



Did U Know?

Today, NBA is the best league in terms of talent, money and popularity. Started in 1946, it was earlier known as the Basketball Association of America (BAA).



Younus Khan

(Pakistan cricket captain)

"I accept the responsibility of defeat, but will not apologise to anyone nor will I resign as captain because it's part of the game to lose and win." On Test and one-day defeats in Sri Lanka.



BTV & TEN Sports

Bangladesh v Zimbabwe
Third ODI
Live from 2:30pm
ESPN
Sportscenter India
Sports News
Live at 9:30pm

Nat'l camp ends today

SPORTS REPORTER

The residential camp of the national footballers ends today after an unprecedented incident marred the training halfway through the camp at the Bangladesh Krira Shikkha Protisthan (BKSP).

In quest of increasing the players' fitness as well as stamina ahead of this year's SAFF Championship in December and next year's SA Games, coach Edson Silva Dido conducted a three-week conditioning camp in Cox's Bazar from June 22 and then moved to the country's educational institute in the middle of July for a five-week training that cost the football governing body approximately Tk 50 lakh. But, the camp at BKSP went through an unpleasant condition after as many as eight footballers walked out of Dido's training citing 'unbearable circumstances' on July 23 that resulted in a clean distance between the Brazilian coach and those eight players though BFF president Kazi Salahuddin invented to send both parties back to the training.

After resumption of the camp, Dido kept Wali Faisal, Rajani Kanta Barman, Zahid Hasan Emily, Arman Aziz, Zahid Hossain, Zahed Parvez Chowdhury, Mofazzal Hossain Saikat and Ariful Islam in separate groups in the camp though the National

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Women's handball

SPORTS REPORTER

Siddeshwari Girl's College and Viquarunnissa Noon School and College moved into the final of the 12th Delta Life Women's College Handball Competition beating respective rivals in the semis at the Dhanmondi Women's Sports Complex ground.

Siddeshwari routed Holy Cross 3-2 after the first half locked at 1-1 while Viquarunnissa crushed Holy Cross 'B' 10-5 after leading the first half 5-4 at the same venue.

The final and place-deciding match will take place today at the same venue.

Tigers go for the kill

CRICINFO, undated

Bangladesh will be looking to follow up their comprehensive rout of Zimbabwe in the first two ODIs at the Queens Sports Club in Bulawayo by sealing the five-match series today.

Bangladesh's batting line-up, led by the enthusiastic Shakib Al Hasan and former captain Mohammad Ashraful, has brought extended relief to the side in limited-overs cricket with bigger challenges ahead.

And therein lies the key to Bangladesh's success - how well they have batted in recent times.

Bangladesh find themselves within a match of winning their third ODI series in a row. A win at Bulawayo will be their eighth in a row, which will be one short of their record best in ODIs. The visitors find themselves on top at home again, under an energetic captain. This ODI team has continued the good work shown in West Indies, with the younger players stepping up admirably. It will take something special to stop Bangladesh going up 3-0 on what is expected to be another slow track.

In the absence of three leading bowlers, Mashrafe Mortaza, Abdur Razzak and Rubel Hossain, Bangladesh's spinners have stepped up admirably in Zimbabwe. Spin accounted for five wickets in each of the first two games, with the host batsmen struggling especially against the slow stuff in the series opener.

Charles Coventry and Williams tonked it around in game two chasing a huge total but the spinners held their nerve and pulled Bangladesh back to script a win. If the Bulawayo pitch turns slowly like it did in the last two games, Bangladesh's spinners should once again be a handful for Zimbabwe.

Zimbabwe's efforts in both matches have

been distinctly underwhelming. In the first they gave the spinners too much respect and were let down by their limited pace attack and in the second dropped too many catches (two were absolute dummies) and erred in sending Elton Chigumbura, a noted hitter of the ball, at No. 9. Such creases must be smoothed out immediately.

