

Anderson survives car crash

Manchester United midfielder Anderson was dragged out of a burning car but escaped with only minor injuries after an early-morning crash in Portugal, local media reported on Sunday. Witnesses quoted by the Jornal de Noticias daily said the Brazilian player had lost control of his sports car in the early hours of Saturday on a local road near Braga in northern Portugal. The car hit a wall in a nearby field and caught fire.

- REUTERS



BFF facing field limbo

Football

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Football Federation's (BFF's) plan to start the upcoming season in October may face a huge obstacle due to the unavailability of country's premium venue, Bangabandhu National Stadium, following the renovation works ahead of the 2011 ICC World Cup.

The BNS is being prepared to host the opening ceremony of the cricket World Cup on February 17 and the multipurpose venue is supposed to be handed over to the International Cricket Council by late October, although the National Sports Council (NSC) has already sought one more month to complete renovation work.

The Bangladesh League committee has already announced that they would begin this season in between October 10 to 15 through the Super Cup or the Federation Cup following the inter-club players' transfer, which will take place on September 1-20.

Keeping the Bangabandhu National Stadium in mind, the game's governing body is also planning to reveal its annual calendar by August, but the fact remains that they are not fully aware of the availability of the country's premium venue.

It seems that the start of football

season would not be possible before the completion of the ICC World Cup opening ceremony if they want to roll football through a curtain-raising tournament at the BNS.

"The renovation works at the BNS has been going on full swing and the venue is supposed to be handed over by October," NSC director (planning and development) Abdur Rahman said.

"I don't think it is possible to hand it over to football."

NSC assistant director (planning and development) Habibur Rahman said that they had verbally informed BFF vice president Badal Roy about the situation.

"If the BFF wants to use the venue for a two-week period to hold a big tournament such as the Super Cup, they would not get the facilities of the players' dressing rooms, the media box and the VIP galleries where the renovation works are currently progressing," said Rahman.

The football's governing body is seemingly in the dark about the venue and is still holding on to the promise of sports minister Ahad Ali Sarkar, who had told BFF president Kazi Salahuddin that they needed the venue for only 40 days preceding the event.

"The NSC has been given our annual roster and they know about our main competitions so we hope to get the venue on time," said BFF general secretary Al Musabbir Sadi.

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PHOTO: AFP

An elephant trudges past a caricature of "Stumpy", the mascot of Cricket World Cup 2011, during the mascot launch ceremony at the P Sara Oval Stadium in Colombo yesterday. The showpiece event will be jointly staged by India, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh. Bangladesh's Bangabandhu National Stadium will host the opening ceremony on February 17.

Dhoni to wait till toss

India-SL third & final Test starts today

Cricket

AFP, Colombo

India's hopes of scoring a series-levelling win in the final Test against Sri Lanka from Tuesday sank as Gautam Gambhir was ruled out and with Harbhajan Singh unlikely to play.

Opener Gambhir has not recovered from a knee injury that kept him out of the drawn second Test, while bowling spearhead Harbhajan was down with a side strain and calf injury.

"Gautam is out of the match and Harbhajan is also very doubtful," Indian captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni said after the team's pre-match training session at the P Sara Oval in Colombo on Monday.

Murali Vijay, who came in for Gambhir for the second Test and scored 58 during a first-wicket stand of 165 with Virender Sehwag, will once again open the batting.

Leg-spinner Amit Mishra is expected to replace off-spinner Harbhajan, who

has managed just two wickets in the first two Tests at an unflattering average of 152.

Harbhajan's 357 career wickets make him the world's leading Test bowler following the retirement of Sri Lankan off-spinner Muttiah Muralidaran after the first Test in Galle, which Sri Lanka won by 10 wickets.

Dhoni declined to reveal who would bat at number six after Suresh Raina, a last-minute inclusion in place of the indisposed Yuvraj Singh in the second Test, hammered 120 on his debut.

"We will announce the team before the toss," the Indian captain said, but ruled out dropping opener Vijay to play both Raina and the fit-again Yuvraj.

"Neither Yuvraj or Raina have opened, so it will be unjustified to place them there," he said. "We will go in with two specialist openers."

