



Did U Know?

The first golf balls used in the 16th century are believed to have been made out of wood.



Bernd Schuster

(Real Madrid coach)
"If it happens again, I will react in the same way because I think that there are times when no enough respect is shown. People forget that they were speaking to the coach of Real Madrid."



What to WATCH

- SAB tv**
New Zealand v England
First Test, Day Five
Live from 3:30am (Sunday)
- ESPN**
FA Cup
Round Six
Man United v Portsmouth
Live from 6:40pm
- English Premier League**
Liverpool v Newcastle United
Live from 8:55pm
- STAR Sports**
Bangalore Open
Women's Semifinals
Live from 7:00pm
- FA Cup**
Round Six
Barnsley v Chelsea
Live from 11:25pm
- Primera Liga**
Real Madrid v Espanyol
Live from 1:30am (Sunday)
- Zaragoza v Atletico Madrid
Live from 3:00am (Sunday)



Premier Div Cricket League
Srnagar Cricketers v Kalabagan
Venue: BKSP-2

Biman v Young Pegasus
Venue: Dhanmendi Cricket Stadium
Victoria v Old DGHS
Venue: Fatullah Cricket Stadium

Selection now on Mar 17

CRICINFO, undated

The selection of India's squad for the first two Tests against South Africa has been postponed from March 9 to March 17. The selectors will now meet in Bangalore instead of Mumbai.

Dilip Vengsarkar, the chairman of selectors, had requested a postponement for picking a squad for the Tests starting March 26, so that players could take part in the Deodhar Trophy scheduled between March 14 and 26. "The Deodhar Trophy is a significant tournament on the domestic calendar and would have lost its value if we had announced the Test team on Sunday," Vengsarkar told Cricinfo.

"We want those who returned immediately after the Test series in Australia to appear in this tournament. But those who stayed back for the CB one-day series deserve these 15 days of rest."

Anil Kumble, Rahul Dravid, Sourav Ganguly, VVS Laxman, and Wasim Jaffer are expected to turn out for their respective zones in the tournament that marks a close to

Rubel keeps his nerve

BCB XI earn a tie

SHAHIDUL ISLAM, Chittagong



Mohammad Ashraf and co may take some encouragement two days ahead of the first one-dayer from the outcome of the BCB XI match against a full-strength South African team yesterday that saw a thrilling last-ball encounter ending in a tie, in front of a jubilant home crowd at the Chittagong Divisional Stadium.

Replying to BCB XI's 243 for 7, visiting South Africa also scored as many runs losing 8 wickets in 50 overs.

Requiring only five runs off the last over, with four wickets in hand, the Proteas failed to reach the target of 244, thanks to some outstanding, tight bowling by Rubel Hossain, fittingly aided by brilliant fielding of the BCB XI in a tense situation.

Rubel showed exceptional patience and calmness in that crucial over to force the mighty opponents to stop exactly at the tied score.

When he came to bowl the last over, two well-set batsmen Andrew Morkel and Johan Botha were at the crease and it looked like the winning shot was only a matter of time. But a resolute Rubel conceded only three runs off the first four deliveries before cleaning up Botha's middle stump in the next delivery, setting the final-ball climax for the Morkel brothers (Andrew and Morne) requiring two runs. Morne Morkel pushed the ball to mid-

wicket and began his sprint. He completed his second run but Albie got tangled with hosts' wicketkeeper Dhiman Ghosh, only to see haplessly the stumps being uprooted by the fielders.

Albie, who struck 57 off 53 ball hitting three mighty sixes and two fours, tried in vain to draw the umpires' attention about being obstructed by BCB fielders.

Despite the fall of two early wickets (Herschelle Gibbs and Hashim Amla) within the first 10 overs, South Africa looked well on course with skipper Graeme Smith leading from the front with his exquisite batting prowess. He consolidated the innings nicely with AB de Villiers, adding 66 runs for the third wicket.

