

Column One SPORTS TALK



Mark Waugh

"Being only the sixth Australian to achieve the feat is in itself a cause for celebration. Looking forward to playing in his 100th Test."

Boost sports WHIZZ KID

COMPETITION FOR SCHOOL CHILDREN
Competition-125

✓ Tick the Correct Answers
Post to The Daily Star
Win attractive prizes
Competition closes at 8 pm
Jan 7, and draw
shortly afterwards

1. Who was the man-of-the-series in the Australia-Pakistan Tests?
Langer Ponting Inzamam

2. Who was the highest "icket-taker in the Australia-Pakistan Test series?
Akram Fleming McGrath

3. How many Test hundreds has Mark Waugh scored to date?
15 16 17

4. Who became champion in the Kenya Premier soccer?
Muktiyodha Mohammed Arambagh

5. Who lifted the Expatriates' Open chess title?
Rezaul Zia Tameer

Name
Class Roll No.
School Address

Phone: (if any)

POWERED WITH
EN-VITS
ENERGY RELEASING VITAMINS

Rivaldo, Beckham stars of Europe's dream team

MONTEVIDEO, Jan 1: Manchester United's David Beckham was selected alongside Barcelona's Rivaldo, the man who beat him to the European Footballer-of-the-Year award. Friday as world media named their continental dream team, reports AFP.

Uruguay's El Pais published the team following a vote by journalists worldwide, selecting Bayern Munich and German custodian Oliver Kahn in goal in front of a defence comprising Beckham clubmate Jaap Stam, Roberto Carlos of Real Madrid and France and Parma star Lilian Thuram.

Beckham, Barcelona and Portugal playmaker Luis Figo, Argentina and Lazio star Juan Sebastian Veron and Rivaldo form a powerful midfield.

Up front, Argentina and Fiorentina sharpshooter Gabriel Batistuta, Andrii Chevchenko of Ukraine and AC Milan and Italy and Inter Milan Christian Vieri would terrify any defence.

THE XI

Oliver Kahn (Bayern Munich and Germany), Lilian Thuram (Parma and France), Jaap Stam (Manchester United and Holland), Roberto Carlos (Real Madrid and Brazil), David Beckham (Manchester United and England), Luis Figo (Barcelona and Portugal), Juan Sebastian Veron (Lazio and Argentina), Rivaldo (Barcelona and Brazil), Gabriel Batistuta (Fiorentina and Argentina), Andrii Chevchenko (AC Milan and Ukraine), Christian Vieri (Inter Milan and Italy).

Caring husband

DERBY, England, Jan 1: Relegation-threatened English Premiership side Derby County's Greek international defender Vas Bobokis won a move home on Saturday when he signed for FAOK Salonika for a fee reported to be 200,000 pounds, reports AFP.

The 30-year-old, who was deployed mainly as a wing-back during his time with Derby and Sheffield United, failed to hold down a regular place in the team since joining them in March.

He made up his mind to move back to Greece when his wife was unable to settle in England, the Press Association reported.

Eskaton, Young canter

Sports Reporter



Eskaton Sabuj Sangha and Young Cricketers won their respective matches of the First Division Cricket League at different city venues yesterday.

At the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium, Eskaton, aided by a fine half-century from Sajid, recorded a comprehensive six-wicket win over Ajax Sporting Club.

Sajid scored a compact 75 off 118 balls as Eskaton, needing 182 for an outright victory in the stipulated 50 overs, reached the target for the loss of only four wickets and with more than five overs to spare.

Opening the innings with Kafi, Sajid put on 99 runs in 29 overs before the former departed for a patient 31.

Sajid then added 52 runs for the third wicket with skipper Tota to take Eskaton close to victory. The young opener hammered seven fours in his polished innings while Tota's run-a-ball knock featured a couple of fours and the lone six of the match.

Earlier, the Ajax innings revolved around an absorbing

ninth wicket stand of 89 runs between Azam Babu and Raja. The number nine and ten batsmen led a spectacular recovery operation after Ajax reduced to

fort not enough to avoid a defeat.

At the Bangabandhu National Stadium, Young Cricketers enjoyed an equally impressive five-wicket win against Orient Sporting Club.

