

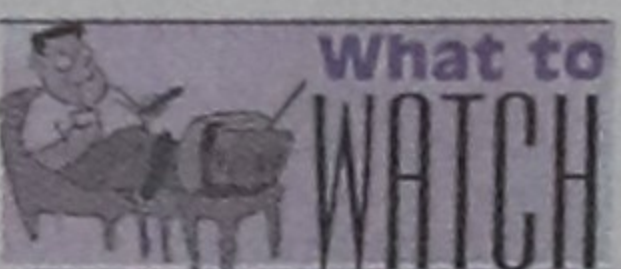


Did U Know?

West Indies batsman Ramnaresh Sarwan scored his thirteenth century on the fifth day of the third Test against England on Thursday.



Sir Alex Ferguson
(Manchester United manager)
"I was shocked that Chelsea should part so soon with a manager of such great experience and proven success as 'Phil' Scolari."
On Luiz Felipe Scolari's sacking by the Blues.



TEN Sports
Pakistan v Sri Lanka
First Test, Day Two
Live from 11:00am
ESPN
English Premier League
Fulham v West Bromwich
Live from 7:25pm
Newcastle v Everton
Live from 9:55pm
STAR Sports
English Premier League
Liverpool v Man City
Live from 8:55pm
Primera Liga
Deportivo v Valencia
Live from 2:00am (Monday)



Premier Div Cricket League
Mohammedan v City Club
Venue: Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium, Mirpur
Abahani v Victoria
Venue: Fatullah Cricket Stadium
Biman v Old DOHS
Venue: BKSP

WICB checked on Stanford

CRICINFO, undated

Donald Peters, the chief executive of the West Indies Cricket Board (WICB), has said his board did attempt to do background checks on Allen Stanford before entering into a five-year deal with him along with the ECB.

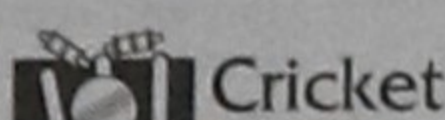
"Both the ECB and the [West Indies] board did due diligence checks," he told the Trinidad & Tobago Express. When asked if the WICB did these checks independently of their British counterparts, Peters responded: "The ECB certainly have more resources than us, so they led the checks."

Both boards have been left with cricket projects in limbo as a result of fraud charges being laid against Stanford, who was sponsoring the Stanford Super Series, the first edition of which was held last year when a Stanford Superstars team won a 20 million dollar winner-takes-all match against England. English counties also received 50,000 pounds each from that game.

Stanford also ran the Stanford 20/20 regional series, from which territorial boards received money for cricket development, and was set to bankroll a quadrangular tournament in England later this year. Stanford was also supposed to contribute to the

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Table-toppers clash today



SPORTS REPORTER

Biman and Old DOHS face off with their sights on taking solo lead in the Premier Cricket League when the fifth round starts at three different venues of the city today.

When the two unbeaten sides lock horns at BKSP for the top spot, Mohammedan will desperately try to bounce back from two consecutive defeats when they meet winless City Club at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur.

Defending champions Abahani are pitted against Victoria, who upset Mohammedan recently, at the Fatullah Cricket Stadium.

Abahani follow the leaders along with Surjo Torun with six points as both have so far lost one game while BKSP, newcomers Gazi Tank and Cricket Coaching School (CCS) have four points each.

Mohammedan, however, jeopardised their hopes in title race bagging only three points from four games.

The standings show the high level of competition among the teams in the league, especially the way the lowly sides have fought against big names and it has made it difficult to predict about 'who will win against whom'.

Besides the contest among the teams, the focus is also on national players ahead of next month's home series against Pakistan. The national players are expected to play at least eight rounds before starting preparation for the two Twenty20 internationals and five one-day

internationals against the visitors.

Chief selector Rafiqul Islam, however, expressed his satisfaction over the Tigers' performance so far in the league and hoped that they will make it maximum in the next few rounds.

"There is nothing better than playing competitive matches. It's fantastic that the players got the opportunity to play the Premier League matches ahead of the series against Pakistan. On the other hand, they had also trained during the gap of the league matches. So, this time they have got a brilliant opportunity to prepare themselves," said Rafiqul.

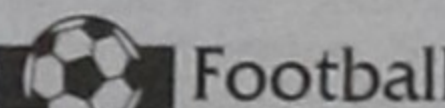
"I think the performance of the national players are not bad, especially some top order batsmen got some runs. Shakib (Al Hasan) continued his good form while Tamim (Iqbal) also scored a few runs as he hit two half-centuries," he added.

Bangladesh and Gazi Tank captain Mohammad Ashraful has been suffering from the same problem as the right-hander got starts but failed to capitalise on them. But the chief selector was not worried with his skipper's form.

"Ashraful looked confident in the Twenty20 competition and also got starts in league matches. There are still a few matches in hand and I hope all the players will take the opportunity (ahead of the series against Pakistan)," said Rafiqul adding that it would have been better if Rokibul Hasan and Zunaed Siddiqui got some big scores.