Then came the double blow from Musharraf Hossain, who was the pick of the BCB bowling attack yesterday, with wickets of Smith and de Villiers. de Villiers (20 off 45 balls) padded a straight Musharraf delivery at 106 while Smith (70 off 82 balls) followed him to the pavilion when the score was 122 after edging a leg-stump ball into the safe hands of Dhiman.

It was then story of some very tight bowling of the local boys that actually paved the way for the exciting finish. Bangladesh bowlers tightened the screws before Morkel and Botha cut loose at the fag end. They took their team on the verge of an easy win, playing some big shots across the ground.

The duo tore apart BCB attack in the 42nd, 45th and 49th over scor-

ing 10, 14 and 10 runs respectively.

Mosharraf sounded a warning yesterday to Smith's men ahead of Sunday's first ODI with his fine spell. He took three wickets for 19 runs in his 8 over spell, followed by Rubel's two wickets (Amla and Botha).

Earlier, the BCB XI innings was built on some mediocre contributions from all the middle order batsmen. Mahmudullah Riyad top scored with unbeaten 37 off 33 balls followed by Forhad Reza not out 20 off 15 balls. Rokibul Hasan scored 33, Shakib Hasan 32, Naeem Islam 30 and Dhiman contributed 20 off 30 balls. Local lad Tamim Iqbal scored 30 but his opening partner mate Zunaed Siddiqui failed to make any impression in the match, being bowled for a first-ball duck.

Riyad and Reza played sensibly for the eighth wicket and provided some entertaining shots to post a challenging score for BCB XI. The last 10 over finally proved crucial for the home team who scored 67 runs in that period.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard of the warmup match between BCB XI and South Africa at Chittagong Divisional Stadium on Friday:

BCB XI
Iqbal c Smith b Nel 30
Zunaed b Steyn 0
Nazimuddin c De Villiers b Morkel 18
Rokibul run out 33
Shakib c Nel b Botha 32
Naeem c Peterson b Harris 30
Dhiman st De Villiers b Harris 20



THAT'S IT! Forhad Reza (C) whips off the balls as South African batsman Albie Morkel collides with wicketkeeper Dhiman Ghosh (on the ground) to give BCB XI a hard-fought tie in the warmup one-dayer at the Chittagong Divisional Stadium yesterday.

Kiwis stay ahead

AFP, Hamilton

Tight New Zealand bowling and a placid pitch strangled England's first innings as they crawled to 286 for six at stumps on the third day of the first cricket Test here Friday.

Although England had passed the follow-on mark they were still 184 runs short of New Zealand's first innings 470.

With New Zealand's twin spinners Daniel Vettori and Jeetan Patel in full flight, England could only muster 199 runs for the loss of four wickets on the third day after resuming at 87 for two.

It was a tough grind for runs and the batsmen were never allowed to dominate. England captain Michael Vaughan who started the day on 44 made slow progress to 63 before he prodded at a delivery from Patel and succeeded only in getting a thick edge, which was taken by Brendon McCullum behind stumps.

Andrew Strauss struggled through to lunch, but three balls after the resumption he played and missed a flighted ball from Vettori and was bowled for 43.

When the new ball was taken, Kyle Mills struck for New Zealand

with a delivery that nipped back from a good length and bowled Ian Bell, putting the batsman out of his misery after he had accumulated just 25 from 88 balls.

Kevin Pietersen, one of cricket's most explosive batsmen, opened in aggressive fashion with a six off the third ball he faced from Patel. But if the meagre crowd of 2,500 thought Pietersen was going to inject some life into the game they were soon proved otherwise as he retreated into his shell.

For nearly an hour while he was at the crease the run rate was down to just one an over.

When Pietersen was eventually caught and bowled by Vettori after tea he had produced an innings of 43 from 131 balls.

England were then 245 for six, still 25 short of the follow-on mark, and it was left to Paul Collingwood and debutant Tim Ambrose to steer them through to safety and stumps.

