



Did U Know?

Jack Nicklaus was honoured with the PGA's Golfer of the Century Award in 1988.



Andrew Flintoff

(England all-rounder)

"There are no guarantees for anybody. But I have three Test matches left, and I'd do anything to get through, maybe put myself through things I wouldn't do if I was looking more long-term."

Dalmiya set to retain CAB post

CRICINFO, undated

Jagmohan Dalmiya is set for another term as the president of the Cricket Association of Bengal (CAB) after no nomination papers were filed to contest against his candidacy.

Reports had earlier suggested Sourav Ganguly was interested in joining the Bengal administration and while he will attend the annual general body meeting July 31, Ganguly is out of contention for any post since the deadline for filing papers has been passed.

There was no challenge for the current two joint secretaries -- Arun Mitra and Biswarup Dey -- and treasurer Subir Ganguly either. Abhijit Dutta will contest for the vice-president's post.

In July 2008 Dalmiya was elected the state board's president, a position from which he was unseated in December 2006 following charges of embezzlement. He defeated the incumbent, Prasun Mukherjee by an overwhelming majority to secure a seat on the Indian board.

Swine flu scare for Aussies

AFP, London

Australia's Ashes stars suffered a swine flu scare after one of the journalists covering the series had been diagnosed with symptoms similar to the illness currently sweeping across England.

There have been an estimated 100,000 new cases of swine flu reported in England since last week and 840 patients are in hospital with the virus, so Cricket Australia were quick to act when News Limited reporter Ben Dorries found he may have been infected. Dorries became ill during the second Ashes Test at Lord's this week and a British doctor suggested during a telephone consultation that he could have swine flu, although that has not been officially confirmed.

He has been asked to stay away from the team for the next three days but Cricket Australia said that no member of the squad had shown any symptoms of swine flu.

Dorries has not been staying in the team's hotel over the past 10 days and his main contact with players would have been at press conferences.

He was prescribed Tamiflu and has since remained in London while the Australians traveled to Northampton for this week's tour match.

A statement issued by

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Mashrafe positive on future

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

Injured Bangladesh captain Mashrafe Bin Mortaza returned home yesterday half way through the series in the West Indies with a hope of returning to cricket very soon.

It's not new for the country's leading pacer to return home in the middle of a tour due to injury but this time he had something to cheer about to appease his injury agony because he had witnessed an historic triumph in Test cricket for the Tigers in the Caribbean.

The 25-year-old Bangladesh skipper, out of action with a knee injury sustained during the first Test in St. Vincent, has rated his team's first-ever away Test series success highly and said that they can only go forward from there.

"It was a fantastic moment. We did something that never happened to Bangladesh cricket. I thoroughly enjoyed it even though I was not playing for the most part. Our cricket could only go forward from here. We are not going to win every game from now on but I

believe you will see more consistency because the boys have confidence and they believe in their abilities," Mashrafe responded on his side's 2-0 victory over a makeshift West Indies side while talking to the reporters at the Zia International Airport.

He was however not prepared to call himself a lucky captain despite the team's achievement in the Caribbean in his presence. "Luck didn't really smile on me, did it? Otherwise I would have been on the field now."

Mashrafe said what made him most happy was that the players took the criticism positively after the heartbreaking loss to the Ireland in the ICC World Twenty20.

"This (criticism) is normal for an international cricketer. There will be criticism when you don't play well. We don't play cricket to prove people right or wrong. Thankfully the players took the disparaging reaction after the loss to Ireland in the World T20 positively. We decided to forget about Ireland and turned things around in the West Indies," said Mortaza.

The Bangladesh captain was optimistic about quick return to cricket and he is expected to be back in time for the next Test.

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Kumar denies Pakistan Sri Lanka clinch series 2-0

Cricket

AFP, Colombo

Kumar Sangakkara hit an unbeaten century to steer Sri Lanka to a draw in the final Test against Pakistan here on Friday and win his first series as captain.

The left-hander made 130 not out as Sri Lanka, faced with a world record target of 492, defied the Pakistani bowlers to finish with 391-4 on the fifth day at the Sinhalese Sports Club.

The rock solid Sangakkara's 19th Test century featured a fourth-wicket stand of 122 with Thilan Samaraweera (73) and 114 for the unbroken fifth with Angelo Mathews (64 not out).

Sri Lanka clinched the series 2-0, their first at home against Pakistan after five unsuccessful attempts, and provided Sangakkara with a winning start as captain after he took over from Mahela Jayawardene in April.