Abahani's young opener Rony Talukdar, however, hogged the headlines as the right-hander smashed a hundred and missed his second for one run in four games after his impressive performance in the Twenty20 competition and Rafiqul said: "Let him play more big innings."

AFC YOUTH CHAMPIONSHIPS U-19s in tough group



SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh have been drawn in a tough qualifying group for the AFC U-19 Championship 2010.

Bangladesh, who will play the Group-E qualifiers in Thailand, will face stronger opponents in 11-time champions South Korea, Vietnam and the hosts apart from lowly Laos and Macau.

The qualification draw for AFC's U-19 and U-16 championships was held at the AFC House in Kuala Lumpur on Friday, throwing up a number of riveting match-ups.

Bangladesh got a better U-16 group, in terms of less number of stronger oppositions, as they face 1994 and 2006 winners Japan and Indonesia beside Mongolia, Chinese Taipei and Philippines.

With the best overall third team to advance to the U-16 finals, Bangladesh have a bright chance to make the championship round.

The AFC.com adds: A total of 42 teams were slotted into seven groups of six teams each in

the U-19 qualifiers. Four groups belong to the West Asia zone and three to the East.

The winners and runners-up of each group will advance to the tournament proper, which will be held next year at an as yet undecided venue. One best third-placed team from the West Zone and one best third-placed team from the East also qualify for the finals.

U-19 GROUPINGS

Group A: Tajikistan, Jordan, Yemen, Nepal, Palestine, Kyrgyzstan.
Group B: UAE, Syria, Qatar, Bahrain, Bhutan, Sri Lanka.

Group C: Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Oman, Kuwait, India, Afghanistan.

Group D: Uzbekistan, Iran, Lebanon, Turkmenistan, Maldives, Pakistan.

Group E: Korea Republic, Thailand, Laos, Vietnam, Macau, Bangladesh.

Group F: Australia, Japan, Indonesia, Singapore, Chinese Taipei, Hong Kong.

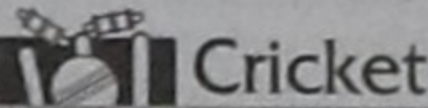
Group G: China, DPR Korea, Malaysia, Myanmar, Guam, Philippines.

U-16 QUALIFIERS

The road to the AFC U-16 Championship 2010

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Sun shines for India



CRICINFO, Christchurch

India have brought rains with them, locals in Christchurch claim. But when it came to India's first practice session, the clouds made way for the sun, and India trained in ideal conditions at the picturesque Bert Sutcliffe Oval on Saturday. Equally warm was the reception that India got - largely from Indians living in New Zealand, at a ground half an hour away from the town and not known by many in the city.

Earlier in the day, though, the thoughts of outdoor activities looked unlikely. It was an ideal winter morning with the rain sounding pitter-patter on the canopy of a street café near Cathedral Square, a perfect place to enjoy a hot coffee. The radio announced: "The rockstars of cricket are here." So did a hoarding outside the

AMI Stadium, which was closed on the weekend. The "rockstars" campaign has been devised to advertise India's tour of New Zealand.

Elsewhere New Zealand Herald profiled some of the key Indian players under the headline, "The happy-slog millionaires".

The Indian team took a bus to Lincoln University, which houses the Oval, passing by lush green meadows and the idyllic Prebbleton village.

For someone new to the city, it is difficult to believe a team would go so far out of the city for the nets session. But the England Lions, here to face New Zealand Emerging Players, were already training there when the Indians arrived.

The Indians may be used to drawing attention wherever they go in the world but even they wouldn't have expected the numbers that

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A banner outside the AMI Stadium announces India's arrival in Christchurch on Friday. The "rockstars" campaign has been devised to advertise India's tour of New Zealand.

PHOTO: INTERNET



PHOTO: AFP

Sri Lanka's batting icon Mahela Jayawardene (R) punches the air as he celebrates his fantastic century while his partner in crime Thilan Samaraweera, who also scored his hundred in an attacking 229-run unbroken fourth wicket stand, looks on during the opening day's play of the first Test against Pakistan at the National Stadium in Karachi yesterday.

NZ call back Oram, Ryder

BBC ONLINE, Wellington

All-rounder Jacob Oram and batsman Jesse Ryder have both been recalled for New Zealand's Twenty20 internationals against India in February.

Oram returns to the Kiwis' 13-man squad as a batsman only after recovering from an Achilles tendon injury while Ryder has shaken off a shoulder complaint.

Pace bowler Ewen Thompson comes in for Kyle Mills, who has an Achilles injury. The Twenty20 matches take place in Christchurch on 25 February and in Wellington on 27 February.

India will also play five one-day internationals and three Tests during their tour of New Zealand.

Six members of the India squad will be allowed to play in New Zealand's domestic cricket competition before the Test series begins on 18 March in Hamilton.

