



Did U Know?

The most prolific boxer in history was Great Britain's Len Wickwar who, between 1928 and 1947, fought 463 bouts. He also holds the records for the most wins (336) and most losses (127).



Gary Kirsten

(India's new South African coach) "I feel completely 'Indian' as we approach the series. I won't ever renounce my nationality, obviously, but I like to think of cricket as a completely professional game and I am a professional." While declaring his commitment to the Indian cause.



NEO Sports

India v South Africa
First Test, Day 2
Live from 10:00am
ESPN
Sportscentre India
Sports News
Live at 8:30pm

BFF's EGM today

SPORTS REPORTER

The much-awaited extraordinary general meeting (EGM) of the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) will be held today.

The 131 councillors of football's governing body in the country will sit at the BFF Bhaban at 11am to give approval to the amendments to the BFF constitution under the guideline of FIFA and AFC.

In fact, the old councillors will gather after a long time to sign their own demise by legalising the football associations formed in districts and divisions.

So far, 56 district FAs and four divisional FAs have been formed.

The eight districts yet to form FAs are Faridpur, Rajbari, Mymensingh, Bandarban, Sylhet, Sunamganj, Panchagar and Nilphamari and the divisions without FAs are Dhaka and Sylhet.

They, however, were given an official deadline till last night to send the committees.

AFC general secretary Dato' Paul Mony and an AFC legal service delegate were expected to reach Dhaka in the early hours today to attend the EGM.

England to play 2 Tests in India

AFP, Chennai

England will play just two Tests instead of three on their tour of India later this year, the Board of Control for Cricket in India announced on Tuesday.

The tour will also feature seven one-day internationals, leaving no time for a third Test since the England squad wanted to return home before Christmas, board officials said.

The original itinerary had pencilled in three Tests, but moves to cut off two one-dayers to accommodate a third Test were reportedly shot down by the Indian authorities.

England will arrive in India in early November, soon after the hosts end a four-Test series against world champions Australia.

The dates and venues for the England matches will be announced later, Indian official N. Srinivasan

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Victoria stun Abahani

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

Victoria Sporting Club looked set to end their struggling form in the Premier Cricket League when they upset defending champions Abahani by four wickets yesterday.

Abahani's first defeat in eight rounds pushed the title contenders down to third place as Mohammedan Sporting Club and Bangladesh Biman consolidated their positions with comfortable wins.

Surjo Torun returned to winning ways while Sonargaon Cricketers, after six consecutive losses, won their second match in a row.

Mohammedan led the table with maximum 16 points while Biman followed closely with 15, two points ahead of Abahani.

ABAHANI-VICTORIA

At the Sher-e-Bangladesh National Stadium in Mirpur, Farhad Hossain (53) and Mahmudullah Riyad (49 not out) shared 100 runs for the fifth wicket to throttle Victoria to their third overall win in a last-over thriller.

Chasing 164 to win, Victoria were reduced to 62-4 before Farhad and Riyad dug deep during the match winning stand. Farhad hit just one boundary in his 106-ball

vigil while Riyad, who scored the winning runs with five balls to spare after losing his century-stand partner and another batsman on the same score of 162, clubbed three fours in 74 deliveries.

Earlier, Abahani's much vaunted batting line -- missing their foreign recruit Anwar Hafeez -- failed to deliver the goods after electing to bat. Shahriar Nafees made 23 on his Abahani debut while Arafat Sunny, who later took 3-18, top-scored 25 as they managed to reach 163 for nine in 50 overs.

Riyad, included in the national team's Pakistan tour, captured two wickets with his off-breaks to pocket the man-of-the-match award despite missing a half-century for one run.

MOHAMMEDAN-KALABAGAN

At BKSP, leaders Mohammedan survived a scare of Kalabagan's 105-run opening partnership to win by 33 runs, thanks to the leg-break partnership between Pakistani Aqeel Arshad and captain Mohammad Ashraf.

Arshad's 3-39 from ten overs and Ashraf's two-over spell of 2-21 helped Mohammedan initiate top and late order collapses as Kalabagan were booked for 202 in 47.2 overs.

Nazmus Sadat (49 off 76 balls) and

Pakistani batter Shahbaz Butt (64 off 76 balls), however, spread terror in the rival camp when the two Kalabagan openers put on 105 in 21 overs.

