

The jersey that Argentina football legend Diego Maradona wore while scoring twice against England in the 1986 World Cup, including the infamous “hand of God” goal, was auctioned for \$9.3 million, a record for any item of sports memorabilia, Sotheby’s said. Seven bidders vied for the garment in an auction that began April 20 and ended Wednesday morning, Sotheby’s said, without releasing the name of the buyer.



Bangladesh begin campaign tomorrow

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh hockey team will start their Men’s Asian Games qualifiers campaign against Indonesia tomorrow in Bangkok. The players in red and green left for Bangkok on Wednesday night for the nine-nation qualifiers event, which starts on May 6. The top six teams will join India, Japan, Malaysia, Korea, Pakistan and China in the 12-team hockey event of Asian Games in China in September. The charges of Iman Gobinathan Krishnamurthy went through three weeks of training at BKSP and Dhaka before and during the Eid holidays.

FIXTURES

May 7 - Bangladesh vs Indonesia
May 10- Bangladesh vs Sri Lanka
May 12- Bangladesh vs Singapore.

“We have had a nice Eid even though we trained in the morning before offering prayers at Baitul Mokarram Mosque,” said captain Babu, who will wear the captain’s armband for the first time since making debut in 2014. “We have focused on the Asian Games Qualifiers with a bit change in strategy during the training at BKSP, so that opponents can’t understand the way we want to play. Because the participating teams saw us in the AHF Cup in May where we became Champions,” said the 25-year-old player.

Archer feared he might not play again

REUTERS, LONDON

England speedster Jofra Archer feared he might not play again after undergoing two bouts of surgery on his troublesome elbow, the 27-year-old said. Archer has not played international cricket since March last year and had a second round of elbow surgery in December. The time he spent on the sidelines filled him with doubts about his career, said the Barbados-born player. “In a situation like this, when you are forced to have operations, you do think about whether you are going to play cricket again, whether you’re going to play all formats even,” Archer wrote in his Daily Mail column. “But the ECB (English board) gave me the assurance and peace of mind that they wanted me around for a long time. “At one point I thought I was going to lose my contract when things weren’t going well.” Archer is targeting a return in the T20 Blast later this month though he is doubtful for the home series against New Zealand next month under new Test captain Ben Stokes.



THE PURSUIT OF TEST approach continues

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh national team players are enjoying their Eid vacations, many of them away from the hubbub of city life, enjoying their time away with friends and families. The excursion into their childhood surroundings would have given them the much-needed peace and quiet away from cricket’s adrenaline rush but the vacations are at an end and a tough home assignment awaits in Sri Lanka. Thus, challenges simmer under the vacation bubble and the need to improve after a difficult Test tour of South Africa are already on the agenda with the team management thinking of the cricketers’ mental sharpness after returning from a break while also looking to improve the issue of the Team’s Test approach after it gave away in the two Tests against the Proteas. The Lankans are due in the country on May 8th and with that in mind, the Bangladesh team management have chalked out their scheduling for the upcoming two-match Test series. Bangladesh’s overseas coaching staff are all expected to return by May 7 and the team will depart for Chattogram on May 8 (Sunday) evening. The team will gear up for the first Test with their training camp scheduled to begin from May 9. Team director Khaled Mahmud was pretty aware of the challenges facing Bangladesh while up against an



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Khaled Mahmud

opponent like Sri Lanka at home. “Sri Lanka are always a tough opponent, especially in the subcontinent. They play spin well and they are well-adjusted to the heat here so it will not take them time to acclimatise,” Mahmud said about the upcoming series. The team management have not yet unfolded the reasons for the batting debacle in South Africa but from what they have been able to ascertain, the approach became problematic due to

challenges of a mental nature. “We had a bad phase in South Africa and the truth is that we were outplayed. The important thing right now is that we have to perform well to get out of that phase. This series presents us with the challenge of playing good cricket. The only positive for us was the first innings in South Africa in the first Test in South Africa. “There were signs that we can show the required approach but we only showed that approach a few times. I

don’t know whether the main problem stems from psychological issues but the main thing is that we have to be positive. Being positive doesn’t mean we have to play aggressive strokeplay, what I mean is to have a positive mindset. We have had a plan for a long time but have not been able to establish it yet which is to play 150 overs. We haven’t found that approach and been able to establish it.” Despite what skipper Mominul Haque said about their approach being pretty similar in South Africa to Mount Maunganui in New Zealand, Mahmud recognises that the team cannot be in two minds approach-wise. Bangladesh went in favour of batting depth in recent Tests but that theory cannot go on. “We can’t play like this as a Test team for a long time. We say that we aren’t a settled team in Tests and that’s the truth because for that you have to play five bowlers. “If the batters, at least the experienced ones in the side, can take the responsibility, we can play five bowlers,” Mahmud said about the inclusion of five bowlers. Mehedi Miraz was ruled out of the first Test but the team director opined that they have to stick to their positive mindset. “We have played fast bowlers recently. If you do not play Khaled [Ahmed] or Shoriful [Islam] then we will be going backwards. We have to get out of the culture of not banking on our pacers in home Tests,” he concluded.

Nadal terms his injury recovery a ‘roller coaster’

REUTERS

Rafa Nadal said his recovery from a rib injury has been like a “roller coaster” after the 21-times major winner returned to action with a win over Miomir Kecmanovic at the Madrid Open. The Australian Open champion was playing in his first event since picking up the injury at Indian Wells in March but showed little signs of rust, cruising to a 6-17-6(4) victory on Wednesday. Read full story “I leave the match very, very happy. You have to be sincere with yourself ... my preparation has not existed. You cannot expect great things at the beginning,” Nadal told reporters. “All trainings have had some up-and-downs, it’s been a roller coaster. I have had better days, worse days. “At the end of the day, the rib is a problem that limits your game a lot.”

The Spaniard added that training had been difficult due to the nature of the injury but he was not worried about his lack of preparation ahead of the French Open later this month, where he will be bidding for a record-extending 14th title. “There are injuries that allow you to do physical work, aerobic work. The rib has not allowed me to do anything ... but I’m not worried. I just think that every minute that I am out there on the court is something positive,” the 35-year-old said. “I don’t have any pain in my rib. I had a little bit of pain at the beginning of the week, and then I went to get a MRI so they could check it, Friday or Saturday when I came here, and the image on the machine was good.” Nadal, a five-times champion in Madrid, will take on Belgium’s David Goffin in the last 16 later on Thursday.

