

Column One

DID U' KNOW?

(The Professor does)

(Of course you did) That Pakistan's Mushtaq Mohammad became the youngest ever Test cricketer when he played for Pakistan against the West Indies at Lahore on March 26, 1959. He was 15 years, 124 days old.

That is hardly news. Mind-boggling is Esmail Ahmed Baporia's feat of playing for Gujarat against Baroda (a first-class match) at Ahmadabad, India, on January 10, 1951. He was 11 years 261 days old.

Were his parents that much bepara?

Boost sports WHIZZ KID

COMPETITION FOR SCHOOL CHILDREN Competition-110

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

Competition closes at 8 pm Jan 29 '99 and draw shortly afterwards

1 The margin of Australia's recent Ashes series win was

3-1 4-1 4-0

2 Who is the number one player in women's tennis at the moment?

Hings Lindsay Venus

3 The final of the 1st Asian Test Championship will be held in

Dhaka Calcutta Colombo

4 The eighth SAF Games will be held in

India Sri Lanka Nepal

5 How many teams are taking part in the Janakantha Premier cricket league?

10 12 14

Name

Class Roll No.

School Address

Phone: (if any)

POWERED WITH EN-VITS ENERGY RELEASING VITAMINS

SPORTS TALK



Rodney Marsh

(Former Australia wicketkeeper and now the head coach of the Australian Cricket Academy)

The objective of the Australian Cricket Academy is not to produce Test cricketers, but to produce very good first class cricketers and in doing so, to raise the standard of the game.

Robbie remains Liverpool's

LIVERPOOL, England, Jan 27: Liverpool striker Robbie Fowler ended months of speculation by signing a five-year deal with the English Premier League club on Tuesday, reports Reuters.

The 23-year-old England international, who joined the club as a schoolboy, told a news conference he was delighted to be staying at Anfield.

"It is a massive boost to Liverpool football club and the future to have him resign," said coach Gerard Houllier.

"I was always going to sign anyway," Fowler said. "A lot has been made up but at the end of the day I am very happy and there is no reason for me to want to leave anyway."

"I'm really happy that I've signed it now."

Liverpool had reportedly offered Fowler 8 million pounds (13.21 million) to keep him at Anfield for the next five years but he had refused to sign a contract which would have made him the highest paid player in the club's history.

He still had 18 months to run on his current contract which pays him around one million pounds (1.6 million) a year.

Fowler appeared at the news conference with Cameroon international defender Rigobert Song who joined Liverpool from Serie A strugglers Salernitana last week.



Mohammedan's Kenyan recruit Maurice Odumbe (R) exults after catching Brothers number nine batsman Shahnewaz Kabir at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday. —Star photo

Brothers Union go down with a whimper Mohammedan back in race

Mohammedan Sporting could not think of the better way to go into their emotional bout with arch rivals Abahani Krira Chakra as the popular Motijheel outfit scored a huge moral-boosting 129-run win over Brothers Union in a crucial Janakantha Premier League match at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

Defending a fighting total of 294, Mohammedan who will lock horns with holders Abahani in their next match starting Saturday, went on to bundle out high-flying Brothers Union for a paltry 165 in 52.4 overs to pull off a surprisingly facile victory.

The big win for Mohammedan not only brightened their chances of regaining the title after a couple of disastrous seasons, but also ushered hopes of an intriguing finish to the topsy-turvy League.

Mohammedan are now on equal terms at the crowded top slot with Abahani, Brothers and Biman, all having six wins from eight matches. But, among the quartet, Biman seem to have profited the most after Brothers faltered at this climactic stage of the League.

Brothers were, however, only to be blamed for surrendering meekly after a solid start.

The Gopibagh outfit went into lunch with 113 for two in 31 overs. But the face of the game saw a sea of change after the sandwiches when the perennial bridesmaid lost their last eight wickets for the addition of only 51 runs to the total.

The rot sustained when opener Shahriar Hossain departed in

the first over after lunch. He scored exactly 50 off 110 balls with the help of five fours and a sixer. Once Shahriar departed, the rest perished in a bizarre fashion playing some reckless shots against a controlled Mohammedan attack.

Sanuar, who is going through a lean patch, scored a struggling 12 off 31 balls before falling to a fine diving catch by wicketkeeper Murtoza off left-arm seamer Monjurul.