Vettori, who had a standout day as captain with his subtle use of pace and spin coupled with precision field placements, was also the thriest of the New Zealand bowlers.

He returned the figures of two for 60 from 38 overs while his spin partner Patel has one for 90 off 35, and the miserly Jacob Oram conceded just 18 runs from 16 overs.

Chris Martin, who made the

initial breakthrough with the wickets of Alastair Cook and night-watcher Mathew Hoggard the previous day, has two for 53 and the other successful wicket-taker Kyle Mills has one for 61.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard at close of the third day of the first Test between New Zealand and England at Seddon Park on Friday:

NEW ZEALAND: First innings 470 (Taylor 120, How 92, Vettori 88; Sidebottom 4-90, Collingwood 2-42)

ENGLAND: First innings (overnight 87 for 2)
Cook c sub (Horsley) b Martin 38
Vaughan c McCullum b Patel 63
Hoggard c Fleming b Martin 42
Strauss b Vettori 43
Pietersen c & b Vettori 42
Bell b Mills 25
Collingwood not out 41
Ambrose not out 23
Extras: (b-3, lb-1, nb-5) 9
Total: (For 6 wks in 134 overs) 286
To bat: Sidebottom, Harmison, Pinesar.
Fall of wickets: 1-84, 2-86, 3-130, 4-159, 5-203, 6-245.

Bowler
Martin 24 10 53 2
Mills 21 6 61 1
Patel 35 10 90 1
Oram 16 8 18 0
Vettori 38 13 60 2

Do what you want, Shakib told Rubel

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Chittagong

BCB XI skipper Shakib Al Hasan was all smiles at the post-match briefing with reporters near the rope of Chittagong Divisional Stadium yesterday afternoon. One could pick the actual mood of the home team through this smile of Shakib.

"If everybody made some contributions and can try to concentrate on scoring big innings, then I believe a challenging score is not that much of a problem," said Shakib.

He said that with lessons from this match they would try to emulate responsibilities in the three match one-day series.

Shakib considered the wicket of South African captain Graeme Smith as the most vital and said, "After we had his wicket, we in fact started thinking of the possibility of winning the match."

"We knew that most of the South African players, excepting Smith, are not comfortable playing spin. So we thought that if he (Smith) is no more there we can hope of a chance with our spin attack," he added.

And what were his final words to Rubel before that crucial last over? Shakib quipped, "Nothing special, I just made fun with him (Rubel), and told him to do whatever he wishes to do with the ball."

LOCAL SNIPPETS

SPORTS REPORTER

The Duckworth-Lewis method was the order of the day as all matches of the First Division Cricket League yesterday were decided according to the law of rain-interrupted matches.

Sadharan Bima handed Indira Road a seven-wicket defeat at the Fatullah Stadium as the winners, chasing the opposition's 187-8 in 50 overs, reached 125-3 in 21.3 overs when rain stopped play.

In other matches, Bangladesh Boys (110-3) beat Young Pegasus B (127) by seven wickets at the Dhanmendi Cricket Stadium, Agrani Bank (160-5) defeated Khelaghar (165) by five wickets at BKSP while Dhaka Wanderers (198-9) edged Dhaka Mariners (203) by one wicket at the same venue also according to D/L method.

JFA CUP
Rajshahi will host the final round of the 4th JFA Cup Under-15 Football Championship from March 11. BKSP will meet Khulna and Cox's Bazar take on Moulvibazar on the opening day at the Rajshahi Divisional Stadium, where all matches will be held.

Ten teams split into two groups will vie for the semifinal spots. They are: BKSP, Cox's Bazar, Narayanganj, Moulvibazar, Khulna (Group A) and Dhaka, Rajshahi, Dinajpur, Kushtia and Bhola (Group B).

MINI HANDBALL
Sunnydale will be pitted against Maple Leaf while Scholastica face Ispahani in today's semifinals of the KFC-Pizza Hut girls' mini-handball tournament at the Dhanmendi Stadium on Wednesday.

