

Dhaka clinch JFA Cup

SPORTS REPORTER

Goalkeeper Sultan Ahmed Shakil pulled off three saves to help Dhaka lift the Second JFA Cup Under-16 football title with a 3-2 victory in the penalty shootout yesterday.

The regulation 90 minutes ended 2-2 at the Bangabandhu National Stadium, taking the final into the tiebreakers.

Man-of-the-match Shakil, who made a brilliant diving save in the very first penalty taken by Tangail captain Liton Barman, stopped efforts by Marufand Raj to bring an end to the show after Jewel Rana, Kibria and Ranabir had converted their spotkicks for Dhaka.

It was Tangail, however, who took the lead in the match when Awal scored from an 11th minute penalty kick. Dhaka equalised on the stroke of the breather when Biplab drove a volley into the roof of the net just inside from the penalty area.

Controversial Dhaka forward Jewel Rana, an over-aged player who was denied a chance to play for Narayananj in the first edition

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Did U Know?

Ken Rosewall, the oldest Australian Open singles champion, was 37 years 2 months in 1972 when he defeated Mal Anderson in the final 7-6, 6-3, 7-5.



"I left my idols behind me now. That means something. I'm very pleased. But they still stay my heroes from back in the old days, Becker and Edberg. I'm definitely on a great roll at the moment."

After winning the Australian Open crown.



Roger Federer

(Swiss tennis star)



TEN Sports

India vs Pakistan
Third Test, Day Four
Live at 11:00 am

ESPN

Sportscentre
Live at 9:30 pm
English Premier Football League
Liverpool vs Birmingham City
Live at 1:55 am (Thursday)

STAR Sports

English Premier Football League
Blackburn Rovers vs Man United
Live at 1:55 am (Thursday)

