

Column One

Boost sports WHIZZ KID

COMPETITION FOR SCHOOL CHILDREN Competition-86

Tick the Correct Answers

Competition closes at 8 pm on Jan 9, 1998

- 1 Who is the Australia cricket coach?
2 Who is the Argentina soccer coach?
3 Which county will Lara lead next year?
4 Who hit the first century in this year's Premier Division cricket league?
5 Who lifted the women's singles title of the national TT championships?

Name
Class Roll No.
School Address
Phone: (if any)



SPORTS TALK



Geoff Boycott (Television commentator) Don't be misled by this new look England cricket team...

V-Day cricket begins Jan 3

The Victory Day cricket tournament involving eight teams from the Premier Division...

A twist in Bevan's fate

Michael Bevan, recalled to the Australian team for Friday's second Test against South Africa here...

Mark needs more rest

Adelaide, Australia, Dec 31: Australian power server Mark Philippoussis has withdrawn from next week's Australian men's hardcourt tennis tournament...

Table with 3 columns: Date, Match, Venue

Wanna bet?

LONDON, Dec 31: Bookmakers, looking into 1998, raise the possibility of either Tim Henman or fellow Briton Greg Rusedski winning Wimbledon as low as 6-1.

Brothers hold Muktis

Sports Reporter

Yellow card: Arun (Muktijoddha), Govinda and Mintu (Brothers Union)

TEAMS

MUKTIJODDHA SANGSAD: Arun, Hasan-al-Mamun, Rajani, Jewel Rana, Tito, Masood Rana, Iqbal, Gaus, Rakib, Munna (Reaz) and Nakib.



Action from yesterday's vital Premier Division football league encounter between Muktijoddha Sangsad and Brothers Union at the Mirpur Stadium. The match ended goalless.

Brothers Union held them to a goalless draw in their return leg clash at the Mirpur Stadium yesterday. In an eye-soring affair, both teams apparently remained contained within the midfield for most of the time and left the ground with a point each.

Spinners stare at SCG

SYDNEY, Dec 31: The Sydney Cricket Ground is expected to serve up its traditionally spin-friendly wicket for the second Test starting Friday, reports AFP.

Both Australia and South Africa played their hands even before arriving here today from Melbourne with the home team adding left-arm bowler Michael Bevan to its 12 and the tourists considering playing Paul Adams, the spinner with the unique 'frog in a blender' action.

The wicket will be the first SCG Test pitch supervised by a team of four as opposed following the departure of former head curator Peter Leroy earlier this year.

Div II cricket result

GMCC: 121 all out in 36 overs (Ripon 31, S Maxi 20; Taj 3/11, Polish 3/27, Tushar 2/21)

DHANMONDI CLUB: 122 for four wickets in 31.3 overs (Sumon 54, Raihan 36; S Maxi 2/14)

Result: Dhanmondi won by six wickets.

Dhanmondi Club recorded a facile six-wicket win over the Greater Mymensingh Cricket Club (GMCC) in the lone First Division cricket league match at the City Club ground in Mirpur yesterday.

In a low-scoring affair, Dhanmondi, chasing a paltry GMCC total of 121 in the stipulated 45 overs, reached 122 for the loss of four wickets and with more than 13 overs to spare.

Opener Sumon scored 54 and one-down Raihan, who shared a vital 78 runs for the second wicket with Sumon, chipped in with 36.

Earlier, sent into bat in the morning, GMCC could muster only 121 runs before being bundled out in 36 overs.

Taj with a three for only 11 runs in his five overs was the wrecker-in-chief. Besides, newly-batting Palash, who gave the breakthrough finished with three for 27 in his nine economic overs.

