



Did U Know?

Justine Henin of Belgium began her professional career on the Women's Tennis Association (WTA) Tour in May 1999 as a wild card entry in the Belgian Open at Antwerp and became only the fifth player to win her debut WTA event.



Talk Turkey



Aravinda de Silva
(Sri Lanka cricket great)
"I couldn't believe Yuvraj Singh being left out of the Test squad. The way he plays he is the Brian Lara of India. I would pay money to go and watch him. He is one of the best players they got in the whole of India."



What to Watch

DD National
India v Pakistan
Third Test, Day Four
Live from 10:00am

TEN Sports
Sri Lanka v England
Second Test, Day Three
Live from 10:30am

UEFA Champions League
Marseille v Liverpool
Live from 1:00am (Wednesday)
Real Madrid v Lazio
Delayed from 3:45am (Wednesday)

ESPN
Australia v New Zealand
Twenty20 International
Live from 3:00pm
Sportscentre India
Sports News
Live at 8:30pm

C'WEALTH CHESS Bangladeshi GMs level on points

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Grand Masters' Abdullah Al Rakib, Reefat Bin Sattar and Niaz Murshed all were level on 6.5 points after the ninth round of the Commonwealth Chess Championships in Delhi on Sunday.

FIDE Master Aminul Islam followed the trio with 5.5 points and IWM Rani Hamid on 3.5.

In the penultimate round, Rakib drew with IM Ponnuswamy Konguvel, Reefat beat IM Lanka Ravi, Niaz defeated Tanveer Gilani while Amin and Rani drew their respective matches.

Ajgor clinches special chess nat'l title

SPORTS REPORTER

Ajgor Ali emerged unbeaten champion in the Grameenphone 8th National Special Chess title yesterday after defeating Mir in the final round at the NSC conference room.

Ajgor collected maximum seven points in the four-day meet to dethrone last year's champion Kamal Hossain, who became runner-up with six points. Mohammed Nazmul, who also bagged six points, was third after losing in the tiebreakers.

Eleven players finished with five points.

Bangladesh Olympic Association vice-president Mizanur Rahman Manu distributed prizes among the winners as chief guest.

Misbah keeps team alive

Cricket

AFP, Bangalore

Pakistan rode on Misbahul Haq's fighting half-century to boost their chances of avoiding a follow-on in the third and final Test against India here on Monday.

The tourists were 369-5 in their first innings at stumps on the third day in reply to India's mammoth 626, needing 58 more runs to avoid the follow-on.

Misbah (54 not out) and Kamran Akmal (32 not out), who made centuries in a similar situation in the previous Test at Kolkata, rallied Pakistan with an unfinished 81-run stand for the sixth wicket.

Pakistan were in trouble at 288-5 before Misbah and Akmal denied India further success. Misbah has now struck eight fours in his second half-century.

India also made a dubious record of conceding 70 extras, their previous highest being 60 against England in 1979.

"It's not easy to keep wickets on this surface as the ball is sometimes keeping low," said India's Sourav Ganguly, who claimed the day's first wicket.

"The first session tomorrow will be important as the ball does something in the morning. They have the last pair of specialist batsmen at the crease and if we get an early

wicket, it'll be difficult for lower-order batsmen."

The hosts lead 1-0 in the series following their six-wicket win in the opening Test in New Delhi. The second match ended in a draw.

Pakistan were strongly placed at 221-2 before stand-in captain Younis Khan was bowled attempting a reverse-sweep off spinner Harbhajan Singh, starting a slide that saw his team lose three crucial wickets in the space of 67 runs.

Younis, leading the team in a second successive Test in the absence of unfit Shoaib Malik, batted confidently during his 156-ball 80 before he fell playing one reverse-sweep too many.

He had played the same shot with success on a couple of occasions in the morning session but missed the line this time off Harbhajan, bowling round the stumps. He struck 12 fours in his 20th half-century.

Younis, who scored a match-saving hundred in the previous Test, propped up the innings with a 90-run stand for the second wicket with Salman Butt (68) and 72 for the next with Mohammad Yousuf (24).

After the reverse-sweep came a poor stroke that led to the dismissal of Yousuf, who upishly drove left-arm seamer Irfan Pathan to Yuvraj Singh at point a few deliveries after exchanging words with India skipper Anil Kumble.

Pakistan threw away two vital

wickets just when Younis, seven overnight, and Yousuf looked set to play long innings on a track which had little for seamers and spinners even on the third day.

