



Did U Know?

The Australian Open was first played in 1905 as The Australasian Championships. Because of its geographic remoteness, historically, the event did not gain attendance from the top tennis players consistently. As late as 1980s, the event lacked participating from top ranked tennis professionals. Since its move to Melbourne Park in 1988, the Australian Open has been widely regarded as a Grand Slam.



Pierluigi Collina
(Former FIFA referee)

"Football needs respect from every angle. We can speak about different situations where respect is needed and certainly this is one. We need respect between players and referees on the field, and between managers and players as well."



ESPN
Sportscentre India
Sport News
Live at 8:30pm

Eid in foreign land

TIGERCRIKET.COM, Hamilton

Celebrating Eid-ul-Azha away from the closest and dearest ones in a foreign land cannot be on the year-planner for the Bangladesh cricket squad members but professionalism demands sacrifices and therefore if the Eid day has to be spent among teammates and Bangladesh expatriates, so be it.

At 7:30am (12:30am BST) the team bus escorted by compatriots living here left for the Hamilton Gardens where the main Eid congregation for local Muslims was scheduled. Most of the players wore the Punjabi brought from home especially for this occasion and the prayer cap. The Eid prayer was held inside an exhibition hall which sits between the lush embankments and botanical beauties of the Gardens and the Bangladesh team's arrival there was announced by the Imam. Among the many nationalities there the 50-odd presence of Bangladeshi men, women and children, some of whom had made the two-hour drive from Auckland just to share the Eid with the players, looked joyfully significant.

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Kumble banks on videos

CRICINFO, undated

Anil Kumble, the Indian captain, rued the fact that weather curtailed the only practice game before the first Test in Melbourne but said the team was practicing hard indoors and working out strategies by studying videos of the Australian players.

"We're doing the best we can, using the indoor facilities at the MCG to prepare ourselves. We're watching videos of the Australian players to have as many plays as possible imprinted in our heads and generally trying to ensure that the four days we have left are put to the best possible use," Kumble wrote in his column for the Hindu.

Only 48 overs of play were possible before rain intervened in the three-day game against Victoria and Kumble regretted the missed opportunity to have a look at the young fast bowlers.

"The whole purpose of my missing out on this game was to

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Tigers revel at Seddon Park

TIGERCRIKET.COM, Hamilton

The Bangladesh fans arrived in numbers from all parts of New Zealand and Seddon Park saw a Tigers party for the first time. With the Twenty20 fixture against a New Zealand Cricket XI arranged to raise funds for the affected from mid-November's Cyclone Sidr the Bangladesh team were obligated to play quality cricket and they delivered. The New Zealand XI were restricted to 133/7 and then despite a few hiccups in the middle the tourists had the depth to run away with a four-wicket win with three overs to spare. This was Bangladesh's first victory on New Zealand soil and there couldn't have been a more festive atmosphere to celebrate that.

Since morning expatriate Bangladeshis have trickled into Hamilton, from nearby Taunanga, Auckland and from cities and towns far away. Some of them had even watched the Tigers' train in the morning. As the afternoon game drew closer more arrived, the majority of them in three buses.

Before the start ICC Chief Executive Malcolm Speed handed over a cheque of US\$ 2,50,000 to Bangladesh captain Mohammad Ashraful and team manager Ahmed Sajjadul Alam. Speed had flown all the way to Hamilton just to be part of this noble effort initiated by World Vision. So many others have also spontaneously come forward, including the sponsors for this match and the

repeated call from the PA system announcer to stand by the people of Bangladesh in this month of giving was heartwarming.

The Tigers played a highly-motivated game. All the bowlers did their part in bowling at the right areas and Shahadat Hossain was the pick of the lot with 3 for 15 off four overs. The highlight of his spell was probably the time when he softened Tim Southee with a bouncer and then delivered the perfect yorker to knock off the stump of the highly-rated rookie.

Bangladesh rested first choice bowlers Mashrafe Bin Mortaza and Abdur Razzak to keep them fresh for the three-match ODI series that starts on Boxing Day in Auckland but the reserves never allowed their absence to be felt. Sajidul Islam bowled with zip and Farhad Reza was once again spot on with his yorkers. Ashraful meanwhile picked up his customary T20 wickets. The fielding was outstanding and Farhad Reza's diving catch at mid-wicket from a flat hit from Ross Taylor was the pick of the effort.

