

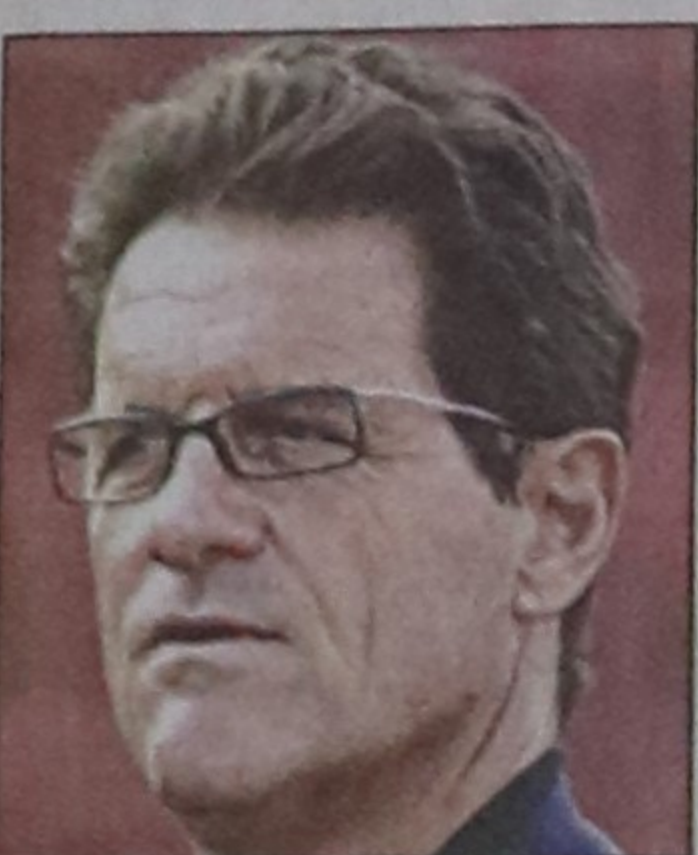
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Did U Know?

Only two men and three women from France have won single's titles at the French Open. The last French person to win at Roland Garros was Mary Pierce in 2000.



Fabio Capello

(England football coach) "David Beckham for me is not important only for free-kicks and corners. He is an important player during the game for other parts of his game."



What to WATCH

STAR Sports

French Open Tennis Fourth Round Live from 3:00pm

TEN Sports

West Indies v Australia Second Test, Day Three Live from 8:00pm

SET MAX

Indian Premier League Final Rajasthan v Chennai Live from 8:30 pm

Booters land in Colombo

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh football team reached Colombo early on Saturday to participate in the 5th SAFF Championship to be held from June 3 in Sri Lanka and Maldives.

Having arrived via a Thai Airlines flight, the Bangladesh team are now residing at the Pegasus Hotel under own arrangements and will be staying at the Galadari Hotel from June 2 under SAFF organisers. The footballers practised this afternoon.

Bangladesh have been placed in Group B of the eight-team meet with Afghanistan, Bhutan and co-hosts Sri Lanka while Group A houses holders India, Pakistan, the Maldives and Nepal.

Bangladesh will start their campaign against Bhutan on June 4, play emerging Afghanistan on June 6 and then take on the hosts on June 8.

'More cricket left in me'

PTI, New Delhi

Nineteen years of international cricket may have taken a toll on his body but Sachin Tendulkar on Saturday made it clear that he has no immediate plans of quitting the game, saying he definitely has cricket left in him.

"There's definitely cricket left in me", the 35-year-old champion batsman, who has been plagued by a spate of injuries in recent times, said in CNN's 'Talk Asia' programme.

Tendulkar's niggling injuries and periodic form slumps had prompted a few former cricketers, including former Australian captain Ian Chappell to call for his retirement a couple of years back but the ace batsman says he was still enjoying the game and was hungry for runs.

In the free-wheeling interview, the batting great bares his soul and talks at length about his life and career. As he delves into the highs and lows, Tendulkar recalls the disappointment after India's first

Aftab scare for Tigers

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

Aftab Ahmed is unlikely to play the upcoming tri-series and Asia Cup as the aggressive middle-order batsman suffered a finger injury during practice at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

With just a week left for the start of the tri-series involving India and Pakistan, the Chittagonian was hit on the ring finger of his right hand after he tried to fend at a rising delivery from pacer Mahbubul Alam during a net session at the centre wicket.

