



Did U Know?

Boxing was introduced as an Olympic sport at the 23rd Olympiad in 688 B.C., with the first Olympic winner being Onomastus Smyrnaeus.



Gary Kirsten

(India cricket coach)
"Anil Kumble commands great respect from his team. He is a performer of note and has done it for many, many years. He is a tremendous person and brings in his personal qualities to the job."



Neo Sports

India v South Africa
Second Test, Day 1
Live from 10:00am

TEN Sports
West Indies v Sri Lanka
Second Test, Day 1
Live from 8:00pm

ESPN
Sportscentre India
Sports News
Live at 8:30pm



Premier Div Cricket League
Sonargaon Cricketers v Surjo Torun
Venue: BKSP-2
Old DOHS v Parlex
Venue: Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium
Young Pegasus v Kalabagan
Venue: Fatullah Cricket Stadium
Biman v BKSP
Venue: Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium
Victoria v City Club
Venue: BKSP-1

Div I cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

Zahid Hossain and Mehedi Hasan slammed centuries as Agrani Bank registered a 93-run victory over Kathalagan GCC in a rain-interrupted First Division Relegation League match at the City Club ground yesterday.

Zahid hit a 92-ball 105 with the help of 15 fours and three sixes while Mehedi hammered a run-a-ball 136 that featured 14 fours and four sixes as the bankers piled up 332 for 4 in 50 overs.

In reply, Kathalagan reached 119 for five in 30 overs before rain stopped the match and Agrani won on Duckworth-Lewis method.

In the day's other match, Dhaka Mariner Young's Club scored 270 in 47.4 overs and then wrapped up Badda Ekota for 173 to secure a 97-run victory at the Dhaka University ground.

Meanwhile, the First Division Super League will kick off tomorrow.

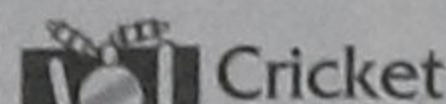
BOA lottery draw today

SPORTS REPORTER

The draw of the Bangladesh Olympic Association (BOA) sports development lottery will be held today at the National Sports Council Gymnasium at 2pm.

Adviser for the Ministry of Local Government Mohammed Anwarul Iqbal will be present as chief guest. Officials of BOA and Bangladesh Bank's prize bond department and representatives of media and public will be present.

Stars by name only



MOHAMMAD ISAM

When Minhazul Abedin and Aminul Islam say that something is wrong, it must be serious.

Tuesday's Abahani-Mohammedan clash attracted little crowd and produced few runs, but it drew two of the country's biggest names to criticise the overall attitude of the national players towards domestic cricket. Not that the two former batsmen are speaking from afar.

Minhazul is the head coach of his beloved Mohammedan while Aminul is looking to clinch a second consecutive Premier League title with the Dhammondi-based giants and both are seeing these national players from close quarters. They must be appalled by the lack of responsibility; something that seems to follow the Tigers at all levels.

Barring Mashrafe Bin Mortaza and to some extent Tamim Iqbal, none of the current national players inspired anyone with their performance.

Fact that Mohammad Ashraful's only contribution of note for Mohammedan has been a two-wicket haul against Kalabagan must be a shock given that he was paid Tk 8 lakh to score runs. In five innings, Ashraful had scores of 24, 20, 7, 22 and 19.

Mohammedan's left-arm spinner Abdur Razzak, bound for the Bangalore franchise in the Indian Premier League (IPL), bowled ten pricey wides in a crucial situation against Old DOHS, costing his club the match. Razzak's teammate Zunaed Siddiqui rose to prominence with his domestic runs, but now he seems to have forgotten what took him to the national team in the first place.

Minhazul, a former national captain and pioneer of professionalism in domestic cricket, questioned the commitment of players like Ashraful. He pointed out that the hunger among them is missing and their poor performance directly places them along the also-

rans in the domestic scene.

He said, "A national player should show his class in domestic circuit but unfortunately, none of them could do that."

Old-timers who were devoted to club cricket in the 80s and 90s, scoff at the word 'pressure' of Dhaka leagues these days. Back in those heady days, players were hounded and lifted on shoulders depending on their show and any lack of commitment towards the club was nothing short of a sin.

