



Did U Know?

The first chess game between space and earth was played on June 9, 1970 by the Soyuz-9 crew. The game ended in a draw.



Rahul Dravid

(Outgoing India cricket captain)
"There is a shelf life to the captaincy in India in which you can give it your best. Maybe the shelf lives are becoming shorter as time goes by." While explaining his decision to resign as India's captain.



ESPN

ICC World Twenty20
South Africa v New Zealand
Live from 5:45pm
England v India
Live from 9:45pm

Sachin avoids tricky issue

PTI, Kolkata

Sachin Tendulkar on Tuesday skirted the issue of captaincy of the Indian cricket team saying he did not have much to say on it.

"I don't have much to say about the issue of captaincy. I am not allowed to do so," Tendulkar, one of the strong contenders for the job, told reporters on the sidelines of the WTA Sunfeast Open here.

Asked how Mahendra Singh Dhoni had been doing as the Indian skipper in the ongoing Twenty20 World Cup underway in South Africa, Tendulkar said, "It is upto the selectors to decide issues like captaincy." Sachin, who came here as a brand ambassador of Sunfeast, the confectionary brand of ITC Foods and main sponsor of the WTA event, said he had been watching the team's performance in the Twenty20 games and felt it had been fantastic.

"The team is doing well though the last result we did not like. I am confident the team will do well. Everybody is wishing the team well," Tendulkar said.

The cricket icon is scheduled to play a promotional mixed doubles match alongside some tennis celebrities including Mahesh

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Pakistan outplay Aussies

AFP, Johannesburg



Captain Shoaib Malik and Misbahul

Haq put on a century partnership as Pakistan stunned Australia by six wickets in the ICC World Twenty20 Championship here on Tuesday.

The pair put on 119 off 78 balls for the unbroken fifth wicket to help their team recover from 46-4 and surpass Australia's 164-7 with five balls to spare in a group F match of the Super Eight's at the Wanderers.

Man-of-the match Misbah smashed 66 not out off 42 balls and Malik chipped in with an unbeaten 52 as Pakistan virtually assured themselves of a place in the semifinals.

Pakistan's second win in the group, following the 33-run win over Sri Lanka on Monday, left them needing a point against Bangladesh in Cape Town on Thursday to move into the last four.

Australia, who must beat Sri Lanka on Thursday to stay in contention for the semifinals, were left to ponder the jinx that the Wanderers ground holds for them.

It was Australia's first appearance at the historic venue since South Africa successfully chased their formidable 434 with one ball to spare in a memorable one-day international in March, 2006.

Malik and Misbah came to the crease with Pakistan tottering at 46-4 after Stuart Clark grabbed three wickets in his first seven deliveries.

Misbah cracked seven boundaries and a six and Malik hit four fours and two sixes to give Pakistan an emphatic victory over one of the most formidable teams in the 12-nation tournament.

The winning run came through a waist-high full toss bowled by Andrew Symonds which was signalled a wide.

The success was set up by young left-arm seamer Sohail Tanvir, who claimed 3-31 in four impressive overs to keep the formidable Australian batting down to 164-7.

The 22-year-old led a disciplined bowling by the Pakistanis after Malik won the toss and elected to field in good batting conditions.

The Australian innings was marked by just one six from Michael Hussey, who top-scored with 37 off 25 balls.

Hussey and Brad Hodge put on 63 in 40 balls for the fifth wicket to boost the total after Australia were struggling at 92-4 in the 12th.

Australia were rattled at the start by Tanvir, who dismissed openers Matthew Hayden and Adam Gilchrist in his first two overs.

Hayden flicked a catch to mid-wicket after making one and Gilchrist, who smashed 24 off 12 balls, was caught at point to make Australia 32-2 in the four over.

Symonds helped captain Ricky Ponting add 48 for the third wicket, himself making an 18-ball 29 when he was bowled by leg-spinner Shahid Afridi in the ninth over.

Three overs later, Ponting

attempted to pull Mohammad Hafeez, missed the line and was bowled for 27 to leave his team at 92-4 in the 12th.

Hussey struck the only six of the innings in the 16th over when he lofted Afridi over the straight field and then flicked a boundary later in the over.

