

## Nat'l Kabaddi finals from Mar 20

**SPORTS REPORTER**

The final round of the Standard Chartered National Kabaddi Championship will begin on March 20 at the Outer Stadium kabaddi court.

Nine district teams split into two groups will take part in the finals. They are: Dhaka, Tangail, Dinajpur, Nilphamari, Bogra, Rajshahi, Jessore, Khulna and Comilla.

## Gaibandha cricket

**OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha**

Ghagot Kirra Chakra crashed Abahani Kirra Chakra by eight wickets in yesterday's Naheed Cotton First Division Cricket League at the Gaibandha Stadium.

Having shot out Abahani for only 34, Ghagot took five overs to reach 35-2. Nadim and man-of-the-match Obaidul each captured five wickets.

## Aussie trio sits atop rankings

**PTI, Dubai**

Australia may have gone down to South Africa in the "greatest one-day match ever", but their batsmen reigned supreme in the latest ICC rankings occupying the top three slots.

Skipper Ricky Ponting, who scored a hurricane 164 in the historic game at the Wanderers in Johannesburg yesterday, leads the table with a record tally of 805 points.

His deputy Adam Gilchrist is second and Andrew Symonds has reached a career-high third spot. The latter is also ranked third in the all-rounder's charts.

South African captain Graeme Smith is back in the top ten at fourth while Mahendra Singh Dhoni is joint fifth along with Sri Lankan counterpart Kumar Sangakkara.

There are a total of five Aussies in the top 10 with Mike Hussey at seventh and Michael Clarke at ninth.

Apart from Dhoni, Yuvraj Singh (eighth) and captain Rahul Dravid (10th) are keeping the Indian flag flying.

Herschelle Gibbs, whose amazing 175 helped set up the victory, has climbed from 22nd place to 11th over the course of the five-match series.

Irfan Pathan finds himself at fifth place in the bowling rankings while Brett Lee, who endured serious punishment in Johannesburg, is down to sixth spot. Nathan Bracken has moved into the top ten at ninth spot.

The series defeat cuts Australia's lead in the ODI table to 15 points. South Africa are likely to be the second-seeded team for the Champions Trophy in India this October which would ensure against an Australia-South Africa encounter at the group stage.

India remain in fourth position, level on points with New Zealand.

## Taimur killed in road accident

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi**

Advocate Taimur Rahman, father of national cricketer Mushfiqur Rahman, was killed in a road accident at Ahammedpur Bazar in Natore yesterday. He was 68.

A speedy bus ran over him while he was crossing the road at Ahammedpur, where he was to board a bus for Jhenaidah. He succumbed to his injuries at about 1pm at the Rajshahi Medical College Hospital.

His body was brought to his Upashahar residence in Rajshahi city in the afternoon. He was to be buried Tuesday night at the Sapura stadium graveyard.

He left behind his wife, three sons and two daughters.

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) expressed deep shock over the death of the father of the national all-rounder Mushfiq.

## Sarwan to miss

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up for the second Test starting here on Friday, he would not confirm their selection for the third Test.

"We're only selecting it one Test match at a time," he said.

Meanwhile there are injury worries facing New Zealand's battle-weary pace attack.

First Test man of the match, paceman Shane Bond, has a sore knee, while Chris Martin and James Franklin have back and side strains respectively.

"They're resting up. Most of them won't bowl again seriously until Thursday mainly because we bowled every day of the Test," Bracewell said.

**SQUAD**

Nathan Astle, Shane Bond, Stephen Fleming (captain), Peter Fulton, James Franklin, Jamie How, Brendon McCullum, Hamish Marshall, Chris Martin, Kyle Mills, Jeetan Patel, Scott Styris, Daniel Vettori.



PHOTO: AFP  
Lazio midfielder Fabio Liverani walks past the Lazio fans after throwing both his shirt and shorts at the end of the January 6 clash against AS Roma at the Olympic Stadium in Rome. The image taken by Paolo Cocco won the 2006 picture of the year 63rd international competition award on March 13.

