

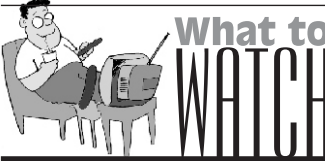


## Did U Know?

The smallest crowd to watch a World Cup soccer game was the 300 who showed up to the game between Romania and Peru during the 1930 World Cup of soccer in Uruguay.



**Mutiah Muralitharan**  
(Sri Lankan master off-spinner)  
"I am not 26 years old any more. Every morning I wake up with a sore shoulder. The mental strain is also taking its toll. It's been six months since I had a weekend off."



### TEN Sports

Sri Lanka vs England  
Second Test, Day One  
Live at 10:00 am

### ESPN

South Africa vs West Indies  
First Test, Day Five  
Repeat at 9:00 am

### Sportscentre Hindi

Sport News  
Live at 8:30 pm

### STAR Sports

English Premier Football League  
Highlights  
Repeat at 9:30 am

### Sportline Tonight

Sport News  
Live at 8:00 pm

New Zealand vs Pakistan  
First Test, Day One  
Live at 3:57 am (Friday)

**Star WHIZZ KID COMPETITION 202**  
Tick the correct answers, post to The Daily Star. Win attractive prizes. Competition closes at 8 pm Dec 19, 2003 and draw.

1. Who has been named Australia's Test captain?  
Gilchrist  
Ponting  
Martyn

2. Who won the Rugby World Cup?  
Australia  
England  
New Zealand

3. Who will lead the Bangladesh A team to Pakistan?  
Rajin  
Mustafiz  
Hamman

4. Who won the Federation Cup title?  
Name: .....  
Class: ..... Roll No. ....  
School Address: .....  
Phone: (if any) .....

## National v'ball from Dec 19

### SPORTS REPORTER

The Pepsi National Volleyball Competition will begin on December 19 in Dhaka.

A total of 13 teams Bangladesh Army, Bangladesh Navy, Bangladesh Rifles, Bangladesh Police, Titas, Dhaka, Khulna, Kushtia, Comilla, Rajshahi, Chittagong, Satkhira and Dinajpur will compete in the men's division.

On the other hand, BJMC, Ansars, Rajbari, Rajshahi, Rangpur, Pabna, Gazipur, Dinajpur and Chittagong will play in the women's section.

# Awesome Abahani, sorry MSC

### SPORTS REPORTER

**WESTERN UNION** Country's top two fan-favourite teams got off to contrasting starts on the opening day of the Western Union Premier Division Football League at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

While Abahani sent an ominous message to their fellow title contenders by annihilating newly promoted Dhaka Wanderers Club 6-1 in the day's first match, their bitter rivals and defending champions Mohammedan struggled to a goalless stalemate in the second fixture.

### ABAHANI-6, WANDERERS-1

Abahani's Russian coach Anatoly must have been the happiest per-

son on the ground as he saw his son Maxim fire a hat-trick as the Dhammondi outfit totally outclassed their startled opponents.

Striker Maxim, who arrived in the city last week to give edge to a goal-shy Abahani forward line, got into the act as early as in the tenth minute. After receiving the ball on the right corner of the box, Maxim unleashed a shot that slipped through the hands of a diving Wanderers custodian Himu (1-0) into the near post.

But Wanderers levelled the score through a rare attack in the 14<sup>th</sup> minute with Ritu heading home from a Jahangir corner after Abahani goalkeeper Nijam had missed the flight of the ball (1-1).

However, Abahani made a quick recovery and took the lead again in the 21<sup>st</sup> minute when striker Saiful Islam Khokon scored the first of his two goals in the match with header from a Parvez cross from the left (2-1).



MAXIM

Maxim ended the game as a contest with another header following a defensive lapse in the 44<sup>th</sup>

SEE PAGE 14 COL



PHOTO: STAR

A goalmouth scramble during the Mohammedan-Sheikh Russel fixture of the Premier Division Football League at Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium yesterday.

## NCL set to suffer

### Cricket

### SPORTS REPORTER

Country's lone first-class competition, the National Cricket League (NCL) faces an abrupt halt following a decision of the grounds committee of the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB).

The committee yesterday announced that they would not be able to allow venues for any domestic competitions including the Mirzapore Tea Fifth National Cricket League from January 1 to mid-February due to preparation for the ICC Under-19 Youth World Cup.

The juvenile cricket showpiece involving the ten Test playing nations and six associate members of International Cricket Council (ICC) will be held across the country from February 15.

"We need minimum one and a half months to fully prepare the venues for the youth competition. There is no way we can spare the venues for domestic competitions if we are to hold the mega event successfully," said member secretary of grounds committee Rafiqul Islam Babu.

The latest development came as a shocking surprise to the tournament committee, which was desperately looking to give the National League a real shape after two years of flop.