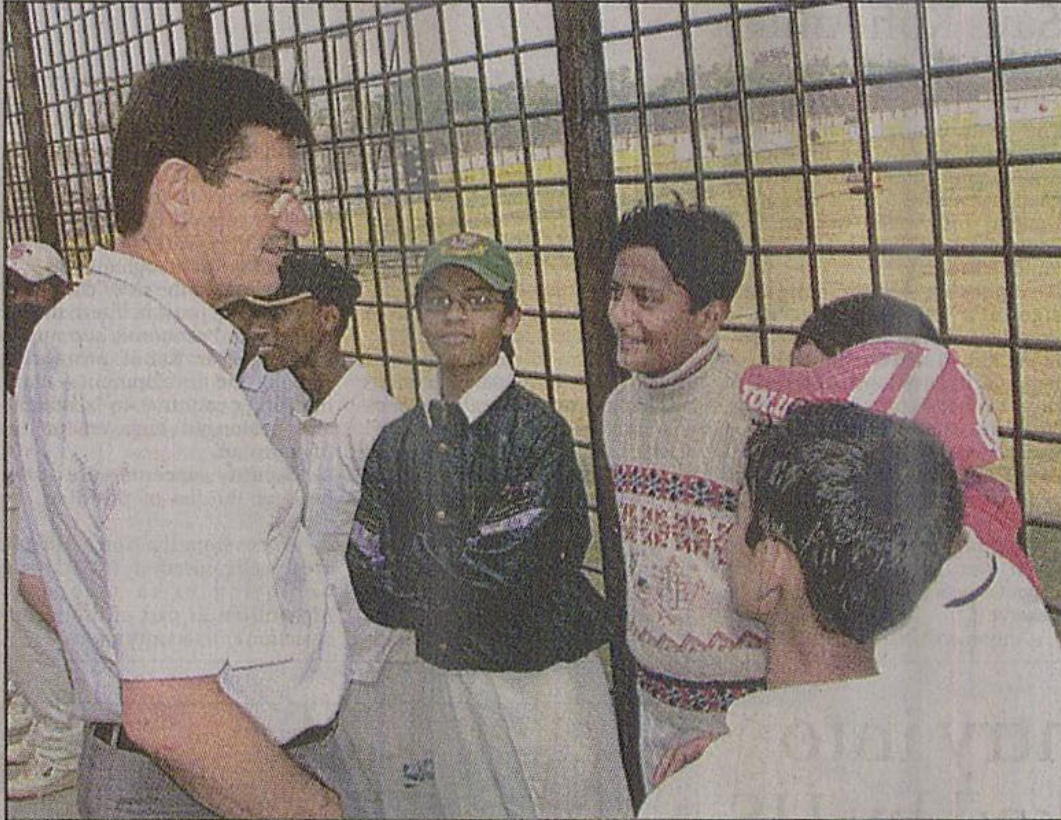
Partex ride on James ton

SPORTS REPORTER

Habib Moballik James struck a hundred as Partex Sporting Club registered an 80-run victory against Uttara Sporting Club in the First Division Cricket League at the City Club ground yesterday.

It was the fourteenth victory for Partex, who have already confirmed their promotion to the Premier League, after 15 matches. James hammered 111 and Munna scored 70 as Partex amassed 339-5 in 50 overs while Uttara, in reply, were bundled out for 259.

At the Dhaka University ground, Lalmatia Club (211-6) beat Young Pegasus B (210-10) by four wickets.



DO YOU KNOW AUSSIES WILL BE HERE? Steve Barnard, manager of the Australian security team, talks to cricketers of tomorrow while inspecting the Chittagong Divisional Stadium on Tuesday.

Inzamam Pak cricketer of the year

REUTERS, Karachi

Captain Inzamamul Haq was named 2005 Pakistan cricketer of the year on Tuesday in the inaugural awards chosen by the country's cricket board.

"We considered a total of nine Tests and 22 one-dayers before selecting the players," said Lt. General Tariq Wasim Ghazi, chairman of the board's selection committee.

"Inzamam was picked not only because of his performances but also due to the impact he has had on the team as captain," he added after the decision based on matches in the calendar year.

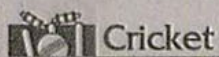
Inzamam struck 431 runs, including three Test centuries, during England's visit to Pakistan before Christmas after compiling 568 runs in three Tests in the tour of India and on his only appearance during the trip to the West Indies.

Wicketkeeper Kamran Akmal was chosen as Pakistan's emerging cricketer of the year.

Pakistan Cricket Board chairman Shahryar Khan said seven players had been short-listed for

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Aussie team satisfied



STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

The four-member team from Cricket Australia and Australia Cricket Association (ACA) expressed their satisfaction after having a close look of the two venues and other facilities including security measures in the port city ahead of Australia cricket team's tour to Bangladesh next April.

After arriving in Chittagong yesterday morning, the visitors accompanied by three Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) members -- Mirza Salman Ispahani, Shahin Aftabur Reza Chowdhury and Alamgir Mohammad Sirajuddin -- went straight to the Chittagong Divisional Stadium (CDS), which earned the ICC's approval as a Test venue, at Sagarika in city's Kattali area.

The team, led by Australia team manager Steve Barnard, later inspected country's second Test venue MA Aziz Stadium, Hotel Agrabad, Chittagong Club and

Hotel Peninsula. The other members of the inspection team are general manager (operations) of Cricket Australia Michael Brown, security manager of Cricket Australia Reg Dickson, ACA official Paul Marsh.

They also had a meeting with Chittagong Metropolitan Police (CMP) officials to get an impression of the security measures during Australia's one Test and one ODI in Chittagong. Deputy Commissioner (north) SM Ruhul Amin made a multi-media presentation of the security measures.

The Australian officials, whose prime concern of the visit was about the security, were astonished to find two Test venues in one city.

"Chittagong is definitely one of the few cities in the world to have two recognised Test venues," Steve Barnard told reporters at the CDS.

"The Australian officials were very much pleased with the overall arrangements here ahead of their upcoming tour," said BCB member Salman Ispahani to The Daily Star.

