



## Did U Know?

The 100th goal of FIFA World Cup was scored by Schiavolo, an Italian player in 1934.



## Faruque Ahmed

(BCB chief selector)  
"He was a true friend of Bangladesh cricket. To be honest he was the architect behind the change of domestic structure. It was bad luck that we couldn't get him for a long time." While paying tribute to Eddie Barlow.



**ESPN**  
English Premier Football League  
West Ham vs Chelsea  
Live at 6:40 pm  
Bolton vs Liverpool  
Live at 8:55 pm  
New Zealand vs Sri Lanka  
Second ODI  
Live at 5:00 am (Tuesday)  
**STAR Sports**  
Australia vs South Africa  
Third Test, Day Two  
Live at 5:00 am (Tuesday)



**Fifth Nitol-Tata Nat'l Football League (Super Six)**  
Mohammedan vs Samabesh Club (4:00 pm)  
Venue: Bangabandhu Nat'l Stadium  
**Akte! Premier Div Cricket League**  
Old DOHS vs Abahani  
Venue: BKSP-2  
Biman vs Mohammedan  
Venue: Fatullah Cricket Stadium  
Victoria vs Agrani Bank  
Venue: Comilla Dist Stadium  
City Club vs Indira Road  
Venue: Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium  
Brothers Union vs Sonargaon Cricketers  
Venue: BKSP-1  
Orient SC vs Kalabagan  
Venue: Bogra Dist Stadium

## CCDM imposes fine on MSC

SPORTS REPORTER

The Cricket Committee of Dhaka Metropolitan (CCDM) imposed a fine on Mohammedan Sporting Club for attacking match officials after their Premier Cricket League encounter against Old DOHS at the Fatullah Cricket Stadium on Friday.

The CCDM's technical committee fined the popular club Tk 5,000 and declared its cricket team coordinator Tariqul Islam Titoo persona-non-grata for the rest of the season, informed CCDM chairman Khondokar Jamiluddin. The committee took the decision yesterday on the basis of reports of two umpires -- Akhteruddin Shahin and Nadir Shah -- and match referee Rafiqul Alam. However, the action against the young organiser seemed to be a harsh one as Titoo was not involved during the incident. But reportedly, he showed his temper during the hearing causing the ban.

After the nerve-tingling finish, Mohammedan supporters and officials hurled abusing languages and assaulted match officials on their way back to the dressing room as they thought that their team were deprived of a crucial over boundary by the umpires.

SEE PAGE 13 COL 3

# Abahani top dog in Super Six

SPORTS REPORTER



National Football League semi-finals.

The two sides produced entertaining football on the New Year's Day at the Bangabandhu National Stadium but Abahani, despite enjoying superior ball possession, were unfortunate not to maintain their all-win run in the Super Six.

Brothers went ahead through Siraji on the stroke of halftime but their lead was short lived as Farhad equalised for the sky-blues 50 seconds after the break. It was Brothers' turn to sweat next as they fell behind after a clinical finish by Abahani's substitute midfielder Parvez. The men in Orange did it in the 72nd minute with Nigerian striker Paul Nwakwuchi converting a penalty.

Abahani, who carried four bonus points from the first stage, led the six-team table with 11 points while Brothers secured the second place with nine.

Mohammedan, Mukhtijodha and Bangladesh Army are still in the race to join the two in the semis.

In spite of their places guaranteed in the last four before yesterday's clash, the two title aspirants fielded full strength squads and the defending champions rushed early blood.

The Gopibagh outfit could have gone ahead after four minutes but Emily, the young national striker who scored two outstanding goals in the recently concluded SAFF Championship in Pakistan, spitted through by Siraji near the Abahani goal.

Abahani hit back in the next minute with Farhad chipping a left-flank cross but Tipu's header from handshaking distance went out. Halfway through the first half, Farhad and Tipu threatened to score but Brothers custodian Mohammed Ali handled the ball outside his area to rescue his side.

Abahani could not utilise the freekick in the danger zone but their rivals used a setpiece in the 42nd minute to take a first-half lead. It was veteran Masud Rana who floated a freekick from mid-pitch that caught the Abahani backline napping and an onrushing Siraji flicked the ball past an advancing goalkeeper Nizam for his second goal in as many

matches. The former Abahani rightback was Brothers' hero in the previous round, having scored the match winner against Mukhtijodha as a substitute.