One senior player would have made the difference back then but nowadays, a national player in the side usually means they would play their 'natural' game. They would do that no matter what situation the team is in.

But once the national player is discarded, we see a completely different picture. Wicketkeeper-batsman Mushfiqur Rahim is a prime example. The plucky customer scored two fifties and a century in consecutive innings and his side BKSP are thriving under his leadership.

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BOA polls today

Babu, Kutub face off

SPORTS REPORTER

It will be all Kutubuddin Ahmed versus Golam Quddus Chowdhury Babu when the much-awaited election of the Bangladesh Olympic Association (BOA) takes place today.

Although there will be voting for four posts in the first BOA election in seven years, all eyes will be on the two veteran sports organisers who vie for the magnetic post of secretary-general.

Already, 29 members of the 37-post executive committee have been elected unopposed.

Chief of Army Staff General Moeen U Ahmed has been re-elected president of the BOA while the other-wise new-look organisation will have Mizanur Rahman Manu, Maj Gen Ashabuddin, Sirajul Islam Bachchu, Khondokar Jamil Uddin and Mushfiqur Ikhat as vice-presidents, Lt Com AK Sarkar, Mohiuddin Bulbul and Ferdous Ara Khanam as deputy secretaries-general and Sanaul Haque Bakul as its treasurer.

The 76 councillors will cast their votes from 10am to 3pm at the NSC



GOLAM QUDDUS CHOWDHURY

conference room.

Babu, president of the Bangladesh Volleyball Federation, is a former secretary-general (1998-2000) who is fighting against the wind. A united panel was submitted by Kutub, who has been acting secretary-general since the death

of BOA's good old chief executive



KUTUBUDDIN AHMED

iser who passed away in 2004.

"Even if I get a few votes, I will contest this election with sporting spirit," Babu had said after submitting his nomination paper.

However, it seems that Babu has already attracted more than a 'few'

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Manchester United stars Wayne Rooney (R) and Cristiano Ronaldo rejoice their second goal against Roma during the Champions League quarterfinal match at the Olympic Stadium in Rome on Tuesday.

MU turn on the style

AFP, Rome



Goal scorers Cristiano Ronaldo and Wayne Rooney notched up a 2-0 victory at Roma on Tuesday night to virtually assure Manchester United's berth in the Champions League semifinals.

United showed they could still dominate the Italians following last season's 8-3 aggregate triumph at the same stage of the competition with a stylish and clinical display.

Ronaldo played down his goal simply saying his 36th of the season was 'a good header' and preferred to comment on the team's overall performance.

"That was a very good performance in what was a top game," he said.

"We created a few chances and

scored twice and we deserved the victory.

"The defence were terrific and they played their part. It was a good job overall but we must remember that the Champions League is a different style to the Premiership."

United manager Sir Alex Ferguson was more satisfied than ecstatic at the performance.

"We had to defend really well and we got a couple of lucky breaks in the second-half when they had chances especially down the left," said the Scotsman.

"We should have released Rooney earlier on several occasions but it was a good and disciplined performance and we didn't concede a goal which was vital."

But for the first 15 minutes of the second period, Roma, who were missing talisman Francesco Totti, never looked capable of challenging the Red Devils.

Even so, Roma coach Luciano

Spalletti refused to accept the tie is over.

"It will be extremely hard to get to the next round now but we shouldn't make the mistake of thinking it's already over," he said.

"The English were lucky with their goal scoring chances but they played with a lot of experience."

"We've already scored twice away from home in the Champions League, though."

United enjoyed a lot of the ball in the first period as Roma sat back, seemingly intent on not giving anything away.

On 12 minutes, though, the visitors opened up the Roma defence but after Park Ji-Sung took the ball down on his chest he was crowded out.

Christian Panucci headed just over the bar from a David Pizarro corner and Mirko Vucinic also shot over as he was falling backwards

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'Ban will last two months'

AFP, Islamabad

Former Pakistan greats Tuesday condemned a five-year ban on fast bowler Shoaib Akhtar, saying the country's new parliament should sack cricket board officials to save the sport in the country.

"Disappointing is no word to describe Akhtar's ban, I would call it pathetic and request the new political government to sack Nasim Ashraf-led Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB)," Sarfraz Nawaz, a former Test cricketer and once Akhtar's coach told AFP.

