



Action from yesterday's Group C match of the Bangabandhu Cup between Iranian side Bargh Shiraj and Eastern All Star of Thailand at the Dhaka Stadium yesterday. Bargh Shiraj won 1-0. — Star photo

## E Bengal stumble early

Sports Reporter



A late strike from Sunil Tuladhar enabled Friends Club of Nepal register a sensational lone goal win over East Bengal of India in one of the two matches of the Bangladesh Cup invitational tournament at the Dhaka Stadium yesterday.

The pony-tailed Nepalese defender stabbed the ball home in the 88th minute as the high-flying Calcutta giant, who on their arrival in the capital promised to win the trophy, bit the dust in their Group B opener.

The dire defeat for East Bengal, one of the three leading clubs of India, not only risked their hopes of wrestling a semifinal berth in the 12-team meet, but also served a black-lash in their claim as one of the pioneering sub-continent outfit. And for the local football buffs, the lacklustre display of East Bengal against a lowly-rated Friends Club from neighbouring Nepal, it was certainly

a disappointing day. In a surprisingly lop-sided affair where the Calcutta giant had to dance to a spirited Friends Club's tune, especially in the second half, were lucky enough to avoid the ignominy of a larger margin defeat. Thanks to some brilliant saves by custodian Hemanta Dora.

Besides, a goal-shy Narendra Sreshtha of Friends Club, who spoiled at least half a dozen sitters in the match, served a lot for the opponents' cause, leaving his side in a daze.

The fleet-footed striker, who had earlier played in the Dhaka league for East End, got the first scoring opportunity in the 25th. But with all the time in the world and a helpless Dora at his mercy, Narendra blasted the ball straight to the hands to an advancing East Bengal custodian much to the dismay of his teammates.

Frustration mounted in the Friends Club tent in the second session as Narendra continued his poor marksmanship shoot-

ing twice straight to Dora from close. And when in the 87th minute Narendra missed another chance, the match looked heading for an obvious draw before Sunil Tuladhar emerged from nowhere to kill off the East Bengal resistance with a cool placing shot.

The deserving victory for Friends Club brightened their hopes for a semifinal berth from Group B. The winners will meet Mohammedan Sporting Club in their last group league match tomorrow.

### TEAMS

Friends Club (Nepal): Manik, Babu Kaji, Pushpa, Babin Bista, Sunil, Gyanu Pulami, Raju Pulami, Mani Shah, Samir Shah (Ram Sarani), Naresh Joshi and Shrestha.  
East Bengal (India): Hemant, Ilias Pasha, Derjit Ghush (Ranjit), D Pal Chowdhury, Amitava Chandra, Amit Das, Mondal, Ranjan Dey, Deb Narayan, Tasuf Jamal and Sarvanon (Tushar Rakshit).

## Iranian lord over Thais

Sports Reporter

Bargh Shiraj Football Club of Iran got off to a sound start in the Bangabandhu Cup silver jubilee of independence football tournament with a solitary goal victory over All Star Football Club of Thailand in their opening first round Group C engagement at the floodlit Dhaka Stadium yesterday.

In a lively encounter, spectators saw the speed and skill of Iranians dominated the raw Thai talents throughout the proceedings where striker Mahyaz Abbassi scored the all-important goal in the 29th minute of the first half.

One would not wonder after seeing the fast football of Bargh Club last night if the orange colour Iranian had won the match by at least half a dozen goals. Sheer bad luck and some brilliant goalkeeping by the Thai custodian Yuthara denied the winners to roll off the affair with a mouthful margin.

Midfielder Mohsan Ranjibayan, who played for Iran in the recent Asian Cup, and Ali Zayai were the linchpin for the every Iranian assault. The two who ruled the midfield with

unmatched brilliance provided enough support to the forwards with series of accurate passes, especially through wings.