Batting first after winning the toss, Orient could manage only 181 in their share of 50 overs despite a brilliant 87 from Aslam. Rajon was the wicket-in-chief for Young Cricketers with a five-wicket haul. The first change bowler conceded only 23 runs in his 10 economical overs.

Coming in to bat at number four, Aslam hold the innings together before becoming the ninth batsman out, leaving Orient at 170 in 47.1 overs. He hammered half a dozen fours in his 134-ball knock.

In reply, Young Cricketers rattled up 182 for five wickets in 48 overs. Opener Rezaul scored a patient 53 to lay the foundation while skipper Azim and Adil ensured the easy victory, putting on 42 runs for the undefeated fifth wicket. Azim, the more aggressive of the two batsmen, hit three disdainful fours and a massive sixer in his 18-ball 28. Adil scored 22.

88/8 in 23.4 overs. Azam scored a gritty 44 off 96 balls while wicketkeeper Raja remained undefeated on 36. But their ef-

Toss tourists' priority

Fourth Test from today



CAPE TOWN, Jan 1: After spending three days in the third Test in hot and humid Durban, England's battle-weary troops will be hoping captain Nasser Hussain will win the toss and choose to bat in the fourth Test against South Africa, which begins Sunday, reports AP.

Ordinarily, English players are used to playing successive cricket matches. But the grind of Test cricket is not what they're used to.

Having had South Africa on the rack during the second, third and fourth days of the third Test, only to be thwarted



HANSIE CRONJE

by a double century by Gary Kirsten, the England players will be wondering just how to get South Africa down and then deliver the coup de grace.

"I'm pleased with the way things are going," said Hussain after the Durban draw, the second of the series, which South Africa lead 1-0.

That said, he needs to reflect on the way in which Kirsten was able to completely shut the English bowlers out during his marathon 14-hour 38-minute 275-run innings in Durban. Even the marauding Andrew

Caddick was unable to penetrate the Kirsten defence, and, as Hussain said, "Caddick was the one bowler who extracted life from a good batting pitch."

With Kirsten playing the fourth Test on his home ground, and South Africa buoyed by the comprehensive manner in which they saved the third Test, it is England, rather than South Africa, who will be asking questions about their team selection.

Alan Mullally is fit to bowl again, and, because Chris Silverwood has not worked out despite his pace, that is an obvious change to make, especially since it is believed South African batsmen struggle against left-handed quick bowlers.

But, having flown Mark Ramprakash out to cover for the injured Michael Vaughan, and with Mark Butcher still having a wretched tour with the bat, the England management may be tempted to play both the now-recovered Vaughan and Ramprakash for Butcher and Darren Maddy.

That's a lot of changes for a side which came so close to victory, and doesn't even take into account the fact that Darren Gough has yet to bowl with anything like the conviction he once had.

South Africa, on the other hand, will note they went into the Durban Test top-heavy with bowlers, and probably will recall Jonty Rhodes for Mornantau Hayward.

The young fast bowler will take heart from the knowledge that Allan Donald is reaching the end of his storied career. That means the rookie will soon join forces with Shaun Pollock to form South Africa's opening attack in the new millennium.

It means more bowling responsibilities for Jacques Kallis and Lance Klusener, both of whom will have to add some wicket-taking skills to their almost indispensable batting contributions. It also means captain Hansie Cronje will

have to bowl more effectively at Test level to offset his lack of batting success recently.

"My own lack of scores recently is embarrassing," he admitted, "but I hope Newlands and 2000 will bring a change in fortunes."

Rhodes' return will be welcomed by a local public which was stunned by his omission after he scored two half-centuries, one unbeaten, in the drawn second Test in Port Elizabeth. Both came as South Africa's batting was under pressure.

TEAMS
ENGLAND (from): Mark Butcher, Michael Atherton, Mark Ramprakash, Nasser Hussain (captain), Darren Maddy, Michael Vaughan, Alec Stewart, Chris Adams, Andrew Flintoff, Darren Gough, Andrew Caddick, Alan Mullally, Chris Silverwood, Phil Tufnell.

SOUTH AFRICA (from): Gary Kirsten, Herschelle Gibbs, Jacques Kallis, Darryll Cullinan, Hansie Cronje (captain), Jonty Rhodes, Lance Klusener, Shaun Pollock, Mark Boucher, Allan Donald, Paul Adams, Mornantau Hayward.