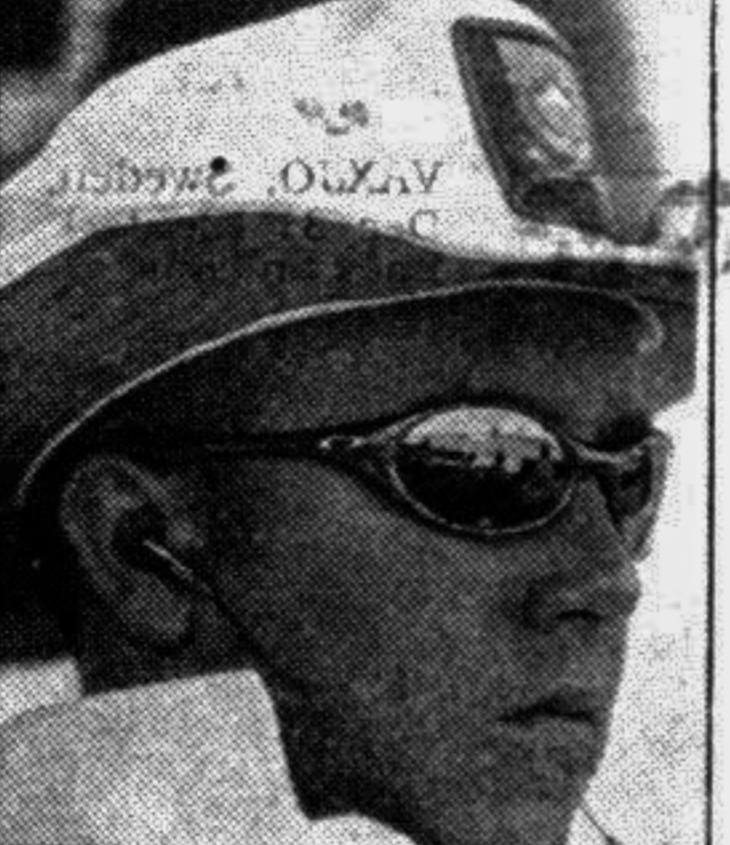
For GMCC skipper Ripon top scored with a defiant 31 while Pakistani Maxi with 20 was the other notable run-getter.

But apart from the day's proceedings, the victorious boys of Dhanmondi Club paid last respect to their teammate Georgy, who died in India on Monday, in a befitting manner. A one-minute silence was observed for the start of the match by Georgy, a playing member of Dhanmondi who was suffering from blood cancer.

Imran scored highest 60 runs as Marketing, batting first, collected 145 before they were all out in 30 overs.

In reply, Finance and Banking were bundled out for 118 in 28.1 overs. Ranak of Marketing was the hero with the ball capturing four wickets.

more bounce than its predecessors of previous seasons and gave generous assistance to NSW spinner Stuart MacGill and David Freedman, who bowled NSW to victory.



That was a result to bring a leg to champion Australian leg-spinner Shane Warne's eye. Sydney cricket and sports ground trust chief executive officer Noel Neate said preparation on the Test pitch commenced on December 16 and it was one of three wickets which had been related.

