

Column One

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 28 '98, and draw
shortly afterwards

- National cricket team captain Aminul Islam will play this season for
Biman | Mohammedan | Surjo Tarun
- Who won the Premier league cricket title last season?
Mohammedan | Kalabagan | Abahani
- How many teams play in the Premier league?
10 | 8 | 12
- How many overs will be played per side in the Premier league this season?
50 | 80 | 100
- How many venues will be used for the Premier league this year?
One | Two | Three

Name

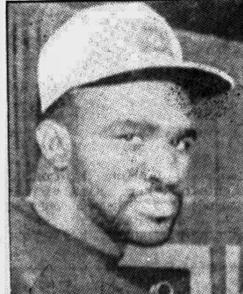
Class Roll No.

School Address

Phone: (if any)



SPORTS TALK



Evander Holyfield
(WBA heavyweight champion)
"Either I'm gonna knock him out good, or I'm gonna knock him out bad."
On his forthcoming bout against Lennox Lewis.

Zidane's bait for United

UNDATED, Dec 24 (Mail/Internet): Zinedine Zidane, the European Footballer of the Year, last night gave a strong hint that he is prepared to leave Italian champions Juventus and launch a new career in England.

The 15-million pound-rated Frenchman, who is known to be upset over the imminent departure of Juventus coach Marcello Lippi to Inter Milan, fanned the rumours when he said: "I may end up looking for new challenges. I still have several great years ahead of me and I want to play them at the highest level."

There have been stories of me wanting to return to Marseille but there will be plenty of time to return to France in the future.

Many had assumed he would follow Lippi to Inter but Zidane said: "I am in no way tied to him. People should not assume that I will just go wherever he goes."

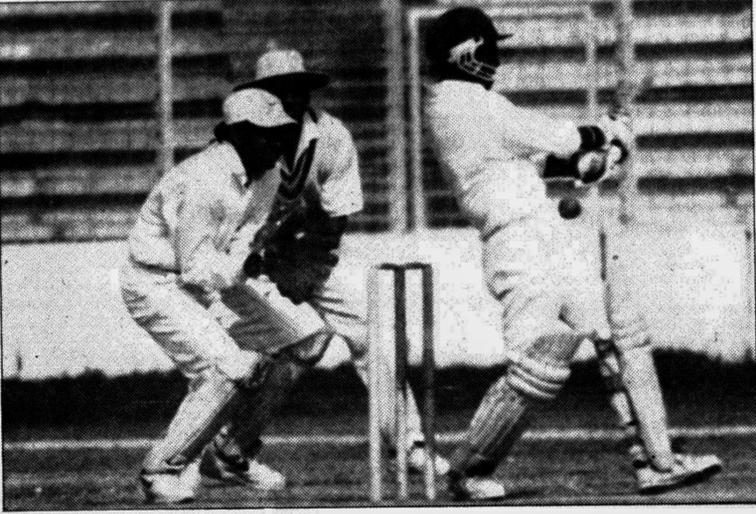
Arsenal tried to sign him last season and reports in Italy suggest the 26-year-old attacking midfielder will move to Manchester United at the end of this season.

United have been in touch with Juventus, asking to be kept informed of the situation. They could have landed him for 4-million pound two seasons ago after watching him on no fewer than 10 occasions playing for Bordeaux. He pushed his price sky high with the two goals which helped France lift the World Cup in the summer.

Hadji honoured

PARIS, Dec 24: Moroccan World Cup star Mustapha Hadji was today named African footballer-of-the-year by African Football magazine after a vote of 51 journalists from countries affiliated to African Football Confederation (CAF), reports AFP.

Hadji, 27, scored a spectacular goal for Morocco in their World Cup final match against Norway. The Deportivo la Coruna midfielder had already been named player-of-the-year by the CAF earlier this month. Nigeria's Jay Jay Okocha, who plays for Paris St Germain, was second in the voting with his compatriot Sunday Oshieh, who plays for Ajax Amsterdam, third.



Agrani Bank middle order Rajin Saleh Ahmed tries to pull on his way to scoring a brilliant 65 against Brothers' Union in a Janakantha Premier cricket league encounter at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday. —Star photo

Mofizur tolls the bell for Brothers Union

Bagan mean big business

Sports Reporter

Shahid Saeed hammered the ninth century of the season in the Janakantha Premier League to help Kalabagan pile up a mammoth total against a lowly-rated Ajax at the Dhamondi Cricket Stadium yesterday.