Just after the match resumed, Brothers defenders found themselves helpless as national striker Farhad, chasing a cross by Obaidur from the right, spectacularly placed an overhead shot to beat Ali and level the score.

Farhad, who scored twice in Abahani's 6-1 rout of Samabesh Club in the previous round, forced a fine save by Ali in the 64th minute but the shaven-headed forward's defence splitting run down the right set up winger Parvez to drill a low drive into the near post in the very next minute.

Brothers soon returned to contention when Paul calmly placed a spotkick into Nizam's right hand post after Abahani fullback Obaidur had tripped his Brothers counterpart Parvez Babu inside the box.

Another slip by Obaidur allowed Abul almost a free run but Abahani's Cameroonian centre-back Marshall's inspired defending defied the Bangladesh international shot at Nizam's goal.

The sky-blues, who possess arguably the most formidable

SEE PAGE 13 COL 4



Brothers defender Shuvra goes for a sliding tackle against shaven-headed Abahani striker Farhad during their Nitol-Tata NFL clash at the Bangabandhu National Stadium on Sunday.

# Ganguly's fate decider?

Cricket

REUTERS, Mumbai

India's tour of Pakistan, which starts this week, could decide the future of former captain Sourav Ganguly.

Ever since the 33-year-old left-hander was recalled into the Test team for the tour, he has been the centre of attention and a target for critics.

Ten days after he was abruptly dropped for the third Test against Sri Lanka, Ganguly was chosen ahead of Mohammad Kaif by the selectors who said his experience would be vital in a high-profile series.

Ganguly's prolonged batting slump is still a concern, however, and it remains to be seen whether the team management will choose him over an in-form Yuvraj Singh in the packed middle-order.

India arrive in Lahore on Thursday and play a three-day warm-up match from Saturday before the three-Test series.

Ganguly's recall, following a meeting with Board of Control for Cricket in India president Sharad Pawar, a powerful federal minister, has been seen as a move to give India's most successful Test captain an opportunity to make an honourable exit.

Ganguly, who led India to their maiden Test series victory on Pakistani soil in 2004, has maintained a stoic silence despite all the speculation about his immediate future.

He got into trouble with the selectors for not heeding instruc-



SOURAV GANGULY

tions to turn out for his home state Bengal in a round of the national championship, the Ranji Trophy, and will now join the national team after playing the next round from Tuesday to Friday for match practice.

This is the third series between India and Pakistan in less than 24 months and sporting encounters between the two still generate huge interest in both cricket-crazy

countries.

On the 2004 tour Ganguly was at the height of his glory but when Pakistan toured India in March last year Ganguly was in a slump.

His loss of batting form affected his leadership, prompting a change of guard as well as his axing, after India had earlier in the season lost their first home series to Australia in 35 years.

In the drawn three-Test series against Pakistan at home, Ganguly scored just 48 runs at an average of 9.60. In four of the six one-day series matches that he played before being banned for slow over-rates, he contributed just 31 runs at an average of 7.75.

Inspiring leadership by Inzamamul Haq helped Pakistan to recover from 0-2 down to record four straight victories and win the one-day series 4-2.

Pakistan are on a high after defeating Ashes champions England in a Test and one-day series at home.

There are fears that the Ganguly issue could prove a distraction for the Indian team, who are also going into the series after a successful run.

Under the new management of captain Rahul Dravid and coach Greg Chappell, India defeated Sri Lanka 2-0 in a three-Test series at the first match was washed out, and they have won eight of their last 11 one-day internationals.

# Old DOHS seek revenge against Abahani

SPORTS REPORTER

AFP, Lahore

With a hope to maintain their all-win record in the Akte! Premier Division Cricket League, defending champions Old DOHS meet fallen giants Abahani in an eighth round match at BKSP today.

Table-toppers DOHS crossed a major hurdle on Friday with an exciting three-run win against Mohammedan Sporting Club to raise their collection to maximum 14 points while Abahani, who have one of their weakest teams in decades, expectedly continued their poor show losing their fourth match.

However, DOHS captain Akram Khan must not forget about his old side Abahani, one of the most successful Premiership clubs, who spoiled their championship party last season.