Zimbabwe can take some solace from the fact that, chasing 321, they managed to post 271 despite four key batsmen - Mark Vermeulen, Hamilton Masakadza, Chamu Chibabha and Brendan Taylor - failing.

Yet the tempo of their batting approach in both innings on slow pitches was all wrong and with the third match to be held at the same venue, Zimbabwe must quickly adapt to the conditions if they want to avoid an irreparable 3-0 deficit.

It is unlikely Bangladesh will change a winning unit but Zunaed Siddiqui's troubles at the top of the order may prompt the management to consider Imrul Kayes as partner to Tamim Iqbal.

But Zimbabwe really need to bolster their pace attack and Tawanda Mupariwa looks the likely candidate, which means Ray Price, unimpressive in two games, or a batsman will have to be sacrificed.

TEAMS

BANGLADESH (from): Shakib Al Hasan (captain), Tamim Iqbal, Zunaed Siddiqui, Imrul Kayes, Mohammad Ashraful, Rokibul Hasan, Mushfiqur Rahim, Mahmudullah Riyad, Nayeem Islam, Enamul Haque, Syed Raseel and Nazmul Hossain.

ZIMBABWE (from): Prosper Utseya (captain), Hamilton Masakadza, Mark Vermeulen, Chamu Chibabha, Brendan Taylor, Stuart Matsikenyeri, Sean Williams, Charles Coventry, Elton Chigumbura, Ray Price, Tawanda Mupariwa and Ed Rainsford.

MSC want longer pre-season

Football

SPORTS REPORTER

Mohammedan Sporting Club demanded at least four weeks preparation before playing the season's curtain-raising tournament Federation Cup, scheduled to start from September 10.

"Most of the players are out of action and they need at least four weeks to be fit after the close of the players' transfer window on August 31 and we will let the BFF know it soon," said Mustaqur Rahman, a member of Mohammedan ad-hoc committee.

The Motijheel-based outfit, Mohammedan, have so far signed up 13 players, of whom 12 are in the training camp of the national team, but they are yet to appoint a coach while their rivals Abahani have already started preparation from Wednesday after roping in 17 players so far.

"We were given five weeks to be prepared in the last season, but this time we are getting only

10 days after the completion of the transfer and it is not possible to ready a team for a major tournament," said Rahman.

According to the BFF calendar revealed in April, the Federation Cup was originally scheduled to be held in October and the professional football league in November after the transfer in August.

"We were forced to bring the schedule forward because of some international engagements of the national team at home. Besides, if we would maintain the original schedule, the length of the league would increase, also due to the international meets, and the clubs would suffer from financial crisis to run their camp. So the decision was taken thinking of both sides," said Anwarul Haq Helal, a member of the B. League committee.

Helal, however, said that they had earlier informed all clubs that the season curtain-raising tournament might get underway in between September 5 to 10.

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Afridi shines on debut

Cricket

AFP, Colombo

Shahid Afridi shone with bat and ball on his debut as Pakistan's Twenty20 captain to steer the world champions to an emphatic 52-run win over Sri Lanka here on Wednesday.

Afridi smashed 50 off 37 balls in Pakistan's 172-5, then claimed 1-21 in four economical overs and effected a run out with a direct throw as Sri Lanka were shot out for 120 with 11 balls to spare.

A sell-out crowd of 35,000 at the overflowing Premadasa stadium watched the first T20 match between the two teams since the World Twenty20 final in England in June, when Pakistan beat Sri Lanka by eight wickets.

The result was the same as seamer Rana Naved and off-spinner Saeed Ajmal picked up three wickets each to stun the hosts.

Sri Lanka lost wickets at regular intervals

with skipper Kumar Sangakkara the only batsman to offer resistance against the fired-up Pakistanis with 38 off 31 balls.

Afridi, who was man of the match in both the semi-final and final at the Worlds, once again won the award as Pakistan ended an otherwise dismal tour of Sri Lanka on a winning note.

Pakistan had lost the preceding Test series 2-0 and conceded the one-dayers by a 2-3 margin during the six-week tour.

