



Did U Know?

Graham Gooch of England became the only player to win three consecutive man-of-match awards in the 1987 World Cup.



Moin Khan
(Pakistan wicketkeeper)
"I was always hoping to get a way back into the Test team, so I kept myself fit and continued to play domestic cricket."



ESPN
English Premier Football League
Highlights
Repeat at 11:30 am
Sportscentre Hindi
Sport News
Live at 8:30 pm
STAR Sports
English Premier Football League
Highlights
Repeat at 9:30 am
Sportsline Tonight
Sport News
Live at 8:00 pm

Star WHIZZ KID
COMPETITION 203
Tick the correct answers, post to
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Win attractive prizes
Competition closes at 8 pm
Jan 2, 2004 and draw

- Who clinched the Intercontinental Cup?
Booca Juniors - AC Milan - Inter Milan
- Who won the 2003 Asian footballer-of-the-year award?
Mahdavi Kia - Inamoto - Cha Kyung-bok
- Who is the Pakistan Cricket Board chairman?
Shaharyar Khan - Tausiq Zia - Intikhab Alam
- Who won the FIFA player-of-the-year award?
Zidane - Ronaldo - Henry

Name
Class Roll No.
School Address
Phone: (If any)

Pepsi volleyball

UNB, Dhaka

Holder Bangladesh Rifles and Bangladesh Army moved into the men's group final of the Pepsi National Volleyball Championship beating their respective rivals in the semifinals at the court near National Hockey Stadium yesterday.

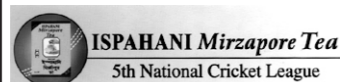
The riflemen had an easy passage to the final as they eliminated Bangladesh Police 25-18, 25-9, 25-12 while the Army team had to fight hard to beat Titus Club 25-10, 25-18, 22-25, 25-12.

In the women's group, Bangladesh Jute Mills Corporation (BJMC) and Bangladesh Ansars and VDP reached the final with wins over Rajshahi and Rangpur respectively.

Ansars were 25-9, 25-3, 25-15 winners while BJMC recorded a 25-16, 25-10, 25-05 win.

The finals of both men's and women's groups will be held this afternoon. The third place-deciding matches in both groups will be held in the morning.

Ray of hope for League



SPORTS REPORTER

The grounds committee of Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) might be forced to soften its stance on postponing the ongoing Mirzapore Tea National Cricket League from the New Year.

Last week member-secretary of the committee Rafiqul Islam said that it was necessary to halt the country's lone first-class competition from January 1 to mid-February to allow the preparation of pitches for the ICC Under-19 World Cup that begins at 21 grounds including eight venues on February 15.

But now it appears the League will run its course if the Board gets the curators they asked for from abroad.

Desperately looking to increase the manpower on the ground, BCB president Ali Asghar and chairman of the grounds committee Shafiqur Rahman Munna went to India to hire some experts.

Asghar also discussed the issue with his Indian counterpart Jagmohan Dalmiya. But the BCB boss, who had a more important agenda of confirming India's scheduled tour of Bangladesh in April next year, didn't reveal any-

thing after returning home yesterday.

However, Munna spoke at length about the attempt to obtain the expertise of five curators from Kolkata.

"We had a cordial discussion with Dalmiya and he assured us of providing a few curators once their domestic duties were complete," said the ground committee chief.

But Dalmiya, who is also the president of the Cricket Association of Bengal, regretted that it wasn't possible to entertain the request for the moment.

Munna, however, remained optimistic that at least three ground experts would arrive in the country by January 10.

"We are trying to get five experts so that they can make up for the shortage of available manpower to make the World Youth Cup a success as well as to provide adequate staff to continue the domestic cricket simultaneously," he added.

However, his member-secretary Rafiq was rather unhappy having to wait for the arrival of additional manpower. He thought it would hamper their task.

"We are already behind schedule and it is not humanly possible for us to keep things rolling unless we get the additional staff immediately. Had we got the extra hands right we could've easily maintained our routine of National

League," grumbled Rafique.

The under-pressure ground committee secretary said that he would meet with officials of both the tournament committee and the CDDM (Cricket Committee of Dhaka Metropolitan) to find a formula for an uninterrupted domestic calendar.

Meanwhile, tournament committee chairman Shah Nurul Kabir Shaheen said that whatever has been said by the grounds committee they were determined to go ahead with the National League according to the fixture.

"My job is to organize tournaments and it's their duty to have the grounds in shape. I will talk to the BCB president to fix this problem," said Shaheen, who is also an advisor to Asghar.

The CDDM chairman Khondoker Jamil Uddin outlined his plan to start the Premier Division Cricket League by April 3.

He however said that the glamorous one-day competition involving the top ten Dhaka club would be played on single league basis this year.

