

Kolkata Test from today

Dhoni expects pacers' pitch; Cook happy to have Finn

Cricket

GUARDIAN, Kolkata

India captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni said he expects the wicket to favour fast bowlers when the third Test in Kolkata gets underway on Wednesday, although the evidence suggests that a slow turner -- closer to Ahmedabad, where England lost the first Test, than Mumbai, where they won the second -- will be presented at Eden Gardens.

"The wicket looks good. I don't think there will be much help for the spinners initially," Dhoni said. "The fast bowlers get a bit of swing at this time of year, both at start of play and then close to stumps. So I think the role of fast bowlers will be very crucial in this game."

"When you come to India you want to play on turning tracks, irrespective of the result. We lost the last game, but still we want to play on wickets that suit the subcontinent -- what the subcontinental challenge is all about.

"If you're not really doing that then that concept of playing around the world, and facing different challenges, goes down the drain.

"If you come to India, why do you

want to play on wickets that are flat for the first three or four days? "And sometimes even five days is not enough to get a result.

"I feel the challenge is to play on tracks that turn, and assist the spinners."

England could boast that they beat India at their own game on a spinners' pitch in Mumbai last week.

But Dhoni added: "It doesn't matter if we lose a few games, or if we win the series. The crucial thing is that a cricketer who has played five or six years can say 'I went to the subcontinent and the wickets were turning and bouncing and I scored runs or I failed'.

"We should still stick to turning tracks because that's what our strength is. That's what home advantage means.

"It doesn't mean that when Australia play in Australia and England play in England they win all the games -- but they still stick to the speciality they have.

"It's the same for the subcontinental teams. Whatever the result, we'll stick to the kind of wicket that is our speciality."

India off-spinner Harbhajan Singh missed net practice because of flu on Monday, and Yuvraj Singh took

a blow in the nets but the indications were that both should be fit for selection.

Meanwhile, England captain Alastair Cook has welcomed the pressure for places that has been provided by Steven Finn's return to fitness from a thigh injury.

Finn is set to replace vice-captain Stuart Broad for this Test and Cook said: "It's great he's now fully fit. He adds competition to the squad, he's a fine bowler and it's great to have him available for selection. It's disappointing he's missed two games but it's great that he's back and we've got some tough selection meetings ahead of us.

"But as a captain and as a coach, that's what you want. You want people pushing for places."

Broad has been down on pace and is wicketless in the opening two matches and Cook said Finn could give England something different.

Cook's opening partner Nick Compton is happy to learn on the job with England. The Somerset batsman has made a solid start to his international career and served notice of his capabilities with an impressive 30 not out from 28 balls to help England seal a famous 10-wicket victory in Mumbai in the second Test.

Ticket sale for 4th ODI from today

SPORTS REPORTER

Tickets for the fourth one-day international between Bangladesh and the West Indies, which is scheduled to take place at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium on December 7, go on sale at the designated branches of Social Islami Bank Limited today.

On the other hand, the tickets for the fifth ODI, which will take place on December 8, will be available from Thursday onwards, said the Bangladesh Cricket Board in a press release yesterday.

CHAMPS TROPHY India, Dutch top pools

AFP, Melbourne

India finished top of Pool A despite going down 3-2 in their final pool game to Olympic champions Germany at the Champions Trophy in Melbourne on Tuesday.

World number 11 India will now face win-less Belgium, who finished fourth in Pool B, in a quarterfinal on Thursday.

The Netherlands, ranked three in the world, topped Pool B after defeating Belgium 5-4 and will face New Zealand in their quarterfinal.

Elsewhere, England blew their chance to finish on top of Pool A after drawing 1-1 against New Zealand and will now face Australia in the quarterfinals.

Directors

FROM PAGE 16 Premier Division Cricket League clubs (according to the last standings of the League) from one to two.

The new constitution also relaxed the clause about the councillorship of the district and divisional organisations. Now someone from other districts can obtain councillorship of any district. In the past it was mandatory that a councillor must be an executive body member of his respective district and divisional sports organisation.

