you're mad," Lawson told the newspaper.

"There are less concerns than I'd have going to London or New York. I was in England in 2005 when all the

Sharapova ends drought

AFP, San Diego

Maria Sharapova captured her first WTA title of 2007 Sunday with a victory at the 1.34 million-dollar San Diego Classic.

The top-seeded Russian defeated Switzerland's Patty Schnyder, 6-2, 3-6, 6-0, to repeat as champion at the hard court tournament that proved a springboard to her US Open triumph weeks later.

Sharapova had appeared to be on her way to another runaway victory after taking the first set in convincing fashion.

But Schnyder converted a critical break point in the second set to go ahead, 5-3, and served out the set to force the winner-take-all finale.

"I don't think we've ever played an easy match," Sharapova said. "She's a lefty so she makes it extra tricky for everyone."

Sharapova restored her momentum in the decisive set, breaking Schnyder in the second game before winning the final four games to close out the match.

The Russian, ranked second in the world, improved to 6-1 lifetime against Schnyder and has won the last five meetings between the players, including a thrilling three-set triumph in the fourth round of this year's French Open.

In winning her first tournament since Linz last October, the 20-year-old Russian appears fully recovered from a shoulder injury that had sidelined her since Wimbledon.

"I won here last year and went on to win the US Open so it does help my confidence," Sharapova said.

Schnyder, 28, remained without a title since the 2005 season opener at Gold Coast - her 10th career championship.

bombs went off, and that was scary. "(People) see the Red Mosque shootout there and hear about bin Laden hiding in the hills of Pakistan. But it's like if you're hiding in outback Australia and you live in Sydney.

"The Australian hockey team decided not to go, I find that astonishing. As sports people in Australia are revered, sports people in the sub-continent are deities almost. If you're involved in sport, that's the safest situation to be in."

The Pakistan board has demanded a major tournament victory in the next two years, a condition which Lawson deems to be fair.

"I don't have fears of failure, I don't have fears of outside influences, I don't have fears of dealing with politics," he said.

"For me, it's an adventure as well. You don't live there that much and I think that's a bit of a pity. I'd love to live for three months with the people."

Lawson's family will remain in Sydney, which he says is a practical solution for his son, who will begin senior high school next year.



PHOTO: STAR

Grameenphone managing director Erik Aas is seen with disabled athletes and officials of the Special Olympics Bangladesh at a local hotel yesterday.