"Most of the clubs have agreed to the proposed April 3 start. Besides, the top clubs also prepared to play if the League is single league instead of two-day competition which was the case last year," Jamil.



Action from yesterday's Western Union Premier Division Football League clash between Dhanmondi Club and Sheikh Russell Krira Chakra at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur.

Sk Russel blank Dhanmondi

SPORTS REPORTER

Sheikh Russel Krira Chakra registered their first win in the Western Union Premier Division Football League after they beat Dhanmondi Club 2-0 in one of the day's two matches at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

In a one-sided game, Murad Ahmed Milon and Moroccan forward Rashidi netted one apiece in each half for the winners.

Milon put Sheikh Russell ahead with a header off a Rashidi cross from the right in the 36th minute while Rashidi sealed Dhanmondi's fate with a brilliant volley in the 68th minute.

Dhanmondi were reduced to ten men in the 77th minute when referee Maruf Sikder sent him off for his second bookable offence.

The spirited Sheikh Russell side, who held defending champions Mohammed Sporting Club to a goalless draw in their opening match, are third on goal difference behind big-spenders Brothers Union in the ten-team league with

each having four points from two matches.

On the other hand, Dhanmondi have lost both their fixtures so far

Both Arambagh and Badda have three points from two matches.

FIRST DIVISION

Teams	M	W	D	L	GF	GA	Points
Abahani	2	2	-	-	8	1	6
Brothers Union	2	1	1	-	5	0	4
Sheikh Russell KC	2	1	1	-	2	0	4
Badda Jagarani	2	1	-	1	2	2	3
Victoria	2	1	-	1	2	3	3
Arambagh KS	2	1	-	1	5	3	3
Mohammedan SC	2	-	2	-	1	1	2
Muktijoddha	2	-	1	1	0	1	1
Dhaka Wanderers	2	-	1	1	2	7	1
Dhanmondi	2	-	-	2	1	4	0

Hattrick: Saiful Islam Khokon (Abahani) against Dhaka Wanderers.
Leading goalscorers: 4 goals--Khokon (Abahani), 3 goalsMaxim (Abahani), 2 goalsRitu (Dhaka Wanderers)

and are bottom of the standings.

In the second game of the day, Arambagh Krira Sangha registered a solitary goal win over Badda Jagarani Sangsad.

After a barren first half, Arambagh skipper Asadur Rahman scored the winner in the 65th minute.

In a Western Union First Division match at the Bir Shrestha Shaheed Mustafa Kamal Stadium in Kamalapur, Deepali Jubo Sangha edged Prantik Krira Chakra 1-0.

Bashir Ahmed's goal nine minutes from time separated the teams.

PTCL take lead BCB's scoresheet gaffe



SPORTS REPORTER

Fast bowler Anwar Hossain Munir grabbed four wickets for Bangladesh A but that wasn't enough to prevent Pakistan Telecommunication Company Limited (PTCL) from taking a first innings lead at close on day two of the four-day Patron's Trophy encounter at the Karachi National Stadium yesterday.

The home side were 39 runs in front as they finished on 262 for five having earlier dismissed the tourists for 223. Left-arm spinner Manjarul Islam Rana was the other wicket-taker for the A side. Manjarul also shone with the bat by making 29 as his team could add

only 22 runs to their overnight total of 201 for seven.

Unfortunately, it was not possible to get an idea of the day's events as the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) again failed to provide a proper scoresheet for the media.

Ever since the A team's tour began, the BCB has only sent unclear, hardly readable, spotted photocopied sheets to the different newspaper offices. Yesterday they sent a brief score with only patchy information and misspelled names of players and teams.

It's difficult to fathom how the responsible person(s) at the BCB confidently named the teams Bangladesh and Pakistan!

The score-sheet is extremely important as there is great interest across the nation regarding the performance of the A side in

Pakistan. The team management should also have had the common sense of sending scoresheets through fax or email as the Pakistan Cricket Board's official website updates the scores a day late.

BRIEF SCORE

BANGLADESH A: First innings 223 all out in 100.3 overs (Hannan Sarker 3, Shahriar Hossain 84, Ehsanul Haque 16, Rajin Saleh 47, Ashraf 7, Jamal Uddin 12, Selim 3, Manjarul Islam Rana 29, Anwar Hossain Munir 1, Alamgir Kabir 6, Tareq Aziz Khan 1 n.o., Reaz 4 wickets, Naeem 2 wickets)

PTCL: First innings 262 for 5 wickets in 77 overs (Naeem 34, Akil 1, Zaidi 0, Fayyaz 21, Shiraz 84 (batting), Shahzad 87, Zulkarnain 30 (batting), Munir 4 wickets and Manjarul one wicket).