Aqeel, who had smashed a run-a-ball 61 in inserted Mohammedan's 235 all out with half-dozen fours, not only removed the threatening openers but also sent back one-down Arif Reza for a duck.

Kalabagan revived hopes from 145-7 when Fariduddin (24) and Rokibul Hassan (25) added 43 runs for the eighth wicket but skipper Ashraf's decision to take the ball in own hands paid rich dividends as his side got the last three wickets in the space of four runs.

Still, Mohammedan would have not gone past the 200-mark had not national cricketer Roqibul Hassan (80 off 107 balls) made up for the poor show by star batsmen Zunaid (4), Aftab (6) and Ashraf (19) in the face of rival pace duo Syed Rasel (2-48) and Aslam Khan (5-41).

Roqibul, who came to the wicket at 84-4 and furnished his essay with five fours and one six, shared 119 runs with man-of-the-match Aqeel for the fifth wicket.

BIMAN-DOHS

Playing on successive days, Biman recorded a 43-run victory against Old DOHS who skittled out for 195 in 48.3 overs at BKSP.

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Abahani opener Shahriar Nafees (2nd from L) congratulates his Victoria rival Mahmudullah Riyad (2nd from R) after the latter's fine all-round performance earned victory for Victoria in their Premier Cricket League clash at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium yesterday.

Women look for series today

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Women Cricket Team go into the third game against visiting Hong Kong Women Team hoping to seal the series at the Chittagong Divisional Cricket Stadium today.

The home side showed their supremacy in the first two games to take a 2-0 lead in the four-match 50-over-a-side series.

The Bangladesh Women Team won the first match by eight wickets and followed that up by securing a 109-run victory in the second game at the same venue.

Captain Salma Khatun led her side from the front as she claimed four wickets for two runs in the first match to wrap up the tourists for only 38 runs and in the second game she slammed the team highest 86 runs to ensure an easy victory.

The fourth and final one-day match will take place at the Mirpur Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium on March 29.

Lifson skips Pak tour

REUTERS, Singapore

Bangladesh cricket team's South African physiotherapist Darryn Lifson has refused to travel to Pakistan for next month's one-day series because of security concerns, a board official said on Wednesday.

"Lifson told us that he is reluctant to travel with the team, but we are still trying to convince him," Bangladesh Cricket Board media committee chairman Ahmed Sajjadul Alam told reporters.

Bangladesh will play five one-day internationals and a Twenty20 match in Pakistan over April 6-20, replacing Australia, who postponed this month's tour citing security concerns.

Panesar seals series

Cricket

AFP, Napier

Monty Panesar spun England to a crushing 121-run victory as New Zealand went down despite a late flourish by teenager Tim Southee in the third and deciding cricket Test here Wednesday.

The win, to give England the series 2-1 and their first away series win in three years, cemented a determined fightback after they were three wickets down for four runs early in their first innings before reaching 253.

When they destroyed New Zealand's first innings for 168, taking the last nine wickets for 65 in 25 overs, and followed with centuries by Andrew Strauss and Ian Bell to set a 553-run target, the outcome was never in doubt.

After losing the first Test in Hamilton by 189 runs, England won by 126 runs in Wellington before wrapping up the series at McLean

Park in Napier, although captain Michael Vaughan noted both victories came from poor starts.

"In the two games we won we had to get ourselves out of some tricky positions," Vaughan said.

"In Wellington we were 120-odd for five before Tim Ambrose and Paul Collingwood put together a 164-run partnership.

"When we were four for three here everyone was writing us off. Kevin Pietersen (129) goes and gets us to 250, no one thought that was going to be enough and Ryan Sidebottom comes out, gets seven for 67.

"I guess we played the better cricket."

New Zealand captain Daniel Vettori believed his bowlers were capable of winning the Tests but the side was let down by poor batting.

"I guess it's symptomatic of where we are as a Test team that we're unfortunately not up to scratch with the bat."

"It's been really hard and really disappointing these last two Tests thinking that we could compete and

win a series and then to let it slip."

New Zealand resumed the final day at 222 for five in their second innings but with Panesar proving near unplayable they struggled through to lunch at nine for 360 in their second innings, still 193 runs short of victory.

With only 19-year-old Southee and one of the world's worst tail-enders in Chris Martin at the wicket the match should not have lasted much after lunch.