With the competition only one round old, the tournament committee now can hold only two more games if they are to comply with the latest decision of the grounds committee. The first phase of the marathon National League was scheduled to be completed by January 23.

"It will be a big blow for us. No doubt the ICC Under-19 World Cup is the biggest event the country has

ever staged, but the National League is also very important. Besides, they (grounds committee) should have informed us beforehand about the non-availability of the grounds," said member secretary of tournament committee Adnan Rahman Dipon.

He said that it was also unfair that the whole domestic calendar would now be suspended for one particular competition.

Cricket has suffered in the past also because of unplanned scheduling. Apart from the National League, the Dhaka Cricket Leagues are also set to face a deadlock.

"The members of the grounds committee were present when we finalised the fixtures of the National

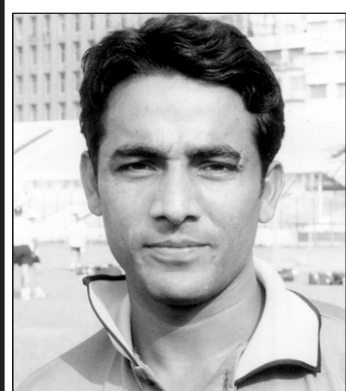
SEE PAGE 14 COL 1

## Hossain double ton gives BD A charge

### Cricket

### SPORTS REPORTER

A scintillating double-century by Shahriar Hossain put Bangladesh A in a commanding position against the Defence Housing Authority



SHAHRIAR...218

(DHA) on the third day of their four-day Inter-Departmental Cricket Championship (Patron's Trophy) match at the Karachi National Stadium yesterday.

The home team put up a better show in the second innings after they were forced to follow-on after the tourists bundled them out for 158. They were 173 for three at stumps on the third day, still 121 runs short of making Bangladesh A bat again.

The reborn right-handed opener, Shahriar, who resumed his innings on 176 Tuesday, occupied the crease for more than seven hours to score 218 to hit the maiden first-class double century by a Bangladeshi which gave the visitors a mammoth first innings total of 452 for nine wickets declared.

He clobbered 36 boundaries and a six, facing 352 balls.

National paceman Tareq Aziz Khan then acted with the leather, capturing four wickets for 36 runs

SEE PAGE 14 COL 5

## Nat'l Cricket's Round 2 today

### SPORTS REPORTER

The second round of the Mirzapore Tea Fifth National Cricket League begins today with star-studded Dhaka hosting aspirants Chittagong at the Bangabandhu National Stadium.

National team captain Khaled Mahmud will lead the locals against a spirited Chittagong side, the only team to win both of their first round games, in the four-day match which will be followed by a limited-overs affair.

On the other hand, former national skipper Akram Khan will lead the port city side.

In the other games, holders Khulna will take on Barisal at the Jessore Stadium while Sylhet face first-round losers Rajshahi at Cricket Garden in Rangpur.

## Biman remain on top

### SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Biman maintained their solo lead in the First Division Chess League at the end of the ninth round games at the NSC Conference room yesterday.

The leaders raised their tally to 34.5 points after beating Sonali Bank by 3-1.

GM Ziaur Rahman, IMs Abdullah Al Rakib and Enamul Hossain Rajib won against Kamber Ali, Rahul Sangma and Ranodev while IM Reefat Bin Sattar lost against Samok Palit of Sonali Bank.

Leonine Chess Club were in the second position with 29.5 points as they beat Kamalapur Samaj Kallayan and Krira Sangha by 3.5-5 points. GMs Alexander Fominyh, Alexie Barsov and Niaz Mursheed won against Din Mohammad, Md Alamgir and Saidul Islam. Abdul Maleq of Leonine drew with Sheikh Anwar of Kamalapur.

In the other matches: Destiny 2000 Limited beat Dhaka University Chess Team by 4-0 points, Mohakhali Prodig Sangha beat Fighter Krira Chakra by 3-1 points, Narayanganj City Chess Club beat Monipur Chess Club by 3-1 points, Anushillan Krira Chakra beat Farashganj Sporting Club by 2.5-1.5 points and Rajshahi Daba Unnayan Sanghatha beat Nakahpara Jubu Kallayan Sangha by 2.5-1.5 points.

## Taekwondo meet from tomorrow

### UNB, Dhaka

The Korea Cup Taekwondo tournament, sponsored by the Republic of Korea Embassy in Dhaka, begins Friday at the National Sports Council (NSC) gymnasium.

Dhaka City Mayor Sadek Hossain will inaugurate the two-day meet. ROK Ambassador to Bangladesh Kyu-Hyung Lee will remain present as special guest at the inaugural function.

Bangladesh Taekwondo Federation organised the meet marking the 30th anniversary of Bangladesh-Korea friendship.

