



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 Metropolitan (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 Bangladesh time 7.30 am.

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!



SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Cricket Board's plan to appoint a national coach before the upcoming New Zealand tour suffered a setback after Zimbabwean Dave Houghton withdrew from the race for the demanding job.

The former Zimbabwe skipper, who was in line to place his presentation before the board after Australian aspirant John Harmer, pulled out his name from the three-member probables citing family reason to make BCB's task even more complicated in finding a Dav Whatmore's successor.

Houghton was most likely in the list to the new ad-hoc committee and that was the reason Gazi Ashraf Hossain Lipu, chairman of the cricket operations committee, was a bit frustrated with the latest development. The former national skipper also cast doubt whether it would be possible for them to fill the vacancy before the next assignment, as the appearance of Jamie Siddons, the

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 Nayeem 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.

Nayeem 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 Alam 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.

'Eng can bounce back'



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."

Although Anderson has dismissed India maestro Sachin Tendulkar three times in the Tests and twice in the one-day series this summer, he is aware of the man's enduring pedigree.

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."



PHOTO: INTERNET

England all-rounder Dimitri Mascarenhas (L) plays touch rugby with captain Paul Collingwood and others during a training session at Lord's in London yesterday.

Gayle wants to be first

CRICINFO, undated



Chris Gayle says West Indies want to be the first Twenty20 world champions, a format many believe suits his attacking style of play.

"It is perfectly suited to me yes but it is still an international game, it is a shorter version of one-day cricket," he said. "I know everyone enjoys it to see balls being hit everywhere; but on the field apart from the fun of it all everyone wants to win it and West Indies would like to get hold of that trophy first."

West Indies had also won the inaugural World Cup for one-dayers in 1975.

Gayle said the team was upbeat after arriving in South Africa. "All the guys are keen to go. We're a bit jet-lagged but we (have begun) to do some work in the gym and on the field to get that out of our system and move on from here on in. The team spirit is high."

Shivnarine Chanderpaul, who might partner Gayle at the top of the order for West Indies, aired similar views. "We are looking to win, not just to play good cricket but to win and take the trophy, it's good to see all the guys in good spirits and talking about winning this tournament," he said. "We showed some good form in the two Twenty20 games we played in England a few weeks ago and in the 50-over games as well. What we have to do is take that form into this tournament."

Chanderpaul indicated that batsmen needed to innovate in Twenty20. "It is a faster-paced game. You have to go out there and score because the overs run out on you very quickly. You have to find ways and you have to try things because you need runs on the board quickly."

Daren Powell, who picked up 14 wickets in an otherwise lacklustre display at home during the World Cup, said that bowlers could capitalise as the batsmen would look to

play shots. "It is a batsman's game but since the batsmen will be very aggressive this will give you the chance to take a couple of wickets."

"There is a 60 per cent chance for the opening fast bowlers to exploit the wicket and make inroads in the first over or two when the batsmen are not sure how the pitch will play. Sometimes it works, sometimes it doesn't but as a bowling unit we are hoping it works."

Gayle also hoped that West Indies could do a repeat of the first match of the 2003 World Cup, where they beat hosts South Africa. "It would be nice to do the same here but we can't take anything for granted. I'm sure they (South Africa) have worked on us by going to the drawing board and I'm sure they will look to capitalise on us and get a good start."

West Indies and South Africa square off in the opening game of the tournament on September 11.

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

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PHOTO: AFP

IT'S CRICKET, SHOAB: Pakistan fast bowler Shoaib Akhtar larks about with a tennis racquet during a training session in Centurion on Thursday.

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 Emilly 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

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Anderson in for Bopara

CRICINFO, undated

James Anderson has been called into England's ICC World Twenty20 squad as a replacement for Ravi Bopara, who was ruled out earlier this week with a broken thumb sustained during the fifth ODI against India.

Anderson's impressive one-day form in the current series will have counted in his favour as the selectors opted for a strike bowler instead of an allrounder. Anderson currently holds the record for the most expensive figures in international Twenty20, his four overs against Australia at Sydney costing 64.

It had been expected that Dimitri Mascarenhas would slot into Bopara's place, especially after hitting five sixes in five balls against India at The Oval. However, England may need another replacement with Andrew Flintoff's position still uncertain as his ankle problem is assessed.

CRICINFO, undated



Pakistan paceman 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.

Akhtar also compared his behaviour to that of French footballing icon Zinedine Zidane, who stunned the world when he head-butted Italian defender Marco Materazzi in the final of the 2006 World Cup in Germany last year.

"I am sorry for my act. It was a two-minute temper loss which caused me and my team embarrassment and I apologise," Akhtar told AFP as he headed back to

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 cam-

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,"

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He thinks he's Zidane

CRICINFO, undated



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

paign 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 in October last year. Both were banned but then won appeals to be reinstated.

Last month Akhtar was fined 5,000 dollars for leaving a training camp without informing team manager Talat Ali but again the fine was suspended on appeal.

The latest episode, however, is likely to impede his immediate return to cricket which saw him play just four one-day internationals and two Tests in the last 19 months.

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Djokovic jokes into semis

AP, New York



Might as well have been Open mike night for Novak Djokovic. Popular on 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 of Maria Sharapova. Tugging at his shorts, he nailed Rafael Nadal.

"Obviously, the people are looking for that. They're looking for a good tennis player and a player with a lot of emotions and a lot of temperament and personality," he said.

Yep, he might have a future in that racket.

For now, he's got at least one more match to play at the U.S. Open.

Djokovic reached his third straight Grand Slam semifinal, beating No. 17 Carlos Moya 6-4, 7-6 (7), 6-1.

"My goal is to be No. 1 player of the world," the third-ranked Serb said. "I've been working for that all my life. And still I'm just 20, so I have a lot of time left."

Encouraged by USA Network's reporter, Djokovic put on the most entertaining show yet at center court.

Pretending to preen his hair, he did a perfect impression of Sharapova's serve. Dashing wildly toward the back wall, he conjured up Nadal.

Moya saw part of the act. "It's funny. He does it very well. That's a gift," he said. "If he doesn't

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PHOTO: AFP

Third seed Serbian Novak Djokovic is ecstatic after winning the first set during his US Open quarterfinal victory over Spaniard Carlos Moya at Flushing Meadows on Thursday.