The Iranians could have easily taken a lead as early in the 6th minute when Mohsan dodged past two Thai defenders from the right flank and sent an accurate pass to Zayai who saw his fierce header rebounded to play after hitting the near post with Thai custodian completely beaten.

In the 20th minute Abbassi headed from a Zayai pass in the Thai box was once again denied by the woodwork.

Their much deserving goal, however, came in the 29th minute through a left side attack which saw defender Mahmood Khoyamzi sending a neat cross to Abbassi who failed to negotiate the ball in the first attempt, but nicely amended the lapse in his second effort by storming home with a powerful

the ball and produced at least six more distinct opportunities to extend the margin, but their effort went down the drain either by the woodwork or by the agile Thai custodian.

In the 49th minute, Abbassi headed from a goal-mouth melee hit the cross piece while Mohammad Zafis shot from close was nicely taken by the custodian in the 58th minute.

In the 61st minute, Iran got the easiest chance when an unmarked Zafi received the ball at the right corner of the Thai box. But the tall striker made a mockery of a sitter shooting the ball straight to the reliable hands of the goalie Yuthara.

The Iranians had to satisfy with the slender lead as their forwards miserably failed to capitalise on the three chances that came by their way during the last quarter of the match.

The winners will meet Ujung Pandang Football Club of Indonesia in their last Group C match tomorrow afternoon at the same venue. It may be mentioned that Ujung Pandang were earlier placed in Group D for the first round along with Cosmos Club of Moscow, Malaysia A and local side Muktijoddha Sangsad. But following the last minute withdrawal of Calcutta Mohun Bagan Club, the organisers reshuffled the groupings pencilling in the new fixture.

Yellow cards: S Somkut and J Bundit (All Star FC).

### Teams:

Bargh Shiraj FC: Mohammad Raza, Sabooyi, Jadayi, Jaded, Mohsan, Mahmood, Ali Kalatay, Mostafa (Shafiel), Zafi, Abbassi (Rahim) and Ali Zayai.

All Star FC: Yuthara, Surin, Songklod (Sakarim), Bundit, Arichat, Pitsaun, Nikorn, Saranut (Piya), Somporn, Somkid and Khomsak.  
Referee: Abul Mansur Azad (Bangladesh).



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After five minutes when defender Zafay Jadayi headed from a left side Abbassi pass but thanks to the Thai custodian who magnificently staved off the scare by fisting the ball away for a corner.

After the breather, the Iranian kept their reign over

## Lalmatia lash Gulshan

Sports Reporter

### BRIEF SCORES

**LALMATIA CLUB:** 262 all out in 46.2 overs (Kamran Hasan 73, Shovon 44, Ershadul Huq 5/34).  
**GULSHAN YOUTH:** 154 all out in 35.1 overs (Moniruzzaman 59, Nahid 4/44, Babu 3/36).

Lalmatia Club recorded a massive 108-run win over Gulshan Youth in the lone Premier cricket league match on the eastern strip at the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium yesterday.

Pakistani Kamran Hossain hammered a blazing 73 as Lalmatia, after winning the toss and electing to bat first, piled up a mammoth 262 before being all out with more than three overs to spare in the 50-over-a-side affair.

Kamran, who opened the Lalmatia innings with Anup Kumar, clouted 14 savage hits across the rope in his 46-ball pyrotechnics to lay a solid foundation for his side.

Skipper Shovon, who is in the fine nick of time with the willow, scored a patient 44 while Asif Iqbal and Amir Uddin, the other Pakistanis in the Lalmatia tent, contributed 33 and 36 respectively.

For Gulshan Youth spinner Ershadul Huq, who fought a lone battle with the cherry, gave away only 34 runs to finish with a five wicket haul. While Qamrul Islam and Monirul Huq evenly shared four wickets among them.

In reply, the lowly Gulshan Youth were skittled out for a paltry 154 in 35.1 overs. Opener Moniruzzaman with a rapid-fire 59 off 52 balls was the only 20-plus scorer for the vanquished.

