

Murali's mark unbeatable

Australian spin wizard Shane Warne feels that his greatest rival Muttiah Muralidaran's world record of almost 800 Test wickets will never be beaten. "I don't think it will ever be broken. Even though so much more Test cricket is played these days, I think Murali's record will stand for a long, long time and probably forever," Warne was quoted as saying by the Herald Sun. "You just have to work it out by numbers -- for that record to be broken someone has to play 140-150 Tests and take 5-6 wickets a



Mariner Youngs striker Saif Hossain battles for possession with Mohammedan's Sabir Hossain Rana during their Green Delta Insurance Premier Hockey League at the Maulana Bhashani Hockey Stadium yesterday.

Marta may come here

SPORTS REPORTER

Brazilian woman football superstar Marta Vieira da Silva, popularly known as Marta, is likely to attend the opening ceremony of the inaugural SAFF U-19 Women's competition in Bangladesh.

The women's football competition is supposed to be held in Bangladesh in September and the SAFF committee headed by Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) president Kazi Salahuddin is scheduled to sit on July 21 in India to finalise the schedule of the competition.

A source in the BFF said the FIFA itself is trying to bring the Brazilian forward in Bangladesh to light up the competition and inspire the South Asian women footballers though nothing has been finalised.

The source informed that the FIFA itself was trying it because its development wing had been working with Bangladesh's women football for last two years.

Marta has been awarded the FIFA Women's World Player for four successive years in 2006, 2007, 2008 and 2009. She won the Golden Ball at the 2004 FIFA U-19 Women's World Championship after having scored six goals in the tournament.

Mohammedan stay ahead

Hockey

SPORTS REPORTER

Titans Mohammedan Sporting Club consolidated their lead in the Green Delta Insurance Premier Division Hockey League with a convincing 4-2 win over Mariner Youngs Club in a Super League encounter at the Maulana Bhasani Hockey Stadium yesterday.

Pakistanis Mohammad Sabir and Mohammad Atique, locals Jahidul Islam Rajon and Mamunur Rahman Chayan netted one goal each for the Black and Whites while Sohanur Rahman and Mainul Islam scored one goal apiece for the vanquished.

The 11th win in as many matches meant Mohammedan lifted their collection of points to 33, six ahead of archrivals Abahani, who however have played a match less than the leaders.

The margin might give an impression that the Motijheel-based outfit raced past their youthful opponents, who suffered a 5-2 defeat in the first round, easily but the fact was Mohammedan faced stiff challenge in the

second half from their neighbours and successfully overcame the hurdles thwarting their scoring efforts.

Forward Sabir put Mohammedan ahead in the seventh minute through a field goal before Mariner hit back with a goal through a Sohanur field goal in the 11th minute.

Two minutes later Pakistani defender Atique converted a penalty stroke and Rajon struck the third from penalty corner in the 13th minute to make it 3-1.

Chayan made the result safe converting another penalty corner in the 20th minute, but Mohammedan probably did not expect the way Mariner played in the second half.

However, the efforts from inexperienced BKSP players of Mariner were not enough to surprise the star-studded Mohammedan as Isa Mia, Chayan, Hasan, Atique stood tall in the backline to keep the Mariner attack at bay.

They, however, got the dividend in the 51st minute when forward Mainul Islam found the back of the net with a fierce hit.

Mohammedan could also have extended their lead, but they miserably failed to cash in on the penalty corners they were given in the second half.

Tigers take on Scots today

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh take on Scotland today in a one-off one-day international at Glasgow. The Tigers are on their last leg of their United Kingdom tour where they have already completed two series against England and Ireland respectively.

Last Friday, the Tigers leveled their two-match series with a 6-wicket win against Ireland after slipping to a seven-wicket loss in the first game. The defeat should provoke the Tigers into taking teams like Ireland and Scotland seriously.

The last time the two sides met was in the 1999 World Cup. Bangladesh, on the back of Minhajul Abedin's brilliant half-century, beat the Scots by 22 runs in Edinburgh.

