



Did U Know?

Real Madrid was voted by FIFA as the "most successful club of the 20th century".



TEN Sports

West Indies v Bangladesh
First Test, Day 3
Live from 9:00pm

STAR Cricket

England v Australia
First Ashes Test, Day 4
Live from 5:00pm



Sourav Ganguly

(Former Indian cricket captain)

"I am convinced that I can play a positive role. Having played the game at the highest level and being part of the system, I know what it takes to make a difference. I intend to take it step by step."

While he expressed his desire to join cricket administration in his home state of West Bengal.

School chess

SPORTS REPORTER

Fatima-Tuz-Zohra Sraboni of Renaissance Kindergarten School defeated Parvez Musharraf from Muktiyoddha Sriti Bidda Niketon to win the National School Chess Competition organized by Nahar Chess Academy on Friday.

Sraboni scored eight points in nine games, and faced runner-up Parvez Musharraf in the play-off match to clinch the title.

Narayanganj Ideal High School's Zahratul Jannat Tisha and Renaissance Kindergarten's Sumaiya Binte Khalida took third and fourth position respectively. Out of the nine games, Tisha scored seven points while Sumaiya scored six points.

The four will be able to take part in the upcoming 11th Standard Chartered Bank School Chess Championship in Dhaka on July 18.

3-match ban on Banks for ball-tampering

AFP, London

Former West Indies Test all-rounder Omar Banks was on Thursday banned for three matches after admitting ball-tampering when he was bored.

The 26-year-old Banks committed the offence of running his thumb and fingernails over the ball during a Somerset 2nd XI match against Essex.

He did not think anyone had noticed but his behaviour was spotted by the umpires - and five penalty runs were immediately awarded to Essex.

Banks was suspended until July 20 while Somerset were fined 500 pounds and ordered to pay an additional 500 pounds costs.

"He explained during the panel hearing that he did it out of boredom, he knew he should not do it, it was the first time he had done it and that he would not do it again. He did not think the rest of the team noticed," said an England and Wales Cricket Board statement.

Tigers make good start

Cricket

AFP, Kingstown

Openers Tamim Iqbal and Imrul Kayes gave Bangladesh a solid start in the 18.5 overs possible before rain prompted an early close to the first Test against a second-string West Indies on Thursday.

Tamim was not out on 14 and Kayes was not out on 26, as Bangladesh, electing to bat, reached 42 without loss in their first innings before stumps were drawn half an hour earlier than scheduled on the opening day at the Arnos Vale Sports Complex.

Not a ball was bowled before the scheduled lunch interval, but Kayes and Tamim remained steadfast in the face of aggressive opening spells from Tino Best and Kemar Roach after play started three hours later than scheduled.

After Tamim slashed a delivery from Roach over second slip, he settled down, but Kayes played a few handsome off-side strokes, after undergoing a thorough examination from Best and Roach in particular.

But the action came to an end when the rain arrived after an hour and this forced an early tea.

The players returned for another 4.5 overs before another, but much heavier downpour finished play off for the day.

There was great interest in the Test from within the Caribbean and around the rest of the world, after it appeared to be in serious doubt only 48 hours earlier.

The West Indies Cricket Board was forced

into assembling a new-look side, after a contract dispute with its leading players led to a boycott by the 13-member squad which was announced on Monday.

The 13 players, including regular captain Chris Gayle, vice-captain Denesh Ramdin, top batsmen Shivanarine Chandernaul and Ramnaresh Sarwan, as well as key fast bowler Jerome Taylor are protesting playing four consecutive tournaments without a contract, outstanding payments, and other issues.

But the WICB was successful in finding players willing to don the maroon cap, and there were seven Test debutants in the side which is being led by long-standing Barbadian left-handed batsman Floyd Reifer.

"What we have said to the guys is, 'This is a Test match, and it is an opportunity for them to showcase their skills to the cricket public here in the Caribbean and to the world,'" said West Indies coach John Dyson.

Of the seven newcomers, Roach has appeared in two ODIs and one Twenty20 International, and left-arm spinner Nikita Miller has played 15 ODIs over the last year.

