



PHOTO: STAR

IT'S FAMILY HOUR: Relatives of Bangladesh star Rokonzaman Kanchan greet the player at his Sheraton Hotel room yesterday.

Booters get 5-star gift



SPORTS REPORTER

It was all quiet at the Bangabandhu National Stadium a day after the SAFF Championship came to a fitting end with host Bangladesh lifting the coveted trophy.

The otherwise vibrant BFF office on the second floor of the all-purpose venue also looked barren as most of the officials decided to take a break after 11 hectic days.

But the celebration of George Kottan's boys that started on Monday night with a 5-3 tiebreak win against Maldives in the final continued at the Hotel Sheraton, the temporary home of the eight participating teams during the championship.

The BFF has offered the members of the national team an extended stay of three days in five-star luxury with their families.

Maldives might have lost the final in the shootout. But the booters of the tiny island nation head home on Tuesday morning with satisfying

memories.

India on the other hand took the pain of being dethroned after winning the first two editions of the regional football tournament and left for Calcutta in the afternoon with a heavy heart. Bangladesh shattered India's dream of a hat-trick of titles with a 2-1 win in the semifinals.

Pakistan, who kicked off the tournament with an upset 1-0 victory against India, left for Karachi last night. Starting as underdogs, Pakistan was the first team to storm into the last four. But their success ended at that point when Maldives handed them a 1-0 defeat in the other semifinal.

More congrats

BSS, Dhaka

Former national footballer and former vice-president of Asian Football Confederation (AFC) major Hafiz Uddin Ahmed (ret), yesterday congratulated the national football team on becoming the 3rd SAFF Championship winners.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

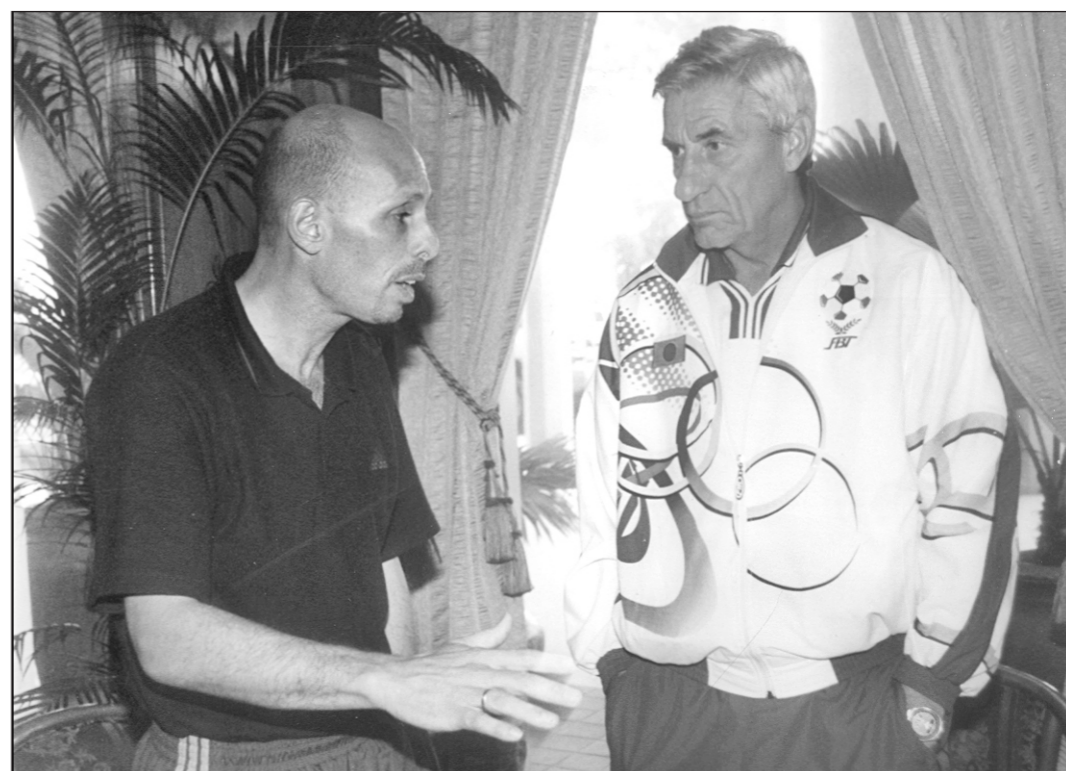


PHOTO: STAR

YOU WIN, I LOSE: India football coach Stephen Constantine (L) talks to his Bangladesh counterpart George Kottan at the lobby of Sheraton Hotel yesterday.