The Indian captain kept changing his bowlers but the next success came with the second new ball, with inexperienced Ishant Sharma making amends for a below-par performance by removing Faisal Iqbal.

Seamer Sharma, playing only his second Test, struck in his third over with the new ball when he surprised Iqbal (22) with extra bounce to have him caught by Gautam Gambhir at short-leg.

India struggled for success in the morning on a placid track as Younis batted comfortably against both pace and spin to help his team add 94 to their overnight total of 86-1.

It was part-time seamer Ganguly who provided the much-needed breakthrough when he dismissed left-handed opener Butt, who could add only 18 to his overnight score of 50.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard at stumps on the third day of the third and final Test between India and Pakistan on Monday:

INDIA: First innings 626 (Ganguly 239, Yuvraj 169, Pathan 102; Arslan 5-161, Kaneria 3-168)

PAKISTAN: First innings (overnight 86-1)

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Even going at Colombo

Cricket

AFP, Colombo

Hosts Sri Lanka warded off England's early threat as the rivals waged a grim struggle to take control of the second cricket Test here on Monday.

Sri Lanka, replying to England's first innings total of 351, recovered from 22-2 to post 105 without further loss by close of the second day's play at the Sinhalese Sports Club.

Opener Michael Vandort and skipper Mahela Jayawardene frustrated England's bid to run through the top order by adding 83 runs for the unbroken third wicket.

Left-handed Vandort was unbeaten on 50 and Jayawardene was on 43 on a batsman-friendly wicket that is expected to assist spin towards the end of what has turned out to be an absorbing match.

England, seeking a series-levelling win after losing the first Test in Kandy by 88 runs last week, battled with both bat and ball in a bid to seize the advantage.

Wicketkeeper Matthew Prior hit a second successive half-century and put on 74 runs for the eighth wicket with tailender Ryan Sidebottom (17) after England were struggling at 272-7 within the first hour of play.

Prior followed his 63 in the Kandy Test with a defiant 79 before he was last man out to the record-breaking Muttiah Muralidaran, who finished with his 62nd five-wicket haul.

The off-spinner, who surpassed Australian Shane Warne's world record tally of 708 wickets in Kandy, finished with 5-116 as England lost their last three wickets for five runs.

Sri Lanka, however, began poorly as Sidebottom and Prior combined once again to remove recalled opener Upul Tharanga (10) and the in-form Kumar Sangakkara (one) by the ninth over.

Sangakkara's wicket was crucial after the left-hander's 152 at Kandy

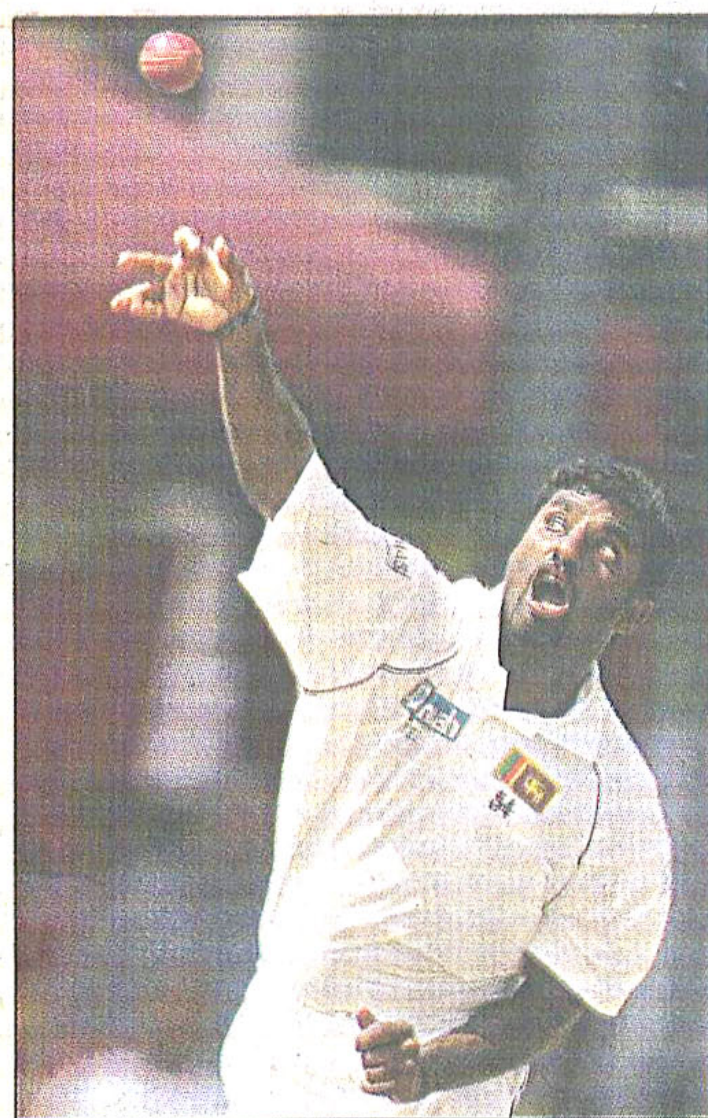
had made him the first batsman in Test history to compile 150-plus scores in four consecutive matches.

