



Did U Know?

The now-defunct Soviet Union took part in the 1952 Summer Olympics after a 40-year absence.



Talk Turkey



Glenn McGrath

(Australian fast bowler)
"I know when I'm bowling well and that second-last day against New Zealand in Perth was the best I've felt and the best rhythm I've had for some time."



What to Watch

SET Max

- Sri Lanka vs West Indies Tri Series, Third ODI DN Live at 1:50 pm ESPN
- Sportscentre Hindi Sport News 6:30 am
- English Premier Football League Highlights at 7:00 am
- Champions Trophy, Sharjah Pakistan vs Sri Lanka Second ODI 2:30 pm
- Football Focus 7:30 pm
- Sportscentre Hindi Sport News Live at 8:30 pm
- STAR Sports Sportsline Today Sport News 7:30 am
- Harsha Online Cricket Talk Show 8:30 am
- English Premier Football League West Ham United vs Man United 1:00 pm
- Harsha Online Cricket Talk Show 3:00 pm
- English Premier Football League Highlights at 7:00 pm
- Sportsline Tonight Sport News Live at 8:00 pm
- Primera Liga Valencia vs Deportivo La Coruna 8:30 pm
- Champions Trophy, Sharjah Sixth ODI Highlights at 11:00 pm

Star WHIZZ KID COMPETITION 162

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

Competition closes at 8 pm Dec 14, 2001 and draw shortly afterwards

1. Who won the man-of-the-series award in the Bangladesh and Zimbabwe one-day internationals?	Al-Shahriar	H Bqshar	D Ebrahim
2. Who became Inter-Continental Cup champion?	Boca Juniors	Real Madrid	Bayern Munich
3. How many runs did Habibul Bashar score in the first innings of the second Test against Zimbabwe?	108	117	109
4. Which number Test venue is the MA Aziz Stadium?	73rd	82nd	66th

Name

Class

School Address

Phone: (If any)

Why blame Biman, Metro?

Cricket

AL-AMIN

Sometimes actions defy logic. Take for instance the decision of the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) to kick holders Bangladesh Biman and Dhaka Metropolis out of the National League.

Presented by the chairman of the National League Committee Dewan Shafiqul Arefin sometime last month, the bill-to-axe was passed with little or no opposition by almost the same persons who only a year ago had endorsed both teams.

The regressive step effectively means that the third edition of country's first-class competition will once again be an exclusive six-team event.

The League, which was the brainchild of former South African all-rounder Eddie Barlow, was launched in 1999-2000 with six divisional teams Dhaka, Chittagong, Rajshahi, Khulna, Sylhet and Barisal.

Chittagong won the inaugural competition. The second edition saw Biman enter, compete and eventually lift the title. Dhaka Metropolis also did not disappoint on debut, making it to the second round.

Though the League is about to start within 15 days, the reasons for omitting the national airliners and the capital team remain a mystery.

The Daily Star Sport has tried to dig out the facts without success since members of the National League Committee are unwilling to talk about the issue.

However, a few, preferring not to be named, came up with some very strange explanations.

"Biman was not included in this year's competition because the National Championship was not held last year," pointed out a director.

Biman, a loyal and longstanding sponsor of cricket in the country, qualified for the National League after winning the 1999 National Championship.

If that is the case, then it is the lamest of excuses to

exclude any team. Because, Biman were not supposed to hold the meet. As being the chairman of League committee, Dewan should be held responsible for not holding the National Championship. Why make Biman the scapegoat for Dewan's folly?

Another director said that the two teams were dropped to save money. The Board spent more than one crore taka to organise the meet last year.

This also sounds illogical when Biman itself is paying its way. Besides, over the years it has proved to be a true sports-loving organisation.

They are the only survivors of the vicious club politics where in the past major office teams have disappeared without a trace and as a result sport has suffered.

The icing on the cake, however, was an attempt to deflect criticism by saying that the ICC (International Cricket Council) has not given its 'approval' for the inclusion of Biman and Dhaka Metropolis.

This is a poor propaganda blitz by a vested quarter since it is not the ICC but respective boards who decide on how many teams should participate in any first-class competition.

A leading BCB director was quoted as saying that, "We do not have 150 first-class grade players."

The statement also makes no sense. This is hardly the time for an emerging Test playing nation to start counting quality when actually quantity should come first.

Certainly the negative attitude in the Board will have a telling effect on the players as a whole.

If the Board really wants to cut costs then first of all the directors can lead the way by not accepting the allowances that they are enjoying.

Moreover, the Board should have thought twice before maintaining two offices including a luxury complex at Gulshan.

