

Dwyer a big fan of Tendulkar

Sachin Tendulkar's popularity transcends the boundaries of cricket as star Australian hockey player Jamie Dwyer is a big fan of the champion Indian batsman and considers him one of the greatest willow-wielders of the game. Apart from representing his country in the Commonwealth Games, Dwyer is closely following the ongoing India-Australia cricket rivalry and said the Kookaburras were heartbroken when VVS Laxman's heroic unbeaten 73 guided India to a dramatic one-wicket win over Ricky Ponting's men in the first Test at Mohali on Tuesday.



Shakib agrees to lead Tigers

SPORTS REPORTER

Shakib Al Hasan has agreed to lead the Tigers in the remaining matches of the ongoing one-day series against New Zealand.

"We have consulted Shakib and he has agreed to captain the side in this series," said BCB's media committee chairman Jalal Yunus yesterday.

"We have not decided on a deputy for him and in case he has to leave the field for any reason he will pick the vice captain," he added.

The announcement came following a special meeting of the BCB's technical committee. It met to select the captain for the remaining matches of the New Zealand series after captain Mashrafe Bin Mortaza was ruled out for more than a month, after twisting his ankle in the first match which Bangladesh won by nine runs to take a 1-0 lead.

The world's No 1 all-rounder was reluctant to take the job initially but later changed his mind, as there is hardly anyone in the team who can lead the team right now.

It was however learnt that Shakib wanted to take the job after the 2011 World Cup because he wants to focus more on his own performance and he was also not interested to do the duty as a makeshift captain.

The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) will decide on the captaincy issue after the series.

"With Mashrafe injured, the board will discuss the captaincy issue after the series as there is very little time to do so during the series.

"We have to wait for Mashrafe's recovery and then we will take the decision. After the series we will also take decision about vice-captain," said Yunus.



Shahriar Nafees has a hard time with the large umbrella and his kitbag in the heavy rain as the Bangladesh opener makes his way off the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday. PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Rain wins 2nd ODI

Pressure on Kiwis: Shakib

SPORTS REPORTER



The writing was on the wall since Thursday morning when the skies opened up so it was not a surprise when yesterday's second one-dayer between Bangladesh and New Zealand was abandoned without a ball being bowled.

The unseasonal rain in Dhaka, like in most of the country, is due to a persistent depression over the Bay of Bengal.

The excess water at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium has drained out quite well but the rain was relentless. The umpires called off the game at 11:00am as the whole playing area in the Mirpur venue takes around three to four hours to dry up. Since there must be a 20-over-a-side game to constitute a one-day international, it was the latest the umpires could have waited to make the call with the cut-off time for the match to start being 1:55pm.

The result (or the lack of it) will frustrate the New Zealanders who are down 1-0 in the five-match series and according to captain Shakib Al Hasan, the pressure would be on the visitors from the third game.

"If we win one more match in the series, we can be assured of a drawn series but they have to win all three games to win the series. I think

the pressure is now on them," he said. The No 1 all-rounder in the world, who was among a few players who turned up on Friday to train at the Mirpur indoors, however said the weather was also testing for the Tigers.

"It's quite frustrating for us as well. Everyone wants to play a match and they have their personal goals for it. We were charged up for the game," said Shakib.

Head coach Jamie Siddons echoed the Tigers captain, saying it was never good for any team when the match gets called off. "It is frustrating definitely when the match gets cancelled," he said.

The weather forecast nevertheless is slightly encouraging for the cricketers as rain is predicted to dissipate by Thursday afternoon. The Mirpur venue is a fast-drying ground, so Monday's third ODI is not under threat just yet.

This was only the second one-dayer to be completely washed out in Bangladesh soil after cyclonic weather in Chittagong forced the 3rd ODI against India in May 2007 to be called off.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) has confirmed that members of the public who had bought tickets for the washed out second ODI will have entry to the stadium for the third ODI of the series on Monday with the same ticket.

This condition however, will not be applicable for the hospitality box tickets.

DELHI DIARY

SPORTS REPORTER from New Delhi

Boxer Suruz Bangali was eliminated from the 69kg pre-quarter finals in the XIX Commonwealth Games when he went down against North Ireland's Patrick Gallagher at the Takatara Indoor Stadium in New Delhi yesterday.

Suruz, who defeated Sri Lankan Surang Muhannayaka in the previous round, fought hard against Patrick in the first round to finish without drawing any points. He attacked the opponent in the beginning of the second round but conceded three points before the game rolled into the third and final set.

After trailing by three points, Suruz conceded another six points in the final round and finally suffered a 9-0 defeat against Patrick, who looked more impressive in counter attacks.

"I just feel he was strong and a good boxer and has a quick reaction," said Suruz after the game.

Patrick also admitted he capitalized on the opportunity when Suruz opened up.

SHOOTERS CONTINUE TO MISFIRE

While the Indian shooters are running up the gold count, Bangladeshi shooters continued to show their dismal performance

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Fed Cup deferred

SPORTS REPORTER

Start of the Grameenphone Federation Cup 2010 has been deferred to October 10 due to incessant rain and unplayable field condition at the Birshrestha Shaheed Sepoy Mostafa Kamal Stadium.

The tournament, which was scheduled to start yesterday, has now been shifted to Oct 10 with the fixture being bodily shifted.

On the opening day, Chittagong Abahani Limited will meet Bangladesh Police at the Bir Shreshtha Shaheed Sepoy Mohammad Mostafa Kamal Stadium at Kamalapur. The first round of matches will now continue till October 15.

Int'l Club Cup kabaddi

SPORTS REPORTER

Three more teams reached the semifinals of the Meizan International Club Cup Kabaddi eliminating their rivals at the Kabaddi Stadium yesterday.