On a day where wily ruled over cherry, Agrani Bank amassed a huge 346 at the Bangabandhu National Stadium, leaving last year's runners-up Brothers Union with the daunting task of keeping their slate clean.

Incidentally, Kalabagan's 391 for five in the stipulated 80 was the highest score in an innings in the league this season and Agrani Bank's 346 for eight at the Bangabandhu surpassed Mohammedan's 330 scored a few days back.

Sahid Saeed scored a superlative unbeaten 127, the highest individual score, as Kalabagan, electing to bat after winning the toss, virtually toyed with the depleted Ajax attack.

The Pakistan middle-order batsman clubbed seven fours and a couple of sixes in his 148-ball knock. The Lahore-based right-hander put on 138 runs for the third wicket with compatriot Ghulam Ali after opener Harun-ur-Rashid laid the foundation with a cracking 90.

The balding stroke-maker hammered 13 disdainful boundaries and a huge sixer in his 115-ball stay at the wicket. Harun missed his first century when he offered a return catch to off-spinner Shoeb.

Appearing in his first match this season, the Pakistan International Ghulam Ali scored a fluent 83 off 127 balls, embellished with seven fours and a six. Coming in to bat at number three after Sajjad returned for 14, Ghulam Ali put on 52 runs for the second wicket with Harun.

The real thrust in the Kalabagan innings came when Saeed joined Ghulam Ali. Together they took the score to 262 in 59 overs before Ghulam Ali departed, offering a tame catch to Nayeem.

Saeed was however not ready to resign. He raced on to complete his 100 off 131 balls and take Kalabagan past the 300 mark. The imposing total perhaps had half the job done for possibly Kalabagan's third win from four league engagements.

At the Bangabandhu National Stadium, a defeat for Brothers after three consecutive wins looked almost certain

Fleming fit for 2nd Test

WELLINGTON, Dec 24: Stephen Fleming is shrugging off the recurrence of a groin injury to captain New Zealand in the second Test against India starting at the Basin Reserve on Saturday, reports Reuters.

The New Zealand team's physiotherapist, Mark Harrison, said: "It is a chronic over-use injury, it is not game-threatening, but causes him discomfort when running."

Fleming's team are optimistic about their prospects for the Test, one which the result of the three-match series could hinge after the first Test in Dunedin was washed out without a ball being bowled.

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A 'general' replacement

The government has appointed Chief of Army Staff Lt Gen Muhammad Mustafizur Rahman as the president of Bangladesh Olympic Association on Wednesday, reports UNB.

Mustafiz replaced Lt Gen (ret'd) Mohammad Mahbubur Rahman. Meanwhile, National Sports Council (NSC) dissolved the ad-hoc executive committee of the BOA for the "greater interest of the country's sports and games," said a notification of the NSC yesterday.

Prime Bank chess Reefat, Rakib jointly on top

Sports Reporter
Reefat-bin-Sattar and Abdullah Al-Rakib — were jointly leading the Prime Bank International Masters' chess tournament table at the end of Round Five held at the NSC chess room yesterday.

In the fifth of the nine-round Swiss league, Reefat defeated M Ziaur Rahman while Rakib won his board against Khandker Aminul Islam to remain jointly atop having raised their tally to 4.5 points each.

On the other hand, Zia, with the defeat, is now sharing the crowded second spot along with Showkat Hossain Pallab, Hasibul Hanif and Abu Sufian Shakil with each having four points.

Pallab posted an easy win over Imon while Hanif and Shakil shared the point with a draw in the fifth round.

On Wednesday, in the 4th round matches, Zia beat Nasir, Reefat beat Bobby, Aminul beat Tipu, Rakib beat Moinuddin, Tavebur beat Monodip of India, Neera beat Alok of India, Shakil beat Romu, Pallab beat Dilu, Emon beat Akand, Moniruzzaman beat Mithu, Fahim beat Tonima, Shiploo beat Nure Alam, Mallik beat Shamsul, Monir beat Islam, Farid beat Lovlu and Rezaul beat Bahar.

Besides, Raton, Rajib and Tipu drew with Hanif, Parag and Milton respectively.

