



Did U Know?

The record for the quickest 'pair' - a duck in each innings - achieved by Peter Judge, of Glamorgan, last man in against India at Cardiff. He was bowled first ball by Sarwate and, to save time when the county followed on, Judge and JC Clay stayed on the field to open the second innings. Sarwate clean bowled Judge again, first ball.



What to WATCH

ESPN

UEFA Champions League Borussia Dortmund vs AC Milan Same Day Delay at 5:00 pm

Cricket Programming

Super Selector Live at 7:30 pm

Sportscentre Hindi Sport News Live at 8:30 pm

STAR Sports

New Zealand vs India First Test, Day One Live at 3:50 am

Cricket Programming Super Selector Live at 7:30 pm

Sportline Tonight Sport News Live at 8:00 pm



TALK TURKEY



Stephen Fleming

(New Zealand cricket captain) "I am not suddenly going to be full and free, but I do want to score quicker."

The plan he will apply against India in the upcoming Test and one-day series.



Star WHIZZ KID COMPETITION 18

Tick the correct answers, post to The Daily Star

Win attractive prizes

Competition closes at 8 pm Dec 13, 2002 and draw shortly afterwards

1. Who clinched the DC Gold Cup soccer title?

Tangail / M'singh / N'ganj

2. Who lifted the Shanghai Tennis Masters Cup?

Agassi / Ferrero / Hewitt

3. Who was the man-of-the-match in the 6th ODI between India and West Indies?

Dravid / Gayle / Agarkar

4. Pakistan won the Test series against Zimbabwe by?

1-0 / 2-1 / 2-0

5. Brazil won the friendly match against South Korea by?

Name

Class

School Address

Phone: (if any)

Magura soccer

OUR CORRESPONDENT

Satyapur Sabuj Sangha defeated Udayan Sporting Club 5-1 in the Econo First Division Football League at the Magura Stadium yesterday.

Ajim, Sanjit, Zia, Anutosh and Omar scored one goal each for the winners while Wahid netted the lone goal for the losers.

Sreerampur Friends Club take on Shafique Smriti Sangsad today at the same venue.



Nurul Kabir Shaheen (2nd from L), chairman of the tournament committee, speaks at the press conference yesterday in connection with the Ispahani Tea 4th National Cricket League.

League made lacklustre

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) is still struggling to get things in order a day after the Ispahani Tea 4th National League got off to a quiet start on Tuesday.

The six divisional teams rolled into action without little or no preparation. Though the six teams have submitted a list of probable players only a day before the start of country's lone first-class competition, but the changes to it are still going on.

Country's top batsman Habibul Bashar, who was a player of Khulna only the other day, has been named in revised list of Barisal yesterday.

Besides the list of 22 players that Barisal send to the chairman of the tournament committee Shah Nurul Kabir Shaheen reflected a poor taste. They have only mentioned the nicknames of most of the cricketers oblivious of the fact that these names would be recorded by the statisticians world wide, let alone the International Cricket Council.

While most of the teams appar-

ently just obliging the mandatory event in the domestic calendar, the organisers also decided to sacrifice the gloss of the championship by giving the event a lacklustre start.

They have not only restricted the national tournament to Dhaka by making it a single league in place of home and away format, but also ruined the real purpose of the first class meet. Bangladesh will have to wait more to see lengthy longer version game being introduced, and cricketers and fans outside Dhaka will have virtually no chance to get involved with the meet.

Shaheen however defended their decision of playing the matches only in Dhaka at a belated press briefing at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

"Most of wickets outside Dhaka are substandard and that's why we have decided to hold all the games in available good pitches," said Shaheen, who is also an advisor of the BCB.

He also said that the response from Comilla and Rajshahi were negative. But the most interesting thing is that the Board for the last

four years put in a lot of effort and money to improving grounds outside Dhaka. And Comilla or Rajshahi District Sports Associations have no good reason to ignore the Board's desire.

Shaheen however said that they are very happy to introduce coloured cloth and white ball for the first time in one-day version of the competition.

But at the same time the incentive for the players have been shelved in half.

The winners of the three-day competition will now get Taka 200000 while the champions of the one-day event will be richer for Taka 100000.

MM Ispahani Group is also playing half the amount they offered last year. The reputed business house spent Taka 30 lakh last year to win the title sponsorship of the meet.

Mirza Ali Biruz Ispahani, vice-president of the sponsors, however said that they are paying less because the tournament has been reduced by days.

First Test starts today

Ganguly's one last chance to win away

Cricket

REUTERS, Wellington

India captain Saurav Ganguly believes the forthcoming Test series against New Zealand, which starts on Thursday, could be his last chance to win a series away from the sub-continent.

"I want to win a series abroad. That's the main aim of my captaincy career," Ganguly said ahead of the first Test in Wellington.

"The World Cup is coming up and obviously that is important, but this series may be my last chance to win a series abroad and I feel that if we fail, I have failed."

India have not won a Test series away from Asia since 1986 when they beat England and they may see the New Zealand series as a golden opportunity to beat a side, which is again without what many would consider its front-line pace attack.

"They (the New Zealand side) don't hold as many terrors as they used to," said Ganguly of the New Zealanders who are missing all-rounders Chris Cairns, fast-medium bowler Ian Butler and left-arm swing bowler Shayne O'Connor.

