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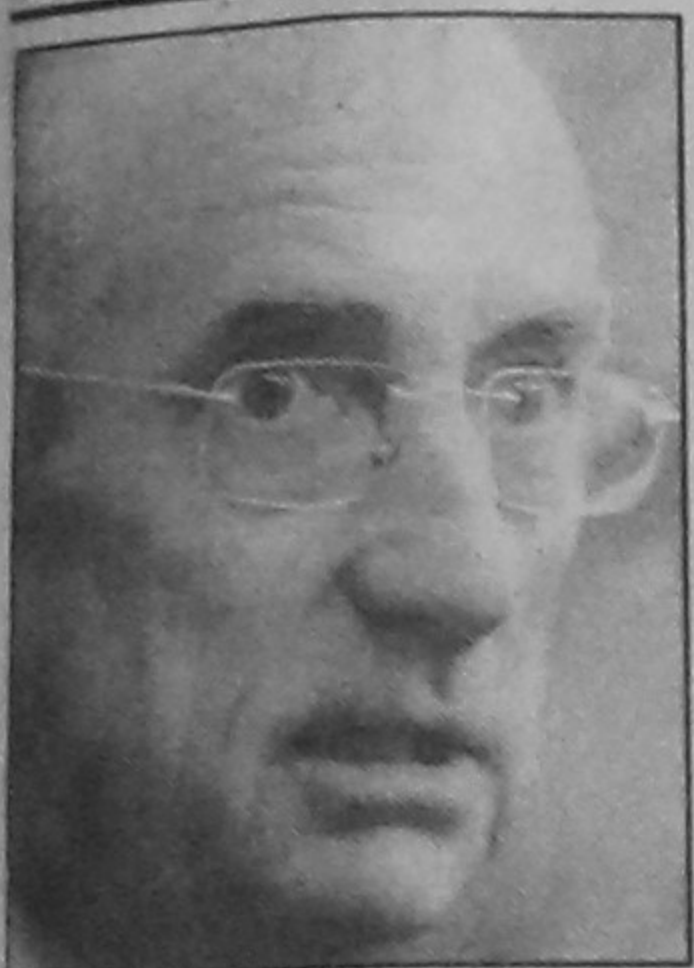
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DHAKA, MONDAY, JANUARY 1, 2001 Email: dssports@bdonline.com

SPORTS TALK



Malcolm Gray
(ICC chairman)

"If cricket wants to be competitive on a global basis, it's important to have a strong governing body with the ability to organise schedules and cope with any problems that might arise. This is a positive step towards us achieving that."

On the proposed International Test Championship.

Sports WHIZZ KID

Competition 141
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Jan 5, 2001 and draw shortly afterwards

- Who was named world footballer-of-the-year?
Rivaldo Ronaldo Zidane
- Who won the Davis Cup?
Spain Australia USA
- Which club clinched J-League title?
Kashima Yokohama S-Pulse
- Who became First Division Chess League champions?
Titas Club Biman Leconic
- Who was man-of-the-match in the Karacall Test?
Aharon Yuhana Saqlan

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School Address:

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Sajjad, Kalim to replace Rajin, Hannan

Sports Reporter

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) yesterday named Sajjad Hasan of Khulna and Mohammad Kalim of Rajshahi as replacements for Hannan Sarkar of Barisal and Rajin Saleh Alam of Sylhet in the BCB under-21 team which is scheduled to take on Australia's Commonwealth Bank Cricket Academy in a three-day match at the BKSP from January 7.

U-17 Asia Cup Twelve teams to take part

At least 12 countries are expected to take part in the ICC Under-17 Asia Cup cricket tournament to be held in Bangladesh in February, official sources of Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) said here yesterday.

"We have decided to host the event beginning on February 12 with the financial assistance from International Cricket Council (ICC) and Asian Cricket Conference (ACC) as part of ACC's development programme," BCB president Saber Hossain Chowdhury told BSS.

Besides hosts Bangladesh, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Malaysia, Singapore, United Arab Emirates (UAE), Kuwait, Qatar, Oman have already confirmed their participation.

India have also agreed to take part in the Asia's biggest cricket event for juniors.

"I talked to president of the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) Dr. AC Murli and he has agreed in principle," BCB said.

BCB is looking for Saudi Arabia in place of Thailand, take part.

The matches of the preliminary round of the tournament are expected to take place in Dhaka, BKSP, Rajshahi, Jessore and Sylhet.

Y2K of local sports compared to none

The year 2000 will be remembered for many reasons. It was the year that Bangladesh cricket joined the Test fraternity, played its first Test match and had to say goodbye to revered Director of Development Eddie Barlow.