DFAs to vote in BFF

Football

SPORTS REPORTER

The Asian Football Confederation (AFC) yesterday paved way for the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) election by allowing the football governing body in Bangladesh to hold the polls according to the current statutes with minor adjustments.

The the-afc.com reported yesterday that AFC president Mohamed bin Hammam gave his nod to conduct the BFF elections in the current status but only after getting relevant guarantees from the BFF, Bangladesh Olympic Association (BOA) and related government authorities that the required structure would be in place for the next elections.

The decision came after a four-member BFF delegation, led by its president SA Sultan, met the AFC chief at his office in Kuala Lumpur yesterday.

The FIFA and AFC had instructed the BFF's expired executive body to hold free and fair elections before April 30, 2008 but the BFF failed to activate its divisional football bodies in compliance with the directives even after ten months.

In fact, only three divisional football associations out of six have been formed so far.

It was learnt that the remaining divisions would be given time to form football associations and will have voting power apart from clubs, who fulfil the criteria, and

the district football associations (DFAs) that have been formed so far.

The AFC had clarified a few days back that the DFAs, as part of the divisions, will not have voting powers but the Asian football body has moved from its previous stance.

The BFF will have to send back a list of the clubs to the AFC, which will approve their status as voters before an extraordinary general meeting (EGM) is held.

"We are very thankful to the AFC president for making this decision. It will definitely clear the way for future development of football in Bangladesh," SA Sultan was quoted by the AFC website.

"At present the district sports

associations and clubs are the main players in football administration while the divisional associations are inactive. The onus is now on us to make sure that the six divisional football bodies which are being formed in compliance with FIFA's Standard Statutes, are functional and active in the next four years.

"We will now hold an EGM to amend the statutes as per FIFA and AFC directives and call for elections before the April 30 deadline," Sultan added.

Apart from Sultan, BOA chief operating officer Col (ret'd) M Waiullah, former national football captain Badal Roy and organiser Mohiuddin Bulbul were part of the Bangladesh delegation.



AFC president Mohamed bin Hammam (L) is seen with BFF president SA Sultan during a meeting with the Bangladesh delegation at the AFC House in Kuala Lumpur yesterday.

Bhaji's parting shots

'Gilly no saint'

tabloid Mail Today

"He (Gilchrist) is also not a saint. He, of course, pretends to be a saint -- someone who doesn't say an offensive word on the field."

"But this is completely wrong. There are times when he doesn't let an opportunity go (to) waste," Harbhajan said, adding Gilchrist said nasty things on the field.

Gilchrist, who earned the reputation of being a "walker" during his illustrious career, retired from international cricket after the triangular finals, won 2-0 by India on Tuesday.

Sri Lanka, knocked out earlier, were the third team in the fray. Harbhajan described Australia as an "arrogant side" but added he never expected they would give his team "so much crap" on the field.

"The whole world knows how the Australians target individual players to break their confidence. This was not new for us either, but calling me a racist was something we never expected," he said.

about me. It was stunning... how low they can stoop to break a player's confidence."

The off-spinner was, however, all praise for Brett Lee, saying the Australian fast bowler was different from his teammates.

"Lee never spoke in the same manner as the rest of his teammates. He never uttered any nonsense to us and kept visiting our dressing-room even after Sydney," he said.

Harbhajan said he was happy his side gave a fitting response to Australia by capping their testing tour with a stunning victory in the one-day finals.

"It was like Harbhajan v Australia after that (Sydney Test). It was, of course, very difficult to focus on cricket," he said.

"I was proud of the way our team played and I believe we have the potential to be the number one side in the world."

Harbhajan has been a thorn in Australia's flesh since 2001 when he claimed 32 wickets in three home Tests to play a key role in ending their 16-match winning streak under Steve Waugh.



Russian tennis champion Maria Sharapova arrives at the premiere of the film '10,000 BC' at the Chinese Theatre in Hollywood on Wednesday.