

British Council cricket starts

SPORTS REPORTER

The 'British Council Leadership Programme through Sports' got underway at the BKSP Ground on Thursday with a two-day match between Blues Eleven and Green Eleven under-15 teams.

At the close of first day's play, Green Eleven scored 123 for six in reply to Blues' 161 all out. Jayanta Dey scored highest 71 runs for Greens while Mohiuddin picked up three wickets for the Blues.

Bangladesh Cricket Board's game development secretary Ali Hossain and national selector GM Nawsher Prince were present at the inaugural ceremony.

Abahani observe Pushkin's death anniversary

SPORTS REPORTER

Abahani observed the first death anniversary of hockey player, former hockey secretary of the club and joint secretary of Bangladesh Hockey Federation Zahidur Rahman Pushkin yesterday at the club premises.

A festive feeding in the noon was followed by a milad mahfil. Former hockey, football and cricket players, Abahani officials, Bangladesh Hockey Federation officials and relatives of late Monem Munna and Pushkin were present on the occasion.

Gaibandha Cricket

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha

Sunrise Sporting Club handed Chamok Sporting Club an eight wicket defeat in the Naheed Cotton First Division Cricket League held at the Gaibandha stadium yesterday. Chamok Sporting Club were bowled out for a meagre 62 runs in 26 overs. In reply, Sunrise cantered home, scoring the required 63 runs in 9.5 overs.

Shafiqul of Sunrise Sporting Club was declared man of the match for capturing three wickets

School Basketball

SPORTS REPORTER

The Shabab Murshid Memorial School Basketball Tournament, organised by South Breeze School and sponsored by Shabab Murshid Foundation, will begin at the Dhanmondi Basketball Gymnasium today.

Eleven teams divided into four groups will participate in the tournament. The teams are: Green Herald, Mastermind, Scholastica, St. Joseph's, BIT, Maple Leaf, Sunnydale, AKS, BN School, St. Jude's and South Breeze.

Albertini bids bye

REUTERS, Rome

Former AC Milan and Italy midfielder Demetrio Albertini bade an emotional farewell to his playing career after a celebrity match in his honour at Milan's San Siro stadium. Wednesday's game pitted a Milan side past and present against a Barcelona dream team and drew 35,000 spectators.

It brought together former Milan greats, including Marco van Basten, Ruud Gullit, Frank Rijkaard and Franco Baresi, with members of the current Milan and Barcelona sides, such as Andriy Shevchenko and Ronaldinho.

"I have had a lucky career, a career full of success. I could only dream about a last day like this," 34-year-old Albertini was quoted as saying on La Gazzetta dello Sport's website.

"Thank you all, the public, the fans. I will keep you always in my heart." Albertini was part of the successful Milan side of the early 1990s, winning five Serie A titles and the 1994 European Cup. He also won 79 caps for Italy.

The central midfielder spent the second half of last season at Barcelona, where he made five league appearances, but announced his retirement as a player in December after several months without a club.

Clark puts

FROM PAGE 16
Rudolph c Gilchrist b Kasprovicz 10
Boucher c Gilchrist b Clark 16
Hall c Hayden b Lee 24
Boje not out 19
Nel not out 0
Extras (lb-4, nb-14) 18
Total (For 8 wkts in 54 overs) 155
Wicket Fall: 1-24, 2-42, 3-48, 4-61, 5-76, 6-104, 7-124, 8-148
To bat: M Ntini.

Bowler O M R W
Lee 4 2 31 2
Kasprovicz 13 0 44 2
Symonds 10 2 22 0
Clark 13 3 34 4
Warne 4 0 20 0

AUSTRALIA

R Ponting, J Langer, M Hayden, D Martyn, M Hussey, A Gilchrist, A Symonds, S Warne, B Lee, M Kasprovicz, S Clark.
Umpires: Aleem Dar and B Doctrove.



Middlesbrough players celebrate their progress into the last eight at the end of their UEFA Cup match against AS Roma at the Stadio Olimpico on Wednesday.