It also adopted three selected directors from the NSC -- the country's regulatory sports authority -- in the 27-member board of directors including the president, in the constitution.



Tobias Matania (L) of Germany celebrates with a teammate after scoring against India in their Champions Trophy match in Melbourne yesterday. Germany won 3-2.

PHOTO: AFP

BCB condoles Kuntal's death

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) expressed its shock at the death of former Bangladesh under-19 wicketkeeper Kuntal Chandra Pappon, who represented the country in the ICC Under-19 Cricket World Cup in 2000.

Police recovered the 28-year-old cricketer's body on Monday morning. The body bore injury marks on the throat and his hands were tied behind his back with his shirt, said the OC of Turag Police Station.

In a press release the BCB stated: "The Board extends its condolences to the player's family and hopes that those responsible for the heinous act that resulted in the death of a talented cricketer are brought to justice at the earliest and exemplary punishment meted out to them."

A student of Bangladesh Kira Shiksha Protisthan, Pappon represented Bangladesh at both the under-17 and under-19 levels. He made a name for himself as a player of the country's leading sports club Abahani. Most recently he had been playing for Biman. He last played a practice match in Dhanmondi on Friday.

Axe likely to fall on Taylor

AFP, Wellington

Ross Taylor is expected to be axed as New Zealand captain when the Black Caps' squad to tour South Africa is announced this week following a string of disappointing results, reports said Tuesday.

Coch Mike Hesson had lost faith in Taylor and was set to replace him with opener Brendon McCullum, Wellington's Dominion Post reported.

Taylor, who took over as skipper in June last year, faced heavy criticism when New Zealand threw away a commanding position and crashed to a 10-wicket defeat in the first Test against Sri Lanka in Galle last month.

While the 28-year-old steered the Black Caps to a series-levelling win in the second Test in Colombo, scoring 142 in the first innings, the New Zealand Herald said several senior players favoured a change of leadership.

LOCAL snippets

SPORTS REPORTER

Tangail finished third in the Exim Bank 22nd National Men's Handball Championship with a 44-32 win over Kushtia in the place-deciding match at the Shaheed (captain) M Mansur Ali National Handball Stadium yesterday. Tangail led the first half 19-13. Sajjadur and Asad scored 17 and nine goals respectively for the winners while Sumon and Shandhi scored nine goals each for the losing side.

Football admin course

A three-day FIFA football Administration and Management Course got underway yesterday at the Bangladesh Football Federation House.

FIFA instructor Adrian Djamaoeddin from Indonesia is conducting the course which has been designed for the officials of district football associations. Though 30 DFA officials were supposed to take part in the first phase, some 20 are only taking part. The second phase of the course, with another 30 DFA officials, is supposed to begin after the conclusion of the first phase.

Wrestling in Pakistan

A 10-member wrestling squad left here for Pakistan today to take part in the Peace International Wrestling Championship which will be held from December 6-9.

The contingent includes three officials and seven wrestlers -- Abdur Rahman, Babul Morol, Bellal Hossain, Mizanur Rahman, Sangnu Marma, Sharat Roy and Sheikh Shipon.

South Asian Goju-Ryu Karate

Bangladesh won a gold medal in the inaugural South Asian Goju-Ryu Karate Championship held in Nepal from November 28 -30, said a press release yesterday.

G Sarker won gold in the 70kg category while Moritul and Ramon bagged silver and bronze medals in the 50kg category. Bangladesh also won another bronze medal with Debu finishing third in the 50kg category. Bangladesh finished third in overall medals count while India and Nepal

Goals galore in youth hockey

SPORTS REPORTER

Mostafizur Rahman and Proshenjit Roy struck six goals each as Rajshahi overwhelmed Satkhira by 25-0 goals in the Agrani Bank 23rd National Youth Hockey Championship at the Maulana Bhasani Hockey Stadium yesterday.

