



Did U Know?

20 red cards were shown during a 1993 game between Sportivo Ameliano and General Caballero in Paraguay.



What to WATCH

Neo Sports

India v South Africa
Second Test, Day 2
Live from 10:00am

TEN Sports

West Indies v Sri Lanka
Second Test, Day 2
Live from 8:00pm



TALK TURKEY



Stephen Fleming

(Sri Lanka cricket chief)
"If I had scored a hundred, it would have been an anomaly."
Being modest to the last as he looks back at his final innings. He has 46 fifties to his nine hundreds in Tests.

Indians were scared: Dale

PTI, Ahmedabad

Young South African speedster Dale Steyn yesterday added insult to injury for the Indian team claiming the home team's batsmen panicked after losing a couple of early wickets and lacked a proper game plan.

"The Indians were scared after losing a couple of wickets. This is what happens when you don't come with a clear game plan," the 24-year-old fast bowler said after the first day's play at the Sardar Patel Stadium here.

The young pacer, who first got rid of Virender Sehwag in his opening spell and also scalped Rahul Dravid with a beauty, said the key was bowling short of a length and then pitching the ball up to the Indians.

"The short balls followed up by fuller length ones got the wickets. Nobody could come on to the front foot," he said.

After the pasting at the hands of Sehwag in Chennai, Steyn said the visitors knew what they had to do against the Delhi dasher.

"We had a game plan for Sehwag. The wicket of Dravid was special," Steyn, who later added three tail-enders to complete his five-wicket haul, said.

'He can't play IPL'

REUTERS, New Delhi

Pakistan's banned fast bowler Shoaib Akhtar will not be allowed to play in the Indian Premier League (IPL) until his suspension is lifted, league chairman Lalit Modi said on Thursday.

The controversial bowler was handed a five-year ban on Tuesday by the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) for disciplinary reasons.

The PCB had said the player can feature in the lucrative Twenty20 league starting on April 18.

"Shoaib has been banned from playing and until his ban is lifted he cannot play in the IPL," Modi told Reuters.

"We know his appeal against the ban is coming up for hearing," he said. "We're hoping his ban will be lifted. He is a great player and we want him to play."

"But he cannot play in IPL as long as the ban is applicable." He has been signed up for the Kolkata team in the eight-team franchise league, promoted by the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) and endorsed by all major national boards.



DALE THE DESTROYER: Fiery South Africa paceman Dale Steyn is in action during his five-wicket burst against India on the first day of the second Test at the Sardar Patel Stadium in Ahmedabad yesterday.

Biman above all

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

As expected, Bangladesh Biman finished on top of the Premier League table on the concluding day of the competition's first phase yesterday but not the easy way.

After eleven rounds, Biman moved to 19 points with Thursday's thrilling two-run victory over contenders BKSP in a rain-affected match. City go through on 11 points, three ahead of both Victoria and DOHS.

Four teams at the bottom of the table -- Partex, Kalabagan, Sonargaon and Young Pegasus -- tied on six points after Partex, Sonargaon and Pegasus won their respective matches.

A one-wicket victory over close rivals Kalabagan gave Pegasus a lifeline while Sonargaon shocked Surjo Torun by 24 runs in a curtailed match.

BIMANVBKSP

Left-arm spinner Nabil Samad took the key wicket of Nasir Hossain (61) in his four-wicket haul and ran out Shakhil Al Hasan to end BKSP's

chances but some late-order resistance ensured a tight affair at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium.

With two runs required for victory, Biman wicketkeeper Sajjad Kadir's accurate throw ran out Moshir Rahman and BKSP were bowled out for 217 in the penultimate delivery of the match.

Earlier, opener Tamim Iqbal struck his third half-century to give Biman a solid start. Tamim creamed six boundaries in his 93-ball knock of 60 runs but the middle-order had little to offer as BKSP restricted Biman to 219-6 in 50 overs.