New Zealand Cricket chief executive Justin Vaughan says the deal has been struck because of the absence of an official warm-up match.

India added an extra Test and Twenty20 international to their tour last month.

TWENTY20 SQUAD

Daniel Vettori (captain), Neil Broom, Ian Butler, Grant Elliott, Martin Gupitli, Brendon McCullum, Nathan McCullum, Iain O'Brien, Jacob Oram, Jesse Ryder, Tim Southee, Ross Taylor, Ewen Thompson.

ICC eyeing BCCI, ICL peace deal

AFP, Dubai

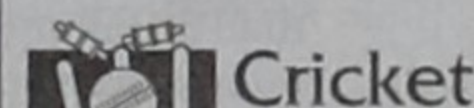
International Cricket Council (ICC) president David Morgan and chief executive Haroon Lorgat will on Monday attempt to broker an agreement in the long-running dispute between the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) and the Indian Cricket League (ICL).

"I've long regarded it as a priority to bring together the BCCI and the owners of the ICL and I'm pleased to say we have fixed a meeting to take place in Johannesburg on Monday," said Morgan.

The ICL, which is bankrolled by India's largest media group, Zee Television, is not

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Mahela, Thilan put Pakistan to sword



AFP, Karachi

Mahela Jayawardene and Thilan Samaraweera hit punishing hundreds to lead Sri Lanka's run charge against Pakistan on the opening day of the first Test here on Saturday as the tourists reached 406-3.

Jayawardene was unbeaten on 136 -- his 25th Test hundred -- while Samaraweera notched 130 not out for his eighth hundred after the tourists won the toss and decided to bat.

The 31-year-old Sri Lankan skipper, whose lack of form in recent one-day matches forced him to step down from the captaincy after the two-Test series against Pakistan, also completed 8,000 career Test runs during the innings.

Samaraweera matched his skipper shot for shot and the pair added 229 for the unfinished fourth-wicket stand, blunting Pakistan's three-pronged pace attack on an unresponsive pitch.

Jayawardene has so far knocked 20 boundaries during his 239-ball innings. The Sri Lankan skipper hit leg-spinner Danish Kaneria for his 15th boundary to reach his century -- his first against Pakistan.

He now has a hundred against all nine Test

playing nations.

When on 37, Jayawardene hit debutant paceman Sohail Khan for a boundary to complete 8,000 runs in his 101st Test. He is the first Sri Lankan and 20th batsman in the world to achieve the feat.

Jayawardene also rode his luck, benefiting from three dropped catches.

When on 17, paceman Umar Gul dropped him off his own bowling and later on 43, Misbah-ul-Haq spilled an easy catch off a luckless Sohail.

On 123, Shoaib Malik grassed another catch, again off Sohail to cap a miserable day for the home team.

The more sedate Samaraweera hit Malik for his 15th boundary to complete his century. He has so far hit 21 boundaries during his 155-ball knock.

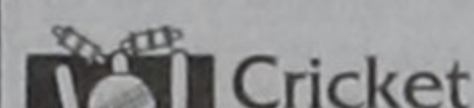
"It was a flat pitch," said Samaraweera. "Malinda (Warnapura) and Kumar (Sangakkara) had set the tone with their brisk batting and we carried that on for a good total."

Samaraweera said Pakistan had an off day. "It can happen because Pakistan is playing a Test after a long time. We punished every loose ball," he said.

In the first session, opener Warnapura and Sangakkara added 90 runs for the second wicket to help Sri Lanka recover from the early

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Flintoff ruled out



AFP, London

England all-rounder Andrew Flintoff was ruled out Saturday of the fourth Test against the West Indies in Barbados with a right hip injury, the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) announced.

Flintoff, 31, underwent a scan on his hip on Friday and the results showed a muscle strain.

The ECB added the fast bowler and middle-order batsman would be reassessed over the coming days in the hope that he will be fit for the final Test in Trinidad and the one-day series which follows.

Flintoff bowled through the pain barrier on Thursday's final day of the drawn third Test in Antigua which ended with England narrowly failing to level the series at 1-1 after they were unable to take the final West Indies wicket.

Such is Flintoff's importance to England they have called up two men as potential replacements.

Amjad Khan and Ravi Bopara have both been summoned from the England Lions tour in New Zealand, to Barbados over the next few days, as cover for Flintoff.

Kent pace bowler Khan, who was born in Denmark, has yet to earn his maiden Test cap and was last involved in the England squad in India before Christmas, as cover for the injured Ryan Sidebottom.

Bopara, aged 23, last played for England in the One-day International series against India. The Essex batting all-rounder's last Test was

against Sri Lanka at Galle in December 2007.

If Flintoff's latest injury turns out to be far more serious, it could be a major setback for him, as well as England's hopes of winning the series.

Prior to the first Test at Kingston, he passed a fitness test on a left-side strain, and he is coming to the end of his first full year back in the

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ANDREW FLINTOFF