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Did U Know?

The oldest Formula One world champion was Argentina's Juan Manuel Fangio in 1957, aged 46 years one month and 11 days.



Juan Carlos Ferrero
(Spanish tennis star)
"It's a very important win for me and I feel special right now. I haven't had this special feeling for a long time."
After beating compatriot Rafael Nadal at the Rome Masters on Wednesday.



SET Max
Indian Premier League
Chennai Super Kings v Kings XI Punjab
Live from 7:30pm

Volleyball final today

UNB, Dhaka

Bangladesh Rifles will face Bangladesh Police in the final of the Premier Volleyball League at the Volleyball Stadium this afternoon.

Favourites BDR have so far clinched all the ten Premiership titles since its introduction in the 1995-96 season.

Bangladesh Olympic Association (BOA) secretary general Kutubuddin Ahmed will witness the final as chief guest and distribute prizes.

Meanwhile, Hazrat Ali Smriti Sangsud outclassed Nababat Majish 3-0 while Nagar Samaj Kalyan beat Nababgarani Sangha 3-1 in yesterday's 2nd Division League.

Another year for Bracewell

AFP, Wellington

New Zealand cricketer coach John Bracewell will step down when his contract expires in April next year, New Zealand Cricket said Friday.

"John has informed me that he will not be looking to extend his contract for another term and will instead pursue other coaching opportunities in cricket," New Zealand Cricket chief executive Justin Vaughan said.

Bracewell, a former off-spinner who took 102 wickets in 41 Tests for New Zealand, has previously said he is interested in returning to coaching English county cricket.

The 50-year-old, currently in England with the touring New Zealand team, coached Gloucestershire for five years before taking up the top New Zealand post in 2003.

Vaughan paid tribute to Bracewell, who has sometimes been a controversial figure for his aggressive style, saying he had produced some tremendous results, "most notably in the one-day game".

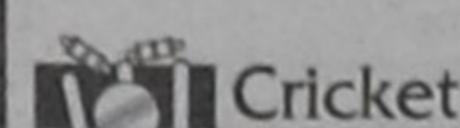
New Zealand Cricket would start looking internationally for a replacement.

"We currently have an extremely talented group of players with some really exciting individuals entering the international game," Vaughan said.

"I believe they have the makings of a very successful team, and the coach will be selected to realise this potential."

Although Vaughan did not refer to any candidates, former New Zealand captain and Indian coach John Wright is a strong contender. Wright is currently New Zealand's high performance coach.

Ashraful back in runs



SPORTS REPORTER

Mohammad Ashraful returned among the runs with a match-winning knock as Mohomedan Sporting Club made sure that there would be no upsets when the Premier Cricket Super League kicked off in immense heat yesterday.

The under pressure Bangladesh skipper led his side from the front with an unbeaten 70 to script second-placed Mohomedan's two-wicket victory over Surjor Torun in the curtailed over match at BKSP.

The right-hander however was the lone national player who shone during the opening day as league leaders Biman rode on Pakistani opener Nasir Jamshed's glittering 92 to get off to a flying start with a convincing 73-run win against City Club at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur.

On the other hand, defending champions Abahani managed a three-wicket victory over BKSP at the Fatullah Cricket Stadium. The match was 45-over-a-side due to a delayed start following overnight rain.

MSC V SURJOTORUN
In his quest to get back in the runs

ahead of the tri-series, Ashraful made a confident start to guide his side to reach the target of 181 with only three balls to spare in a 43-overs-a-side match.

BIMAN VCITY

Jamshed has so far represented Pakistan in seven one-day internationals and the youngster stood tall in a pitch where the ball carried to the wicketkeeper brilliantly. His opening partner Tamim Iqbal made a four-ball duck while one-down Mosharraf Hossain endured a two-ball duck but still Biman managed 212 in 46.4 overs thanks to a 93-ball 92 by Jamshed.

The left-hander struck nine fours and two sixes while the second best knock of 33 runs came from number seven batsman Liton Dey.

Rashedul Islam was the most successful bowler with three for 24 but pacer Shafiq Al Jabir and Arifat Salahuddin made the real damage by taking two wickets each.

On the other hand, young pacer Mahibul Alam exploited the condition brilliantly to dismiss City for 139 runs in 44.2 overs. City were never in contention as they lost wickets in regular intervals.

Left-arm spinner Mosharraf started the carnage by removing Golam Mabud (8) and then

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added 34 off 56 balls.

Pacer Dollar Mahmud captured three wickets while four batsmen fell victim of run out.