Umpires: Cyril Michley (South Africa) and B L Cooray (Sri Lanka).



NASSER HUSSAIN

Hussain (captain), Darren Maddy, Michael Vaughan, Alec Stewart, Chris Adams, Andrew Flintoff, Darren Gough, Andrew Caddick, Alan Mullally, Chris Silverwood, Phil Tufnell.

SOUTH AFRICA (from): Gary Kirsten, Herschelle Gibbs, Jacques Kallis, Darryll Cullinan, Hansie Cronje (captain), Jonty Rhodes, Lance Klusener, Shaun Pollock, Mark Boucher, Allan Donald, Paul Adams, Mornantau Hayward.

Umpires: Cyril Michley (South Africa) and B L Cooray (Sri Lanka).

Akhtar vows to be back



PERTH, Jan 1: Banned Pakistan speedster Shoab Akhtar has declared himself the best bowler in the world, claiming that if he is a "chucker" so is every second bowler in international cricket, reports AFP.

Akhtar, 24, was speaking at a media conference here Saturday, the day after he was told by the International Cricket Council (ICC) to stand out of the game while he works to eradicate problems with his action.

The ruling bars him from the lucrative triangular one-day series against Australia and India, starting next Sunday.

"I'm simply the best (bowler) and better than the rest," he said.

Akhtar said the ICC had told him his short-pitched deliveries caused concern, but he was mystified about why he had been singled out.

"I'm still confident there is nothing wrong with my action -- it is totally fluent," he said.

"It doesn't stop anywhere -- if I stopped and then I pitched the ball, that is wrong, that is throwing. I don't stop my arm anywhere."

"They say I bend my arm a little bit. If I do, every second bowler does all around the world. I can mention four or five names that have been playing Test cricket for ages."

He said he had accepted the ICC decision and vowed to clear his name in time for next month's three-Test home series against Sri Lanka.

When he arrives home, former West Indies fast bowling

great Michael Holding, a member of the ICC panel which banned him, will work with him to try to eliminate any doubts about the legitimacy of his action.

"I'm a little disappointed, but it's alright. We are part of the system and with a brave heart I accept this," Akhtar said.

"I'm still sure there is nothing wrong with my action. Whatever they say, I will try to put it right again."

Holding is expected to suggest the Pakistan speedster makes some minor modifications to his action before the former West Indies pace champion compiles more video footage to present to the ICC, which will make another ruling on Akhtar's action.



SHOAB AKHTAR

"I can assure you I will be alright in three weeks' time," Akhtar said. "I'll be playing against Sri Lanka in Pakistan -- I am sure of that."

Akhtar said he was particularly disappointed to be missing the triangular series because he considered he was ready to atone for his indifferent bowling in Pakistan's 3-0 Test series loss to Australia in November.

"It was my dream to play in Australia, because there are good pitches to bowl on," he said.

"I had a few problems with my shoulder before the Tests, but it was just a matter of time and now I am perfectly fit."

"I was prepared for this one-day series and I was raring to go. That dream won't come true now, but it will one day."

Davenport pulls out

HONG KONG, Jan 1: World number two Lindsay Davenport's Australian Open preparations have suffered a jolt after illness forced the American ace out of an exhibition event here next week, reports AFP.

Davenport was due to appear in the Millennium Cup in a field including arch-rival and world number one Martina Hingis, but has pulled out with a chest infection, organisers said.

"She will not be playing in Hong Kong and we have been told that the reason is that she has a severe respiratory infection," a spokesman for the tournament promoters said.

Acme Cricket

Sports Reporter

Dhaka Mariner Youngs rode on a sparkling all-round performance from Bishwajit to record a facile five-wicket win over Kakral Boys in one of the two Acme Second Division Cricket League matches, played at different city venues yesterday.

At the Mirpur Outer Stadium, Bishwajit took three wickets for only 25 runs to shot Kakral Boys out for 163 runs in 37 overs. The most successful Mariner bowler then stepped in to hit an unbeaten 40, guiding his side to 164 in 33.1 overs.

