

Column One

DID U' KNOW?

(The Professor does)

THAT Formula Racing, or single-seat automobile racing, in which the designs of the cars are strictly regulated, is governed by FIA, the International Automobile Federation. The organisation, located in Paris, France, is the international governing body for much of worldwide automobile racing, including almost all racing outside of the United States. Periodically, FIA sets technical regulations for building, maintaining, and racing many different classes of cars. Vehicles used in Formula One (F1) racing — the most important form of racing outside the United States — are considered the highest form of single-seat racing cars due to the sophistication of construction and ultimate speed. Their design, in which the flow of air over and under the car (aided by sophisticated wings and the closeness of the car to its racing surface) creates a downward force, holds them close to the ground despite high speeds. Designed for road racing, F1 cars can accelerate and brake quickly. FIA also regulates classes for other formula cars. There are slower and less sophisticated single-seat cars competing in such categories as Formula Two (F2), Formula Three (F3), Formula Atlantic, Formula Renault, and Formula Ford. In descending order. We have only one category here, and that is the Formula Gap, which means put you bus, truck, car, baby-taxi, tempo, motorcycle and rickshaw in the available gap ahead of you. By the way, they all compete here in the same category.



Kalabagan cricketers warming up at their club field in Dhanmondi yesterday morning.

—Star photo

Premier Division Cricket League Preview - III

Bagan doubt their bowlers

Al-Amin

The emergence of Kalabagan Kirra Chakra as a major force in the domestic cricket circuit is a compliment of a motivated set of young organisers. It was not long ago that the modernistic powerhouse were struggling for their very survival in a makeshift clubhouse adjacent to the unkempt Kalabagan park. The last couple of years, however, saw a sea of change; a new building replacing the tinsel and the otherwise bumpy meadow turning into lush greenery.

Kalabagan shot into the limelight when they finished runners-up in 1994-95. Their potentialities were further exposed when they repeated the feat the following year. But, the coveted championship remains elusive.

Bagan slipped to third place last season, but they look stronger this year as they renew their bid for a maiden title triumph. Not that they are once again depending on their foreign recruits, who have so far proved to be the cutting edge in their phenomenal rise. Cricket fans are yet to forget a Zahid Ahmed, the middle-aged Pakistani, who won many a match for Kalabagan. Or a Manzoor Elahi, for his pyrotechnics with the willow.

It is promising to note that unlike previous years, Kalabagan have recruited a much better band of local talent by roping in some young cricketers. Sajid Hassan, who played for Mohammedan last season, joined Kalabagan this year. Musfiqur Rahman and Fahim Muntasir Sumit, who recently donned the national cap, are their other prized buys.

With hard-hitting opener Harun-ur-Rashid staying back, discarded national seamer Saiful Islam likely to lead the team for the second successive year. Sajid Ahmed Monsur hopeful to find his class and, after a turbulent year, Mahabubur Rahman Selim working hard to get back his rhythm, the long-

down the order, Mukul, Saiful and Saikat can also bat a bit", said Dipu.

Dipu, however, looked quite concerned about his bowling department. "We have lost a few disciplined bowlers. But, to tell you frankly, we are in need of a real penetrative fast bowler. Pakistani Shahid Saeed will open the bowling with Saiful. But you can hardly expect a good bouncer from Saiful", said Dipu.

Saiful, who is living with a chronic injury on his bowling arm, lost his swing and pace, and can hardly bend his back for the last couple of years. But Kalabagan possess a good set of spinners. Sumit, who had a wonderful debut for the national team against the touring West Indies A with a haul of three wickets in a three-day match, will lead the three-man attack with Mukul, the most successful Kalabagan bowler with 27 wickets last season, and left-arm tweaker Sharifuddin Ibane-Shahid Saikat.

Dipu argued that the introduction of 80-over matches in the league will not affect the players' performance as they are accustomed to limited-over games. "I believe, it still is a limited-over game", he said.

Elaborating the chances of other teams, Dipu said: "The championship will be a four-way battle. Kalabagan apart, Abahani and Brothers are the two strongest teams in the fray. I think Biman is the other contender for the title".

"Although many people are talking about Surjo Tarun, I have my reservation. They might have taken some good players. But I think they are not a balanced side", said Dipu.

The southpaw, however, did not rule out the chances of Mohammedan SC. "They might be the most affected team this year. But their bowling department is very strong. I think a couple of good batsmen in their ranks can change their face", said Dipu.

"We are thinking of bringing a couple of good all-rounders from abroad. But, Musfiqur is not a bad choice to bat at number five and wicketkeeper Ishraq to follow. Besides, lower

Flowers, cops greet Juve

guaranteed the players' safety and police were posted at intervals all along the 30 km (19 mile) trip into downtown Istanbul.

Some 22,000 police, gendarmes and troops, will be on duty ahead of kick-off, most of them at a distance from the stadium. Spectators will be searched at the stadium entrance for weapons and loose change will be confiscated.

Italy and Turkey appeared to be moving towards a possible compromise in a row over Kurdish leader Abdullah Ocalan that has severely strained relations between the two NATO member states.

