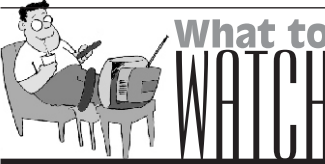




Did U Know?

The United States' Major League Soccer made its debut in 1996, shortly after the wildly successful 1994 World Cup was hosted by the United States.



What to Watch

TEN Sports

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

ESPN

Australia A vs India
3-Day Tour Match
Live at 5:57 am

Sportscentre Hindi

Sport News
Live at 8:30 pm

STAR Sports

Sport News
Live at 8:00 pm

Sportline Tonight

Sport News
Live at 8:00 pm

Futbol Mundial

Taped Version at 9:00 pm
New Zealand vs Pakistan
First Test, Day Two
Live at 3:57 am (Saturday)



Talk Turkey



Greg Chappell

(Former Australian cricket captain)
"India has got a better-balanced side than anyone apart from Australia at the moment."



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
Mushfiq
Hamman

4. Who won the Federation Cup title?
Rajin
Mushfiq
Hamman

Name

Class

School Address

Phone: (if any)

Jr hockey team leaves for S'pore today

BSS, Dhaka

A 22-member Bangladesh junior hockey team leaves for Singapore today to take part in the first Asian Junior Championship beginning on December 21.

Eight teams, split into two groups, are taking part in the meet. Bangladesh have been placed in Group A along with Hong Kong, Iran and Singapore.

Bangladesh meet Hong Kong in their first match on December 21, face Iran on December 22 and play Singapore in their last group match on December 24.

Champions and runners-up of the meet will earn the right to play next year in the Under-21 Asia Cup.



PHOTO: STAR

Brothers Union's Brazilian recruit Gomez (L) and Arambagh's Anupam Barua try to win possession of the ball during their Western Union Premier Division Football League encounter at Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium yesterday.

Muktis redfaced, BU blaze

SPORTS REPORTER

WESTERN UNION
Treble chasing Mukti joddha Sangsad Kriya Chakra got off to the worst possible start in the Western Union Premier Division Football League when they were stunned by minnows Victoria 1-0 at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

There were no such jitters, however, for the star-studded Brothers Union who put behind their first round exit from the Federation Cup by thumping Arambagh 5-0 in the day's first match at the same venue.

VICTORIA-1; MUKTIJODDHA-0

This year's National Football League and Federation Cup champions Mukti joddha are the favourites to complete a hat-trick of titles by lifting the Premier Division crown also. But the way the Reds played yesterday was nothing short of a lacklustre display and was a far cry from their usual flamboyant

style. Victoria's Ugandan recruit Idris was the day's hero after he scored the all-important goal early in the second half.

Before the goal, Mukti joddha had two great chances to go in front but first, Shahazuddin Tipu shot straight into the safe hands of Victoria custodian Raju in the 7th minute from an easy angle and then national striker Kanchan somehow failed to connect his head to a teasing Saiful cross with an open net beckoning in the 30th minute.

Idris missed a golden opportunity when he couldn't meet Govinda's chip from the right in the 33rd minute. But the lanky striker made no mistake five minutes after the breach.

Sharif's clever through pass from the midfield found Idris who was lurking near the top of the D box. With a burst of speed, Idris left a couple of Mukti joddha defenders in their wake, entered the danger zone and dodged past country's number one custodian

Aminul Haq before slotting the ball in.

Mukti joddha tried to regroup and come back in the match but it was not to be their day as the Victoria defence calmly dealt with every move by their forwards.

Yellow cards: Govinda (Victoria), Prodeep and Saiful (Mukti joddha).

TEAMS

Victoria SC: Raju, Israfil, Jet, Ramzan, Fakhru, Govinda, Sharif, Rintu, Rahel, Idris and Sohag (Mehdi).

Mukti joddha Sangsad: Aminul, Hasan Al-Mamun, Prodeep, Harry, Lajuk (Moni), Saiful (Gerald), Bidyut, Matiu Munna, Ghansha, Tipu (Toe) and Kanchan.

Referee: Abdur Rakib.

BROTHERS UNION-5; ARAMBAGH-0

After a humiliating departure at the hands of Bangladesh Army in the

Biman remain unreachable

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Biman continued their solo lead with 38.5 points after the end of the tenth round games of the First Division Chess League at the NSC Conference room yesterday.

Biman defeated Destiny 2000 Limited by 4-0. GM Ziaur Rahman, IMs Reefat Bin Sartar, Abdullah Al Rakib and FM Rezaul Haque won against FM Sheikh Nasir Ahmed, Md Javed, Debaraj Chatterjee and Minhazuddin Ahmed.

Leonine Chess Club followed the leaders with 33.5 points. They beat Dhaka University Chess Team by 3-1. GMs Alexander Fominyh, Alexie Barsov and Niaz Murshed won against Uten, Hasan Emam, Ariful Islam. Abdul Malice lost against Md Riad. Bangladesh Answers were in the third position with 28 points.

