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Star SPORT

DHAKA TUESDAY FEBRUARY 6, 2001, E-MAIL: dssports@gononet.com

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Did U Know?

We all hear popular superstitions when the 13th day of the month falls on a Friday. It's bad luck to hold more than two balls at a time when serving in lawn tennis. And no player wants to wear the number 13. It is said that superstitions have been a part of sports since their beginning. Players and fans alike have their ways of avoiding bad luck.

Some superstitions are stranger than others. For example, Michael Jordan (a graduate of North Carolina) always wore his blue North Carolina shorts under his Bulls uniform for good luck. Baseball pitcher Turk Wendell brushes his teeth and chews liquorice between every inning. Wade Boggs eats only chicken the day of a game and draws a symbol that means "To Life" in the dirt before every at-bat. Former pitcher Mark "The Bird" Fidrych used to play with the dirt on the mound and talk to himself before every inning.



Talk Turkey



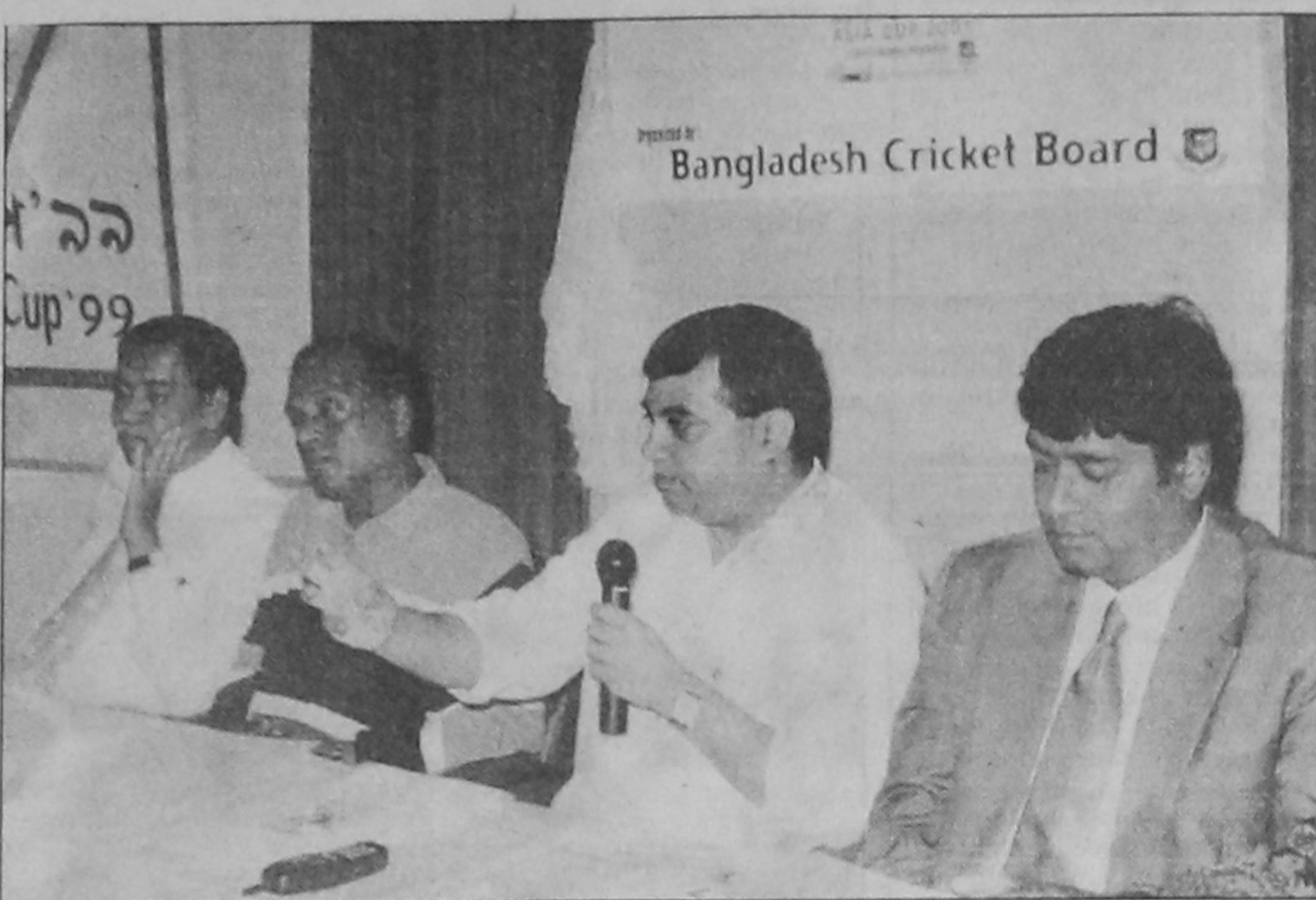
Tim Henman
(British tennis star)
"I couldn't classify myself as a fashion guru."
Giving his view on dress sense at the Australian Open.