At the same time some things never changed at all. The tug of war between football and cricket over possession of the Bangabandhu National Stadium and failure at the Sydney Olympics were to name but a few instances. Our swimmers drowned in the pool, athletes collapsed in the middle of the track, and country's flag-bearing shooter Sabrina Sultan was way off the target.

Taking a leaf out of cricket's book by holding the inaugural National League, football also had to play the game puzzle -- "Who's the coach?" We refer to the sacking of 1986 Iraqi World Cupper Samir Shakir and the subsequent short-lived tenure of his British incumbent Mark Harrison. A new name in the long list has recently been included. He is George Cottan from Hungary. But how long will he be at the helm is anybody's guess?

In other sports, the story had bright beginnings with an ending of unfulfilled promises. Notably chess, which saw the return of the country's only Grand Master Niaz Murshed. His presence however wasn't enough to inspire young pretenders to come forward and make their primary grades. At the Olympiad both our men and women fared miserably. International Master Ziaur Rahman meanwhile is chasing the other elusive norm.

Though the last 12 months have not been all doom and gloom for our sports. By lifting the coveted Premier League title Muktijoddha finally dispelled the long-held belief that spectators would turn up at matches involving only Mohammedan and Abahani. Dhaka enhanced its growing reputation as an ideal international venue by successfully staging the Pepsi Asia Cup in May-June.

There was also a bit of controversy too. Up on the list in January was the cricketers' revolt and formation of an association to show solidarity with seven colleagues who were dished out with punitive punishment. Only weeks before the inaugural Test against India on November 10, the selectors came under fire over their choices. No sooner had they decided to leave out Habibul Bashar and Enamul Hoque storm clouds gathered over the Bangladesh Cricket Board office. So, in a desperate effort to diffuse the tension chief selector Tanvir Haider upon the advice of Board president Saber Hossain reluctantly stretched the initial list of fourteen to

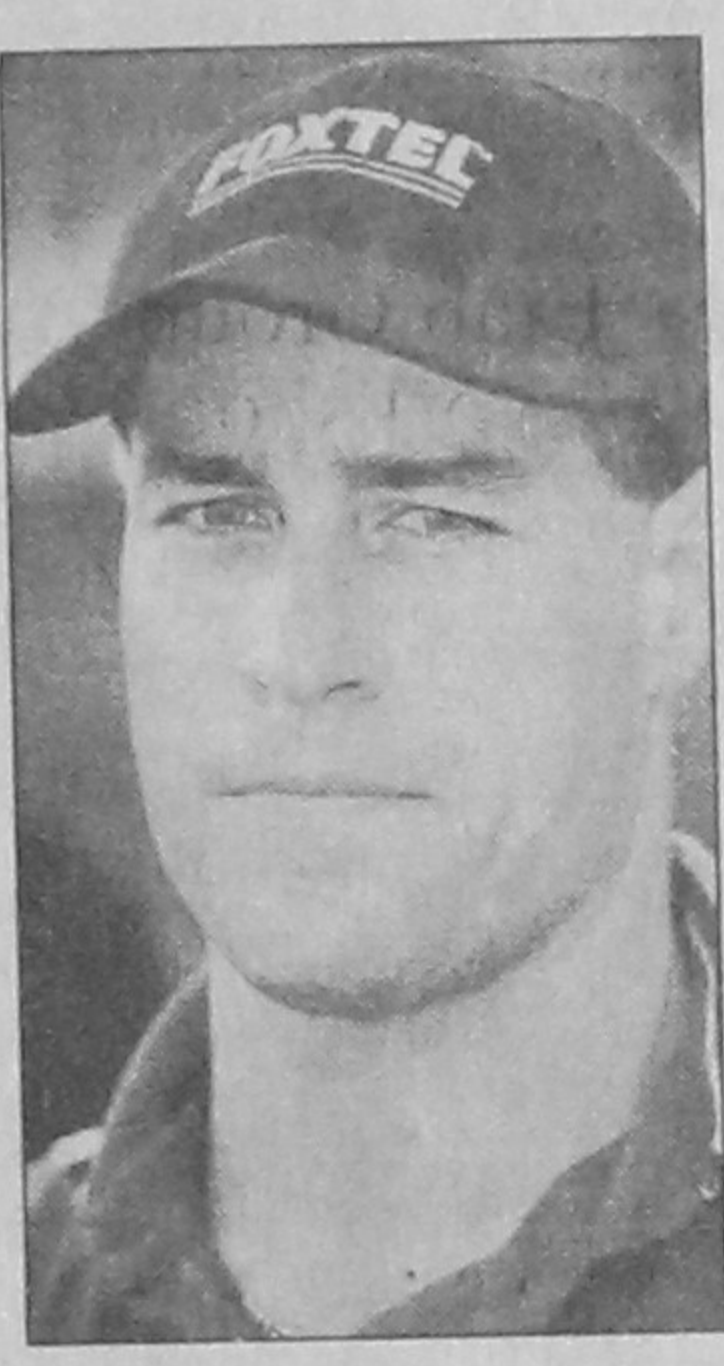


BEST OF THE TIGERS: Aminul Islam acknowledges after reaching his hundred in the inaugural Test against India. -- Star file photo