Opening batsman Dale Richards made the recent trip to England, but failed to break into the Test squad before he returned home early with injury.

Darren Sammy is the vice-captain, and is the only player in the 11 who has commanded a regular place in the full-strength West Indies side over the last year.

Best, who earned a recall after four years in the cricket wilderness, and all-rounder Dave Bernard Jr, who featured in the recent home

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Bangladesh openers Imrul Kayes (L) and Tamim Iqbal cross each other to take a run on the first day of the first Test against West Indies at the Arnos Vale Ground in Kingstown on Thursday.

PHOTO: AFP

Aussies in driving seat

Cricket

AFP, Cardiff

Michael Clarke batted Australia into a first innings lead on the third day of the opening Ashes Test at Sophia Gardens here on Friday as a see-saw contest once more moved in the tourists' favour.

Australia at tea were 458 for four in reply to England's first innings 435, a lead of 23 runs.

Clarke was 70 not out and Marcus North, in his debut Ashes innings, unbeaten on 50 after captain Ricky Ponting had made 150 and opener Simon Katich 122.

A slow pitch was, not for the first time in this match, proving more of an obstacle to bowlers than batsmen and England, who had broken through with the new-ball before lunch, endured a wicketless second session.

Clarke was only 19 not out at lunch and North yet to score.

But apart from a couple of top-edged sweeps, which fell into the unguarded short fine leg area, the duo were rarely troubled in a chanceless fifth-wicket stand so far worth 127.

Vice-captain Clarke played some sparkling shots in his 100-ball fifty.

He went down the pitch to loft left-arm spinner Monty Panesar down the ground for six and reached the landmark when, again displaying good footwork, he drove off-spinner Graeme Swann for four.

Swann was struggling and England captain Andrew Strauss brought-on occasional medium-pacer Paul Collingwood in a bid to break the stand.

But there were to be no 'golden-arm' moments from the Durham all-rounder and it was left to Andrew Flintoff, the hero of England's 2005 Ashes

triumph, to once again rouse his side and, indeed, the crowd.

However, a pulled four by Clarke in Flintoff's comeback over saw Australia into the lead and, aided by byes conceded by wicket-keeper Matthew Prior when stood up to Collingwood, they wasted little time in extending their advantage.

North's single off Flintoff saw the left-hander, who has played for five English counties, to a fifty in 107 balls with seven fours.

Earlier, England finally saw the back of Katich, whose hundred was his first in Ashes cricket and Ponting, reaching three figures against England for the eighth time in Tests.

Ponting, exactly 100 not

out overnight, fell when he bottom-edged into his stumps after trying to force Panesar through the offside.

His innings spanned more than five hours and saw Ponting face 224 balls with a six and 14 fours. It was the 13th time in his 38 Test centuries the 34-year-old Tasmanian, one of cricket's great batsmen, had scored 150 or more.

Australia had been scoring steadily, and in largely untroubled fashion, until the advent of the new ball.

Katich's near five-and-a-half hours of resistance came to an end when he was hit on the boot in front of his stumps and was given out lbw by West Indian umpire Billy Doctrove.

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Australia skipper Ricky Ponting (R) drives off the back-foot during his knock of 150 against England on the third day of the first Ashes Test in Cardiff yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

Media toast Ricky, Simon

Cricket

AFP, Sydney

Captain Ricky Ponting and Simon Katich, both seeking different forms of Ashes redemption, were the toast of the Australian media on Friday after batting the Aussies towards a secure position in the first Test against England.

Katich scored his maiden Ashes hundred and Ponting his 38th Test century as the Australians reached second day stumps in Cardiff at 249 for one in reply to England's first innings 435, a deficit of 186.

Katich, dubbed by one pundit as the "Uluru (Ayers Rock) of Australian cricket," tasted the sweetness of Ashes success for the first time in six torrid Tests against England, the Sydney Morning Herald said.

"Katich's painful Ashes history stretches back to 2001 when he made an unsatisfying debut at Headingley and takes in the traumatic campaign of 2005.

