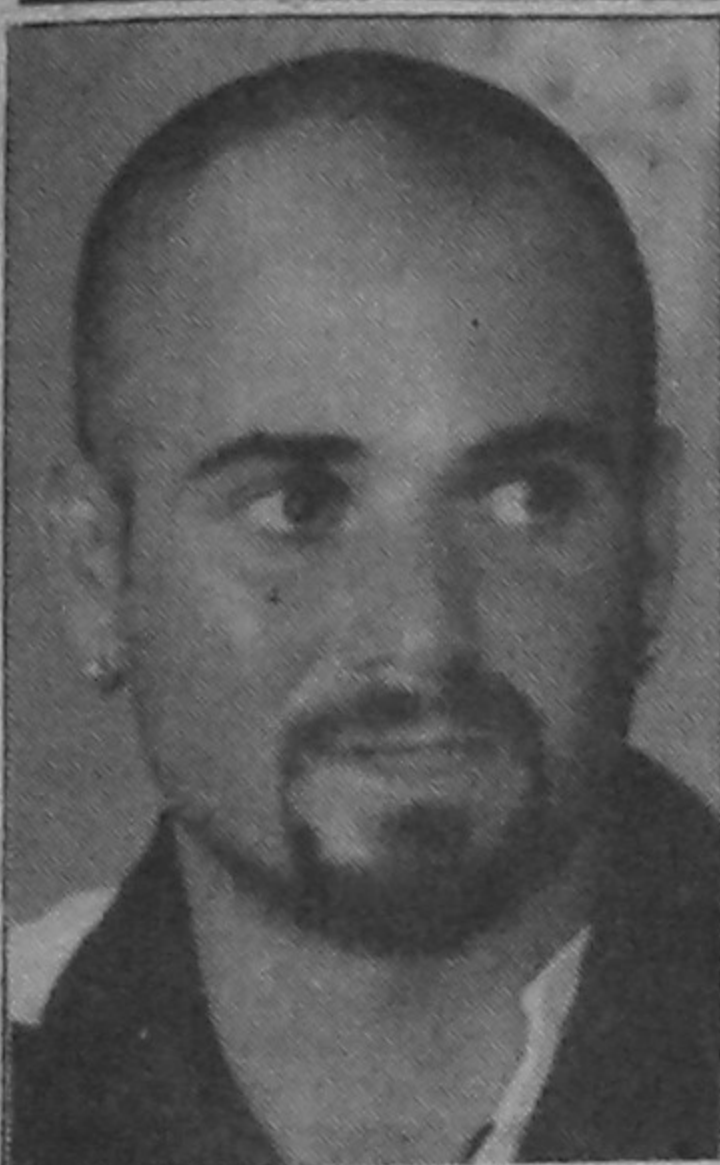


Column One

SPORTS TALK



Andre Agassi
(American tennis superstar)
"How easy it must feel looking from the outside! To me, it feels absurd."
On his chance to achieve a Grand Slam sweep this year.

Boost sports WHIZZ KID

COMPETITION FOR SCHOOL CHILDREN
Competition-126

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

Competition closes at 8 pm
Feb 21, 2000 and draw
shortly afterwards

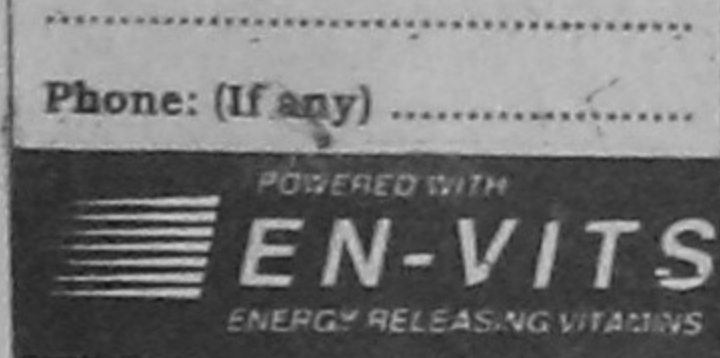
1	How many centuries did Tendulkar score in the Tests series against Austr. a recently?	One	Two	Three
2	Who won the last ever European Cup Winners' Cup soccer?	Lazio	Barcelona	Man United
3	Who was named player of the cricket World Cup?	Kluesener	S Waugh	Dravid
4	Where did Maurice Greene break the 100m world record?	Athens	Seville	Toronto
5	Who lifted the National Cricket League title?	Chattogram	Sylhet	Khulna

Name

Class Roll No.

School Address

Phone: (If any)



Tarun sign Ramzan

Sports Reporter
Surjo Tarun Club signed Pakistani opener Mohammed Ramzan yesterday.