BKSP finish fourth in the table as they continue their impressive run in their debut Premier League season.

VICTORIAVCITY

At the outer BKSP cricket ground, Rasel Al Mamun and captain Imran Ahmed gave City Club the ideal start as they shared 134 runs for the opening wicket. Rasel scored 71 off 86 balls with two sixes and four boundaries while Imran's 57 was laced with four hits to the fence. Some hefty hitting from Arafat Salahuddin (23 off 16 balls) ensured City reached 253-6 in 50 overs.

Victoria made a poor start and only recovered when Pakistan-bound Tigers Mahmudullah Riyad and Dhiman Ghosh struck 56 and 57 respectively to give them a

glimmer of hope. But the chances of them and Old DOHS were dashed when Zahoor Elahi's innocuous off-spin removed both batsmen and gave City the 28-run victory and a ticket to the Super League.

YOUNG PEGASUS V KALABAGAN

Despite a century from Nazmus Sadat, Kalabagan only managed 235 before being all out in 49.4 overs at the Fatullah Cricket Stadium. Sadat smashed nine boundaries in his 104 off 119 balls while new captain Shahbaz Butt struck 53 off 93 balls. But Kalabagan's middle-order collapsed in a heap as Nazmul Islam took four wickets.

Pegasus replied in earnest with both openers Rabiul Islam and Rahat Sadek scoring half-centuries. But all was gone for Pegasus and it was left to captain Jubair Ahmed (34 off 25 balls) and number eleven Mamun Hossain to salvage a victory with 35 required off 22 balls. They managed it with a ball in hand from Rokibul Hasan's final over.

SONARGAON V SURJO TORUN

Veteran opener Mehrab Hossain smashed 57 as Sonargaon posted 195-4 in 30 overs at the main BKSP cricket ground. Mehrab cracked

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National and Bangladesh Biman paceman Mashrafe Bin Mortaza (R) and wicketkeeper Sajjad Kadir celebrate their second-last-ball victory over BKSP in the Premier League at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

Usha sign 9 players

SPORTS REPORTER

The ten out of 11 national hockey players who did not find any team during last week's Premier League transfers, were finally signed by two clubs yesterday.

The 11 players had tendered their resignation and the Bangladesh Hockey Federation, on acceptance of their appeal, freed them from the national pool to make way for their transfer to any team.

On the final day of the additional three days of transfer for these players, Usha Krira Chakra -- the defending two-time champions who had cited they won't build a strong team due to lack of fund -- suddenly got the money to recruit nine players.

The old-Dhaka outfit wanted all ten but last year's joint champions Abahani roped in goalkeeper Zahid to further strengthen their squad.

Defender Yamin Mia, one of the 11 players, will miss the entire season due to injury.

The players to join Usha are Shahidullah Tito, Mostafizur Rahman Dinar, Tabib-e-Noor, Shamsuddin Tuhin, Zahidul Islam Rajan, Khondokar Hasan Ahmed, Maksud Alam Habul, Mahub Ullah Chowdhury Shakil and Rahul Kanti Roy.

National Sports Awards to be given Apr 8

UNB, Dhaka

The prestigious National Sports Awards for 2007 will be handed over to 10 sports personalities of the country at a function at the Osmani Memorial Hall on April 8.

Chief Adviser Dr Fakhruddin Ahmed will hand over the awards at a function at 10.0 am. Chief Adviser's Special Assistant for Youth and Sports Mahub Jamil will preside over the function.

The award recipients: Sharmila Roy (athletics), Ranjit Das (football), Amir Hossain Patwari (kabaddi), Lt Commander (retd) Arshad Hossain (swimming), Aminul Islam (judo), Nurul Islam (hockey), Sheikh Abul Hashem (badminton) and Professor Dr. Rashiduddin Ahmed (basketball), and late Ataul Haq Mallik (posthumous) and Kazi Anisur Rahman

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Women's v'ball from today

SPORTS REPORTER

The 11th Inter-district women's volleyball tournament will begin today at the Dhaka Volleyball Stadium.

