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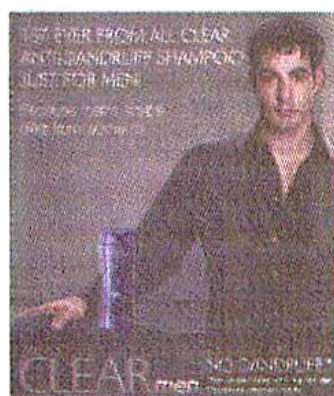
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## Did U Know?

Brett Lee of Australia recorded the first-ever hat-trick in the just concluded ICC World Twenty20 Championship in South Africa. The speedster achieved this feat against Bangladesh.



**Marion Jones**  
(US sprinting superstar)  
"It is with a great amount of shame that I stand before you to tell you that I have betrayed... your trust... I want to ask for your forgiveness for my actions."  
While announcing her retirement on Friday.

**What to WATCH**

**NEO Sports**  
India v Australia  
Fourth ODI  
Live from 9:30am

**TEN Sports**  
Pakistan v South Africa  
Second Test, Day One  
Live from 10:45am

**ESPN**  
Sportscenter India  
Sports News  
Live at 8:30pm

## Bangla Games in Feb 2008

UNB, Dhaka

The second Indo-Bangladesh Bangla Games will be held in the country in February next year.

The decision was taken at a meeting of the Bangladesh Olympic Association (BOA) yesterday with its acting secretary general Kutubuddin Ahmed in the chair.

The meeting also decided to hold the inaugural ceremony of the Games at the Bangabandhu National Stadium while the main competition will be held at the BKSP in Savar.

The second edition of the event was originally scheduled for December this year.

## BANGLADESH-TAJIKISTAN WC PRE-QUALIFIER TODAY

# Draw would suffice

Football

SPORTS REPORTER

Memories of their worst home defeat ever will haunt the Bangladesh footballers when they host Tajikistan in the first leg of the 2010 World Cup pre-qualifier at the Bangabandhu National Stadium today.

Bangladesh lost, by identical margins of 2-0 to Tajikistan in both their 2006 World Cup pre-qualifiers but the Central Asians were on top form last year, thrashing the home side 6-1 in the inaugural AFC Challenge Cup at the same venue in Dhaka.

With Indian coach Syed Nayeemuddin ignoring senior players and going for a number of newcomers -- who have had a rather colourless past in top flight of domestic football -- in his experimental side, another disaster might loom ahead for the underprepared side.

And naturally, the Bangladesh think-tank could not encourage on the eve of the match, which will be telecast live by ATN Bangla. Fans will not need to buy tickets for the game.

New Bangladesh captain Hassan Al Mamun, however, said at a press conference at the BFF Bhaban yesterday that his side will not go into the field bothering about the previous results.

"It's a different match. So everything is new for both teams. Its true we haven't had the best of preparations but we are here to fight," said Hassan who did not play in Bangladesh's previous game against Tajikistan after being ruled for the entire Challenge Cup due to injury.

"We have not played any significant practice match. So, we got little chance to correct our mistakes and have the right combination," said the right fullback, who returned to the full national side after a long lay-off.

"The physically strong Tajiks'

would have the edge and under these circumstances, a draw would be a good result."

Nayeemuddin once again reminded of the lack of preparation matches and said that the expectation should be high of this team.

"Tajikistan are tough opponents as they are better in technique and physical conditions. But we are mentally prepared. We have a solid defence and ready to give our best effort," the 60-year-old Indian told.

The Tajiks have brought only five players of the side that lifted the Challenge Cup and fans of

SEE PAGE 16 COL 6



Bangladesh coach Syed Nayeemuddin, flanked by captain Hassan Al Mamun (L) and vice-captain Saifur Rahman Moni, addresses a press briefing at the BFF Bhaban yesterday.

## Uthappa denies discord

### India-Australia 4th ODI today

Cricket

AGENCIES, Chandigarh

Batsman Robin Uthappa denied reports Sunday of a rift between veteran and junior members of India's cricket team after the chief selector made a pitch for the inclusion of more youngsters.

Dilip Vengsarkar had put the senior players on notice Saturday, saying there were young players on the fringe who were vying to make it onto the team and make their places count.

Uthappa, himself a talented 21-year-old, denied Vengsarkar's comments had caused any problems ahead of the fourth match of the one-day series with Australia, which the home team is trailing 2-0.

"There is absolutely nothing like a senior versus junior thing in the team. It's all in the media. Everyone is enjoying themselves in the dressing room and it's amazing to be part of this team," he told reporters.

Uthappa also said Gautam Gambhir was doubtful for the fourth one-day here on Monday after he sustained a groin injury during practice.