Brief Scores:

Dhaka Mariner v Kakral Boys

Kakral Boys: 163 all out in 37 overs (Anwar 29, Neon 24, Extras 34; Bishwajit 3/25)

Dhaka Mariner: 164 for 5 wickets in 33.1 overs (Bishwajit 40 not out; Arman 48; Nasir 2/37)

Result: Dhaka Mariner won by 5 wickets.

Kalabagan GCC v Cricket Coaching School

Kalabagan: 205 all out in 39 overs (Sabu 57, Asad 43, Iqbal 24; Setu 5/29)

Cricket Coaching School: 151 all out in 30.4 overs (Raju 51; Mahin 4/17, Didar 2/21)

Result: Kalabagan won by 54 runs.

Bishwajit apart, opener Arman scored 49 for the winners.

At the Dhanmondi Club ground, Kalabagan GCC defeated Cricket Coaching School by 54 runs.

Batting first, Kalabagan piled on a huge total of 205 before being all out with six balls to spare in the 40-over-a-side contest. Sabu top-scored with 57 followed by Asad, who chipped in with 43. Setu captured five wickets for 29 runs for Cricket Coaching School (CCS).

CCS, in their chase, could manage only 151 before being bundled out in 30.4 overs. Raju with 51 fought a lost battle for CCS.

Mohanagari Chess

Sports Reporter

Six players crowded the top slot at the end of the seventh round of the Mohanagari Qualifying Chess at the NSC room yesterday.

The top-notchers, who bagged six points apiece, are Arman Hossain, Shafiq Ahmed, Kazi Taberul, Shamsul Kabir, Sharifuzzaman and Motakin.

They are being closely followed by Hanif Molla, Mazharul Islam and Sujon. The trio hold the second position with five and a half points each.

Steve sorry for Shoab

SYDNEY, Jan 1: Australian captain Steve Waugh said today he was saddened by the International Cricket Council's decision to ban Pakistan fast bowler Shoab Akhtar, reports Reuters.

"I must admit I was a bit shocked," Waugh said.

"It's disappointing for the player and probably a little bit disappointing for the game because he's such an exciting bowler."

"But there are rules there and if people think he's broken those rules then they have got to make a judgment on it."

Akhtar will be sent home from his team's tour of Australia after a nine-man International Cricket Council panel announced on Thursday that his bowling action had been ruled illegal.

Akhtar was only told of the panel's decision shortly after his arrival in Perth to prepare for a triangular limited-overs series with Australia and India starting January 9.

Waugh would not say whether or not he thought Akhtar actually threw the ball but did say he had some sympathy for the "Rawalpindi Express".

"I think there has probably been hundreds over the history of cricket that have done a similar thing but these days there is more of a spotlight on things such as actions," Waugh said.

Rome Marathon Kiprono's

ROME, Jan 1: Josephat Kiprono of Kenya won today's Rome Millennium Marathon through the streets of the Italian capital in a time of 2hr 8min 27sec, reports AFP.