It was Gulshan's seventh consecutive defeat in the 12-team elite group.

## First Div cricket

Sports Reporter

### BRIEF SCORES

**Gopibagh FA:** 170 for 8 in 45 overs (Sopu 63, Setu 24, Ripon 3/21, Maqsood Raza 3/32).  
**Ajax SC:** 171 for 6 in 32 overs (Rafiqul 57, Babu 51, Azim 3/20).  
**Result:** Ajax SC won by 4 wickets.

**Uttara SC:** 173 for 8 in 45 overs (Narayan 44, Midul 24, Shamem 23, Tushar 2/31).  
**Dhanmondi Club:** 172 in 44 overs (Ripon 30, Tushar 30, Sabir 25, Pijush 2/25).  
**Result:** Uttara SC won by one run.

Ajax Sporting Club and Uttara Sporting Club won their respective First Division cricket league matches held at different venues in the city yesterday.

Ajax defeated Gopibagh Friends Association by four wickets at the City Club ground while Uttara beat Dhanmondi Club by the narrowest possible margin of one run at the Jagannath Hall ground.

The winners will meet Ujung Pandang Football Club of Indonesia in their last Group C match tomorrow afternoon at the same venue. It may be mentioned that Ujung Pandang were earlier placed in Group D for the first round along with Cosmos Club of Moscow, Malaysia A and local side Muktijoddha Sangsad. But following the last minute withdrawal of Calcutta Mohun Bagan Club, the organisers reshuffled the groupings pencilling in the new fixture.

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## Pakistan spoil Aussie party



SAQLAIN MUSHTAQ snared three wickets and two run outs as he bowled Australia to a 1-0 victory in the first Test match at the Sydney Cricket Ground.

Seamer Paul Reiffel broke down with a hamstring strain in his fourth over and joins a growing list of Australian strike bowlers out of action this season.

Young South Australian paceman Jason Gillespie succumbed to a side strain after just three overs of the third Test loss to the West Indies in Melbourne last week.

Earlier, Steve Waugh's 42 was the best of an ordinary Australian batting effort. Adding to their woes, captain Mark Taylor made just 11 and has made one fifty all season and only one in his last 22 first-class innings.

Australia crashed from 154 for four to 165 for seven in the 38th over.

In an embarrassing dismissal for tall Australian all-rounder Tom Moody, Afridi thought he had Moody lbw and was still vociferously appealing when Saqlain pounced on the ball at short third man.

His 40-metre throw hit the stumps at the bowler's end and Moody pulled up short thinking there was a certain overthrow only to be run out.

Mark Taylor said Australia, which have won only two of their last 10 one-dayers, were about 30 runs short of a winning total.

It's the same problem for the last week or so — too many 20s or 30s or 40s and no-one making a big score," he said.

"It's another one-day game and we don't want to get too intense about it."

His main concern was the injury toll.

Losing two frontline bowlers in the space of 10 days is not too good," Taylor said. "The initial report (for Reiffel) is 10 days out."

Meanwhile, winning skipper Wasim Akram said Australia needed to play one extra strike bowler.

Australia put Tom Moody at seven but he only bowled two overs.

"Any non-regular bowler in a pressure game is going to go for five an over," he said.

"I think you would rather have five pure batsmen and four bowlers than three all-rounders who can do a bit."

One of the few plusses for the

beaten Australians was the form of leg-spinner Shane Warne, who captured two wickets in his first over and played a lone hand with 4-37 as Australia used eight bowlers to try and defend a modest total.

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M Waugh c Moin b W Akram 12  
Law c Elahi b Mushtaq 23  
S Waugh b Saqlain 42  
Bevan c b Afridi 27  
Blewett b Sohail 33  
Moody run out 4  
Healy not out 22  
Reiffel c and b Sohail 3

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## Reinforcements ready to fly in

SYDNEY, Jan 1: Pakistan have called up Ijaz Ahmed junior and Mujahid Jamshed to join their tour of Australia, team officials said today, reports AFP.