Gambhir slipped while batting in the nets and had to be rushed to the hospital for a scan. Former skipper Sourav Ganguly, who was not part of the team that was drubbed at Kochi and Hyderabad, could take Gambhir's place in the squad.

Ganguly is believed to have recovered from a hamstring injury that he picked up during fielding in

the first one-dayer at Bangalore, which was abandoned due to rain.

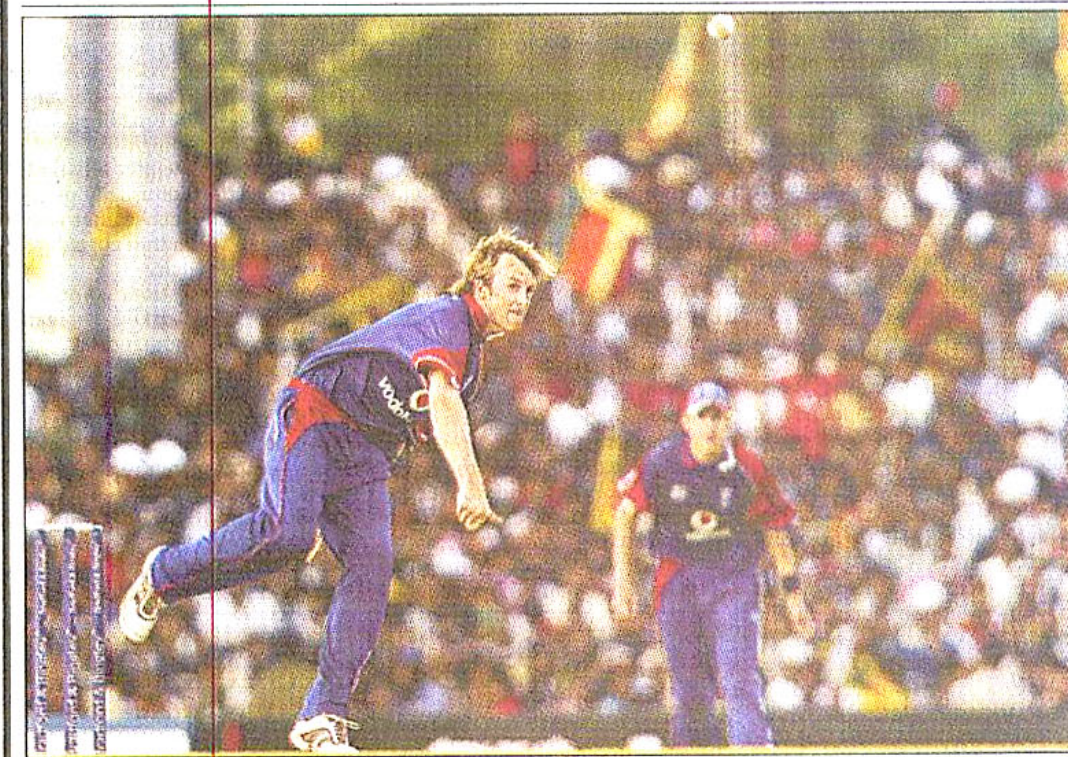
Uthappa also admitted that the team's intensity had dropped amidst the euphoria over the triumph in the inaugural Twenty20 World Championship in South Africa last month.

"All of us were a bit knackered up after the Twenty20 victory. It was difficult to shift gears and our intensity level dropped," he said.

Meanwhile, Uthappa said that Shanthakumar Sreesanth, who was at his belligerent best in the first two one-dayers against Australia before going uncannily quiet in the third match, mellowed down due to criticism of his volatile temper.

"You guys have mellowed him

SEE PAGE 18 COL 5



England off-spinner Graeme Swann lets one rip on way to a four-wicket haul in the third one-day international at the Rangiri International Cricket Stadium in Dambulla on Sunday.

## Skipper greets batting greats

PTI, Karachi

Pakistan captain Shoaib Malik has welcomed the inclusion of senior batsmen Inzamamul Haq and Mohammad Yousuf in the team for the second cricket Test against South Africa starting Sunday in Lahore.

He said Inzamam's return to the Test was a morale booster for him as well as for the team.

"Just having him training today (Sunday) with us has raised our confidence level and hopefully we can win this Test and square the series," Malik said.

The second Test would be Inzamam's swansong from cricket after he had retired from one-day internationals during the World Cup in March.

SEE PAGE 18 COL 5

## Akhtar unruly, says Smith

PTI, Karachi

South African skipper Graeme said Pakistan's controversial fast bowler Shoaib Akhtar was a match winner but also had been a disruptive influence on the team.

"Certainly he is a player who has won Test matches for them as a bowler, but certainly we have seen he has been a disruptive influence for them," Smith said replying to a query about how Shoaib's absence was influencing their ongoing Test series against Pakistan.