Boro thru' on away goal



AFP, Paris

Middlesbrough survived a fierce late onslaught from Serie A giants Roma to claim the biggest European scalp in their history on Wednesday as German hopes of victory in the UEFA Cup faded.

A first-half header from Dutch striker Jimmy Floyd Hasselbaink proved decisive for Boro as Steve McLaren's unfashionable Premiership outfit took a shock lead at the Stadio Olimpico.

A goal in each half from Roma's Brazilian striker Amantino Mancini set up a nerve-jangling finale, but Boro keeper Mark Schwarzer kept the Italians at bay with a string of superb saves to restrict the scoreline to 2-1.

That left the tie 2-2 on aggregate with Boro advancing on away goals

at the end of an ill-tempered encounter which had been marred by clashes between rival fans on Tuesday that left three Middlesbrough supporters with stab wounds.

Roma's French defender Philippe Mexes was sent off in stoppage time for two yellow cards, while six other players were also cautioned.

Roma coach Luciano Spalletti admitted Hasselbaink's goal left them with too much to do. Roma and Boro's tense tussle was one of three matches played in the UEFA Cup on Wednesday. Elsewhere, Bundesliga outfit SV Hamburg ran out 3-1 winners over Rapid Bucharest but it was not enough to stop them exiting the competition.

Primera Liga outfit Seville meanwhile advanced to the last eight at the expense of French team Lille, clawing back a 1-0 first leg deficit with goals from Frederic Kanoute and Luis Fabiano to run out 2-0

winners on the night, 2-1 on aggregate.

Hamburg, second in the Bundesliga, fell victim to an away goal as Bucharest survived a brave second leg comeback from the German team.

Thomas Doll's side trailed 2-0 from the first leg but had levelled the tie through goals from German international Benny Lauth (24) and Sergei Barbarez (36).

But Rapid struck a crucial away goal through Mugurel Buga on 51 minutes meaning Hamburg had to score twice to progress.

Dutch international Rafael van der Vaart gave the hosts hope scoring in the 65th minute but Rapid held on to reach the quarterfinals.

Hamburg's exit means Schalke 04 are the only German team left in Europe.

Schalke host Italian side Palermo on Thursday aiming to overturn a 1-0 first leg deficit.

Ctg end Rajshahi run



SPORTS REPORTER

Champions Rajshahi suffered their first defeat in the one-day competition of the Ispahani Seventh National Cricket League when they crashed to a 38-run defeat to Chittagong in the ninth round yesterday.

Rajshahi have already ensured retaining the title with 16 points after winning all their previous eight matches but must forget about the loss as they have to concentrate on the four-day match against the same opponents starting today. Rajshahi and Chittagong are both level on 32 points in the first-class competition with two rounds left.

The victory, however, kept Chittagong's hopes alive to finish limited-overs runners-up with ten points.

A blazing century by opener Uttam Sarkar helped Dhaka return to winning ways after four consecutive defeats when they beat Khulna by 50 runs. In the other match, Sylhet recorded a three-wicket win over Barisal.

RAJSHAHI-CHITTAGONG
Rajshahi heavily missed the services of key all-rounder Mushfiqur Rahman, who is mourning the death of his father, and were all out for 166 in reply to Chittagong's 204 at the BKSP.
Only Farhad Reza (34) and Anisur Rahman Sanchay (32) showed some

resistance as Chittagong spin duo Ilias Sunny and Yasin Arafat destroyed the Rajshahi innings taking six wickets between them.

Earlier, Chittagong rode on man-of-the-match Nazimuddin's 57 off 48 balls to put on board a defendable total on a tricky wicket.

DHAKA-KHULNA
Uttam smashed 124 off 100 balls as Dhaka amassed 296-9 in the allotted 50 overs after electing to bat at the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium. He shared 199 runs during the opening stand with Anwar Hossain, who dug in deep to score 65 off 108 balls. Uttam, who was dismissed by Khulna's most successful bowler Nazmus Sadat (4-59), cracked 19 fours and two sixes. He was adjudged man-of-the-match.