Sri Lanka, whose new-look attack in the second Test was hammered for 707 runs by the Indians, will be bolstered by the return of sling-arm fast bowler Lasith

Malinga from a knee injury.

Malinga and Muralidaran claimed 15 of the 20 scalps during the emphatic win in Galle, before the off-spinner bowled out of Test cricket with an unprecedented haul of 800 wickets.

"Malinga is back and strong and he had a good bowl at the nets," said Sri Lankan captain Kumar Sangakkara, adding the team will be named on Tuesday morning.

Both captains agreed the P Sara Oval pitch will be different from the featherbed prepared for the second Test at the Sinhalese Sports Club, where 1,478 runs were scored for the loss of just 17 wickets.

"There will be a bit of bounce in it," said Dhoni. "There is a bit of grass, but the surface looks hard and will have bounce and carry for the bowlers."

Sangakkara, calling it a "pretty good wicket", added: "A lot will depend on how you play on it because looks can sometimes be deceptive. But I think there will be a result."

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Sachin set for 169th Test

Cricket

AFP, Colombo

India's world batting record holder Sachin Tendulkar is poised to become cricket's most-capped Test player on Tuesday, adding another milestone to one of the sport's most accomplished careers.

Tendulkar will overtake former Australian captain Steve Waugh when he takes to the field for the third and final Test against Sri Lanka at the P Sara Oval for his 169th match.

The 37-year-old has also played 442 one-day internationals, just two behind Sri Lankan Sanath Jayasuriya's record of 444 appearances.

Tendulkar, who was 16 when he made his debut against Pakistan in Karachi in 1989, is the leading run-scorer and century-maker in both Test and one-day cricket.

He has scored 13,742 runs in 168 Tests at an average of 56.08, with 48 centuries and 55 half-centuries.

In his 442 one-dayers, he has accumulated 17,598 runs, including 46 centuries, including the first double-hundred in the limited-overs format against South Africa earlier this year.

Tendulkar opted out of the Twenty20 version at the international level after just one



PHOTO: AFP

CONCENTRATION IS THE KEY: Indian cricket great Sachin Tendulkar is doing some shadow practice at the P Sara Oval International Cricket Stadium in Colombo yesterday.

match, although he still plays the shortest format in the domestic Indian Premier League.

Besides his record-shattering batting feats, Tendulkar has also claimed 44 Test and 154 one-day wickets, bowling both seam and leg-spin.

"It's been a privilege to play for India for so long, because it was my dream to represent the country," Tendulkar told reporters on Monday.

"Cricket is my passion. I think it is a gift from God that I have been able to live that passion for so many years. It's just fantastic."

Asked to reveal the secret behind such a long and successful career, Tendulkar said: "I have always prepared well before every match and made sure I was on top of my game when I went in."

"Things may not always work in your favour during a match. You will do well in some games, but some may not go your way. But what I am proud of is that my pre-match preparation has always been good."

"How time flies. I still remember my first Test against Pakistan. And when the rough patches came, I found the reason to work harder. I spent all my energy trying to iron out my shortcomings."

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State awards Tk 1 lakh cash to Siddiqui

SPORTS REPORTER

State Minister for Youth and Sports Ahad Ali Sarkar announced a cash prize of Tk one lakh for golfer Siddiqui Rahman, who became the first Bangladeshi to win on the Asian Tour after defeating South Africa's Jbe Kruger in a nerve-racking play-off at the Brunei Open on Sunday.

The minister hoped that the brilliant success of Siddiqui would inspire the sports fraternity to bring more laurels for the country.

Bangladesh Olympic Association (BOA) also greeted Siddiqui Rahman for his achievement.

By winning the Brunei Open Golf Trophy, the first-ever professional golf trophy for Bangladesh, he earned a prize money of US\$ 48,600 (equivalent to Bangladesh Tk 35 lakh).

On the other hand, Bangladesh Golf Federation gave a reception to Dulal Hossain and Zakiruzzaman at the Kurmitola Golf Club yesterday for their success in the 123rd Sri Lanka Open Amateur Golf Championship. The duo became champions in the team event while Zakiruzzaman finished runners-up in the individual event.

Sadia finishes in 79th place

SPORTS REPORTER

Sadia Sultana was 79th in the women's 10m air rifle junior event at the 50th ISSF Shooting Championship in Munich yesterday.