Sangakkara hung on for nearly seven hours on a placid pitch to frustrate Pakistan's bid to record a face-saving win ahead of the five-match one-day series starting at Dambulla on July 30.

No team has achieved this high a target in the

fourth innings to win a Test match. The highest successful chase so far is 418-7 by the West Indies against Australia in Antigua in 2003.

The two teams went into the last session of the match with Sri Lanka needing 154 runs from a possible 38 overs to record a record-breaking win and Pakistan requiring six wickets.

The hosts gave an indication they would prefer to settle for a draw when they made just 76 runs from 26 overs in the two hours after lunch.

The final session, watched by some 3,000 home fans, provided dull cricket from both sides as the batsmen plodded along and the bowlers set defensive fields to ensure the run-rate did not pickup.

Play was finally called off when 15 overs remained with Sri Lanka needing a further 101 runs.

It was the first time in the series that play went into the fifth day after the tourists lost the first Test in four days and the second in three.

Sangakkara and Samaraweera, who resumed the day at 183-3, batted through the morning session to take Sri Lanka to 262 without further loss by lunch.

The pair made a cautious start in the morning, scoring 50 runs in 21 overs before Pakistan

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PHOTO: AFP

Sri Lanka captain Kumar Sangakkara raises his bat after scoring a brilliant unbeaten century against Pakistan on the final day of the third and final Test at the Sinhalese Sports Club ground in Colombo yesterday.

Kiwi stars dodge IPL lure

Cricket

CRICINFO, undated

Six New Zealand players had to "agonise for two weeks" over the decision of signing their national contracts because their marquee homes series against Australia clashed with the IPL. They finally chose to represent their country over their IPL franchises but the New Zealand players' body has warned that this might not be the case if a similar situation arose again.

Daniel Vettori, the captain, Brendon McCullum, the vice-captain, Jesse Ryder, Ross Taylor, Jacob Oram and Kyle Mills will now miss close to half of the IPL, which is tentatively set to begin on March 12. Australia's tour across the Tasman Sea is also set for March-April.

"It has been a tough two weeks for the players," Heath Mills, the NZCPA head, told Cricinfo. "This was a very difficult decision for them all. While it is a good result for New Zealand cricket, and the players have shown how much they value international cricket, I am not at all convinced that we are going to see players make this choice in the future."

"It is unfair to ask the players to make this sort of decision. It's an awful choice to make,

they love playing for their country but at the same time IPL has been fantastic for them in terms of financial security. The financial rewards for our players in the IPL are significantly greater than those playing international cricket for New Zealand. Everyone wants to see international cricket maintain its primacy, but if we can't sort out a window for the IPL I suspect we will slowly find our players choosing to participate in the IPL and other events like it ahead of international cricket. This situation cannot be the right answer for cricket."

The six players, who had shown reluctance in signing the contracts in the first place, were given extended deadlines to make up their minds and choose between New Zealand and the IPL. The Australian series could not be shifted owing to Australia's tight home schedule and there was no compensation for those players opting to forgo the IPL monies. During this period, there were also suggestions Oram might retire from Tests to prolong his career in the more lucrative formats of the game.

Mills defended the players' indecision at a time when Test cricket is fighting to continue as the no. 1 form of the game. "They all want to play for New Zealand," he said. "But there comes a time when a player has to weigh up supporting his family, his kids and his financial

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Bangladesh captain Mashrafe Bin Mortaza (R), accompanied by Shahadat Hossain (C) and Sahagir Hossain are greeted with bouquet on their arrival at the Zia International Airport yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

Bright start for U-19s

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh U-19 team made a bright start in the series deciding final and fifth one-day against hosts England U-19s at the County ground, Hove yesterday.

The visitors, who bounced back with a 53-run victory in the fourth game the previous day to level the series 1-1, reduced the home side to 53 for 2 in 15 overs when the last report came in.

Earlier on Thursday, Bangladesh Under-19s bowlers bowled splendidly in defence of a paltry total of 192 to register 53-run win. The hosts were bundled out for 139 runs in 45 overs.

England were cruising at one stage with 66 on the board for the loss of just a wicket but the spinners turned the game on its head as the English lost their last 9 wickets for just 72 runs. Abul Hasan, Shabbir Rahman, Mahmudul Hasan and Nur Hossain took two wickets each for the visitors while Nortea's 41 was the only notable contribution for the hosts.