Bangladesh will face the Netherlands in another one-off tie, also at Glasgow, tomorrow.

Football Festival starts

SPORTS REPORTER

In a bid to inspire school footballers as well as to cash in on the craze created by the just concluded FIFA World Cup, the BFF-Daewoo Football Festival got underway in the capital yesterday.

On the first day, the Bangladesh Football Federation Eleven comprising former footballers like Sheikh

BCB set for new CEO

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) has at long last decided to appoint a permanent chief executive officer after running with an interim for almost three years.

Manzur Ahmed, a former cricketer and long-time chief executive of Brunei Cricket Association, has been selected from a shortlist of six people to take over from Nizamuddin Chowdhury, who has been the acting CEO since Mahmudur Rahman's contract expired in February 2008.

Manzur will be offered a renewable one-year contract after a committee headed by BCB president AHM Mostofa Kamal made the choice.

When contacted, BCB media committee chairman Jalal Yunus all but confirmed the news. "We are still waiting for his letter of acceptance but he has told us verbally. We are expecting it anytime," said Jalal.

"He wanted some time to wind up his work in Brunei since he has been there for a long

time," he added.

Manzur, who used to be a wicketkeeper-batsman, has served in the Brunei Darussalam National Cricket Association for nearly 16 years. Brunei are an ICC affiliate member and have been elected to the game's governing body in 1992.

Manzur has a massive job in hand as the World Cup is coming up in February 2011.

Back in September last year, BCB gave the responsibility to the Institute of Business Administration of the Dhaka University and they proposed five names after scrutinising over 60 applications.

The other short-listed candidates were Mahmudur Rahman, a former BCB CEO, Intekhab Mahmud, Mainul Haque Chowdhury, Imdad Ehsan and Rizwan Bin Farouq.

Zimbabwean Macky Dudhia was BCB's first-ever CEO when he was appointed in October 2003. Mahmudur was his successor before Nizamuddin took over as acting chief executive.

Manzur, the elder brother of former national wicketkeeper Nasir Ahmed Nasu, will be BCB's third CEO.



MANZUR AHMED



Jahurul Islam takes part in a throwing drill during Bangladesh's practice session yesterday at the Clydesdale Cricket Ground in Glasgow ahead of today's one-day game against hosts Scotland.

Afridi eyes biggest one

Cricket

AFP, London

Former Pakistan Test captain Shahid Afridi vowed to return to England on Sunday, saying the limited-over series starting next month will be the launch pad for his ambitions to win the 2011 World Cup.

The 30-year-old announced he would retire from Test cricket after the second and final Test against Australia at Leeds starting Wednesday, citing a lack of temperament for the five-day game.

His announcement came minutes after he led Pakistan to a 150-run defeat against Australia in the first Test on Friday, where Afridi slugged 31 in the first innings and hold out for two in the second.

But a side strain meant the batsman was ruled out of the second Test and he was released from the Pakistan squad which, after the Australia series, will stay on to play four Tests against England.

However, Afridi -- who led Pakistan to the 2009 World Twenty20 title -- is determined to return for the subsequent limited over series

against England.

"I took a decision which I felt was right and now all my concentration is on the limited overs series against England which will be our first step towards winning next year's World Cup," Afridi told AFP.

"I have won the World Twenty20, beaten England and India in Tests at home and have achieved some other milestones as well, but before I leave the game I want to win the World Cup," he added ahead of next year's tournament in Asia, where Pakistan will try to add to their lone World Cup title won in 1992.

Opener Salman Butt will lead Pakistan at Leeds and in the Tests against England.

"Butt must take coach Waqar Younis and others with him because this team will be tested against England," said Afridi who may join English county side Hampshire if they qualify for the domestic Twenty20 quarterfinals.

"I had to abandon the contract with Hampshire because I was here for the Test series but now they want me to play the last three matches of the Twenty20, provided they qualify," said Afridi, known as a Twenty20 specialist.