On the other hand, Mohammedan will face a tough challenge against Biman at the Fatullah Cricket Stadium to recover from their previous round's heart-breaking defeat. Mohammedan and Biman are joint third in the table with ten points.

Second-placed Victoria Sporting Club, two points adrift of the leaders, take on Agrani Bank at the Comilla Stadium to continue their dream-run with a team having little known players.

Smarting under a 34-run defeat against Victoria in the previous round, Brothers Union are pitted troubled Sonargaon Cricketers. Mohammad Ashraf will lead the big-spending Sonargaon after club officials stripped Al Shahrir off the captaincy after a five-wicket defeat against Kalabagan in the last round.

Runners-up City Club face Indira Road Kriira Chakra at the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium while the match between Kalabagan and pointless Orient will take place at the Shaheed Chandu Stadium in Bogra.

# Another ton for Ponting

REUTERS, Sydney

Australia captain Ricky Ponting celebrates his 100th Test appearance in the third and final Test against South Africa starting at the Sydney Cricket Ground on Monday.

Ponting will join an elite band of just nine Australians to reach the milestone, a decade after he burst on to the world stage in 1995, scoring 96 on debut against Sri Lanka.

"It's a great milestone for anybody to play 100 Test matches," Ponting told a news conference on Sunday.

"It's an absolute pleasure to play one but to be around long enough to play 100 is something that anybody can be very proud of."

At 31, Ponting is showing no signs of ever slowing down and is arguably in the best form of his career.

"Ten years of international cricket has passed me by pretty quickly," he said.

"I still feel pretty much the same now as when I first started so that's obviously a good sign for me. The enjoyment's still there as much as it's ever been and my body feels great."

SEE PAGE 13 COL 2

# Sydney Test from today

Cricket

AFP, Sydney

Australian captain Ricky Ponting is aiming to start the new year the way he ended 2005, with runs and another victory against South Africa in the decisive final cricket Test starting here on Monday.

The Proteas must beat the Australians on an anticipated trending Sydney Cricket Ground wicket to square the series after going down by 184 runs in the second Melbourne Test, a match that Australia won comprehensively in all departments.

Ponting heads into 2006 as Test cricket's officially top-ranked batsman, having snatched the honour away from South Africa's Jacques Kallis after becoming the year's leading runscorer with 1,544 runs at 67.13 in 15 matches.

"On a personal note, I guess it's been a decent year. I don't get too carried away with it," Ponting said on Sunday.

"Hopefully, this year I can average about the same and the team can keep improving."

"There was a lot of disappointment with the Ashes tour of England (lost series 2-1) the way it was, but the way we've bounced back...has been pretty pleasing."

He admits he is already looking ahead to the home Ashes series against England.

"It's only I think six Test matches (four against South Africa and two against Bangladesh) away from the



TONIC FOR THE 100: Australia captain Ricky Ponting cools off with a drink during a training session at the SCG on Sunday.

PHOTO: AFP

# 'No home advantage'

Cricket

AFP, Lahore

Pakistan skipper Inzamamul Haq on Sunday tipped India as favourites in the forthcoming Test series, saying a home advantage and Pakistan's recent series win over England would count for little.

"We will need to work extra hard. For me, India will be favourites in the series," Inzamam told reporters ahead of the three Tests and five one-dayers -- the third series between the arch rivals in two years.

India arrive on January 5 and start the tour with a three-day side match against Pakistan 'A' on January 7. A final tour itinerary is likely to be released on Monday.

Inzamam said the victory over England would not be of great help.

England came to Pakistan on the back of their September Ashes triumph, their first in 18 years, but lost the three-Test series 2-0 and the one-day series 3-2.

"The win against England is a thing of the past now, and since there is not much difference in pitches and other things in India and Pakistan, there will be no home advantage," said Inzamam.

Inzamam, who was in top form

with 431 runs against England in three Tests, said India have an experienced squad.

"India has a strong batting line up and with Sourav Ganguly's return it has further strengthened. Although Rahul Dravid does not have experience as a captain he is a



INZAMAMUL HAQ

wise batsman and will mature as captain."

The Pakistan captain, however, said his team have an edge in fast bowling.

"Our fast bowlers did well against England and in that department we have an edge over India. I think my quicks have the ability to

help us beat India," said Inzamam.

