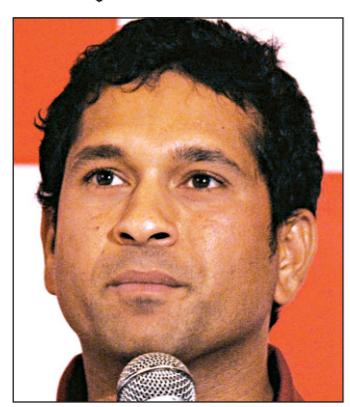




Did U Know?

Women's football made its debut as an Olympic sport at the 1996 Atlanta Games.



Sachin Tendulkar

(Superstar Indian batsman)
"The thought of retirement has not crossed my mind. I am still enjoying the game very much and want to play for as long as I can. Cricket means a lot to me."



TEN Sports

US Open Tennis
Day Thirteen
Live from 9:00 pm
ESPN
England v India
Seventh ODI
Live from 3:15 pm
STAR Sports
Euro 2008 Qualifiers
England v Israel
Live from 9:50 pm

Clubs given more time

SPORTS REPORTER

The pending relegation league of the Dhaka Premier League could be deferred further as the Cricket Committee of the Dhaka Metropolis (CCDM) has asked the working committee of the Bangladesh Cricket Board to oversee the matter.

Brothers Union, Indira Road and City Club have asked for more time during yesterday's meeting at the CCDM office in Bangabandhu National Stadium. With the weather condition, player availability and the fact that it is merely the beginning of a season all going against the scheduling of the 3-team survival play-off, the three clubs have pleaded for more time.

But CCDM chairman Gazi Ashraf Hossain Lipu has said that no matter what, the relegation must take place but the scheduling should be decided by the working committee.

The BCB working committee had earlier decided that the relegation league, postponed by the last board regime, will take place by the end of September.

Bringing reference from 1980s, the clubs have always floated the idea whether they can all stay in the Premier League.

Hockey team face Pakistan today

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh will take on a wounded Pakistan in the classification match for 5th-8th places in the 7th Asia Cup hockey tournament today in Chennai.

The match will kick off at 7.30am.

Bangladesh finished fourth in their group while three-time Asia Cup champions Pakistan failed to make it to the semifinals, ending third behind Malaysia and Japan in their Pool.

Bangladesh, who beat Thailand 13-0 and Sri Lanka 3-2 and lost 6-0 to both India and China, went down 8-0 to South Korea on Thursday with Jang Jong Hyun scoring four goals for Korea and Kang Moon finding the net twice.

The two semifinals – India-Japan and Malaysia-Korea – will be held this afternoon.

In the day's other classification games, Singapore meet Thailand while China play Hong Kong.

Coach search to continue!

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

other Australian candidate, for the presentation is also uncertain.

"Houghton informed us that he has to stay with his elderly parents and that it would be impossible for him to stay in the race. We are in a difficult situation about appointing the new coach," said Lipu.

"No doubt we will desperately try to settle the issue before the next assignment but everybody should understand one thing that we should appoint someone who is fit for the job. We can't compromise with our requirements," he added.

Lipu also hinted that they will extend their search to the subcontinent.

"We are also trying to negotiate with new coaches besides those in the shortlist. Of course we extend our search for coaches in the subcontinent because we desperately need coaches not only for the national team but also at different levels in the system," he said.

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NCA beat Strike

SPORTS REPORTER

BCB National Cricket Academy (NCA) thrived on two half centuries by Naseem Islam and Dhiman Gosh to register a 50-run victory over Northern Territory Strike in their last limited-over game in their Australian tour yesterday.

Naseem slammed a 68-ball 61 while wicketkeeper-batsman Dhiman made a quickfire 42-ball 55 as the visiting NCA piled on 268-7 in the stipulated 50 overs after deciding to bat first at the Marrara Oval.

Another wicketkeeper-batsman Sahagir Hossain chipped in with 31 while Rokibul Hasan and Imrul Kayes scored 27 each.

In reply, Page scored 108 but it was not good enough for his side to avoid defeat as the local side were restricted to 218-7 in 50 overs.

Mahbubul Alami Robin (2-32), captain Mehrab Hossain (2-35), Dollar Mahmud (1-25) and Enamul Haque (1-55) were the successful NCA bowlers.