A total of 165 players, including 55 women, representing 18 teams will compete in the 16-weight categories meet six each for men's and women's senior groups and two each for boys and girls junior groups.

Best players of each of the four groups will be awarded 20<sup>th</sup> colour television in addition to champion and runner-up trophies.

SEE PAGE 14 COL 4



PHOTO: AFP

An Indian supporter stands in front of a huge Rahul Dravid poster in Bangalore on Tuesday.

## Dravid does the impossible

### Cricket

### AFP, Adelaide

India pulled off one of the most remarkable come-from-behind victories in the history of Test cricket to defeat Australia on the final day of the second Test at Adelaide Oval here on Tuesday.

India sent their cricket-besotted nation into raptures with a famous four-wicket victory over the world's best team to clinch their first triumph in Australia for nearly 23 years and lead the series 1-0 with two matches to play.

First innings double centurion Rahul Dravid hit the winning runs, a boundary off leg-spinner Stuart MacGill at 4:24 pm (0554 GMT) and remained unbeaten on 72 in his man-of-the-match performance.

It completed an extraordinary victory for India, who had been left

a mountain to climb after Australia piled up a mammoth 556 first innings total. Australia's defeat was only the eighth inflicted on a side scoring 500 or more runs in the first innings of a Test match.

India last won in Australia at the Melbourne Cricket Ground in February 1981 and have never won in seven previous Tests at the Adelaide Oval.

Australia's last loss in Adelaide was against England by 106 runs in the fourth Test in 1995.

India's batsmen had fought brilliantly to get within 33 runs of Australia's first innings total, and then skittled the home side for 196 to set up their final day winning push.

It was India's third win in their last four Tests against Australia and continues their improving form away from home. Last year they defeated England by an innings and 46 runs at Headingley and the

West Indies by 37 runs in Trinidad. For Australia it is the first time in almost 10 years they have been 1-0 down in a home Test series since losing to South Africa in the second Sydney Test by five runs in January 1994.

Australia must win at least one of the last two Tests in Melbourne (December 26-30) and Sydney (January 2-6) to prevent losing their first home series since going down 2-1 to the West Indies in 1992-93.

The nervous Indians lost two wickets chasing the 13 runs required for victory after tea with VVS Laxman lashing out to Andy Bichel at mid-wicket off left-arm spinner Simon Katich for 32 and teenage wicketkeeper Parthiv Patel bowled for three attempting to sweep Katich.

The Australians battled on in

SEE PAGE 14 COL 6

## The darling of India

### Cricket

### AFP, New Delhi

Rahul Dravid finally replaced Sachin Tendulkar as the darling of the Indian media Wednesday as it celebrated one of the finest wins in Test history over world champions Australia.

Newspapers ran front-page banner headlines to mark Dravid's match-winning knocks of 223 and 72 not out as India came from behind to eclipse Steve Waugh's men by four wickets in the second Test at Adelaide on Tuesday.

The Indian Express had a simple "Dravid" at its headline with the letter 'v' replaced by a photograph of the batsman's raised arms soon after he had scored the winning boundary in the final session of play.

"Dravid slays Goliath. Howzatt!" screamed the Times of India's front-page, with the caption of the accompanying photograph saying "Dravidinator The wizard offs Oz".

"The Wall stands strong as Fort

Australia cracks," said the Hindustan Times, referring to Dravid's nickname for his solid, text-book batting style that grinds the opposing attack.

"Skepticism about India's grit has evaporated in the blazing Aussie summer," the Times of India wrote.

"And no needless aggro involved either in the transformation, just steady resolve and focus."

"Why, even captain Saurav Ganguly showed restraint, and did not tear off his shirt as a metaphor of joy after this famous victory."

"Having caught Steve Waugh with his pants down, perhaps he did not have to."

The Hindustan Times echoed the feelings of millions of fans when it said that Dravid had finally emerged from the shadows of Tendulkar, regarded by many as the finest contemporary batsman.

"The genius of Dravid ensures that India keep their date with history and show that the mighty Aussies are fallible," it wrote.

"Pressure and rising expectations do not seem to be help Tendulkar, who has been averag-

ing a disastrous 17 in his last 10 Tests.

"The result could well be India's greatest win abroad. The victory was in many ways achieved through a team effort. But in the end, without Dravid's magnificent effort, India could well have lost."

Legendary Test opener Sunil Gavaskar, who was India's captain when it last won a Test on Australian soil in 1981, described Dravid as the "iron man of Indian cricket".

"His strength of character shines through in every move he makes on the field," Gavaskar wrote in his syndicated column.

"It was a privilege to be present and witness the way the team played. Part of the dream has been fulfilled, but the hard work begins now as the Aussies are sure to return all ammunitions firing in the two remaining Tests at Melbourne and Sydney."

Former Australian captain Ian

SEE PAGE 14 COL 5