

Warne takes Hurley to 'Gossip Girl'

Shane Warne yet again proved himself as a loyal boyfriend as he accompanied Elizabeth Hurley to the sets of 'Gossip Girl'. According to the Daily Telegraph, the spin king was spotted with the model during the filming of her guest role as a ruthless media mogul in the hit TV series in New York. This is the second time that Warne has been spotted accompanying Hurley on her venture. Recently he appeared with her in South Africa during her Estee Lauder tour.

-- INTERNET



India seamer S Sreesanth (R) celebrates the dismissal of England batsman Matt Prior during the first day of the second Test at Trent Bridge on Friday.

PHOTO: AFP

Tired Tigers aim for match practice

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER from Harare

Bangladesh are hoping for an out-and-out practice game when they take on the Zimbabwean XI at the Academy Ground in Harare from today.

The three-day game would be an essential exercise ahead of the one-off Test for a team that is out of international cricket for almost four months and out of touch with Test matches for more than a year.

Captain Shakib Al Hasan has said that if the hosts agree, they would like to play all the batsmen and bowlers but even a 12-a-side hit would do his side a favour.

"If we get the chance, we want to get all our batsmen and bowlers in. Otherwise, it would be best if we could get at least twelve in," said Shakib yesterday.

The Tigers practiced in the afternoon after their marathon flight from the capital took nearly 42 hours including travel hassles that took its toll.

"Rubel [Hossain] was slightly sick yesterday. But it doesn't look like it is too bad. He has a headache, a bit of jet lag," he said. "It [one day of training] was a bit of a problem because they didn't allow us to come here earlier. We can't do much about it. We talked about it during the stretch that we should forget about it and think about the match."

Shakib also confirmed that Tamim Iqbal

will play the three-dayer though the left-handed opener will have to closely monitor his groin injury.

Stuart Law, the Tigers' head coach, also said that it wasn't the greatest way to prepare for a game of cricket but has told his charges to focus on the game.

"They understand they're here to play cricket. BCB tried to get us in here a couple of days early, but Zimbabwe weren't too accommodating in that area. Unfortunately for us, we arrived here late last night.

"We haven't got much time to settle in and we have a 3-day practice game tomorrow. It is not ideal but this is what we've got in front of us. We have to be big and that's what we've expressed this morning. Boys will get tired but we have a game starting tomorrow (Friday)," said Law, adding that he doesn't want anyone to make an excuse for the lack of preparation.

"It'll give us an indication of how the boys are right now. I think they've the fitness base where you can tell them to do something and it's no problem.

"All we now have to do is get some cricket under the belt but we've only got a 3-dayer in front of us. It's a shame but we have to do what's in front of us. We have to be up for the game, we can't use this as an excuse," he added.

For the hosts, Tatenda Taibu is set to return for his first game since the World Cup.

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England in early trouble

Cricket

AFP, Nottingham

India's seamers reduced England to 124 for eight at tea on the first day of the second Test at Trent Bridge here on Friday as they looked to level the series.

India, albeit in helpful, overcast conditions, took six wickets for 55 runs in 24 overs after lunch as they ripped through England's top order.

Stuart Broad (six not out) and Graeme Swann (nought not out) were unbeaten on their Nottinghamshire home ground.

England, 69 for two at lunch, lost four wickets for 15 runs in a dramatic slump at the start of the second session, with Praveen Kumar striking twice in four balls.

Five balls after lunch, Kevin Pietersen, on 29, was squared up by fast bowler Shanthakumaran Sreesanth, in for the injured Zaheer Khan, and third slip Suresh Raina held the edge to leave England 73 for three.

Kumar had rocked England with his

command of swing while taking a Test-best five for 106 in the hosts' 196-run series-opening victory at Lord's.

The medium-pacer had England captain Andrew Strauss, who'd 'got in', out for 32, when the left-hander's full-blooded drive flew to Raina, who held an excellent catch.

And that same over saw 85 for four become 85 for five when a full-length outswinger to left-hander Eoin Morgan pitched in line and had the former Ireland international lbw for nought.

Matt Prior had frustrated India with an unbeaten century after England had collapsed to 62 for five in their second innings at Lord's.

But on Friday he managed just one before, playing at a ball from Sreesanth that left him, the wicketkeeper nicked straight to Rahul Dravid at first slip.

England, in the face of some high-class swing and seam bowling, had lost three wickets for three runs in 23 balls to be 88 for six.

Tim Bresnan, replacing injured fast bowler Chris Tremlett, was undone on 11 by a ball from Ishant Sharma that nipped away.

Ian Bell, the last of England's frontline batsmen, was dropped on 22 by Dravid but he got himself out for 31 when he flat-footedly cut at Sharma and was caught behind by India captain and wicketkeeper Mahendra Singh Dhoni.

England came into this match knowing they would replace India at the top of the ICC's Test rankings if they won this four-match series 2-0 or better.

But during the last decade India have fought back to either win or square series after losing the first Test. And although they were without left-arm quick Zaheer due to the hamstring injury that had cut short his participation at Lord's, Dhoni fielded first.

Sharma made the breakthrough when he had Alastair Cook lbw for two. Sreesanth struck with his fourth ball when Jonathan Trott, on four, drove at an outswinger and edged to Venkatsai Laxman at second slip.

Pietersen, who made a man-of-the-match winning 202 not out at Lord's, survived a huge lbw shout from Kumar on 17, after walking across his stumps.