## Euro MPs advise UEFA to red card racism

**Football**

**AFP, Strasbourg**

The European Parliament has voted to call on European football authorities to take firm action in the fight against racism in stadiums, abandoning matches if necessary.

The Euro MPs urged the Union of European Football Associations (UEFA) and other European sporting bodies to "ensure that referees have the possibility, according to clear and precise principles, to stop match in cases of serious racist offences".

They also called on UEFA to consider handing down sporting sanctions, including exclusion from tournaments, to clubs and national associations where supporters or players commit racist acts.

European football grounds are increasingly the scene of racist behaviour among fans, notably in Italy and Spain.

Late last month Barcelona striker Samuel Eto'o, Spain's top scorer with 18 goals, wanted to leave the pitch a quarter of an hour before the end of a game away to Real Zaragoza in protest at monkey cries from the rival team's supporters.

The Cameroon international was persuaded to stay on the field by the referee and team-mates.

Also, Rio Ferdinand has backed a call for referees to be given the power to abandon matches in which black players are abused by supporters and accused UEFA of not taking the problem seriously.

"For too long now, European football authorities have not taken the problem of racism in the game seriously and refuse to acknowledge how widespread the problem is," Ferdinand said.

## UEFA CUP

### Boro on the brink of history

**UEFA CUP**

**AFP, Paris**

Middlesbrough travel to Rome for a vital UEFA Cup last 16 second leg tie on Wednesday, dreaming of making history.

Australia forward Mark Viduka insists his team are entirely focused on reaching a European quarterfinal for the first time.

"The UEFA Cup is now what we focus on," said Viduka. "It's a huge game for us in Rome and it's all to play for."

Last season, the northeast club also made it to this stage of the competition before a disastrous home leg against eventual finalists Sporting Lisbon of Portugal.

Now Steve McClaren's men want to go to at least one better than last year and build on their 1-0 home advantage to make the quarter-finals in only their second ever excursion into Europe.

"The spirit among the players is excellent, the camaraderie, the togetherness, the willingness to work, playing as a team and people doing their jobs, and doing them very, very well," said McClaren.

"That's the key to winning all games, but especially in Europe. I wanted to have a chance going to Rome and we certainly have that."

After a strong league campaign last year, Boro have struggled this term, and their UEFA Cup tie and then an FA Cup quarterfinal against Charlton, present their most important challenges left this season.

In the first leg, played in dreadful conditions, Middlesbrough mastered their in-form and highly-fancied opponents who are fifth in the Serie A.

"That was a great night and one I will remember for a long time," added Viduka. "Now it's time to do the same again and create history."

Roma boss Luciano Spalletti will be without injured strike trio Francesco Totti, Vincenzo Montella and Shabani Nonda, but said defiantly: "The main concern is up front, but I am quite confident we can win."

Elsewhere Wednesday, German title-chasers Hamburg will attempt to overturn a 2-0 deficit at home to Rapid Bucharest who have already eliminated English Premiership team Everton this season.

Spain's Sevilla are trailing 1-0 down following their trip to Lille.

The French side will again be without the services of midfielder Mathieu Debuchy after a back injury sidelined him for the first leg.

## Dravid delighted with Patel, Kumble

**Cricket**

**REUTERS, Mohali**

India captain Rahul Dravid lavished praise on debutant paceman Munaf Patel and spinner Anil Kumble for their nine-wicket victory over England in the second test on Monday.

"His bowling today was fantastic," Dravid said. "His three wickets in the morning set the game up for us."

Patel, 22, grabbed three quick wickets to run through the England tail on the final day, bowling consistently fast for a match haul of seven for 97 on a grassless Mohali pitch.

"If you are quick, accurate and can swing the ball around, you always pose problems," he told reporters.

Leg spinner Kumble turned the game on its head, finishing with a match haul of nine for 146.

The 35-year-old took five in England's first innings to reach 500 test scalps and dealt three quick blows after tea on day four when England batted again.

"I talk to a lot of European players and know there are big problems in Spain, in Italy and in Eastern Europe."

"It is time for UEFA to stop paying lip-service to the problem. The fines handed out after the England-Spain game last year (when black players Ashley Cole and Shaun Wright-Phillips were abused) were a joke."