The initial report saw a fracture on the finger but the final decision is expected to be taken today after consultation with an orthopedics specialist.

"We hope it would not be serious but the initial report shows a fracture on his finger. We will get the final report from our physio (Darryn Lifson) and then decide on our next course of action," informed chief selector Rafiqul Alam yesterday.

"There is a lot of pain on the finger and it is also swelled.

Everything will depend on the physio's report whether there will be a need for any operation," said Aftab adding that initially he could not comprehend the gravity of the injury.

This is Aftab's second injury in the space of three months after a Jacques Kallis bouncer struck his face at his hometown during the second Test against South Africa in March. He was out for nearly three weeks and returned to play in the Ireland one-day series.

But this finger injury has come as a shock because the selectors struggled to find a replacement of Shakib Al Hasan, who decided to keep himself away from cricket to attend HSC examinations, when they announced a 14-member squad for the tri-nation tournament and a 15-member team for the Asia Cup in Pakistan.

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) are yet to give any official announcement on Aftab's injury but team operations manager Shafiqul Haque said that the right-hander would require at least 5-6 weeks to recover from the injury.

The tri-series will start from June 8 with the match between hosts Bangladesh and Pakistan at

Mirpur while Bangladesh's Asla Cup campaign will start on June 24 with the match against United Arab Emirates.

Aftab was not in good form as he scored only 202 runs in his last ten one-day internationals with only two half-centuries, and his batting in the recently concluded Premier League was also disappointing but still he is considered a vital player in the Bangladesh middle-order.

"He (Aftab) is a very important player in the team and we want to wait for him. We may get his service if it is a minor fracture. We are hoping for good news," said Rafiq. Aftab's injury however may give Alok Kapali a chance to make a comeback to the national side.

Stylish right-hander Kapali was not considered as the replacement of Shakib because the Rafiqul Alam-led selection panel emphasised on some international engagement before making the comeback.

But there is now hardly any choice for the selectors to think of any new player other than Kapali, who was included in the reserve bench for both tournaments and also included in the Bangladesh A team for the tours to Ireland and England.

It's Chennai v Rajasthan

CRICINFO, undated



An inspired Chennai Super Kings shrugged off the underdog's tag with a comprehensive display to thrash Kings XI Punjab by nine wickets and join Rajasthan Royals in the Indian Premier League final. Punjab's batting had been in superb form through most of the tournament, but they came completely unstuck in the face of some accurate and relentless seam bowling by Chennai's three fast bowlers, folding for a paltry 112 in Mumbai last night.

Parthiv Patel and Suresh Raina then ensured that the run-chase was a canter, putting together 102 for the second wicket -- both ended on unbeaten half-centuries as Chennai sailed home with 31 deliveries to spare, making 116.

Punjab's two previous losses to Chennai, in the league games, had both come when they'd chased, and Yuvraj Singh did the team a huge favour by winning the toss and choosing to bat on a pitch which was expected to assist the spinners later in the evening. That, though, was the only thing that went right for Punjab, as Makhaya Ntini and Manpreet Gony struck twice each in their first spells and reduced Punjab to 40 for 5. They never released the pressure thereafter as the Wankhede Stadium played host to the second one-

sided semifinal in two days. On a pitch offering generous bounce to the fast bowlers, Chennai's pace attack of Ntini, Gony and Albie Morkel bowled in the perfect channel, denying the Punjab batsmen any room to execute strokes through the off-side. Learning from Shane Watson's spell on Friday, Ntini pitched it slightly short of a length, hit the bat hard, and hurried the batsmen in their shots, while Gony bowled a fuller length, and with the sort of control which would have made Glenn McGrath proud. Chennai were also superb in the field -- Mutiah Muralidaran pulled off a splendid catch over his head to intercept a Yuvraj pull, Raina was equally spectacular in pulling off a diving catch to dismiss Wilkin Mota, while the ground fielding was blemishless.