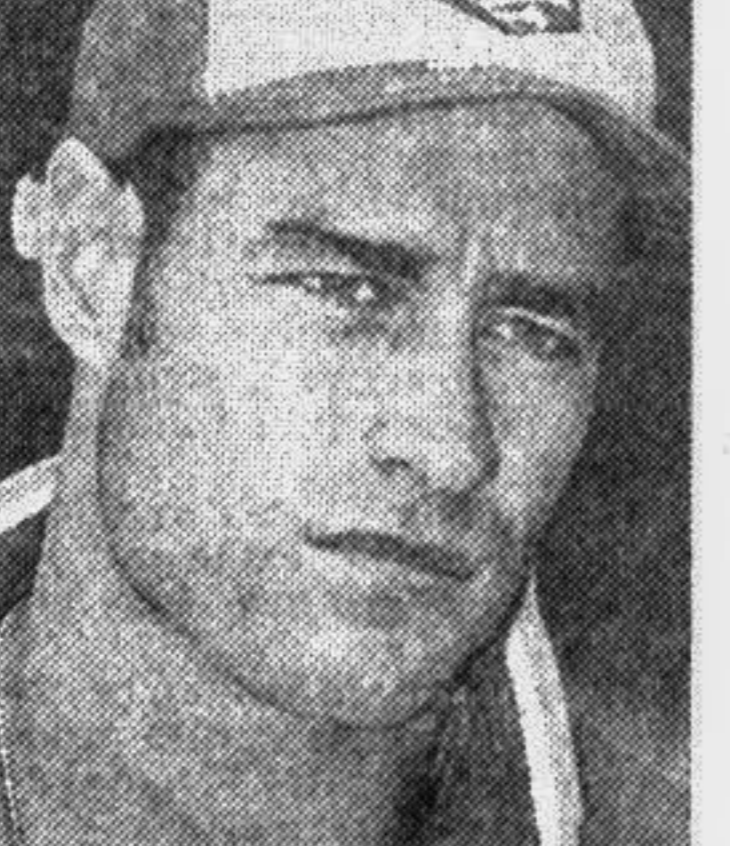
RU cricket Marketing lift crown

From Our Correspondent RAJSHAHI, Dec 31: Department of Marketing emerged champions in the Rajshahi University inter-department cricket championship defeating Finance and Banking by 27 runs in the final played at the University ground here today.

Imran scored highest 60 runs as Marketing, batting first, collected 145 before they were all out in 30 overs.

In reply, Finance and Banking were bundled out for 118 in 28.1 overs. Ranak of Marketing was the hero with the ball capturing four wickets.

Prof Abdul Khaleque, the Vice-Chancellor of Rajshahi University, witnessed the final and distributed prizes.



MICHAEL BEVAN

BTV may cover Independence Cup

Sports Reporter

Bangladesh Television has planned to cover all the six matches live of the Coca Cola Independence Cup cricket tournament. But the state-run electronic medium is yet to finalise a deal with Asiatic, the local agent for WorldTel who have bought the right of the tri-nation tournament.

The week-long meet, organised by the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) in celebration of Bangladesh's Independence, will begin at the Dhaka Stadium from January 10. India, Pakistan and hosts Bangladesh will participate in the limited-overs tournament.

Although the viewers, who have access to the satellite television, can enjoy the event live through Door Darshan International (DDI), but most of the people across the country will have to rely on BTV for the live coverage of the cricketing extravaganza.

Besides, it was learnt that the two popular sports channels - Star Sports and ESPN - will not cover the Dhaka spectacle. "We are in the process. And we are expecting to finalise the contract within the next few days," said Nawajish Ali Khan, the general manager of the BTV.

Tendulkar resigns?

Sports Reporter

A section of Indian media reported yesterday that Sachin Tendulkar resigned from the captaincy, but the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) is yet to confirm or rebut the press report.

The press report however did not provide the comment of Tendulkar, whose performance as skipper came under severe criticism as India lost 23 one-dayers out of 39 outings in 1997.

On Tuesday, Tendulkar led from the front to guide India Eleven to a huge 124-run victory over the International XI in the 'Unity Cup' cricket exhibition match at Puttaparthi, Bangalore. The captain in question, displaying his aggression and artistry, notched up a blistering unbeaten 88 in just 49 balls, with six sixes and six 4s to pave the way for his team's victory.

Former cricketers, Zaheer Abbas, Clive Lloyd, Hanif Mohammad, Alvin Kalicharan, Erappalli Prasanna, Syed Kirmani and Sunil Gavaskar were honoured prior to the start of the match. Sri Satya Sai Baba presented lockets to Dougie Brown of England and Arjuna Ranatunga, while Jayasuriya received a gold bracelet.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh captain Akram Khan and his deputy Aminul Islam Bulbul were also invited to take part for the International Eleven. Aminul was made 12th man and Akram had not been considered for the playing eleven.

South Africa, who started the year at the top of the unofficial world rankings, confirmed that they remain Australia's closest rivals with victories over India (2-0) and Pakistan (1-0).

Taylor has warned that Australia faced a tough challenge in the three-Test series against South Africa, which started in Melbourne on December 26. The winners of that series will have full justification in claiming they are the world's best.