"UEFA should look at imposing huge fines or deducting points within tournaments or competitions."

"If UEFA really is serious about kicking racism into touch they should adopt some of the penalties called for in the (EP) resolution and get on with punishing those who defame the game we all love with their backward, racist views."

But Nigerian striker Peter Odemwingie (high) and defender Gregory Toforeau (adductor) should be fit for the French, with Greek Stathis Tavlaridis back from suspension in a central defensive role.

French giants Marseille travel to Zenit St Petersburg Thursday trailing 1-0 and without France international goalie Fabien Barthez, sidelined with a left calf muscle tear, with midfielders Wilson Oruma and Franck Ribery suspended.

Barthez, 34, will be replaced by number two goalkeeper Cedric Carasso.

"Fabien was in great form at the moment. His absence is a bitter blow for the team," admitted coach Jean Fernandez.

Barthez picked up the injury in Sunday's 2-0 league win against St. Etienne and will be out of action for at least ten days.

Swiss outfit Basel take a 2-0 advantage to Strasbourg and Palermo hold a 1-0 lead going to Germany against Schalke.

Levski Sofia and Real Betis have home advantage in winner-takes-all clashes against Udinese and Steaua Bucharest respectively after goalless draws in their away ties.

## Death anniversary of Pushkin tomorrow

**SPORTS REPORTER**

Abahani will observe tomorrow the first death anniversary of Zahidur Rahman Pushkin, the club's former hockey secretary, player and joint-secretary of the Bangladesh Hockey Federation.

A destitute feeding will be held in the afternoon, followed by milad mahfil and prayers after the Asr prayers at the club premises.

## Flintoff reflects

**FROM PAGE 12**

could put on a few runs."

Flintoff played a captain's part, scoring 70 and 51 and taking four wickets to restrict India's first innings to 133 runs.

Flintoff also backed his young side to step up in the final test in Mumbai.

"Every quality we have will have to come to the party next week. We've got a young side. I think we have done well to compete in India."

"Last week in Nagpur, in this game we have shown signs we can compete with the best sides in the world."

## Brazil the best seller

**AFP, Rio de Janeiro**

Foreign transfers of Brazilian footballers have netted a billion dollars in the past decade, according to central bank statistics published Monday in the daily O Estado de Sao Paulo.

Between 1994 and 2005 Brazilian footballers have been one of the most lucrative exports for the South American country bringing in one billion dollars (840m euros).

Transfers in 2005 were the brisket yet amounting to 158 million dollars - a 55 percent increase on 2004.

There were 804 transfers recorded in 2005.

The most expensive was that of Santos striker Robinho who signed for Spanish giants Real Madrid for 25 million dollars followed by Cruzeiro's Fred who joined French outfit Lyon for 18 million dollars.

## Getting girls is easy: Becks

**AFP, London**

England football captain David Beckham's teenage letters admitting being a soccer starlet made it easier to attract girls were sold at auction on Monday.

Sex symbol Beckham's two letters and a drawing of a dog were penned in 1991 when he was 16 years old and had just signed for English giants Manchester United.

Written to a friend called Lee, they show Beckham's first wages were far short of the estimated 100,000 pounds (145,000 euros, 175,000 dollars) a week that the 30-year-old Real Madrid midfielder earns now.

The items fetched 1,058 pounds at Bonhams auction house in Chester, northwest England, as part of a sporting memorabilia sale including a blazer awarded to United legend George Best.

Beckham wrote: "I've been playing in the A-team instead of the B-team, which is brilliant. I've been doing really well with my football as well as with girls, because we are United players they all want to go with us."

"I got my first wage packet the other day and a bonus which come to 120 pounds so that went into the bank and I have got about 250 pounds in there now."

The picture is of a greyhound called Rosie Red at Walthamstow Stadium dog track in Beckham's native east London, where he worked as a glass collector.

Northern Ireland star Best gave the United club blazer to the landlord of the Trafford Hotel pub in Manchester, northwest England.

The publican kept it until his death in 2004, and his widow decided to sell the navy blue garment after Best's death last November. It fetched 13,160 pounds.

