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Did U Know?

Michael Johnson, the American track and field legend, won five Olympic gold medals. He was the first man to win both the 200m and 400m races at the same Olympics, accomplishing the feat at the 1996 Olympics.



Yuvraj Singh

(India's star batsman)
"He has been a very good captain with plenty of experience. His first win as Test captain must be very special to him. He is very aggressive and hungry for success."
On Anil Kumble.



ESPN
Sportscentre India
Sport News
Live at 8:30pm



Nat'l Cricket League
(Round Eight, Day Four)
Barisal v Dhaka
Venue: Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium, Mirpur
Rajshahi v Chittagong
Venue: Rajshahi Divisional Stadium
Khulna v Sylhet
Venue: Khulna Divisional Stadium

Trio to receive BCCI awards

PTI, Mumbai

Champion batsmen Sachin Tendulkar and Rahul Dravid, ace leg spinner Anil Kumble and former Test captain Nari Contractor will be felicitated here Monday for their playing feats at the Cricket Board's annual awards function.

Contractor will receive the Lifetime Achievement Award, carrying a cheque for Rs 15 lakh, the CK Nayudu Trophy and a citation. Tendulkar is to receive two awards while Dravid and Kumble one each, a BCCI release said Sunday.

Tendulkar will get the Polly Umrigar Award for outstanding performance in international matches in the 2006-07 season, carrying Rs five lakh prize and a trophy, as well as a special trophy for reaching personal milestones of 11,000 and 15,000 runs in Tests and ODIs.

Dravid will receive a special trophy for completing 10,000 runs in ODIs while Kumble will be felicitated and awarded a trophy for being appointed as the captain of the Indian Test team and for completing 550 wickets in Tests.

Young Karnataka batsman Robin Uthappa and lanky Bengal pacer Ranadeb Bose would each get Rs one lakh and the Madhavrao Scindia Award for scoring the highest number of runs and taking the highest number of wickets respectively in the 2006-07 domestic season.

Mumbai Cricket Association will receive a trophy for the overall best performance in the 2006-07 domestic season while woman cricketer Jhulan Goswami would receive a cheque for Rs one lakh and a trophy for becoming the ICC Women's Cricketer of the Year 2007.

Tigers' tame start

Cricket

TIGERCRIKET.COM, Hamilton

Bangladesh's match-preparation on their New Zealand tour got off to an inauspicious start when the Northern Districts Knights eased to a seven-wicket victory with seven and a half overs to spare chasing a target of 223 in the first warm-up at Seddon Park on Sunday. The day ended on a gloomier note for the tourists when it was learnt that left-arm paceman Syed Rasel had suffered a dislocated left collarbone.

In the 32nd over of the Knights' innings, Rasel took a tumble while fielding a ball and landed hard on his left shoulder and immediately raised his right hand to signal his distress. He was taken for an x-ray straightaway and reports confirmed the dislocation. An orthopedic surgeon will examine the bowler tomorrow morning before further assessment is made on his injury.

Under scattered cloud cover Bangladesh were put in by Knights skipper James Marshall. Openers Zunaed Siddiqui and Tamim Iqbal looked comfortable against the

seamers from the beginning and Tamim helped himself to a couple of flicked fours while Siddiqui cleared the infield whenever the ball was pitched up. The Knights' new ball bowlers Tim Southee and Brent Arnel struggled with line in the beginning but Tamim (12) gifted the home side a breakthrough when he slashed at an away going ball and was caught behind (27-1 in 8.0 overs).

Siddiqui continued to play confidently but saw number three Tushar Imran (8) taken down the leg side with 64 on the board. Captain Mohammad Ashraful then put on 57 with Siddiqui before he was gone for a fluent 30. The Tigers captain went hard at a Southee delivery and was given out after a prolonged appeal.

There were no demons in the wicket and the batsmen faced little difficulty in negotiating the occasional movement and zip. But the Tigers lost crucial wickets at the wrong moments. Shakib Al Hasan (6) was unfortunate as his full-blooded sweep stuck in the hands of short mid wicket Bradley Watling and Aftab Ahmed (12) edged to the 'keeper when he flashed outside off.

From 121-2 Bangladesh slumped to 143-5 in 37th over. Siddiqui reached his half-century with a cracking off drive for four and then hit the first six of the Bangladesh innings but when he needed to go on he holed out at mid off having made 73 off 114 balls.

Farhad Reza and Mashrafe Bin Mortaza ensured that the Tigers passed 200. Mortaza (25) clouted a six and three fours while Reza made a run-a-ball 27 as Bangladesh finished with 222-8.

The Knights were off to a solid start as Mortaza and Rasel were guilty of bowling a touch short. By the time the spinners came in the batsmen were already set. Left-handed opener Nick Horsley pulled and cut his way to 92 and Marshall remained not out on 55 in a convincing win. Ground fielding was good from the Bangladesh team but the bowlers need more adjusting to do in their next warm-up on Tuesday if they want to come back strong.

