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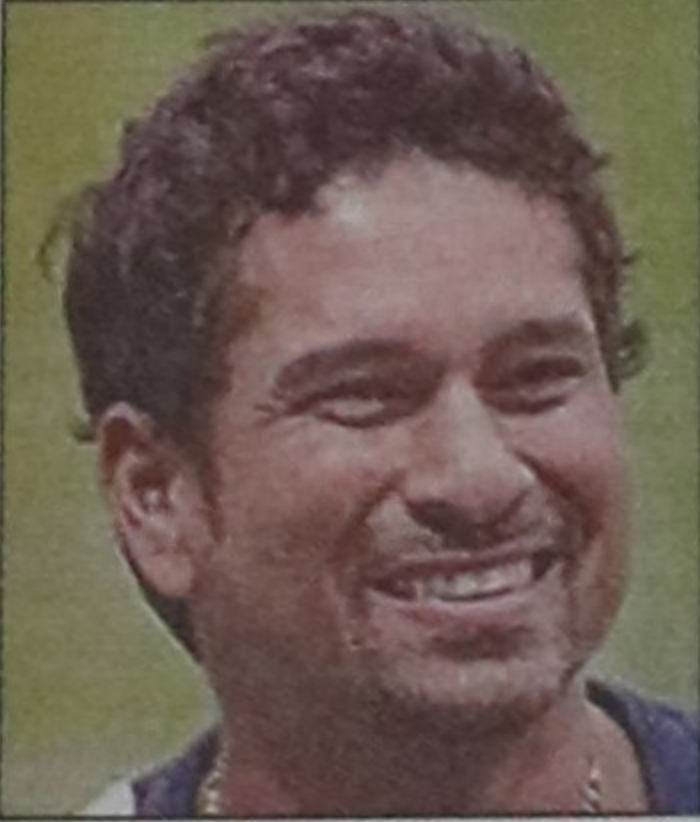
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## Did U Know?

The Roland Garros was named after a former French tennis player who was also the first pilot to fly over the Mediterranean Sea.



**Sachin Tendulkar**  
(Indian batting superstar)  
"I don't personally feel that, you know, (Indian Premier League is) dumbing down the game. It's just another version of cricket."



**STAR Sports**  
French Open Tennis  
Men's Women's quarterfinals  
Live from 3:00pm

**TEN Sports**  
West Indies v Australia  
Second Test, Day Five  
Live from 8:00pm

**ESPN**  
SAFF Championship  
India v Nepal  
Live from 5:00pm

Sportscentre India  
Sports News  
Live at 8:30pm

## Asoka neutral umpire for tri-series

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) yesterday released the match officials' names for the upcoming tri-series involving India and Pakistan.

Sri Lanka Asoka De Silva has been named neutral field umpire while New Zealander Jeff Crowe will act as match referee during the weekend tournament.

Former Bangladesh international Enamul Haque will stand with Asoka for the first two games - Bangladesh v Pakistan on June 8 and Pakistan v India on June 10 - while Nadir Shah is the other local umpire to accompany the Sri Lankan for the remaining two games - Bangladesh v India on June 12 and the final on June 14.

AFM Akhter Uddin has been named TV umpire.

## A Dhoni run cost about Rs 1.5 lakh

PTI, New Delhi

Mahendra Singh Dhoni may have lost the Indian Premier League (IPL) final but every run he scored in the 44-day tournament was worth nearly 1.5 lakh rupees.

The Chennai Super Kings captain attracted the highest bid in the landmark IPL auction in February when the Chennai franchise owners shelled out a whopping six crore rupees for the Indian ODI and Twenty20 captain.

Dhoni tallied 414 runs at an average of 41.40 in 14 innings and each run that flowed from his blade was worth 1,44,927 rupees.

Tournament's top scorer Shaun Marsh, however, was not equally fortunate. Bought for a paltry 12 lakh rupees, the left-hander, son of former Australia opener Geoff Marsh, went on to aggregate 616 runs at a mammoth average of 68, which ironically means every run he scored earned him just 1,948 rupees, a pittance compared to Dhoni.

In fact, none of the franchise

SEE PAGE 18 COL 5

## Regional rivalry time

SPORTS REPORTER

Regional football powerhouses India and Bangladesh will be put to the test by the emerging nations of South Asia when the fifth edition of the SAFF Football Championship begins in Maldives

capital Male today.

Three-time champions India kick off their campaign against Nepal in the opening match of the eight-team event while Maldives face Pakistan later on the day.