And what about the Anti-Corruption Unit and its chief who is being paid Taka 50,000-per-month virtually for nothing?

With no malice intended to the gentleman, can somebody please clarify when he will get a case?

Series could be decided

Cricket

REUTERS, Ahmedabad

Nasser Hussain goes into the second Test against India with a brave face but few answers as England bid to rescue the three-match series.

His side will need a near-miracle after crashing to a 10-wicket defeat in the first Test on the one pitch likely to favour them during the tour.

Hussain's side looked clueless against leg-spinner Anil Kumble and off-break bowler Harbhajan Singh in Mohali last week as the pair harvested 15 of the 20 wickets to fall.

The Mohali debacle was played out on a seamer-friendly wicket. Ahmedabad, however, starting on Tuesday, will offer a barren, dusty pitch specifically designed for spin.

England failed to reach 250 runs in either innings in the first game and look on course for a repeat of the 3-0 whitewash on their last Indian tour eight years ago.

Indian skipper Sourav Ganguly was already talking about a sweep as he met reporters on Monday.

"It's a good hard wicket with a bit of grass covering. It will probably turn as the game progresses," he said, adding that a 3-0 scoreline would help erase his team's hugely disappointing tour of South Africa last month.

"We lost the Test series in South Africa. We have to win here. We can't get complacent."

Both India's bowling and batting, to make matters worse for Hussain, will be strengthened in Ahmedabad.

Pace spearhead Javagal Srinath returns after missing the first game with a broken finger.

India have also recalled batsman 23-year-old Virender Sehwag, who sat out the Mohali Test to serve a one-Test ban served on him in South Africa.

Ganguly's only worry, indeed, centres on his own batting. He has failed to score a century since the third and final Test in Ahmedabad against New Zealand late in 1999.

Since taking over as captain 13 Tests ago, Ganguly has recorded just three fifties, against Bangladesh, Zimbabwe and Sri Lanka, and was in great discomfort against the rising ball in the home series against Australia and in South Africa.

The left-hander spent time in the nets on Monday receiving tips from former Test batsman Mohinder Amarnath, known for his prowess against pace during his career in the 1970's and early '80s.

"It's a bit of a concern," Ganguly said. "In the last five Tests, I have got

a 90 (98 not out in Sri Lanka in August), a 20, a forty and forty. I have been getting starts. I am trying my level best to get back."

England skipper Hussain, in contrast, looked in good form in top-scoring with 85 in Mohali but opener Marcus Trescothick and fellow left-hander Graham Thorpe were the only others to manage fifties.

The touring side's bowling is as great a worry, so much so that

well received in India, the side having lost in Sri Lanka and South Africa after being held 1-1 in Zimbabwe earlier this year. That away form has left coach John Wright under pressure.

TEAMS

INDIA: Sourav Ganguly (captain), Deep Dasgupta, Shiv Das, Rahul Dravid, Sachin Tendulkar, Vangipurappu Laxman, Virender