The series over there earlier this year was tough enough, but this will be even tougher," says Taylor. "I know they are very keen to beat us so I am expecting tougher opposition."

South Africa are currently

Inzamam tops Stephen



Inzamam-ul-Haq has taken over from Steve Waugh as the number one batsman in the Coopers & Lybrand Ratings Waugh had topped the ratings since May 1995.

Inzamam is the first Pakistan batsman to top the ratings since Javed Miandad in 1989, according to a December 10 ranking of the UK-based organisation.

Inzamam's climb reflects the general ascendancy of Asian batsman in current Test cricket. Seven of the Coopers & Lybrand top ten are now from Pakistan, India or Sri Lanka. Tendulkar has been a regular in the world top five, while Aravinda de Silva, Sanath Jayasuriya and Rahul Dravid first entered the top ten of the ratings earlier this year. Newcomers to the top flight of the ratings since September are Aamir Sohail of Pakistan (now eighth) and Saurav Ganguly of India (ninth).

Not since the late 1970s have India and Pakistan enjoyed so much sustained batting success - those were the days of Sunil Gavaskar, Gundappa Viswanath and Miandad. Player for player, Pakistan now look to be a good match for Australia. These are the leading two teams in Test cricket, and both countries have three bowlers

(two pace, one spinner) in the world top ten.



INZAMAMUL HAQ WEST INDIES AT A 30-YEAR LOW

The West Indies appear to be

Table with 5 columns: Rank, Change, Player, Country, Rating, Career average

at their weakest level for more than thirty years. There is currently no West Indian batsman in the top ten of the ratings; both Brian Lara and Shivnarine Chanderpaul dropped several places after the disastrous series in Pakistan. (There is some comfort, however, that Sherwin Campbell and Carl Hooper have climbed into the top twenty after some individual success in that lost series).

West Indies bowling also looks more ordinary than it has for a very long time. Curtly Ambrose has dropped to second place in the ratings, and Ian Bishop has fallen out of the top ten. Only Courtney Walsh improved his rating in Pakistan, climbing six places to ninth.

The table below shows changes in the batting rating since September 1, 1997.

The year Windies would choose to forget



LONDON, Dec 31: (AFP) While Australia maintained their supremacy in Test cricket in 1997, the once-great West Indies slumped to new lows, sparking fears that a malaise is turning into a terminal condition.

The Australians enjoyed series wins over West Indies (3-2), South Africa (2-1), England (3-2) and New Zealand (2-0) and they went into their series against South Africa as the undisputed kings of the five-day game.

If the narrow margin of their triumphs suggests that the gap between them and the rest of the world has been closing, the truth is that they habitually failed to kill off their opponents at the end of dead rubbers.

Mark Taylor's side lost the last Test against West Indies, England and South Africa and managed only a draw in the final match against hapless New Zealand, comfortably the weakest side in world cricket at the end of 1997.

South Africa, who started the year at the top of the unofficial world rankings, confirmed that they remain Australia's closest rivals with victories over India (2-0) and Pakistan (1-0).

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The series over there earlier this year was tough enough, but this will be even tougher," says Taylor. "I know they are very keen to beat us so I am expecting tougher opposition."

South Africa are currently

in the middle of one of the most gruelling schedules ever undertaken with 16 Tests and a minimum of 22 limited-overs internationals to be played in under a year.

Having already played three Tests in Pakistan, they face three more in Australia, three against Pakistan in South Africa, two against Sri Lanka in South Africa and five against England in England.

England, typically, enjoyed a year of ups and downs with a comfortable triumph in New Zealand (2-0) before raising hopes of regaining the Ashes with a one-day whitewash and a first Test victory over the Australians.

But the joy was short-lived as the Australians took ruthless control of the series with emphatic wins in the third Test (by 268 runs), the fourth (by an innings and 61 runs) and the fifth (by 264 runs).