The top-order kept Khulna in contention when they reached 200-3 but the departure of half-centurions Sadat and Sahagir Hossain and skipper Tushar Imran initiated an irreparable collapse as they finished on 246 with more than five overs remaining. Paceman Mohammad Sharif was the wrecker in chief with 5-29 from his seven overs.

SYLHET-BARISAL
A five-wicket haul by former national paceman Hasibul Hossain set the stage for Sylhet's impressive away win at the Barisal Stadium. The man-of-the-match took 5-41 to restrict Barisal to 228-9 in 50 overs. Sylhet overhauled the target with 11 balls to spare.

thanks to quickfire half centuries by opener Imtiaz Hossain (67 off 54 balls) and one-down Golam Mabud (54 off 58 balls).

SCORES IN BRIEF
CHITTAGONG: 204 all out in 49.5 overs (Masum 27, Nazim 57, Faisal 34, Alamgir 1-41, Farhad 1-32, Kamrul 3-17, Shuvo 2-41, Farhad Hossain 1-36).
RAJSHAHI: 166 all out in 45 overs (Farhad 34, Farhad Hossain 26, Sanchay 32 n.o., Gazi Alamgir 1-44, Robin 1-21, Ilias 3-19, Yasin 3-27, Sabbir 1-34).
Result: Chittagong won by 38 runs.
DHAKA: 296-9 in 50 overs (Uttam 124, Anwar 65, Mehrab Jr 21, Sajjad 35, Sadat 4-59, Sadik 3-23).
KHULNA: 246 all out in 44.5 overs (Sadat 55, Sahagir 66, Tushar 49, Sharif 5-29, Rubel 1-35, Mehrab Jr 3-46, Rezaul 1-57).
Result: Dhaka won by 50 runs.
BARISAL: 228-9 in 50 overs (Nadif 28, Sonnet 52, Marshall 37, extras 28, Hasibul 5-41, Nabil 3-35, Sadiqur 1-18).
SYLHET: 231-7 in 48.1 overs (Imtiaz 67, Mabud 54, Sadiqur 29 n.o., extras 20, Sonnet 1-39, Monir 1-45, Marhsall 2-31, Nadif 1-44).
Result: Sylhet won by three wickets.

Al Shahriar denied

FROM PAGE 16

Unfortunately, he has failed to impress the selectors even after being in such good form. Let alone being picked for the national team, he was even neglected for the Bangladesh A team that plays against Sri Lanka A in the first Test starting from March 23.

"There's no doubt that he's the man in form. But I feel sympathetic towards him because his previous inconsistency at the international level have gone against him when it came to being selected for Bangladesh or the A team this time", said former Bangladesh captain Raqibul Hassan when contacted

over telephone. No doubt Al-Shahriar had got enough opportunities at the highest level before being finally dropped after the Australia tour in July 2003. But three years is a very long time for a player of his quality to redeem himself. He might be criticised for his often casual approach.

But isn't it a bit harsh for not giving him a fair chance after what he has done at the domestic level when the selectors have categorically mentioned that domestic performance is the prime criterion for a player to get into the national fold.



banglalink CEO Lars P Reichelt and Fahima Chowdhury, MD of Aktivision Ltd. shake hands after agreeing on a three-year sponsorship deal for the National School Football Championship 2006 at a local hotel on Thursday.

Benitez agrees new contract

REUTERS, London

Liverpool's Spanish manager Rafael Benitez has agreed a new four-year deal with the club that will extend his stay on Merseyside by an extra year to 2010, British media reported on Thursday.

The Guardian reported that Benitez's agent Manuel Garcia Quilon spent Wednesday in talks with Liverpool chief executive Rick Parry hours before their Premier League match with Fulham and the new contract is likely to be signed on Thursday.

The newspaper said the deal was worth around 10 million pounds (17.37 million dollars) to Madrid-born Benitez, 45, who had been linked with a return to Spain.

