



Did U Know?

Sometimes boxers apply live leeches to their black eyes. This sucks out the blood from the crushed tissue, evidently lessening the blackness, or promoting healing.



Ian Chappell
(Former Australia cricket captain)
"I cannot see how England are going to win against decent sides with a wicketkeeper who is woeful. An old skipper of mine, Les Favell, said that once a wicketkeeper starts costing you games, he's got to go, Matthew Prior is in that category for me."
While blasting the England wicketkeeper.

What to WATCH

ESPN
Sportscenter India
Sports News
Live at 8:30 pm

Bhutia talks of winning

PTI, New Delhi

India have a realistic chance of winning Nehru Cup football tournament starting on Saturday, said skipper Baichung Bhutia as he advised his side to concentrate on one match at a time.

"The way our pre-season preparation has been and the manner in which our training sessions have gone, winning the tournament is a realistic expectation," Bhutia said.

"However, it is not going to be easy as we cannot take any team lightly. We need to take it one match at a time and not look at the end result," the Mohun Bagan striker said.

India take on Cambodia in the tournament opener at the Ambedkar Stadium and coach Bob Houghton said he was not looking

SEE PAGE 21 COL 5

DC Gold Cup from Aug 25

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khagrachhari

Defending champions Khagrachhari take on Panchhari in the opening match of the DC Gold Cup football tournament on August 25.

More than Taka one lakh was budgeted for the second such tournament.

A press conference was held at the District Commissioner office in connection with the competition yesterday.

Deputy Commissioner Mohammad Shahadat Hossain headed the meeting. Among others present were ADC Mohammad Khalilur Rahman, ADC Tapon Kanti Gosh, Additional District Magistrate Mohammad Shamsuddoha, 25 club representatives and district sports association authorities.

Merdeka Cup again after 24 years

Football

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh enter uncharted territories when Hasanuzzaman Babloo takes the second-string national team to Malaysia for the Merdeka Cup.

The team will leave Dhaka on Saturday to take part in the prestigious international football tournament after a gap of 24 years.

The Bangladesh Football Federation's decision to send two national teams to different events at the same time – the apparently stronger team left Dhaka yesterday morning for the Nehru Cup under guidance of head coach Syed Nayeemuddin – naturally handed Babloo the weaklings of local football with some exception.

However, the former national winger, who has often been given charge of the national team whenever the federation misses out a foreign coach, vowed to fight the oppositions in the group stage but for Zimbabwe.

It would be the first time Bangladesh will face an African nation in a football international and the coach, addressing a press briefing at the BFF Bhaban yesterday, admitted he had little idea about the Zimbabweans.

Bangladesh, who begin their campaign in Group B against Southeast Asian opponents Indonesia on August 21, will face Singapore and Zimbabwe on August 23 and 25 respectively. All matches will be played at the Shah Alam Stadium.

Myanmar, Lesotho, Laos and hosts Malaysia are in Group A of the eight-team meet.

Hassan Al Mamun, who got the national armband for the first time, would look to regain his position as rightback in the main team for the SAFF Championship this December through this tournament after missing international activities in the entire last season due to injury.

The captain will have the experience of former national stars like Parvez Babu, Mahmudul Hassan, Matiuur Munna and Saifur Rahman

Moni, a few fresh faces apart from a set of players who have been playing for long in the domestic circuit but made this level for the first time.

Moni, however, will be the only seasoned striker with two first-timers -- Mohammedan's Mohammed Rony and Khulna Abahan's GM Mamun -- chosen as his partners.

"Yes, my side have a problem in striking with just one experienced player. But it is a national problem now as most of the teams use foreign strikers for result," said Babloo.

"But I don't feel my boys are weaker than the team to play in the Nehru Cup," said Babloo dismissing views of the weak-strong national teams that had been the talk of the sports arena in recent days.

"The seniors have responded better in the camp than the younger ones. And my experience of handling the national and the Olympic teams in the last six months gives me the feeling that

SEE PAGE 21 COL 1



Nehru Cup-bound Bangladesh team captain Nazrul Islam boards a bus with his teammates at the BFF Bhaban on way to the ZIA yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

NO SPONSOR YET

BCB names all 16 committees

SPORTS REPORTER

A marathon meeting of the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB), the third of the ad-hoc committees, yesterday completed formation of its 16 standing committees.

Only the top two persons of the standing committees had been named after the board's first meeting and the complete committees feature cricket personalities like coach Jalal Ahmed Chowdhury (operations committee), former national cricketers Jahangir Shah Badshah (tournament committee), GS Hassan Tamim (game development committee), Selim Shahed (finance committee) and Tanjib Ahsan Saad (umpires committee).