Afridi hit two sixes and four boundaries after taking over the Twenty20 team from Test and one-day skipper Younus Khan, who has retired from the shortest format of the game.

"I told the boys before the match that we are world champions and so we should go out there and play like champions," the 29-year-old Afridi said.

"I am an aggressive captain and I wanted the whole team to play aggressively. That is what we did and I must congratulate the whole team for

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Pakistan skipper Shahid Afridi (second from R) celebrates with teammates after the dismissal of Sri Lankan batsman Chamara Kapugedera during the only Twenty20 match at the Premadasa Stadium in Colombo on Wednesday.

PHOTO: INTERNET



Argentina star Sergio Aguero (R) celebrates scoring the equaliser against Russia during their international friendly in Moscow on Wednesday.

PHOTO: AFP

Cricket bankrolls football

AFP, New Delhi

India's cricket chiefs on Thursday agreed to donate five million dollars over the next two years to improve the nation's under-performing football team.

The affluent Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) accepted a request from the country's cash-starved football body for funds needed to prepare the national team for the 2011 Asian Cup finals in Qatar.

"The BCCI will give 250 million rupees (five million dollars) to the All-India Football Federation (AIFF) for the development of football in the country in the next two years," the cricket board said in a statement.

The AIFF will use part of the money to fund its "Goal 2011" project where top 25 players will be taken away from club duties for nine months to build the national team for the Asian Cup.

Under the project, the AIFF will pay players the fees they earn from their respective clubs for the time they remain in the national camp.

India's football team has made little impact on the international scene, and has never qualified for the World Cup.

The BCCI, the richest sports body in the country, which earned around 222 million dollars in fiscal year 2007-2008, has already set aside 11 million dollars for the promotion of other sports in India.

Anwar Pak batting coach!

CRICINFO, undated

Former opener Saeed Anwar is expected to be hired by the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) as a batting coach for the national team. A statement released by the PCB said Anwar had been approached by chairman Ijaz Butt and that he had emerged as a prime candidate.

"Chairman PCB today had a discussion with Saeed Anwar regarding utilisation of his services for cricket. The chairman and Saeed Anwar will meet in the coming week to discuss the plan in detail," the statement said.

Anwar, 40, reportedly offered to assist Pakistan, who have been struggling at the top of the innings recently. Butt hoped Anwar's expertise would help the team. "I am thankful for Saeed's encouraging response and his offer to assist PCB and Pakistan players. I am sure Saeed will be

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Aguero leads revival

Football

AFP, Moscow

Two-time world champions Argentina battled from a goal down to clinch a 3-2 friendly win over hosts Russia here on Wednesday as the two countries met for the first time in the post-Soviet era.

Atletico Madrid marksman Sergio Aguero, Lyon striker Lisandro Lopez and Napoli midfielder Jesus Datolo were all on target for the guests after Zenit St Petersburg halfback Igor Semshov put Russia into the lead.

Tottenham forward Roman Pavlyuchenko rounded off the scoring with a late consolation. Argentina manager Diego Maradona said he was happy with the result but added that he was worried with his defence performance.

"Russia is now among the strongest teams in the world but we looked very good against them. We scored three times and won. It's a good result," Maradona said.

"But I'm worried with our playing in defence as we allowed Russia to score two goals. We need to analyse our defensive playing to strengthen this line and avoid even more serious troubles in the future."

The hosts, supported by a capacity 28,800 home crowd, started brightly but striker Alexander Kerzhakov's unopposed shot from just inside the box after a breakaway 30 seconds into the match flew wide.

The visitors, weakened by the absence of several star players, including Manchester City striker Carlos Tevez, replied with a 10-metre shot by Aguero also on a breakaway, but he was

denied by Russian 'keeper Igor Akinfeyev.

In the 17th minute Russia netted the opener, when Konstantin Zyryanov fed Semshov with a razor-sharp pass to the edge of the box.

