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Did U Know?

In the 1938 FIFA World Cup semifinal, the shorts of Giuseppe Meazza of Italy fell down as he was taking a penalty shot. He held his shorts up and calmly scored past Brazil's Valter.



Shaun Pollock

(South Africa's star all-rounder) "I'd like to thank Cricket South Africa for allowing me the opportunity of representing my country for the last 12 years. I thoroughly enjoy the honour and privilege of wearing the Protean badge and take with me some remarkable memories having played against some great players. While announcing his retirement from international cricket on Friday.



ESPN
Sportscentre India
Sports News
Live at 8:30pm
FA Cup
Liverpool v Luton
Third Round, Replay
Live from 1:55am (Wednesday)
STAR Sports
Australian Open
First Round
Live from 6:00am

Zia, Rajib and Taibur keep winning

SPORTS REPORTER

Three of the four Bangladeshi players maintained their winning run in the 6th Parsvath Open International Open Chess Tournament in Delhi.

Grandmaster Ziaur Rahman, International Master Enamul Hossain Rajib and FIDE Master Taibur Rahman have won in all three rounds to lead the table with maximum three points.

In the third round in Monday, Zia beat Praveen Prasad of India, Rajib beat Russian WGM Yana Melnikova and Taibur defeated local player Santosh Kumar.

Sohel Chowdhury, now on two points, was the only Bangladeshi to lose when he went down to IM Sudhakar Babu of India.

In the second round on Sunday night the Bangladesh quartet won against their Indian opponents with Zia beating Debayan Majumder, Rajib beating Meghan Gupta, Taibur beating Himal Gusani and Sohail beating Kals Meherjat.

Flemo denies retirement reports

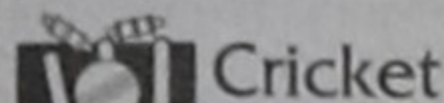
BBC ONLINE, undated

Former New Zealand captain Stephen Fleming insists he will be available for the March Tests against England despite reports he is set to retire.

The 34-year-old retired from the one-day game in September and reluctantly relinquished the Test captaincy to Daniel Vettori.

Reports had suggested the batsman was considering quitting Tests. But Fleming said: "Unless it has

Siddons not worried



SPORTS REPORTER

After the Tigers' meek surrender in the two-match Test series, coach Jamie Siddons pointed out that 'short-term goal' set by the previous management is behind the reason Bangladesh have failed to improve rapidly in Tests.

"I think there was a short-term goal from the previous management, definitely. Trying to win games as we go and I think we've had a short-term vision there. I think my vision is more long-term with young players brought in purely on skill and talent which have been identified," the Australian was quoted by TigerCricket.com.

"We've got a great group at the moment but I'm sure there are a couple of players who need to be looked at back home," he added while speaking in the post-match briefing after his side's innings and 137-run run defeat in the second Test on the third morning in Wellington.

Despite the frustrating first

assignment with the Tigers, the new Bangladesh coach said that there was something positive to take out of the trip.

"Not in terms of score on the board but definitely in terms of hope and potential. The potential of our opening bowlers Mashrafe (Bin Mortaza) and Shahadat (Hossain) is enormous. The potential of our opening combination of Tamim (Iqbal) and Zunaed (Siddique) is pretty enormous as well."

"I see some really good things there and I think it is going to be seen in the next four-five months," he continued.

"It's going to take a while. I have to say two years as my contract is for that period but it may even take longer to reach the level where we can compete properly with New Zealand in New Zealand, which is a tough ask for any international cricket team," he said in reply to a question about how long it might take for Bangladesh to be competitive at this level.

He also said that the current players need to stay together as long as they can.

"I think they need to stay

together. They need to travel with the coaching staff I have chosen which I think is supposedly the best coaching staff around in Bangladesh. I'd love this 15 to stay together as long as we can," he said.

Meanwhile, injured opener Tamim Iqbal was checked by a specialist in Wellington and was told to cover his injured thumb with a splinter.

"The splinter would come off in two to three weeks and an x-ray will be done after that. Based on the report we'll have an idea about when he can start training," said team physio Darryn Lifson.

The Tigers will leave Wellington for Auckland on Thursday to catch their flight to Bangkok on way to Dhaka.

SCOREBOARD

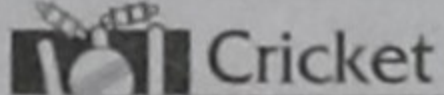
Final scoreboard on the third day of the second Test between New Zealand and Bangladesh at the Basin Reserve in Wellington on Monday:

BAHGLADESH: First innings 143 (Ashraful 35; Martin 5-65, O'Brien 3-34)

NEW ZEALAND: First innings 393

SEE PAGE 18 COL 5

Captains call truce



REUTERS, Perth

Australia and India called a truce to their week-long feud when rival captains Ricky Ponting and Anil Kumble met on Monday and the visitors dropped a complaint against spinner Brad Hogg.

Ponting and Kumble emerged from the one-hour meeting at a Perth hotel saying they had resolved their differences.

