



DON'T MESS WITH ME: The Sri Lankan team are in a jolly mood as leading spinner Muttiah Muralidaran (C) pulls up Farveez Maharoof (R) ahead of their warm-up at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

Mashrafe sizes up Lankan attack

Cricket
SPORTS REPORTER

Out of the nine bowling attacks in Test cricket, it is the Sri Lankan ensemble that really tests the quality of the batsmen's technique.

There is the champion offspinner Muttiah Muralidaran who has the wily left-arm paceman Chaminda Vaas for assistance. Vaas shares the new ball with the likes of the accurate Farveez Maharoof, the muscular Dilhara Fernando or the deceptively quick Dhammika Prasad, who troubled the Indian batsmen last August. This is usually enough but Sri Lanka also boasts the slinger Lasith Malinga and the mysterious Ajantha Mendis, but the duo is not currently travelling to Bangladesh to play the Test series.

Mendis, who is replaced by Rangana Herath for the series, has created stirred up the

world of cricket and his absence from the Test side for at least the first Test has made

they have variety," said the Tigers vice-captain.

"Mendis is definitely a top-class bowler and probably they would play an extra pacer in his place. Maybe Mendis's absence will give us some comfort but whoever will play in his place is definitely of good quality," added Mashrafe.

For the Narail Express however it is always Muralidaran who poses the most threat. The man from Kandy so far has taken a staggering 76 wickets from just nine outings against the Tigers and it is the batsmen's duty to tackle the most successful bowler in the world.

"We have to handle Murali because he's the reason of our biggest concern. Our batsmen are working on that," said Mashrafe, who himself got out four times to Muralidaran.

But for all the challenges ahead the Tigers must find inspiration to succeed and Mashrafe mentioned the



MASHRAFE BIN MORTAZA

the Bangladesh pace spearhead Mashrafe Bin Mortaza think more intently about the visitors' attack.

"Even without (Ajantha) Mendis, the Sri Lankan bowling attack is powerful. Actually

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Did U Know?

The first-ever player to be disqualified from the men's doubles of the Wimbledon Championships was Tim Henman in 1995, for hitting a ball in anger which struck a ball girl.

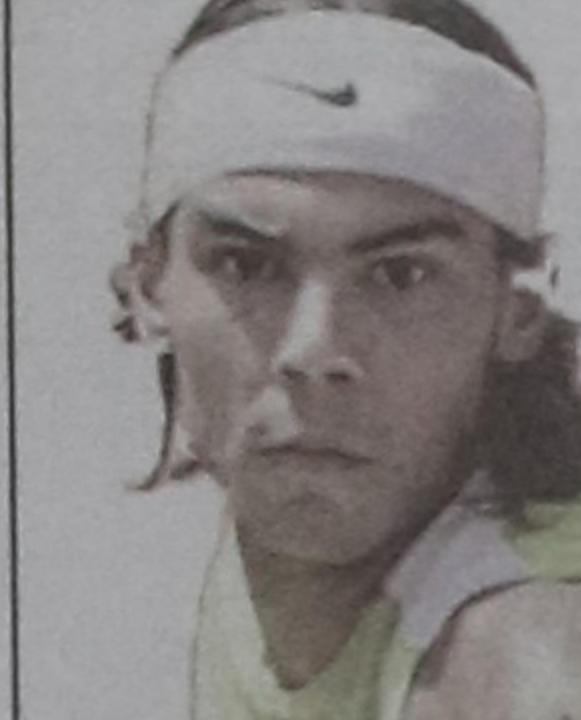


What to WATCH

- STAR Cricket**
Australia v South Africa
First Test, Day Four
Live from 8:30am
- Neo Cricket**
India v England
Second Test, Day Two
Live from 10:00am
- ESPN**
English Premier League
Fulham v Middlesbrough
Live from 8:55pm
- STAR Sports**
English Premier League
Blackburn Rovers v Stoke City
Live from 8:55pm
- Primera Liga**
Real Madrid v Valencia
Live from 1:30am (Sunday)
- Espanyol v Atletico Madrid**
Live from 3:00am (Sunday)



TALK TURKEY



Rafael Nadal
(World No. 1 tennis star)
"To finish the year ranked No. 1 was really special. At the same time I was proud to win the Olympic gold medal, and help Spain regain the Davis Cup. It has been a wonderful year for Spanish sport, and I am happy to have been part of it."
After being named as world champion for 2008 by the International Tennis Federation on Wednesday.