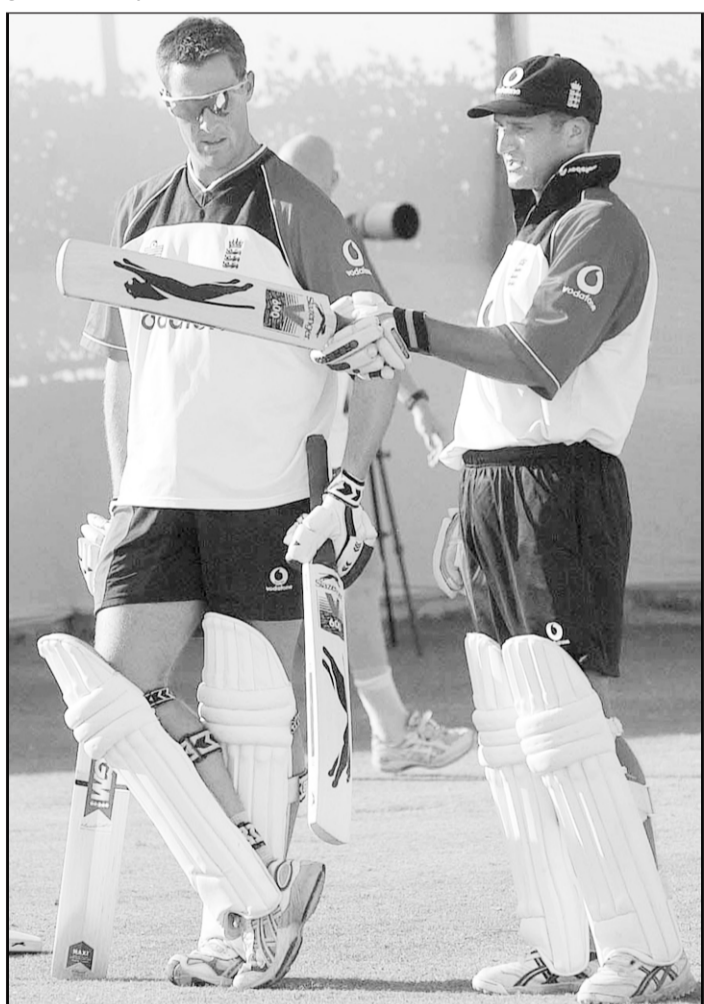


PHOTO: AFP

England's Mark Butcher (R) tries to draw the attention of teammate Marcus Trescothick to something during a practice session at the Sardar Patel Gujrat Stadium in Ahmedabad on Monday. The second Test between England and India starts here today.

England look set to gamble on left-arm spinner Ashley Giles, who has been struggling for fitness after Achilles tendon surgery.

The 28-year-old Warwickshire bowler last played a Test five months ago.

He is desperately needed, however, to give support to 21-year-old Richard Dawson, who impressed on his debut with a four-wicket haul.

A convincing victory would be

Sehwag, Anil Kumble, Harbhajan Singh, Javagal Srinath, Tinu Yohannan.

ENGLAND (possible): Nasser Hussain (captain), Marcus Trescothick, Graham Thorpe, Michael Vaughan, Mark Ramprakash, Craig White, Andrew Flintoff, James Foster, Matthew Hoggard, Ashley Giles, Richard Dawson.

Umpires: Avi Jayaprakash (India) and Ian Robinson (Zimbabwe).

Nat'l League CDSA calls up cricketers

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Chittagong

The Chittagong Divisional Sports Association (CDSA) on Monday called up 30 players to form a divisional cricket team for the Third National League. The country's only first-class competition begins on December 26.

The players come from six districts.

Chittagong features prominently in the list with 14 players. Comilla has eight players. Chandpur and Brahmanbaria contain three each. Cox's Bazar and Bandarban make up the rest.

But interestingly some of the selected cricketers are either in New Zealand or will be touring India later this month.

PLAYERS

Chittagong: Minhazul Abedin, Akram Khan, Ehsanul Haq, Azam Iqbal, Masum Ud Dowla, Suja Irfan, Nafees Iqbal, Aftab Ahmed, Aulul Abedin Shakil, Rubbi, Rippon (sr), Mohibur Rahman, Shabib and Nazim.

Comilla: Anis A Hakim, Shabbir Khan, Mohammad Ashraf, Enamul Hoque, Sumon Barua, Faisal Hossain, Mohammad Wasel Uddin and Mohammad Hasan.

Chandpur: Shaifuddin, Mohammad Sharif and Mohammad Alamgir.

Brahmanbaria: Mohammad Tariq Jasim and Anisur Rahman Hanif.

Cox's Bazar: Mohammad Rezaul Hasan.

Bandarban: Golam Mortuza.

U-15 cricketers win again

UNB, Dhaka

The Bangladesh Under-15 cricket team won its second straight limited-overs match against the Under-14s of the Cricket Association of Bengal by 19 runs in Kolkata on Monday.

Batting first, the Bangladesh colts scored 183 for nine in 45 overs. The home side replied with 164 in 43 overs.

SL tri-series Windies face hosts today

INTERNET, undated

Struggling West Indies meet hosts Sri Lanka in the third game of the one-day triangular series in Colombo on Tuesday.

The Lankans are on a high after stamping a world-beating win over Zimbabwe in the opening match on Saturday, while the Caribbeans faltered against depleted Zimbabweans the day after.

Meanwhile, the West Indies selectors have announced the names of the two replacements for the injured Leon Garrick and Dinanath Ramnarine. They are the Jamaican Ricardo Powell and the uncapped Trinidadian Darrel Brown.

Both players arrived in the Lankan capital in the early hours of Monday. Garrick, who has been diagnosed with a heart condition, and Ramnarine, who sustained a side strain, had already left for the Caribbean.

Zimbabwe's India tour dates fixed

REUTERS, Ahmedabad

Zimbabwe will play a two-Test series and five one-day internationals during their tour of India in February-March, the Indian cricket board announced.

The first Test will take place in the central city of Nagpur (February 21-25) and the second in New Delhi (February 28-March 4).