Tanvir returned for his final over to dismiss the dangerous Hussey before Mohammad Asif claimed Brad Hodge for 36.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard of the Twenty20 World Super Eight's match between Australia and Pakistan at the Wanderers on Tuesday:

AUSTRALIA				
Gilchrist c Hafeez b Tanvir	24			
Hayden c Younis b Tanvir	27			
Ponting b Hafeez	29			
Symonds b Afridi	37			
Hussey c Nazir b Tanvir	36			
Hodge c Younis b Asif	36			
Clarke run out	0			
Lee not out	2			
Johnson not out	1			
Extras: (b-1, lb-3, w-3)	7			
Total: (For 7 wks in 20 overs)	164			
Fall of wickets: 1-8, 2-32, 3-80, 4-92, 5-155, 6-159, 7-162.				
Bowler				
	O	M	R	W
Asif	4	0	34	1
Tanvir	4	0	31	3
Afridi	4	1	35	1
Hafeez	4	0	31	1
Gul	4	0	29	0

PAKISTAN				
Nazir c Johnson b Clark	10			
Hafeez c Clarke b Clark	15			
Butt lbw b Johnson	11			

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LEADING FROM THE FRONT: Pakistan captain Shoaib Malik whacks one over mid-wicket off Australia off-spinner Andrew Symonds (not in picture) during their ICC World Twenty20 Championship match at the Wanderers in Johannesburg yesterday.

Procter hails Tigers

SPORTS REPORTER

International Cricket Council (ICC) match referee Mike Procter has praised the Bangladesh cricket team for donating 5,500 to Ugandan cricket during their recent quadrangular series in Nairobi.

Procter, who officiated in the series that acted as a warm-up for the two teams and Kenya ahead of the ongoing ICC World Twenty20 tournament in South Africa said, "When you talk about the Spirit of Cricket, well, the players from Bangladesh and Pakistan really displayed it with their gesture as far as I am concerned."

"It is about respect for your opponents and that is exactly what the players of these two sides showed with their generosity. They are among the big boys of world cricket and to help out a country that is still developing in the game is a superb effort."

"Uganda is moving forward with its cricket, as it showed during the series when it beat Kenya, and the generosity of the players of Bangladesh and Pakistan will be a huge help in that regard. It is something that deserves to be talked about and recognized," he added.

The cash was made up of five man of the man awards -- US\$500 each -- as well as the player of the series prize, a total of US\$3000 that was shared by the two captains, Mohammad Ashraful of Bangladesh and Pakistan's Shoaib Malik.

Bangladesh vice-captain Mashrafe Mortaza, a man-of-the-match winner in the tournament, explained why the players acted in the way they did.

"We donated the money to help Uganda's cricket development," he said. "They are trying hard to improve their game and so far the signs have been encouraging."

"In a small way we wanted to be a part of the effort to take cricket forward in Uganda. As a Full Member of the ICC I feel we have a responsibility to try and help Associate countries in any way we can."

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Kiwis almost through

AFP, Durban



England lost three wickets in the space of five

balls as New Zealand won a tense World Twenty20 Super Eight's match by five runs at Kingsmead on Tuesday.

The defeat probably ensured that New Zealand would reach the semi-finals while England faced almost certain elimination.

England seemed on course for a win when they restricted New Zealand to 164 for nine.

New opening pair Darren Maddy and Vikram Solanki put on 64 for the first wicket. Maddy seemed well on the way to a man of the match performance when he made 50 off 31 balls after pulling off a direct-hit run-out and taking two wickets but he became the first of three run-out victims as the England challenge subsided.

Needing 20 to win off the last two overs, England's hopes crashed when Owais Shah was run out after he and Luke Wright had put on 42 for the sixth wicket.

New batsman Dimitri Mascarenhas was caught at deep cover off the next ball from Shane Bond and Wright followed in the same way three balls later.

"We were one good innings, one partnership away from winning," said England captain Paul Collingwood.

Earlier England were on top, with New Zealand in deep trouble at 40 for four after nine overs.

But Scott Styris (42) and Craig McMillan (57) went on a six-hitting blitz.

Styris hit four sixes in an innings of 42 off 31 balls, three of his sixes coming off successive balls from Dimitri Mascarenhas.

McMillan, who was named man of the match, also hit four sixes in making 57 off 31 balls.

Maddy brought England back into the game by running out Styris from deep midwicket, then dismissing McMillan and Jacob Oram in his only over of medium-pace bowling. "The boys bowled pretty well," said Collingwood. "But New Zealand got away in the middle part of the innings. Styris and McMillan played some wonderful shots."

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New Zealand's Craig McMillan smashes the ball for a six over the bowler's head during the ICC World Twenty20 Championship match against England at the Kingsmead in Durban yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

Nayeemuddin denies use of drugs

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh's Indian coach Syed Nayeemuddin blasted the media for erringly accusing him of using banned drugs on the footballers.

Recent media reports suggested that Nayeemuddin has used drugs on players to enhance their performance but the veteran Indian, a former international and award winning coach, said he had used vitamin injections on Bangladeshi players during the Nehru Cup in New Delhi last month.

The drug in question is Neurobion Forte, a reformulated combination of vitamin B1, B6 and B12, which is a popular product of German multinational E Merck.

The vitamin injection is available in Indian market and very cheap, at Tk 6, informed Nayeem over phone from Cox's Bazar, where the national team have been undergoing a special physical training session.