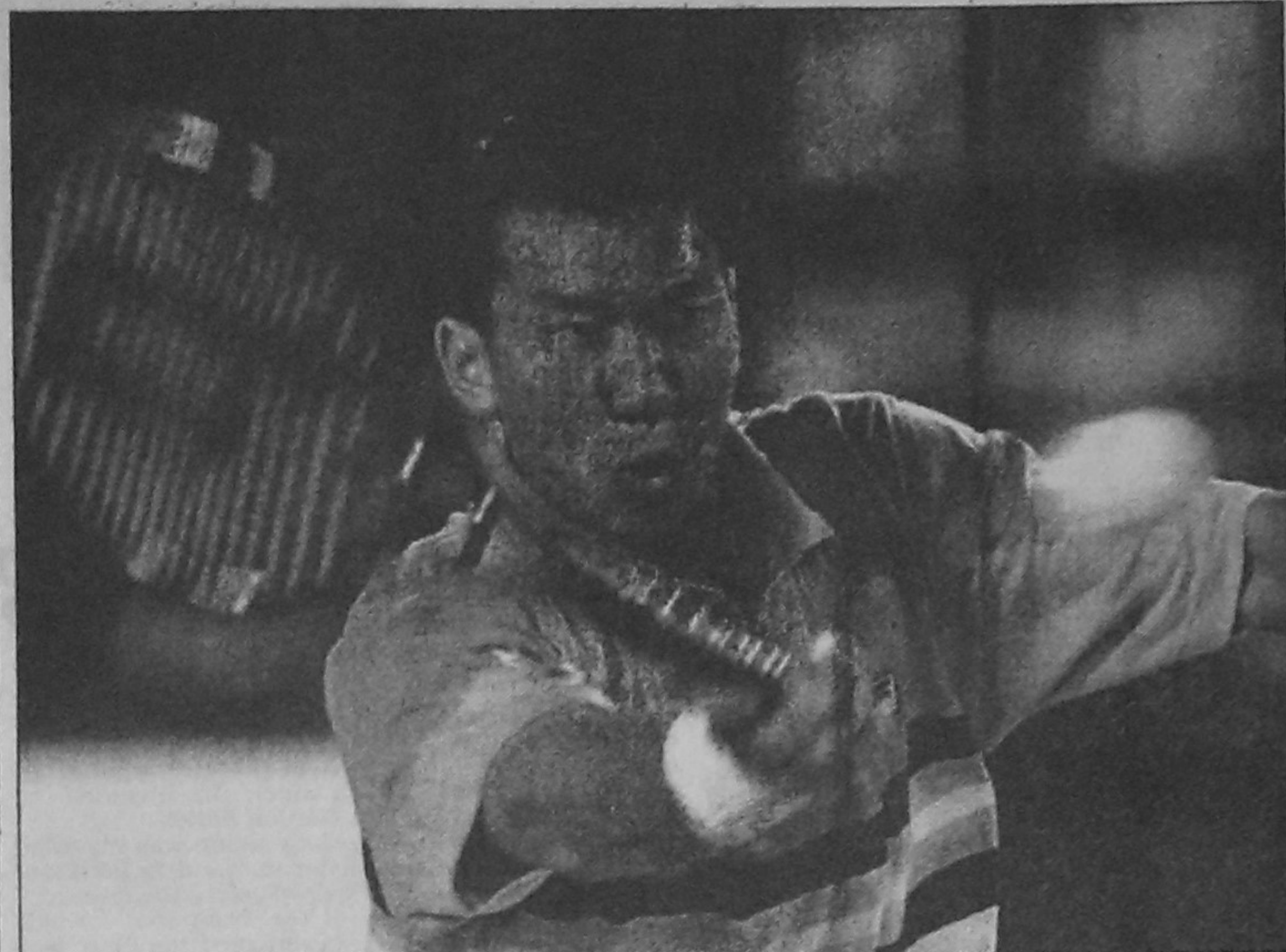
Kiprono, 26, the pre-race favourite and winner of the Berlin Marathon in September, finished ahead of Italians Giacomo Leone and Francesco Ingiorgioli.

NZ take on WI in first ODI today

Sports Reporter

New Zealand and West Indies meet in the first match of the five-game one-day series in Auckland today.

Star Sports television will provide live coverage.



Paradorn Srichaphan of Thailand hits a forehand in his Hopman Cup qualifier against Japan's Takao Suzuki yesterday. The Thai player won 6-3, 7-6.

Waugh wants to stretch streak

SCG may surprise India



SYDNEY, Jan 1 (AFP/Reuters): Steve Waugh's Australia will continue to batter India with fiery pace as they bid to record their seventh consecutive Test win when the third and final Test starts here on Sunday.

The Australians, 2-0 up in the series, have been encouraged by an unusually well-grassed Sydney Cricket Ground pitch, described by curator Tom Parker as the fastest in 20 years.

"It's pretty grassy, I have never seen a wicket like that in my career," Waugh said today as his team took a day off to spend the New Year with their families.

SACHIN TENDULKAR



SACHIN TENDULKAR

lies. "It's going to be quick and bouncy and there's a lot of grass there so it will suit the quick bowlers."

That is bad news for Sachin Tendulkar's men, who found the Aussie pace too hot to handle in the first two Tests, losing by margins of 255 and 150 runs.

The normally slow and low SCG wicket, a haven for spinners in the past, was expected to provide India with their best chance of stopping the rampaging Australians.