Winners of 2003 and last version's runners-up Bangladesh meet Bhutan tomorrow in Colombo where co-hosts Sri Lanka are pitted against Afghanistan in the second match.

Although India and Bangladesh share the glory, though unevenly, in all four previous meets, they would be facing strong challenge from the two co-hosts as well as Pakistan and Afghanistan.

Under German coach Klaus Staerk, the Afghans who joined seven Saarc nations in the SAFF (South Asian Football Federation)

in the 2003 competition in Dhaka, have made vast improvement. They got the reward last month when they qualified for the AFC Challenge Cup finals after a goalless draw with Bangladesh and a stunning 1-0 victory against hosts Kyrgyzstan.

Football in war-torn Afghanistan is plagued by several problems and topping the list is security as many parts of the country are still controlled by the conservative Taliban regime.

With the game confined to capital Kabul only, the five Germany-based players make the core of the team who would be eyeing a semifinal spot ahead of Sri Lanka or Bangladesh from Group B.

Sri Lanka have never been a contender but their recent 7-1 win against Pakistan to confirm qualification for the Challenge Cup proves that they would be the team to bet on home territory.

Also, they had won the Saarc Gold Cup, the mother of the SAFF Championship, held in Colombo in 1995 and finished runners-up in the inaugural Challenge Cup in Dhaka in 2006.

Maldives are the only team apart from India and Bangladesh to have reached final of the tourna-

ment. Losing finalists in the inaugural SAFF Championship in 1997 in Kathmandu and in 2003, Maldives have brought back Slovakian coach Jozef Jankech, who masterminded their trip to the final against Bangladesh before eventually losing the match to the home side in penalties.

If they expectedly reach the semifinals, they will have the big advantage of playing the knockout match at home even if they finish second in Group A or do not draw Sri Lanka in the last four.

Pakistan, humiliated by Sri Lanka in the Challenge Cup qualifiers, have boosted their chances by including four foreign-based players.

The latest inclusion is Atif Bashir of Welsh Premier League side Haverfordwest County AFC while they have called Adnan Ahmed of Tranmere Rovers and Kashif Siddiqui of Eckerd College, Florida in addition to Queen's Park Rangers defender Zeeshan Rehman, who had made his SAFF debut in 2005 in Karachi.

Nepal will bring a young team under German-born coach Thomas who had to drop five key players due to injury and include seven under-19 booters.

SEE PAGE 18 COL 8

## Tigers' chance to adapt

### Rain threatens practice and tri-series

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

The day-night practice matches between the national team and the second string A team could be dress-rehearsals for both players and organisers about what kind of situation they might face during the tri-nation one-day series which kicks off on June 8 at Mirpur.

The first preparation game under floodlight will take place at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur today. But uninterrupted action looks uncertain following weather conditions.

Monday's heavy rain and the weather forecast for the next few days make many believe that the tournament involving archrivals India and Pakistan may eventually become a disaster.

Before every international tournament Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) gather advance weather forecast reports from the local met office and there was no

exception this time.

They, however, hardly got anything encouraging from the weathermen because there is prediction of light to moderate rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty or squally winds for next few days.

"Everybody knows about what happens during this period. This is reality and we have to accept it. We have got prediction of rain during the tri-series from our local met office," said Ahmed Sajjadul Alam, BCB's media committee chairman yesterday.

But the authority was buzzing with the facilities at the home of cricket.

"But the encouraging thing for us is that we have a very good drainage system in this stadium. And because of the slope in the outfield, the water hardly stays in the field," said Sajjadul.

"That's why we are very much hopeful that action will not be fully suspended if sudden rain disrupts any match for a while," he added.

And as an added pre-cautionary

measure the BCB has decided to gather maximum covers from the other grounds to make sure that the entire outfield is covered during rain.

In a bid to get the Tigers accustomed to the floodlights, the team management has arranged two matches but it may also help the players to adjust to rain-stoppages.

"We can only hope that there would be no rain during the series but you know it's unlikely in this season. It would be, however, interesting to get the experience in the practice matches," said captain Mohammad Ashraf.

The Tigers were excited with the fact that they are going to play match under floodlights at home after a long two-year gap.

"I think we played our last international match under lights at Bogra in 2006 and that's why I am looking forward to play the matches in Mirpur. It will really be helpful to us if rain doesn't spoil the matches. It is however encouraging for us that the Mirpur venue has a good drainage system," Ashraf said.