"I was pleased with the way we batted initially. The goal was to not lose wickets and we achieved that. However we lost our way in the

SEE PAGE 18 COL 1

Advantage Khulna

SPORTS REPORTER



Imrul Kayes slammed his second hundred as hosts Khulna tightened their grips on Sylhet on the penultimate day of the four-day game at the Birshreshtha Matiur Rahman Stadium yesterday to brighten their chances of posting solo lead in the National Cricket League.

Leaders Rajshahi, meanwhile, made a bold start in their second essay but the home side were still facing a daunting task to manage an outright win. A straight win, however, would not be enough for Rajshahi to stay atop as only a draw at Khulna can ensure it.

At the Mirpur Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium, captain Al Shahrari missed his first century of the competition for eight runs but his efforts helped Dhaka consoli-

date their position against Barisal.

KHULNA-SYLHET

Left-handed opener Kayes, who began the day on 87, extended his overnight score to 138 while Nahidul Haque and Sahagir Hossain chipped in with half-centuries as Khulna piled up 421 after resuming on 193-1.

The home team, well placed with a handsome 121-run first-innings lead, then reduced Sylhet to 39-2 in their second innings at stumps.

The morning for Khulna, however, was not well as overnight batsman Mostafizur Rahman (43) was dismissed in the fourth over before captain Habibul Bashar fell for a three-ball duck.

But Nahidul, who scored 58 off 115 balls with the help of seven fours, shared in a 92-run fourth wicket stand with Kayes to take his side into a strong position despite rival left-arm spinner Enamul

Haque's five-wicket haul.

Sahagir smashed ten boundaries in his 54 off 113 balls.

RAJSHAHI-CHITTAGONG

Rajshahi thrived on an unbeaten century stand for the second wicket between Shakil Halder and Farhad Hossain to better their first innings total but still, they need 267 runs on the final day to win the match at the Rajshahi Divisional Stadium.

Shakil was batting on 57 with one-down Farhad accompanying him on 52 before bats were drawn. Earlier, the hosts produced more than a hundred percent effort to wrap up Chittagong's second innings quickly with even veteran wicketkeeper Khaled Mashud bowling one over.

The visitors managed 301 after resuming the day on 113-3 to put a challenging target of 382 for Rajshahi.

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Khulna opener Imrul Kayes is all set to play a square cut during his swashbuckling 138 against Sylhet on the third day of their National Cricket League match at the Shaheed Birshreshtha Flight Lieutenant Matiur Rahman Stadium in Khulna yesterday.

Malik faces Khan threat

Cricket

CRICINFO, undated

Nothing stirs Pakistan cricket more than defeat by India. A first-ever Test series loss in India in 27 years - preceded by the ODI series reverse - and particularly the insipid manner of defeat has ensured that discontent with the status quo is gathering strength.

The prime target is the captaincy. The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) has reiterated its full support to Shoaib Malik, the incumbent, till December 2008. But Younis Khan's recent change of heart over the captaincy has clouded matters.

Younis, it is emerging, is not only open to the idea of captaincy now but

is actively keen on it. Though Nasim Ashraf, chairman of the board, has publicly said it is too late - still smarting, perhaps, from Younis's earlier refusal - Younis is now understood to have support from quarters within the board, as well as from key players within the team.

The support is understandable, says one official. "His performances while captain, in particular the fact that his batting has been largely unaffected by leadership and that he is a certain starter in any Test side, weigh heavily in his favour." By contrast, Malik's continuing inability to convince people of his Test credentials, more even than concerns about his leadership or attitude, do him no favours.

One official, broadly sympathetic to Malik as captain, even

admitted "he makes the middle order by default, because there is no competition, no other real candidate. The captaincy is officially not available to Younis, but in Pakistan you can never say." As an endorsement for continuity, it is hardly convincing.

And there is also reason to believe that the selectors, if put in a dilemma by the credentials of a better-performing middle-order candidate, would not hesitate to drop Malik from the Test side.

The issue is further complicated by what more than one official privately admits to be "some friction" between Malik and Younis. The rift is thought to have emanated from certain selectorial decisions, including the decision

SEE PAGE 18 COL 6



BAD NEWS: Zunaed Siddiqui (L) signals to the dressing room as left-arm seamer Syed Rasel cringes in pain after dislocating his shoulder during Bangladesh's first warm-up game against Northern Districts at Seddon Park in Hamilton on Sunday.

Selectors mull on Rasel's spot

SPORTS REPORTER

A replacement for left-arm seamer Syed Rasel, who was injured in 'Tigers' opening warm-up game against Northern Knights, is expected to be announced later today.

23-year-old Rasel displaced his collarbone after landing hard trying to field a ball. He was immediately taken for an x-ray, which confirmed dislocation. Rasel will have a check-up with an orthopedic surgeon to further assess the injury today.