It was the third limited-over victory for the academy side in the tour and they will finish their tour with a four-day match against the same opponents starting from Monday at the same venue.

Akhtar smacks Asif Sent home in disgrace

AFP, Islamabad

Pakistan sent Shoaib Akhtar home from the Twenty20 championships in South Africa Friday after the paceman hit teammate Mohammad Asif with a cricket bat, plunging the troubled team into fresh chaos.

Akhtar, the world's fastest bowler, struck new ball partner Asif on the leg after they had a blazing row during a practice session in Johannesburg on Thursday, the Pakistan Cricket Board said.

"The tour management has heard the two players and they have decided to send Shoaib Akhtar back. The Pakistan Cricket Board fully endorses this decision," PCB chief executive officer Shafqat Naghmi told AFP.

"Shoaib Akhtar will be returning on the first available flight."

The bust-up happened after Pakistan held a practice session at Centurion Park in Johannesburg, just five days before their opening match in the tournament against Scotland, Pakistan team manager Talat Ali said.

"It was reported to us by Mohammad Asif that Shoaib Akhtar had hit him on his leg with a cricket bat and abused him," Ali said in a statement.

"After this, the team management investigated the incident and after recording the statements of both Mohammad Asif and Shoaib Akhtar, decided to send Shoaib back to Pakistan immediately," he added.

The team management had sent a request for a replacement for Akhtar to the PCB in Pakistan, while Asif would be fit to play, the PCB said. Officials said young pacer Najaf Shah was being considered as the stand-in for Akhtar.

The maverick Akhtar's exit from the tournament is the first major challenge for new coach Geoff

Lawson, the former Australian fast bowler who arrived here in August to coach the often-fractious Pakistani team.

Pakistan are due to open the Twenty20 World Cup against Scotland at Durban on September 12 before facing arch-rivals India at the same venue two days later.

The 32-year-old Akhtar, who has taken 169 wickets in his 43 Tests, has been dogged by controversy and injury since making his debut

for Pakistan 10 years ago.

He was already on six weeks' probation and had a 5,000-dollar fine suspended after being cleared last month of leaving a training camp in Karachi without informing manager Ali.

Last year he and Asif were involved in a doping scandal when they tested positive for the banned steroid nandrolone. Akhtar was banned for two years and Asif for

SEE PAGE 18 COL 1

Tigers take on Scotland today

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh play their first warm-up match against Scotland today at Centurion Park in Pretoria ahead of the Twenty20 World Championship which begins on September 11.

Earlier, on Thursday, the Bangladesh squad reached Johannesburg from Nairobi for the competition where they are pitted with hosts South Africa and West Indies in Group A.

After reaching the Southern Sun Grayston Hotel, the Tigers had no training session on Thursday, but had a stretching session at the hotel in the afternoon.

Bangladesh will play their first match against the West Indies at the Wanderers on September 13.

Ponting to join squad

AFP, Sydney

Ricky Ponting will join the Australian squad for the inaugural Twenty20 cricket world championships in South Africa after his wife's health improved.

The Australian captain had been in doubt for the tournament after staying home when the rest of the team left on Monday due to a "private family issue".

Ponting revealed Friday there had been a health issue relating to his wife. He did not specify the nature of the issue.

Ponting is expected to arrive in South Africa in time to attend the ICC Awards ceremony in Johannesburg on Monday night.

"Fortunately Rianna's health has improved over the last few days and I'm hoping travel plans can be finalised as soon as possible,"

SEE PAGE 18 COL 1

'Eng can bounce back'

Cricket

BBC ONLINE, undated

James Anderson is confident England can overcome successive defeats to win the deciding one-day match of the series with India at Lord's on Saturday.

"I think we have had a reasonably good series and played better cricket than we have done in recent times," said the fast bowler, who has taken 12 wickets.

"To win would give us a massive boost and a starting place to kick on from."

"India have played very well in the last two games. It is down to us now to work hard and give it a red-hot go."

Anderson, still only 25, is the most experienced member of the England attack if Andrew Flintoff

does not feature, having played 75 one-day internationals since making his debut in Australia in December 2002.

Wednesday's nerve-jangling two-wicket defeat at The Oval was the first match of the series in which Anderson failed to take a wicket, though his figures of 0-79 by no means did the Lancastrian justice.