Ramzan, a member of the Pakistan team that toured South Africa in 1997, arrived in the city yesterday to play for the new leviathan in the forthcoming Premier Division Cricket League.

The 21-year-old Faisalabad-based right-hander, who was not recalled in the Pakistan team since his one-off stint in South Africa, plays for Pakistan National Shipping Corporation (PNSC) in the domestic First Class cricket.

This is his visit to Dhaka. He however played club cricket in Durham and Sharjah.

Ramzan apart, Surjo Tarun, who finished third in the League table last year, are also expected to rope in two more Pakistani cricketers to strengthen title campaign. They are tall off-spinner Arshad Khan and Akhter Sharfaraz.

Pakistan earn full points

KUALA LUMPUR, Feb 20: Pakistan remained in the hunt to retain their crown in the 10th Sultan Azlan Shah Cup men's field hockey tournament defeating New Zealand 3-1 Sunday in Kuala Lumpur, reports AP.

Stunned by an early goal from New Zealand striker Umesh Parag, Pakistan retaliated with three goals in the space of 10 minutes to boost their points tally to seven from three points.

Malaysia lead the round-robin league standings with nine points from three matches, while Pakistan are tied on seven points with South Korea.

South Korea's superior goal difference has placed them second, followed by Pakistan.

European champions Germany continued to struggle with Southeast Asia's hot and humid conditions but secured a hard-earned 3-2 victory over Canada to take fourth place in the standings with six points from four games.

Slayers target giants

Hasan Masood



Premier League
Agrani Bank
Agrani Bank had never been a serious contender for the Premier League title, but they earned the distinction of being a giant-slayer only last season after beating titans like Abahani Krira Chakra and Brothers Union and finishing sixth ahead of strong Kalabagan Krira Chakra.

The bankers won six out of eleven matches in the two-day league outings but were eventually denied the fifth place by Mohammedan Sporting Club on run rate.

Their remarkable success should not be dubbed as a flash in the pan, argued some critics. Agrani Bank, with a selection of inexperienced local lads, were commendably consistent throughout the League, they pointed out.

However, the situation is different this time as the League is going back to its old one-day format with top six teams playing in the Super League after the first round. And the bankers have also a new target for this year.

Though they have lost left-arm spinner Suja Erfan and pacer Dofin, Agrani Bank have revived their last year's squad by hiring seamer Mizanur Rahman, left-handed opener Mozilur Islam Biplab and middle-order batsman Mazharul Haque. They have also retained the service of leg-spinner Mosaddeq Hossain.

Bankers are however counting heavily on three Pakistani players-- Shaheen Malik, Ali

Premier League

Agrani Bank



ANWAR ... coach

Haider and Zaved Gauhar. The Pak trio is expected to arrive from Karachi today. Of the three, Shaheen Malik played for the bankers last season.

"Our initial aim is to make it to the Super League. On reaching there, we would set our new target," said Agrani Bank coach Anwar Hossain Chowdhury at the nets yesterday.

"The boys are eager to perform better this season and upset some more giants in the

League.
"I don't want to rate any team as big or small because this is a limited-over match where anything can happen. To me, every team is powerful. You need to beat them on the ground," said the long-standing Bank coach.

He plans to open the innings with Sajjad Qadir and Mozilur Islam and send Mazharul Haque to bat at number three. Shaheen Malik and Ali Haider will fill in for the vital number four and five spots. Mozilur Rahman comes in as the first all-rounder behind them.

Skipper Ziauddin Shovon is likely to be pushed down to the number seven spot. And their tall includes Zaved Gauhar, Mizanur Rahman, Mosaddeq and left-arm spinner Russell Khan.

Captain Ziauddin expressed his satisfaction about the batting depth of his team, admitting that the inclusion of three foreigners would certainly increase the strength of his team.

"As far as the local batters are concerned, we've got a pretty solid line-up. If the Pakistanis also play well, I think, none of the aspirants should count us out," said the Bank skipper.

About his bowling department, Ziauddin disclosed that Mozilur Rahman and Mizanur Rahman would share the new-ball while Mazharul and Zaved Gauhar back them up. Mosaddeq Hossain, Russell Khan and Shaheen Malik will take care of the spin department.

"I think it is a balanced side and we should reach the Super League," said Ziauddin.



National cricket team captain Aminul Islam (sitting L) and a Bashundhara Group official exchange papers after signing a sponsorship deal yesterday. — Star photo

Azhar, Mongia returning

Sachin to quit captaincy

BOMBAY, Feb 20, (AFP/AP): Sachin Tendulkar on Sunday decided to step down as Indian cricket captain after the South African series as his predecessor Mohammad Azharuddin roared back into the Test team.