Pakistanis Aamir Hanif and skipper Khaled Mahmud hung around for a while after Brothers

were reduced to 130 for four. But both the experienced campaigners paid the penalty of paying little respect to the bowlers.

Aamir Hanif, on 12, tried to push for a single on the on-side but ended up offering a simple return catch to Kenyan all-rounder Steve Tikolo. The other Kenyan, Maurice Odumbe, then had Mahmud smartly caught by Murtoza down the leg-side to decisively take the wind from the Brothers' sail.

Rafique, who rotated his bowlers with aplomb, then mopped up the Brothers tail to finish with four for 24 in his 8.4

Sports Reporter

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard of the Janakantha Premier Division cricket league encounter between Mohammedan Sporting Club and Brothers Union concluded at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

Overnight 294 all out in 79.4 overs (Tikolo 63, Odumbe 55, Nasir 33, Murtoza 30, Extras 56; Inrun 2/37)

BROTHERS UNION
Shahriar c Nasir b Ashfaq 50
Ehsan c Odumbe b Ashfaq 14
Jahangir b Odumbe 27
Sanuar c Murtoza b Manjurul 12
A Hanif c & b Tikolo 16
K Mahmud c Murtoza b Odumbe 6
Zahid b Rafique 6

Wahid c Nasir b Rafique 5
Shahnewaz c Odumbe b Rafique 2
Shafiquddin not out 0
Imran lbw b Rafique 0
Extras: lb-2, lb-9, w-16 27
Total: (All out in 52.4 overs) 165
Fall of wickets: 1/27; 2/85; 3/114; 4/130; 5/144; 6/144; 7/158; 8/159; 9/165.

Bowler O M R W
Manjurul 12 2 21 1
Ashfaq 12 1 43 2
S Tikolo 9 1 31 1
S Shadid 2 0 14 0
M Rafique 8.4 1 24 4
M Odumbe 9 3 21 2

Result: Mohammedan SC won by 129 runs.

TODAY'S MATCHES

Janakantha Premier Division Cricket League:
Biman v Sadharan Bima (Venue: Bangabandhu National Stadium)
Ajax SC v Wari Club (Venue: BKSP)

A step in the right direction

NEW DELHI, Jan 27: Whoever said a sporting event is war by other means probably had a cricketing encounter between India and Pakistan in mind. At the best of times, it is a clash that is fraught with tension; a war of nerves that is fought with no quarter given, or sought. And failure equals humiliation, not just for the players, but the entire country.

It has been 10 years since such an encounter — a full-fledged Test series between the two subcontinental neighbours — has taken place, but many of the images have endured: Krishnamachari Srikkanth being assaulted by a spectator; Anshuman Gaekwad exchanging words with Javed Miandad after being given out leg before; heckling crowds pelting players with all sorts of missiles; and the many controversial umpiring decisions. There were, if players like Gundappa Vishwanath, Asif Iqbal, Sunil Gavaskar, Zaheer Abbas and Bishen Singh Bedi are to be believed, pleasant moments too.

But they have been largely forgotten by Indian fans who followed the game between India and Pakistan through the 1980s — a time when Pakistan was clearly the superior side and most decisive encounters between the two sides ended in humiliating defeats for the Indians. As the two rivals square off once again for a Test series this week, nothing seems to have changed. The atmosphere still crackles with tension, the players are cordial and effusive in their praise for each other, but few among them can completely hide their desperation to win — or at least not lose.

Lossing can have disastrous consequences. Pakistan captain Wasim Akram learned that when his team lost the quarter-final match against India in Bangalore during the last World Cup. His house was stoned and the team had to return home secretly to avoid enraged cricketers who had gathered at airports.

The Indian team is relatively better off in this respect. No one has yet attacked them for their property physically for losing, but few would like to endure the sustained criticism that follows defeat in a country where every other person thinks he or she is an expert on the game. If, despite all this, the two teams are once again preparing to battle each other ignoring the threats of violence from right-wing jingoists such as the Shiv Sena's Balasahib Thackeray, it is because, on both sides of the border, the game is followed with an obsessiveness that borders on fanaticism. In this country, at least, cricket is among the few pan-Indian passions, along with Hindi cinema and music. And a cricket match, even if it is with minnows Zimbabwe, will have half the nation glued to their television sets. It is a passion that cuts across gender, caste, class, religion and region. It is also a passion that transcends politics. And Thackeray learned this to his discomfort last week, when he had to withdraw his threat to disrupt the series after he was clearly told by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) that it would pull out of the coalition government the two parties run in Maharashtra. Thackeray and his followers — known as Sainiks, or golders — have a vice-like grip over Mumbai, the city that saw the birth and phenomenal growth of the party. It is a city in which few have dared to take on the Sena or its committed supporters, known for their strong-arm tactics when it comes to tackling dissent.