Akhtar was banned from playing cricket in Pakistan for five years for violating the players' code of conduct, effectively ending his 11-year career.

The 32-year-old Akhtar appeared before a disciplinary committee earlier Tuesday charged with publicly criticising the country's board. He was already on two years' probation for hitting a teammate with a bat.

Nawaz said he would urge new Prime Minister Yousaf Raza Gilani and other coalition leaders to take "a serious notice of this unjust ban because Akhtar is the only match-winner in the team."

Nawaz predicted the current PCB members will be removed from office in the next few days.

"I have come to know that this PCB set up, which has a personal vendetta against a talented bowler, will be removed and the high-ups have also decided on who will take over," said Nawaz, who played 55 Tests for Pakistan.

He did not say who he thought was lined up.

Former Pakistan captain Rashid Latif termed the ban "damaging for Pakistan cricket."

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Zia fifth

SPORTS REPORTER

Grand Master Ziaur Rahman finished fifth in the 3rd Kolkata Open Grand Master chess tournament that ended at the Gorky Sadan in Kolkata yesterday.

In the tenth and last round, Zia shared point with Indian Grand Master Koneru Humpy to finish on seven points.

Viktor Laznicka, Grand Master from Czech Republic, clinched the title with 8.5 points and Indian Grand Master Krishnan Sasikiran finished runner-up with same points.

With 7.5 points, GM Safin Shukhrat secured the third position. Grand Master Abdullah Al Rakib beat Indian Aditya Udeshi to finish 19th with 6.5 points while IM Enamul Hossain Rajib became 31st with 6 points, GM Niaz Murshed got 36th place with 5.5 points.

In the last round, Rajib drew with IM Konguvel of India, Niaz drew with IM Solomon of South Africa, Taibur drew with IM Satyapragyan of India and Javed drew with Swamyas of India while Nasir lost against IM Rathnakaran of India, Sagar lost to IM Fihri Ali of Egypt and Parag went down to Nimmy of India and Ali was beaten by Karma of India.

A total of 114 players from 15 countries including 18 Grand Masters, 30 International Masters took part in the meet.

BKSP champs in school cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

BKSP lifted the Standard Chartered Young Tigers National School Cricket title when they won the rain-interrupted final against Faridpur Zila School by virtue of better average run-rate at the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium yesterday.

BKSP were 116 for six after 31 overs in reply to Faridpur Zila School's 178 when the match was called off due to heavy rain.

With no chance to resume the match, BKSP were declared winners. After winning the toss, the Faridpur outfit opted to bat and were all out in 48.3 overs. Shahidul topscored with 40 while Sumit (3-30) and Asif Ahmed (3-35) shared six wickets between them.

For BKSP, Ashiqul made 42 and Enamul 31.

Faridpur Zila School's Shovon, who bagged 4-30, was adjudged man of the final.

BKSP's Zakaria Masud, who scored 196 runs and took 22 wickets, was adjudged player of the tournament. He was also the highest wicket taker his teammate Ashiqul Alam the highest run getter with 390 runs.

Humaira Azam, director and head of Financial Institutions Standard Chartered Bank distributed prizes as chief guest. Bangladesh Cricket Board's game development committee chairman Lt Col (ret'd) Abdul Latif Khan was present as special guest.

A spoiled talent



AFP, Islamabad

A lot has been said about mercurial Pakistan paceman Shoaib Akhtar, but one fact cannot be denied -- his talent has been wasted by a series of injuries, indiscipline and a doping controversy.

The five-year ban imposed by Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) on Tuesday, if not lifted on appeal or court case, effectively ends the 11-year career of Akhtar, who was famous for bowling at 100 miles (160 kilometres) per hour on two occasions.

"I want to be remembered as a match-winner, someone who wants to do well for his country, but I don't know why I am being embroiled in controversy after controversy, why they blame me for getting injured," he has said.

"Tell me which fast bowler has not suffered injuries in the last few years because of the demanding cricket. Zaheer Khan, Steve Harmison, Shane Bond, Andrew Flintoff -- they all get injured, then why blame me?" he said in earlier statements.

Tagged the "Rawalpindi Express" for his speed, Akhtar is arguably better known for his antics off the field than on it.

Sarfraz Nawaz, Akhtar's former coach and once a fast bowler himself, said he would like to remember Akhtar as a bowler whose talent went wasted due to poor management.