Media speculation in England and Spain had centred on Real Madrid heading the queue for the services of the man who steered Liverpool to Champions League success last year.

Barca claim Henry deal

INTERNET, undated

Barcelona claim they have a "verbal agreement" to sign Arsenal striker Thierry Henry for a cut-price 10 million pounds.

Senior sources at the Nou Camp claim the Frenchman has agreed to sign for the Spanish champions in the summer in a deal reportedly worth 140,000 pounds a week.

Barcelona are refusing to make an official comment on the situation, but Spanish newspaper reports suggest the Catalan giants hope to pay out only 10 million pounds for Henry because of FIFA rules over players with only one year left on their contracts.

Because there is not a release clause in Henry's Arsenal contract and he has been at the club for more than three years, he may be able to go to a new club for a compensation payment in the region of 10 million pounds.

And that has prompted Nou Camp insiders to boast privately that Henry will be lining up alongside Ronaldinho for Frank Rijkaard's team next season.

A source said: "Signing Henry has always been the club's highest priority because it will have a knock-on effect on the remaining money available to Frank Rijkaard this summer."

"Rijkaard and his coaching staff are already working on a system for next season that will integrate Henry quickly and allow him to adapt as soon as possible to playing alongside Ronaldinho and Samuel Eto'o."

Rajib shocks GM Zia

SPORTS REPORTER

International Master Enamul Hossain Rajib upset Grand Master Ziaur Rahman in the sixth round of the Mercantile Bank 32nd National Chess Championship at the BCF hall-room yesterday.

It was Zia's second loss in the tournament which saw the defending champion slump to sixth place with his previous collection of 3.5 points.

Rajib, who has played five games so far, was sharing the third place with Sheikh Nasir Ahmed with 4.5 points, behind Ims Abdullal Al Rakib and Reefat Bin Sattar who have 5.5 and five points respectively.

Rakib retained solo lead defeating Enayet Hossain while Reefat beat FM Reazul Haque.

In other sixth round games, Nasir beat Syed Mahfuzur Rahman Emon, GM Niaz Murshed beat Hassan Imam and Abu Sufian Shakil beat Delwar Hossain.

SL up against

FROM PAGE 16

"The rule obviously favours the side that wins the toss and therefore it's wrong," said Woolmer.

Pakistan lost a recent one-day series at home to India by a 4-1 margin but Woolmer said he expected his team to be on top form.

"The one-day defeats against India were disappointing but our final goal is the 2007 World Cup. We have identified what went wrong and I am sure the boys have learned from them," Woolmer added.

Harmison misses
FROM PAGE 16
England are already missing four members of their Ashes-winning squad.

Regular skipper Michael Vaughan and fast bowler Simon Jones returned home because of injuries before the series started, while left-handed opener Marcus Trescothick was unavailable due to personal reasons.

Dravid confident of series win



AFP, Mumbai

India captain Rahul Dravid is keen to cap his 100th Test with a series-clinching victory in the third and final Test against England starting in Mumbai on Saturday.

India, who drew the opening match at Nagpur, gained a 1-0 lead with an emphatic nine-wicket win in the second game at Mohali.

"Hopefully, I will be in the winning side here. It's a special feeling playing the 100th Test," the Indian skipper said.

Dravid, 33, is set to become only the sixth Indian to complete a century of Tests after Sachin Tendulkar, Kapil Dev, Sunil Gavaskar, Dilip Vengsarkar and Anil Kumble.

"When I made my debut in 1996, I never thought I'd be playing for as long as I have. It's going to be a special occasion for me to join these cricketers, some of whom were my heroes when I was growing up," he said.

India expect their bowlers to deliver again, especially leg-spinner Kumble who became only the fifth cricketer in Test history to complete 500 wickets during his nine-wicket match haul at Mohali.

Kumble was brilliantly supported by seamer Munaf Patel, who finished with seven wickets in his debut Test.