What to Watch

Star Sports
New Zealand vs Sri Lanka
3rd one-day international
Live at 3:15 am
Australia vs Zimbabwe
12th ODI in Carlton series
6:00 pm (1hr highlights)
Primera Liga
8:30 pm

ESPN
New Zealand vs Sri Lanka
1st one-day international
7:30 pm (1hr highlights)
Serie A highlights
2:00 pm



Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) president Saber Hossain Chowdhury addresses a press briefing in connection with the forthcoming under-17 Asia Cup Cricket Championship at the conference room of the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

U-17 fiesta from Feb 15

Title sponsorship goes to GP

Cricket

The second edition of the Under-17 Asia Cup, involving ten teams, will begin in the city on February 15.

The inaugural edition of the juvenile tournament, launched by the Asian Cricket Council (ACC) as part of the ICC's (International Cricket Council) development programme in Asia, was staged in Pakistan last year.

The event might lack star value and the usual enthusiasm of fans, but it will indeed provide a unique opportunity for India and Pakistan to restore cricketing ties, which has been deteriorated further with Indian government's stubborn stance of not playing any matches with their bitter neighbours, whom they accused of fomenting violence in Kashmir.

On Saturday, India, who had cancelled a proposed tour of Pakistan last year, turned down a tri-nation one-day series, also involving Bangladesh, in aid of earthquake victims in Gujarat.

However, India will lead Group A that includes Sri Lanka, United Arab Emirates, Malaysia and Oman. Pakistan on the other hand will lead the other group, also featuring Singapore, Nepal, Kuwait and hosts Bangladesh.

Former Indian captain Ravi Shastri will be present during the 10-day meet as an ICC ambassador.

Grameen Phone, the leading cellular phone service provider in the country, will be the title sponsor of the event. They won the rights at an expense of Taka 15 lakhs. Bulk expenses of the 1,33,000 US dollar meet would however come from the ICC-ACC fund.

"ICC will pay 4000 USD and the ACC 5000 USD to run the meet," revealed event manager Mahmud-ul Haq during a press

ICC set for Test talk

Cricket

The introduction of a 10-year Test schedule and consideration of a world championship will be two of the major topics of discussion at February's ICC executive board meeting in Melbourne.

This would be the first time a co-ordinated calendar of international cricket has been adopted, giving the opportunity for long term planning and preparation. It will also provide newer Test playing nations such as Zimbabwe and Bangladesh with regular fixtures against all other teams.

The tours programme is structured to allow all Test playing countries to play each other at home and away over a five-year period. However, long established and traditional fixtures such as the Ashes series would continue on a four-year cycle.

The development of the future tours programme has been largely undertaken by Chris Doig, Chief Executive of New Zealand Cricket, on behalf of the ICC.

This schedule would provide the framework for the introduction of an official Test cricket world championship. The meeting will discuss the potential structure and timing of this and consider the benefits of adding context and enhanced spectator interest to the game at Test level.

The Melbourne meeting will

Premier Cricket now from Feb 12

SPORTS REPORTER

The Premier Division Cricket League will start from February 12, as per the latest decision of the Cricket Committee of Dhaka Metropolitan (CCDM) taken last night.

The meeting also decided to start the First Division Cricket League in the city from February 15.

Talking to The Daily Star Sport over telephone, CCDM secretary Mahmud Ul Haq said that all the clubs were provided with the draft by-laws during the meeting. The clubs have been given four days to raise objections, if any.

Fixture of the Premier League would be completed by February 9. Holders Abahani are likely to take on promotees Young Cricketers in the opening match at the Bangabandhu National Stadium.

The meeting also maintained its last season's decision on foreign players. Each of the 12 Premier Division clubs will be allowed to register four foreign cricketers, out of which two can play in a match.

BSF body fires its parting shot

SPORTS REPORTER

The outgoing committee of the Bangladesh Shooting Federation (BSF) blew its own trumpet at a press conference in Gulshan yesterday.