Iftekhar Ahmed Tipu, chairman of Ifad Group, will formally inaugurate the three-day meet as chief guest at 4 pm.

In the opening day's matches, Pabna face Rangpur, Jessore meet Bagerhat, Rajbari play Naogaon and Rajshahi are pitted against Sathkhira.

India Steyn-gunned

Cricket

AGENCIES, Ahmedabad

Jacques Kallis and AB de Villiers consolidated South Africa's position with half-centuries after Dale Steyn sparked a sensational Indian collapse in the second Test here on Thursday.

The 24-year-old Steyn gave a magnificent display of fast bowling on a lively track to finish with 5-23 as India crashed to 76 in their first innings in one of their worst batting performances in recent years. Kallis (60 not out) and De Villiers (59 not out) put on 106 for the unfinished fifth-wicket stand to press home the advantage given by Steyn as South Africa reached 223-4 in reply at stumps, for a lead of 147 runs.

India made a horror start after winning the toss as their batsmen looked clueless against a quality pace attack led by Steyn, who bagged his eighth haul of five or more wickets in a Test innings.

Steyn was brilliantly supported by Makhaya Ntini (3-18) and Morne Morkel (2-20) as India were dismissed before lunch on the opening day for the first time in Test cricket. The innings lasted only

20 overs.

India's total was their lowest against South Africa and the second-lowest at home in Tests. It was also their second-shortest innings, after 17 overs against England at Lord's in 1974, when they were shot out for 42.

Off-spinner Harbhajan Singh briefly boosted India's hopes of restricting South Africa's lead with three wickets in four overs, but Kallis and De Villiers batted sensibly to deny the hosts further success.

South Africa gained the lead without losing a wicket as skipper Graeme Smith (34) and Neil McKenzie (42) put on 78 for the opening wicket.

Harbhajan removed first-Test century-makers McKenzie and Hashim Amla (16) before accounting for Ashwell Prince (two) in quick succession, but South Africa found the right pair in Kallis and De Villiers.

The Indian batsmen, who had posted 627 on a flat track in the drawn opening Test in Chennai, were exposed against pace on a pitch having both pace and movement in the morning session.

Irfan Pathan (21 not out) and wicketkeeper Mahendra Singh Dhoni (14) were the only batsmen

to reach double figures in a fragile batting performance. Extras were the second-highest contributors with 19.

India were in danger of falling to their lowest-ever total of 66 (at Durban in 1996) against South Africa when they were 56-8, but Pathan and Rudra Pratap Singh put on 20 for the ninth wicket.

Steyn took two big wickets when he dismissed hard-hitting Virender Sehwag and Rahul Dravid, India's key batsmen in the previous match.

Sehwag, who hammered the fastest recorded triple-century in Chennai, made six this time before inside-edging a delivery on to his stumps.

Dravid, who scored a hundred to join the 10,000-run club in the last game, was also beaten by the movement after making three.

India's batting problems began in the fourth over when Ntini had Wasim Jaffer (nine) caught by Smith, who held a low catch to his left at first slip.

Ntini then bagged two wickets in his fourth over as Venkatesai Laxman was bowled shouldering arms and Sourav Ganguly played a delivery on to his stumps before Steyn and Morkel made short work of the Indian innings.

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CONGRATULATING IN ADVANCE: Losing candidate Golam Quddus Chowdhury Babu (R) shakes hands with newly elected secretary general Kutubuddin during the BOA election at the National Sports Council yesterday.

Kutub new BOA secy gen

SPORTS REPORTER

Kutubuddin Ahmed had the last laugh in the election of the Bangladesh Olympic Association (BOA) yesterday when the councillors chose him to be the secretary-general of the country's Olympic committee.