Tendulkar told the selectors before the team was picked for this week's first Test that he did not want to continue as captain after the two Tests against the South Africans.

The 26-year-old, widely regarded as the number one batsman in the world, said he was taking moral responsibility for the disastrous tour of Australia, where India lost all three Tests and seven of the eight one-day internationals.

"Before the season started, I had told the selectors that I was reluctant to become captain," Tendulkar said in a statement.

"But I took up the jobs as I was the most experienced player, and the selectors felt I was the best man for the job."

I will continue for the home series against South Africa so that my successor gets time to settle down," he said.

Tendulkar's stunning announcement came just before the selectors met, indicating it may not have been connected with Azharuddin's recall for the first Test, which starts here on Thursday.

Critics have suggested that the pressure of captaincy were affecting Tendulkar's batting.

Tendulkar was first appointed India's captain in 1996, but he gave up the job after 17 months as selectors felt that the critics were right.

But he was recalled to the job last year after India performed badly at the World Cup cricket under the captaincy of Azharuddin.

Azharuddin was sacked as captain after the World Cup in June and was a controversial omission for the Australian tour, reportedly because he was unwanted by Tendulkar and coach Kapil Dev.

Tendulkar told us he did not want to be captain," Borde said. "We tried to convince him otherwise, but he was adamant. It's his decision and we respect that decision."



'SACHIN TENDULKAR

Borde, who said Tendulkar's successor had not been decided, added that neither the captain nor coach had anything against Azharuddin.

"We decided to take a young team to Australia, obviously it did not work so we have called back Azhar," Borde said.

Azharuddin, who is two matches away from making 100 Test appearances, will bat at number six behind the openers and the experienced trio of Rahul Dravid, Tendulkar and Sourav Ganguly.

The 14-man squad also includes wicketkeeper Nayan Mongia, who was axed for the Australian tour, but there is no place for flamboyant batsman Ajay Jadeja.

Two uncapped slow bowlers, off-spinner Nikhil Chopra and left-arter Murlil Karthik, have been included in the squad to support spin spearhead Anil Kumble.

Ajit Agarkar or Thiru Kumaran will share the new ball with Jagavall Srinath after long-time partner Venkatesh Prasad was dropped for lack of form.

Opener Wasim Jaffer and middle-order batsman Mohammad Kaif, who led India to victory in the under-19 World Cup in Sri Lanka last month, are the new faces in the squad.

SQUAD
Sachin Tendulkar (capt), Wasim Jaffer, Venkat Laxman, Rahul Dravid, Sourav Ganguly, Mohammad Azharuddin, Nayan Mongia, Anil Kumble, Nikhil Chopra, Murlil Karthik, Jagavall Srinath, Ajit Agarkar, Thiru Kumaran, Mohammad Kaif.



Hasina Mohsin (R), wife of Col Mohsin Ahmed Choudhury, Station Commander, Dhaka Cantonment, handing over prizes after the annual athletics competition of Bangladesh International School (BIS) at DOHS, Mohakhali on February 19.

League to start on Feb 23

Sports Reporter

The Premier Division Cricket League is finally going to the ground as the Cricket Committee of Dhaka Metropolitan (CCDM) has decided to start the colourful limited-overs contest from February 23.

The prestigious league, involving twelve teams, will kick off at the Bangabandhu National Stadium with defending champions Bangladesh Biman taking on promotes City Club. While runners-up Abahani Krira Chakra will meet the other promotes Gopibagh Friends on the following day at the same venue.

Although the fixture of the League is yet to be finalised, CCDM secretary Mahmud-Ul Haq said that the Super Six second round would be played under lights at the Bangabandhu National Stadium. This is for the first time the League matches would be held under floodlight.

The twelve teams will play each other in the 50-over-a-side contest from where the top six teams will move into the Super Six to fight it out for the coveted title while rest of the teams will play in the relegation league.

Besides, the ICC code of conduct would also come into play in the league this year.

To explain the ICC rules, the CCDM has also summoned the captains of the twelve participating teams in the meeting at the BCB conference room last evening.

Ashraful against foreign umpires

Sports Reporter

The Cricket Committee of Dhaka Metropolitan (CCDM) is planning to officiate all the matches of the Premier Cricket League by foreign umpires. But the general secretary of the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) said that this was an unacceptable move by the organisers.

"I do not personally agree with the idea of engaging foreign umpires for all the League matches because it will deprive our local umpires. They (CCDM) might bring players for only a few important matches," said Syed Ashraful Huq yesterday.