Instead, Southee went on a rampage scoring an unbeaten 77 off 40 balls, including four fours and nine sixes, and providing the bulk of the 84-run last-wicket stand.

His 50 off 29 balls was the sixth fastest in Test-match history and capped an impressive debut after the opening bowler took five wickets in England's first innings.

Panesar, who had ripped out the New Zealand middle order, saw his figures balloon from a career-best six for 85 to six for 126 in the space of three overs.

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England players congregate in celebration after beating New Zealand to clinch the three-Test series at McLean Park in Napier on Wednesday.

Guyana Test wide open

Cricket

AFP, Providence

Sri Lanka were put under some early pressure after they set West Indies 437 to win in a minimum of 113 overs in the opening Test on Tuesday.

Though they poached an early scalp, the Sri Lankans were put on the back-foot as West Indies reached 96 for one in their second innings when stumps were drawn on the fourth day at the Guyana National Stadium.

Malinda Warnapura scored 62 and Thilan Samaraweera hit an unbeaten 56 that propelled Sri Lanka to 240 for seven before they declared for the second time in the match, after West Indies managed to avoid the follow-on, but conceded a first innings lead of 196 when they were dismissed for 280.

The Sri Lankans were then put

on the defensive by enterprising batting from makeshift opener Dwayne Bravo, in particular, and West Indies vice-captain Ramnaresh Sarwan.

The visitors failed to find an answer for the positive stroke-play of the pair, as they added 74 -- unbroken -- for the second wicket.

The Sri Lankans were jumped when Bravo emerged with left-hander Devon Smith to open the batting instead of West Indies captain Chris Gayle, obviously being shielded from the early misery of Chaminda Vaas' expert left-arm swing bowling.

The visitors saw the pair play some audacious strokes before Vaas had Smith caught at deep backward square leg for 10 by a sprawling Thilan Thushara when the batsman miscued a hook at a short, rising delivery.

Sri Lanka's bowlers produced some nervous moments for Bravo and Sarwan, but the two West

Indies batsmen consolidated to carry the home team through until the close.

Before lunch, Sri Lanka failed to make West Indies follow-on, after the hosts continued from their bedtime total of 269 for nine.

The visitors knew they had to bat a second time, when Daren Powell edged Muttiah Muralidaran past Sri Lanka captain Mahela Jayawardene as slip to third man for three.

After Muralidaran and Vaas, Sri Lanka's two most experienced bowlers, failed to separate the two West Indies tail-enders, Jayawardene turned to Thilan Thushara and he responded with the scalp of Powell caught low down at second slip for 12, leaving Taylor not out on 27.

Thushara, playing his first Test since making his debut on Sri Lanka's previous trip to the Caribbean five years ago, ended

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Zia wins in third round

SPORTS REPORTER

Grand Master Ziaur Rahman won his third round board in the 3rd Kolkata Open Grandmaster Chess tournament against Egyptian International Master Fhrat Ali at the Gory Sadan in Kolkata on Tuesday.

Zia improved his tally to 2.5 points while FIDE Master Sheikh Nasir Ahmed and FM Mehdi Hasan Parag secured two points each.

Grand Master Niaz Murshed lost his game to Indian International Master Satyapragyan Swayangsu to remain at 1.5 points along with Grand Master Abdullah Al Rakib, IM Enamul Hossain Rajib and FM Minhazuddin Ahmed Sagar.

In the 3rd round, Nasir beat Pratul Mehta of India, Parag beat Sayantan Das of India, Rakib drew with Debashis Das of India, Rajib shared points with Swapnil Dhopade of India, Javed beat Amrutha Mokul of India, Ali beat Shalmali Gagate of India, Sagar lost to Barbosa Oliver of Philippine and Taibur lost to Ankit Rajpara of India.

LOCAL SNIPPETS

SPORTS REPORTER

The three-day inter-club players' transfer for the Second and Third Division Cricket League will start on April 1 at the Bangabandhu National Stadium.

The Second Division League will kick off from April 15 and the Third Division League from April 16.

U-13 CRICKET

Maple Leaf International School and Kalabagan CA won their respective matches in the Under-13 Boost Power Cup cricket at the Kalabagan Cricket ground.

Khandokar made 53 as Maple Leaf scored 165 for four in stipulated 20 overs and then restricted Paramount High School for 137-5 in allotted 20 overs to secure a 28-run victory.

