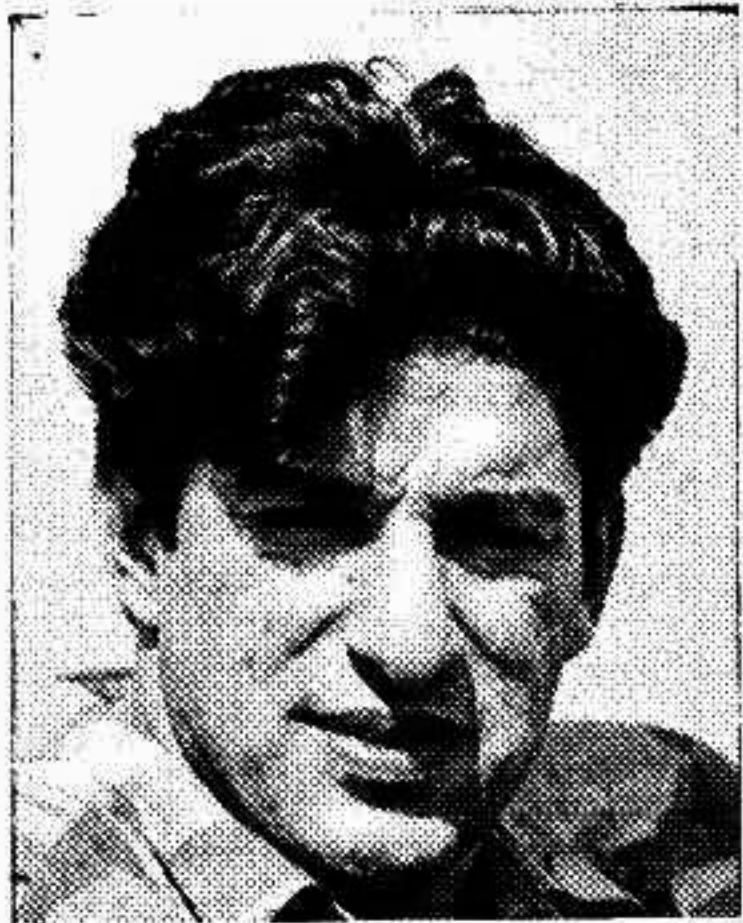


Column One

SPORTS TALK



Wasim Akram

(Pakistan cricket captain)
"I was particularly disappointed in the quality of the Ferozeshah Kotla pitch -- it wasn't up to Test match standard."

Boost sports WHIZZ KID
COMPETITION FOR SCHOOL CHILDREN
Competition-111
✓ Tick the Correct Answers
Post to The Daily Star
Win attractive prizes
Competition closes at 8 pm
Feb 19 '99 and draw shortly afterwards

- Who was the mar- of the match in the first Indo-Pak Test?
Afidi Tendulkar Seaglin
- How many Tests has Mark Taylor played?
102 103 104
- South Africa won the Test series against West Indies
4-1 3-1 5-0
- How many centuries have so far been scored in the Janakantha League?
29 30 31
- Who clinched the sub-junior chess title?
Rakib Rajib Tuhin

Name
Class Roll No.
School Address
Phone: (if any)
POWERED WITH
EN-VITS
ENERGY RELEASING VITAMINS

BUET cricket

Department of Electrical Engineering and Electronics beat Mechanical Engineering by 40 runs in the opening match yesterday of BUET Inter-Faculty Cricket Championship at the university ground, according to a press release. Speaking as chief guest, Vice-chancellor Prof. Dr. Nooruddin Ahmed stressed upon the students to develop their standard in sports and games in tandem with their scholastic pursuits.

Scores: (45-over match)
EEE - 220 for 5 (Sanaul 97, Galib 43)
Mechanical - 180 in 42.3 overs (Shawpon 110)

BUET v'ball

BUET Inter-Hall Volleyball Championship began at the university ground yesterday, says a press release. Vice-chancellor Prof. Dr. Nooruddin Ahmed declared the tournament open.