Among the nine in the standby list, three will be considered to replace Rasel.

Barisal's left-arm seamer Sajidul Islam, among the two fast bowlers in the list, is ahead with his table-topping 38-wicket haul in this season's National Cricket League four-day competition as it will have a like-for-like replacement with his left-armers' angle.

Khulna and Bangladesh under-19 tearaway Dollar Mahmud has taken a hat-trick in one of his two appearances for his divisional side

SEE PAGE 18 COL 1

'Tendulkar & De Silva my favourites'

PTI, Colombo

Sri Lankan veteran Sanath Jayasuriya has rated Indian batting maestro Sachin Tendulkar and compatriot Aravinda de Silva as his favourite batsmen.

"Aravinda de Silva and Sachin Tendulkar are my favourite batsmen," Jayasuriya said, "It has been a terrific journey. I am not someone who was born with a silver spoon in my mouth. So I learnt everything the hard way."

The devastating batsman rated Australian Glenn McGrath as the most difficult bowler to play against.

Jayasuriya, who has decided to continue playing One-dayers, has completed 10,000 runs in the shorter version of the game.

Recalling his rise towards stardom, Jayasuriya said, "It has been a terrific journey. I am not someone who was born with a silver spoon in my mouth. So I learnt everything the hard way."

India will fear Tait: Akhtar

PTI, Melbourne

Pakistani speedster Shoaib Akhtar has urged the Australians to pick Shaun Tait for the upcoming Test series against India as the slinger would be a scary proposition for Anil Kumble's men on the quick track here.

"The Australians must pick Shaun Tait. I'm telling you, the Indians will be scared of him. They're not comfortable with pace at all," Akhtar told the 'Sunday Telegraph'.

Tait, whose action was questioned by the visiting New Zealand team in the ongoing Chappell-

SEE PAGE 18 COL 4

Jaffer knows his job

Cricket

REUTERS, Mumbai

Opener Wasim Jaffer is hoping that India's top-order batsmen can emulate those on the last tour of Australia by giving the visitors a solid foundation to build big scores.

Considered one of the better players of fast bowling in the team, the 29-year-old may be on his first tour of Australia but expectations are high that he will be a success in the four-Test series beginning on Dec. 26.

"In 2003-04, the openers really played well... gave tremendous starts which made it easier for the middle-order," Jaffer told Reuters. Explosive Virender Sehwag and

the resolute Akash Chopra shared in two century stands and two fifty partnerships as India drew a remarkable series one-all after going 1-0 up in Adelaide.

"(There is) a lot of responsibility on the top-order, especially the openers. If they (middle-order) get exposed to the new ball it can get difficult," said Jaffer, who recorded the second double hundred of his Test career in the recent series against Pakistan.

"But if we get through the new ball it makes it easier for all the batting to come," added the Mumbai batsman, who has performed consistently well since he was recalled to the side in March last year.

However, India, aiming to snap top-ranked Australia's two-year, 14-match winning streak during

the tour, have form concerns in the top-order.

Sehwag, recalled for the difficult tour because of his experience despite not figuring in the initial list of probabilities, has struggled for runs in domestic cricket.

Second wicketkeeper Dinesh Karthik managed to hold his place as makeshift opener after hitting a fifty in the drawn final Test against Pakistan following a woe-filled run.

Meanwhile, matting mainstay Rahul Dravid has not been able to convert starts since quitting the captaincy in September.

"Rahul is too good a player to be out of form for long. He had a decent series against Pakistan... looked solid," said Jaffer who averages 51.18 this calendar year, scoring 819 runs from nine Tests with

SEE PAGE 18 COL 4

Aussies' moral victory

Second ODI washed out

Cricket

AFP, Sydney

Australia claimed a moral victory in the second one-day game against New Zealand on Sunday after the tourists slumped to a top-order collapse before the match was abandoned because of rain.

Fast bowler Brett Lee said losing three wickets for just 12 runs would have inflicted "mental scars" on New Zealand, who lost the first Chappell-Hadlee Trophy match in Adelaide by seven wickets.

"We can take a bit out of this game. Even though there was only a few overs bowled, we put a few mental scars into them," Lee said. "Early on our intensity was brilliant."

The three-match series will now go to Hobart on Thursday, with Australia seeking to take back the trophy won convincingly by New Zealand in February.

The tourists were in trouble at 30 for three from six overs when rain halted play, and officials eventually called the game off in the early evening.

Kiwi captain Daniel Vettori won

the toss and batted, with play starting 45 minutes late because of the rain.

Australia's fast bowlers struck early, snaring three wickets in the

opening three overs. Spearhead Lee (2-12) had Lou Vincent caught at second slip by Ricky Ponting for a second-half duck.

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NOW MY FOOD'S WET! A fan, well protected by plastic raincoats, shares a laugh with her friends during a rain stoppage in the second Chappell-Hadlee Trophy match between Australia and New Zealand in Sydney on Sunday.

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