Bangladesh Biman paceman Mahibul Alam sends down a delivery while being watched closely by City Club batsman Abul Bashar during their Premier Cricket Super League match at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

Revenge match for Punjab

PTI, Chennai

Having lost their home tie against Chennai Super Kings, Yuvraj Singh would be keen to settle the score as Kings XI Punjab take on the hosts in the Indian Premier League tie at the M A Chidambaram stadium on Saturday.

Absence of Australian players -- Mike Hussey and Matthew Hayden -- and Kiwi Jacob Oram gives Yuvraj a perfect chance not only to take revenge for the early defeat as well strengthen their chances of making the semifinal stage.

With 10 points in their kitty the Punjab team is placed at the top of the points-table while the hosts are placed at third in the Twenty20 extravaganza.

Punjab skipper Yuvraj would also look to fire big as he is yet to come up with a sterling innings in the tournament. He has aggregated 170 runs from seven matches with his highest being 57.

Dhoni would also be looking at the semifinal spot and would not hesitate in pushing teammates for their second victory over the Punjab team.

Dhoni had looked in a good touch in the tournament as he has scored 229 runs from eight matches with a strike rate of 145.45.

Sehwag rues 5th option

CRICINFO, undated

Delhi Daredevils conceded 15 runs off the final over in their last-ball defeat to the Chennai Super Kings, but instead of faulting Shoib Malik, the bowler, his captain Virender Sehwag blamed the defeat on the lack of a specialist spinner in the side.

Sehwag said it was a choice between him and Malik for the final over. "I consulted my teammates and they said either me or Malik

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Bangladesh down & out

SPORTS REPORTER

Late goals sunk Bangladesh's chances to reach the AFC Challenge Cup finals when they gave up a 1-0 lead to lose 2-1 against Kyrgyzstan yesterday.

Bangladesh were in a must win situation against the hosts in the last Group C qualifier and striker Zahid Hasan Emily raised hopes when he put the visitors ahead after 63 minutes at the Spartak Stadium in Bishkek.

But forward Roman Kornilov cancelled the lead in the 83rd minute before defender Ruslan Kyroval sealed the victory for Kyrgyzstan four minutes later.

The result meant dark-horse Afghanistan qualified for the 8-team finals as group champions with four points following a

goalless draw against Bangladesh and a stunning 1-0 defeat of favourites Kyrgyzstan who finished second with three points.

Bangladesh, who hosted the inaugural Challenge Cup in 2006, were left in the cold with one point.

So far, Bangladesh's South Asian rivals Sri Lanka and Afghanistan have made it to the July 30-August 10 final rounds to be played in Hyderabad, where they join automatic qualifiers North Korea, Turkmenistan, Myanmar and hosts India.

Bangladesh got their first chance when Emily got behind the rival backline but his close-range drive went straight to the Kyrgyz goal.

The second half started with Kyrgyzstan changing formation to a more attacking 4-3-3 as Bangladesh settled rather defensively.

Kudrenko's freekick from close

flaw just over the bar six minutes after resumption and the hosts paid for missing too many chances as Bangladesh scored from a corner.

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PHOTO: STAR

Mohammedan striker and captain Ariful Haque Prince (on the ground) is dispossessed by Sonali Bank's Biplob (3rd from left) during their Premier Hockey League match at the Maulana Bhasani National Hockey Stadium yesterday.

Women end Asia Cup quietly



SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh women's cricket team completed their first Asia Cup campaign with an embarrassing nine-wicket loss at the hands of hosts Sri Lanka at the Welagedara Stadium in Kurunegala yesterday.

Electing to field first, the Lankan women were always on top bowling out Bangladesh for only 120 runs in 49.3 overs. Dedunu Silva smashed an unbeaten 66 to power the hosts to the winning target in only 25.5 overs to move into the finals where they face India on Sunday.

Right-handed Silva, an opening batswoman, struck twelve boundaries in her 82-ball innings that was complemented by Shashikala Siriwardene, who chipped in with a

34-ball 23. The two batswomen shared an unbroken 81-run second wicket stand to take the Lankans home.

Off-spinner Rumana Ahmed took the only wicket to fall as she had Chamari Polgamola caught behind for 14.

Earlier, the hosts had Bangladesh in early trouble. Janakanthi Mala removed Shukthara for a nine-ball duck and added Shathira Jakir in her next over, and left-arm spinner Suwini de Alwis struck to make it 29 for 3. Ayesha Akhtar stuck around long enough to top-score with 30 from 75 deliveries but nobody else crossed 20 and Bangladesh were all out for 120 in 49.3 overs.

Silva finished with the most excellent figures of 10-6-9-3 and was backed up by Shashikala Siriwardene's 3 for 28.