On the opening day, Rashid Hall beat Ahsanullah, while Titumir Hall defeated Suhrawardy by the identical margin of 2-1 sets.

Rajshahi badminton

From Our Correspondent RAJSHAH, Feb 12: The district badminton competition organised by Rajshahi District Badminton Society started today.

A total of six matches were decided on the opening day.

RESULTS

Men's double: Anam and Tipu beat Didar and Liton 15-1, 15-2

Boys under-18 singles: Subir beat Moniruzzaman 15-2, 15-4 sets. Enayet beat Musfiqur Rahman 15-13, 10-15, 17-14 and Rana defeated Masud 15-8, 15-10.

Boys under-14 group: Sweet beat Ershad 15-4, 15-12.

M'singh cricket

MYMENSINGH, Feb 12: County Cricket Club earned a thrilling one wicket victory over Golden Future Boys' Club in the First Division Cricket League at the Circuit House ground today, reports UNB.

Batting first, Golden Future Boys' Club scored 187 for eight in the stipulated 40 overs. In reply, County Club reached 189 for nine in 40 overs.

Abahani, Brothers academic chance go astray

It's now 'official': Biman are the champs

Sports Reporter

Two half-centuries from opener Mehrab Hossain and Pakistani recruit Ijaz Ahmed inspired Abahani Krira Chakra to pile up a huge total against Brothers Union in the last match of the Janakantha Premier Division League began at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

Mehrab scored 80 and Ijaz, the discarded Pakistani international, hammered 85 as the popular Dhanmondi outfit, electing to bat first, amassed 358 in the stipulated 80 overs with two wickets to spare. Despite the enormity of the score, it was not enough to supersede Biman's run-rate and a likely Abahani win will only provide them the runners-up spot. Neither was a Brothers win dethrone Biman.

Abahani, who were unable to lift the league title for the third successive season, got off to a flying start with a century partnership between openers Hannan Sarkar and Mehrab, who reached three figure in 25.3 overs. The stand was broken on 102 in the same over when Brothers' skipper Khaled Mahmud trapped Hannan before, on 42, Hannan, who primarily rendered support to his partner Mehrab, played a patient innings. He faced 80 balls in his 101-minute stay, which included four boundaries.

Mehrab then added another 42 runs with one-down Naimur Rahman before he was run out in the 35th over, a victim of his casual approach. The national opener went for a single after

pushing Towhid to the mid-off region. But he was well short of his mark, thanks to a quick throw from Shahriar.

In his 109-ball vigil, Mehrab, who reached his fourth fifty of the league from 73 balls, scored 80 runs with the help of eight fours. With yesterday's 80, Mehrab has scored a total of 484 runs, the second highest among the local batsmen. Brothers opener Shahriar, who



will be batting today, has 489 runs from his previous 10 matches.

Naimur (20) was next to go in the 42nd over leaving Abahani on 167 for three. Ijaz then partnered his skipper Akram Khan and shared a 90-run stand in the fourth wicket, during which Abahani crossed the 250-mark in the 60th over.

Brothers Pakistan left-arm spinner, Zahid Ahmed, took a simple return catch from Akram to break the partnership at 257.

Ijaz then almost single-handedly took the scoreboard to 303 before he was badly run-out on 85 in the 72nd over. After Ijaz's return, Neeayamur Rashid and Hasibul Hos-

sain shared a 51-run partnership for the seventh wicket to enable Abahani cross the 350-mark in 78.5 overs.

Hasibul, who scored a run-a-ball 25 with a huge six and a boundary, was caught at long on when he drove Khaled Mahmud while Neeayamur, who scored 26 off 36 balls, was stumped by wicketkeeper Jahangir in the next delivery.