The Sena has proclaimed in the past that it will brook no opposition once its supreme leader announces a course of action — in this case the disruption of the Test series. The attack the Sainiks allegedly launched on the office of the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) and the vandalism of the pitch at the cricket grounds in Delhi and in Muzaffarnagar, Uttar Pradesh, once again underscored this point. Yet, it was in Mumbai that a group of people, including many women, gathered under the banner of

"Like Minded Citizens" to protest the attack on the BCCI office and demand Thackeray's arrest — yes, his arrest, boldly sought before television cameras — for threatening to disrupt the India-Pakistan series. There were similar protests all over the country, with children and women joining in. Delegations met Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee, held rallies and sit-ins and launched signature campaigns. And it was this open show of displeasure at the Sena's moves that finally pushed the BJP into cutting its losses by threatening Sena with a severance of ties. Such is the power of cricket.

Gen Zia-ul-Haq as President had, during the 1986-87 tour, flown down to attend an India-Pakistan match in Jaipur in a bid to cool rapidly rising temperatures on either side of the border on the non-cricketing front. The move was at that time dubbed as "cricket diplomacy" and Zia was praised for his astuteness. The visit, however, did little to improve relations between the two countries. And a mere two years later the insurgency in Kashmir had gone out of control, with India blaming Pakistan for fanning the flames. Cricket, clearly, is not meant to sort out the political differences between the two countries. But it will be good for the game itself if both Pakistanis and Indians learn to play it without bitterness — especially now that there is a wealth of talent on both sides. Which kept follower of the game, for instance, would want to be deprived of a battle between Akram and Sachin Tendulkar? In the current series, the two teams appear to be making an effort to play the game in just such a spirit. On the last day of the three-day tie between India 'A' and Pakistan, Akram declared the innings when Inzamam-ul-Haq was on 98, believing he had already reached his ton. The Indians covered up his faux pas by agreeing to consider it as a 100 for the record. It is such gestures that make cricket such a wonderful game.

— India Abroad News Service

Aamir Sohail to enrich Abahani

Sports Reporter
Former Pakistan captain Aamir Sohail arrives in the city today to play for Abahani in the on-going Janakantha Premier League.

The southpaw, dropped from the Pakistan team recently, is scheduled to fly into the capital at around 10 am. The left-handed opener and a useful tweaker is likely to make his maiden appearance in the Dhaka League when the popular Dhanmondi outfit clash against arch rivals Mohammedan Sporting in an important match at the Bangabandhu National Stadium starting Saturday.

Sohail captained the visiting Pakistan team to Dhaka during the Wills Cup in November last year.

A desperate appeal indeed

Tawfiq Aziz Khan

South Africa were cruising along nicely against the West Indies at Durban. They were comfortably placed at 120 for the loss of Herschell Gibbs. Keith Arthurton was bowling his left-arm 'donkey drops' to Cullinan firmly saddled on 46. It was the fifth delivery of the 27th over.

Arthurton sent down a quickish one and Cullinan misjudged. The ball hit the hard ground and bounced up quite a lot. As it started its dismount Cullinan caught it with his right hand probably in an innocuous attempt to help the fielding side. But that was a silly thing to do. If he counted to protect his stumps he could have very well done it after the ball had landed on the pitch and took a turn towards the stumps. At that point Cullinan could either stop it with his bat or kick it out of harm's way. But West Indies captain Brian Lara, who is having a torrid time against the South Africans having been white washed 5-0 in the Test series, desperately needed a wicket at that stage and appealed to umpire David Orchard, who had no option but to raise his finger against Cullinan. It was Orchard's 35th ODI and both he and Cullinan became part of cricket history. This was the first such decision in an ODI.

But the burning question remained. Did Lara work against the spirit of the game of cricket? Incidentally, it was also my first such experience.