Elements the winner



AFP, Hamilton

Bad light and rain conspired to end the first cricket Test between New Zealand and Pakistan in a draw here Tuesday after a fiery bowling spell by Mohammad Sami had given Pakistan a slim chance of glory.

Sami destroyed the top order as New Zealand collapsed to seven for 52 in their second innings before struggling back to 96 for eight, a lead of 196 before the rain intervened with 35 overs left in the day.

In a game that had been dominated by New Zealand for three days and then appeared destined for a draw on the fourth, Sami rewrote the script with a withering spell of pace bowling in the dying hours.

With the morning session lost because of the weather, New Zealand abandoned hopes of scoring quick runs in search of a result and the afternoon loomed as a batting exercise.

After 10 overs the score had edged up from four to 13 when Sami struck, taking out Lou Vincent (4) and Stephen Fleming (0) in the space of five balls.

In a 13-over spell, in which he fired the ball down repeatedly in excess of 150 kilometres an hour, Sami took four for 32. He then took another wicket after tea to finish with the remarkable figures of five

for 44 from 16 overs.

His Midas touch extended to the field where a brilliant throw from the deep had Craig McMillan run out at a time when New Zealand needed to survive rather than pick up stray runs.

Umar Gul was nearly as menacing as Sami, and had Mark Richardson caught behind and then Chris Cairns clean bowled in successive balls. Jacob Oram staved off the hattrick.

When it appeared as if Pakistan could snatch a victory that had never looked likely over the first four days, Daniel Vettori and Oram staged a desperate rescue mission with New Zealand's best partnership of 43.

Oram was New Zealand's top scorer, unbeaten on 23 after 85 minutes at the crease.

The New Zealand side, which had cursed the rain that interrupted play when they had the momentum on the fourth day, were in the end thankful for the final downpour bringing the game to an end.

The second and final Test in the series starts at the Basin Reserve in Wellington on Friday before the sides play five one-day internationals.

SCOREBOARD

Final scoreboard on the fifth and final day of the first cricket Test between New Zealand and Pakistan at Auckland on Tuesday:
NEW ZEALAND: First innings 563

(Fleming 192, Vettori 135 not out, Richardson 44; Shabbir 5-117)

PAKISTAN: First innings 463 (Moin 137, Hameed 80, Inzamam 51; Tuffey 5-87)

NEW ZEALAND: Second innings (overnight 4-0)

Richardson c Moin b Gul	15
Vincent c Farhat b Sami	4
Fleming c Moin b Sami	0
Styris c Umar b Sami	20
McMillan run out (Sami/Moin)	2
Cairns b Gul	0
Oram not out	23
Hart b Sami	0
Vettori c Umar b Sami	20
Tuffey not out	11
Extras: (lb-4, w-1, nb-6)	1
Total: (For 8w kts in 41.1 overs) 96	
Fall of wickets: 1-13, 2-13, 3-42, 4-42, 5-42, 6-47, 7-52, 8-95	
To bat: Butler	

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Sami	16	4	44	5
Shabbir	10	7	10	0
Gul	8.1	2	25	2
Kaneria	4	2	6	0
Razzaq	3	1	7	0

Result: Match drawn and two-match series tied at 0-0.

Man-of-the-match: Stephen Fleming.

Second Test: Dec 26-30, Wellington.



TASTES SO SWEET: Juventus' Czech Republic superstar Pavel Nedved kisses the Ballon d'Or trophy handed out by France Football magazine for the 2003 European Footballer of the Year on December 23 in

Nedved rules Europe



AFP, Paris

Juventus midfielder Pavel Nedved has been named the 2003 European Footballer of the Year, it was revealed here on Monday.

The prize, known as the Ballon d'Or in French and handed out by bi-weekly France Football magazine, was awarded after a poll among journalists from the 52 countries affiliated to European football's governing body UEFA.

Nedved, 31, captained the Czech Republic to the Euro 2004 finals in Portugal and last season led Juventus to the Champions League final, where they lost to AC Milan on penalties, though he was suspended for that match at Old Trafford.

"I still don't understand how I could have won. I didn't even dream about it," said Nedved who earned 190 votes to win with

Arsenal's France international striker Thierry Henry second with 128 votes and AC Milan captain Paolo Maldini third with 123 votes.

The 1998 winner Zidane of France, who won the FIFA World Player of the Year award last week for the third time, came fifth.

"But now that I can touch the Ballon d'Or I believe it even if it's difficult to believe that I am ahead of players like Thierry Henry, Zinedine Zidane or Andrei Shevchenko," said Nedved.

"Of course it's an intense emotion, even more so because I'm winning 41 years after the Czech football idol, our greatest player Josef Masopust."