The Bangladesh chase was a stop-start affair and Tamim Iqbal was out in the first over. Zunaed Siddique played a lovely flick for four but skied a similar attempt before Aftab Ahmed (20) and Ashraful (20) started entertaining. With New Zealand bowling seam up both batsmen played their trademark scoop shot by improvising. Ashraful's one going for the maximum. Aftab was the first of three run, outs as Ashraful and Shakib (22) followed suit leaving Mehrab Hossain (21 not out) and Farhad Reza (31 off 17 balls) to take

the side to victory.

Reza came in at 86 for 5 and took off the pressure with a scorching drive for four and a swept six. He was out with one to get and Mushfiqur Rahim pushed one to mid-wicket to complete the formalities.

"This win was important, especially because of the cause this match was related to. From a cricketing point it gives us a lot of confidence. We wanted to improve match by match and I think we are getting there," said Ashraful.

The Tigers leave Hamilton for Auckland tomorrow (Monday) morning.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard of the Twenty20 match between New Zealand Cricket XI and Bangladesh at Seddon Park in Hamilton on Sunday.

NEW ZEALAND CRICKET XI
Howc Junaid b Shahadat 10
Fleming c Sajidul b Ashraful 17
Fulton c Omar b Sajidul 3
Taylor c Reza b Ashraful 15
Styris c Mehrab b Reza 29
Marshall not out 33
Hopkins c Iqbal b Shahadat 12
Southee b Shahadat 1
Mason not out 3
Extras: (b-1, lb-5, w-4) 10
Total: (For 7 wks in 20 overs) 133
Did not bat: Patel, O'Brien.
Fall of wickets: 1-12, 2-19, 3-47, 4-59, 5-98, 6-116, 7-120.

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Shahadat	4	0	15	3
Sajidul	4	1	23	1
Reza	4	0	26	1
Ashraful	4	0	28	2
Shakib	3	0	23	0
Aftab	1	0	12	0

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CLIPPING THE KIWII WINGS: Bangladesh batsman Farhad Reza pulls the ball to the square leg boundary during the day-night Twenty20 game against a New Zealand XI at Seddon Park in Hamilton yesterday. Reza struck a brisk 31 as Bangladesh romped to a four-wicket win in their first real challenge ahead of the three-match one-day series with the opening game billed at Auckland on December 26.

Mashud bunks practice

SPORTS REPORTER

Former national skipper Khaled Mashud didn't turn up when the training camp for the New Zealand tour stand-by players started yesterday.

The no-show raised question over the veteran wicketkeeper's reluctance to attend the training under Sarwar Imran.

Mashud has cited illness for his absence. "We already referred his issue to our medical committee and the selectors were also informed about the matter. The fitness is a big issue so we have to be careful about the issue," said Gazi Ashraf Hossain Lipu, chairman of the cricket operations committee.

It was learnt that the board has taken Mashud's absence seriously and will not consider him if found guilty of reluctance or a lack of fitness.

Out of the nine cricketers, six practiced yesterday including middle-order batsman Rajin Saleh, who will leave Dhaka for New Zealand today. Left-arm seamer Sajidul Islam is now in New Zealand and young paceman Dollar Mahmud will fly with the Under-19 team for South Africa today.

Mahmudur resigns?

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) is all set to begin search for a new chief executive officer after it was learned that serving CEO Mahmudur Rahman has tendered his resignation.

It was learnt that Mahmudur has taken the decision as there is hardly any chance for him to have an extension in the demanding job. The two-year tenure will be end in February.

Most of the board members are not happy with the performance of Mahmudur, who was appointed during the Ali Asghar-led committee.

Rahman was tight-lipped over the issue. "I don't want to make any comment as an employee of the board," he said.

Under-19s off to SA today

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh under-19 cricket team will depart for South Africa on December 24. The youth side will play a three-day match against their South African counterparts and a triangular one-day series, which also involves India.

The Suhrawardi Shuvo-led side won both one-day series against Pakistan and Sri Lanka 3-2 in the last month.

The team will return on January 9.

SQUAD
Suhrawardi Shuvo (captain), Dollar Mahmud, Marshall Ayub, Ashraful Aziz, Subhashish Roy, Rubel Hossain, Syed Golam Kibria, Rony Talukdar, Mahmudul Hasan, Nasir Hossain, KM Shakil, Nadimuddin Mintu, Mithun Ali (wicketkeeper), Hamidul Islam.