Smith, however, made it clear "my focus is on what we have to do best to win matches." Shoaib is currently facing a disciplinary hearing after being sent back home from South Africa last month before the ICC World Twenty20 Championship after having a brawl with teammate, Mohammad Asif.

The South African captain also felt his team had matured and improved its mindset and entire game plan for playing in the sub-continent.

"Winning the first Test in Karachi was a fantastic morale booster and winning in the sub-continent is always special," he said.

"We know how hard it is to win a Test in Pakistan. But a more positive mindset gives us a very good chance in this second Test of winning our first series in the sub-continent against major opposition since 2000," he added.

## Ponting digs at India

AFP, Chandigarh

Australian skipper Ricky Ponting on Sunday took a swipe at the Indian cricket team, saying their trash talk and other field antics would not help them win matches.

"It seems as though their aggression is more directed at body language and staring and adding a few words," he told reporters here ahead of the fourth match of the one-day series on Monday.

"Aggressive cricket is being able to play aggressively when you are under pressure. When we are under pressure, we try and play the same kind of cricket, back our skills and ourselves.

"That is what positive, aggressive

SEE PAGE 18 COL 1

## Full points for Friends

SPORTS REPORTER

Friends Social Welfare Organisation blanked Gulistan Club 2-0 in the Third Division Football Super League at the Bir Shreshtha Mostafa Kamal Stadium in Kamalapur yesterday.

Prolific scorer Chomrin Rakhine gave Friends a first half lead while Jahir sealed the victory on the hour.

## NATIONAL CRICKET LEAGUE 2007-08

# Spirited Rajshahi

SPORTS REPORTER

Khaled Mashud promised that his side will continue its spirited effort in the National Cricket League this year, no matter what happened in a practice match before the tournament starts from October 19.

Last year's runners-up Rajshahi lost both their warm-up games against GP-BCB National Cricket Academy team when they went down by 20 runs in the second match at the Rajshahi Divisional Stadium yesterday.

Academy rode on three half-centuries from Rukibul Hasan (76), Dhiman Ghosh (62) and Marshal Ayub (57) to put on a decent total of 242-8 in the stipulated 50 overs.

Dashing left-hander Junaed Siddique continued his purple patch with 49 but it was not enough as the divisional side were bundled out for 222 runs with two overs to spare.

"Lack of match practice was the reason behind the defeats. Only two players in our team were in the groove for the last few months but it was not the case for the Academy boys. They not only had regular practice, but recently visited Australia. But to be honest, I am not too worried with the outcome of these matches," said Mashud over telephone.

"I am happy at how we played the second match. We tried to give all of our players a go before the competition starts," he added.

Rajshahi did not lose a single match in the four-day competition last season. They won four and drew six matches but were two points shy of champions Dhaka, who won three games but benefited from the first innings leads in the six drawn matches. But they made sure that Dhaka had a good run for their money as the winners' were decided in the final week of competition.

But it was a lot closer in the one-day tournament. In a winner-takes-all game, Rajshahi went down by a wicket to Dhaka, who rode on a hurricane hundred from all-rounder Nazmul Hossain Milon. In the end, Rajshahi were runners-up, falling short of Dhaka's tally by two points.

"We were very unfortunate not to lift the title last season even though we played good cricket all throughout. You know, team spirit is high in our division. Each and every player in my team believes in hard work," said the long-serving wicketkeeper, acclaimed for his own hard work.

The former Bangladesh captain said that all-rounders have always played a big role behind his team's success.

"We have a number of all-rounders like Mushfiqur Rahman and Forhad Reza, something which is a real strength. I am very hopeful with young medium-pacer Delwar Hossain. Actually most of our players are young and focused on their game," informed Mashud.

He is also looking forward to revive his career by showing something special in his batting, ahead of selection for the national team's next assignment to New Zealand in December-January.

"I am eagerly waiting to get back some confidence in my batting. And also to get my place back in the national team," said Mashud, who was out from the one-day squad in the last few occasions and his Test career is also not out of danger due to a slump in form with the bat.

Like many others, the long-serving cricketer also believes that it would be more competitive this year than the previous occasions.

"When it was not easy to beat a team like Barisal in the last two seasons, you couldn't say the competitiveness was completely missing. But it will be more competitive this time as national players are going to play regularly," he concluded.

## Malik hopes to win 'Inzamam's Test' from today

Cricket

AFP, Lahore

Pakistan captain Shoaib Malik is confident the return of Inzamamul Haq and Mohammad Yousuf will spur Pakistan to victory over South Africa in the second Test that starts here on Monday.

The key batsmen pulled out of the first Test, which Pakistan went on to lose by 160 runs to go 1-0 down in the two-match series.