And the Czech player, who finished fourth in the FIFA poll, said that he intended to retire when he reaches 34.

"I'm still planning to stop in 2006. But that gives me time to achieve my goals at club and national level," said Nedved.

change how I manage my career, although I might train even harder than before to prove that I deserve it!"

LAST TEN WINNERS

AFP, Paris

Last 10 European Footballer of the Year winners:

- 1994: Hristo Stoichkov (BUL)
- 1995: George Weah (LBR)
- 1996: Matthias Sammer (GER)
- 1997: Ronaldo (BRA)
- 1998: Zinedine Zidane (FRA)
- 1999: Rivaldo (BRA)
- 2000: Luis Figo (POR)
- 2001: Michael Owen (ENG)
- 2002: Ronaldo (BRA)
- 2003: Pavel Nedved (CZE)

Note: Since 1995, players from outside Europe but playing for a European club were eligible to win the trophy.

Leonine chess from today

SPORTS REPORTER

The Victory Day Leonine Grand Masters Chess Tournament begins at the National Sports Council (NSC) conference room today.

Ten players including four GMs will take part in the round robin league basis competition, organized by Leonine Chess Club.

The organizers arranged a press conference at the NSC conference room yesterday.

"Prime Bank has extended their support to make the competition a success," said secretary of the Leonine Chess Club Manzoor Hossain.

Three thousand dollars will be t o



Grand Master Niaz Murshed speaks to reporters during a press conference, organised in connection with the Victory Day Leonine Grand Masters' Chess Tournament, at the NSC yesterday.

Mashrafe's 2nd op successful

SPORTS REPORTER

Injured fast bowler Mashrafe-bin Mortuza underwent a successful second operation in Australia on Monday.

He had to have a screw adjusted in the left-knee.

"He is now fine. Dr David Young operated the knee," said member-secretary of BCB cricket committee Asif Ali Khan yesterday.

The Australian surgeon had operated on the 20-year-old's other knee four weeks ago.

PM hands over Sports Award

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia yesterday asked all concerned to rethink whether it was wise sending teams or players abroad to competitions without attaining a minimum level standard.

She made the suggestion while honouring six sportsmen and an organizer for their contribution to the development of country's sporting arena.

At a function held at the International Conference Centre, the Prime Minister handed an 18-carat gold medal and a certificate to each of the recipients of the National Sports Award 2003.

State Minister for Youth and Sports Fazlur Rahman also spoke at the function attended by a large number of eminent sportsmen and sports organisers of the country.

THE AWARDEES

Salam Murshedi, Kaiser Hamid (football), Jahangir Shah Badshah and Aminul Islam (cricket), Mahbub Alam (athletics), Senior Warrant Officer M Abdus Salam (swimming).

Lt Col (ret'd) Hesamuddin Ahmed (organiser)

Biman Div One chess champs

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Biman retained their First Division Chess League title beating Kamalpur Samaj Kalayan and Krira Sangha in the last round at the NSC auditorium yesterday.

The national flag carrier side finished the table with 50 points to win their 11th title.

Grand Master Ziaur Rahman, IM Reefat Bin Sattar, IM Abdullah Al Rakib, IM Enamul Hossain Razib, FM Rezaul Haque and IWM Rani Hamid played for Biman.

Star-studded Leonine Chess Club with three Grand Masters became runners-up securing 48.5 points.

GM Alexei Barsov, GM Alexander Fominyh, GM Niaz Murshed, Abdul Maleq, Md Monjur Alam and Rafiqul Islam played for Leonine.

Bangladesh Ansar finished third with 41.5 points.

Asian U-19 hockey

B'desh meet S'pore today

UNB, Dhaka

Bangladesh take on Singapore in their last group match of the first AHF Cup Under-21 Hockey Tournament in Singapore today.

The match will start at 6pm (Bangladesh time).

Bangladesh, placed in four-team Group A, already reached the semifinals by winning their two previous matches. In the event opener, they beat Hong Kong China 5-0 on Sunday and then Iran 8-0 on Monday.

Top two teams of the meet will earn right to play in the Asia Cup Hockey.

Bangladesh lift F'ship kho kho

BSS, Dhaka

Bangladesh national team emerged champions in the Friendship Cup Kho Kho Tournament after defeating Guwahati Club of Assam 23-18 in the final on Monday in Guwahati, India.

Bangladesh beat Rangia district team 20-21 and Sonapur Sports Association 15-13 in their previous fixtures of the tournament.

TODAY'S MATCHES

Western Union Premier Div Football League
Mohammedan vs Victoria (4:00 pm)
Venue: Sher-e-Bangla Nat'l Stadium, Mirpur
Patron's Trophy 4-day match
Bangladesh Avs PTCL (Day-3)
Venue: Karachi National