Meanwhile, powerhouse India

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Mohammedan share points with Sonali

SPORTS REPORTER

Mohammedan Sporting Club fired two late goals to salvage one point with a 2-2 draw against Sonali Bank in yesterday's Green Premier Hockey League.

Both teams came to their fourth round game on the back of three straight wins and the Bankers, this year's losing Club Cup finalists, looked like joining all-win Abahani and Usha atop the table when they cruised to a 2-0 lead early into the second half.

Rimon put the Bankers ahead after ten minutes while Iqbal Nader doubled the lead in the 39th minute.

Mohammedan, however, bounced back in four minutes later when Abdus Sajjad John converted a penalty corner to give them a lifeline.

The black and whites secured a vital point when Jahid Ali Talib levelled the scores in the 51st minute.

In the day's other match, Mariner Youngs Club registered their first victory in four games when they trounced bottom-table Wari Club 4-0.

Ranjan struck twice while Prashanta and Rajib shared the rest for Mariner who are now on four points. Wari remained without any point after four defeats.

AZLAN SHAH HOCKEY
Pakistan crush New Zealand

AFP, Iqbal

Pakistan's Rehan Butt scored four goals to help his team to a 6-3 win over New Zealand in a highly entertaining Sultan Azlan Shah Cup match Friday.

Pakistan, who beat hosts Malaysia 3-2 on Thursday, placed themselves among the favourites in this seven-team tournament with near flawless hockey.

Argentina also were also rampant as they beat India 5-1, while earlier Canada edged Belgium 1-0.

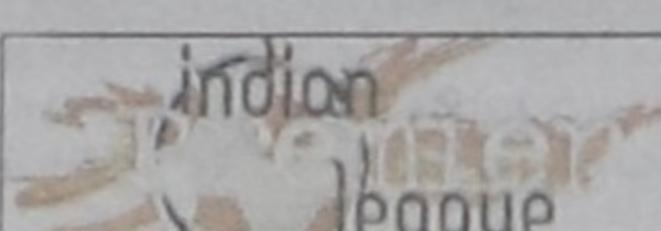
Pakistan had to come from behind as New Zealand drew first blood but failed to capitalise in the match at the Azlan Shah Stadium in northern Perak state.

New Zealand skipper Phillip Burrows gave his team the lead in the sixth minute, noticing Pakistan's goalkeeper Salman Akbar was blocked by his own players, and sending a shot sailing into the back of the net.

But Pakistan did not let the goal dampen their spirits, producing an equaliser five minutes later, when Butt connected with a cross from Muhammad Saqlain.

Before New Zealand could

Kolkata reign in rain



CRICINFO, undated

duced a superb direct hit from backward point to get rid of J Arunkumar, that perhaps decided the outcome. Bangalore's top order failed to keep pace and Ganguly, clearly charged up by the occasion, struck a huge blow by bowling his opposite number Rahul Dravid. By the time Ganguly was done, Bangalore needed 78 off 36 balls, a near-impossible task.

Cameron White and Boucher played good hands, the latter almost pulling off a win, but Bangalore's top order had left them with a bit too much to do. White cut loose to take 15 runs off the 11th over from Laxmi Ratan Shukla, eight came off the next from the next from Ashok Dinda, and another 15 off Umar Gul kept them in line with the asking-rate. Ishant Sharma just gave five off the 14th, and when White was run out, bringing up too far at the non-striker's end by Murali Kartik, it seemed a done deal. Boucher, whose 26 had needed 30 deliveries, then scored 24 off just 10, but Bangalore still fell five runs short.

Bangalore's top-order mess needs to be addressed, but their effort in the field after Kolkata decided to bat was heartening. Aakash Chopra, the former India opener, came in to bolster a struggling top order but didn't make much of an impact; lbw to Dale Steyn, and Hodge fell pulling Zaheer Khan.

If he looked smooth with the

going had been slow for Kolkata, and David Hussey tried to step it up, lofting a Praveen slower delivery over long-off, before placing the following delivery through extra-cover. He launched Anil Kumble for two consecutive sixes, but a good throw from Steyn cut him off. Tatenda Taibu got his first game but went early, top-edging Steyn, who then picked up a third when Shukla chopped onto his stumps.

An embarrassing goof-up delayed play ahead of Steyn's final over, the 14th of the innings, with only one bowler allowed to bowl four. The scorers and umpires mixed up the two Kumars, and had R Vinay with four overs bowled and Praveen with one, instead of three and two. David, taking the walkie-talkie from the on-field umpires, pleaded his case and Steyn finally got to bowl. Wridhiman Saha and Murali Kartik added 34 quick runs, the highest partnership of the innings, and Kolkata finished on 129.

That proved just out of reach for

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