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Stage set for DOHS

SPORTS REPORTER

Defending champions DOHS will be out to seal their second successive Premier Cricket League title when they meet Bangladesh Biman today at BKSP in a Super Six clash.

A win today will wipe out any doubts or mathematical equations about retaining the trophy for Akram Khan-led DOHS, who took an unassailable lead in the table with 24 points from 14 rounds after a massive 121-run victory against Mohammedan Sporting Club on Monday at the same venue.

All the eyes, however, definitely will be on the match between Sonargaon Cricketers and Mohammedan Sporting Club at the Fatullah Cricket Stadium as the outcome of the match will play a vital role for the runners-up position.

Second-placed Sonargaon, two points ahead of Mohammedan with 20 points, can confirm the second position on their Premiership debut in the top flight with a win in the penultimate round.

On the other hand, a Mohammedan win will open up the race for second place as Victoria Sporting Club also have a chance if they can beat Brothers Union at the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium.

Meanwhile, Cricket Committee of Dhaka Metropolis (CCDM) has rescheduled the last round fixture. As per new schedule DOHS meet Victoria at Fatullah Stadium and Biman play against Sonargaon at Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium on February 3 while the curtain will be drawn on the coveted competition with the Mohammedan-Brothers match at the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium on February 4.

Faisal wants to make a name for himself

REUTERS, Karachi

Pakistan's Faisal Iqbal is determined to step out of the shadow of his uncle Javed Miandad after striking his maiden Test century on Tuesday.

Faisal hit an unbeaten 103 on the third day of the final Test against India but needs to go some way before upstaging the exploits of his uncle, who played 124 Tests and 233 one-dayers before coaching the team in three separate stints.

"I have learnt a lot from my uncle. He has always been there to help me out and polish my skills. But I have only wanted to do one thing and that is to make a name for myself," he said.

Faisal was drafted in to the Pakistan team to replace injured skipper Inzamamul Haq for the third Test after an absence of 2-1/2 years.

"I speak a lot to my uncle but once you are at this level you need to do all the hard work yourself," he said.

Faisal has been overlooked by the selectors since October 2003 when he last played a one-dayer against South Africa while the last of his 11 Test appearances came against the same opposition in January the same year.

"While I was out of the squad my only aim was to get back. I wanted to be a part of this excellent team. I failed in the first innings and I was under pressure. I applied myself and the pitch also eased out."

Faisal also scored 87 against India in the tour match at Lahore earlier this month and was praised by visiting captain Rahul Dravid.

"It's a really good feeling when you and gives you tips for the future. It really boosted my confidence and it helped me today," he added.

Harper meets his charges

AFP, Nairobi

New Kenya cricket coach Roger Harper held a first face-to-face meeting with his players on Monday as part of a squad assessment ahead of the tour of Bangladesh in March.

Cricket Kenya (CK) selectors have named a provisional squad of 24 players to start training under the former West Indies all-rounder and national team coach. Harper, who has signed a one-year contract with Kenya, has insisted he would have to make an assessment of all the players before naming his final team to tour Bangladesh.

CK chief executive Tom Tikolo said the selected players include long-serving skipper Steve Tikolo, who is currently playing club cricket in Bangladesh.

Tikolo said Ravindu Shah, the resourceful opening batsman who has spent nearly two years on the sidelines with a nagging knee injury may return to the team pending a doctor's advice on his condition.

Pakistan in driving seat



AFP, Karachi

India's seasoned batsmen faced a test of character to save the series after Pakistan took a vice-like grip on the decisive third Test here on Tuesday.

The hosts, led by Faisal Iqbal's maiden century, staged a com-

manding batting performance on the third day to take their second innings to 511-5 by stumps, an overall lead of 518.

India's star line-up, led by captain Rahul Dravid, Sachin Tendulkar and Virender Sehwag, will have to bat out at least five sessions to prevent Pakistan from winning the match and the series after the first two Tests were drawn.

It is an unenviable task even

though the National Stadium wicket appeared to have eased out from the seaming track that produced 14 wickets on the first day and eight on the second.