Brothers will begin their innings this morning.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard of the Janakantha Premier Division cricket league match between Abahani and Brothers Union began at the Bangabandhu National Stadium on Friday:

ABAHANI				
Hannan lbw b K Mahmud	42			
Mehrab run out	80			
Naimur lbw b A Hanif	20			
Ijaz Ahmed run out	85			
Akram Khan c & b Zahid	25			
Neeayamur st Jahangir b K Mahmud	26			
Hasibul s Ehsanul b K Mahmud	2			
Kamal not out	4			
Nuruzzaman not out	4			
Extras: (b-12, lb-8, nb-11, w-8)	39			
Total: (For 8 wks in 80 overs)	358			
Did not bat: Saidul Islam.				
Fall of wickets: 1-102; 2-144; 3-167; 4-257; 5-282; 6-303; 7-354; 8-354				
Bowlers				
Shahnewaz	3	0	11	0
Shafinuddin	16	0	70	0
Zahid	16	0	59	2
K Mahmud	16	2	67	3
Ehsanul	5	0	24	0
Imran	9	1	44	0
Towhid	4	0	17	0
A Hanif	11	1	46	1



Abahani's Pakistani recruit Ijaz Ahmed Junior flicks Brothers' Khaled Mahmud yesterday.

—Star photo

Suhrawardy Cup soccer

RANGPUR, Feb 12: Sirajganj and Chapinawabganj tasted their first wins in the final round of the Keya Cosmetics Suhrawardy Cup U-19 Football Championship at the local stadium today, reports UNB.

Sirajganj outplayed Barisal 3-0 after leading the first half 1-0. Arif put Sirajganj ahead in the 15th minute while Rubel doubled the margin in the 66th minute. Babu completed the rout in the 85th minute.

Earlier, Sirajganj were beaten 2-1 by Jessore. Chapinawabganj also earned a 3-0 victory over Nilphamari after leading the first half 1-0.

Mainul struck twice in the 28th and 80th minutes while Rubel added the third in the 65th minute.

Nat'l women's chess

Shabana Parveen Nipa maintained her sole lead in the 20th national women chess tournament collecting full four points at the end of fourth round yesterday, reports APB.

At the day's round at the NSC chess room, Nipa survived stiff resistance from Nazrana Khan Ava before wrapping up the match in 85 moves adopting Queen-Pawn opening.

IM Rani Hamid and Tanima Parveen followed by the leader with 3.5 points. Defending champion Rani beat Zakia and Tanima outwitted Farzana.

The other matches between Afroza Khanam and Afsana Parveen as well as Masuda Begum and Fayzunnisa ended in draws.

Barisal cricket

From Staff Correspondent BARISAL, Feb 12: Khelkar Kalyan Samity (KKS) defeated Meghadut Krira Chakra (MKC) by 25 runs in the First Division cricket league here today.

Batting first, KKS scored 186 for nine in the stipulated 40 overs. In reply, MKC scored 161 in 38.4 overs.

Rain plays foul at the MCG

MELBOURNE, Feb 12: The second limited-overs cricket final between Australia and England was abandoned today because of rain, reports Reuters.

The Australian Cricket Board said the game would be replayed at the Melbourne Cricket Ground on Saturday, a third match, if required, would also be held at the MCG on Sunday.

Australia currently lead the best-of-three finals 1-0 after winning Wednesday's opening match in Sydney by 10 runs.

Today's match was called off before a ball was bowled. England captain Alec Stewart had won the toss and chosen to bat but almost as soon as he made his decision, it started to rain.

Umpires Darrell Hair and Daryl Harper waited for almost three hours before calling the match off.

TEAMS

AUSTRALIA: Shane Warne (capt), Adam Dale, Adam Gilchrist, Brendon Julian, Stuart Law, Shane Lee, Darren Lehmann, Damien Martyn, Glenn McGrath, Ricky Ponting, Mark Waugh, Michael Kasprovic (12th man).

ENGLAND: Ale Stewart (capt), Robert Croft, Mark Ealham, Neil Fairbrother, Darren Gough, Graeme Hick, Adam Holoake, Nasser Hussain, Nick Knight, Alan Mullally, Vince Wells, Ben Holoake (12th man).