Kalabagan CA registered a 106-run victory over Radiant School as the latter were bundled out for 94 in 14 overs in reply to a mammoth 200 for eight in 20 overs.

INDEPENDENCE DAY

BADMINTON

The Independence Day Badminton Competition will begin tomorrow at the Wooden Floor gymnasium.

A total of 70 boys and 16 girls will take part in the competition.

The participating players have been asked to report to tournament referee Mansoor Ahmed Khan Penu by 9am at the venue.

Proteas' fine first day

Cricket

AFP, Chennai

South Africa revelled in good batting conditions to pile up 304-4 on the opening day of the first Test against India here on Wednesday.

Neil McKenzie (94), skipper Graeme Smith (73) and Hashim Amla (85 not out) laid the foundations for a big total as the Indian bowlers toiled in oppressive weather and on an unresponsive wicket at the Chidambaram Stadium.

McKenzie and Smith provided the momentum with an opening stand of 132 in their first outing since compiling a world record partnership of 415 against Bangladesh in Chittagong earlier this month.

The duo batted through the morning session to put on 109 by lunch after Smith won the toss and took first strike on a placid wicket.

Smith had made 73 when he lost his wicket midway through the

post-lunch session, on-driving Anil Kumble to short mid-wicket where Venkatesai Laxman moved to his right to take a smart catch.

Smith fell soon after he had slammed three boundaries in one over from seamer Shanthakumaran Sreesanth, but McKenzie and Amla put on 64 for the second wicket to further frustrate the Indians.

McKenzie, who was recalled to the South African side in January after three years in the wilderness, missed a fourth Test century when he edged off-spinner Harbhajan Singh to Rahul Dravid in the slips just before tea.

Harbhajan struck again on the resumption, having Jacques Kallis caught at forward short-leg by Wasim Jaffer for 13 to leave South Africa 244-3.

Amla and Ashwell Prince carried the total to 291 when 37-year-old Kumble, the Indian captain, dived to his left to pick up a low return catch off Prince.

The umpires agreed to have two

drinks breaks every session, instead of the mandatory one, as on-field temperatures touched 38 degrees Celsius (100 degrees Fahrenheit) with 75 percent humidity.

"It is disappointing to miss a Test century but if anyone had told me in the morning that I will make 94, I would have taken it happily," said McKenzie.

"Bangladesh was a watershed for me and I am really enjoying my return to Test cricket. In the sub-continent it is best to open the innings, when the ball is hard and comes off the bat."

"We have a lot of batting left and hope to add another 250 runs."

Harbhajan was confident India can restrict South Africa on the second day.

"It is a matter of getting a few wickets tomorrow," the off-spinner said. "The target is not to give them more than 80 runs."

"If only we had won the toss and batted first. The wicket is tough for the bowlers as is the weather. But we are determined to win this Test match."

Smith and McKenzie, who both hit double centuries during their record stand in Chittagong, appeared in prime form as they played the Indian seam attack of Rudra Pratap Singh and Sreesanth in the morning session.

Runs flowed freely from their blades as McKenzie opened his account by flicking Rudra Pratap to the square-leg fence, and took two more boundaries off the same bowler.

Smith cut Sreesanth to point and then slashed him over the slips before the seamer beat the South African captain twice outside the off-stump.

Kumble, who came on with his leg-spin in the 11th over, was welcomed by McKenzie with two fours in one over.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard at stumps on the opening day of the first Test between India and South Africa at the Chidambaram Stadium in Chennai on Wednesday:

SOUTH AFRICA: Firstinnings			
Smith c Laxman b Kumble	73		
McKenzie c Dravid b Harbhajan	94		
Amla not out	85		
Kallis c Jaffer b Harbhajan	13		
Prince c b Kumble	23		
DeVilliers not out	10		
Extras: (b-1, lb-4, w-1)	6		
Total: (For four wks in 90 overs)	304		
To bat: Boucher, Morkel, Harris, Steyn, Ntini.			
Fall of wickets: 1-132, 2-196, 3-244, 4-291.			
Bowler	O	M	R
RP Singh	14	1	68

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South Africa opener Neil McKenzie plays a defensive stroke during the first day of the first Test against India at the Chidambaram Stadium in Chennai on Wednesday.