BSF president Abdul Mueyed Chowdhury spent a great deal of time in praising his committee's achievements in last three years, during which time Bangladesh earned a single SAF gold.

With the election only two weeks away, officials were found to be very busy again at the briefing that started at the National Shooting Complex one-hour behind the schedule.

Mueyed claimed that his committee brought back discipline in the federation and that the suspension of five shooting clubs was an example of it. Mueyed's committee came under severe criticism after it was revealed that seven of its affiliated body were engaged in illegal selling of the imported Federation arms to open market.

The programme was also attended by BSF vice-president Azizul Haque, general secretary Afzal Karim and treasurer Nazimuddin Chowdhury.

Kushtia finish with a win

SPORTS REPORTER

A virtuoso all-round show by captain Sanjay throttled Kushiya to a massive 95-run victory over Nilphamari in the final Group D match of the 20th National Youth Cricket Championship at the Thakurgaon Stadium yesterday.

Sanjay scored a superb 85 off 106 balls as Kushiya recovered from a shaky start to post a fighting 186 for nine in the stipulated 50 overs. The middle-order bat hammered 11 fours and a couple of sixes in his virtual match-winning knock.

After the good work with the bat, Sanjay also shone with the ball. He captured two wickets giving away only six runs in his seven overs to help his side shot Nilphamari out for 91 in 31.2 overs.

The victory for Kushtia however offered them some sort of solace after Chittagong had already confirmed their passage in the final round from this group with two wins from as many matches.

BRIEF SCORE
Kushtia vs Nilphamari
Kushtia: 186 for 9 in 50 overs (Sanjay 85, Titu 35; Nadim 3/27, Kalim 2/29)
Nilphamari: 91 all out in 34.2 overs (Raihan 24 not out; Rana 3/28, Sanjay 2/6, Bokul 2/17)
Result: Kushtia won by 95 runs.

Jr hockey

UNB, Dhaka

Utara Hockey Club registered a convincing 6-2 victory over Tejjagan Agragami in the Metropolitan Junior Division Hockey League at the Maulana Bhasani National Stadium yesterday.

The winners led the first half by 3-0.

WC hockey qualifiers

BD face tough task

Hockey

SPORTS REPORTER

National hockey coach York Schumacher believes Bangladesh will be tested as they compete in the 2002 World Cup qualifiers to be held in Edinburgh, Scotland. The 16-team qualification tournament begins on July 17.

The competing teams will be placed in four Pools A, B, C and D for the 13-day competition in the Scottish capital. But eventually seven nations progress to the finals in Malaysia in March.

Bangladesh have been placed in Pool B alongside Argentina, Belgium and France. Former Olympic champions India, Egypt, USA and Wales have been drafted in Pool A.

Japan, Chile, and Spain join the hosts respectively in Pool C while Canada is pitted against Poland, Zimbabwe and Russia in Pool D.

According to Schumacher, who has been preparing the team for last three months at the Maulana Bhasani Stadium, Bangladesh's group is the toughest.

Talking to Daily Star Sport at the Bangladesh Hockey Federation yesterday, the 37-year old

German rated Argentina and Belgium very highly.

"You see only the top two finishers from each group advance to the second round in the qualifiers, and of them only seven will make it to the finals. Also, in a group containing Argentina and Belgium, I think it's going to be tough for my boys to finish ahead of them at the end of the preliminary stage," Schumacher admitted.

"Argentina have already played in the finals last time. Belgium is an excellent side because they beat Germany in Germany during a Test series before the Sydney Olympic Tournament," he added.

Schumacher was nevertheless relieved in the knowledge that Bangladesh would avoid being put through the pre-qualifiers after finishing sixth at the 1998 Bangkok Asiad.

Commenting on his preparations, he said it was unfortunate that recent devastating earthquake in Gujarat forced the Indian Hockey Federation to abandon a four-match Test series.

"However, if the BIFF can stage the proposed 10-nation Prime Minister's Gold Cup Tournament in Dhaka next month, my boys will still get enough practice before

their trip to Scotland," he said.

Except for finding an official sponsor, BHF general secretary Shamsul Bari said all the necessary formalities have almost been completed. The organisers hope to settle the issue through a local consortium - Maitra and Ardent - by next week.

India, Pakistan, Malaysia, Japan, Chile, Singapore, Ireland, Scotland and Egypt have confirmed their participation in the tournament likely to start on March 10.

The German coach also revealed that a Test series against Malaysia in May might be played as well.

