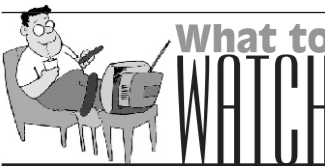




## Did U Know?

The match between New Zealand and India at Auckland on February 14, 1981 was the first in New Zealand in which coloured clothing, white balls and black sightscreens were employed.



## ESPN

Pakistan vs New Zealand

Second Test, Day One

Live at 3:57 am

South Africa vs West Indies

Second Test, Day One

Live at 4:55 pm

Sportscentre Hindi

Sport News

Live at 9:00 pm

## STAR Sports

Australia vs India

Third Test, Day One

Live at 6:00 am

English Premier Football League

Arsenal vs Wolves

Live at 5:54 pm

Sportline Tonight

Sport News

Live at 8:00 pm



## TALK TURKEY



## Rahul Dravid

(India cricket vice-captain)  
"A lot has been said unnecessarily about his form. We believe he's in great touch and hitting the ball really well. We're looking out for a big score from him in Melbourne." On Sachin Tendulkar.



Tick the correct answers, post to  
**The Daily Star**  
Win attractive prizes  
Competition closes at 8 pm  
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- Who clinched the Intercontinental Cup?  
Booca Juniors AC Milan Inter Milan
- Who won the 2003 Asian footballer-of-the-year award?  
Mahdavikia Inamoto Cha Kyung-bok
- Who is the Pakistan Cricket Board chairman?  
Shaharyar Khan Tauqir Zia Intikhab Alam
- Who won the FIFA player-of-the-year award?  
Zidane Ronaldo Henry

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

## V-Day v'ball

BSS, Dhaka

Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) take on Bangladesh Police while Bangladesh Air Force meet Titas Gas in the inaugural matches of the Victory Day Volleyball Championship at Dhaka Volleyball Stadium today.

Six teams, split into two groups, are to take part in the meet, organised by Bangladesh Volleyball Federation.

BDR, Bangladesh Police and Bangladesh Air Force are drawn in one group, while the other group comprises Bangladesh Air Force, Bangladesh Army and Titas Gas.

The final of the competition will be held on December 31.

# A draw to savour

SPORTS REPORTER



High flying Abahani dropped their first points of the season but can thank the Christmas stars for not suffering more damage in a 3-3 thriller against fancied Brothers Union in their Western Union Premier Division Football league clash at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday afternoon.

The second big match of the league turned out to be a cracker of a contest with fortune fluctuating from one end to the other from the onset. Abahani's Mahmudul Hasan saved his team from a costly defeat when he equalised from a Saiful Islam Khokon pass three minutes from time. Earlier, midfielder Abdullah Parvez had put the Sky Blues ahead within 15 minutes of the start. But Brothers' Ugandan recruits Francis and Okelo replied for the star-studded team. And when national forward Alfaz Ahmed cancelled out Maxim's equaliser to take Brothers 3-2 up, Abahani were looking down the barrel until Hasan's late strike.

Despite the draw, Abahani still lead the table in the 10-team league with seven points from three games. Brothers are tied in the second spot with defending champions Mohammedan Sporting Club with five from three outings.

With two comfortable wins from their previous two matches, a confident Abahani started off in

dream fashion when Parvez shot them in front with a sudden right-footer in the 14th minute.

Parvez's dipping left-footed attempt from outside the box entered the far corner of net after country's number two custodian Biplab Bhattacharya committed a fatal error by trying to grip the ball instead of parrying it. The ball slipped through his hands and rolled into the net (1-0).

Brothers' response to the goal was electrifying as they took control and scored twice within three minutes before the first half had ended.

Defender Francis, who made his first appearance for Brothers yesterday in place of the injured stalwart Rajani Kanta Barman, leveled the margin in the 37th minute. Veteran playmaker Arman Mia curled in a corner which Abahani's custodian Nizam only managed to fist to an unguarded Francis who took no time in sending the ball home with a powerful shot (1-1).

Two minutes later, Abahani were stunned by the brilliance of Alfaz. After receiving the ball on the left flank, Alfaz dodged past his marker, saw Nizam out of his line and unleashed a curving right footer from the top of the box that crashed against the net (2-1).

But there was still time for more drama before the breather. In the 45th minute prolific Russian striker Maxim, the son of Abahani coach Anatoly, pounced on a defensive lapse and placed the ball past an advancing Biplab (2-2).

It was Maxim's fourth goal in three outings.

Undaunted, Brothers took the lead once again when Okelo headed in a trademark rainbow corner taken with the outside of the right boot by master midfielder Arman in the 65th minute.

With the clock ticking away, Abahani launched a comeback effort reminiscent of their famous 3-2 victory against the same opposition way back in 1985.