There was little sign of such a dramatic collapse when Shaun Marsh stroked the first ball of the match -- from Muralidaran, surprisingly -- through the covers for four. Seven came off that over, but the wheels started coming off in the next over, when James Hopes slashed at a wide one from Ntini and edged to Parthiv. That dismissal sparked off a procession of wickets, as three more fell in the next four overs. Kumar Sangakkara was the most bizarre, as he seemed to miss a drive off Gony, but walked off even though Parthiv didn't appeal at all. Yuvraj was restless after playing out

three successive dot balls and pulled to Murali at short mid-wicket, but the biggest blow was delivered in the next over, when Ntini hit back to dismiss Marsh immediately after being creamed for a perfect straight drive. Marsh had top-edged a pull for six earlier in the innings, but wasn't as lucky in the sixth over, as the inside edge crashed into his stumps.

Clearly rattled by the early wickets, Punjab lost the plot with some terrible running between the wickets, which cost Irfan Pathan his wicket. Mahela Jayawardene stroked the ball to third man, ran two, started for the third and then changed his mind, leaving Pathan with too little time to gain his ground. When Jayawardene himself fell next over, steering to the wicketkeeper, Punjab had slumped to 45 for 6.

From there, it was only an exercise in damage control: Mota and Ramesh Powar -- the two local Mumbai players -- put together 35, easily the most productive partnership of the innings. Mota managed a useful 26-ball 25, while Powar smeared Morkel for a huge six over mid-wicket and then punished a listless L Balaji for three fours in the last over, but a target of 113 was hardly enough to test Chennai.

S Vidyut fell early, but Raina and Parthiv gave Punjab no further opportunity. Raina was in especially sublime touch -- he started off with two delectable fours, adjusting to Powar's turn and gliding a four to



IT LOOKS BAD: Bangladesh top-order batsman Aftab Ahmed (C) is in agony as team physio Darryn Lifson (R) assesses the damage on his ring finger in the right hand at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

Abahani hit 7 past Ajax

Usha could clinch it today

SPORTS REPORTER

Abahani did a demolition job of Ajax Sporting Club by putting seven past their hapless opponents in the Green Delta Premier Hockey Super League at the Maulana Bhashani Hockey Stadium yesterday.

Russell Mahmud Jimmy and Mosharraf Hossain struck three goals each as the emphatic victory improved Abahani's points tally to 28 points from 11 matches but they remain five behind Usha Krira Chakra, who take on Mohammedan Sporting Club today. If Usha win today's game, they would lift the title. Abahani face Usha in the last match of their campaign on June 3.

Meanwhile, Ajax figured that their collection of 13 points would not improve when national star Jimmy's clinical precision opened the scoring in the 17th minute. Three minutes later, Mamunur Rahman doubled the lead after he converted a penalty corner.

Within a minute, Abahani were 3-0 up as Mosharraf opened his scoring in the Dhanmondi outfit's next attack and in the 23rd minute, Jimmy scored his second of the day from a penalty corner. Mosharraf's 25th minute strike was the last action of the first-half as Abahani went into the break with an impregnable lead of five goals.

Jimmy and Mosharraf hit their third goals each in the second half, giving Abahani an easy victory.

LOCAL SNIPPETS

SPORTS REPORTER

Impressive pace bowlers from this season's domestic competitions will take part in a trial at the BKSP in Savar from tomorrow.

The National Pace Foundation of the Bangladesh Cricket Board has arranged the trial for pace bowlers who have impressed during the National Cricket League and the recently concluded Premier and First Division Leagues.

Bowling coach Champaka Ramanayake, the former Sri Lankan pacer, will conduct the four trials. Dipu Rai Chowdhury, Mizanur Rahman and Golam Faruque Chowdhury will assist Ramanayake during the tryout.

On the first two days, there will be two trials each and on the final day, June 4, there will be a final trial which will determine the candidates.

The BCB also announced that regular training camps will be conducted at the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium and the BKSP for the selected candidates from the pace foundation trials.