A pair of British size seven Reebok football boots signed by Best on May 31 last year sold for 4,700 pounds.

Spanish sources claim that Milan have struck a deal with Atletico Madrid for highly-rated Colombian Luis Amaranto Perea.

The 26-year-old has been linked Manchester United, Valencia and Internazionale in recent months - but Milan look to have won the race for his signature.

Caden Ser Radio has announced that a €7 million deal has been agreed between the two clubs.

Atletico are yet to confirm the deal, but it is also being suggested that Perea has also shaken hands on a four-year contract at the Giuseppe Meazza.

## Milan sign promising Perea

**INTERNET, undated**

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## Mansion wins MU shirts for £60m

**INTERNET, undated**

Online betting company Mansion have won the race to sponsor Manchester United's shirts to the tune of £60 million.

The Observer says that the deal, for £60m over four years, is expected to be unveiled within days by the Glazer family, which took control of the club in an £800m takeover last year.

The sponsorship arrangements will be viewed as a coup for the club, as it dwarfs the current deal with Vodafone, which concludes at the end of the current season.

Mansion, headed by Indonesian billionaire Putera Sampoerna, will yield Man Utd £15m a year against £9m from Vodafone.

Mansion is understood to have beaten off stiff competition from Qatar Airways.

## Mourinho a Klinsmann fan

**Football**

**AGENCIES, undated**

Germany coach Juergen Klinsmann, under fire for poor results and his decision to keep living in the United States, has received support from Chelsea manager Jose Mourinho.

"I am a Klinsmann fan," Mourinho was quoted as telling Tuesday's issue of mass-selling German daily Bild.

"I admire him for his courage. He's got a strong personality. He believes in young talent and promotes players like (Robert) Huth, (Bastian) Schweinsteiger, (Lukas) Podolski and (Philipp) Lahm. And he doesn't change his ideas just because he loses a game. That's great."

The Portuguese coach said he regularly spoke to Klinsmann over the phone, notably to talk about Chelsea's German international defender Huth.

Klinsmann, under scrutiny since a 4-1 friendly defeat by Italy on March 1, has also faced criticism for his decision to remain based in the U.S. instead of moving back to Germany.

In the interview, Mourinho also talked about his own future, saying: "I will definitely coach Portugal one day."

The 43-year-old did not rule out a job in the Bundesliga.

"I could imagine coaching Bayern Munich but they should give me a year's notice so I can learn German," he said.

In the first part of the interview published on Monday, the Chelsea manager, who was in Germany at the weekend, had said he would love Germany captain Michael Ballack to join the English champions.

Ballack's contract with Bayern Munich expires at the end of the season. The 29-year-old midfielder's agent has said he was very interested in a move to Chelsea.

Also, Jose Mourinho insists he does not feel like the best coach in the world despite being hailed the number one for the second consecutive year.

Mourinho, who famously introduced himself to English football as the "special one", was selected by the IFFHA (International Federation of Football History and Statistics) as the world's best coach.

But it is a title the Portuguese coach finds difficult to carry.

"In 2005 I won a championship, an English cup and reached the final stages of the Champions League, obviously I am happy with all this, but I am ambitious and I want to win more."

"For this reason I don't feel like the best coach in the world," Mourinho told Portuguese sports daily Record.

As Chelsea close in on a second straight Premiership title, Mourinho said that he had accepted their Champions League defeat by Barcelona, but being Portuguese he hoped that Benfica would advance past the Spaniards.

"I accepted the elimination much easier than people can imagine," he said.

"I'm not stupid. I know football and its different competitions. We were eliminated by an excellent team. In this type of match between great clubs the details make the difference."

"Barcelona is part of my past and I had many good moments there and I have played two ties with them and won one," he said.

"I'm not against Barcelona. Our defeat to them is already part of the past."

"I said I supported Benfica because I am Portuguese. I would like Benfica to be champions of Europe because they are the only Portuguese team left in the competition."

## Henry keen on Vieira return

**Football**

**AFP, London**

Thierry Henry is relishing the prospect of Patrick Vieira's return to Highbury when Arsenal face Juventus in the quarterfinals of the Champions League later this month.

