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Did U Know?

China has spent 40 billion dollars on infrastructure development as Beijing prepares to woo the world with the Olympic Games in August.



Oliver Bierhoff
(Germany football manager)
"The level of an European Championships is higher than that of a World Cup and from the first round."



ATN Bangla
V-Day Club Cup Football
Badda Jagarani v Arambagh
First Semifinal
Live from 4:15pm
ESPN
Sportscentre India
Sports News
Live at 8:30pm



Footballer Kabir passes away

Former national footballer and coach Feroz Kabir died yesterday morning of iodine deficiency disorder at the Millennium Hospital in Dhaka.

Kabir, who represented the Bangladesh national team during the Merdeka Cup in 1973, was 56.

He left behind his wife, one son, one daughter and a host of relatives and well wishers to mourn his death.

Kabir was later buried at the Mohishbathan graveyard in Rajshahi.

The Bangladesh Football Federation consoled the death of the ex-international and prayed for the salvation of the departed soul. The federation officials also expressed deep sympathy for the bereaved family.

Rakib still unbeaten

Abdullah Al Rakib and Enamul Hossain Rajib both drew their fourth round matches in the International Chess Festival of Moscow Open on Tuesday but fellow Bangladesh player Sheikh Nasir Ahmed recorded his second successive win after two defeats in the meet.

Grand Master Rakib, still unbeaten, drew with Russian GM Pavel Smirnov to reach three points while International Master Rajib, who lost in the previous round, pushed his tally to 2.5 points after sharing points with FM Valery Zolotukhin, also of Russia.

FIDE Master Nasir defeated local FM Musaeiev Mansur to collect his second point at the Russian capital.

Faith in the trusted Javed the exception

Cricket
SPORTS REPORTER

There was no surprise call-up when Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) announced a 17-member national squad yesterday for the upcoming two-match Test and three-match one-day series against South Africa.

It was expected that ace left-arm spinner Mohammad Rafique would be included amongst the probables but the most significant decision taken by the Rafique Alam-led three-member selection panel was the omission of opener Javed Omar.

Three players -- Tushar Imran, Nazmul Hossain & Mehtab Hossain were also excluded from the party that toured New Zealand.

It looks likely that the new team management, better to say new coach Jamie Siddons, are all set to put to an end the dilemma about Javed as they didn't even consider the veteran for the six-member reserve list where veteran wicketkeeper Khaled Mashud heads a list featuring Nazimuddin, Talha Jubair, Dollar Mahmud, Mahmudullah Riyad and Mosharraf Hossain.

The right-hander has also not been considered for the 14-

member team which was announced yesterday to play the three-day warm-up match, which will take place at the Fatullah Cricket Stadium from February 17-19, against South Africa.

The selection of Javed in the past had never been without questions, especially his inclusion in the one-day squad where his style has always been pedestrian.

Many thought that the headache in the opening position would never be solved until the selectors

SQUAD

Mohammad Ashraful (captain), Habibul Bashar, Aftab Ahmed, Zunaed Siddique, Tamim Iqbal, Shahriar Nafees, Shakib Al Hasan, Rajin Saleh, Mashrafe Bin Mortaza (vice-captain), Shahadat Hossain, Mushfiqur Rahim, Sajidul Islam, Forhad Reza, Abdur Razzak, Enamul Haque, Mohammed Rafique, Syed Raseel.

TEAM (FOR 3-DAY MATCH)
Zunaed Siddique, Shahriar Nafees, Nazimuddin, Rajin Saleh, Shakib Al Hasan, Aftab Ahmed, Mushfiqur Rahim, Enamul Haque, Sajidul Islam, Talha Jubair, Forhad Reza, Syed Raseel, Rokibul Hassan and Habibul Bashar.

stopped their policy of using Javed as a fill-in.

Siddons however was courageous enough to take a harsh decision against the veteran opener during the New Zealand tour to make way for two uncapped youngsters -- Zunaed and Tamim, both of who vindicated the coach's decision.

Javed, who returned home after the one-day series without playing any match in New Zealand, made a half-century in the last practice match yesterday in favour of Team C (200-8) against Team B (177 all out) but it was not good enough for a change of heart from the selectors.

"This decision has been taken because we are now looking forward. Tamim (Iqbal) and Zunaed (Siddique) both showed their considerable potential in New Zealand and plus Shahriar Nafees is an important player for us as well," said chief selector Rafique, explaining the decision to axe Javed.

"There was no reason to make wholesale changes. We announced a 17-member squad because of some injury problems in the team but all 23 players (seventeen in the squad and six in the reserve bench) will be considered for both the Tests and one-day series," he added.