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The longest journey

Cricket

MOHAMMAD ISAM from Harare

Shakib Al Hasan, clad in the Tigers' new tracksuit, walked out of the team hotel yesterday morning and sat in the sun-drenched driveway. "So this was the cold everyone was talking about," he said with a wry smile.

Some of the other members of the team followed the captain out to see the near-perfect weather conditions in the middle of the Zimbabwean winter.

It was a pleasant surprise to the team that had to go through a terribly long journey from Dhaka to Harare. And as it happens, it invoked memories of previous elongated routes and hazardous trips one had to take in their lifetime.

There have been shared stories of this route being longer than the famed Sydney-London flight and most put their hand up and did the 'this was my longest journey' declarations. But coach Stuart Law, a much-travelled man, said that even this 42-hour epic was not his worst.

"I have travelled from the West Indies to

Miami and on to Zimbabwe last year with Sri Lanka. It took 58 hours," he said. "It is part and parcel of international sport now."

There's hardly any doubt that days of long preparations on tour are well and truly over, it is a test for young players to recover quickly and move on to the job at hand.

For the Tigers, it is important that the captain leads by example even when waiting in airports.

"If I don't show that I'm tired, then two other players will do the same and the rest will follow," said Shakib.

"This is how important it is. But we all know each other well and everyone is used to these things by now. Some of them are tired and one is slightly sick but otherwise, it is fine," he added.

It would also be the first opportunity for Law to gauge the mental resolve of the Tigers.

"It is another challenge. We have to be ready to face it. If you want to move up in the world and be a better cricket team, we have to put those negative thoughts out of your mind.

"One of my messages in the meetings was no excuses, you've got to find a way to get it

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Ilievski on vacation

SPORTS REPORTER

National football coach Nikola Ilievski left here yesterday night for Macedonia for a one-month vacation after guiding Bangladesh in the FIFA World Cup pre-qualifying round.

Ilievski came to Dhaka just three days before Bangladesh's first match against Bangladesh on June 29 and guided his new charges to the second round after a 3-0 aggregate win over Pakistan. Bangladesh posted an emphatic 3-0 win on home soil and played out a goalless draw against Pakistan on July 3.

In the second round, the 56-year old coach saw his charges go down 4-0 but they bounced back in the home match with a 2-0 win

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Ending provides reason to be hopeful

Football

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh's dream of playing the FIFA World Cup Qualifying round with the top twenty teams from Asia is over despite a scintillating 2-0 win over Lebanon on home soil and the booters left a message through their performance on Thursday that football in Bangladesh is improving rather than being in decline.

National footballers came under fire after their disappointing 4-0 defeat to Lebanon in the first leg in Beirut as the BFF officials and coach Nikola Ilievski hit out at the players heavily. Some were even termed 'incapable of playing international football' and these were words that have seemingly spurred them on to put up a sterling show in the second-leg match against Lebanon at Bangabandhu National Stadium.

Though the booters time and again complained that their 17-hour gruelling journey, tiredness, food and water problems were the chief reason behind their defeat, it was words that fell on deaf ears. Thus the players were determined to prove themselves and show that Bangladesh are not a team to

suffer by a big margin from a second-tier nation like Lebanon.

The players gave the maximum of what Ilievski sought from them on the pitch and thus erased allegations of a lack of commitment. Yet, despite this brief dawn, the harsh reality is that the booters cannot maintain their consistency so far.

On the verge of their departure at the BFF dormitory in Friday morning, the team management, coaching staffs and players sat to discuss different issue regarding the national teams and the players urged the BFF officials to allocate more time for the national teams before any assignments if they want to get consistent performance from them.

"We all forgot the comments made by the BFF officials and the coach rather we took those as inspiration to do better result and we all knew if we could do better result, everything would go in the right direction," said playmaker Mamunul Islam after a nearly one-and-a-half hour meeting with the national team management committee led by BFF vice president Badal Roy.

"We have asked them to give us more time to be prepared before any international

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Action from yesterday's Sheikh Kamal International Basketball Championship match between West Bengal and Bhutan at the Dhanmondi Basketball Gymnasium.

PHOTO: STAR

Bangladesh, WB in virtual final today

SPORTS REPORTER



Hosts Bangladesh will meet favourites West Bengal in the last and title-deciding match of the Sheikh Kamal International Basketball Championship at the Dhanmondi Basketball Gymnasium today.

Both teams have won all three of their games so far and therefore the last match turns out to be a virtual final. West Bengal beat Bhutan by 101-83 points in their third match yesterday after leading the first half by 50-41 points. West Bengal's two stalwarts S Pal and VV Pillay continued their fine form caging 32 and 20 points respectively. Earlier, West Bengal had beaten Malaysia U-18 team by 67-64 points and Maldives by 77-71 points.

Hosts Bangladesh had a well earned rest yesterday after winning their first three matches on three previous days. Bangladesh started their campaign with a 77-44 win over Bhutan on the opening day and then beat the Malaysia Under-18 team 66-47 in the second match before overcoming Maldives 77-70 in their latest match.

There was a second match yesterday, between Maldives and Malaysia U-18 team and it went to the very wire before the island nation took it by a point. Maldives were trailing mid way through by 30-34 points but they made a good comeback and took the game to the Malaysian teens in the next two quarters before finally snatching victory by 82-81 points. Fazlee scored 14 points for Maldives while Tan scored 16 for the losing side.

Meanwhile, today's match between Bangladesh and West

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