"I've not been involved in many like that, it must have been a great game to watch," he said.

"I have enjoyed the extra responsibility. It was pretty tough in the last game and there were a few pats on the back in the dressing room but I'm pretty confident that I can bounce back."

"The series for me has gone pretty well, though The Oval was pretty disappointing. In a seven-match series you are going to take some punishment somewhere but hopefully I can turn it around."

"I would not say India had the upper hand. One-day cricket can turn around in a very short space of time. The series had gone back and forth -- it is pretty much a one off game, a final if you will."

The 34-year-old has scored four fifties in the first six matches of the series, twice dismissed in the 90s, including at The Oval when he was afflicted by cramp.

"Tendulkar is one of the best in the world," Anderson said. "During the Test series people were saying he is not the player he was but I think we saw at The Oval that he is still one of the best, and on a flat pitch he is very difficult to bowl at."

"I would not say India had the upper hand. One-day cricket can turn around in a very short space of time. The series had gone back and forth -- it is pretty much a one off game, a final if you will."

The team management had sent a request for a replacement for Akhtar to the PCB in Pakistan, while Asif would be fit to play, the PCB said. Officials said young pacer Najaf Shah was being considered as the stand-in for Akhtar.

The maverick Akhtar's exit from the tournament is the first major challenge for new coach Geoff

Footballers in Cox's Bazar

SPORTS REPORTER

The national football team reached Cox's Bazar last night to begin the first leg of their three-month preparation for the SAFF Championship in December.

The booters, who left the BFF Bhaban yesterday at 9.30 am by bus, halted at Noakhali for lunch during a long journey.

The team will train for one month at the tourist resort near the country's southern tip before returning to the capital for the World Cup 2010 pre-qualifiers against Tajikistan in October.

The coaches will then select an under-23 squad for the Grand Royal Cup to be held in Myanmar in November before resuming training for the regional football festival, which will be jointly hosted by Sri Lanka and Maldives.

Although 33 footballers were named for the preliminary camp, some seniors, alarmingly, did not accompany the team.

Midfielders Abul Hossain and key striker Zahid Hassan Emili both requested the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) to allow them join the team a day later due to personal reasons while Mehdi Hassan Ujjal claimed that he was sick and advised by the team physician to rest for a few days.

BFF acting general secretary Manzoor Hossain Malu, who is also the chairman of the National Team Management Committee, however, informed that he did get any report from team doctor.

Veteran center-back and former

SEE PAGE 18 COL 1

He thinks he's Zidane

CRICINFO, undated

Pakistan pace-man Shoaib Akhtar apologised Friday for hitting teammate Mohammad Asif, but said he was provoked into the act, which saw him sent home from the world Twenty20 championships.

"I was provoked and I will brief the media about the whole affair on Saturday evening when I return home. I have never hit anyone like that and I am very sorry," he added.

"Zidane did it in a World Cup final and I am also a human being. What happened was not good but I am also a human being and what can happen to a human being in a fit of anger, a random act, is unbelievable."

The injury-prone paceman was on the comeback trail with Pakistan due to open their Twenty20 camp-

Pakistan from Johannesburg in South Africa.

The 32-year-old hit Asif on the leg with a cricket bat after a row during a practice session in Johannesburg on Thursday and the team management in consultation with the Pakistan Cricket Board decided to expel him.

"I was provoked and I will brief the media about the whole affair on Saturday evening when I return home. I have never hit anyone like that and I am very sorry," he added.

"Zidane did it in a World Cup final and I am also a human being. What happened was not good but I am also a human being and what can happen to a human being in a fit of anger, a random act, is unbelievable."

The injury-prone paceman was on the comeback trail with Pakistan due to open their Twenty20 camp-

aign against Scotland at Durban on Wednesday.

The maverick bowler, the fastest in the world has endured a torrid year.

Last year he and Asif were also sent home from the ICC Champions Trophy for testing positive for the steroid nandrolone.

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The injury-prone paceman was on the comeback trail with Pakistan due to open their Twenty20 camp-

SEE PAGE 18 COL 1

Djokovic jokes into semis

AP, New York

Might as well have been Open mike night for Novak Djokovic. Popular

YouTube for his imitations of other pros, and egged on by the crowd, Djokovic showed he had a talent for more than tennis after he won Thursday.

Dancing a little jig, he did a dead-on rendition