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SETTING SIGHTS ON THE BULLS EYE: Archers, mostly from the hilly districts of the country, train at the Paltan Maidan adjacent to the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday. The third National Archery Championships begins here today.

Nat'l archery opens today

UNB, Dhaka

The 3rd National Archery Championships, organised by Bangladesh Archery Federation, begins today at the Outer Stadium.

Archery Federation president Maj Gen Mohammad Sadik Hasan Rumi will formally inaugurate the three-day meet for men and women.

Forty teams across from the country will take part in two events - 'recurve bow' and 'bamboo bow'.

Federation general secretary Kazi Rajibuddin Ahmed Chapal disclosed the details at a press conference at the National Sports Council conference room yesterday.

A budget of Tk 2,90,000 has been fixed to run the meet.

U-19s clinch series over WI side

SPORTS REPORTER

First semifinal today Mohammedan, Arambagh punished

Football
SPORTS REPORTER

The Protiti Pharma Victory Day Club Cup tournament committee did football one favour by penalising local giants Mohammedan Sporting Club and Arambagh Krira Sangha for their 'unsporting' behaviour and playing against the 'spirit of the game'.

Having confirmed their semifinal berths, the two teams were engaged in an 'unfair' contest of trying to lose the last match of Group A on Tuesday -- apparently in a bid to finish group runners-up and avoid a clash with favourites Abahani in the semifinals.

Normally returned in the latter stage of the match under pressure of the angry fans and eventually, tourna-

ment hosts Mohammedan won 3-1.

The disciplinary committee, taking match commissioner Abdus Sadek's report into consideration, yesterday termed the Mohammedan-Arambagh tie completely 'unsporting'.

The tournament committee also condemned the two teams for hurting the spirit of the game although they had ensured their places in the last four before going into the game.

Representatives of the two clubs, who were present in the disciplinary committee meeting, also apologised for their acts.

The two teams have been fined Tk 50,000 each, the amount they are to receive as appearance money. Both clubs have been directed to pay the fine before their respective semifinals. The total Tk one lakh will go into Bangladesh Football Federation's fund for distressed footballers and organisers.

The result of the match has also been cancelled but the standing in the group and the semifinal line-up remain same. Level on four points with Arambagh, Mohammedan are still group champions by virtue of better goal difference.

"We have done this for the sake of football," said tournament committee chairman and former national and Mohammedan captain Zakaria Pintoo.

"This is our (Mohammedan's) tournament and had we not done this, we would have been branded as crooks forever. Now we have proved that at least, we do not support such acts," added the former international defender.

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School cricket from Feb 9

SPORTS REPORTER

The Standard Chartered Young Tigers National School Cricket Tournament (Under-16) gets underway at the Dhaka Cricket Stadium on February 9 with BKSP taking on West End High School in the opening match.

The Game Development Committee of the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) has trimmed down the number of participating teams and venues to give the tournament a proper shape in order to find out future cricketers.

A total of 460 schools, which is almost half of last year, from the country's all sixty-four districts will take part in this year's tournament.

"We reduced the number of the participating teams and concentrated on a divisional-based tournament rather than last year's district-based competition because we want to give it a proper shape. We are also looking forward to appointing a coach for each district teams," said Ishtiaque Ahmed, vice-chairman of the BCB body, at a press conference yesterday.

"On conclusion of 969 matches in 70 venues there would be six divisional champions along with Dhaka metro.

As per earlier commitment, sponsors Standard Chartered Bank will provide Tk 60 lakh in the last year of their three-year contract with the BCB.

"Our bank always wants to contribute something in development of the game and that is the reason we have associated our-

selves with school cricket," said Shah Masud Imam, head of corporate affairs of Standard Chartered Bank.

He also informed the reporters in reply to a question that they failed to fulfil their commitment about providing scholarships for top ten performers from the last year tournament as they didn't get any indication regarding the matter from BCB.

"We were ready to do that but we didn't get any indication from BCB," Imam said.

Ishtiaque however defended the board's position by saying that it was almost impossible for them to find out ten top players from such a massive competition and that was the reason they decided to resize it in this year.

Game development chairman Lt. col. (ret'd) MA Latif Khan told the

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Press Briefing
February 6, 2008

Bangladesh Cricket Board's development committee chairman MA Latif (2nd from L) makes a point during a press briefing in connection with the National Schools Cricket Championship 2008 at a city hotel yesterday. Also present at the briefing was sponsors Standard Chartered Bank's head of corporate affairs Shah Masud Imam (2nd from R).