SCHEDULE Feb 12: Arrive in Bombay Feb 15-17: Board President's XI, Vijayawada Feb 21-25: First Test, Nagpur Feb 28-Mar 4: Second Test, New Delhi

Mar 7: First one-day international, Faridabad Mar 10: Second one-day (D/N), Mohali

Mar 13: Third one-day, Cochin Mar 16: Fourth one-day (D/N), Hyderabad

Mar 19: Fifth one-day, Guwahati

Pepsi nat'l handball

UNB, Dhaka

Hosts Rangpur became zonal champions in men's while Panchagar in women's groups of the Pepsi 14th National Handball Championship beating their rivals in the final at local stadium yesterday.

Rangpur defeated Rajshahi 11-10 after locking the first half 6-6.

In the women's final, Panchagar beat hosts Rangpur 15-13 after leading the first half 9-7.

What was that song?

Cricket

REUTERS, Auckland

Record-breaking Bangladesh batsman Mohammad Ashraful adopts an unusual ritual to help calm his nerves as he waits to bat for the newest member of the Test playing club -- he sings.

Before scoring his second innings 114 in the debut match which made him the youngest player in Test history to score a hundred, aged 17 years and 63 days, he eased his nerves in the dressing room by singing a song he heard on the radio that September morning.

Was it a Bengali favourite he sang? "No, it was a Hindi song because we were in Sri Lanka, but it was a nice one," said Ashraful.

The Dhaka-born youngster had already made his mark in that Colombo Test against Sri Lanka for being the top scorer, with 26, in Bangladesh's dismal first innings total of 90.

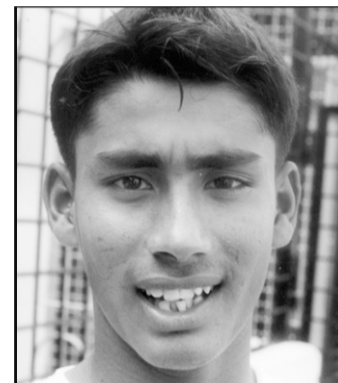
In the second innings, Ashraful was promoted from No 7 to No 6 and he handled Muttiah Muralitharan, Chaminda Vass and Ruchira Perera with aplomb to lead Bangladesh to a total of 340.

"I knew it was a record," the quietly-spoken Ashraful said after

practice on Monday.

"I remembered seeing a list of all the youngest century-makers and Mushtaq Mohammad (Pakistan) was the youngest and I beat him. I was pretty happy."

Mushtaq's was a 30-year-old record but Ashraful also surpassed the feat achieved by Zimbabwe



MOHAMMAD ASHRAFUL

batsman Hamilton Masakadza against West Indies in Harare in July this year by becoming the youngest debut-making centurion.

Ashraful said he did not notice any pressure to follow up his debut performance with more big scores, which is perhaps just as well because in five innings since his highest score has been 33.

But he did show maturity beyond

his years by holding out for 95 minutes for just a single in the recent Test against Zimbabwe in Dhaka to enable the match to go into the fifth day.

"We were getting badly beaten and I was told just to stay at the wicket, so I did," he said. "We still got beaten but we went into the fifth day."

Bangladesh coach Trevor Chappell said the team's diet of one-day matches has made it difficult for his players to remain patient if the runs are not coming in the Test arena.

"They get terribly frustrated at times, which makes Ash's refusal to worry about runs in that innings all the more meritorious," Chappell said.

Ashraful is proving to be a handy leg-spinner. His hero is Australian great Shane Warne, although he admits he bowls a faster, flatter line more like Pakistan's Mushtaq Ahmed.

Bangladesh's rain-plagued tour -- they have yet to bat -- continues with a four-day match against a strong Auckland side beginning on Wednesday.

The first Test against New Zealand in Hamilton starts on December 18 and the second Test begins eight days later in Wellington.

Double trouble for BD

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh might have to face an under prepared pitch and a wet outfield out at the Westpac Trust Park in Hamilton where the first Test against New Zealand starts on December 18.

According to Internet reports, the rainfall in Hamilton in November was 250 per cent more than the usual December rainfall in last ten days, which left groundsman with a little chance to bring the ground up to a Test standard.

However, the latest weather forecast could bring a sense of relief for the tourists as sunny four days were predicted before the Test.

Doug Strachan, the head groundsman of Westpac Trust Park, said that he would be able to present a good pitch if there was no rain in the last four days before the match.

"The best pitch I ever had was for the Northern Districts game against Australia two years ago, and I did

that in four days," he said. "I would have liked more time to get the pitch ready and to do some fine tuning to it."

Strachan also disclosed that the pitch for next Tuesday would be a typical Kiwi one. It will make bowlers' eyes light up because of the amount of green in it, but that will again be deceptive.