Isn't it a shame?

TIGERCRIKET.COM, Auckland

SPORTS REPORTER

For the average television viewers of the country, the first two days was all about surfing channels to enjoy the Eid programmes, but on the third day they were desperate to find somewhere to watch live coverage of the Twenty20 charity match between Bangladesh and a New Zealand Cricket XI yesterday.

There was however only a few fortunate ones who finally found the desired channel and watched the Tigers' four-wicket success live.

However as usual it was not on the screen of the state-run television, BTV, rather on an Indian channel named Sony SAB, which televised the match, arranged to raise funds for the Cyclone Sidr-hit people of

Bangladesh, live from Hamilton.

"Why not BTV?" was the most demanding query when the particular Indian channel was available only to a limited section of viewers.

The Daily Star Sport last night desperately tried to get connected to the programme section of the BTV. The phone kept ringing but unfortunately there was nobody at the other end to pick it up. Maybe people over there were still in Eid mood.

It's very sad that a game, which was dedicated for the Sidr victims of the country, could not be seen on BTV due to the lack of proper initiative.

"If our television can manage sponsors to telecast the India-Pakistan match live then what's wrong about telecasting our own team's match," an aggrieved fan complained to this newspaper over telephone.

No doubt an India-Pakistan match has got enormous commercial interest but doesn't it look very odd for the BTV and the sponsors alike to remain nonchalant when the cricket fraternity has come together for a noble cause?

It was not sure whether BTV would telecast the one-day and Test series but the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) confirmed yesterday that SAB will also telecast the three-match ODI and two-match Test series between Bangladesh and New Zealand over the next three and half weeks.

This very fact however raises the question as to how many people will really have access to the said channel (SAB), leaving many keen followers in the dark about the progress of our beloved Tigers when they are on one of their most challenging foreign assignments.

Tamim ton in vain

TIGERCRIKET.COM, Auckland

Tamim Iqbal's brilliant 104 failed to inspire the Bangladesh team who muffed a superb platform to get bundled out for 242 against the Auckland Aces on Friday. That score on a fast outfield and smallish square at Eden park's Outer Oval was always going to be difficult to defend and the Aces were comfortably home by seven wickets with four overs to spare.

This was the tourists' second loss in three warm-up matches with the other being washed-out before Bangladesh could bat.

The Tigers had made the two-hour bus journey from Hamilton to arrive at the Outer Oval and were greeted by a gloomy sky and cool

breeze. But with the pitch looking firm and brownish Mohammad Ashraful opted to bat on winning the toss. For the first five overs it didn't look like a good decision especially when Zunaed Siddique (1) went behind a length ball from Darryl Tuffey and was frozen when the delivery took the outside edge of the ball and went to wicketkeeper Young Bangladesh were 7/1 after five before Tamim opened up and hit four boundaries in one over from pacer McKay.

The shackles were broken and with the ever-fluent Aftab Ahmed joining Tamim the runs began to flow. They were precise in defending or leaving out balls that posed risk but punished anything wide, short or too full. Aftab spanked Paul Hitchcock over mid off for the first six of the innings six and then found the cover boundary with a

trademark over the infield shot. Then came a delightful scoop over the short fine leg fielder for a four that had the Auckland-based young Bangladeshi expatriates at the ground in raptures.

Having put on 86 in 17 overs with Tamim Aftab (29 off 42) gave a tame catch to Martin Guphill at point off Hitchcock but Ashraful maintained the momentum with a 25-ball 27 before a firm pull from him went straight to Guphill at mid wicket (147/3 in 29.3 overs). Shakib Al Hasan (18 off 18) looked in fine touch as he partnered Tamim on way to the opener's 100 that came with a gentle nudge to fine leg but Tamim was caught behind soon after (184/4 in 35.4 overs). In the next six overs Bangladesh lost four wickets for 24 runs to hand over the initiative to the Aces and the eventual score of 242 in

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Master Indian batsman Sachin Tendulkar gives slip catches after his side's tour match against Victoria fell through due to rain in Melbourne on Friday.