PIONEER LEAGUE
UNB adds: Siraj Smriti Sangsard crushed Moghbazar Sabuj Sangha 3-0 in a North Zone match of the Dhaka City Corporation Pioneer Football League at the T&T ground in Mohakhali. Momin, Sohail and Ramzan scored one goal each for the winners. Jamal and Sohail struck once each as Narayangang Football Academy beat Nandipara Kamalkali Sangad 2-0 in the Central Zone. Samaj Kalyan Krira

Clarke close to century

Ponting joins 10,000-run club; ton for Katich

Cricket

AFP, St. John's

Michael Clarke was within sight of his seventh hundred as Australia continued to bat themselves into an impregnable position before lunch in the second Test against West Indies on Saturday.

At the interval, Australia, choosing to bat, reached 360 for five in their first innings with Clarke unbeaten on 85 and Brad Haddin not out on 33 on the second day of the Test at the Vivian Richards Cricket Ground.

The pair has added 64 for the sixth wicket to consolidate Australia's position, after they continued from their bedtime total of 259 for three.

Clarke, the Australia vice-captain, looked in fine touch from the time he arrived at the crease the about 45 minutes before the sched-

uled close.

He has stroked the ball with crisp assurance with his classical driving, particularly through the arc between extra cover and mid-off, where he has gathered the majority of his 11 fours.

Clarke reached his 50, when he caressed a delivery from Jerome Taylor to mid-off and scrambled a single.

The innings has been all the more remarkable, considering he arrived in the Caribbean two weeks later than the rest of the squad, after he was granted compassionate leave to attend the funeral of the father of his fiancée.

But Clarke had a huge slice of fortune, when wicketkeeper Denesh Ramdin dropped him on 63 down the leg-side.

Clarke anchored Australia through the morning period, although the visitors lost the wickets of century-maker Simon Katich, who got out on his overnight score

of 113, and Andrew Symonds.

Katich was caught down the leg-side, when he feathered his 248th delivery from Taylor in the same over that Clarke reached his half-century.

Symonds arrived and looked set to play in much the same style that he did in the opening Test, but he tried to glance a delivery from Fidel Edwards and was also caught down the leg-side for 18.

On Friday, Katich fashioned his third Test hundred and overshadowed the 10,000-run milestone of captain Ricky Ponting to lead a solid Australia batting performance.

Katich remained undefeated on 113 as Australia reached 259 for three at stumps when bad light stopped play eight overs early on the opening day of the inaugural Test at the Vivian Richards Cricket Ground. The venue has become the 11th ground to host Tests in the Caribbean and the 98th



WHO SAYS WE CAN'T PLAY? A visually impaired player bowls during an exhibition cricket match at the Dhanmondi Playground yesterday. The match was organised by the National Association of Sports for the Persons with Disability (NASDP) in association with Action on Disability and Development.

Ponting ignores stats

Cricket

AFP, St. John's

Ricky Ponting has played down his achievement of becoming the seventh batsman to pass 10,000 runs in Tests, rejoicing more at the length of his career.

The Australia captain needed 61 when he went to the wicket about 30 minutes before lunch on the opening day of the second Test against West Indies on Friday.

He reached the milestone about 15 minutes after the tea break, when he drove a full-length delivery outside the off-stump from Ramnaresh Sarwan -- twirling his modest leg-breaks -- through extra cover for two before he was dis-

missed soon after for 65.

"I must admit it was on my mind a little bit actually," Ponting told reporters. "It's nice to get there, disappointing to get out when I did, but nice to get to that figure I guess."

"As you all know, I've never been anyone that's really focussed or worried too much about milestones or statistics, but to be the third fastest player in history to

score 10,000 runs is a nice little thing that I will be able to look back upon when I'm finished."

Ponting became the third Australian batsman to reach the coveted landmark, following in the footsteps of two of his predecessors -- Allan Border (11,174 runs) and Steve Waugh (10,927).

"It was on my mind probably right from the start because I was made aware of it by you blokes in the media the other day, so it gave me a little bit extra to think about, probably at the start of the innings more than any other time," Ponting said.

"The pitch was obviously very good, so I thought I was going to have as good a chance as any to get across that line. To get it out of the way was great."



THE ENTERTAINER: Rajasthan Royals' hard-hitting batsman Yusuf Pathan whacks one over mid-wicket during his blistering knock of 45 against Delhi Daredevils in the first semifinal of the Indian Premier League at the Wankhede Stadium in Mumbai on Friday.