"We are pretty happy with the situation at this stage," said Sri Lanka's Australian coach Trevor Bayliss.

"At the end of yesterday, we thought if we could bowl well and keep them under 350 that would be okay."

"Our 105-2 is an in-between sort of score, so we still have some hard work to do."

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Sri Lanka's master spinner Muttiah Muralidaran, who took 5-116, lets go yet another venomous delivery during the second day's play of the second Test at Sinhalese Sports Club ground in Colombo yesterday.

An ultimatum to BFF

Football

SPORTS REPORTER

Ex-footballers and organisers gave the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) an ultimatum of one week to take an acceptable decision about forming the district and divisional football associations with government involvement.

In a roundtable meeting at the NSC conference room yesterday, speakers agreed they were in favour of government's involvement in the game for the betterment of football.

The executive committee of the BFF, which expired last April but has been given a year's time by the FIFA to form DFAs and hold the federation election, has been trying to follow the FIFA directive to exclude government officials from

football associations.

The game is backed by the government, which owns and maintains grounds and stadiums across the country.

"We ask the BFF to stop the current proceedings of forming the DFAs and sit with FIFA, AFC, the government and organisers outside the federation within a week to find an acceptable solution," said former BFF general secretary Harunur Rashid.

"BFF president SA Sultan has showed interest to sit with us and discuss the issue but he has been barred by his BFF colleagues," he added.

Senior sports journalist Manzurul Haque, who supported the concept of DFA, said that the BFF should explain the pros and cons of the idea inducted by football's world governing body FIFA.

Former footballers Kaiser Hamid and Nurunnabi both

thought that football in Bangladesh has yet to reach a position where it can ignore the government association.