Meanwhile, it was learnt that the CCDM, which had earlier intended to bring Pakistani umpires, might have a change of heart, as they need to meet enormous match fee of those umpires.

Div I cricket

Sports Reporter

Brief Scores
Khelaghar SKS v Jatrabari
Venue: Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium
Jatrabari: 106 all out in 34 overs (Liton 30, Jashim 17; Kabir 3/26, Raju 2/18, Rana 2/5, Alamgir 2/28)

Khelaghar: 108 for two wickets in 21.2 overs (Sabuj 58, Paris 25, Rahman 2/38)
Result: Khelaghar won by eight wickets.

Khelaghar Samaj Kalyan Sangha registered their sixth win in the First Division Cricket League when the Damal Smriti champions thumped down an eight-wicket defeat on Jatrabari Krira Chakra at the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium yesterday.

In a low-scoring affair, Khelaghar shot a lowly Jatrabari out for 106 in 34 overs and then went on to score 108 for the loss of only two wickets in 21.2 overs.

Opener Shabaz scored an unbeaten 58 off 78 balls that included six hits across the rope. Earlier, Kabir, with three wickets for only 26 runs, led the Jatrabari demolition. New-ball bowler Alamgir, Raju and Rana (junior) — who took two wickets apiece, supported Kabir nicely.

Skipper Liton, with a defiant 30, offered some sort of resilience for Jatrabari.

Rajshahi varsity cricket champs

RAJSHAHI, Feb 20: Hosts Rajshahi clinched the inter varsity cricket title beating Dhaka by seven wickets in the final at the university ground here today, reports UNB.

Dhaka batted first after winning the toss and were all out for 132 in 49.4 overs.

Tito of Rajshahi captured three wickets giving away 17 runs while Nayan took two wickets conceding 30 runs.

In reply, Rajshahi faced no trouble and reached their target of 133 for the loss of three wickets only in 19.5 overs.

Palash of the hosts contributed 51 off 45 balls and was adjudged man-of-the-match while Ripon added 31.

Bikash, Masud and Babul of Dhaka claimed one wicket each giving away 16, 25 and 25 runs respectively.

National player Mushfiqur Rahman Babu of Rajshahi was adjudged man-of-the-tournament for his outstanding performance in the week-long meet.

Vice-Chancellor of Rajshahi University Prof Saïdur Rahman Khan was the chief guest in the day's final and later distributed trophies.



Action from the Office Hockey League match between Blue Berry Travels and Sonali Bank at the Maulana Bhasani National Stadium yesterday. — Star photo

Int'l junior tourney on

Sports Reporter



Dipu Lal and **Amol Roy** of Bangladesh entered the quarterfinals of the qualifying round of the 14th Bangladesh International Junior Championship that began at the Ramna National Tennis Complex yesterday.

In the second round, Dipu upset Kentara Aoki of Japan 6-2, 6-4 while Amal earned a walk-over Huang Teh Lun of Chinese Taipei.

Dipu, the younger brother of former national champion Hira Lal, will be tested by yet another Japanese player Taichi Wada and Roy is pitted against Vivian Raj Chettri in today's action.

The other four quarterfinalists are: Jun Rong Kim of South Korea, Chris Kwon of USA, Michael Frick of Hong Kong and Alamgir Wali of Pakistan. The winners will join 28 others in the main draw of the boys singles which begins today after the qualifiers.

Thirty two girls have already been drawn for the singles. Radhika Tulpule of India has been named top seed.

Earlier, Bangladesh Tennis Federation president Syed

Alamgir Farouk Chowdhury formally inaugurated the 18-country ITF-approved meet in a colourful opening ceremony. The qualifying round for four berths in the boys singles began immediately after the ceremony.

The participants in the main draw are:
Girls: Radhika Tulpule, Liza Perera, Sania Mirza, Nondita Chandrashekhari, Nischella Reddy, Geeta Manohar, Samrita

Boys: Ahmed Walla (Pakistan), Amanjot Singh, Sunil Krishna, Shivang Mishra, Sunil Kumar, Karon Doctor, Paratap Chaturvedi, CS Mohanty, Harshit Sharma, Punna Vishal, Nikhil Vijay Murali, Nipun Gupta (India), Demianenko Taras (Ukraine), Stephen Timu (Canada), Adam Jaya (Malaysia), Anuwat Dalodom (Thailand), Marytun Sofyan (Armenia), Soeda Go (Japan), Resmus Noerby (Denmark), Yu Hiu Tung (Hong Kong) and Nadeem Kamran Khan, Faheem Ahsan, Alamgir Hossain, Moin Kabir Chowdhury, Shahrar Haider (Bangladesh).