Recent comments from Italian and Turkish leaders indicated that Italy, which has refused to extradite Ocalan, might agree to try the guerrilla leader in Italy with the agreement of Ankara and Rome.

Italy's refusal to extradite a Kurdish guerrilla chief has sparked a wave of anti-Italian sentiment in Turkey, placing severe strain on a rescheduled Champions League group B match between Galatasaray and Juventus.

Galatasaray fans at Istanbul airport chanted "Turkey, Turkey" and threw white flares ahead of the Juventus bus as the Italian players looked out apprehensively.

Many had expressed concern at playing in Turkey, where Italian flags have been burned in angry street protests. The match has already been delayed one week over security concerns.

Turkish authorities have

Aussie Open entrants

LONDON, Dec 2: Top-ranked Lindsay Davenport and former Nos. 1 Martina Hingis, Steffi Graf and Monica Seles have confirmed their participation in next month's Australian Open, reports AP.

The International Tennis Federation said Tuesday that Venus and Serena Williams, Anna Kournikova, Arantxa Sanchez Vicario and Conchita Martinez were among other top women's names entered in the first Grand Slam event of 1999.

Davenport will go into her first Grand Slam as the reigning No. 1 player, while No. 2 Hingis will be seeking her third straight Australian title.



Riot police escort the Juventus team bus to the hotel in Istanbul after the Turin club arrived in the Turkish city yesterday.

—Internet photo

Rajshahi cricket

RAJSHAHI, Dec 2: The second Mayor Gold Cup cricket tournament organised by Rajshahi City Corporation will be held at the local Government College ground from December 5, reports UNB.

Rajshahi mayor Mizanur Rahman Minu will formally open the meet.

Eleven sports clubs of Rajshahi and district teams from Chhainawabganj, Dinajpur and Pabna will also participate in the 13-day event.

Thorpe on the mend



PERTH, Dec 2 (Reuters/ AFP/ Internet): England's cricketers received a much-needed boost on Wednesday when star batsman Graham Thorpe completed his first training session in over a week.

Thorpe missed England's seven-wicket loss to Australia in the second Ashes Test at Perth because of back pain but is hoping to return for the third Test starting in Adelaide next week.

The Surrey lefthander batted through a net session in Perth on Wednesday and is likely to play in a four-day match against Victoria state starting on Saturday.

Thorpe said his main worry was the effect the five-hour flight from Perth to Melbourne would have on his back after he aggravated the injury travelling from Brisbane to Perth.

"No-one really knows what goes wrong with backs from

Thorpe does play, the English management has decided to allow Graeme Hick to remain with the squad.

Hick was called in as a temporary replacement for Michael Atherton but ended up playing in the second test when Thorpe pulled out and top scored with 68.

Victoria have named a second-string team to play the tourists with Shane Warne, Damien Fleming, Matthew Elliott and Paul Reiffel all rested.

Warne's withdrawal has fuelled speculation that he may miss the entire Ashes series as he slowly recovers from shoulder surgery.

But the Australian leg-spinner said in a column with an English newspaper that he pulled out because there was nothing to be gained from playing.

"Why should I let the Poms have a go at me when I am honestly nothing like 100 per cent spot on with my bowling," Warne said.

England captain Bob Willis, who said that England would probably lose against the Australian second XI.

"I don't reckon anyone cares what Bob Willis says," Thorpe said. "It's fine for those players to criticise if they want to, but they've had their day."

There are three Tests to go and the boys will be well up for the next three games."

Meanwhile, England manager Graham Gooch has refused to write off a side the Australian press has dubbed "Rabbit Stew" after its seven-wicket thrashing.

"The thing we have to believe is we played under-par in this Test and got beaten," Gooch said.

"We can play a lot better than that and have to play a lot better than that," he added.

"We have to play at our best to compete with the best players in the world. We will talk to individuals and reinforce things but you can only put what you believe are the best policies in place and hopefully they can take that in and put it into practice."

Gooch feared their poor form may have been caused by over-training.

"Too much practice breeds mediocrity," was the surprising comment of a man who as a player forged a reputation as a fitness fanatic.

Gooch and coach David Lloyd told the squad to forget about travelling to Melbourne.

England's only other bright spot from this Perth debacle was fast bowler Alex Tudor.

But Gooch was quick to play down claims he might turn into a world-beater.

"We are hoping he will continue to improve on this tour, which was the whole idea of bringing him in the first place," Gooch said.

"The boy did well but I don't want to go overboard about him or make any comparisons with anyone else," he added.

Tudor claimed five wickets in Perth but Gooch stressed the 21-year-old lacked stamina.

"It's no good bowling six overs at the speed of light and then 15 overs at military medium -- you have to be able to provide about 20 overs a day at the same pace," Gooch said.

But Gooch said his Perth performance did increase his chance of playing in the third Test.

"He is still a young lad with a lot to learn but he has certainly put himself up for selection in every game," Gooch said.

GRAHAM THORPE

time to time and I'm in that

dilemma. I just have to take

each game as it comes," Thorpe said.

Regardless of whether or not

England's players have reacted angrily to criticism of their defeat in the second Test.

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