Seven players, who secured 3.5 points after the round were in second position in the points table. They were: International Masters Reefat bin Sattar and Abdullah Al Rakib, Khandker Aminul Islam, Nazmul Haq Raton, Tavebur Rahman Sunon, Hasibul Hanif and Abu Sufian Shakil.

Eleven others with 3.0 points were in third position. They were: Showkat Hossain Pallab, Sved Mahfuzur Rahman Emon, Moniruzzaman Khan, Sheikh Nasir Ahmed, Ashiquzzaman Fahim, Syed Ruhul Kabir Shiploo, Anisuzzaman Mallik, Farid Ahmed, Enayet Hossain, Moinuddin Ahmed and Monir Hossain.

The sixth round will start at the same venue today at 2 pm.

Atal rewards medalists

NEW DELHI, Dec 24: Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee today announced cash rewards to Indian athletes who won medals at the just-ended Bangkok Asian Games, reports AFP.

Vajpayee said each gold medal winner would get 500,000 rupees (12,500 dollars), while silver and bronze medalists would receive 300,000 rupees (7,500 dollars) and 200,000 rupees (5,000 dollars) respectively.

The awards were higher than those previously given by Indian governments to winners at international meets.

India won just seven gold, 11 silver and 17 bronze medals at the Bangkok Games. But Vajpayee told the medalists at his residence here that Indian sportsmen and women were "inferior to none" and encouraged them to aim higher.

"With better infrastructure and training, (Indians) are capable of touching dizzy heights. If we keep climbing the ladder of success, one day we will be able to rub shoulders with the top countries who are well ahead of us today."

The Indian men's hockey team won the gold at the Bangkok Asian Games after a gap of 32 years.



Bangladesh Cricket Board president Saber Hossain Chowdhury (R) speaking at a press conference yesterday. —Star photo

Tri-nation tourney to follow Asian Test final

Cricket-happy in March

Sports Reporter

Dhaka will host a triangular cricket tournament involving Zimbabwe, Kenya and Bangladesh in March next year.

President of Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) Saber Hossain Chowdhury disclosed this at a press briefing yesterday afternoon. Talking to journalists, the BCB supremo said that the tournament, in lieu of the deferred Asia Cup, will be held immediately after the final of the Asian Test championship, scheduled to commence at the Bangabandhu National Stadium from March 12.

"The triangular tournament will start on March 17," said Saber. Elaborating, Saber said that it would be played in double-league format and the top two teams will advance into the one-off final, slated for March 27.

"It will be a day-night meet. Besides, there will be a rest day after every match to cope with any inclement weather", said Saber.

The tri-nation tournament will be part of Bangladesh's preparation for the World Cup '99 to be held in England. The national team will tour Pakistan in April, where they will feature in the Wills Cup before setting off for England on April 15. This will be Bangladesh's maiden appearance in the World Cup.

"We had a plan to hold the Asia Cup in Dhaka in October or November this year (after India expressed its non-availability in March). But the Asian Cricket Council (ACC), after detailed discussion, has shifted the biennial event to the year 2000", said Saber, adding that the eighth edition of the meet is likely to be held in Dhaka from April 25 to May 15 in the new millennium.

Regarding the final match of the first-ever Asian Test championship, Saber said that the decision of picking Dhaka was a sequel to ICC's commitment to hold it in a neutral venue.

Although the event will be run by the ACC, Bangladesh is likely to earn a handsome amount from gate receipts as well as from advertisement.

The Test championship event, unique of its kind, will commence in Calcutta on February 17 with arch-rivals Pakistan and India playing in the inaugural match. Sri Lanka are the other team in the meet. The second match will be held in Colombo while the third one will be played in Lahore.

The playing conditions and other details of the championship will however be disclosed after the ICC meeting in Christchurch, New Zealand, next month.

Dean has something to say

SYDNEY, Dec 24 (AFP): Former Australian Test star Dean Jones says he will name an international cricketer who helped organise an approach by illegal bookmakers on the 1992 tour of Sri Lanka, a news report said today.

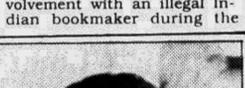
Jones will reveal to a new Australian Cricket Board inquiry the identity of the player who was with him when a bookmaker offered US 50,000 dollars for information about team changes and pitch conditions.