The three teams are Bangladesh Prisons, Assam and West Bengal.

The semifinals will be held today before the final at 4 pm the same day at the same venue.

In the day's matches, Assam beat Bangladesh Prisons 32-24 with two creditable 'lona', Bangladesh Prisons defeated Nepal 32-18 with two 'lona' and West Bengal outclassed Bangladesh Police 39-18 with two 'lona' to book the semifinal berths.

In the day's other two matches, Assam beat Nepal 33-18 with one lona while West Bengal outplayed Japan 14-12.

Japan had earlier confirmed their semifinal berth.

'India must open doors to Pak players'

ANI, Islamabad

Legendary Pakistan cricketer Wasim Akram has stated that India should open its doors to Pakistani players in the next IPL auction due early November, as this would help 'improve ties' between the two countries.

In his column in the Daily Times, Akram said, "With the IPL auction due early November, I am really keen to see Pakistan players this time around. Pakistan players add charm to the matches by sheer capability. Players like Umar Gul, Afridi and Saeed Ajmal can be assets for any team. Young quickie Mohammad Irfan is also an exciting T20 cricketer."

"More importantly, the IPL following will grow in Pakistan and fans will follow the league

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Behind Jamaica's track supremacy

ANISUR RAHMAN from New Delhi



Despite the absence of world's two best sprinters -- Usain Bolt and Asafa Powell -- Jamaican athletics team have showed they can still dominate track and field in the XIX Commonwealth Games after Lerone Clarke won the 100m sprint gold on Thursday night.

It was the fourth consecutive Games where a Caribbean athlete grabbed the top award after Ato Boldon from Trinidad & Tobago won in 1998, Kim Collins from St Kitts and Nevis in 2002 and Powell won four years ago.

Beginning with Arthur Wint, their first

Olympic gold medallist to Usain Bolt and Shelly-Ann Fraser at the 2008 Beijing Olympics, Jamaica have bagged 13 gold medals in Olympics, 38 medals in Commonwealth Games, and 12 in World Championships over their 75-year athletics history.

Nevertheless, Jamaica, with a population of only 2.8 million, have over the years produced some of the world's best sprinters. When asked about the Jamaican success on the track, gold medallist Clark said, "We are not just talented, we are driven and probably that's why we run so fast."

There is certainly something there, maybe in the air, water or the gene helps Jamaica produce gold medallist year after year. Their chef

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Laxman doubtful

India-Aus final Test starts today



AFP, Bangalore

India kept batting hero Venkatsai Laxman under wraps ahead of the final Test against Australia which starts on Saturday, as the tourists lost bowler Doug Bollinger to injury.

Laxman, who defied back spasms to score a match-winning 73 not out in the first Test in Mohali, sat out of training for the second successive day on Friday.

Indian captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni said the middle-order batsman was recovering well, but refused to confirm if Laxman will play the decisive Test at the Chinnaswamy Stadium.

"He is feeling much better and we would love it if he plays, but the team will take a final call on his fitness before the toss," Dhoni told reporters after training.

"It's a five-day game and that is a long time to be on the field. Everyone is available for selection as of now, except perhaps VVS (Laxman)."

India will consider the fact that Australia are unlikely to allow Laxman to bat with a runner, as he did in Mohali during the crucial ninth-wicket stand of 81 with tailender Ishant Sharma.

The hosts have already lost opening batsman Gautam Gambhir and seamer Sharma for the match due to knee injuries sustained during the Mohali Test.

Opener Murali Vijay and fast bowler Shanthakumaran Sreesanth are almost

certain to replace the injured duo, while rookie batsman Cheteshwar Pujara was standing by for Laxman.

Dhoni warned of an Australian backlash after the heart-breaking one-wicket defeat for the tourists in Mohali and warned his top-ranked team against being complacent.

"Australia will come up hard, it is not in their culture to give up easily," the Indian captain said. "They are a strong side and will respond to the task."

"On our side we must ensure we do the basics right. It is easy to gloss over our failings after a match has been won, but we are aware the areas we need to improve like catching and running between the wickets."

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Misbah Pak Test captain



AFP, Lahore

Pakistan Friday appointed Misbahul Haq as Test captain for upcoming matches against South Africa and retained Shahid Afridi as limited-overs skipper.

Misbah will lead a 16-man Test squad with wicketkeeper batsman Kamran Akmal left out as he recovers from an operation.

Pakistan play two Twenty20 matches, five one-day internationals and two Tests against South Africa in Abu Dhabi and Dubai. The first T20 will be played on October 26 with the first Test starting on November 12.

Pakistan appointed 36-year-old Misbah as Test captain as Salman Butt was not available while he is provisionally suspended over spot-fixing allegations that surfaced during the team's recent tour to England.

Also missing from the squad are bowlers Mohammad Aamer and Mohammad Asif, who were suspended over the same scandal.

Misbah will be Pakistan's sixth Test captain in two years after Shoaib Malik, Younis Khan, Mohammad Yousuf, Shahid Afridi and Salman.

Chief selector Mohsin Khan said the best available players were picked.

"Under the circumstances we have picked the best man to lead and the best 16 players as South Africa are a tough side to

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Australia's Michael Hussey dives to take a catch as teammates look on during a training session at the Chinnaswamy Stadium in Bangalore yesterday. PHOTO: AFP

SPORTS POLL

What is your prediction for the 2nd ODI?

Tigers to win 61.4%

Black Caps to win 38.6%

TOTAL VOTES: 601

TODAY'S QUESTION

Do you think Bangladesh can take a 2-0 lead in the 3rd ODI?

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