Apart from Mostafizur and Proshenjit, Taher Ali scored five goals, Hasin Arman netted three goals, Belal Hossain and Bappi Majumder scored two goals each while Rubel Kumar scored one goal in the game where Rajshahi struck one goal in less than every three minutes.

Former champions Faridpur also joined the party by thrashing Natore 8-0, thanks to a six-goal haul including a hatrick from Moinul Islam. Rabbi Salehin and Imran Hossain scored one goal each.

In the day's other matches, Rajshahi Division beat Comilla 4-2 while Kushtia defeated Narail 2-1.

Vettel's suit earns £11k

AFP, London

A signed race suit worn by newly crowned Formula One world champion Sebastian Vettel was sold for 11,000 pounds at a charity auction, organisers announced on Tuesday.

The suit was part of a collection of Formula One memorabilia sold at Bonhams auctions house in London that raised 39,000 pounds for the Wings for Life charity, which funds research into spinal cord injuries.

A signed suit worn by this season's world championship runner-up, Spain's Fernando Alonso, went for 6,000 pounds.

Suits belonging to recently retired German great Michael Schumacher and British former champions Lewis Hamilton and Jenson Button were also sold, while other lots included signed race gloves and photographic prints.

"It's been one of the most competitive seasons for Formula One drivers," said Vettel.

Ponting feared Lara most

Cricket

AFP, Perth

Newly retired Ricky Ponting says while India's Sachin Tendulkar was the best batsman he played against, West Indian Brian Lara was the opponent he feared most.

Ponting pulled stumps on his Australian record-equalling 168-Test career at the conclusion of the third Test loss to South Africa in Perth on Monday.

In 17 years of Test cricket, which produced 13,378 runs at 51.85 and made him the second-highest run-scorer in Test history behind Tendulkar, Ponting said the pair stood out as his highest quality opponents.

"I am on record before as saying I felt Sachin was the best player I played against," he said.

"He has so much success against us in our conditions and their conditions.

"But I probably lost more sleep on the eve of games against Lara, because I knew that he could single-handedly win games for his team.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS
1 Rearward, at sea
4 Highlanders
9 AAA job
12 Scatter seeds
13 Monastery head
14 Years you've lived
15 9-Ball setting
17 Popular sandwich, for short
18 Him (Ger.)
19 They can't be compared to oranges
21 Thickly entangled, as hair
24 Aching
25 Playwright Levin
26 Steal from
28 Do, re and mi
31 Occupy completely
33 Ph. bk. data
35 Colt's mama
36 Dervish
38 Affirmative
40 Falsehood
41 Sketch
43 Rouse
45 Journalist
47 Scot's hat
48 "— and Peace"
49 Cheating, e.g.
54 Superlative ending
55 Small egg
56 Citric beverage
57 Secret agent
58 Apportioned
59 Tatter
DOWN
1 Cleopatra's snail
2 Egg
3 Pair
4 Accumulate
5 Strand
6 Recede
7 Albright and Falana
8 Trample
9 Mealtime chat
10 Lecherous look
11 Drenches
16 Illuminated
20 Seniors' dance
21 Anger
22 Opera solo
23 Swear
27 Lad
29 A Great Lake
30 Wittenessed
32 Old Italian money
34 Washington city
37 Haphazard
39 Vacillated
42 Relinquish
44 Pump up the volume
45 Has bills
46 Grate
50 Trench
51 Rowing tool
52 Harem room
53 Lower limb

Solution time: 24 mins.

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CRYPTOQUIP

QKYIDY WIDYZTWA HYDMZUDAR
ECK EWM KQRDA TWXNCR
UWATZAN RK HKHXVWY
IXMZT: NYKKG DY TVDGDVWAU.

Saturday's Cryptoquip: WHEN A PERSON WORKS TO MAKE SURE ALL THE CREDITS AND DEBIT'S MATCH UP. IS THAT A BALANCING ACT?
Today's Cryptoquip Clue: E equals W