The world record for the most successful fourth innings chase in history is 418-7 by the West Indies against Australia in St John's, Antigua in 2003.

The Indians can seek inspiration from their hosts whose first six batsmen scored half-centuries, with Iqbal reaching his hundred in the last over of the day by pulling Anil Kumble for a boundary.

Iqbal, nephew of Pakistan cricket great Javed Miandad, made up for his dismissal for five in the first innings with an unbeaten 103 that contained 12 hits to the fence.

Abdul Razaqa was the other batsman on the crease on 44, having added 109 runs so far for the unbroken sixth wicket with Iqbal.

Mohammad Yousef made 97, skipper Younis Khan 77 and Shahid Afridi 60 to build on half-centuries from openers Salman Butt (53) and Imran Farhat (57) on Monday.

The Indian attack wilted under the assault with Irfan Pathan going for 1-93 from 23 overs, Zaheer Khan 0-93 from 26 overs and Rudra Pratap Singh 1-91 from 21 overs.

Pakistan, who started the day on 173-2, went to lunch untroubled at 270 without further loss and moved to 370-4 by tea.

Younis and Yousef put on 158 for the third wicket, their fourth century partnership in the series, before both batsmen were trapped leg-before by Kumble in the afternoon session.

Younis, leading the hosts in the absence of the injured Inzamamul Haq, was denied his third hundred in the series when he was dismissed for 77. He hit 11 boundaries.

Yousef fell three short of what would also have been his third century in the series. His 97 included 12 fours.

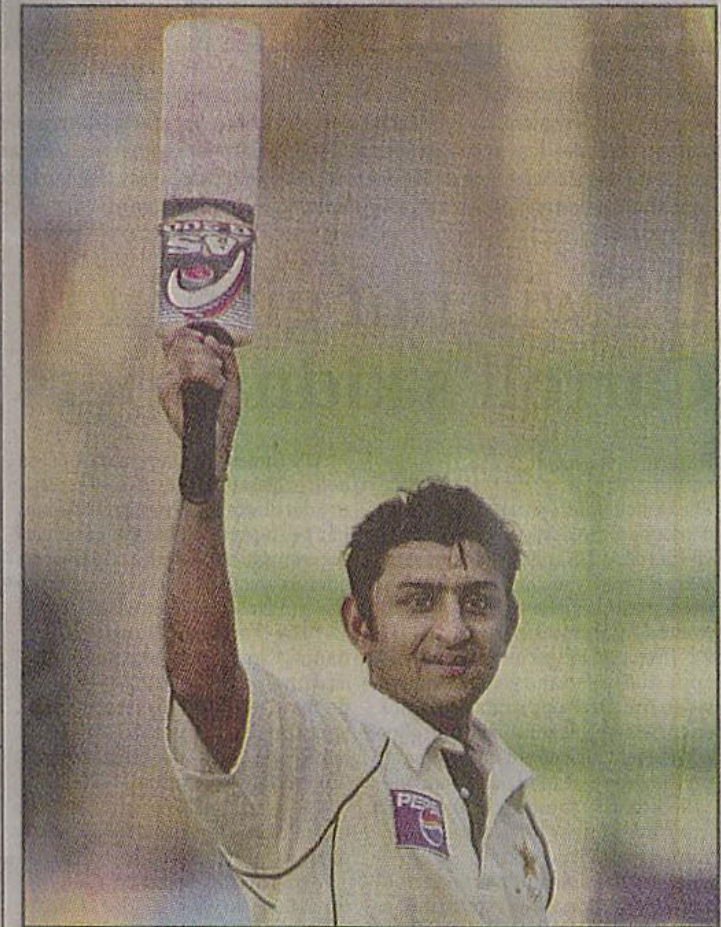
Pakistan fell from 280-2 to 318-4, but Iqbal and Afridi pressed home the advantage by adding 84 for the fifth wicket.

Afridi smashed 60 off 46 balls, reaching his half-century with two fours and a six off consecutive deliveries from Pathan.