Semshov dribbled into the danger zone and fired the ball home with a sharp-angled shot through Argentina 'keeper Mariano Andujar's hands.

Argentina replied with a set of threats through Aguero, who missed several chances before he levelled with a 22-metre screamer past the outstretched hands of Akinfeyev just before the break.

Lopez, who substituted Diego Milito in the interval, put the Argentines 2-1 up just 30 seconds after the restart, firing in from close range between Akinfeyev's legs after a short cross by Emiliano Papa.

Another of Maradona's super subs, Datolo, then clinched it with Argentina's third goal barely 30 seconds after he entered the fray at the Lokomotiv stadium in the 58th minute, blasting home a powerful shot from the edge of the box.

Pavlyuchenko reduced the arrears, firing home through the defensive Argentine wall with a well-struck 20-metre freekick after a foul on Semshov with 12 minutes to go but the effort was not enough to save the day for Russia.

"A defeat at the hands of a strong team may be much more useful than a series of wins over minnows," Russian manager Guus Hiddink said.

"We played well from the start and scored a good goal but lost concentration before the break and right after the restart and Argentina, an experienced team, punished us for it. We could have saved the day but missed too many chances."

Pakistan won't fight

Cricket

AFP, Karachi

Pakistan has decided to end its legal battle against cricket's governing body over being stripped of its share of World Cup 2011 matches, an official said Thursday.

The decision came after a meeting of the governing board of the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) decided to opt for an out-of-court settlement with the International Cricket Council (ICC).

"We have decided 90-95 per cent that the matter of the World Cup 2011 will be settled out-of-court as Pakistan remains the co-host of the mega event. The legal course has ended," PCB chairman Ijaz Butt told a press conference.

Pakistan officials will still work behind-the-scenes at the World Cup.

Pakistan initiated a legal case against the ICC after being stripped of its World Cup 2011 matches in April.

The ICC relocated Pakistan's share of 14 matches because of security fears after attacks in its eastern city of Lahore on the Sri Lankan team on March 3.

The attacks, which injured seven players and their assistant coach and killed eight people, appeared to end any chance of hosting international cricket in Pakistan,

where teams had already refused to tour over insecurity.

But the PCB launched a legal fight against the relocation and won a stay order against moving the World Cup secretariat from Lahore to arch rival India's Mumbai.

The PCB agreed to put on hold its legal battle following requests from the ICC and the Central Organisation Committee as they wanted to negotiate the matter in London in June.

But the talks failed, forcing the PCB to threaten to revive the legal battle.

However, the PCB again tried to settle the matter out of the court. A meeting between ICC President David Morgan and Butt in Dubai last month, raised hopes of a quick solution.

Butt said Pakistan will be compensated a "substantial amount" after it settles the matter out of the court.

"Pakistan will get the hosting rights fee of 10.5 million dollars (840 million rupees) and apart from that the ICC will compensate us a substantial amount which at this point of time I don't want to reveal," said Butt.

The ICC had also ruled out relocating the matches to a neutral venue such as the United Arab Emirates, where Pakistan played their recent international matches.

The Central Organising Committee of the World Cup 2011 last month awarded eight

of Pakistan's matches to India, four to Sri Lanka and two to Bangladesh.

Butt said that hosting World Cup matches on neutral venues could have meant Pakistan taking a financial hit.

"We did think over hosting the matches on neutral venues but it could have cost us huge losses," he said.

Besides World Cup matches, the Champions Trophy 2008 was also moved out to South Africa after several teams refused to tour Pakistan over security fears.

The trophy will be held from September 21 to October 5 this year.

Farhat to quit ICL

CRICINFO, undated

Imran Farhat, the Pakistan batsman, has become the latest international cricketer to quit the unofficial ICL. Farhat has said he would apply for a No-Objection Certificate from the ICL and then concentrate on making a comeback to the national team.

"I want to play cricket and I love to play for my country," Farhat, 27, said. He has played 27 Tests and 33 ODIs for Pakistan, and last represented the country in January 2007.

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