The pitches of the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur are under covers during yesterday's heavy rains. With the tri-nation one-day series involving India, Pakistan and Bangladesh, due to start on June 8, being organised during this period of year, many fear that such scene could be a daily event.

## Abahani's MSC test

Hockey

SPORTS REPORTER

Abahani must thank Mohammedan for giving them a lifeline in the Green Delta Premier Hockey League title race but all the gratitude will be over when the two archrivals meet in today's crucial Super 5 clash.

The match will kick off at 4 pm at the Maulana Bhasani National Hockey Stadium.

Mohammedan's 3-2 win on Sunday over Usha, who are still leading the table, opened up the challenge but Abahani are facing the tough task of winning two big matches - against opponents they have not beaten this season - to retain the title.

A draw or a loss by Abahani can seal Usha's championship today but everything depends on Mohammedan, who have little to gain.

Mohammedan's young and inexperienced side threw away a 3-1 lead to draw 3-3 with Abahani in the first leg while their Club Cup semifinal also ended in a stalemate before the latter won on penalties.

The black and whites can still finish runners-up and coach Barkatullah Chapal said there was no chance of relaxing on the turf.

"It is a prestige match and we will go for the maximum," said Chapal who might miss injured captain Ariful Haque Prince for the second successive game.

Abahani coach Mahbub Harun told that his side will try to make most of the chance created by Mohammedan.

"They have created a chance and we must beat them today to stay alive," said Harun whose side will play Usha in Friday's league final.

The sky-blues will miss defender Faruq through suspension and it could be a headache for a leaky backline which conceded a

4-2 defeat to Usha last week.

"We have to protect our defence first because in a big match, it is difficult to come back after conceding goals," added Harun, who has special plans to block Mohammedan's Pakistani playmaker Mohammed Sabbir.

Meanwhile, Sonali Bank brushed aside Ajax Sporting Club 7-2 yesterday for their first win in the Super League.

The Bankers, who lost to Usha and Abahani in their first games in the Super 5, raised their tally to 22 points while Ajax, who lost all four Super League encounters, finished their campaign at fifth place with 13 points.

Krishna Kumar fired three goals, Iqbal Nader Prince added a brace while Sheikh Nannu and Asaduzzaman Chandan scored one goal apiece for the bankers, who play Mohammedan in the last match.

For Ajax, Nurunnabi and Rubel reduced the arrears.



Top-seeded Russian Maria Sharapova serves to compatriot Dina Safina during their fourth round engagement in the French Open at Roland Garros in Paris yesterday. Sharapova however lost the match 7-6, 6-7, 2-6.

## Pacy Pakistan coming here

AFP, Lahore

Pakistan cricket selectors Monday included five fast bowlers in a 16-man squad to take part in next week's one-day tri-series in Bangladesh.

Fit-again Mohammad Asif leads the strong pace attack, which also includes Umar Gul, Sohail Tanveer, Rao Iftikhar and rookie left-arm paceman Wahab Riaz. But suspended paceman Shoaib Akhtar was not considered.

"Akhtar was not considered as he was suspended and the team is a balanced one which we hope can do well in the tri-series," said chief selector Salahuddin Ahmed.

The squad for the Asia Cup, which Pakistan will host from June 24 to July 6, will be announced later, Ahmed said.

The 25-year-old Asif suffered a hand injury while playing in a domestic cricket tournament in India but has since recovered well for Pakistan's hectic season ahead.

He has played in only four one-day matches for Pakistan this year after undergoing elbow surgery in Australia late last year.

The 32-year-old Akhtar was banned for five years on charges of indiscipline in April this year - a ban suspended for one month to allow him to feature in the Indian event.

His appeal against the ban will resume next week.

The tri-series, also featuring India, will be held in Dhaka from June 8-14, with each side playing the other once in a league before the June 14 final.

SEE PAGE 18 COL 1

## Different right to the end

REUTERS, North Sound

Australia leg-spinner Stuart MacGill's surprise retirement was an appropriate end to a career in which he always spoke his mind and rarely conformed.

"I guess I have been fighting it for a while because I don't want to retire I haven't achieved everything I wanted to achieve," he told a news conference after the third day of the second Test against West Indies on Sunday.

"When you play for your country you have a huge responsibility not only to yourself but to the guy at the other end and I couldn't live myself if I thought that I had let someone down in that respect," added MacGill.

MacGill, who at 37 had worked his way back from fitness problems including a wrist operation to make the tour party, realised during the first Test win in Jamaica that something was wrong with his bowling.