In the other matches: Titus Club beat Rajshahi Daba Unnyon Sangstha by 3-1. Sonal Bank beat Mohakhall Prodig Sangha by 2.5-1.5. Anushilan Daba Kriya Chakra beat Nakhalpara Juba Kallayan Sangha by 3.5-5. Farashganj Sporting Club drew with Narayanganj City Chess Club by 2-2 p. Fighter Kriya Chakra drew with Monipur Chess Club by 2-2.

Unsporting Shiv Sena!

AFP, Agra

Hardline Hindu activists have damaged a pitch being prepared for match between Indian and Pakistan veteran cricketers in the north Indian Taj Mahal city of Agra, officials said Thursday.

Members of the Shiv Sena, a right-wing Hindu group, said they dug up the pitch late Wednesday.

"We condemn the policies of Pakistan and oppose the holding of cricket matches till Pakistan brings an end to terrorism," said Pawan Chauhan, a Shiv Sena leader in Agra.

Senior superintendent of police in Agra, Ashutosh Pandey, said they were searching for those responsible and security had been tightened around the stadium.

A three-match series is to be played between the Pakistani and Indian veteran cricket teams, including one in Agra on December 24.

SEE PAGE 14 COL 4

McGrath misses the whole series

REUTERS, Melbourne

Australia's chances of coming from behind to win the series against India suffered a blow on Wednesday when paceman Glenn McGrath was ruled out of the third and fourth Tests.

McGrath, who missed the first two matches after undergoing ankle surgery in August, had hoped to play in the Melbourne Test which starts on December 26 and the Sydney Test beginning on January 2.

TODAY'S MATCHES

Western Union Premier Div Football League
Dhanmondi Club vs Badda Jagorani (5:00 pm)
Venue: Sher-e-Bangla Nat'l Stadium, Mirpur
Nat'l Cricket League (Day-2)
Dhaka vs Chittagong
Venue: BNS
Khulna vs Barisal
Venue: Jessore Stadium
Sylhet vs Rajshahi
Venue: Cricket Garden, Rangpur

Dhaka left wobbling



SPORTS REPORTER

Chittagong made the most of damp weather when they put Dhaka into trouble on the opening day of their Mirzapore Tea National Cricket League fixture at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

The home team was stuttering on 75-4 when stumps were drawn well ahead of the scheduled close due to bad light.

With the depression that brewed in the Bay making its presence felt over the capital, the important match of the two former champions could only get underway after lunch.

While Dhaka experienced a gloomy start, the game at the Jessore Stadium between holders Khulna and Barisal was called off without a ball being bowled due to rain.

However, at Rangpur the inclement had no effect on Rajshahi who had a full day's cricket against Sylhet. They dismissed Sylhet for 102 and were four without loss at the end of day one.

DHAKA VS CHITTAGONG

But the delay did little to help Dhaka after Chittagong captain Akram Khan sent them into bat in

overcast conditions. Right-arm paceman Gazi Alamgir exploited the seaming conditions claiming the first three wickets, leaving the hosts at 34-3 before slight drizzle offered brief respite for Dhaka.

But when the match resumed again the home team lost their top-scorer Al-Shahriar, who made 35 before being out in a peculiar fashion.

The discarded national opener was adjudged to have handled the ball after he completely missed a delivery from Chittagong's new find off-spinner Yasin Arafat, who made his first-class debut with nine wickets against Rajshahi last week.

Dhaka and national captain Khaled Mahmud and Halim Shah however made sure that they carefully negotiate four overs after Al-Shahriar was dismissed in the 30th over.

Halim, who scored a century in Dhaka's victory against Barisal in the first game, was batting on 14.

Chittagong, the only team to collect full eight points from the first game, will be hoping for the same overcast weather with no chance of rain for at least another day to take a firm grip of the match.

For Dhaka nothing was going right since their upset defeat in the one-day match against Barisal.

Rashedul Haq, coming in for an

out-of-sort discarded national opener Mehrab Hossain, scored only eight before being clean bowled by Alamgir.

Alamgir then trapped Sanwar dead in front of the wicket for four before tempting former national captain Naimur (1) to play a pull shot straight down the throat of Faisal at square leg. The young right-arm seamer finished the day with 3-30.

RAJSHAHI V SYLHET

Away at Rangpur Cricket Garden, Rajshahi bowled Sylhet out for 102 in a desperate effort to make up for the disappointing defeat against Chittagong last week.

A depleted Sylhet without their star middle-order batsmen Alok Kapali and Rajin Saleh showed little signs of improvement since they were shot out for 80 in their first innings against Khulna.

Only Parvez Ahmed scored a defiant 31 against a variable Rajshahi attack.

Left-arm spinner Saifullah Khan was the pick of the Rajshahi bowlers with 4-43. Shahjada claimed three wickets for 23 runs while Aminul, who opened the attack, took two for seven.