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Rain, Lanka reign

Cricket

AFP, Galle

Tharanga Paranavitana and skipper Kumar Sangakkara hit centuries as Sri Lanka dominated the rain-hit opening day of the first Test against India on Sunday.

The left-handed duo put on 181 for the second wicket to lead Sri Lanka to 256 for two in their first innings before heavy rain stopped play 22 overs early at the Galle International Stadium.

Sangakkara made 103, his 22nd Test century and fourth against India while Paranavitana notched up his maiden ton to remain unbeaten on 110 at the close.

Some 15,000 home fans were on hand to watch the final Test match for world bowling record holder Muttiah Muralidaran, who needs eight more scalps to reach the 800-wicket mark.

Sri Lanka's Sports Minister Chandrasiri Ratnayake presented Muralidaran with a silver plaque before the start of play, which was delayed by 30 minutes due to a wet outfield caused by heavy overnight rain.

Posters hailing Sri Lanka's favourite cricketer son as the 'greatest bowler ever' were plastered around the ground alongside giant pictures of the

off-spinner. India's depleted bowling attack, missing the injured pace duo of Zaheer Khan and Shanthakumaran Sreesanth, proved ineffective on the easy-paced wicket after Sri Lanka won the toss and elected to bat.

Paranavitana and his opening partner Tillakaratne Dilshan made use of good batting conditions to smash 55 runs in 10 overs.

India's new seamer Abhimanyu Mithun was the only bowler to escape the onslaught, conceding just six runs from his first four overs.

Mithun, a 20-year-old right-arm seamer from Karnataka, was rewarded for his steady bowling when Dilshan edged a pull shot to Indian captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni behind the stumps.

Dilshan, who hit six fours in his 25 off 24 balls, appeared to indicate the ball went off his elbow to the wicketkeeper.

Paranavitana took a heavy toll on seamer Ishant Sharma, who went for 41 runs in his first five overs.

Sangakkara overcame India's defensive field placements -- there were six fielders on the leg-side on most occasions -- to earn himself a well-deserved century.

The Sri Lanka captain, who hit 12 boundaries, fell against the run of play after tea when he pulled a short ball from part-time spinner Virender

Sehwag to Sachin Tendulkar at deep mid-wicket.

Former captain Mahela Jayawardene was unbeaten on eight when the bad weather intervened.

Sharma conceded 79 runs in 14 overs, while bowling spearhead Harbhajan Singh went for 0-41 from 17 overs and left-arm spinner Pragnan Ojha gave away 66 runs in 17 overs.

Mithun, the most impressive of the Indian bowlers, finished the day at 1-41 from 13 overs.

India, the top-ranked Test side, are looking for their first series win in Sri Lanka in 17 years. Their lone success so far came through a 1-0 victory under Mohammad Azharuddin in 1993.

The three-Test series is the third between the two nations in a span of two years. Sri Lanka won 2-1 at home in August 2008 before India won the return leg in their own backyard 2-0 last year.

SCOREBOARD
Scoreboard at stumps on the opening day of the first Test between Sri Lanka and India at the Galle International Stadium on Sunday:

| | |
|---------------------------------|-----|
| SRI LANKA: First innings | |
| Paranavitana not out | 110 |
| Dilshan c Dhoni b Mithun | 25 |
| Sangakkara c Tendulkar b Sehwag | 103 |
| M Jayawardene not out | 8 |
| Extras: (lb-6, nb-4) | 10 |

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Sri Lanka captain Kumar Sangakkara celebrates after scoring his century against India on the opening day of the first Test in Galle yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

WORLD CUP POLL
SOUTH AFRICA 2010
TODAY'S POLL
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What to WATCH
TEN Sports & SuperSports
Sri Lanka v India
First Test, Day Two
Live from 10:30am

DAY'S EVENT
Premier Div Super League Hockey
Abahani v Ajax SC
Time: 4:00pm
Venue: Maulana Bhashani National Hockey Stadium