"We're really happy with the outcome," Australia skipper Ponting told reporters. "We've decided from here on in this (four-match) series will be played in great spirit."

"The first Test certainly was and it's our responsibility to make sure we uphold that and we're looking

forward to the next couple of Test matches being very good and very enjoyable for the spectators."

Kumble said the teams wanted to put the feud behind them.

"It's time to move on and whatever has happened, it's just one of those incidents," he said. "Ricky and I had a fantastic meeting...and we're really happy to be playing cricket again."

India also said they had withdrawn a complaint against Hogg.

The Australian was charged with using abusive language during last week's bad-tempered second Test in Sydney but the case was dropped when the visitors withdrew the complaint.

"It's all behind us now so we can get on with cricket," International Cricket Council (ICC) match referee Mike Procter said. "It's a wonderful gesture by India, showing

what sportsmanship they possess."

Ponting and Kumble were all smiles as they shook hands and posed for the cameras after the meeting and ICC mediator Ranjan Madugalle said he was satisfied there would be no repeat of the bitter fallout in Sydney.

Madugalle was called in to help resolve the dispute after Kumble questioned Australia's sportsmanship during the second Test and the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) threatened to quit the tour unless the ICC cleared Harbhajan Singh of a racism charge.

Harbhajan was suspended for three matches after the ICC found him guilty of calling Australia all-rounder Andrew Symonds a monkey.

Off-spinner Harbhajan has

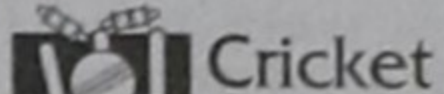
SEE PAGE 18 COL 4



PHOTO: AFP

LET'S FORGET THE BITTER SYDNEY EPISODE: International Cricket Council (ICC) chief match referee Ranjan Madugalle (R), Australia captain Ricky Ponting (L) and India skipper Anil Kumble are all smiles during a meeting at Hyatt hotel in Perth yesterday.

The onus is on Bowden



AFP, Perth

New Zealand umpire Billy Bowden, who steps into the super-charged atmosphere of the third Test between Australia and India, is already no stranger to controversy.

Bowden, with the crooked finger and eccentric gestures, has previously been written off by the Australians as the world's worst umpire yet he has been tasked with keeping the volatile series on track.

His call-up for the Perth Test starting Wednesday to replace the heavily criticised Steve Bucknor came after poor decisions by the West Indian inflamed the volatile second Test.

Australia, already 2-0 up in the series, are now ratcheting up the pressure for the third Test with passionate talk of setting a world record 17 consecutive Test wins.

Despite the difficult situation, New Zealand Cricket umpires' manager Brian Aldridge says Bowden can take the pressure.

"If anyone can handle it Billy can," said Aldridge.

"It's a feather in his cap, the fact they (the ICC) have got confidence in him considering the climate they've got at the moment."

Bowden will stand in his 42nd Test in Perth and already has a sense of the

deep emotion between Australia and India after officiating in Australia's 377-run first Test victory.

There were no complaints about his performance then but two years ago a poll of Australian cricketers rated Bowden as the worst on the International Cricket Council elite panel.

For Brent Fraser "Billy" Bowden, umpiring, and its reported

120,000-dollar salary, came about after his promising playing career was cut short by rheumatoid arthritis in his early 20s.

When he arrived on the international scene in March 2000 it was evident a combination of his personality and the disease had produced an animated character at the crease.

SEE PAGE 18 COL 2



PHOTO: AFP

WATCH YOUR CROOKED FINGER BILLY: India off-spinner Harbhajan Singh (L) shares a light moment with umpire Billy Bowden at the WACA ground in Perth yesterday. Bowden is replacing Steve Bucknor in the third Test following some poor judgement by the West Indian umpire in the eventful second Test in Sydney.



PHOTO: AFP

DOWN AND OUT: Last Bangladesh pair, Mashrafe Bin Mortaza (L) and Shakib Al Hasan -- with their heads down, leaves the pitch after conceding an innings and 137-run defeat on the third day of the second and last Test against New Zealand at Basin Reserve in Wellington yesterday.

Ponting admits team mistakes

REUTERS, Melbourne

The Australian team made a couple of mistakes on the field in the controversial second Test against India, Australia captain Ricky Ponting has admitted.

The fallout from the Test, which Australia won by 122 runs, included India captain Anil Kumble accusing the Australians of not playing within the spirit of the game, while Ponting faced calls for his sacking.

The Australian team have received support from numerous other international players for their hard-nosed attitude to the game, though Ponting said the team had examined aspects of their behaviour and reaffirmed their pledge to the spirit of cricket.

However Ponting, writing in his column in Monday's Australian newspaper, said there had been two incidents on the field that his side could have handled better.

"I know when I was given out in the first innings in Sydney I should have left straight away instead of hanging around for a few seconds, and I know I should not have lobbed my bat into the dressing room," Ponting wrote.

"Michael Clarke also knows that he should have gone straight away too, after cutting the ball to first slip."

"He knows he did the wrong thing but at the time he was just shocked at how he had got out first ball."