ICC U-17 camp in March
Three cheers for Gordon
Sports Reporter
Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) appointed three coaches — Sheikh Dawlatuzzaman, Abdul Hadi Ratan and Sarwar Inam to assist West Indian coach Gordon Greenidge in the World Cup '99 camp.

The residential camp with 30 cricketers will begin at the Bangladesh Krira Shiksha Protisthan (BKSP), Savar, from February 1. The preliminary camp will continue for four weeks after which a 19-man squad, including four reserves, will be announced on February 28.

According to BCB Joint Secretary Mahmud Ul Haque Manu, who is also secretary of Coaching and Planning Committee of the board, the three coaches will help Gordon upto February 28 after which the legendary Caribbean will take over the charge alone.

Meanwhile, national coach Jalal Ahmed Chowdhury, who had been assisting Gordon so far, has been given charge of the under-17 cricketers for the ICC training camp to be held in BKSP in April and May. Sixty under-17 cricketers, including 45 from Bangladesh, will take part in the camp scheduled to begin from the end of March.

MADRAS, Jan 27 (AFP/AP): India's batting genius Sachin Tendulkar is set for a rousing showdown against Pakistan's under-17 cricketers for the ICC training camp to be held in BKSP in April and May. Sixty under-17 cricketers, including 45 from Bangladesh, will take part in the camp scheduled to begin from the end of March.



HAPPY MOMENT: Mohammedan cricketers jubilate after defeating Brothers Union by 129 runs yesterday. —Star photo

বাংলাদেশ ব্রিজ ফেডারেশন



Bangladesh Bridge Federation (BBF) president Farooq Sobhan (R) makes a point during a press conference yesterday in connection with the forth coming second SAARC bridge tournament. BBF vice-president Firoze Ahmed is on the left. —Star photo

4 men's and 2 women's local teams SAARC bridge opens Feb 4

Sports Reporter

The delayed 2nd SAARC Bridge Tournament '98 will start in the city from February 4 under the auspices of the Bangladesh Bridge Federation (BBF). The tourney involving India, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and hosts Bangladesh, which was earlier scheduled in December last, was deferred for two months because of last year's devastating flood.

State Minister for Youth and Sports Obaidul Quader will inaugurate the six-day meet at Hotel Sheraton, the main venue, on February 4 at 5 pm. The tournament will be held in two parts — team and pairs event.

A total of 78 pairs will compete in the pairs duplicate bridge while 12 men's team and six women's team will take part in the teams event. Bangladesh and India have made four entries in the men's team competition while Pakistan will send two teams. The other two men's teams will come from Nepal and Sri Lanka.

For the first time in Bangladesh's history, two women's

teams will take part in the women's event which also features two teams from India and one each from Sri Lanka and Nepal.

The four men's team from Bangladesh are Dhaka Club Blue, Aces Bridge Club, Kamal and Partners, and Bangladesh Bank Red. They will be known as Bangladesh A, B, C and D while two women's team will also be named as Bangladesh A and B.

A press conference in connection with the tournament was held at the Dhaka Club yesterday with BBF president Farooq Sobhan in the chair. BBF vice-president AK Feroze Ahmed read the key note while other senior officials of the federation were also present on the occasion.

Replying to a question, Farooq Sobhan, the former Foreign Secretary, said they have allocated an estimated budget of Taka 20 lakh for the smooth functioning of the meet. He also revealed that the tournament will be sponsored by three leading business houses — Rangs

Group, HRC and GMG Airlines. The following are the members of the six Bangladesh teams: Men's:

Bangladesh A: AK Feroze Ahmed (captain), M Waliul Islam, Brig (Retd.) M Azizul Haque, ATM Mofazzal Hossain and Zahurul Haque.

Bangladesh B: NH Shamsuzzaman (captain), Syed Sujuddin Ahmed, Mobinul Islam, Rafiqul Hasan Siddique, Hasinur Rahman Talukder and Mamunul Islam.

Bangladesh C: Anisul Haque (captain), Bani Amin, DM Hanzala, Saeed Ahmed, Naimul Hasan and Q Habibul Haque.

Bangladesh D: Saleh Ahmed (captain), Shamsul Alam, Humayun Kabir, Abdul Wahab Hawlader, M Ismail Hossain and M Shahjahan. Women's:

Bangladesh A: Salma Karim (captain), Mehbooba Qayyum, Shafiqaz Bhai, Anju Hussain, Suraya Rahman and Nargis Rahman.