He said that in time he would like to see more captains bat first on the ground and realise there would be disadvantages in batting last on it.

"The rain has been a huge disappointment to me but we will still make a good pitch," he said.

Meanwhile, bad weather in Wellington over the last 10 days hasn't hampered preparations for the pitch of the Boxing Day Test (second Test) at the Basin Reserve on December 26.

Basin Reserve groundsman Trevor Jackson does not want any more rain as he is set to begin his preparation once the State Championship match between Wellington and Central Districts is finished on Thursday.

"The general preparation is

good, but the major concern is that the block has been under cover for so long," he said. "However, the block is looking very good, the consolidation is good underneath. All we need is some good fine weather to bake the wickets off."

Meanwhile, Bangladesh team, with only a day's tour match experience under their belt, returned to Auckland on Monday for their next practice match, a four-day affair, starting at the outer oval of the Eden Park Wednesday. Two days of the their three-day tour opener against New Zealand District Association Eleven were rained out.

This will be their last chance to gather some match practice before the Test series starts.

The New Zealand Cricket is likely to name its squad for the first Test on Thursday (December 13).

Chief Selector Sir Richard Hadlee has already made it clear that New Zealand will not be tempted to do any experiment by introducing new players in the series against Bangladesh.

At home and spinning

Cricket

AFP, Ahmedabad

It took Indian spinners Anil Kumble and Harbhajan Singh just one Test against England to put the smile back on their faces.

Both bowlers are looking forward to the second Test starting at the Motera Stadium here on Tuesday after sending down devastating spells in last week's opener at Mohali.

Everything appears to have changed with one victory at home.

Indian captain Sourav Ganguly is hopeful of completing a clean sweep, which will give his team a much-needed respite after failing to win away series in Zimbabwe, Sri Lanka and South Africa this year.

Kumble is back to haunt England, having played a vital role in India's series victory against Gooch's squad with 21 wickets in three Tests.

"I am happy the English batsmen have a bit of trouble against me from 1993 till now. I hope it remains like

Test innings in his own backyard.

"All he (Kumble) has to do against England is to put the ball between him and the batsman," said former India captain Sunil Gavaskar after the tourists' batting collapse at Mohali.

With Harbhajan keeping pressure from the other end, England's batting woes are expected to continue.

"It is great to be bowling along side Harbhajan," said Kumble. "He has been bowling well for the past one year. Having him bowling at the other end gives me good competition."

The 21-year-old Harbhajan rose to fame with a record 32-wicket haul, including at hatrick, against Steve Waugh's world champion Australians early this year, leading his team to a stunning 2-1 victory.

Harbhajan has yet to take five wickets in a Test innings abroad, but is second to none when it comes to winning matches at home. He has the bounce and turn to test the best in tailor-made conditions.

England have yet to show they can stop the Indian juggernaut.

Kenya humble Zim A again

AFP, Nairobi

Two centuries steered Kenya to a comfortable 105-run victory over Zimbabwe A in the second one-day match at the Nairobi Gymkhana club here on Sunday.

Set a huge target of 358, Zimbabwe A were all out for 253 in 46.3 overs as the home side wrapped up their second win in two days over the tourists.

Maurice Odumbe had Zimbabwe on the ropes with three successive wickets including the dismissal of opener Mark Vermeulen who made 66 of 62 balls.

For Kenya, Ravindu Shah and Steve Tikolo shared a second wicket stand of 209 with Shah hitting a career-best 132 runs off 127 balls, while Tikolo hit 133 off just 98 balls.



FILE PHOTO

Indian spinners Harbhajan Singh (L) and Anil Kumble.

Leg-spinner Kumble grabbed eight wickets and off-spinner Harbhajan seven to send Nasser Hussain's Englishmen crashing to a 10-wicket defeat inside four days in the first Test.

For England, the series has revived horrors of 1993 when Graham Gooch's team succumbed to Indian spinners on turning pitches to suffer a 3-0 rout.

England's nightmare began just when India's ended.

India looked mediocre in the recent away series against South Africa, showing grit neither in batting nor bowling. The spin magic did not work as South Africans continued to pile up runs.

that for the remaining two Tests as well," said Kumble, who has 289 wickets in 64 Tests.

Kumble, 31, is not a big turner of the ball like Australian leg-spin wizard Shane Warne. Nor does he fight it as much as the Australian. He unsettles batsmen with his accuracy and speed in the air and off the wicket.

Kumble was at his best at Mohali since returning to international cricket after nearly a year due to a shoulder injury, keeping a testing line and length to tie the English batsmen in knots.