Nayeem also threw a challenge to prove him wrong. "Let's have dope tests of players to prove that I have used no banned drugs," he

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Will NCL get serious?



SPORTS REPORTER

After each and every debacle in Test cricket, the common suggestion that comes from all quarters is Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) must improve its first-class standard in a bid to silence the critics about the cricketers' ability in the longer-version game at the highest level.

The National Cricket League (NCL) has been termed as more or less a picnic tournament because lack of competitiveness and seriousness. With this kind of reputation, the ad-hoc committee of the BCB is all set to give this competition, which kicks off the domestic season, a facelift.

In an attempt to ensure all top cricketers' participation throughout the meet, it had set a tentative date of start on September 28 with the mind set on finishing it before the New Zealand tour in December-January.

But tournament committee chairman Selim Bhuiyan yesterday said that it would not be possible to start it this month because of weather condition and some of

other difficulties.

"Definitely we will start it by October 3. The tournament and cricket operations committee meet tomorrow (Wednesday) to settle some important issues," Bhuiyan however assured.

But the question has been raised whether the authority is fully prepared to make a fresh start or keep it as it had been for the last eight seasons -- a light affair.

The last board had finally realised that it has to concentrate immediately on three areas -- inject more money, arranging camps for all the divisional teams at least three weeks before the tourney and provide coach and physio -- to make an immediate impact.

This board, however, has decided to execute the recommendations on financial boost up as a player will receive Tk 10,000 for a four-day match and Tk 5,000 for a one-dayer as match in addition of increased travel and dining allowances.

The prize money has also been increased, to Tk 10 lakh for the champions, Tk 5 lakh for the runners-up and Tk 3 lakh for the third-placed side.

But the reality is that the authority is yet to receive 30-member proba-

ble lists from the divisional sides and that could be one of the reasons team teams might not get the chance to practice together for a certain period of time before the main event.

And it would be the Rafiqul Alam-led selection panel's first assignment to reduce the squads to 20-member teams.

Gazi Ashraf Hossain Lipu, former national captain turned chairman of the cricket operations committee, who was very much vocal about the standard of the competition, however, was still optimistic about the change of approach this time.

"I do agree that lack of preparation is an issue but the fact is more than sixty percent players are involved in tournaments at different levels. I think the financial package will make an immediate impact this year," Lipu opined.

"Our first target would be to give a message that it would be the main event for the players. It is impossible to change everything overnight but there would be no scope for them to take it lightly any more. We cannot compromise because it is a question of our survival," he added.

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Dhoni new ODI skipper



AFP, New Delhi

Mahendra Singh Dhoni on Tuesday was named India's new cricket captain for upcoming one-day home series against formidable sides Australia and Pakistan as the selectors looked to the future.

"The selectors have appointed Dhoni as captain for one-day series against Australia and Pakistan," Indian cricket board secretary Niranjan Shah told reporters in Mumbai.

India will figure in 12 one-dayers at home, seven against Australia, starting this month, and five against Pakistan in November.

Wicketkeeper-batsman Dhoni, 26, took the high-profile but high-pressure job after strong contender Sachin Tendulkar reportedly opted out of the one-day captaincy race.

The 34-year-old Tendulkar, the world's leading scorer in the shorter version of the game with 15,425 runs in 395 matches, has admitted to finding successive one-day games too tiring of late.

The appointment opened the way to a split captaincy for the first time in Indian cricket, with Tendulkar

likely to lead in Tests and Dhoni in one-dayers in the coming busy international season.

Dhoni has spent barely three years in big-time cricket, but has impressed with his breathtaking strokeplay and sound temperament. He is already in charge at the ongoing Twenty20 World Championships in South Africa.



MAHENDRA SINGH DHONI

Tendulkar has twice led India in the past decade, his last stint coming to an end in 2000 after losing a two-Test home series against South Africa.

The selectors now have some

time to pick a Test captain before India start their next series in November against Pakistan. India then tour Australia in December for a Test series.

The selectors were forced to find a new skipper after Rahul Dravid surprisingly ended his two-year stint last week, saying he was no longer enjoying the job and wanted to concentrate on his batting.

Dhoni's first big test comes when India open their one-day series against Australia with a day-night game at Bangalore on September 29.

He has so far scored 2,477 runs in one-dayers and 1,019 runs in 20 Tests since making his international debut in December 2004.

"We thought it was the best way to go and it's the right time to groom him," said Indian chief selector Dilip Vengsarkar.

The selectors also named a 15-man squad for the first three one-dayers against Australia, with fast bowlers Irfan Pathan and Shanathakumaran Sreesanth, and spinner Harbhajan Singh returning to the fold.

Left-arm seamer Pathan comes back after nine months, while off-spinner Harbhajan has not played

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TODAY'S MATCHES

Team	Time	Venue
South Africa v New Zealand	6 : 0 0 p m	Durban

Ad