Initially, Schumacher began the camp in November with 77 players. After two weeks, it was reduced to 33. Now after two months there are 26 boys for the final phase commencing in two weeks time.

SQUAD

Ashique, Bappi, Habul, Isa Mia, Jahangir, Javed, Kamal, Khokon, Shahidullah, Khurshid, Mamun, Miraj, Moked, Musa Mia, Naqib, Prince, Abdur Rahman, Ramiz, Mambub Ahsan, Tawfiq Rana, Sawkat, Shamim, Shuvo, Titu, Tuhin and Yamin.



Bangladesh Shooting Federation (BSF) president Abdul Mueyed Chowdhury addressing at a press conference at the National Shooting Complex in Gulshan yesterday.

Sirajganj cricket

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sirajganj

Dhopakhandi Ekadosh defeated Kornosuti New Boys Ekadosh by 139 runs in the TM Smriti cricket tournament at Haji Korop Ali Memorial Degree College playground today.

Winning the toss, Dhopakhandi decided to bat first and collected 189 runs losing all wickets in 30 overs.

In reply, Kornosuti were bundled out for 50 runs in 20 overs.

Meanwhile, the First Division football league will start tomorrow (Tuesday) at Shaheed Shamsuddin Stadium. Nine teams will participate the tournament.

Sharjah meet called off

Cricket

AFP, New Delhi

A cricket tri-series in Sharjah to raise funds for Indian earthquake victims was officially cancelled on Monday, raising fears that arch-rivals India and Pakistan were unlikely to play each other in the near future.

The tri-nation series between India, Pakistan and Bangladesh, scheduled to be held in the Gulf emirate from Thursday to raise funds following the devastating quake in Gujarat state which killed an estimated 30,000 people, was called off after India refused to play against Pakistan.

"It's off because the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) could not confirm their participation," said a spokesman for the Asian Cricket Foundation, the organisers of the series.

India's Sports Minister Uma

are now left with no choice. We will not approve the ICC's 10-year programme of cricket schedules," he warned.

"We are supposed to play India at least four times during the next 10 years and if they refuse to tour us all the time, then why sign such a programme?" Zia said.

The ICC is due to approve a 10-year schedule for all Test-playing countries in Melbourne later this month.

Unless the Indian government changes its policy, observers fear that another Sharjah tri-series between India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka in April will also be affected.

"There are still two months to go, but I am pessimistic," said a senior official of the BCCI.

"It could be a long time before India and Pakistan play each other again."

BCCI president AC Muthiah pleaded helplessness, saying he

Akram for Indo-Pak cricket

AFP, Karachi

Famous Pakistani pacer Wasim Akram on Monday urged Indian cricket fans to pressure New Delhi to allow matches between Pakistan and India and to keep the sport above politics.

"I call on the Indian fans to urge their Government to change its anti-cricket stance and revive Pakistan-India cricket, just for the love of the game," Akram told this news agency.

The former Pakistani captain was reacting to India's refusal of a cricket series in Sharjah to raise funds for quake victims in the Indian state of Gujarat.

"I know the fans love Pakistan-India ties and get engrossed in them but they are starved due to politics which should not be mingled in the game.

"Even if today you hold a poll 70 per cent of Indians will give thumbs up for Pakistan-India matches, they want this and are being deprived," he said.

"How can I forget the Chennai crowd that gave Pakistan a standing ovation when we won a Test there in 1999," Akram, who led Pakistan to the last Test series between the arch rivals, said.

separatist militants in Kashmir.

"I must say cricket should not be affected. Pakistan showed a great gesture by agreeing to raise funds for India victims," Akram said.

"I can safely say this on behalf of all the Pakistani players that they want to play India anywhere in the world."

The cancellation of the series allowed Akram to leave for Ireland where his wife gave birth to their second son last week.

Pakistan Cricket Board chairman Lieutenant General Taqir Zia said Sunday he was worried for another tri-nation series, involving Pakistan, India and Sri Lanka, in April.

Zia demanded the Sharjah organisers to confirm India's participation in that tournament.

Former Pakistan captain Intikhab Alam said India should not be allowed to do whatever it chose.

"Indians are doing what they like and it should not be this way. Pakistan is maintaining a positive stance all the time while India is negative," Alam told AFP.

Alam, however, saw no danger for the Sharjah tri-series in April.

"I think since Sharjah event is a regular commitment India will honour it," he said.



WASIM AKRAM