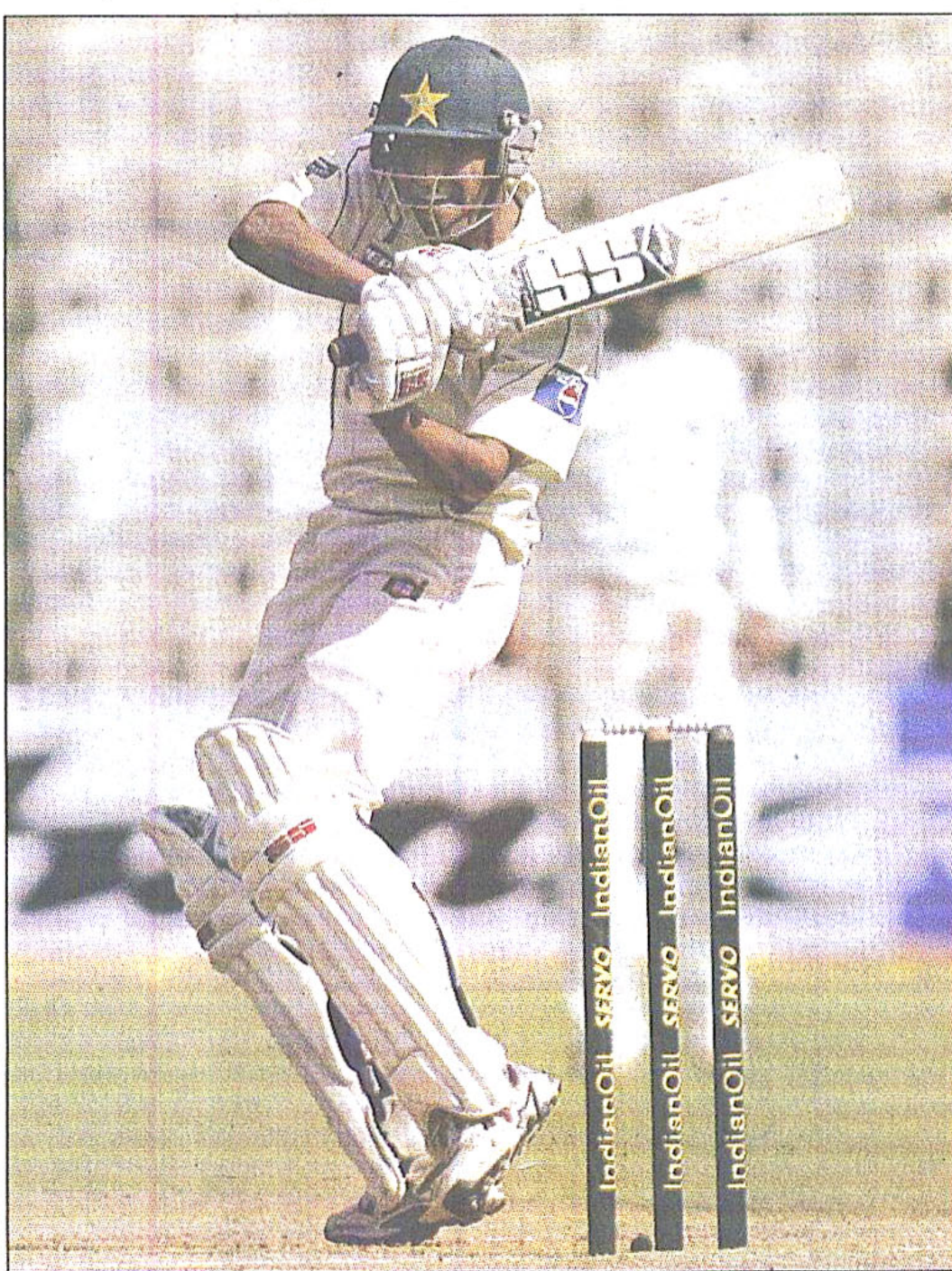
Former national captain and BFF official Badal Roy was worried about the recent altercation between BFF and the government.

"The way the BFF boss attacked the sports adviser following his (Tapan Chowdhury) remarks on the federation activities last week, it will only bring harm to football," said Badal.

"The BFF officials seem happy to be under the immunity of FIFA but we are not afraid of any ghosts. We want the BFF to announce the date of an emergency general meeting immediately," Badal added.

Abahani director Kazi Nabil Ahmed said that the gap between the BFF and the government must be bridged.

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Pakistan's stand-in captain Younis Khan pulls one on the way to scoring a fine 80 on the third day of the third and final Test against India at the Chinnaswamy Stadium in Bangalore yesterday.

BFF to sit with organisers and booters today

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) officials had a meeting with the general secretaries of the district sports associations (DSA) yesterday with a view to ease the way to the coming elections of the proposed DFAs (district and divisional football associations).

BFF president SA Sultan, acting general secretary Manzoor Hossain Malu, vice-presidents and other officials were present.

The BFF listened to suggestions how the DSA secretaries could be involved with the DFAs.

Sultan told reporters after the meeting that they have thought about forming an advisory council for the DFAs where the DSA secretaries would be included.

The final decision, however, will be taken in BFF's executive committee meeting tomorrow.

Meanwhile, the BFF will finally sit today with the players and organisers, who have been repeatedly demanding a general meeting of the councillors to discuss the election issues, especially the formation of the DFAs.

Tigers donate Tk 1.61 lakh to CA's fund

SPORTS REPORTER

The New Zealand-bound Bangladesh cricket team handed over a cheque of Tk 1.61 lakh to Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed yesterday for the relief fund of the Cyclone Sidr victims.

Bangladesh captain Mohammad Ashraf, middle-order batsman Tushar Imran and tour operations manager Sadrul Amin Bhuiyan went to the Chief Adviser's office to hand over the cheque.

"Fifteen players who are selected in the one-day side and eight officials have donated their four days' tour allowances," informed Ashraf.

"We may take an initiative to give more money after returning from the tour," he said adding that the Chief Adviser also wished them best of luck for the upcoming tour.

The Tigers will fly to New Zealand tomorrow to play three one-day internationals and two Tests besides three limited-overs warm-up games and a charity Twenty20 match during their 36-day tour.