Malik said his team would be bolstered by the return of Yousuf and the talismanic Inzamam, who will be playing his last Test after announcing his retirement from Test cricket.

"A big player has returned to the Pakistan team and his return has boosted confidence in the camp," said Malik of Inzamam, who resigned as captain in March following Pakistan's humiliating first-round exit from the World Cup.

"Inzamam is not a distraction but an encouragement," he said.

"Both he and Yousuf will strengthen our middle order and we are determined to give it our best shot as we have learnt from the mistakes of the first Test," said Malik, whose team dropped three crucial catches in Karachi.

Yousuf pulled out of the first Test at the last minute due to lack of match fitness while Inzamam was unavailable.

Malik singled out as a target South Africa's Jacques Kallis, who made a masterly 155 and followed it up with an unbeaten 100 in the second innings in the first Test.

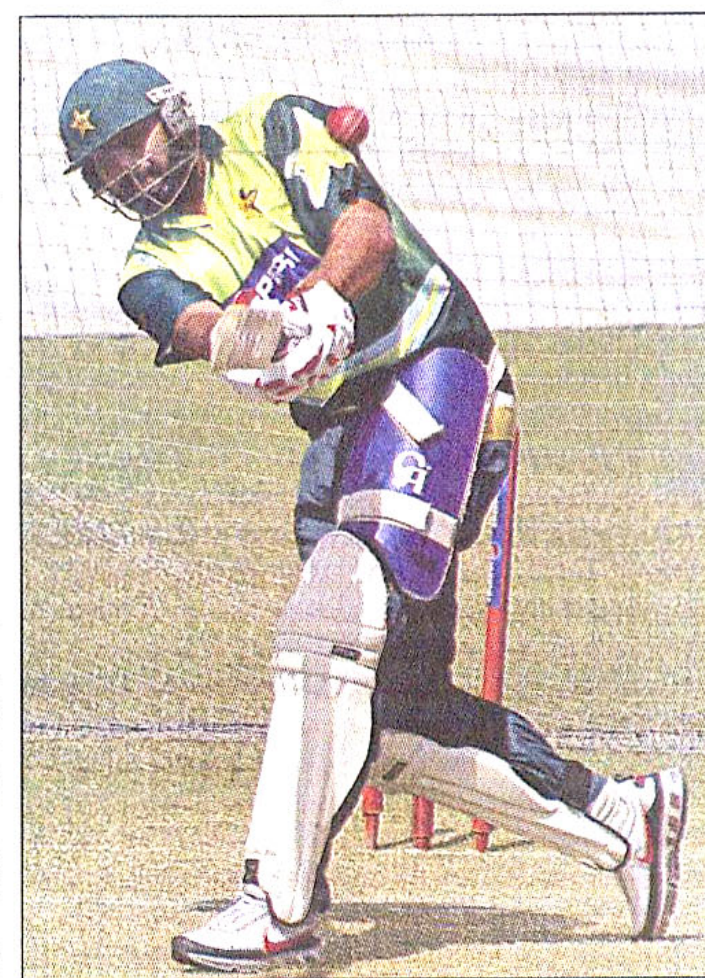
"We need to dismiss Kallis early and we have set a few plans for him,"

said Malik. "The pitch here has bounce and will help the bowlers."

In contrast, South African cap-

tain Graeme Smith is eyeing a first-series win against a major team in

SEE PAGE 18 COL 2



Pakistan great Inzamamul Haq lofts the ball during a practice session on the eve of the second Test against South Africa at the Gaddafi Stadium in Lahore on Sunday.

**শোভামন**

এ সপ্তাহের বিষয়: মাটি

অতিথি: মেহরীন

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## Swann plucks 4

Cricket

CRICINFO, undated

England shrugged off the blow of losing the toss in the third one-day international at Dambulla to restrict Sri Lanka 164. Ryan Sidebottom and Stuart Broad again did the early damage before Graeme Swann took out the middle order with another fine display of attacking off spin. Tillakaratne Dilshan gave Sri Lanka a fighting total with well-crafted 70, but the pressure is now on the home side's bowlers.

England maintained control

SEE PAGE 18 COL 6

LATEST

STAR SPORT MONITOR

England clawed their way back from trouble, chasing Sri Lanka's 164 in the third one-day international in Dambulla last night. They moved to 89 for four in 25 overs.

Captain Paul Collingwood was on 24 with Owais Shah, who was on 16 as they helped recover their side from a shaky 47-4 in the twelfth over. Fast bowler Farveez Maharoof got three wickets in his full quota of ten overs, giving away only 34 runs. Due to the rain break in the Sri Lanka innings, the match was reduced to 48-overs-a-side.

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