Did U Know?

The record winning sequence at a track and field event is 122, and Ed Moses of the USA is the proud holder of that feat. His winning streak continued from 1977 to 1987.



Talk Turkey



Mansur Ali Khan Pataudi
(Indian cricket legend)
"My son was a talented cricketer but I am not sure if he could have played at international level."
On his son Saif Ali Khan who now is a Bollywood star.



What to Watch

ESPN
Football Focus
Repeat at 7:00 am
English Premier Football League
Southampton vs Liverpool
Repeat at 11:00 am
Football Focus
Repeat at 1:00 pm
Sportscentre Hindi
Sport News
Live at 8:30 pm
Cricket Programming
Legends Of Cricket
Repeat at 10:00 pm

STAR Sports
Australian Open
Men's/Women's Singles Qtrs
Live at 6:00 am
Sportsline Tonight
Sport News

BTF names team

BSS, Dhaka

Bangladesh Table Tennis Federation yesterday announced the national junior team for the qualifying round of South Asian zone of the Asian Championship.

The competition will be held at Bangladesh Knira Shikkha Protishthan (BKSP) from January 26 to 30.

Five players were included in the boys' team while four in the girls' team after a month-long coaching programme.

SQUAD
BOYS : Masud Rana Porag, Dhananjay Shil Tirtha, Al Helal, Mehedi Hasan and Masumul Haque Rimon.

GIRLS: Sonam Sultana Soma, Moumita Alam Rumi, Nusrat Sultana Lopa and Jesmin Nahar.

Ponting punishes Lanka



REUTERS, Melbourne

Australia captain Ricky Ponting smashed an unbeaten century to lead his side to a nine-wicket win over Sri Lanka in a triangular series one-day match on Tuesday.

Sri Lanka won the toss and batted, scoring 214 for eight before Australia reached 215 for one in 34.3 overs in reply.

Ponting hit 106 off 97 balls and put on a record stand of 178 for the second wicket with opener Matthew Hayden, who was 80 not out.

There was nothing at stake in the match, the last in the 12-game series, with Australia and England already through to the best-of-three finals starting in Sydney on Thursday.

Earlier, Sri Lanka veteran Aravinda de Silva became the third player to reach 9,000 runs in one-day internationals.

The 37-year-old provided one of the few highlights of the Sri Lanka innings with the 27th run in his score of 44 from 73 balls.

Sri Lanka's batting fell away after a promising start of 86 for one from 20 overs.

Opener Avishka Gunawardene made 45 and Kumar Sangakkara hit 43 before becoming two of left-arm wrist spinner Brad Hogg's three victims for 37 runs.

The partnership between

TRIANGULAR TABLE

Final standings in the triangular one-day series involving Australia, England and Sri Lanka after Australia beat Sri Lanka by nine wickets on Tuesday:

Team	P	W	L	BP	Pts
Australia	8	7	1	3	38
England	8	3	5	1	20
Sri Lanka	8	2	6	1	14

Ponting and Hayden was a record for the second wicket by Australia against Sri Lanka, beating the 157 by Steve Smith and Wayne Phillips in 1984-85.

Ponting, 28, who hit 11 fours and one six, played superbly to all parts of the ground in scoring his 11th century in 155 one-day internationals and second hundred in the

triangular series.

"I hit the first ball for four and everything felt back to normal again. I was pretty happy with the way I struck the ball," said Ponting, who was rested from Australia's game against England on Sunday in Adelaide.

Hayden hit only one four but also thumped four sixes in his 87-ball innings.

Sri Lanka had rested captain Sanath Jayasuriya and were led by opener Marvan Atapattu who made 26. They had also chosen to rest leading wicket-taker Muttiah Muralitharan, who has a thigh strain.

Atapattu said the team, which had less than two days of rest in Colombo between a South Africa tour and the Australia tour, would have a brief break in Sri Lanka ahead of next month's World Cup in southern Africa.

Atapattu said Sri Lanka had hoped to finish their Australia tour on a better note than a nine-wicket loss, their sixth defeat in eight matches in the series.

"Sanath was under a lot of stress at the beginning of the tour (with

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

Edge for Dhaka

SPORTS REPORTER

Holders Dhaka almost confirmed a berth in the Ispahani Mirzapore Tea National Cricket League four-day final after taking a 98-run first innings lead against Chittagong at the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium yesterday.