England, though, head to the Caribbean in January confident of their first series victory over the West Indies since Ray Illingworth's side triumphed 2-0 way back in 1969.

England finished the year on a high by winning the Champions' Trophy in Sharjah with impressive victories over West Indies (twice), India and Pakistan.

The bookmakers offer England at 3-1 to win the five-match series - morale-boosting odds based partly on England's steady improvement in recent seasons and partly on the West Indies' gradual demise.

It was not long ago that the West Indies were the most feared team in world cricket, but they recently plumed new depths of failure when they crashed to a 3-0 humiliation at the hands of Pakistan.

It was their first whitewash since they were beaten 3-0 by England in 1928 and arrived amid endless stories of widespread indiscipline and dressing room bust-ups between top players.

The current team is in stark contrast to the near-invincible side led by Clive Lloyd, and then Viv Richards, who went three years unbeaten and a record 27 Tests without tasting defeat.

The Australians took over the mantle of the West Indies' previous invincibility, following up an historic triumph in the Caribbean in 1995 with another series victory down at the start of this year.

Since losing to Australia on home soil, they have won just two of their last eight Tests and could find themselves with a full-blown crisis on their hands if they lose to England.

Lloyd, now the West Indies manager, says the West Indies Cricket Board must unearth

new stars if the calypso kings are to return to the top of the sport they dominated so comprehensively for so long.

But he refuses to accept that the previously bottomless well of talent is starting to run dry up as the islands' younger generation turn their interest to other sports.

"It is really a very serious matter and they should look seriously to find new talent which is theirs," says Lloyd.

The West Indies batted poorly against Pakistan with the one-time legend Brian Lara again just a shadow of his former parklingself, scoring just 129 runs in the entire series.

But the main worry is that the production line of world-class fast bowlers appears to be slowing down.

West Indies coach Malcolm Marshall conceded the problem shortly before leaving Pakistan, saying, "We batted miserably in the whole series and Courtney Walsh did not get the needed support from the other end."

Weah operated successfully

MILAN, Dec 31: AC Milan's former FIFA world player-of-the-year George Weah underwent a successful hernia operation. It was announced here on Tuesday, which will put him out for two months, reports AFP.

The former Paris Saint Germain striker, who had to pull out of a club friendly in Israel, was operated on by Professor Alessandro Ducati after he had been advised by the AC Milan doctor to have the surgery after a longstanding back injury failed to clear up. He last played for Milan in the 2-0 win over Bari on November 23.