"I will always remember him as a talented bowler. Look at score cards -- where does Pakistan team stands when Akhtar is injured?" said Nawaz, who played 55 Tests for Pakistan and was regarded as a pioneer of swing bowling.

Another of Akhtar's fans is Pakistan cricket legend Imran Khan.

"Akhtar has always been made scapegoat for Pakistan's defeats," Khan had said after Akhtar was blamed for Pakistan's 1-0 defeat in

India late last year.

"He still is head and shoulder above every other bowler in the team and needs special handling," Khan had said.

Unfortunately for Akhtar, he never had the tutelage of Khan, who polished the talent of Wasim Akram and Waqar Younis.

Akhtar, who started his career in 1997, made headlines in the 1999 World Cup held in England.

With a peculiar long, hurtling run-up and blistering speed, he fetched 16 wickets to help Pakistan finish runners-up to Australia.

The then-Pakistan captain Wasim touted his talent.

"Akhtar may be a bit wayward on

and off the field but he needs guidance and support and once he gets that he can win matches for you," Wasim said after the World Cup.

His star status was sealed, but with it came the negative side of the picture as he was portrayed as someone who liked late-night outings and partying with girls.

Akhtar has always insisted he has been let down by coaches.

"Had I been born in Australia I would have been a top bowler or had I got a chance to play under Imran then my talent would have been utilised properly," Akhtar said in 2006.

A series of injuries, a doping

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WE ARE WITH YOU: Supporters of banned Pakistan speedster Shoaib Akhtar (C) carry him on their shoulders as he waves after a press conference in Islamabad on Wednesday.

India in Kumble scare

Second Test against S Africa starts today



AFP, Ahmedabad

India's hopes of finding a winning formula for Thursday's second Test against South Africa here suffered a setback due to fitness fears over skipper and key spinner Anil Kumble.

Kumble, with 607 wickets in 126 Tests, looks a doubtful starter after failing to recover from a groin strain suffered during the drawn opening Test in Chennai on Sunday.

"We still have not decided on the team combination because there are a couple of injury concerns. I am feeling better, but we'll wait till tomorrow morning," Kumble told reporters here on Wednesday.

India desperately need a fit Kumble as their bowling options are already restricted following finger and toe injuries to teenage paceman Ishant Sharma, who was the find of the recent Australia tour.

Sharma is in contention for a place here after missing the first Test, but his captain said medical staff still needed time to assess his condition before making a final decision.

"We'll just have to wait. We'll take a final call tomorrow morning," said Kumble, the third-highest wicket-taker in Tests after

Sri Lankan off-spinner Muttiah Muralidaran and retired Australian leg-spinner Shane Warne.

"Whatever combination we will have, I think we have enough quality to do the job. We have worked out some plans to ensure we put pressure on South Africa and get the result."

The fitness problems have come at a tricky time for India, already struggling to find match-winning bowlers against South Africa. Their bowlers toiled in Chennai as the visitors racked up scores of 540 and 331 on a docile pitch.

The hosts are also without record-breaking batsman Sachin

Tendulkar, who is ruled out of the match after aggravating a groin injury in the first Test and makes way for Mohammad Kaif.

Venkatesai Laxman, who batted at number six in the first Test, is expected to replace Tendulkar in the number-four slot.

The Indian captain said they were not worried over South Africa's plans to counter opener Virender Sehwag with short-pitched deliveries following the batsman's fastest recorded triple-century in the previous Test.

"I think he (Sehwag) is a good enough batsman to handle that. He has scored 319 in the last innings. He is capable of handling whatever comes his way," said Kumble.

South Africa coach Micky Arthur said Tuesday his team planned to target the Indian opener with short-pitched balls in order to curb his strokeplay.

Visiting captain Graeme Smith said it was one of the options.

"I think as a team it is important to come up with a plan. We have this option of bowling short to him (Sehwag). We have a few things to work on. Hopefully, we execute them over the next five days," said Smith.

He said South Africa were likely to be unchanged after an impressive performance in Chennai.

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Players and officials of BKSP celebrate with the champions' trophy after they defeated Faridpur Zila School in the Standard Chartered Young Tigers National School Cricket final at the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium yesterday.