On the second day of the four day play-off, left arm spinner Arafat Sunny took six wickets as Dhaka, who scored 295 in the first, bowled out Chittagong for 197 in just 67.5 overs.

The tweaker conceded 48 runs in his 17 overs to destroy the backbone of the port city team.

He was ably assisted by off spinner Fahim Muntasir who bagged three for 63 runs.

Former Bangladesh skipper Akram Khan was the only one who put up some resistance with a brilliant 93 that came in 179 minutes with 15 boundaries.

Opener Anisul Hakim (25) and middle order Azam Iqbal (28) were the other notable run-getters.

Dhaka, in their second innings scored 58 for two in 21 overs taking the overall lead to 156 with eight wickets in hand.

Opener Rashedul Haque was batting on 43.

SCORES IN BRIEF

DHAKA: First innings 295 all out in 96.1 overs (Javed 60, Jahangir 51, Mazharul 32, Kadir 31, Sabbir 5-102)

CHITTAGONG: First innings 197 all out in 67.5 overs (Akram 93, Azam 28, Anisul 25, Arafat 6-48, Fahim 3-62)

DHAKA: Second innings 58 for 2 in 21 overs (Rashedul 43 n.o., Jahangir 11, Suja 1-7)

Venus, Agassi march on

AFP, Melbourne

Venus Williams unleashed her big-serving game to blast into the Australian Open semi-finals as men's favourite Andre Agassi romped into the last four here Tuesday.

Williams, seeded two, just missed breaking her own world record for the fastest serve ever recorded as she blew away seventh-seeded Slovakian Daniela Hantuchova 6-4, 6-3 in 1hr 15min.

Second seed Agassi was an equally emphatic winner in his quarterfinal with 12th seed Sebastian Grosjean, sweeping aside the Frenchman in two hours to win 6-3, 6-2, 6-2.

The 32-year-old American will now play South Africa's Wayne Ferreira in the semifinals on Thursday. Unseeded Ferreira defeated fourth seed Juan Carlos Ferrero of Spain 7-6 (7/4), 7-6 (7/5), 6-1 in the late match Tuesday.

Ferreira's victory in 2hr and 11 minutes equalled his best performance in a Grand Slam, a semi-final appearance at the Australian Open in 1992.

Earlier, Williams had batted a buzz at Melbourne Park with her blistering serves.

After morthballing the biggest shots in her repertoire in recent seasons, Williams decided to unload with the heavy artillery against Hantuchova - and the results were devastating.

One Williams' ace was sent rocketing towards Hantuchova at 201kp/h, just outside the 205kp/h exocet that she blasted in Zurich in 1998, which remains the fastest serve ever recorded on the WTA Tour.

The bad news for Williams' semifinal opponent - fifth seed Justine Henin-Hardenne of Belgium - is that Venus thinks she can serve faster.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