sixteen by including the two. After just a month or so Haider himself resigned citing a customary poor health.

Nobody in their wildest dreams could have imagined Bangladesh, under new skipper Naimur Rahman, giving Saurav Ganguly a hard time. In fact, for the most part of the first Test the home side did just that, thanks to the contributions of century-maker Aminul Islam and Naimur's bag of six wickets. Unfortunately, a second innings collapse of the hosts enabled the tourists to rally back into game, turning an honourable draw into a sensational victory on the evening of the fourth day.

Eddie Barlow, acknowledged for masterminding Bangladesh's promotion to the rank of Test nation at the June meeting of the International Cricket Council (ICC), collapsed after suffering stroke at his Gulshan residence in April. The former South African all-rounder was then treated in Singapore and in South Africa. He finally bade



MICHAEL BEVAN

Lenin Gani

a tearful farewell, as his health did not permit to continue.

Following is the brief look-back at the past months:

JANUARY
It began on the wrong foot. The BCB banned seven leading players including then captain Aminul Islam to only fuel the growing discontent between the newly floated Cricketers' Welfare Association of Bangladesh (CWAB) and Cricket Committee of Dhaka Metropolitan (CCDM). The three-month impasse however ended on January 22. A few days later opener Shahrir Hossain scored centuries in both innings against the visiting MCC. Renowned footballer Monem Munna was diagnosed with a serious kidney disorder. Besides, noted chess organiser Mujibur Rahman, 60, passed away on January 21.

FEBRUARY
Discontent, death, near-miss, a noble gesture and match-fixing was on February's menu. The ill-feeling between cricketers and the establishment re-surfaced when the BCB endorsed CCDM's plan to increase the quota for foreign players from two to three.

Yet another well-known organiser died. He was Jalal Uddin Ahmed a vice-president of the Bangladesh Shooting Federation. Ziaur Rahman fell half a point short of a required second GM norm in the Goodricke tournament. The footballers and cricketers for one evening set aside their differences by featuring in a charity football match to raise funds for Munna treatment. Fixing took the shape of a Second Division match in which one side brilliantly chased 83 runs off 29 balls!

MARCH
Dhaka cricket witnessed the ugliest incident when Kalabagan's Pakistani batsman Zahoor Elahi, angry at being dismissed, threw his bat at his conqueror Abahani pacer Hasibul Hossain. Although Abahani won the match amid controversial circumstances the result and for that matter the championship is being fought out in the courts by Kalabagan who claim that they were denied victory on a technicality.

APRIL
International Cricket Week was observed in Bangladesh as elsewhere in the world. The highlight of the programme organised by the International Cricket Council (ICC), was the one-day match between Asia Eleven led by Wasim Akram and Mark Waugh's Rest of the World. Michael Bevan's blistering 132 not out almost swung the game to the world stars' way. Wari Club, founded in 1838, held a colourful five-day centenary celebration. The month ended with Barlow suffering a brain hemorrhage.

MAY
Coach Mark Harrison

watched as Bangladesh were eliminated from the Maldives Golden Jubilee Tournament. After that Harrison went to England and never returned. To drum up support for Bangladesh's bid for Test status, BCB president Saber Hossain visited Australia and New Zealand. Meanwhile, State Minister for Youth and Sports Obaidul Quader went to India and Pakistan. Both Australian and South African boards offered unanimous support ahead of the ICC's meeting at Lord's in June. Dynamic organiser from Chittagong Yusuf Ghani and Sports Editor of the Daily Ittefaq Baduzzaman breathed their last. The biggest cricket carnival in this part of the world -- the eighth Asia Cup got underway in the capital.

JUNE
June 26 goes down in history with the emergence of the tenth Test playing nation. The news from London was greeted with joyous scenes all around Bangladesh. Pakistan won the Asia Cup for the first time beating Sri Lanka in the final. Elsewhere, Bangladesh finished runners-up at the Asian Under-16 Hockey Tournament in Singapore. They lost to India 5-2 in the final.