"His captain is also seeking to mend the past after presiding over the infamous 2-1 defeat on English soil (in 2005)."

Ponting batted with "a steely glint in his eye" and reminded everyone of his greatness when he joined Sachin Tendulkar, Brian Lara and Allan Border in the exclusive 11,000-run club before going on to raise his 38th Test hundred, the Herald said.

Former Test off-spinner Greg Matthews even went as far as to say that Katich should be leading Australia.

"Katich is the Uluru of Australian cricket, and if I was chairman of selectors I would have him captaining every form of the game because we know that we'd be rock solid," said Matthews, a panellist on SBS TV's Ashes coverage.

"We know the guy, as a custodian of the sport, would take the game forward and leave it in a better place."

The Herald's Peter Roebuck said Ponting gives every indication that he wants to block England's path to regaining the Ashes, which they lost 5-0 in the last 2006-07 series in Australia.

"He knows that Cardiff gives England their best chance to win a match. He knows the pitch is likely to take spin and was chosen as the venue for this contest for that very reason," Roebuck wrote.

"Plainly he intends to block England's path. His patience against spin confirmed his commitment."

"He might not be an outstanding tactician but he is a superb batsman and might take some shifting in this series."

Australian cricket writers were also fascinated by the second day's cameo between unorthodox Australian opener Phillip Hughes and England's all-rounder Andrew Flintoff.

"It was the moment that lit up the match."

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ODI SERIES

Zim ready for Bangladesh

CRICINFO, undated

Zimbabwe's coach Walter Chawaguta has upped the pressure on his team by labelling next month's one-day series against Bangladesh a "must-win" contest.

"We're in camp with a training squad of about 30 players which is inclusive of the Zimbabwe-A players who will play against Bangladesh in the warm-up matches," Chawaguta told the Sunday Mail.

"Over the past week our focus was on getting rid of the rust that comes with not playing the game for a long time so we have spent most of our time working on the basics. This coming week we will be getting into the nets with the tempo picking up gradually."

Prosper Utseya, Zimbabwe's captain, admitted that his side had "lost too many times to Bangladesh". He continued: "We need to have a killer

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Doubles time for Sania

PTI, Hyderabad

Sania Mirza's days of singledom come to an end tonight with the Indian tennis ace all set to get engaged to childhood friend Sohrab Mirza in a private ceremony here.

Sohrab is an MBA student and son of a city-based businessman.

The 22-year-old Sania and Sohrab (23) will exchange rings at 8.30pm at a posh city hotel tonight.

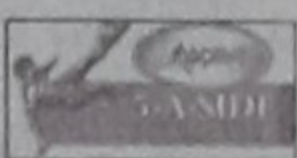
With two cupid-struck youth creating nuisance outside Sania's Banjara Hills residence in the last two days, the city police have made tight security arrangements to ward off any trouble at the function.

The Mirza family have gone to great lengths to keep the function a private affair, away from media glare.

"This is a private affair and we request the media to cooperate with us," Sania's father Imran Mirza told media persons who gathered outside their residence.

Brac, Beximco rain goals

SPORTS REPORTER



The fourth edition of the Ascent Group 5-a-side indoor soccer cup kicked off yesterday at the Scholastica STM Hall premises amidst festivity, competitiveness and in some cases -- a slew of goals.

Debutantes The Daily Star got off to a slow start, but managed to beat Mutual Trust Bank by 1-0. Striker Ashfaq Wares Khan scored the all-important goal and although the winners missed a host of presentable opportunities, they had their stand-in goalkeeper to thank for some

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No resolution to strike

Cricket

CRICINFO, undated

Negotiations to end the current impasse surrounding player contracts have failed after the West Indies Players' Association (WIPA) refused a call by the West Indies Cricket Board (WICB) to end its members' boycott of the first Test against Bangladesh.

The representatives of the two parties met in Port of Spain this morning, but the meeting lasted only 23 minutes. A release issued by the WICB stated that the board "impressed upon WIPA that it was not prepared, consistent with good industrial relations practices, to negotiate under duress, and insisted that before any good faith negotiations commenced, the players' strike would first have to end."