Maxim was fouled by Brothers' national defender Mohammed Sujon apparently inside the box in the 86th minute. Although it looked suspiciously close to a penalty, referee Ramkrishna Ghosh however thought otherwise and awarded a free kick to Abahani.

Maxim took the free kick which was half cleared by a diving Biplab. But the ball went to Khokon who unselfishly passed it to Hasan and the defender didn't make any mistake from point-blank range (3-3).

Yellow cards: Joy, Sila (Abahani), Parvez Babu, Liton and Gomez (Brothers Union).

## TEAMS

**ABAHANI:** Nizam, Osamanu, Sila, Mahmudul Hasan, Masood Rana, Abdullah Parvez (Faisal), Pranotosh (Nayan), Joy, Sandro, Maxim and Khokon.

**BROTHERS UNION:** Biplab, Francis, Nazrul, Sujon, Parvez Babu, Arman, Iqbal, Liton, Gomez (Tito), Okelo and Alfaz.

Referee: Ramkrishna Ghosh.



SCORING THE MAXIM-UM: Abahani's Russian striker Maxim, who scored in all his team's three games so far, was irrepresible all through as seen in this picture against Brothers Union during their Western Union Premier Division Football League encounter at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

# Their biggest challenge



AFP, Melbourne

Australia face their biggest cricket challenge in over a decade in the third Boxing Day Test here with India one-up in the series with two matches to play.

In what seemed an outrageous suggestion at the onset of the series Australia are on the brink of their first series loss at home for 11 years.

Australia are feeling the affects of playing without their talisman bowlers, Glenn McGrath and Shane Warne along with the injured Jason Gillespie against a team regarded as one of the best batting sides in the game.

Much of Australia's hopes rest with paceman Brett Lee, back into the team after an injury and sur-

gery to his ankle.

Lee has played in just four losing Australian Tests in his 35 Tests and none of the losses were in live matches as they all came after a series had been decided in Australia's favour.

And Lee has only experienced a loss once on Australian soil, against England at the Sydney Cricket Ground in January this year when Australia had to do without injured pair Warne and McGrath.

Lee finds himself in a similar position here, leading a thin Australian attack, without McGrath, Warne or Gillespie.

"He wants that responsibility. He's talked about stepping up to the plate," Australian captain Steve Waugh said of Lee on Thursday.

"He's done that in one-dayers and the time is right for Brett to take up the challenge and to assume the

mantle of strike bowler and he doesn't get an opportunity better than the Boxing Day Test."

Indian captain Saurav Ganguly acknowledged Lee's impeccable record against India 13 wickets at an average of 14.15 in his first two Tests four years ago but said the fast bowler would find it hard without McGrath or Gillespie bowling at the other end.

"He's got a bit of pace," Ganguly said. "But I've always thought of bowling like batting, you bowl in pairs. And without McGrath at the other end it's a different ball game."

"Suddenly he's become the spearhead of the attack."

Australia believe India are susceptible to pace but Waugh also wants Lee to be able to restrict runs particularly in-form Rahul Dravid and VVS Laxman.

SEE PAGE 14 COL 4

# Lara scare before all clear



AFP, Durban

The West Indies, already hard hit by injuries, had a scare Wednesday when captain Brian Lara was taken to hospital for precautionary X-rays after being hit on the left arm during practice for the second Test against South Africa starting at Kingsmead Friday.

Manager Ricky Skerritt said Lara was taken to hospital for X-rays after being hit on the left forearm by a net bowler while batting at Kingsmead, but that he was later cleared to play in his 100th Test match.

"Brian's fine," Skerritt said after Lara had left the hospital.

"The X-rays revealed that there were no broken bones," he said in comments quoted by the SAPA news agency.

Coach Gus Logie earlier revealed that opening batsman Chris Gayle

and pace bowler Corey Collymore had both been ruled out of the match because of hamstring injuries.

Logie said the injuries provided opportunities for young players to prove themselves but it was not clear which of the touring youngsters would play.

Uncapped specialist batsman Dwayne Smith and reserve wicketkeeper Carlton Baugh, who has played in two Tests are the contenders for Gayle's batting place.

Fast bowler Adam Sanford, who took five wickets in the rain-hit match against Border last weekend, is likely to slot into Collymore's place if the West Indies decide on an all-seam attack, but left-arm spinner Dave Mohammed will also be considered.

The West Indies went into the first Test in Johannesburg, which South Africa won by 189 runs, without a specialist spin bowler because Gayle was expected to bowl a reasonable number of overs

off-spin.

But Gayle tore his hamstring early in the match and did not bowl.

Logie said the final decision would be made after a discussion with former batting star Viv Richards, the convenor of selectors, who joined the squad in Durban.