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While there will be a two-day gap between most of the fixtures, there will be just a day's rest between the 3rd and

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Federer father of twin girls

AFP, Paris

Swiss world number one Roger Federer said Friday he has become a proud father of twin girls after wife Mirka gave birth overnight to Charlene and Myla Rose.

"This is the greatest day of our lives. Mirka, Myla and Charlene are all healthy and doing very well," Federer, who regained the top ranking from Rafael Nadal after winning a record 15th Grand Slam at Wimbledon, said on his website.

British bookies are already laying odds on the chances of one or both of the girls enjoying success with the racquet.

Ladbrokes is offering 100 to one for either girl winning Wimbledon one day and odds that to 25 to 1 for a Grand Slam triumph at any of the four majors.

And just in case Myla and Charlene take a leaf out of the Williams sisters' book and land a doubles crown alongside each other the early odds are 50 to 1 for a doubles Slam success anywhere or 200 to 1 for one at Wimbledon.

ODIs AGAINST BANGLADESH

Dyson rallies Windies

Cricket

CRICINFO, undated

West Indies coach John Dyson has said that despite his team losing the Test Series against Bangladesh, he expects competitive performances in the three-match ODI series. "This is a totally different game now," Dyson said. "We're playing 50-over cricket, not five-day cricket. The two Test matches were closely fought, it wasn't a case where we were thrashed in either of the matches. We could have won both so I don't think there's much in it."

Though the Test squad was made up of replacement players -- following strike action by the more reputed names -- Dyson said he was not disappointed with the way they performed. "For guys who had little experience in international cricket to come forward like that and play as well as they did, I think they did pretty well," Dyson said. "They've played some good cricket so far, unfortunately we weren't able to get across the line and win the Tests."

The first two ODIs will be played in Dominica on Sunday and Tuesday, and Dyson hopes the pitches will nullify the Bangladesh spinners and aid the West Indian pacemen.

"I'm looking forward to the one-dayers. What I'd like to see is a hard, pacy, bouncy wicket," Dyson said.

Given the statistics from the two Test matches in St. Vincent and Grenada, the Bangladeshi spinners -- led by captain Shakib Al Hasan -- have been dominant. They took 33 of the 40 wickets with Shakib and Mahmudullah, both picking five-wicket hauls. The duo, along with Enamul Haque jnr, who featured in the second Test, worked over the West Indies batsmen with relative ease.

Contrastingly, fast bowlers Kemar Roach and Darren Sammy were the standout performers for the hosts. Roach, who debuted in the first Test, was the highest wicket-taker for West Indies with 13. He bowled with disconcerting pace and bagged an impressive career best 6 for 48 in the first innings at Kingstown.

Sammy also had impressive returns by picking up back-to-back five wicket hauls. In the first match, Sammy took 5 for 70 in the Bangladesh second innings, and followed it up with identical figures in Grenada.

It is no surprise, therefore, that Dyson is keen on a pitch which will offer some assistance to the pacers with the West Indies squad comprising Roach, Sammy, David Bernard, Nelson Pascal and Gavin Tonge.

Russians rule the pool

Swimming

AFP, Rome

Russia retained the synchronised swimming duet free title as Natalia Ishchenko and Svetlana Romashina won gold at the World Championships here on Friday.

The Russians scored 98.333 points to edge perennial bridesmaids Gemma Mengual and Andrea Fuentes of Spain into second by just half a point with Chinese twins Jiang Tingting and Jiang Wenwen taking home the bronze.

Russia, who dominate synchronised swimming, were the reigning champions although with previous pairing Anastasia Davydova and Anastasia Ermakova.

For Ishchenko this was her third gold medal at these championships and her ninth world title, while it was Romashina's second gold here in Rome.

Romashina partnered Davydova to duet technical gold earlier in the week while Ishchenko won both the solo free and solo

technical competitions.

"We are very happy to have secured the gold medal. We wanted to distinguish ourselves from the other swimmers," said Romashina.

"Our performance was perfect, our choreography was easy and full of little details."

Spain's Mengual finished second to Russians in all those events and now has 10 silver medals from world championships as well as seven bronze.

But having criticised the judging in Thursday's solo free event, Mengual admitted they had been beaten by the better pairing this time.

"I believe this time we have been evaluated correctly and the final score reflects the level of our performance," she said.

Meanwhile, Jiang Wenwen revealed just why the Chinese have improved so dramatically over the last year.