Vieira quit Arsenal for Juventus before this season got underway and Henry is looking forward to the prospect of being on the opposite side to his France international teammate.

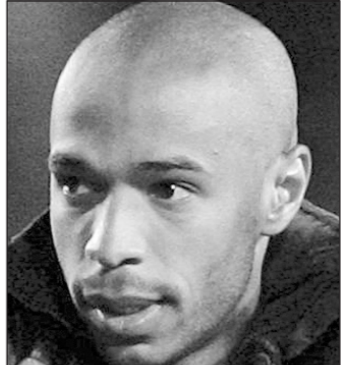
Midfield general Vieira helped Arsenal to three Premiership titles, including two double triumphs, in nine years and is set to receive a hero's welcome on his return to the club in their final year at Highbury.

Henry, who scored twice in Arsenal's 2-1 Premiership win over Liverpool last weekend, after netting the goal which knocked European giants Real Madrid out of the Champions League, said: "I am sure it will be really strange for him."

"The place will go crazy when he steps out on the pitch. He was more than a great servant for the club."

"I'm sure it will be a bit special for him to come back. People might still fancy Juventus to go through because of their history, because they are top of their league and because they don't lose that often, but we have shown it is what happens on the night."

"We respect Juventus a lot but it will be who wants it the most on the night. You never know in football."



THIERRY HENRY

On the domestic front Arsenal's win left them fifth in the Premiership and involved in a race for the fourth and final Champions League qualifying spot with north London rivals Tottenham and north-west teams Blackburn and Bolton.

## C'wealth Games

**FROM PAGE 12**

effort of thousands of people over the last 10 years and the Commonwealth Games will prove to everybody that Melbourne is the sporting capital of Australia," he said.

"Our children's children will not only benefit from the facilities we've created ... but they will also remember having a third of the world's population see Melbourne, Australia, in it's true glory."



PHOTO: COURTESY  
Major General Abdul Mubeen and Ghaib Ahmed Ansari, AGM Marketing, GrameenPhone are seen with the participants of the GrameenPhone Cup Golf tournament during the inaugural ceremony of the two-day meet at the Jessore Golf and Country Club on March 10.

## CROSSWORD

**By Eugene Sheffer**

**ACROSS**

1 Trudge along

5 Fond du —, Wis.

8 Pinnacle

12 Roll-call

13 Mrs. McKinley

14 Glorify oneself

15 PDA, in part

17 Wrestling style

18 Instance of wordplay

19 Wears away

21 Cupid's yokemate

24 Credit-card user

25 Hebrew month

26 Coach's jottings

30 Sermon subject

31 Seed coats

32 Holbrook or Linden

33 Student's tome

35 Tragic

**DOWN**

1 Third degree?

2 Meadow

3 Scrap

4 Further down

5 Narnia critter

6 Commotion

7 One-sided contest

8 Soak up

9 Gunk

10 Angela Lansbury

11 Hollywood clasher

16 Even so

20 Alejandro

21 Playlist listing

22 Garfield's pal

23 Tailless tabby

24 Medleys

26 Shields

27 Louisville's river

28 Rowboat supply

29 "Fish" artist

31 Slightly

34 Chest

35 Reservations

37 Albanian money

38 Classroom furnishing

39 Squared

40 Pianist Peter

41 Aerobic maneuver

44 "Caught ya!"

45 La-la lead-in

46 Inseparable

47 Tease



**CRYPTOQUIP**

U C D A Y D L H Y Q T H A E P O D P

C E L E Y W U W A A E Q U C

Q T C Q O B D Y A . C Q B

N W T A Q L D T N D V E B H P W V Q T H .

**Yesterday's Cryptogram:** IF A DIGITAL CAMERA FAILS, IS IT POSSIBLE THAT THE PROBLEM COULD BE A SHUTTER BUG?

Today's Cryptogram Clue: A equals F

The Cryptogram is a substitution cipher in which one letter stands for another. If you think that X equals O, it will equal O throughout the puzzle. Single letters, short words and words using an apostrophe give you clues to locating vowels. Solution is by trial and error.