The cricketer is neither Sri Lankan or Australian, Jones told the Australian newspaper. He would not comment on whether it was Indian all-rounder Monoj Prabhakar, about whom allegations have been made but who has consistently denied links with cricket's murky underworld.

"It will be in my report," Jones said. "If they want to release that I've got no problem. I have got nothing to hide."

He said what happened on the tour had never been extensively covered. "I'm not out to get anyone," he said. "I just want to clear my name."

The incident came more than two years before the game-shaking revelations that former Pakistan captain Salim Malik offered bribes to Shane Warne and Mark Waugh to play badly during the 1994 tour of Pakistan.



DEAN JONES

means a lot more today than it did then.

The Australian Cricket Board Wednesday said an independent Australian inquiry into the effect of gambling on cricket would begin on January 12, although preliminary interviews will start on January 4.

The probe, to be headed by Queensland lawyer Rob O'Regan, will last for three weeks with the report made public at the end of February.

O'Regan said the inquiry

would be held in private as that was the best way to achieve results.

The ACB made the move in light of the Jones revelations and after another Australian Test batsman, Rickey Ponting, dropped for the upcoming fourth Ashes Test against England, said last week a Sydney bookmaker offered him money a year ago for information about pitch conditions.

Two other former Test players, Australian Greg Matthews and New Zealander Danny Morrison, were also approached by bookmakers.

Former Australian Test great David Boon, who was on the 1992 tour with Jones, said he was prepared to attend the inquiry but didn't think he could add anything new.

"The only incident I know about was the one with Dean when he said he had the offer," Boon said. "He asked Allan Border and myself about it and we said don't touch it. As far as I know, he knocked it back."

Both Jones and Boon said they had no knowledge of any other Australian cricketers involved with bookmakers.

"I honestly think this (Waugh and Warne) might have been an isolated case, but unfortunately with all the other stuff going on it has become far bigger than it probably was," said Boon.

McGrath scare for Aussies

MELBOURNE, Dec 24: Australia may be without both their pace bowlers for the fourth Test with England starting here Dec 26, reports AFP.

Glenn McGrath was battling a mystery virus today, the day after Jason Gillespie pulled out with a knee injury.

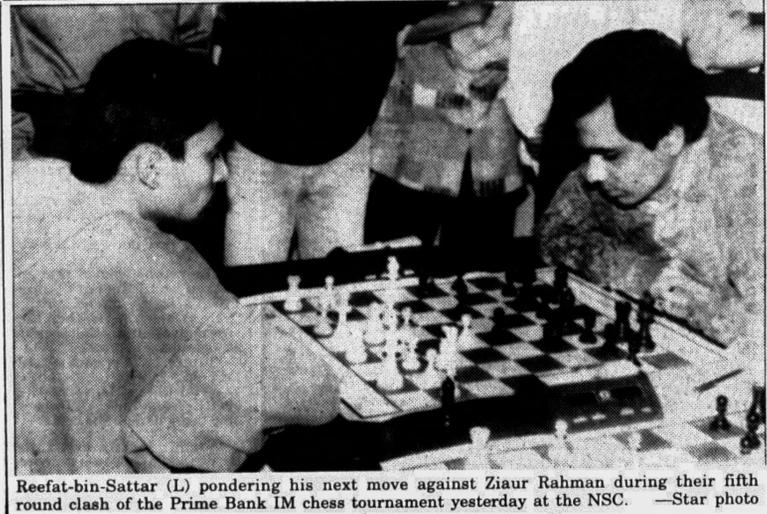
Matthew Nicholson, 24, was a shock call-up for Gillespie to cap off a stunning rise, which has seen him win national honours after only seven first class matches.

Even more remarkable is that only last year the big West-Indian Australian's career looked over as he went down with chronic fatigue syndrome.

Possible replacements Michael Kasprowicz and Paul Reffel both suffered leg injuries during the Australian XI's victory against England in Hobart earlier this week.

However, Australian captain Mark Taylor was hopeful McGrath would be fit for the fourth Ashes Test.

Taylor said McGrath complained of a virus on the final day of the third Test win in Adelaide that secured Australia the Ashes for a sixth consecutive



Reefat-bin-Sattar (L) pondering his next move against Ziaur Rahman during their fifth round clash of the Prime Bank IM chess tournament yesterday at the NSC. —Star photo