JULY
Bangladesh missed out on qualifying for the final round of the Asian Under-19 Football Championship after brightening their chances in the Group 4 qualifiers in Rajshahi. Iraq advanced by virtue of having a better goal difference but not before the hosts gave them a real scare in a (1-1) drawn en-

counter. In their first attempt towards professionalism, BCB brought 18 players on its payroll. South Korea clinched the Asian Junior Women's Handball Tournament. Footballers followed their cricket cousins by threatening a strike during the national camp for the historic one-match against India in England. The strike was averted and tour went ahead eventually. Bangladesh lost 1-0 at Leicester City's Filbert Street.

AUGUST
Football dominated the headlines on and off the pitch. The inter-club transfers which had Abahani and Muktijoddha battling for possession, went as far as to a 'hijacking' when some leading players on their return from England were whisked away by waiting club officials at the airport. Mohammedan Sporting Club undertook a tour of England. They lost to West Ham's youth side. National winger Mamun Joarder called it a day. Abahani lifted the Federation Cup defeating archrivals Mohammedan 2-1. Naimur Rahman was named new Bangladesh cricket captain replacing Aminul Islam. England declined to play in Bangladesh's historic first Test match because of conflicting prior commitments.

SEPTEMBER
While the "greatest show on earth" the Millennium Olympic Games were going on in Sydney there was the extravagant annual general meeting of the BCB in Cox's Bazar. Also Mohammedan, who starved of success in other disciplines, rode on the prowess of Paki-

stani wizard Shahbaz and his prolific compatriot Tahir Zaman to win the hockey league title for the fourth consecutive time.

OCTOBER
Heartbreak and agony went hand in hand. From crashing to an eight-wicket defeat against England in the Second ICC Knockout Trophy in Kenya, Bangladesh had to endure four painful losses against various selections in South Africa. The visitors were bowled out for 50-odd runs in their last two one-day matches.

NOVEMBER
It was an eventful month when Bangladesh played their inaugural Test match against India. They lost their first official five-day encounter with a day to spare, but won the hearts of even a hard-nosed critic like Novjot Singh Sidhu, the former Indian opener who vehemently opposed Bangladesh's awarding of Test status.

The high points of the match were Bangladesh's 400 runs in the first innings, the second highest total by debutating nation. Aminul Islam walked in the record books in a grandiose way. He scored a majestic 145, which is the second best individual score on debut after Australia's Charles Bannerman. Muktijoddha won the coveted Premier Football League for a second time.

DECEMBER
BCB chief selector Tanvir Haider decided to step down. Titas Club ended the monopoly of Biman's reign in domestic chess lifting the First Division League title for the first time. Eddie Barlow bade adieu without any prior notice.



Ecstatic Muktijoddha booters who won the National Bank Premier Division football league title. -- Star file photo

Green Delta National Cricket League

Leg two from tomorrow

Sports Reporter

Leaders Biman will take on Dhaka Metropolitan in one of the two first round matches at the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium as the second leg of the Green Delta National Cricket League gets underway tomorrow.

Holders Chittagong will meet Khulna in the other match at the Jessore Stadium.

Eight teams, split into two groups, took part in the first leg. Biman and Chittagong finishing first and second in Group A. Biman collected the highest 32 points followed by Chittagong's 30. Khulna and Dhaka Metropolitan made it from the other group having collected 26 points each.

After the four-round second leg where teams from one group will meet only the teams from the other group, the side collecting the highest points from both legs will be the champions.

The longer version game will be a four-day affair in the second leg instead of three-day which will be followed by the one-day match. Like three-day matches where first innings were limited to hundred overs, there will be no restriction in overs in the first innings of the four-day matches.

Biman, who have a strong batting line up, will miss the services of their most inform batsman Inran Farhat. The young Pakistani all-rounder, who scored highest 735 runs with two centuries and took 23 wickets, returned home after the first leg and would not be back to the remaining four

Group	Team	1	2	3	4	5	6
Group A	Biman	24	8	32			
	Chittagong	26	4	30			
Group B	Khulna	22	4	26			
	Dhaka Metro	20	6	26			

matches. Biman, however, have already flown in a replacement, the former Pakistani Test all-rounder Manzoor Akhter.

Dhaka Metropolitan, on the other hand have lost top order batsman Zahoor Elahi as he has also returned to Lahore after the first leg. Although the officials initially hinted that his younger brother Saleem Elahi might play the remaining matches for Dhaka Metropolitan, Saleem is yet to arrive.