The South Africans will go into the match as favourites after a convincing win in Johannesburg. They have no major injury worries, although the selectors will want to be sure that opening batsman Herschelle Gibbs has fully recovered after suffering a broken nose in the first Test.

Experienced batsman Gary Kirsten will return for South Africa after missing the first Test to be at the birth of his first child. South Africa named a squad of 13, so it was not clear which of Jacques Rudolph, Neil McKenzie and Martin van Jaarsveld would make way for Kirsten.

SEE PAGE 14 COL 2

# India A whip Pakistan A

AFP, Calcutta

Naved Latif hammered an impressive 128, but failed to stop India A from posting an 89-run victory over Pakistan A in a triangular one-day cricket tournament here on Thursday.

India virtually batted Pakistan out of the match when they amassed 329-6 off 50 overs after electing to bat, with Gautam Gambhir, Sanjay Bangar, Mohammad Kaif and Yuvraj Singh all smashing half-centuries.

The total proved too big for Pakistan, who were bowled out for 240 in the first big match in four years between the two nations on Indian soil.

Pakistan were rocked by fast bowler Amit Bhandari, who grabbed four wickets to reduce the tourists to 72-6.

They could never recover from these blows despite middle-order batsman Latif's 123-ball knock, which included seven sixes and 11 fours.

Pakistan now need to win their remaining two matches against the hosts and Sri Lanka A to keep alive their hopes of qualifying for the December 30 final.

Sri Lanka top the league table with two wins from as many matches, followed by India (1/2) and Pakistan (0/2).

SEE PAGE 14 COL 8

# BCDF team to play in India

BSS, New Delhi

An invitational under-19 cricket team under the banner of the Bangladesh Cricket Development Foundation (BCDF), will play in the Under-19 Commonwealth Cricket Championship starting outside New Delhi on Sunday.

A total of eight teams including two Indian sides, namely India and the India A, are taking part.

The Bangladesh team opens its campaign against India A on December 29 at Tau Devi Lal Stadium, Gurgaon.

They take on South Africa on January 2 at the Tau Devi Lal Stadium and meet Sri Lanka in their last group encounter on January 7 at Feroz Oval in Haryana. The final is slated for January 11.

SEE PAGE 14 COL 1



## Western Union Premier Div Football League

Arambagh vs Dhanmondi (3:00 pm)

Muktijoddha vs Badda Jagaroni (5:00 pm)

Venue: Sher-e-Bangla Nat'l Sta-dium, Mirpur

**Nat'l Cricket League (Day-1)**

Dhaka vs Sylhet

Venue: Sylhet Stadium

Khulna vs Chittagong

Venue: Comilla Stadium

Rajshahi vs Barisal Stadium

Venue: Barisal Stadium

# A team beaten



SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh A suffered their first setback on their tour of Pakistan when Pakistan Telecommunication Company Limited (PTCL) handed down a crushing eight-wicket defeat in the Patron's Trophy at the Karachi National Stadium yesterday.

In a game where batsmen reigned supreme, PTCL successfully chased a victory target of 236 in just 46.5 overs on an eventful final day.

The visitors, who drew their first four-day game and won both their one-day engagements, were awestruck by two blistering knocks from Babar Naaem (118 not out) and Fyaz (80) after they produced what appeared to be a match-saving second-inning total of 339.

The marauding PTCL duo virtually toyed with the Bangladesh A bowlers after they were given 57 overs with which to chase the target.

Naaem's match-winning knock was the second century on the day after Rajin Saleh scored 114.

Resuming the day on 97, the diminutive right-hander reached the magical three figures at a venue where he hogged the international spotlight during Bangladesh's Test series against Pakistan last August.

But Rajin's century and an addition of 104 runs to the overnight total of 235-4 were not enough for the tourists to avoid a defeat.

The second-string Bangladesh

attack that looked brilliant only the previous day with Anwar Hossain Monir finishing with a seven-wicket burst was miserably out of depth in the absence of Mushfiqur Rahman, who returned home following an injury after the first game against Defence Housing Authority.

Left-arm spinner Manjarul Islam could only claim the wicket of Fyaz but not before all the damage had been done. Aqeel Mukter was the other local batsman to be run out after making six.

However, despite the defeat the good news for the visitors was that their top batsmen have returned among runs.

Ashraf showed definite signs of returning to form with a superb 108 in the second innings after a reborn opener Shahriar Hossain his 84 in the first innings.

Bangladesh A will play their next match against WAPDA (Water And Power Development Authority) from December 28 to January 1.