But following WIPA's refusal, the meeting broke up. However, the release also mentioned that the board, "as an act of good faith", was willing

to pay its former players the sums it had offered to pay during previous negotiations with the WIPA.

Dave Cameron, Gerard Pinard and Derek Ali represented the WICB, while Dinanath Ramnarine and Ousman Ali were the WIPA representatives.

On Tuesday, the WIPA announced the original squad would boycott the Test because, as it claimed, the players hadn't received contracts for the last four tournaments. The board scrambled to get a second-string side ready with only a day left before the Test started. An inexperienced squad of 15, with nine uncapped players, was put together and the Test went on.

But on the sidelines, the two bodies continued fighting; the WIPA accused the board of not responding to its submission of the contracts and then going on penalise players for not signing them in time. Cameron, the WICB vice-president, on the other hand, said contracts had not been signed because of the WIPA's "unreasonable behaviour".

Murali out of 2nd Test

Cricket

AFP, Colombo

Sri Lanka will once again be without spin king Muttiah Muralidaran as they attempt a series-clinching win when the second Test against Pakistan starts on Sunday.

The world's leading Test and one-day bowler missed the first Test in Galle, which Sri Lanka won by 50 runs, after hurting the patella tendon in his right knee during training last week.

Team manager Brendon Kuruppu said Muralidaran, 37, had improved considerably but will sit out the second Test on his home ground at the P Sara Oval as a precautionary measure.

"He won't be playing the Test, but that's more as a precaution than anything else," Kuruppu told reporters. "We are confident Murali will play the third Test."

The off-spinner, who has taken a record 770 Test and 505 one-day wickets, was not missed as Sri Lanka pulled off a dramatic win in the Galle Test to take the lead in the three-match series.

Pakistan, chasing a modest target of 168 runs, collapsed from a comfortable 71-2 to 117 all out, losing their last eight wickets for 46 runs on the fourth morning.

Sri Lanka's hero was left-arm spinner Rangana Herath, who was flown in from England where he was playing league cricket two days before the Test to replace Muralitharan.

Herath, 31, who had 36 wickets in 14 previous Tests, grabbed a career-best 4-15 from 11.3 overs in the second innings to wreck Pakistan and win the man of the match award.

Pakistan, hoping to level the series, will still be delighted at Muralidaran's absence from the P Sara Oval, the home of his long-time club,

Tamil Union.

The wily bowler has taken 52 wickets in nine Tests at the ground where Sri Lanka have won their last four Tests on a firm wicket regarded as the most sporting in the island nation.

The tourists last played at the ground in 2002, losing by 41 runs to Australia during a series that was shifted to neutral venues due to security concerns in Pakistan.

Pakistan's initial worries about their inexperienced bowling attack -- three of the four specialist bowlers made their debut at Galle -- proved unfounded as Sri Lanka managed totals of 292 and 217.

Left-arm pace bowler Mohammad Aamer was the star with three wickets in each innings, while fellow-rookies Abdur Rauf and Saeed Ajmal shared eight scalps between them.

But the batting let the tourists down with none of the top three, Salman Butt, Khuram Manzoor and skipper Younus Khan, getting among the runs.

Veteran Mohammad Yousuf hit a century in the first innings' on his return to Test cricket after an 18-month absence, but his dismissal for 12 on the fourth morning turned the tables on Pakistan.

"The younger guys in the team could not take the pressure of a Test match," said Younus. "When I am under pressure, I go back to the basics. They should do the same."

The seasoned duo of leg-spinner Danish Kaneria and all-rounder Abdur Razzaq, who were surprisingly left out of the Galle Test, will fancy their chances of playing the second match.

Younus indicated the final composition will not be decided until Sunday morning after a good look at the wicket and weather conditions. Thundershowers are forecast during the match.



Action from the Ascent Group Corporate 5-a-side indoor soccer cup at the Scholastica STM Hall premises in Uttara yesterday.

PHOTO: COURTESY