The swashbuckling batsman was dismissed soon after tea when he tried to smash Rudra Pratap out of the ground and was caught in the deep by Tendulkar.

The Indian bowlers once again had no clue how to dismiss Younis and Yousef, who had put on 319 in the first Test in Lahore and 142 and 242 in the two innings in the second

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Pakistan batsman Faisal Iqbal salutes the Karachi crowd after scoring his maiden century on the third day of the third and final Test against India at the National Stadium on Tuesday.

CA calls for lifetime bans on racist fans



AFP, Melbourne

Australian cricket's governing body has called for lifetime bans on supporters found guilty of racial abuse following reports that India's top lawyer has been called in to investigate ongoing complaints by South African players.

Cricket Australia chief executive James Sutherland said in a

statement Tuesday that spectators who racially abused players should either face heavy fines or be banned from attending matches.

South Africa's cricketers have complained of racist taunts from small sections of crowds since arriving in Australia in December and authorities have promised a crackdown.

The International Cricket Council (ICC) announced that India's Solicitor General Goolam

Vahanvati would arrive in Australia in mid-February following an official complaint from the United Cricket Board of South Africa.

Vahanvati would speak to venue staff, Cricket Australia representatives and ICC officials in Australia before compiling a report for the ICC, a council statement said.

He would also travel to South Africa and Sri Lanka to interview players and officials from all three sides taking part in the recent Test and current one-day international series, it said.

Sutherland said tougher penalties were needed to "allow cricket administrators globally to ban for life or heavily fine the small handful of miscreants who offend with weak-minded racist taunts from the relative anonymity of packed stadiums."

"The weak-minded minority who are tempted to think 'me too' when they see or hear media reports of racist taunts might think again if they realised they faced bans or huge fines of the type that now apply to spectators who trespass on Australian cricket arenas," he said.

"We intend to talk to Australian federal and state governments who supported us by introducing heavy fines for on-field trespassers to see if a similar approach might be possible for racist spectators," he said.

The ICC statement quoted chief executive Malcolm Speed as saying international cricket needed to act appropriately against racism.

"Once the ICC executive board has received this report, we will be in a position to identify what further steps cricket can take to tackle this issue before it spreads beyond the incidents that have taken place in Australia," Speed said.

The ICC board is scheduled to meet in Dubai on March 20-21.

Travolta to pilot Soccerroos



AFP, Melbourne

Negotiations are being finalised to have Hollywood star John Travolta pilot the plane taking the Australian team to this year's World Cup finals in Germany, reports said Tuesday.

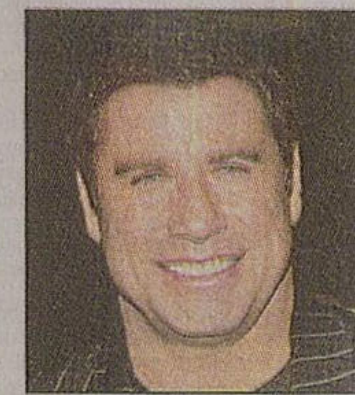
Travolta, a qualified pilot and 'ambassador' of major team sponsor Qantas, was part of chaotic dressing-room celebrations after Australia beat Uruguay in Sydney in November to qualify for the World Cup for the first time in 32 years.

Travolta, who was filmed wearing an Australian team scarf and singing with the rejoicing Soccerroos, made the offer at the time, but reports say the star's management and Football Federation Australia (FFA) officials are finalising details.

FFA insiders told the Melbourne Age Tuesday an announcement was expected as soon as all the minor details were agreed. It was

not clear whether Travolta would pilot the plane out of Australia or be part of the cockpit crew.

The Age said the other option was for the Hollywood celebrity to be at the controls of the plane taking the team from its Dutch training camp to Germany in June.



JOHN TRAVOLTA

Australia is drawn in the same group as World Cup champions Brazil, Japan and Croatia and plays its first match in the finals since 1974 against Japan in Kaiserslautern on June 12.