Instead, the tourists find themselves facing an uphill struggle against the likes of tearaway Brett Lee, who returns to his home ground after snatching seven wickets on his Test debut in Melbourne earlier this week.

Australia, who won the World Cup in June, have not looked back since losing a Test

series in Sri Lanka in September.

They swamped Zimbabwe in a one-off Test in Harare in October, whitewashed formidable Pakistan 3-0 at home in November and crushed India in the first two Tests.

A seventh win here will put Waugh just one match away from equalling the Australian record of Warwick Armstrong, who won eight in a row against England in 1920-21.

Waugh is, however, well short of the world record of 11 consecutive wins achieved by Clive Lloyd's all-conquering West Indies between 1983 and 1985.

"We all really want to create a new Australian record and that's winning eight in a row, and we have got two more to do that," Waugh said.

"But we have got to win this match first."

"We know India is a very good side and I don't think they have shown their best so far but we are going to make it as hard as possible for them."

"Winning is a habit and once you get used to it, you want to keep doing it."

While Australia are expected to retain the same team which won the Melbourne Test, India are struggling to find a replacement for injured opener Sadagopan Ramesh.

The left-hander broke his left thumb fending a vicious lifter from Lee in Melbourne, forcing the Indians to fall back on the out-of-touch Devang Gandhi.

Gandhi, who was dropped after making four runs in the first Test at Adelaide, is set to return mainly because he is the only other opener in the side besides Venkat Laxman.

Tendulkar, named man-of-the-match in the second Test after defiant knocks of 116 and 52, said the absence of a good start put his team under pressure in both Tests.

India's best opening start in the four innings so far has been 11, and the problems have been compounded further by the poor form of Rahul Dravid at number three.

"We really have to pull up our socks in batting," Tendulkar said. "I know we are capable of doing better."

To mark the first Test match of the new millennium, Australia's players have decided to take a stroll back in time.

Waugh has asked his players to abandon their traditional baggy green caps for replicas of the skull caps

worn by Australia's players in the first Test of the last century.

"You have got to know where you have come from to know where you are going, I think that's important in sport," Waugh said.

Australia have other reasons to celebrate, with Waugh playing his 100th Test in front of his home crowd and leg-spinner Shane Warne five wickets away from surpassing Dennis Lillee's Australian record of 355 wickets.

Warne had been hoping to get the record in Melbourne but was restricted to only two wickets. He now very much wants to get the five he needs in Australia's final home match of the 1999-

2000 season.

Waugh said he expected his top strike bowler to reach his target in Sydney.

Sydney is one of Warne's favourite hunting grounds. He made his Test debut against India there in 1992 and claimed his 300th test victim there against South Africa two years ago.

LIKELY TEAMS

INDIA: Sachin Tendulkar (capt), Venkat Laxman, Devang Gandhi, Hirshikesh Kanitkar, Mannava Prasad, Anil Kumble, Jagavallab Sinath, Ajit Agarkar, Venkatesh Prasad.

AUSTRALIA: Steve Waugh (capt), Greg Blewett, Michael Slater, Justin Langer, Mark Waugh, Ricky Ponting, Adam Gilchrist, Shane Warne, Damien Fleming, Glenn McGrath, Brett Lee.

Umpires: Ian Robinson (Zimbabwe) and Darryl Hair (Australia).

Azhar omission angers Calcutta

From Our Correspondent



CALCUTTA, Jan 1: The non-inclusion of Mohammed Azharuddin for the triangular World Series between Australia, Pakistan and India to be played down under has angered the followers of the game here.

Former Test players and critics of the game today lashed out at the selectors for dropping Azhar once more. Former Test cricketer Pankaj Roy today said, "Even today, it was proved that the Indian side needs an experienced middle order. How could the selectors then leave out Azhar. If they have decided that they will never consider Azhar again, then they should inform him. Why humiliate him in this manner?"

"As far as my knowledge of the game goes, Azhar is necessary for the side. His close catching and quick running between the wickets would have been an asset to the side in Australia."

The former member of the selection committee Sambaran Banerjee also felt that Azhar should have been included.

"When you have kept out Ajay Jadhav, you should have taken Azhar. Especially, as Rahul Dravid has failed to strike form in this tour. Azhar would have been the ideal number three after Sachin and Saurav