But many think that the absence of Elahi won't have any significant impact on the team who have already reinforced their side by opening their door to national skipper Naimur Rahman, who is a registered player of Dhaka Division, missed the first round because of injury, shifted his allegiance under mutual understanding as Dhaka Division have not qualified for the second leg.

No changes are expected in the Chittagong and Khulna squads.

Chittagong have a powerful batting line up which will be backed by their spin duo Shahmed Mehmed and Enamul Hoque.

On the other hand, Khulna, considered as the weakest among the four, have a balanced side composed mostly of young talents.

The Board has revealed the fixture of the first two rounds. The second round will start from January 11.

POINTS TABLE

Group	Team	3-dayer	1-dayer	Total
Group A	Biman	24	8	32
	Chittagong	26	4	30
Group B	Khulna	22	4	26
	Dhaka Metro	20	6	26

Ronaldo injury their worst

PARIS, Dec 31. Inter Milan fans have voted the moment Ronaldo injured his knee on his comeback as the worst moment of a miserable year for the club, reports AFP.

Inter's Internet site carried out the survey of supporters, two thirds of whom deemed that their footballing year touched its nadir with Ronaldo's April 12 injury suffered just minutes after his comeback against Lazio.

Millennium Cup Muktis dominate national squad

Sports Reporter

Defender Mohammad Suijon is the only new face in the 20-member national football team which Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) announced yesterday for the forthcoming Millennium Cup to be held in India from January 10.

Bangladesh, led by Alfaz Ahmed, have been drafted in Group A along with European power Yugoslavia, Bosnia and Asian giants Iraq for the first round of the 16-nation tournament organised by All India Football Federation (AIFF).

This tournament will also be of tremendous help for the Bangladesh team as they prepare for their World Cup 2002 qualifiers which will be held in Saudi Arabia next month.

Uruguay, Iceland, Indonesia, Romania, Cameroon, Jordan, Hong Kong, Chile, Uzbekistan, Japan, Bahrain and hosts India are the other 12 team taking part in the biggest football tournament in India which will end on January 25.

The fixture of the first round will be revealed by the organisers tomorrow.

Suijon, the tall Muktijoddha central defender, is otherwise considered as the best find of the season. Although, he was facing a six-month ban along with five other booters on disciplinary ground at the beginning of the season, the talented central defender finally got a chance to show his ability to the Dhaka crowd after BFF lifted the ban during the Premier Division league.

His Muktijoddha teammate Maksudul Amin Rana has also returned to the national fold after two years.

The talented striker played for the National team in 1998 when Bangladesh toured Qatar for two friendly matches. He was then considered for the

SAF Football Championship in April 1999 but was finally dropped for injury. The injury also kept him away from the national team for last three trips in Nepal, Maldives and India.

Suijon and Rana are two of the nine Muktijoddha booters included in the 20-man team. Country's number one goalkeeper Aminul Haque, defenders Rajani Kanta Barman, Prodeep Kumar Poddar, Hasan Al-Mamun, midfielders Zulfikar Mahmud Mintu, Rezaul Karim and forward Sourav Majumder Raju are the others selected from the Premier Division champions.

National League champions Abahani have five, Mohammedan three while Badda Jagarani and Rahmatganj have two and one is represented in the side which is being trained by Hungarian coach George Cottan.

The BFF initially selected 30 booters for the World Cup qualifying camp. Four players -- Selim Tushar, Khokon and Sentu did not respond to the call of the federation and accepted life ban while Biman and Tanveer were dropped initially on fitness ground. The remaining four who failed to make it to the last twenty are Titumeer, Ritm, Asad and Parvez Babu.

SQUAD
Aminul Haque, Biplab Bhattacharaya, Firoz Mahmud Hossain Tito, Prodeep Kumar Poddar, Nazrul Islam, Pavel Mahmud, Hasan Al-Mamun, Mattur Rahman Munna, Iqbal Hossain, Saifur Rahman Mont, Alfaz Ahmed (captain), Roko-nuzzaman Kanon, Zulfikar Mahmud Mintu, Maksudul Amin Rana, Monwar Hossain.

LOOK BACK ON 2000



MIRROR MIRROR ON THE WALL, WHO'S THE GREATEST OF 'EM ALL! After the FIFA think-tank failed to decide on a single player, the world governing body for football opted for the easy way out by handing the 'Player-of-the-Century' award to legends Diego Maradona (L) and Pele. The decision didn't please anybody including Maradona. And the Argentine icon has every reason to feel sour. He received 53.60 per cent votes for the award in the Internet poll against Pele's 18.53 per cent. Pele however came out favourite in the poll of FIFA's jury where he received 72.75 per cent votes to Maradona's 6 per cent. Can you pick a winner?