V-Day tennis

SPORTS REPORTER
Amol Roy, Niranjan Ram, Dipu Lal, Aravind Fernando, Anwar Hossain, Alamgir Hossain, Omar Faruk and Ranjan Roy moved into the men's singles quarterfinals of the Popular Pharmaceuticals Victory Day tennis tournament yesterday.
The boys' (under-16 and 14) competition also reached the last eight stage.

Fog frustrates Lankans

Cricket
SPORTS REPORTER

The blanket of fog that has engulfed the whole country for days seems to be the only worry for the Sri Lankans, who looked eager to get clear weather ahead of the Test series against Bangladesh.

Sri Lanka, who arrived in Dhaka on Thursday to play two Tests against Bangladesh and a tri-nation one-day series also involving the hosts and Zimbabwe, did not have a full-fledged practice session at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday and were confined to warm-up and gym sessions only.

And when Mahela Jayawardene turned out for the official press briefing, the Lankan skipper, obviously irked by the foggy wel-

come, said he was hoping for sunshine. The foggy condition has disrupted wicket preparations and Jayawardene told they came to the ground to assess the situation.

"We didn't know what was going on. I spoke to the groundsman and he was also saying that they didn't have any time during the last few days and was struggling to get the wicket ready. This is something you can't control and hopefully the weather would change and there will be some sunshine to get the wicket prepared for the Test match," told Jayawardene.

Sri Lanka's only blemish in previous tours to Bangladesh was one one-day loss but Jayawardene was diplomatic when asked whether he was expecting a relatively easy series or not.

"I don't know for how long I have played but each and every game I have taken seriously whether you are playing

Bangladesh or any other team. Bangladesh are a young side and they are improving but we don't want to leave any room for them to get close to us.

"That's our attitude. We've got a very good side, a very good combination that you can come up with and we have to maintain the standard and keep focus. That's what I always tell the guys that irrespective of whom you play you have to maintain the standard and play proper cricket. If you play this game you have to know that you have given hundred and ten percent every time," said Jayawardene, who started his career as a captain in Bangladesh in 2006.

"It wasn't pleasant after you have lost a one day game against Bangladesh at the start but it has always been a good place for us to tour because there is great enthusiasm and the crowds are brilliant. We

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Gambhir guides India

Cricket
AFP, Mohali

Gautam Gambhir hit an unbeaten 106 and Rahul Dravid finally returned to form with 65 not out as India made a solid start in the second Test against England on Friday.

The pair put on 173 for the unbroken second wicket as India recovered from the early loss of Virender Sehwag to post 179 for one when bad light ended play 18 overs early.

Left-handed Gambhir, who made 66 in the first Test in Chennai which India won by six wickets, slammed his third century in four Tests and the fourth of his 22-match career.

The 27-year-old Delhi opener now has 964 runs in eight Tests this year at an average of 68.85, with a personal best of 206 against Australia in New Delhi in October.

Dravid, fighting to retain his Test place after a recent slump in form, recorded his 54th Test half-century, but the first in his last nine innings.

The pair batted through most of the gloomy day to frustrate England's bid to gain quick wickets in a match they must win to draw the two-match series.

Gambhir, who made 104

against Australia at the same Punjab Cricket Association stadium in October, said he was delighted with his performance.

"This is obviously a lucky ground for me," he said. "But this one is a special hundred because the ball was doing a bit and England looked determined to come hard at us."