With more pending issues on the agenda, there was hardly any progress in matters like new sponsor of the national team and their new coach.

Media committee chairman

SEE PAGE 21 COL 2

Mashrafe the gunslinger!

Tigers return today

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

Mashrafe Bin Mortaza lived up to his maverick reputation when he hit the target five times out of five in the group firing session on the final day of the Tigers' boot camp at Bangladesh Army's School of Infantry and Tactics (SI&T) in Sylhet yesterday.

Visibly ecstatic, the fast bowler made sure that everyone was aware of his accomplishment with an SMG within a 100m range. All-rounder Forhad Reza was the other notable shooter during the session, which also included a demonstration of warfare.

Due to heavy rain, the planned

tiger chase could not be held. Instead, the national players went on a 5km run.

At the end of the day, Major Ashek called up each player individually from their room for an appraisal session where the national players were asked about their experience during the stint in the camp.

Meanwhile, wicketkeeper Mushfiqur Rahim endured another day of high fever while left-arm spinner Abdur Razaq also had a leg injury. Rahim's condition prevented him from taking part in any of the day's activities.

The players, who are heading back to Dhaka today, visited the shrines of Hazrat Shah Jalal (RA) and Hazrat Shah Paran (RA) in the evening.

Charity match deferred

SPORTS REPORTER

Today's charity football match between footballers and silver screen stars to raise fund for the flood victims has been put back for inclement weather.

The organisers have rescheduled the match for next Thursday at the Bangabandhu National Stadium.

Rajib loses in fourth round

SPORTS REPORTER

International Master Enamul Hossain Rajib lost to Belarusian Grand Master Aleksandarov Aleksej in his fourth round game of the 17th Abu Dhabi International Chess Festival yesterday.

He remains at 2.5 points. GM Amin Basem of Egypt now has solo lead with a maximum of four points.

Football resumes in Sylhet

IQBAL SIDDIQUEE, Sylhet

After being suspended for seven years, the 16-team First Division Football League began at the Sylhet stadium yesterday.

Munna of United Sporting Club slammed a hat-trick as his club dismantled Apollo 12 Club 6-0 in the opening match. Selim struck twice and Mosleh scored one goal.

Long standing disputes, including legal battles between the District Sports Association and the local clubs, stood on the way of the yearly competition. However, the cases were resolved recently as they were withdrawn.

Divisional Commissioner of Sylhet Aziz Hasan formally inaugurated the league while Deputy Inspector General of Sylhet Police Abdus Salam attended as special guest.

Each team will be allowed to register maximum 3 players from overseas this year, officials said.

Malik cool on revolt

PTI, Karachi

Pakistan captain Shoaib Malik has denied unconfirmed reports that some six players of the South Africa-bound squad have threatened not to play in the Twenty20 World Championship if the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) did not take action against one of its senior officials.

Some television channels reported that Malik had been involved in a row with Zakir Khan, the Director of Cricket Operations, over the manner in which fast bowler, Shoaib Akhtar had left the training camp without informing team manager Talat Ali.

Reports said that Zakir had questioned why Malik had allowed Akhtar to leave the camp without informing the manager after the fast bowler said in his appeal he had informed the captain before leaving the camp.

The board had fined Akhtar 300,000 rupees and docked points from his central contract for leaving the camp without permission.

SEE PAGE 21 COL 1

Farhat's yes to ICL

Cricket

AFP, Lahore

Out of favour opener Imran Farhat Thursday became the first Pakistani cricketer to confirm he is on the verge of signing a lucrative deal with a breakaway Indian league.

"It's almost done and I am about to sign the deal to play in the India league," Farhat told AFP.

His commitment is likely to earn him around 300,000 US dollars for a season but may cost him a place in the national side in the future.

The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) has warned that any player who chooses to participate in the multi-million-dollar rebel league will not be considered for future selection in the national team, but Farhat was unperturbed.

"Look what has happened to me in the past six or seven months and I am not comfortable with that. I don't only want a central contract but I want playing opportunities," said

Farhat, who was axed from the 15-man Pakistan squad for the Twenty20 World Cup.

Top Pakistani cricketers were targeted for the breakaway Indian Cricket League (ICL), which is being bankrolled by Zee Telefilms, India's largest listed media company.

Seven current players -- captain Shoaib Malik, Shoaib Akhtar, Mohammad Asif, Shahid Afridi, Younis Khan, Mohammad Yousuf and Abdul Razaq -- were offered lucrative contracts to play in the ICL Twenty20 tournament.

Akhtar, Malik, Asif, Afridi and Younis snubbed the offers while Yousuf and Razaq -- both dropped from next month's Twenty20 World Cup in South Africa and yet to sign with the PCB -- are still considering their offers.