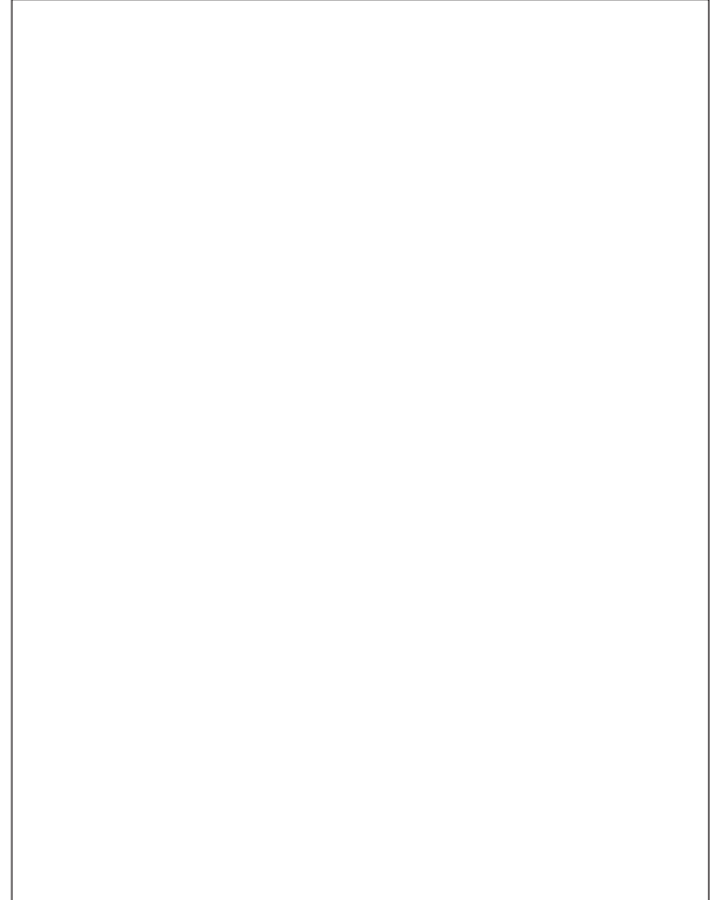
At a glance



SPORTS REPORTER

The biggest football festival of South Asia is over now, with Bangladesh crowning themselves as undisputed kings on January 20 at the Bangabandhu National Stadium.

The results of the third SAFF Championship are as follows:



BD-Namibia match today

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh play on Namibia in their second exhibition one-day match at the United Cricket Club ground in the capital Windhoek today.

Bangladesh, who are in Namibia for a two-week conditioning camp as part of their preparation for next month's World Cup in South Africa, defeated the home side by 60 runs in the first match on January 18.

The visitors will play another three one-day match against the World Cup newcomers.

Ticket-scalpers told to beware

INTERNET, Cape Town

South Africa's Cricket World Cup (CWC) committee will act against those persons found re-selling tickets for next month's event at a profit.

CWC co-ordinator for Cape Town, Peter Heeger, told Parliament's sports portfolio committee on Tuesday that the names of people placing adverts in newspapers to re-sell their tickets had been passed onto the committee's lawyers.

"It is illegal, and we are monitoring the situation very closely. "Those people will be contacted and it will either be pointed out that their activities are illegal, or they will be dealt with by the commercial crimes unit."

It was indicated on the back of World Cup tickets that they could not be re-sold for profit.

He added that it was clearly unethical for a person to buy a ticket for a match at R150 "and to sell it at a 1000 per cent profit at R1500".

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4



PHOTO: AFP

Sri Lanka's legendary batsman Aravinda de Silva pulls one during their triangular series clash against Australia in Melbourne yesterday.

Aravinda's attainment



REUTERS, Melbourne

Sri Lanka veteran Aravinda de Silva became the third player to reach 9,000 runs in one-day internationals during the triangular series match against Australia on Tuesday.

The 37-year-old provided one of the few highlights of the innings with the 27th run in his score of 44 from 73 balls.

Only Indian pair Sachin Tendulkar with 11,546 runs from 303 games and Mohammad Azharuddin on 9,378 from 334 matches stand ahead of De Silva on the all-time list.

Tuesday's match was also the last for De Silva, the longest serving current player in international cricket, on Australian soil. He however bowed out a loser.

De Silva is to bring down the curtain on his 19-year international career after the World Cup in South Africa and Zimbabwe in February and March.

The Australian team formed a

guard of honour for the 37-year-old as he left the ground. He was also given a great reception by spectators.

Stand-in Sri Lanka captain Marvan Atapattu described de Silva as the greatest batsman his country had ever produced.

"He has been a great asset to Sri Lankan cricket and he is the best batsman we have produced by far," Atapattu said.

"With his batting, he is capable of pulling you through in a game at any time."

De Silva's finest international cricketing moment came against Australia when he scored an unbeaten 107 to guide Sri Lanka to victory in the 1996 World Cup final.

He made his Test debut against England at Lord's in 1984 at the age of 18.

"My target was the World Cup and I'm quite happy to be able to play it as my last tour," De Silva said.

The veteran batsman insisted Sri Lanka's poor recent form will count for little in the World Cup.

The 1996 World Cup winners

have suffered a poor run-up to the tournament, losing December's one-day series in South Africa 4-1.

Sri Lanka won two of eight matches in the triangular series, beating Australia and England once each.

"It's going to be a totally different ball game on the World Cup tour," De Silva said.

"We won't be playing one opponent all the time -- some opponents will be weak and some strong.

De Silva relished his country's under-dog tag -- one they overcame to win the title in 1996, thanks to his century in the final.

"If we get to the Super Six and have one or two good days I'm sure we can give teams a good run," he went on.

Sri Lanka open their World Cup campaign against New Zealand in Bloemfontein on February 10.

To progress to the second round, Sanath Jayasuriya's side must finish in the top three of a group that also includes South Africa, West Indies, Bangladesh, Kenya and Canada.