124 participants took part in the event.

Sadia, who won the team gold with Sharmin Akhter Ratna at the South Asian Games and the Commonwealth Shooting Championship, made 387 (99, 97, 97 and 94) out of 400.

SPORTS POLL

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Pakistan turn to Yousuf

Cricket

AFP, Nottingham

Pakistan responded to their crushing 354 run first Test defeat by England at Trent Bridge on Sunday by recalling former captain Mohammad Yousuf and so ending the batsman's international exile.

The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) also announced leg-spinner Danish Kaneria had been released back to English county side Essex ahead of the second Test at Edgbaston, which starts on Friday.

A brief statement issued by the PCB in Lahore said: "Danish Kaneria is released from the national team and he is now available to play for his county Essex. His services will be available for national squad if required."

"Mohammad Yousuf and Raza Hasan (a left-arm spinner) are added to the national squad with immediate effect."

Kaneria was dropped after a hugely expensive match return of one wicket for 171 runs at Trent Bridge.

Yousuf, a batsman of proven Test-class, announced his retirement from international cricket in March, having been handed an indef-



MOHAMMAD YOUSUF

inite ban by the PCB following Pakistan's disastrous tour of Australia where the team failed to win a single international match.

His recall came just hours after Pakistan were bowled out for 80 - their lowest ever Test total against England - at Trent Bridge.

Yousuf effectively took the spot of the previously unrecalled Shahid Afridi, who announced his intention to quit Test cricket after captaining Pakistan to a 150-run loss against Australia at Lord's last month and

was then ruled out of the team's remaining Tests on their tour of England with a side strain.

There had been speculation that batsman Younis Khan, also a former Pakistan captain, might be added to the squad as well.

But although he has been playing for English county side Surrey this season, he was not handed a call-up on Sunday.

Yousuf, 35, has scored 7,431 Test runs, including 22 hundreds, at an average of 53.07 in 88 matches with a highest score of 223 against England at Lahore in 2005.

And in 2006 he broke West Indies great Vivian Richards's 30-year-old record for most Test runs in a calendar year with 1,788 in 11 matches, including nine hundreds, at a staggering average of 99.33.

ICC confirms Isaac nomination

Cricket

CRICINFO

The saga over the next ICC vice-president appears to be drawing to a close with confirmation that Alan Isaac, the chairman of New Zealand Cricket, has been jointly nominated for the position by the New Zealand and Australian cricket boards.

Isaac, who has been formally supported by the ECB and the BCCI, was nominated after Cricket Australia's preferred candidate, John Howard, was blocked by the other international boards - notably the BCCI - who did not see Howard, former Australian prime minister, as an appropriate candidate. Unlike Howard, Isaac appears to be a less fractious candidate and comes into the role with two years experience on the New Zealand board after 35 years in the business world.

If, as expected, his nomination is approved by the ICC's executive board Isaac would take up the role immediately

before becoming the ICC president in 2012. Haroon Lorgat, the ICC chief executive, welcomed the nomination and is hopeful that it will bring an end to a contentious issue. "It has been a lengthy process and I am grateful to both Cricket Australia and New Zealand Cricket for their joint nomination of Mr Isaac as the ICC vice-president."

"The process now requires Mr Isaac's nomination to be formally approved by the ICC Board and Council, which will be done as quickly as possible, through a circular resolution so that he immediately assumes responsibility as ICC Vice-President for two years before taking over as the ICC President in 2012."



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2011 WORLD CUP Development of venues on track: Shetty

CRICINFO

The tournament director of the 2011 World Cup, Ratnakar Shetty, has said that the development of the stadiums was on schedule and that the governments of the host countries - India, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh - were working together to ensure an "incident-free" competition.

Several venues in India, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka are being redeveloped or constructed from scratch and Shetty was confident they would be ready before the December 31 deadline.

"We are monitoring the development of all the World Cup venues, particularly the re-development of stadiums. The events are properly chartered and time is of the essence for us," Shetty said. "The World Cup has been previously held in the subcontinent in 1987 and 1996, and our aim is to deliver a World Cup remembered as a memorable event for spectators to enjoy and the teams that are participating to be at full strength."

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