Express paceman Shoaib Akhtar took 17 wickets in Tests against England and with his changed attitude and resolve looked a transformed bowler. Pakistan also have Mohammad Sami, Navedul Hasan and fit-again Umer Gul.

Inzamam said Pakistan match India in the spin department.

"We are not weak in the spin department because we have Danish Kaneria, Arshad Khan, Shoaib Malik and Shahid Afridi so we can match India who have Anil Kumble and Harbhajan Singh," he said.

The Pakistan skipper said he wants pitches to assist his pace bowlers.

"I am thankful to Wasim Akram for advising us to prepare hard pitches keeping in view the good form of our bowlers in the series against England," said Inzamam, who will meet groundsmen on Monday to devise a strategy.

He disagreed that Pakistan rely heavily on him in batting and Akhtar in bowling.

"Salman Butt, Mohammad Yousuf and Kamran Akmal have batted well in recent matches, so has Afridi and in bowling we also have Naved, Kaneria and others who have done well."

# India getting on ICC's nerves?

Cricket

GUARDIAN, undated

Only days after cricket's great revolutionary Kerry Packer died, the game's leaders are trying to head off another major upheaval.

Key members of the International Cricket Council (ICC) have been meeting at their Dubai headquarters discussing a veiled threat from India to run their own international programme if the Test and one-day schedule is not radically altered.

The new regime of the Board of Cricket Control in India (BCCI) say they have cut a bilateral deal with Cricket Australia to play more games between their national teams, at the expense of the minors - Zimbabwe and Bangladesh - though the Australians deny this.

The Indian negotiators, who want their team to play more one-day games, have a meeting with the England and Wales Cricket Board on 9 January and it is understood they will get a favourable response to their requests.

It is an open secret that the leading cricket nations are unhappy having to play so many one-sided, and unprofitable, matches against the weaker of the 10 Test-playing countries.

The ICC executive meet on 11 January to work out a compromise deal before their full meeting in March. At the October meeting of the ICC in Sydney, there was a report on the practicality of replac-

ing the five-year playing calendar with a six-year schedule. India want to speed up that process.

The decision on who will host the 2011 World Cup is expected in June. Australia, whose turn it is to host the tournament, have yet to make up their minds and India are favourites to step in.

The BCCI deny they are holding the ICC to ransom, but sources told The Observer that there have been heated telephone exchanges between Dubai and Mumbai in the past few weeks. "They [the ICC] are very, very angry about this," said a source close to the negotiations. "They see it as a challenge to their authority and reckon it will undermine the whole structure of the game if individual countries act like this. It is a very disturbing development."

A key figure in the showdown is the new vice-president of the BCCI, Lalit Modi, a thrusting young television executive and skilled cricket administrator. Modi told The Observer: "We have already had bilateral meetings with Australia and will be making an announcement shortly. There is no threat to the ICC Trophy here next year. We are just fine-tuning the calendar and there will be an equal number of games for India and the other main countries. There will be reciprocity between all of them."

"We are meeting England on the ninth, ahead of the ICC executive board meeting on the eleventh. We have had a positive response from member countries we have spoken to. This is not a challenge to the ICC. This is just a fine-tuning.

"We will be having bilateral talks also with South Africa and New Zealand. The old programme was always a problem for member nations. India was never listening to what they were saying under the old regime [headed by Jagmohan Dalmiya, who was recently ousted]. Under the new regime it is. I think this will be fair to all countries."

James Sutherland, the chief executive of Cricket Australia, denied there was a split between the BCCI and the ICC but said: "It is a well documented fact that more than half of international cricket's revenue has its source out of India."

It is this fiscal buoyancy - thanks largely to the phenomenal success of one-day cricket on the subcontinent - that has encouraged the new young bloods who have moved into the BCCI leadership to chance their arm. Modi claimed last week that Indian cricket was the number-one sports brand in the world. It is some claim, but the figures are impressive.

Sponsorship of the India shirt brings in \$27.12million a year - outstripping even the Brazil football deal with Nike (\$16million a year) and top clubs Juventus (\$22.2m), Chelsea (\$17.5m) and Manchester United (\$16.8m). The BCCI have completed several major deals in recent weeks, with bidders clamouring to be associated with their brand. The biggest is with Air Sahara for \$70m over four years.

It is estimated Indian cricket generates \$90m a year overall.