Hectic FA Cup weekend

LONDON, Feb 12: Kevin Keegan could be forgiven for taking his eye off the ball this weekend when his high-flying Fulham side face the daunting task of trying to knock English Premiership leaders Manchester United out of the FA Cup at Old Trafford, reports AFP.

The former Newcastle boss has spent most of the week denying his interest in the England manager's post vacated last week by Glenn Hoddle.

Keegan says he does not want the job despite being seen as the people's choice, insisting he will remain loyal to Fulham owner Mohamed al-Fayed.

The 48-year-old is dismayed that the issue has deflected publicity away from his club's cup exploits.

"I wish it hadn't come to the fore this week," he said. Mr al-Fayed gave me a budget of the club and that means more to me than the England job. That's hard to say but it's true," he added.

Keegan's Second Division leaders have already disposed of two Premiership sides in Southampton and Aston Villa but United are a different matter altogether.

Last week they cracked eight past the Premiership's bottom club Nottingham Forest, away from home, and it would be a serious upset if Fulham were to do anything other than lose on Sunday.

United manager Alex Ferguson can afford the luxury of resting Andy Cole, in action on Wednesday for England, and looks likely to field Ole Gunnar Solskjaer alongside 21-goal Dwight Yorke in attack.

Judging by the Norwegian's efforts in 10 minutes as a substitute last week at Forest, when he scored four times, quite what he scored four times, quite what

he will do in a full 90 minutes is anyone's guess.

At Elland Road Tottenham manager George Graham comes up against his protégé David O'Leary in an enticing-looking clash against Leeds on Saturday.

O'Leary, who succeeded Graham when the Scot left earlier in the season to take over at Spurs, is annoyed with the English Football Association for organising friendlies with France ahead of the FA Cup weekend.

It followed call-ups for Jonathon Woodgate and Alan Smith to the Under-18s, Lee Bowyer and Paul Robinson to the Under-21s and Nigel Martyn with the full squad.

"It has been a scandalous week in preparation for such an important game. We started off with all these injuries, then we had all the people going away on international duty," said O'Leary on Thursday.

"I was working with four players up until yesterday, and with no keeper because of the call-ups for Paul Robinson and Nigel Martyn, so it has been quite a nice week!"

Holders Arsenal are also counting the cost of England's 2-0 defeat by France in midweek as they prepare to welcome first division Sheffield United on Saturday.

Right-back Lee Dixon has concussion and a neck injury while central defensive stalwarts Martin Keown and Tony Adams picked up hamstring and knee knocks respectively.

United too have their injury problems and manager Steve Bruce admitted: "To get anything from this game we are going to have to catch Arsenal on an off day, while we will have to play to our maximum."

But this is the FA Cup. It's got that little bit of magic and that's why everybody loves it. I'm sure people up and down the country will be wishing us well

— except the Arsenal fans."

Gianluca Vialli's Chelsea, who were fortunate to scrape past Oxford in the last round, travel to Sheffield Wednesday in a match which pits Wednesday's Italian wizard Benito Carbone against his friend and compatriot, Chelsea playmaker Gianfranco Zola.

"Zola is a close friend of mine," said Carbone. "But I won't talk to him before this game. I don't want to speak with him. It's important we keep Zola quiet because he is the best player for Chelsea at the moment. Whenever he is the star man, Chelsea always win."

Rudolf Gullit's Newcastle, finalists last year play host to Blackburn Rovers in another all-Premiership clash.

Rovers have improved since the arrival of Brian Kidd thanks to the performances of youngsters like Damien Duff, who was man-of-the-match in a 2-0 Ireland win over Paraguay on Wednesday.

Ireland goalkeeper Shay Given will be in the Newcastle goal on Sunday and said of Duff: "As an out-and-out winger against Paraguay he showed just what we all know he can do and if he turns that on again on Sunday against Newcastle we've got problems."