"I believe there are no glaring issues we need to address, but when they are all added together in

SEE PAGE 18 COL 5

Charges against Harbhajan can't be dropped: ICC

PTI, New Delhi

While Brad Hogg is celebrating after India withdrew charges against him, Indian off-spinner Harbhajan Singh stands no such chance even if Australia wants to reciprocate to India's goodwill gesture.

Even if Australia suddenly has a change of heart and decides to withdraw racism charges that earned the spinner a three-match ban from the Match Referee, it's too late, according to laws of the International Cricket Council (ICC).

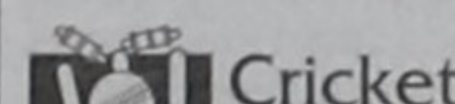
According to a source in the ICC, once the Appeals Commissioner is appointed, the process would complete its full course, even if the complainant wants to drop the charges.

"In Hogg's case, the charges of abusing the Indian players were laid by their administrative manager Chetan Chauhan, who later withdrew it," he said.

"But in Harbhajan's case, the charges were brought by both the on-field umpires, after which ICC has already appointed John Hansen as the Appeals Commissioner. The process would go the full distance in this case," the source said.

SEE PAGE 18 COL 8

India set Hogg free



AFP, Perth

Australian spinner Brad Hogg is free to play against India after the tourists withdrew their complaint that he made offensive comments during the contentious second Test in Sydney.

Hogg had been accused of calling Indian captain Anil Kumble and wicketkeeper Mahendra Singh Dhoni "bastards" at the Sydney Cricket Ground and was due to face a code of conduct hearing here on Monday.

Hogg arrived for the hearing with Cricket Australia officials, but Kumble announced that the Indians had decided to drop the allegations after a peace meeting with Australian captain Ricky Ponting and International Cricket Council chief match referee Ranjan

Madugalle just an hour earlier.

"From what happened with Ricky and I, we had a discussion with Ranjan and after that it was important that the game of cricket moved on," Kumble said.

"Cricket is larger than the individual and it was important that we forgot about what happened in Sydney as one of those bad moments and that it was time to move on."

"So in view of that, we decided as a team that we withdraw the charge made against Brad Hogg."

Hogg was relieved and thanked the Indians. "It's a kind gesture, a lovely gesture by the Indian team and it's much appreciated by myself and the Australian cricket team," he said.

Despite the good news, Hogg is no certainty to retain his spot for the third Test on his home ground starting Wednesday, with the Australian selectors considering

recalling Shaun Tait at the spinner's expense to unleash a four-pronged pace attack against the Indians on what seems certain to be a lively pitch.

The Indians made the initial complaint after spinner Harbhajan Singh was reported for allegedly racially abusing Andrew Symonds.

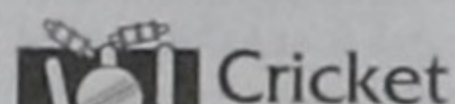
Harbhajan was handed a three-Test suspension, but is free to play at the WACA pending an appeal.

The ICC's Madugalle said he was confident the simmering tensions between the two teams that followed the Sydney Test had now been resolved.

"As captains (Ponting and Kumble) have the responsibility to uphold the game in the right spirit and play the game with mutual respect for one another and I'm very confident that the next five days will see just that."

"So let's all look forward to a great Test match."

IPL sold for a billion dollars



AFP, Mumbai

India's cricket chiefs on Monday sold the media rights for the star-studded inaugural Twenty20 Indian Premier League (IPL) for one billion dollars.

A consortium of India's Sony Television network and the Singapore-based World Sports Group won the rights for the next 10 years by outbidding the ESPN-Star Sports network, jointly owned by Rupert Murdoch and Disney.

"There were two bidders in the final phase -- ESPN Star Sports and the

Sony-WSG combine," IPL commissioner and Indian cricket board vice-president Lalit Modi told reporters.

"Sony-WSG bagged the media rights for 1.026 billion dollars, comprising 918 million dollars as rights money and 108 million dollars for compulsory promotional activities."

"They will keep the rights for the next 10 years."

The IPL, the brainchild of the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI), is backed by the International Cricket Council and supported by cricket boards around the world.

The tournament, featuring eight franchised teams drawn from a star cast of cricket's top players,

SEE PAGE 18 COL 1

Jatrabari clinch eves' kabaddi league

SPORTS REPORTER

Jatrabari Krira Chakra lifted the EXIM Bank Women's Kabaddi League with a 68-51 victory over neighbours Matuail Milon Smriti Sangsad in the final at the Outer Stadium kabaddi court yesterday.

Jatrabari, who had beaten Matuail 58-38 in the league phase, earned four lonas.

EXIM Bank entrepreneur M Nazrul Islam Swapan and managing director Kazi Moshir Rahman witnessed the final and distributed trophies.

Meanwhile, a two-day Inter-divisional women's kabaddi competition will begin at the Dhanmondi Women's Sports Complex today.



PHOTO: STAR

Players of Jatrabari Krira Chakra celebrate winning the EXIM Bank Women's Kabaddi League after beating Matuail in the final at the Outer Stadium kabaddi court yesterday.