In the end, hype about a tight contest ended in a one-sided affair as Kutub, who was acting chief executive of the BOA since May 2004, outgunned Bangladesh Volleyball Federation president and a former BOA secretary-general Golam Quddus Chowdhury Babu by 49-24 votes.

The 10am to 3pm polls attracted 74 of the 76 councillors at the National Sports Council gymnasium where leading sports personalities of the country gathered to elect a new executive body led by Chief of Army Staff General Moeen U Ahmed for four years.

Councillors Anjan Chowdhury Pintoo, a former BOA vice-president, and representative of

Bangladesh Police Mahub Hakim failed to cast their votes as they were abroad.

With 29 candidates being elected unopposed, votes were taken only for the posts of the secretary-general and three executive members in the divisional quota in the first election of the supreme sports organisation in seven years.

Mahmud Jamal was the other casualty of the day as the Rajshahi organiser, a disciple of late Zafar Imam -- the last elected BOA secretary-general who died in May 2004 -- unexpectedly lost the battle.

Four competed for the three places with Qutubuddin Aksir of Dhaka (65 votes), Begum Lily Aziz of Chittagong (50) and Asaduzzaman Khasru of Barisal (43) winning. Jamal got 37 votes.

It was a relief for Kutub, who remained acting secretary-general for a long time. It was also an irony for the successful businessman to have to compete for the post after virtually selecting the whole panel.

Babu, who had said that he

would accept any result sportingly, did exactly that.

"I heartily congratulate Kutub. I have accepted the result as it came. If the BOA needs my help in any way, I will be glad to work for it," said Babu.

Kutub told he was ready to work with Babu. "I will involve him in BOA matters. My plan is not only to improve conditions of the Olympic events but also revive the games that have been dying."

"We are also looking forward to bring complete transparency at the BOA and we have already got near that. We want to make the BOA a more professional organisation than the past."

The BOA constitution, however, needs to be amended, thinks chief election commissioner Brig Gen Shawkat Hossain.

"While working with the present constitution, I have found out that it needs some amendments," said Shawkat.

Admitting the fact, the new

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Shoaib sued for \$3m

Cricket

AFP, Islamabad

The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) sued paceman Shoaib Akhtar for 200 million rupees (three million dollars) on Thursday for making allegedly defamatory comments after he was banned for five years.

Akhtar was banned by the PCB on Tuesday, a move that effectively ends his career after a series of disciplinary problems culminating in a public outburst against the board for not giving him a contract.

"We demand the immediate retraction of allegations from Akhtar in various statements which were malicious and baseless," PCB chairman Nasim Ashraf told AFP.

"He must apologise and pay damages of 100 million rupees to the PCB and damages of 100 mil-

lion rupees to me."

In a letter made public by the board, lawyers for PCB chairman Nasim Ashraf demanded the money for a "malicious and vile piece of defamation" allegedly made by Akhtar in a television interview on Wednesday.

The letter said that in the interview with the Express News Channel, Akhtar alleged that Ashraf had "pressurised you for and tried to extort from you" payments from Akhtar's Indian Premier League contract, and that the five-year ban was a response to Akhtar's alleged refusal.

Akhtar and several other Pakistan players have signed for the multi-billion dollar IPL, which starts from April 18.

The lawyers' letter said he should pay Ashraf 100 million rupees "for defaming him personally" and the same amount again

"for sully the name of the Pakistan Cricket Board and the Pakistan cricket team."

"By alleging that players have given me a commission to join the IPL, he has tarnished the image of his fellow players as well," said Ashraf.

Reports from India said the IPL has also barred Akhtar from featuring in the lucrative league until his five-year ban is averted.

Ashraf denied he put any pressure on the IPL to stop Akhtar playing for them. The PCB said Tuesday that Akhtar was only banned from playing for Pakistan or in Pakistan.

"We stand by our commitment to allow Akhtar to play anywhere in the world and it's the IPL's decision to ban him from playing, we have nothing to do with that," said the PCB chairman.

Ashraf said the ban on Akhtar

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