Dravid warned his team should not lower their guard as England were capable of striking back despite

losing key players Michael Vaughan, Marcus Trescothick and Simon Jones.

"I expect them (England) to come back hard at us. There is a lot of fight left in them and they are a very competitive unit," said Dravid.

India also got a boost ahead of the match from hard-hitting opener Virender Sehwag's return to form with an unbeaten 76 in the second innings at Mohali after three successive failures.

But a long innings is overdue for champion batsman Tendulkar, who is set to become the most capped Indian player during his 132nd Test here.

Tendulkar has not scored a half-century since his world-record 35th Test hundred against Sri Lanka at Delhi last December.

Stand-in England captain Andrew Flintoff is looking forward to an improved performance from his batsmen to keep hopes alive of squaring the series.

He won a good toss in the previous Test, but his team failed to post a challenging first-innings total, which is considered all-important on low, slow Indian pitches.

The tourists made 300 in the first innings and were skittled out for 181 in the second despite a brave half-century under pressure from Flintoff.

"To compete with India we need to put up a big first-innings total. We need a big hundred from someone," Flintoff said, adding his team needed to dismiss Dravid early.

"He (Dravid) is nicknamed 'The

Wall'. It is very difficult to get him out once he is set. He is a great example of how to bat in the sub-continent."

Flintoff said his team deserved to square the series as they had done well on the tour barring one session at Mohali when they lost five wickets for 112 runs on the fourth day.

"I don't think we deserve to lose the series at this stage. We have done well on the whole except one session at Mohali," he said.

"It will be a massive achievement if we could beat India. We have shown signs of it in the last two matches. We just need to get our act together."

England (from): Andrew Flintoff (capt), Andrew Strauss, Alastair Cook, Ian Bell, Kevin Pietersen, Paul Collingwood, Geraint Jones, Ian Blackwell, Matthew Hoggard, Steve Harmison, Monty Panesar, James Anderson, Liam Plunkett, Matt Prior, Owais Shah, Shaun Udal.

India (from): Rahul Dravid (capt), Virender Sehwag, Wasim Jaffer, Sachin Tendulkar, Yuvraj Singh, Mohammad Kaif, Mahendra Dhoni, Irfan Pathan, Anil Kumble, Harbhajan Singh, Munaf Patel, Venkatesh Laxman, Shanthakumar Sreesanth, Piyush Chawla, Rudra Pratap Singh.

Umpires: Darrell Hair (AUS) and Simon Taufel (AUS)
Match referee: Ranjan Madugalle (SRI)

Key second Test from today



AFP, Wellington

New Zealand and the West Indies go into the second cricket Test here Friday smarting from criticism that both sides seriously under-achieved in the tense first Test.

"Every area needs improving," New Zealand captain Stephen Fleming said reflecting on a first match in which neither side exceeded 275 in an innings.

In that game the honours swung virtually every session, before New Zealand eventually won by 27 runs.

New Zealand need to win in Wellington to wrap up the three-match series and the West Indies must win to keep it alive, and Fleming believes he has the inside running.

"It's a lot easier when you're 1-0

up with a Test win. You can dissect areas that weren't special and move forward in a positive vein instead of trying to worry about the fallout of a Test loss," he said.

"In the leadership group meeting we addressed a lot of those areas, but now it's up to individuals to prove they have made the changes."

The West Indies boast a formidable batting line up with Brian Lara, Shivnarine Chanderpaul, Chris Gayle, Dwayne Bravo and Daren Ganga but they need more of them to fire at the same time.

The 148-run opening partnership by Gayle and Ganga in the second innings of the first Test potentially put the West Indies in a winning position, but Lara's second consecutive first ball dismissal to Bond seemed to be the catalyst for the rest of the line-up to fold as well.

But despite the psychological damage from such a collapse, and

having lost their past seven Tests, coach Bennett King put on a brave face to say his side is moving in the right direction.

"Sometimes you've got to get to the depths of despair before you start re-emerging," he said.