Former captain Inzamamul Haq, who retired from one-day cricket after Pakistan's first-round exit from the World Cup in the Caribbean, is also weighing his options.

Most of the players linked to the ICL are retired, semi-retired or

unable to hold a place in their national side.

Farhat, a 27-year-old left-handed batsman, has scored 1,655 runs in 27 Tests and 974 runs in 33 one-day internationals. He was also overlooked for the 50-over World Cup held in the Caribbean earlier this year.

Farhat was fined and reprimanded for a phone call he made to the chief selector Salahuddin Ahmed after he was not picked for a one-day series against Sri Lanka in May this year.

The cricketer was then placed on six-months probation during which his behaviour and attitude were to be monitored.

Farhat said he has sent a notice to the PCB asking them to release him from his players' contract.

"I am a professional cricketer and get offers to play. What has happened with me shows that my future is not safe," he said.

Bedi isn't bothered

Cricket

AFP, New Delhi

Former India captain Bishan Bedi has rubbished Muralidaran's demand for monetary damages for suggesting the Sri Lankan off-spinner was a cheat, reports said on Thursday.

"I am a free man and I have a right to express my opinion," Bedi, 60, was quoted as saying by the Times of India. "I haven't said anything new. Everyone knows for years my views on the matter."

Bedi, a classical left-arm spinner who took 266 wickets in 67 Tests before retiring in 1979, said last week that Muralidaran's unusual bowling action made him "the best shot-putter in the history of cricket."

"The most worrying thing is that young boys are trying to emulate

him. So the ICC (International Cricket Council) have ended up creating a monster with all their technological nonsense to help him continue," he said.

Muralidaran's manager Kushil Gunasekera said on Wednesday that his lawyers had written a letter to Bedi, demanding approximately 6.7 million dollars, as damages for what he said were "derogatory" remarks.

Gunasekera said lawyers gave Bedi 14 days to respond and will later decide whether to file court action against him.

The outspoken Bedi told the Times of India that the ICC should take the blame for letting Muralidaran bowl with a bent arm, which the bowler attributes to a deformity.

"It's not poor Murali's fault. My grouse is against the ICC, which

may yet rue this decision, the paper quoted him saying.

"Cricket has been a part of my existence for as long as I can remember and I can't bear to see the spirit of the game being flouted."

"Murali's success has prompted kids from Sri Lanka to Maharashtra to Gujarat to emulate his action. Can that be a good thing for cricket?"

Muralidaran, 35, is just nine wickets away from surpassing retired Australian leg-spinner Shane Warne's world-record tally of 708.

He hopes to accomplish the feat when Sri Lanka play two Tests in Australia in November or during the home series against England in December.

Muralidaran's glittering 113-

SEE PAGE 21 COL 1

Boucher in hot water

Cricket

AFP, Johannesburg

The row over the omission of Jacques Kallis from South Africa's World Twenty20 team deepened on Wednesday when wicketkeeper Mark Boucher was summoned to a disciplinary hearing over comments he made criticising the decision.

Cricketer South Africa said Boucher would have to attend a hearing Friday on five counts of breaching the body's rules and code of conduct following comments attributed to him in a newspaper article.

Boucher was quoted by the Business Day newspaper as suggesting there were ulterior motives for Kallis being left out. "It is either those who have an issue with him, and have a chip on their shoulders, or those who have ulterior motives." He did not elaborate.

Boucher said of Kallis, who resigned as South African vice-captain after being left out: "He's the best all-rounder we've ever had and he's saved more (limited overs)

games than anyone realises -- and he is a far better one-day player than he is given credit for."

He poured scorn on recent allegations about excessive drinking in the camp and the existence of a senior players' clique.

"In my off-season I have been doing some building on my house and reading about my being an alcoholic," he said. "I see pictures of myself and Herschelle (Gibbs)

who do we want running things, the senior players or the junior players?" he asked. "When I first started out and I would see Hansie Cronje, Brian McMillan, Allan Donald, Gary Kirsten and Jonty Rhodes chatting together, I would simply think 'Oh, the senior guys are having a chat. That's fine. It's a good sign if the guys are getting together to discuss things -- five heads are better than one.'"

Unlike Kallis, his close friend and business partner, Boucher was picked in the Twenty20 squad but he was lukewarm about the tournament, to be staged in South Africa next month.

"First prize for those of us who love cricket is to be Test world

SEE PAGE 21 COL 1



India fast bowler Rudra Pratap Singh appeals successfully to remove Scotland batsman Fraser Watts for six during their one-off one-day international at Titwood in Glasgow on Thursday.

PHOTO: INTERNET

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