Gilly waiting for IPL

Cricket
AFP, Sydney

Record-breaking Australian cricketer Adam Gilchrist said Wednesday he was upbeat about his chances of taking part in the lucrative inaugural Twenty20 Indian Premier League (IPL).

The six-week competition kicks off in April and the 36-year-old wicketkeeper-batsman would be a huge draw, commanding a hefty pay packet.

Tournament organisers and international boards have an agreement that bans players from participating in the IPL until two years after retirement but Gilchrist said he expected to receive an exemption from Cricket Australia.

"As far as I know at the moment, Cricket Australia haven't given me any indication they wouldn't want me to be part of that, but I'm not 100 per cent sure," said Gilchrist.

"We're just trying to confirm that. It is moving quickly and we're just trying to get a gauge of where it's at so we'll know more in the next few days."

While he waits for confirmation of his IPL future, Gilchrist, the record holder for most dismissals by a wicketkeeper in Test cricket, is looking forward to renewing his rivalry with Sri Lanka in Friday's triangular one-day series clash in Sydney.

The last time the sides met in a one-day international, Gilchrist smashed an incredible 149 from 104 balls in the World Cup final last April and said he wanted to give Australian fans one last innings to remember in his farewell series.

"I'd love to produce a big score for the fans, for the team more importantly," he said.

"It has been a wonderful, overwhelming reception everywhere I have gone since announcing my retirement."

With the first two matches of the series washed out, both sides will be keen to post their first win at the SCG.

Opener Matthew Hayden will return for Friday's game, with seamer Stuart Clark also available after missing Tuesday's clash with India for personal reasons.

Gilchrist dismissed concerns about the home side's fielding after more catches went to ground against India in the series opener on Tuesday, continuing a worrying trend from the recent Test series.

"Look, as long as cricket is played, there is going to be dropped catches," Gilchrist said.

"It's expected and when you don't catch them it's glaringly obvious, particularly if you set the standards we set."

"All we can continue to do is to keep working hard at training and trying to make sure we are as sharp as possible come game day."



ADAM GILCHRIST

Oram blow for Kiwis

Cricket
AFP, Christchurch

The New Zealand cricket team, humbled in its first Twenty20 encounter with England, was struck a further blow on the eve of the second match with all-rounder Jacob Oram out injured.

Oram is central to the New Zealand game plan and his defiant 61 was the only New Zealand innings of substance when they were thrashed by 32 runs in the opening match on Tuesday.

However, he confirmed Wednesday he had tweaked a hamstring during the match and would not be taking part in Thursday's second fixture in Christchurch.

Although the injury is not serious, he has been withdrawn to give

Oram blow for Kiwis Second T20I against England today

him more time to recuperate fully before the first of five one-day internationals on Saturday.

"I have a wee bit of a sore hamstring. It's not completely torn and it's not overly bad," Oram said.

"It's similar to what I did in South Africa (in November) where I missed a Test match but it's nowhere near as bad as that, thankfully."

Oram being out has made it even harder for New Zealand to square the Twenty20 series.

He was as economical with the ball as he was efficient with the bat, taking one for 24 off four overs.

"I'm more happy with the bowling than the batting to be honest," he said.

Aside from Oram, only debutant Jesse Ryder (22) and bowler Kyle Mills (11) reached double figures as New Zealand never seriously threatened England's imposing 184 for eight.

Oram's robust knock from 40 balls was never going to be enough as the New Zealand top order crumbled just as they did against Australia and South Africa late last year.

Although England's spearhead bowling trio of James Anderson, Ryan Sidebottom and Dmitri Mascarenhas kept the New Zealand batsmen tied down, Sidebottom taking three for 13, most of the dismissals came from poor shot selection.

The exception was Ryder, who was run out when he slipped trying to regain his crease after backing up too far.

In contrast for England, the early dismissal of Luke Wright for one was insignificant given the feature innings from Kevin Pietersen and man-of-the-match Mascarenhas.

Pietersen was all class as he

SEE PAGE 18 COL 2

Sr Div soccer restarts today

SPORTS REPORTER

The Senior Division Football League will resume today after a three-day break to give some breathing space to the teams participating in the ongoing Victory Day Club Cup tournament.

Two matches will be held today at the Birshreshtha Shaheed Mostafa Kamal Stadium with second-placed Victoria looking for revenge of their 3-0 defeat to Youngmen's Club Fakirerpool in the V-Day meet.

The two clash at 1.30pm followed by the match between Dhaka Wanderers and City Club at 3.30pm.

There will be no league matches tomorrow.



England one-day captain Paul Collingwood trains in Christchurch yesterday ahead of the second Twenty20 match against New Zealand today.