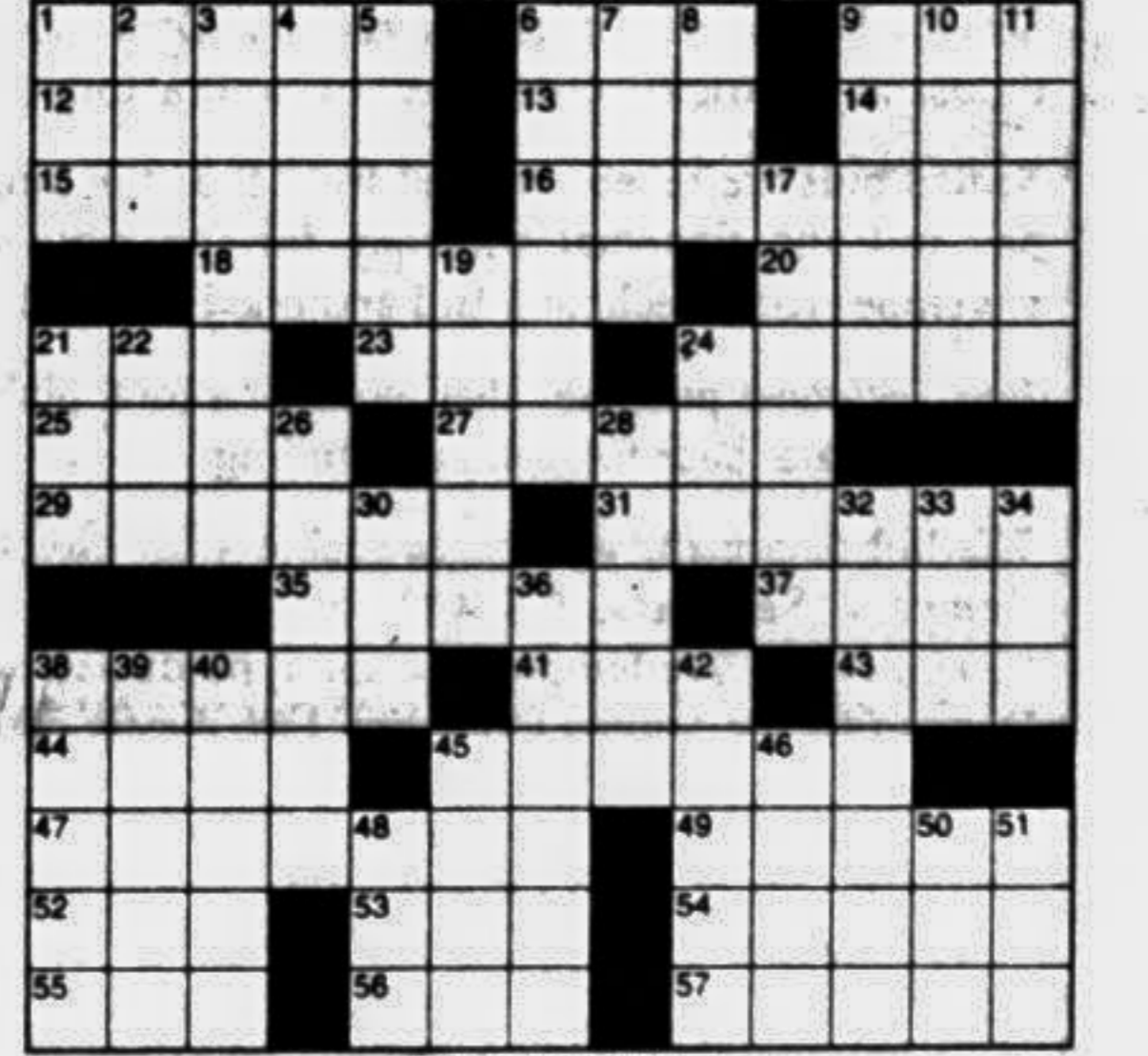
Weah, who has scored just three goals in 13 appearances this season, refused to reveal any details about the operation but assured the club's directors that he would hold a press conference later in the week to explain his current state of fitness.

Veteran Italian striker Maurizio Ganz, recently transferred from city rivals Inter, looks likely to replace the Liberian along side Dutch strike partner Patrick Kluyvert.

TODAY'S MATCHES Premier Division Football League: Arambagh KS vs Rahmatganj MFS (Mirpur Stadium, 2:15 pm) Bangladesh Boys Club vs Mirpur Chalanika (Army Stadium, 2:15 pm) First Division Cricket League: Sadharan Bima KS vs Gulshan Youth (City Club).

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

- ACROSS 44 Wind instrument 17 Looks of displeasure 19 All, individually 21 Diamond club 22 Candle count 24 Feathery accessory 26 Having a curve 28 See 21 Across 30 Bullring bravo 32 Grotesque creature 33 A billion years 34 Underworld bigwig 36 Mean 38 Reduce 39 Tolerate 40 Scout's master 42 Meets 45 Taj Mahal site 46 Stoltz or Bogosian 48 Cartesian conclusion 50 Kan. neighbor 51 Pompous sort



CRYPTOQUIP

P U N X A F Q C F Z C S V S C M N I Z Y Q P F B A C X R Q G S N V P X S X C S Q I Q G M R S G X N B Y A U N A C. Yesterday's Cryptogram: WHAT MIGHT YOU CALL A SHOW ENTIRELY ABOUT BORDER COLLIES? A DOGUMATARY. Today's Cryptogram clue: B equals P 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.