Premier League or not!

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) was in the discomfort zone with this season's Premier and First Division cricket leagues, the most attractive and financially viable domestic competition for cricketers.

Cricket Committee of Dhaka Metropolitan (CCDM) had decided to start the three-day players' transfers for the competition January 8 but a Division Bench of the High Court last month ordered a two-month stay on any further activities over the league following a writ petition filed by Brothers Union.

Brothers went to court after the board's decision to relegate them along with Indira Road Krita Chakra from the Premier League after the two clubs' failure to turn up for a relegation play-off on October 4.

"Hopefully the legal battle will start from next week through our legal adviser. But nothing could have been better than Brothers' withdrawal of the petition for the greater interest of the game," said CCDM chairman Gazi Ashraf Hossain Lipu yesterday.

"We are really in the discomfort zone because it's a very important competition in our domestic calendar. I am, however, not frustrated at all because I believe that we can manage a solution in time," he added.

The former national skipper also said that they would think about an alternative if there is no solution.

"The Premier League is Premier League and you can't match it up with any other tournament. But we have to think about those cricketers who would seriously suffer without this competition and that's why we will not hesitate to arrange an alternative solution to at least console them," he said.

Cricketers Welfare Association of Bangladesh (CWAB) has already expressed its deep concern over the uncertainty of the league as it's a question of bread and butter for the country's cricketers.

"This league has had a great contribution in the development of the game in the country and it's a main source of income for most of the players. With the uncertainty there are prevailed anxiety and stress among the cricketers," said a press release issued by CWAB, which will officially make a demand today to start league.

U-19 team announced for SL leg

SPORTS REPORTER

A 15-member Bangladesh Under-19 squad was announced yesterday to play a five-match one-day series against the visiting Sri Lanka Under-19s.

Sohrawardi Shuvo was retained as captain in the team that returned home two days back, after a successful trip in Pakistan.

Three new faces -- Nadimuddin Mintu, Hamidul Islam and Ashraf Islam -- were included in the side from the last squad as the dashing left-handed opener Tamim Iqbal takes up duty with the national side while Zaid Hossain has been ignored for the home leg.

The 15-member Sri Lankan Under-19s arrived in Dhaka yesterday. The first three matches of the series will be take place at the Shaheen Chandu Stadium in Bogra on December 12, 14 and 15 while the last two games are scheduled for the Fatullah Cricket Stadium on December 18 and 20.

SQUAD

Sohrawardi Shuvo (captain), Dollar Mahmud, Marshall Ayub, Ashraf Aziz, Shubhashis Roy, Rubel Hossain, Gulam Kibriya, Rony Talukder, Mahmudul Hasan, Nasir Hossain, K. M. Shakil, Nadimuddin Mintu, Mithun Ali (wicketkeeper), Hamidul Islam and Ashraf Islam.

Ganguly wants to play thru' 08

CRICINFO, undated

Sourav Ganguly has said that his forced exile from international cricket made him more determined to prove a point. He also said that he intends to play through 2008.

"Not better, but probably more determined," Ganguly told the Kolkata-based Telegraph. "I wish to add that the circumstances and the manner in which I got dropped just weren't right. I don't have an issue with being left out, that's part of the game, but the manner wasn't right."

Ganguly had differences with the then coach Greg Chappell and the issue snowballed after one of Chappell's emails to the board was leaked in September 2005. On November 22, the selectors ended his five-year reign as Test captain when they picked Rahul Dravid to lead the side for the series against Sri Lanka. Dravid had been handed the one-day captaincy a month before.

Ganguly was dropped from the one-day side in October and the Test team in December and made his comeback in to both teams a year

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Dropping Sehwag a mistake, says Chappell

PTI, Melbourne

Former Australia captain Ian Chappell feels India have committed a big 'mistake' by not including Virender Sehwag in the list of probabilities for their tour down under as the world champion side still fears the swashbuckling opener.

"India have made their first big mistake and the team hasn't even been selected, let alone set foot on Australian soil. Now was not the right time to give up on Virender Sehwag," Chappell said.

The 29-year-old Sehwag failed to make the list of the 24 probabilities, which will be pruned to 16 on

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Bangladesh captain Mohammad Ashraf hands over a cheque to Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed at his office yesterday. Bangladesh cricket team donated Tk. 1,61,000 to the Chief Adviser's Relief Fund for the Sidr victims.