In other ties Premiership strugglers Everton and Coventry clash at Goodison Park, while Derby County visit first division Huddersfield, both on Saturday. First division Barnsley will start as favourites at home to division two side Bristol Rovers.

FIXTURES
Saturday: Arsenal v Sheffield United, Barnsley v Bristol Rovers, Everton v Coventry, Leeds United v Tottenham Hotspur, Sheffield Wednesday v Chelsea, Huddersfield v Derby County.

Sunday: Manchester United v Fulham, Newcastle United v Blackburn Rovers.

Eng FA found innocent

LONDON, Feb 12: The Football Association have been cleared of any 'improper or incorrect' actions' after an inquiry by FIFA, a spokesman said Friday, reports AFP.

Football's world governing body carried out an investigation into the saga, which led to the enforced resignations of FA chairman Keith Wiseman and chief executive Graham Kelly.

It was alleged that the two men had been attempting to secure support from the Welsh Football Association for Wiseman's bid to be elected to the FIFA executive as the Home Nation's representative.

FIFA executives spoke to representatives from both the FA and the Welsh FA at the end of January but said the matter was now considered closed.

A FIFA spokesman said: "The two associations involved were asked to submit a report to FIFA on what happened."

"FIFA have found that there were no incorrect or improper actions that would warrant further investigation. The case is now closed as far as FIFA is concerned."

Kelly was the first to resign at the end of last year after the FA's executive committee had carried out their own investigation into his actions.

He was deemed to have acted without having consulted either the executive committee or the FA's full council in advance. Wiseman attempted to cling on to power until a meeting of the full council in early January, but was met with widespread opposition and he, too, then resigned.

He thanked the FA for having made clear that "no aspirations had been cast on my integrity or honesty" but was condemned for what his interim successor Geoff Thompson called an "error of judgement."

Former FA vice-chairman Thompson and director of public affairs David Davies have been installed into the interim roles of chairman and executive director respectively, and have already started building bridges with UEFA and FIFA.

The search for a full-time chief executive has already begun, while a vote will be taken on the new chairman by the full council in June.

The FA welcomed the official announcement, which follows a meeting that Davies and Thompson held with FIFA president Sepp Blatter a fortnight ago.

FA spokesman Steve Double said: "We gave a full report on the matter to Sepp Blatter two weeks ago when David Davies and Geoff Thompson went to Switzerland to meet him."

"It was made clear to us then that FIFA fully accepted our version of events. We are pleased that they have publicly confirmed that today."

acting chief executive of the English Football Association (F.A.), said it was too early to link the arrests with a spate of floodlight failures at Premier League matches.

"The arrests followed damage to electrical equipment connected to the floodlights," Davis said in a statement prepared on behalf of the F.A., the Premier League, the football league and Charlton.

"Those in custody are neither players nor officials of Charlton. We understand one of them is employed by an outside company which is used by the club. The three others are believed to be foreign nationals."

Floodlight sabotage?

LONDON, Feb 12: Four men have been arrested after damage was caused to floodlight equipment at Charlton Athletic's stadium in an incident linked by the club's managing director to possible Far East betting coups, reports Reuters.

Police are now looking into instances of floodlight failures at other English Premier League grounds amid reports of possible betting scams.

The men were detained on Wednesday night on suspicion of burglary at Charlton's South London ground.

Charlton managing director Peter Varney told BBC TV on

Thursday "we believe it is to do with a far east betting coup, or attempted coup, on spread betting."

Charlton play Liverpool at home in the Premier League on Saturday and the arrests followed damage to the floodlight's electrical equipment.

Varney said: "We are not quite sure of the details but we know that ... our floodlights would have been knocked out some time during that game and the damage would have been such that possibly the game could not then have continued."

"That must be linked to spread betting which we believe emanates in the far east."

However, David Davies, the



A groundsman wiping water at the Melbourne Cricket Ground where heavy rain postponed the second final of the World Series Cup yesterday.

—Internet photo