"In the first Test I just started to

SEE PAGE 18 COL 5

## Federer in last eight

French Open

AFP, Paris

A below par Roger Federer was made to work hard by unseeded Julien Benneteau of France at the French Open on Monday before winning a rain-hit match 6-4, 7-5, 7-5 to reach the quarterfinals.

The Swiss star has dropped just one set en route to the last eight where he will play Fernando Gonzalez of Chile for a place in the semifinals, but he will have cause for concern over how he struggled to kill off his lowly-ranked opponent.

"He played a great match today but it was tough for both us with the conditions," said the top seed.

The unseeded Benneteau had played more sets than any other player to get the last 16 (14) and he was not expected to pose any problems for the world No. 1 who won their only previous meeting in straight sets in Cincinnati last

year.

But he did give the home fans, in a damp and overcast Philippe Chatrier Centre Court, something to cheer about when he broke the Federer serve at 3-5 down in the first set.

He failed though to hold on to his own serve in the following game sending a looping forehand wide under pressure from a cracking Federer backhand down the line.

Benneteau gifted Federer the first break of the second set by netting an easy volley at the net and then playing an abysmal drop shot.

But once again the world No. 1 failed to put the set away when serving at 5-3 and this time the Frenchman had a point to force a tie-break before Federer struck again moving two sets up as the rain started to fall.

Play resumed ninety minutes later and Federer promptly bagged a break of serve in the third game only for Benneteau to do likewise in the next game.

But he says he is happy with his form and ready to challenge Nadal for the title. Nadal though has so far looked formidable and has yet to lose a set in four matches.

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## Aftab to have surgery in Mumbai

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) has decided to send Tigers batsman Aftab Ahmed to India for operation on his injured ring finger.

The Chittagonian, who has been ruled out for six weeks due to injury that he had suffered during practice on Saturday, will fly for Mumbai within two days after completion of his visa formalities.

Aftab will need to be surgically repaired immediately but it was not within twenty-four hours, which the BCB official informed on Sunday.

"Actually nowhere it was mentioned in the report that he has to go under surgery within twenty-four hours that's why we have decided to send him abroad for better treatment. He will go to Mumbai within two days," said Ahmed Sajjadul Alam, BCB's media committee chairman yesterday.

The X-ray report confirmed that Aftab, who was replaced by Alok Kapali for the tri-series and Asia Cup, has a comminuted fracture of the right ring finger.

## Miron SAFF's match referee

UNB, Dhaka

Abdul Hannan Miron, one of AFC's elite pool of referees, will conduct the matches of the 5th SAFF Championship beginning in Maldives today.

The Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) media manager Ahmed Syed Al Fatah said that Miron will act as the main referee in the championship except three matches of Bangladesh.

Miron has already left for Maldives.

## Elements hold up Aussies

Cricket

AFP, St. John's

A day that promised much, delivered very little, after heavy overnight and early morning rain coupled with poor drainage stymied Australia's charge in the second

Test against West Indies on Sunday.

When stumps were drawn on the third day at the Vivian Richards Cricket Ground, West Indies, replying to Australia's first innings total of 479 for seven declared, were 255 for four - still 25 adrift of the follow-on target - after the start was delayed by 5-1/2 hours.

Australia were hamstrung,

when the drainage system which was recently reinstalled at the ground did not respond effectively to the morning deluge, and the outfield remained soggy in a number of areas.

The Australians had suffered similarly at the World Cup last year, when they had to utilise the reserve day to finish off the same opponents in a Super Eight match.

The West Indies Cricket Board had warned Antiguan authorities that the venue would not be a part of the tour itinerary unless the drainage problem had been corrected, and a committee had been appointed to oversee the improvements.

A multi-million dollar renovation was undertaken, but on the day that the rainy/hurricane season officially begins in the Caribbean, the drainage system failed.

Reports indicate corrective measures will again be undertaken following a World Cup football qualifying match between the Antigua and Barbuda national team and Cuba later this month.

Australia did not fully assert themselves in the 2-3/4 hours available to them before the close, but they managed to remove Ramnareesh Sarwan for 65, after he added 77 for the fourth wicket with Shivnarine Chanderpaul.

Sarwan, leading West Indies in the absence of injured Chris Gayle, had reached his 50, when he turned a ball from Brett Lee into the leg-side for a single.

He was dismissed however when he edged playing defensively

SEE PAGE 18 COL 1