'Our best chance'

TIGERCRIKET.COM, Melbourne

Sachin Tendulkar said Saturday India have their best chance of beating Australia on home ground for the first time in the four-Test series beginning here with the Boxing Day Test match.

The phenomenal Indian run-machine, second all-time in Test runs to West Indian Brian Lara, said a victory over Ricky Ponting's champion team would be the crowning glory of his magnificent 18-year career.

The 34-year-old superstar, who is making his fourth and likely last tour of Australia, also ruled out any immediate thoughts of retiring.

Tendulkar, who has scored four

centuries from 12 Test matches in Australia, says he is keen to beat the top-ranked Aussies on their home ground for the first time.

India have won just four Tests in eight Australian tours, but pushed Steve Waugh's Australians all the way in the drawn 1-1 last series tour here in 2003-04.

"I think it would be the most important tour (ever) if we can pull it off," Tendulkar told a press conference here Saturday.

"Beating Australia is obviously the ultimate thing because of the way they have played for so many years, so it makes it a special tour."

"And having come here for the fourth time, it would be a wonderful occasion (if we could win the series)."

Australia's last home series loss was 14 years ago to the West Indies

2-1 and they have been unbeaten in 26 subsequent home series.

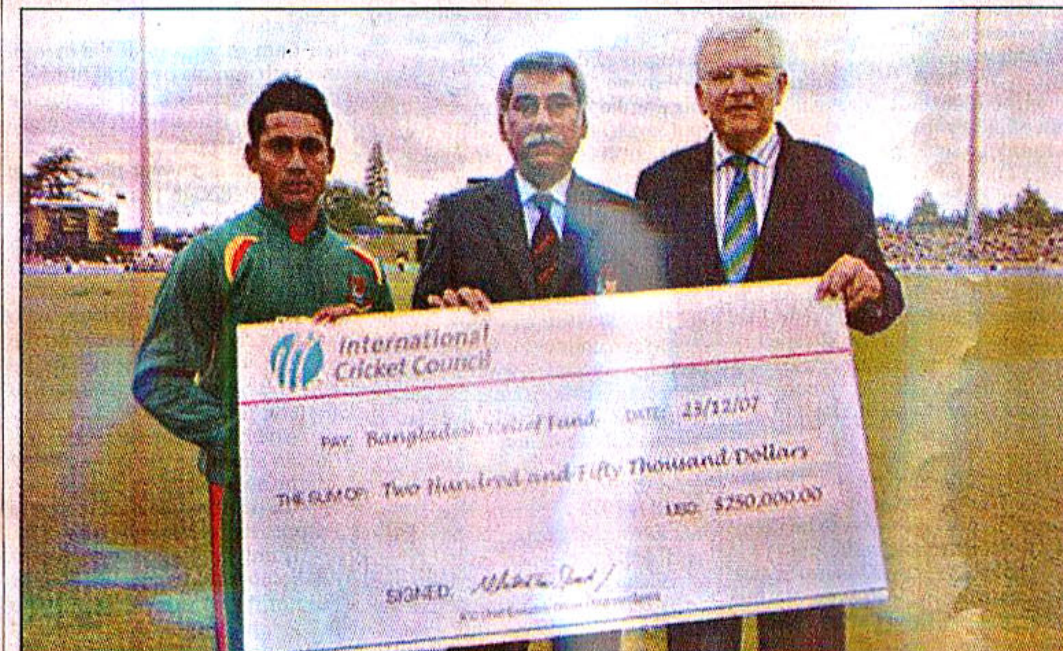
The Indians' only lead-up game to the Boxing Day Test was abandoned after three rain-hit days, offering the tourists only 48 overs' batting practice, but Tendulkar believes India have never been better prepared to beat Australia.

He said India have just come off Test series victories against England in England and against Pakistan in India.

"We have come here properly prepared because, although the practice match was rained off, we have come here having played Test cricket, which is extremely important," Tendulkar said.

"So yes, I would say we are geared up (to win) and as far as I am concerned we are ready to go out

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A NOBLE GESTURE: International Cricket Council (ICC) CEO Malcolm Speed (R) hands over a cheque of 250,000 dollars for the Sidr victim relief fund to Bangladesh Cricket Board's media committee chairman Ahmed Sajjadul Alam prior to the Bangladesh-New Zealand T20 international at Seddon Park in Hamilton yesterday. Bangladesh captain Mohammad Ashraful is also seen.