They are expected to arrive before the end of the week. The move comes after experienced opening batsman Saeed Anwar, weakened by a lingering virus, was forced to return home.

Mujahid, 24, is uncapped while Ijaz junior, 26, has played two Tests against Sri Lanka.

Their visas could not be processed in Islamabad today because of the Australian new year's day public holiday but team management expect the pair to be on an Australia-bound flight shortly.

## Joao sticks to his guns

RIO DE JANEIRO, Jan 1: Joao Havelange reaffirmed on Tuesday that he would stand down as president of FIFA, international soccer's governing body, when his mandate expired in June 1998, reports Reuters.

"I will be 82 by then and the descent to 86 is fast," he told the Jornal Do Brasil newspaper in an interview. "I want to spend more time with my grandchildren and not have to worry about airline time tables."

He said he would not back any possible replacement. "I'm not going to propose anyone. I have a lot of friends and it would not be correct to give one of them my preference."

He promised that 1998 World Cup would be a show of organisation in "modern installations" and claimed that football could succeed where politics had failed.

"Only football has the power to solve the problems of international conflicts in Asia and the east, we have had football matches between countries in conflict."

Havelange claimed that he had an average of 800 hours' flying time a year and said he had visited 186 countries since taking over as president in 1974.

He said that each of the 32 finalists at the 1998 World Cup in France would receive 1 million dollars per game played from FIFA. "In the past, the teams spent a lot of money on the World Cup. Today, it is when they get their biggest income."

Robson to the rescue?

LONDON, Dec 31: Middlesbrough manager Bryan Robson could make an emergency return to Premiership action on Wednesday as the north east club's injury crisis deepens, reports AFP.

Boro have seven players ruled out for the tough visit to Arsenal and three others doubtful through injury, meaning Robson may be pressed into action just 10 days short of his 40th birthday and nearly a year since his last first team appearance.

## Epoch marking win for Zimbabwe

## Strang strangles Brits



HARARE, Zimbabwe, Jan 1: Zimbabwe's victory over England Wednesday before a packed house and to beating drums in a one-day cricket clash here has brought them the first international series triumph in their history, reports AP.

Scoreboard in the second one-day international between England and Zimbabwe in

Harare on Wednesday:

ZIMBABWE

G Flower c Hussain b Gough 4  
Waller b Mullanly 0  
Campbell c Stewart b Gough 14  
Houghton c Croft b Mullanly 5  
A Flower c Stewart b Mullanly 63  
Evans lbw Croft 32  
Whitall run out 14  
F Strang c Atherton b Croft 13  
Streak not out 43  
Brandes c Atherton b Gough 0  
Rennie b Gough 0  
Extras: 24  
Total: (all out in 48.5 overs) 200

Fall of wickets: 1-2: 2-14; 3-26; 4-38; 5-97; 6-125; 7-126; 8-192; 9-200

Bowling: Mullanly 9 1 29 3  
Gough 8.5 1 43 4  
Silverwood 6 0 30 0  
White 10 1 39 0  
Croft 10 2 33 2  
Irani 5 0 15 0

ENGLAND

Knight c Houghton b Brandes 0  
Stewart c A Flower b Whitall 41  
Crawley c A Flower b P Strang 73  
Hussain lbw b P Strang 25  
Atherton c Whitall b P Strang 7  
Irani b P Strang 4  
White lbw b Streak 5  
Croft not out 9  
Gough not out 2  
Extras: 13  
Total: (seven wickets in 42 overs) 179

Fall of wickets: 1-1: 2-67; 3-95; 4-137; 5-158; 6-165; 7-169

Bowling: Brandes 6 2 25 1  
Waller 8 0 41 1  
Streak 5 0 26 0  
Rennie 5 0 26 0