Bangladesh B: Shamim Hamid (captain), Ameneh Ispahani, Fiona Humphry, Sandra Hutton, Firdous Ali and Noi West.

Indo-Pak Test clash after a decade Cricket is the winner



WASIM AKRAM

MADRAS, Jan 27 (AFP/AP): India's batting genius Sachin Tendulkar is set for a rousing showdown against Pakistan's under-17 cricketers for the ICC training camp to be held in BKSP in April and May. Sixty under-17 cricketers, including 45 from Bangladesh, will take part in the camp scheduled to begin from the end of March.

The last time Tendulkar faced the lethal duo of Wasim Akram and Waqar Younis at the Test level was when he made his international debut as a 16-year-old prodigy in Pakistan in 1989.

Now one of the game's leading batsmen, the 25-year-old faces a severe test of his reputation as Pakistan go for the kill in their first Test on Indian soil in 12 years.

"We know he is the best, it will obviously be important to get him early," said Akram, the Pakistani captain, who has played against Tendulkar in one day cricket in the intervening period.

Akram, the only bowler to have more than 300 wickets in both Test and one-dayers, said he was unfazed by India's strong batting and their 12-year unbeaten series record at home.

"I am inspired by the fact that the last time India lost a series at home was against us in 1987," Akram said. "I think we have the talent to repeat the feat."

"Moreover, we are known to play well abroad, just as India do at home. It should be a great contest," he said ahead of the first Test at the heavily-guarded Chepauk Stadium.

Security is tight, despite Hindu militants having called off a campaign to disrupt the Test series.

Even the media was prevented from attending the match-eve training sessions as 6,000 security staff ringed the stadium and approach roads.

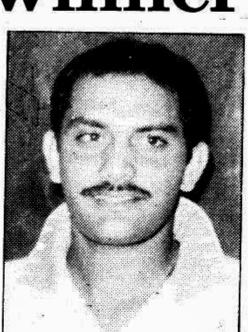
There are few rivalries in international sport more intense than between Pakistan and India in cricket, the sub-continent's version of the Ashes encounters between England and Australia.

The two back-to-back Tests promise exhilarating cricket even though both teams are struggling to overcome poor form and embarrassing recent defeats.

Pakistan come to India after being tamed in their own backyard, first by Mark Taylor's mighty Australians and then quite unexpectedly by unfancied Zimbabwe.

India, who have won just one Test match abroad since 1986 despite an enviable home record, lost to New Zealand earlier this year.

Cricketers in both country will, however, forget the past as the bitter rivals cross swords again after more than a decade. Tendulkar and skipper Mohammad Azharuddin are the only Indians to have experienced the overcharged atmosphere of an Indo-Pakistan



AZHARUDDIN

Test. Four Pakistanis — Akram, Younis, Salim Malik and Ijaz Ahmed — have played before against India.

India are expected to pick three spinners and Pakistan as many fast bowlers on the grassless Chepauk wicket that affords bounce on the first day before taking turn later in the match.

"This wicket suits us," said Indian captain Mohammad Azharuddin, who defeated Mark Taylor's mighty Australian here a year ago.

The rival captains brushed aside speculation they will adopt negative tactics to ensure they don't lose — akin to a national disaster in both countries.

Of the 44 Tests between the two countries, 33 have ended in draws, but both Akram and Azharuddin said they will go for a win.

"It's every Pakistani cricketer's dream to beat India in India," said Akram. "I am no different. I want to win."

Azharuddin responded: "We will be positive because the fear of defeat can often backfire."

SQUADS

PAKISTAN (from): Wasim Akram (capt), Wahajhatullah Wasti, Saeed Anwar, Ijaz Ahmed, Salim Malik, Inzamam-ul-Haq, Yousuf Youhana, Moin Khan, Waqar Younis, Shoaib Akhtar, Saqlain Mushtaq, Mushtaq Ahmed.

INDIA (from): Mohammad Azharuddin (capt), Sadagopan Ramesh, Venkat Laxman, Rahul Dravid, Sachin Tendulkar, Saurav Ganguly, Nayan Mongia, Javagal Srinath, Venkatesh Prasad, Anil Kumble, Sunil Joshi, Harbhajan Singh, Laxmi Shukla, Hrishikesh Kanitkar.

Umpires: Steve Dunne (New Zealand) and Venkat Ramaswamy (India).