## SCORES IN BRIEF

**BANGLADESH A:** First innings 223 all out in 100.3 overs (Shahriar 84, Rajin 47, Manjarul 29; Riaz Afridi 4-39)

**PTCL:** First innings 327 all out in 93 overs (Khalid 99, Malik 87, Zulqarnain 63 not out; Monir 7-81, Alamgir 2-35)

**BANGLADESH A:** Second innings 339 all out in 102.4 overs (Ashraf 108, Rajin 114, Monir 28, Manjarul 20)

**PTCL:** Second innings 236 for two in 46.5 overs (S Naaem 118 not out, Fyaz 80)

**Result: PTCL won by eight wickets.**

# Zia shares lead

SPORTS REPORTER

Grand Master Ziaur Rahman posted his first win in the Leonine Grand Masters Chess tournament with an easy win over his Bangladeshi compatriot Amin in the second round at the National Sports Council conference room yesterday.

With that win, Zia was sharing the lead along with International Master Reefat-bin-Sattar and Russian GM Alexi Barsov with each having 1.5 points.

Reefat beat Indian Dinesh while Barsov beat IM Abdullah Al-Rakib.

GM Niaz Murshed, GM Alexander of Russia and Dinesh are sharing second spot with a point each.

The third round will start at the same venue today at 3 pm.

# Magura cricket

OUR CORRESPONDENT

Shahid Mintu Sangha became champions in the Econo Cricket League defeating Islampurpara Sporting Club by four wickets in the final at the Magura Stadium yesterday.

Islampurpara batted first and scored 112 in the stipulated 35 overs. Shahid Mintu Sangha replied with 116-6 in 26.2 overs.

## SCORES IN BRIEF

**ISLAMPURPARA SC:** 112 in 35 overs (Sohel 47, Kaikobad 23, Masum 11; Koton 4/14, Firoz 2/9, Utpal 1/13).

**SHAHID MINTU SANGHA:** 116 for 6 in 26.2 overs (Sazzal 27, Jehad 17, Rubenish 15, Gora 13; Sohel 2/14, Litu 2/26).

**Result: Shahid Mintu Sangha won the match by 4 wickets.**

# Cairns blow for Kiwis



AFP, Wellington

The New Zealand cricket team, psychologically on the back foot going into Friday's second Test against Pakistan, received further bad news on the eve of the match as a virus struck all-rounder Chris Cairns.

Pakistan are on a roll after destroying the New Zealand batting top order on the final day of the first Test, before rain and bad light intervened to ensure the match ended in a draw.

They will be further strengthened at the Basin Reserve Test with the expected return of Shoab Akhtar, the world's fastest bowler, who missed the first encounter because of a slight hamstring strain.

New Zealand coach John Bracewell tried to put a positive spin on the impact of the first Test batting collapse, saying it was just a glitch.

"We lost some psychological points which we need to regain, based around continual focus," Bracewell said.

"It's a first session, fresh game, and those are the things we'll be talking about, how you recover from a psychological deficit."

"It's a matter of gaining that momentum straight away."

But the condition of Cairns adds to the problems, and batsman Richard Jones, 12th man in the first Test, has been recalled to the squad

as cover.

"Chris has a virus and hasn't eaten at all today, we're concerned about it and he's in doubt for tomorrow," manager Lindsay Crocker said, adding a decision on Cairns' fitness would be left until the last minutes.

Cairns is aiming to become the sixth cricketer to take 200 wickets and score 3,000 Test runs, but in Hamilton he went wicketless off 17 overs to remain on 197 Test scalps, while with the bat he scored 11 and

"The outfield is obviously quite heavy, they've had some rain which will make the run-ups a bit heavier which may be an advantage to us as well," he said.

"There are little things that can change the momentum. They've got bowlers who run in hard, run in very fast, if they're going through a soft outfield it'll make it hard."

A satisfied Basin Reserve groundsman Trevor Jackson confirmed he had provided Bracewell's wish of a dry, consistent surface without the excessive seam movement of last year's 10-wicket win over India.

He was not so confident about the weather and expected several disruptions in the opening days.

The first session will again be the key if New Zealand bat first how the top-order blunt Sami and Akhtar while if they bowl first how Daryl Tuffey, Ian Butler and Jacob Oram snare early wickets with some expected early seam movement.

## TEAMS

**NEW ZEALAND** (from): Stephen Fleming (captain), Mark Richardson, Lou Vincent, Scott Styris, Craig McMillan, Chris Cairns, Jacob

Speedster Mohammad Sami snared five wickets to reduce New

0 to sit on 2,867 runs.

His absence could mean a recall for off-spinner Paul Wiseman and more bowling onus on Scott Styris and Craig McMillan.

While the Black Caps were struggling in the Test build up, Pakistan were on a roll.



SIZE MATTERS: Brothers Union's Ugandan defender Francis (L), who stands around 7 feet, clears the ball against Abahani's Brazilian recruit Sandro yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

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