"Over the time that I've been here, I certainly think we've improved and progressed in different areas. We're creating opportunities to win Test matches."

Both sides face selection problems because of injuries, with the West Indies perhaps worst hit after injuries ruled Ramnaresh Sarwan and Jerome Taylor while all-rounder Bravo has been unable to bowl since straining muscles in his left side in the opening match of the tour.

Sarwan's place in Wellington is almost certain to go to Runako Morton, whose 110 in the last one-day international is the only century so far by a West Indies batsman on this tour, while Daren Powell would come in for Taylor.

Kyle Mills has been drafted into the New Zealand squad as cover for the pace attack of Shane Bond, Chris Martin and James Franklin, who were all suffering niggles after the first Test.

All three were expected to get a clean bill of health for the Test on a Basin Reserve wicket, which tends to seam on the first day.

This may give Mills the nod over Martin, who toiled for three wickets in the first Test in Auckland with a tendency to bowl short.

SQUADS

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

WEST INDIES (from): Daren Ganga, Chris Gayle, Runako Morton, Brian Lara, Shivnarine Chanderpaul (captain), Dwayne Bravo, Dwayne Smith, Denesh Ramdin, Daren Powell, Ian Bradshaw, Rawl Lewis, Fidel Edwards, Jerome Taylor.

Umpires: Mark Benson (ENG), Daryl Harper (AUS).

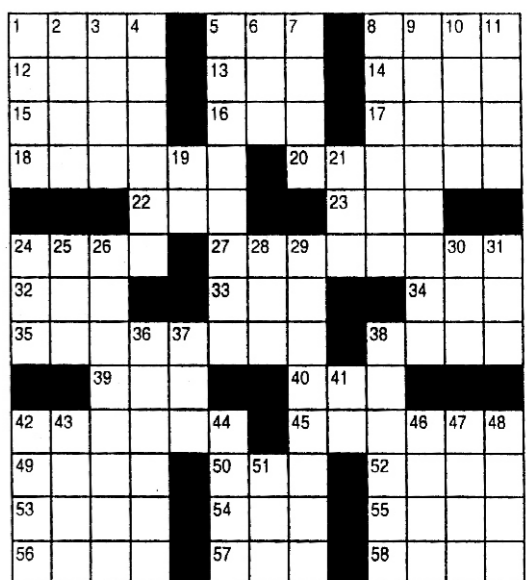
CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS
1 Fratricide
5 Allow
8 Amor-phous
12 Big Ten
13 Eventual-aves
14 Trade-mark symbol
15 Pair with an air
16 Upper limit
17 Bruins' sch.
18 Jog sans logs
20 Base runner's wear
22 Ultimate
23 Blond shade
24 Hit persistently
27 Sane
32 Past
33 Old
34 A billion years

DOWN
2 Visual — de
25 Id
26 Security-part
28 Wahine's gift
29 Rigid con-formity
30 Caviar, basically
31 Em halves
36 Governor
37 Census datum
38 Madness
41 Tagged player
42 React in horror
43 Sheltered
44 Imple-ment
46 Herr's missus
47 Topped
48 A handful
51 Expert

Solution time: 25 mins.

BIAS PTA STOP
ETCH OWL TOBE
SCREW TOP OF IE
THERE SACHET
ARREST LAKE
DUO BONUS PLAN
AMP BENT YARD
FBI YOUR
MOORE'S PESTO
OKRA HOUSE TOP
CITY ENR ZANE
KEYS DEN ER TIN



CRYPTIQUIP

Q DWQYC YIK FQPPXHWQBLA
JLNB XJ NBIYXYH JNNY
XR KXPP WIBNWRICPA DI

FQPPIC BIY JRRXNY
Yesterday's Cryptiquip: IF SOMEBODY LIKED HOT DOGS MORE THAN ANYTHING ELSE, MIGHT HE BE NAMED FRANK DIGGER?

Today's Cryptiquip Clue: P equals L
The Cryptiquip 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.