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PHOTO: STAR

YOU'D HAVE LOVED TO BOWL OUT THERE: Chittagong captain Akram Khan (C) talks to selector GM Nowsheer Prince (L) while teammate Minhazul Abedin looks on after rain interrupted the National Cricket League match between the port city side and Dhaka at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

Draw at Karachi



SPORTS REPORTER

Three centuries on the final day thwarted Bangladesh A's hopes of achieving a victory against Defence Housing Authority (DHA) in their four-day Patron's Trophy match in Karachi yesterday.

The bat continued to dominate the ball at the Karachi National Stadium as the home team, forced to follow-on after being dismissed for 158 on Wednesday, in reply to the tourists' formidable first innings total of 452-9 declared, eventually scored 473 for six at the close of play.

After DHA resumed the day on 173-3, Amir Iqbal (129), Mohtasim Ali (107) and Sharjeel Ashraf with an unbeaten 103 ensured that the match ended in a draw.

None of the Bangladesh A bowlers could show the same fire as they did during the first innings.

Medium paceman Tareq Aziz

Khan, who had earlier claimed four first innings wickets, and skipper Mushfiqur Rahman took two each.

The national second string side's next fixture is against Pakistan Telecommunications Company Limited (PTCL) at the same venue starting on Sunday.

The tour is being used by Bangladesh selectors to assess the likely players who will tour Zimbabwe in February.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard on the final day of the four-day Patron's Trophy match between Bangladesh A and Defence Housing Authority (DHA) at the Karachi National Stadium yesterday:

BANGLADESH A: First innings 452 for nine in 127.3 overs (Shahriar 218, Ashraf 45, Mushfiq 38; Rizwan 4-116, Umair 3-101)

DHA: First innings 158 all out in 48.1 overs (Rizwan 62; Tareq 4-36, Mushfiq 2-31, Alamgir 2-60)

DHA: Second innings (overnight 173 for 3 in 59 overs)

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Alamgir	18	2	58	0
Monir	28	8	68	1
Tareq	23	5	66	2
Mushfiq	25	9	67	2
Manjarul	19	4	73	1
Rajin	10	1	30	0
Hannan	6	2	25	0
Ehsanul	3	1	16	0
Ashraful	10	3	48	0

Result: Match drawn.

USA make bid for WC games

BBC ONLINE, undated

The United States of America, Bermuda and the Cayman Islands are all hoping to host matches in the 2007 Cricket World Cup.

The event will centre on the West Indies, with a total of 51 matches beginning in April 2007.

Four first round groups, involving six matches, will each be based in a single region to reduce travelling time.

The five traditional Test venues plus Grenada, St. Kitts-Nevis, St. Lucia, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines make up the 12 territories in the bidding.

The organising committee will release detailed requirements for hosting matches on 19 February, signalling the start of the bidding process.

If they do not succeed in securing a first-round group, smaller regions could secure part of the 24-match round-robin second round.

The Super Six format used in the last two tournaments has been expanded by two teams.

Former West Indies spinner Lance Gibbs is chairman of the USA bid, which is expected to be based in Florida.



PHOTO: STAR

A Mukti joddha attack at the Victoria post during their clash in the Western Union Premier Division Football League at Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium yesterday.

ICC working on chucking



BBC ONLINE, undated

Cricket's governing body is to carry out scientific research into spin bowling to try and weed out chucking.

New allegations have been levelled at Sri Lanka off-spinner Muttiah Muralitharan, who has been cleared in the past.

International Cricket Council (ICC) general manager David Richardson said research would help reduce pressure on umpires who report actions.

"Let's compare what Shane Warne does with his elbow to Saqlain [Mushtaq] and all other spinners and try and find out the facts," he said.

"Then we're in a better position to advise umpires as to what they

need to watch out for."

An illegal delivery is defined as one where the bowler straightens his elbow after his arm passed his shoulder on the way up.

The ICC has a two-stage process in place to analyse actions of players who are reported.

Richardson, a former South Africa wicketkeeper, said umpires are no longer being asked to call a throw during a Test match.

"You're playing with bowlers' careers so you have to be correct before you right someone off as a chucker," he told Sky Sports.

"We're not going to ask umpires to make a decision.

"We're saying, 'If you suspect something is wrong, report it and we'll take it from there.'"

Muralitharan, Pakistan's S h o a i b

SEE PAGE 14 COL 4

Lara back to the top

REUTERS, London

West Indies batsman Brian Lara has reclaimed top spot in the Price WaterhouseCooper's Test ratings after his innings of 202 in the first Test against South Africa.

India's Rahul Dravid moved up to second place in the rankings issued on Wednesday following his innings of 233 and 72 not out in their second Test victory over Australia.

Another Indian, Sachin Tendulkar, slipped out of the top 10 for the first time since 1993.

Batsman	Points
Lara	903
Dravid	880
Hayden	870
Ponting	863
Inzamam	792
Richardson	765
Gilchrist	759
Vaughan	757
Gibbs	754
Kallis	751

SEE PAGE 14 COL 4