"Our mindset should be to

go for runs and try and win the series 2-0 which will make us the number two Test side by the end of this year."

Both Gambhir and England coach Peter Moores applauded Dravid's return to form.

"His innings was important for himself and the team," said Gambhir. "He is a legend and I am no one to comment on him."

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PURPLE PATCH CONTINUES: India opener Gautam Gambhir cuts the ball during his fourth Test hundred that came on the first day of the second Test against England at the PCA Stadium in Mohali yesterday.

Abahani sign Tushar

SPORTS REPORTER

Defending B. League champions and first-leg leaders Abahani yesterday registered Sajedur Rahman Tushar for the rest of the competition.

Abahani, who were interested to sign their old fullback Jahangir Alam Mintu from Chittagong Abahani, failed to make a deal with their namesakes.

Tushar has been training for long with Abahani, who will open their second-leg campaign against Farashganj tomorrow in Dhaka.

Other clubs, especially title contenders Mohammedan and Brothers, have showed interest to sign foreign players to gain momentum in the race.

Mohammedan are unhappy with midfielders Dami Emmanuelle of Nigeria and Egyptian Hazem Mahmud, who scored their match winner at Khulna against local Abahani on Thursday.

Brothers are also looking forward to include strikers Elijah Junior or Anok, who had played for the side last year but have yet to get any response.

The mid-season transfer window for local players end today but the teams would be able to enrol foreigners till December 31.

SL confirm Pak tour

AFP, Karachi

Sri Lanka have confirmed they will tour Pakistan next month in place of India, who cancelled their five-week series over the Mumbai attacks, a Pakistani cricket official said Friday.

"We are thankful to Sri Lankan Cricket for confirming a tour in place of India," Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) chief operating officer Salim Altaf told AFP.

Sri Lanka will play three Tests, three one-day internationals and a Twenty20 game in Pakistan next month on the heels of a tour of Bangladesh, which ends in mid-January.

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Idris upsets Russel

SPORTS REPORTER

Idris Kasirye inspired giant-killers Rahmatganj to come from two goals down and snatch a valuable point from Sheikh Russel on the final day of the Citycell B. League's first leg yesterday.

Ugandan striker Idris struck either side of the break as Rahmatganj, who had defeated the top two teams -- Abahani and Mohammedan, held the title contenders 2-2 at the Bangabandhu National Stadium.

The draw was a huge blow for Wajed Gazi's Russel, who looked set to put more pressure on league leaders and defending champions Abahani at the end of the first leg with a 2-0 lead by the 18th minute with goals from Mobarak and captain Touati Youness.

But they threw away the advantage and ended fourth in the table instead of finishing second and within two points of Abahani, who sit on top with 22 points. Abahani, who rested during the final round, face Farashganj in the first match of the return

leg tomorrow. Russel, on 18, are trailing Mohammedan and Brothers by one point. Chittagong Mohammedan

remained fifth after a comfortable 2-0 defeat of Muktiyoddha Sangsad at home, thanks to goals by Akbar Hossain Ridon

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PHOTO: STAR

Alfaz (R) joins the celebration as Russel captain Youness embraces an ecstatic Mobarak (No. 15) after his first goal against Rahmatganj during their Citycell B. League match at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

মুন্দের একটি দেশ
এসিমে নিয়ে যাম তারফ

আমার বাংলাদেশ

চোখ রাখুন
এর পর্দায়
আজ সন্ধ্যা ৬ টায়

পর্ব-৭: উন্মাদ ও তরুণ সমাজ

আলোচক: তারেক মাসুদ
সম্পাদিত: নির্মিতা
বাণিদা মাহমুদ মিঠু
চিত্র শিল্পী ও চলচ্চিত্র নির্মাতা

উপস্থাপক: সৈয়দ মুনীর শবরু
অধ্যাপক, আইবিএ, ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়

পরিচালনা: হাসিনুর রহমান মুকুর
নির্বাহী পরিচালক, এমআরটিভি

সংগীত: