

Column One

DID U' KNOW?

(The Professor does)

That drag racing is a form of specialised automobile racing that is most popular in the United States, although it is also practised on a limited basis in England, Canada, and Australia. In a drag race, two entries start side by side, aiming to finish the straight-line course — called the drag strip and usually 0.25-miles long — in as fast a time as possible. Such cars, known as drag racers, take many forms. Some have engines behind the driver and parachute-assisted braking. Speeds are maintained only for a short burst, but are calculated in miles per hour and also in seconds.

Drag racing owes its origin to hot rods, cars specially modified for improved acceleration and speed, which were first built in southern California in the late 1930s. Drag racing was formalised in 1937 with the creation of the Southern California Timing Association, an organisation of automobile enthusiasts who raced their cars in the California desert. World War II (1939-1945) interrupted development of the sport, but after 1945 it blossomed, helped by the US Air Force, which saw drag racing as a way to identify young men who could serve in the mechanical and flight crews of the Strategic Air Command. The first paved strips for drag racing, in fact, were runways at air bases and airports. The first formal drag strip was opened in Goleta, California, in 1948. The sport spread rapidly, and today there are hundreds of drag-strip facilities on which more than 5000 events are run annually.

This is one race in which we would do well because here only short bursts of speed are possible.

Boost sports WHIZZ KID

COMPETITION FOR SCHOOL CHILDREN Competition-108

Tick the Correct Answers Post to The Daily Star Win attractive prizes

Competition closes at 8 pm Dec 25 '98, and draw shortly afterwards

- National cricket team captain Anamul Islam will play this season for

Biman	Mohammedan	Surjo Tarun
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- Who won the Premier league cricket title last season?

Mohammedan	Kalabagan	Abahani
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- How many teams play in the Premier league?

10	8	12
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- How many overs will be played per side in the Premier league this season?

50	80	100
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- How many venues will be used for the Premier league this year?

One	Two	Three
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Name
 Class Roll No.
 School Address

Phone: (If any)

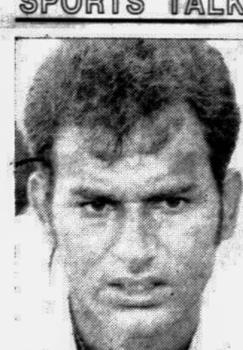
EN-VITS

POWERED WITH EN-VITS ENERGY RELEASING VITAMINS

NOTICE

Due to unavoidable circumstances, draw of the WHIZZ KID competition -108 could not be held yesterday. The draw will now take place on December 25. — Sports Editor

SPORTS TALK



Aamir Sohail

(Pakistan cricket captain) "Pathetic to say the least. I am sure Pakistan has not benefited that badly." After losing to Zimbabwe in the first Test in Peshawar.

Wasim baffles Brothers Azam hits a hundred

A last-ball century by Azam Khan helped holders Abahani to collect a respectable 289 for nine against Victoria SC in the Janakantha Premier Division cricket league at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday, reports UNB.

Pakistani-recruit Azam Khan scored 100 facing 143 balls in his three-hour steady but calculated innings, which included seven boundaries and a superb six from Sabbir Khan. Azam Khan, the Pakistani Customs and national player, needed five runs from the last two balls of the 80-over innings. He hit across the rope with a magnificent flick off the first ball and took one run from the last delivery.

Earlier, sent in to bat first Abahani lost openers Azam Iqbal (1) and Mehrab Hossain

major upset of the league beating Kalabagan KC by 58 runs, were all out for 197 in 61.2 overs.

Opener Mushtaq Munna contributed the highest 31 in 36 balls including four fours while his partner Anup Kumar made 25 with four boundaries.

SCOREBOARDS

First day's scoreboard of the two Janakantha Premier Division cricket league matches played at different city venues yesterday:

ABAHANI V VICTORIA SC

Venue: Bangabandhu National Stadium

ABAHANI INNINGS

Azam c Aftab b Al-Amin 1
 Mehrab lbw b Al-Amin 7
 Naimur n Moniruzzaman b A l-Amin 47
 Nuruzzaman lbw b Al-Amin 37

Mushtaq Munna c S Babu b A Hanif 31
 Amir Wasim c & b S Sharma 24
 Sanjib Das c Jahangir b A Hanif 24
 Tareq Mahmood lbw b A Hanif 13
 M Biplob c Pappu b A Hanif 10
 Nasim Ahmed c Jahangir b KM Sujon 10
 AR Nittu c Jahangir b Hassan 19
 M Salauddin c Jahangir b Hassan 7
 M Islam Montu c Sezan b Hassan 5
 Zahid Solaiman not out 0
 Extras: 59
 Total (All out in 61.2 overs) 197

Fall of wickets: 1-49; 2-57; 3-89; 4-91; 5-134; 6-137; 7-156; 8-188; 9-191.

Bowling

SK Shuvra 3 0 16 0
 Shafuluddin Babu 6 2 24 0
 Sanjib Sharma 14 3 36 1
 Hasanullah



Opee (7). But Azam Khan and Naimur Rahman Durjoy contributed a valuable 93-run partnership, which helped the holders reach a fighting total.

National all-rounder Durjoy made the second highest 47 off 103 balls with six boundaries. Number four Nuruzzaman Tuhin added 37 runs facing 68 balls, including two boundaries. Abahani scored 105 runs losing two wickets before lunch in 31 overs and added 92 before losing captain Akram Khan (6) and Durjoy at tea.

Rahul scored 27 runs off 61 balls with three boundaries while Hasibul Hossain Shanta added 15 runs off 18 balls, including two sixes against Mona. Pacer Al Amin was the most successful bowler for the Victoria, who captured 4-59 in his 16-over spell.

Skipper Mustadir Litu and JH Mona took two wickets each for 65 and 52 runs respectively. Sabbir Khan claimed another wicket for 15 runs in 4 overs.

APB adds: Pakistani off-spinner Amir Wasim put Brothers Union batting in a tail-spin with a four-wicket haul as the Gopibagh outfit were reeling at 50 for 6 in reply to Wari's 197 on the first day.

The left-arm off-spinner ripped through Brothers Union capturing four for only 12 runs in 9 overs with the Gopibagh team fighting a grim battle to save the match at the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium.

Brothers, the current runners-up, will require another 147 runs in the remaining 63 overs in an 80-over-a-side affair when they will resume their innings today with Aamir Hanif and Hasanullah Hassan at the crease.

Wam, who missed a hat-trick yesterday triggered the Brothers slide dismissing national opener Shahriar Hossain Biddyt and middle-order batsman Sanwar to reduce the side to 40 for 3 wickets after tea-break.

Biddyt made 18 in 43 balls before sending a return catch to Wasim while Sanwar was caught by Zahid for a duck. Wari, who pulled off the first



Abahani's Azam Khan on way to an unbeaten century. —Star photo

ABAHANI V VICTORIA SC

Azam Khan not out 100
 Akram Khan c sub b Jewel 6
 Naimur c Sabbir b Jewel 29
 Hasibul c Zilani b Sabbir 15
 Iqbal c&b M Litu 8
 M Rana b M Litu 2
 Saiful not out 2
 Extras: (lb-3, nb-13, w-21) 37
 Total: (for 9 wks in 80 overs) 289

Fall of wks: 1-11; 2-15; 3-108; 4-123; 5-148; 6-212; 7-233; 8-266; 9-279.

Bowling

Zakir 16 2 46 0
 Al-Amin 16 2 59 4
 Zilani 6 0 26 0
 Shawkat 9 1 23 0
 M Litu 16 1 65 2
 Jewel 13 0 52 2
 Sabbir 4 2 15 1

BROTHERS UNION VS WARI CLUB

Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium

WARI INNINGS

Anup Kumar run out 25

Bowling

Hassan 6.2 1 18 3
 KM Sujon 14 2 31 3
 Amir Hanif 15 2 43 4
 Sanwar Hossain 3 0 17 0

Brothers Innings

S H Biddyt c & b A Wasim 18
 AH Sezan c Anup b Montu 1
 Jahangir Alam c AR Nittu b A Wasim 10
 Sanwar Hossain c Zahid b A Wasim 0
 S H Pappu b Nasim 0
 KM Sujon c Tareq b A Wasim 4
 Amir Hanif batting 4
 H Hassan batting 0
 To bat: (S Sharma, S Babu and SK Shuvra)

Total: (For six wickets in 17 overs) 50

Fall of wickets: 1-10; 2-40; 3-40; 4-42; 5-46; 6-50.

Bowler:

Amir Wasim 9 4 12 4
 MI Montu 2 0 16 1
 Tareq Mahmood 2 0 9 0
 Zahid Solaiman 1 0 4 0
 Nasim Ahmed 3 1 5 1

Lillee pulls for Mark, Shane

SYDNEY, Dec 18 (Reuters/Internet): Former Australian fast bowler Dennis Lillee has defended the actions of Mark Waugh and Shane Warne after the pair admitted taking money from an illegal Indian bookmaker.

Lillee, who holds the Australian record for the most wickets in Test cricket, said he did not condone what the pair had done but said they had not sold out their teammates.

"Being fiercely proud members of the Australian cricket team there was no way they would reveal anything that would compromise their mates or jeopardise their team's chances," Lillee wrote in a newspaper column on Friday.

"I guess they thought if some sucker was offering money they might as well take it because they would probably give more details if they happened to bump into an inquisitive Aussie tourist at the gate.

"That doesn't condone what Waugh and Warne did, but there was nothing underhand about their actions."

Waugh and Warne admitted last week they had taken money from a bookmaker to provide pitch and weather information during Australia's 1994 tour of

Sri Lanka and Pakistan. The two were secretly fined by the Australian Cricket Board in early 1995 but the incident was not revealed until last week.

Lillee also broke his silence on the betting scandal that he and Rod Marsh were involved in 18 years ago.

The two Australians were criticised after it was revealed that they backed England at odds of 500-1 to win the third Test at Headingley in 1981 after England had been ordered to follow on.

England, inspired by a brilliant all-round performance



DENNIS LILLEE

from Ian Botham, staged a remarkable comeback to win the match and eventually the series.

Lillee and Marsh have both denied any wrongdoing. Lillee said he had wanted to wager 100 pounds on the England team but ended up laying just 15 pounds. "I had never seen such ludi-

crous odds offered for a two-horse race and announced to everyone in the dressing room, including the manager, that I was going to have a hundred quid on the rank outsider," Lillee said.

"I naturally would have swapped the money for a win, but being a small-time punter, I had been unable to resist the juicy 500-1."

Paris bids for 2008 Games

PARIS, Dec 18 (Reuters/Internet): Paris, having played its part in a successful soccer World Cup in France this year, is bidding to stage the 2008 Summer Olympic Games.

Jean Tiberi, mayor of the French capital, made the official announcement on Thursday after the news was leaked nine days ago at the Asian Games in Bangkok.

"We have the ambition and the means," Tiberi told a news conference as he named Philippe Bourguignon, owner of the Club Mediterranee tourism organisation and a sports enthusiast, as president of the bidding committee.

"It's up to us to show Paris is a city that can express Olympism in all its aspects," Tiberi said.

"I've never negotiated the candidature for an Olympic Games. But I know that to win a market you can have the best possible commercial team but if your product isn't good you won't get there," Bourguignon said.

Div I chess

Leonine Club extends lead

Leonine Chess Club maintained their solo lead in the First Division Chess League, beating Sonali Bank by 3-1 points at the end of 11th round yesterday at the NSC chess room, reports APB.

Their overseas recruits GM Sulman and Rausis tamed Aminul and Shafiq of the bankers' side but Kayes and Rafiq shared points with Safiq and Moin as the defending champions collected 37 points.

Title contenders Bangladesh Biman followed the leaders closely with 36.5 points after defeating Anushilan Daba Chakra 3.5-0.5.

Local IMs Reefat and Ziaur Rahman beat Amir Hossain and Sarfuddin respectively, veteran Tahmid defeated Dipu while Rakib settled for a draw with Sheikh Anwar.

In the crucial penultimate round engagements today, Biman will face Titus Club, who is in the current third position with 31.5 points. Titus beat Narayanganj CPA by 3.5-0.5 in this round.

In the other ties of the day, Mahakhal Pradip Sangha and Dhaka University defeated Brothers Union and West Zatrabari by 3.5-0.5 points. Ansars beat Farangjanj SC by 2.5-1.5 while Kamalapur SK and KS drew 2-2.

Today's matches: Leonine vs Kamalapur, Biman vs Titus, Anushilan vs Dhaka University, Brothers Union vs Farangjanj SC, Ansars vs West Zatrabari, Sonali Bank vs Mahakhal Pradip Sangha and Nakhpalpara Jobo Sangha vs Narayanganj CPA.

BSPK-Dhaka youth hockey final today

Dhaka DSA moved into the final of the ACME 17th national youth hockey championship beating Faridpur DSA 3-1 in the second semifinal yesterday, reports APB.

Dhaka led the first half by a solitary goal at the Moulana Bhashani National Hockey Stadium.

Imran, Riaz and Babu netted one goal each for the winners while Firoz scored the solitary goal for Faridpur.

The final against BSPK is today at 2.30 pm. Air Vice Martial Jamaluddin Ahmed, Chief of Air Staff and also president of Bangladesh Hockey Federation will be present as the chief guest.

NZ-India 1st Test Play abandoned on Day One

DUNEDIN, New Zealand, Dec 18 (Reuters/Internet): Play was abandoned at tea on the first day of the first cricket Test between New Zealand and India at Carisbrook on Friday.

Umpires Steve Dunne of New Zealand and Edward Nicholls, of the West Indies, abandoned play at the scheduled tea break after light rain had kept the players off the field for two sessions.

The pitch was covered in the morning when light drizzle set in, bringing an end to team warm-ups and preventing a toss or team announcements.

Faisalabad Test yet to start

ISLAMABAD, Dec 18: Dense fog cancelled play for a second straight day in the third and decisive cricket Test between Pakistan and Zimbabwe in Faisalabad on Friday, reports AP.

Misty conditions and thick fog denied play on the first day Thursday. On Friday foggy conditions continued and the umpires canceled play.

The light is even poorer than what we witnessed on the first day," Pakistani umpire Salim Badar said.

The weather forecast is not encouraging for the remaining three days of the match with more fog expected.



Scene from the First Division chess matches played yesterday at the NSC chess room. — Star photo

Asian soccer final today

BANGKOK, Dec 18: Two of the biggest names in Asian football — Iran and Kuwait — clash in the final of the Asian Games football final on Saturday, reports AFP.

With four Asian cups and three World Cup spots between them over the last 30 years, only Saudi Arabia and South Korea can challenge the pair as the historical champions of the Asian region.

In Saturday's final, Iran will be looking for their second gold medal in three tournaments while Kuwait aim to win the title for the first time.

Kuwait went close in 1982 when they lost to bitter enemies Iraq in the title to end a year that had seen Kuwait represent Asia at the World Cup finals in Spain.

Iran, in contrast, have won the title twice to add to their three successive Asian Cup victories from 1968 to 1976. They also represented Asia at the World Cup in 1978 and more recently, in France during the summer.

Qualification for France

marked a return to the top for Iran, who had been in doldrums for most of the 1980s as the country was torn apart by the war with Iraq.

The last time the two countries met in a serious match at this level was last year when two World Cup qualifiers both ended level — the first in Kuwait was a 1-1 draw while the match in Tehran was scoreless.

Iran defeated the Kuwaitis in the United Arab Emirates during the Asian Cup to claim third place behind the hosts and Saudi Arabia, who equalled Iran's Asian Cup record by winning the trophy.

Then Iran's Ali Daei was crowned king of Asia's strikers after top scoring at the tournament while Kuwait's Jassem al Houwaidi was a close second.

Now the pair can resume their battle on a head-to-head basis. Daei has scored seven while al Houwaidi, who missed the semi-final win over Thailand due to a thigh strain, has eight but ahead of both of them is Farj Laheeb, a 19-year-old who

burst onto the scene during this tournament by scoring nine goals in seven games.

Kuwait will be hoping for a repeat performance of the last time the two teams met in a friendly match in October.

Then Milan Macala's side won 3-0 as they prepared for what turned out to be a successful defence of the Gulf Cup in Bahrain.

But Macala refused to rest on the laurels of that victory. "That was just a friendly match and it stands for nothing now," he said. "We have had very many problems at this competition and we have played 28 games in the last five months. My players are tired."

Iran go into the game as favourites having brought an experienced side boasting eight of the team that played in France while the Kuwaitis, like many other sides in the competition, have a young squad based largely on the Olympic team that will attempt to qualify for the Sydney Games in 2000.

Foreign coaches inspiring Asians

BANGKOK, Dec 18 (Reuters/Internet): Englishman Peter Withe is already a national hero in Thailand, Czech Milan Macala could soon achieve that status in Kuwait.

They are among the increasing number of foreign coaches being drafted into Asia as the region attempts to jump into the big leagues of world soccer.

Asian fans, who now have a rich diet of European soccer on cable or satellite television to feed on, are getting increasingly hungry for success.

Few were impressed by Asia's performance in the 1998 World Cup finals in France when all four of the region's qualifiers -- Iran, Saudi Arabia, Japan and South Korea -- went out in the first round.

With the 2002 World Cup finals being held in Japan and South Korea, they are going to want better than that. And the pressure shows in Asia's push to elevate its game to truly competitive heights as more and more foreign coaches take charge of national teams.

The intense competition at the December 6-20 Asian Games told the story -- five of the quarter-finalists had foreign coaches and three of them got their sides to the semifinals.

Only Iran coach Mansour Pourheidari, the semifinal odd man out, now stands in the way of Macala's elevation to hero status as Kuwait, the newly crowned Gulf champions, tackle the Iranian World Cup squad in Saturday's final.

"Right across Asia, people have seen what foreign coaches have done in other parts of the world," said Withe, drafted in to

take charge of the Thai team just four weeks before the Games began.

Withe became an instant national hero on Monday after his side beat South Korea, one of the perennial powerhouses of Asian football, to win an unexpected semifinal place. Two Thais were sent off, but they won with a near miraculous extra time goal.

The former England striker, who played his last league game just eight years ago at the age of 39, had made all the difference, said Thai manager Tawatchai Sajakun.

"Previously, when we were underdogs and looked like losing, we lost," Tawatchai said.

"He has inspired the Thai players to fight to the last minute. Of course, the miracles ended and Thailand were beaten 3-0 by Kuwait in the semifinal, but nevertheless Thai fans were left with the feeling they had a team going somewhere."

England legend Sir Bobby Charlton saw the game and said he was impressed with what he saw -- especially the way the Thais fought to the end.

"That's what I hadn't seen in Asia before. The Thais kept their composure even when they were two down. Usually you see Asian teams give up when that happens," he said.

Asian teams were right to look for the best coaches in the way many top British athletes train in the United States "because that's where the best coaches are," he said.

"I'd love to see Thailand go to the World Cup finals with a Thai coach, but they are more likely to do it with a foreign coach."

The mental element that foreign coaches bring to Asia,

usually after years at high level back home, is important, said United Arab Emirates coach Carlos Quieroz of Portugal.

Asian players, he said, need to learn how to rebound from defeat.

But Asian sides also need to learn tactically, said Philippe Troussier, coach of a young Japan side that went out in the second round.

Asian Test tourney early next year

NEW DELHI, Dec 18: India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka will feature in the trend-setting Asian Championship of Test cricket to be held in the sub-continent in February-March next year, it was announced today, reports AFP.

The three teams will play each other once in a round-robin league with the top two, based on a points system for outright wins and first innings leads, meeting in the final in the Bangladesh capital of Dhaka in March.

Indian cricket board secretary Jayant Lele said the exact match dates in the first ever tournament of its kind will be finalised by the end of the month.

But he confirmed that the tournament will open with India playing Pakistan at the Eden Gardens in Calcutta in February-end, following a two-Test series between the arch-rivals in India.

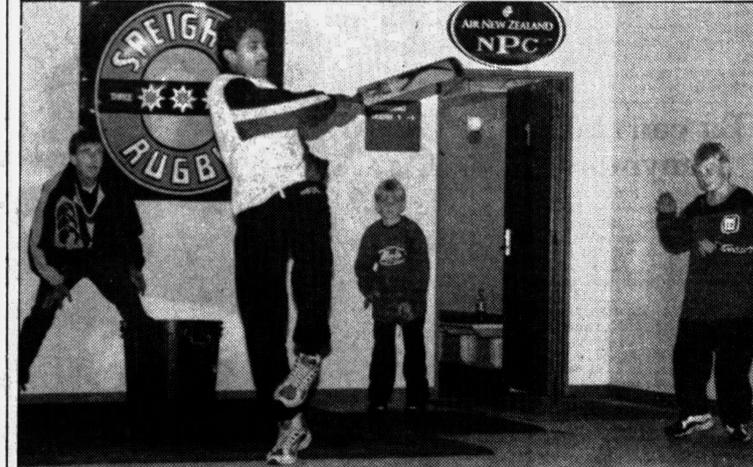
Sri Lanka will then host India in Colombo and play Pakistan in Lahore before the finalists are determined.

The tournament will hopefully be a forerunner for the proposed World Championship of Test cricket, Lele said. "It's an event we are very excited about."

The traditional five-day Test matches have so far been confined to series between two countries. There are multi-nation tournaments only in limited-overs cricket, including the World Cup held every four years.

The championship will be preceded by a two-Test series between India and Pakistan, the first on Indian soil in 12 years.

Pakistan, who last played a Test match in India in March, 1987, are scheduled to arrive here on January 21, Lele said, adding the venues and dates will be finalised on December 30.



India's Anil Kumble playing indoor cricket with some youngsters as the opening day of the first Test against New Zealand was washed out at Dunedin yesterday. — AFP photo