Trouble in Office Hockey League

The lone match of Shah Sports Office Hockey League between Blue Berry Travels and Sonali Bank Club was abandoned at the Maulana Bhasani National Stadium yesterday, reports UNB.

Blue Berry were leading by 1-0 goal when the match was abandoned in the 35th minute. The goal was scored by Mamun from a penalty corner.

After conceding the goal, the bankers strongly protested the umpire's decision and finally refused to play demanding annulment of the goal.

SA on the front foot

BOMBAY, Feb 20: Former Indian captain Mohammad Azharuddin suffered a bruised thumb as the South Africa bowlers spit fire in their tour opener here on Sunday, reports AFP.

The 37-year-old, who was recalled for this week's first Test, was hit on the left thumb by a rising delivery from fast bowler Morantau Hayward after scoring nine.

The fiery Hayward also grabbed four wickets as the Indian Board President's team, replying to the tourists' 293-6 declared, were shot out for 172 on the second day of the three-day match at the Brabourne Stadium.

The South Africans reached 93-3 in their second knock by stumps, giving them an overall lead of 214 and a good chance of forcing a morale-boosting win on the final day.

Indian cricket board secretary Jawawant Lele said Azharuddin's injury was not serious enough to prevent him from playing in the first of two Tests starting at the Wankhede Stadium here on Thursday.

"Azhar has a swelling of the soft tissue in his left thumb, and it should be okay in the next 48 hours," Lele said.

Left-arm spinner Clive Eksteen cemented his Test place with three for 51 as the home team struggled to dominate the South African attack.

Skipper Ajay Jadeja, another contender for the Test series, made just two before he

was caught behind off Hayward. Wicketkeeper Nayan Mongia, who was recalled to the Test side, fell in similar fashion against express bowler Allan Donald after scoring 16.

The President's XI were reduced to 123 for eight, before the last-wicket pair of Amit Bhandari and Harbhajan Singh smashed 49 off 44 balls to prevent a follow-on.

Bhandari hit two sixes in an unbeaten 30, while Harbhajan made 38 with the aid of seven boundaries.

Harbhajan then took two wickets with his off-spin as the tourists slipped to 59 for three in their second innings, before skipper Hansie Cronje's unbeaten 29 took them to safety.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard on the second day of the three-day match between the touring South Africa and the Indian Board President's on Sunday:

SOUTH AFRICA: First innings 293 for 6 declared.
BOARD PRESIDENT'S: First innings

Arunkumar b Hayward	9
Jaffer lbw b Kluesener	12
Kaif b Hayward	23
Azharuddin retired hurt	9
Jadeja c Boucher b Hayward	2
Mongia c Boucher b Donald	16
Karthik c Eksteen b Hayward	0
Kumar c Cullinan b Eksteen	8
H Singh c and b Eksteen	38
Mohanty c and b Eksteen	0
Bhandari not out	30
Extras: (b-4, lb-10, nb-11)	25
Total: (All out in 53.2 overs) 172	
Fall of wickets: 1-9; 2-46; 3-68; 4-75; 5-75; 6-96; 7-114, 8-	

123, 9-172
Bowler O M R W
Donald 11 3 27 1
Hayward 17 2 68 4
Kallis 5 3 5 0
Kluesener 5 3 7 1
Eksteen 15.2 6 51 3

SOUTH AFRICA: Second innings
Kirsten lbw b Mohanty 4
Gibbs lbw b Harbhajan 28
Kallis b Harbhajan 12
Cullinan retired hurt 2
Cronje not out 29
Strydom not out 12
Extras: (b-4, lb-2) 6
Total: (For three wickets in 36 overs) 93
Fall of wickets: 1-6; 2-30; 3-59

Bowler O M R W
Mohanty 5 2 7 1
Kumar 6 0 19 0
Harbhajan 10 1 31 2
Bhandari 9 5 16 0
Karthik 4 1 12 0
Kaif 2 1 2 0

Mutual Cup Q'land meet WA in final

BRISBANE, Feb 20: Queensland beat New South Wales in Brisbane on Sunday to claim a place in next weekend's final of the Mercantile Mutual Cup domestic one-day cricket competition, reports Reuters.

Queensland will face Western Australia after beating New South Wales by three wickets at the Allan Border Field in Brisbane on Sunday.

SCORES: NSW 210-6 (Mark Higgs 74); Queensland 214-7 (Clinton Perren 86).



South African wicketkeeper Mark Boucher (C) gets excited as the ball travels towards skipper Hansie Cronje brushing Ajay Jadeja's pads on the second day of the three-day tour match at Bombay yesterday. — AFP photo