India, however welcome back their main strike bowler, left-armed Zaheer Khan, who injured himself in a warm-up match earlier in the tour. Zaheer is likely to share the new ball with Ajit Agarkar with Ashish Nehra or Tinu Yohannan the other pace bowler.

Ganguly also has the potential match-winner in off-spinner

Harbhajan Singh in the squad who, Ganguly said, can take wickets on the sort of green wicket players expect to see on Thursday.

"The best thing about the sort of pitch we are likely to face is that it will give both sides the chance to take 20 wickets, and that is good."

New Zealand captain Stephen Fleming, however, played down any significance the pitch may have.

"Expectations can be tough," said Fleming. "You see a green seamer and all of a sudden the bowlers are expected to do damage."

"It's the same with a flat deck for batsmen. One thing you can expect, I suppose, is good entertainment."

While Fleming will attempt to bowl out what is arguably the world's strongest batting lineup twice with a makeshift attack, he does have last year's find of the Australian series,

Shane Bond back to lead the bowling.

Bond missed the England series in March but did collect two five wicket bags in the series-winning tour of the West Indies.

TEAMS

NEW ZEALAND: Stephen Fleming (captain), Mark Richardson, Lou Vincent, Craig McMillan, Nathan Astle, Jacob Oram, Scott Styris, Robbie Hart, Daniel Vettori, Shane Bond, Daryl Tuffey, Michael Mason (one to be omitted).

INDIA: Saurav Ganguly (captain), Virender Sehwag, Sanjay Bangar, Rahul Dravid, Sachin Tendulkar, VVS Laxman, Parthiv Patel, Ajit Agarkar, Harbhajan Singh, Zaheer Khan, Ashish Nehra, Tinu Yohannan (one to be omitted).



A smiling India skipper Saurav Ganguly listens to a question during a press briefing in Wellington yesterday. The first Test between India and New Zealand starts here today.

No lights in NSC

Football

SPORTS REPORTER

With only a month left for the South Asian Football Federation (SAFF) Championship, the organisers BFF (Bangladesh Football Federation) keeps dragging its heels over upgrading the floodlight system at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur.

The BFF in association with the NSC (National Sports Council) has been involved in bringing the system up to the required international standard since July and the result of their combined effort is a big zero.

Though chairman of NSC and State Minister for Youth and Sports Fazlur Rahman had been vocal about getting all the preparation done on time, but the development and planning department of NSC appeared not to have given any attention to materialise his promise.

As per the international football rule, a stadium should have minimum 1,100 lux to hold international

matches under lights. The NSC last week confirmed the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) that there were 700 lux available in Mirpur and that steps had already been taken to increase it up to 1100 lux.

But to the utter surprise of all, Nurul Haq Proddhan, director, development and planning of NSC, informed the State Minister yesterday that they have in fact only 450-500 lux available at the moment and it would not be possible to upgrading the lighting system within a month.

BFF president SA Sultan and his acting general secretary Sirajul Islam Bachchu were also present when Proddhan was called up.

According to Sultan, Proddhan said that NSC will have to ask for a tender in this regard and it would take some time. He however could not say what they the NSC and the BFF did in the last five months. And why the NSC also misinformed the AFC about existing lux only a week back?

Having been misled and letdown by their colleagues, the state minister and the BFF boss instantly

contacted the tournament sponsor, AFC Marketing Limited (AML), and proposed to shift the venue to the Bangabandhu National Stadium, where cricket is being played at the moment.

But the AML instantly turned down their request saying it was too late for them to make any changes to the venue. Upon insistence, the AML said that they would give a final say regarding the matter by Thursday.

"We are now waiting for a positive response from the AML. We can only relax if AML accepts our proposal. Otherwise we are going to end up in a soup," said SA Sultan at his office yesterday.

Sultan also held the NSC development and planning department responsible for all the farce. "The country had to earn bad reputation because of its carelessness. It was decided to hold the eight-nation meet at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium more than a year back. They knew what to do but nothing had been done so far."

But many sports observers on

the other hand questioned BFF's intention too. They accused BFF of playing false, as they always wanted to hold the tournament at the BNS to have more gate money.

Sultan himself also failed to hide his feelings about the floodlight failure in the end. "It is a blessing in disguise as we will have more spectators at the Bangabandhu National Stadium," he remarked with a smile.

Cricketer organiser meanwhile expressed their worries at the prospect of venue shifting, as it is sure to upset their schedule. The all-purpose BNS has been allotted to the cricket board till April, 2002.

The NSC has already spent more than Taka 30 lakh to transform the BNS into a cricket ground again after all the damages done during the football season that ended last September. And if the SAFF Championship finally goes to BNS, NSC would have to spend more from the public's coffers.

Old wine in a new bottle

When he arrived in Bangladesh with the West Indies team on November 26, few people had any idea who he was or what he did. Two weeks later, the name Vasbert Drakes is on everyone's lips.

Born on August 5, 1969 at Springhead, St Andrew in Barbados, Drakes' international career began in 1995 when he played in five one-day internationals against Australia. He was also drafted into the West Indies squad for the last part of their 1995 tour of England. However, something definitely went off the track along the way as Drakes' career never took off until he was past 30.

Out in the international wilderness, the wily fast bowler spent his time representing Border in South Africa and Nottinghamshire, Sussex and Warwickshire in English county cricket. In the 2001 season, he took 42 first-class wickets for Warwickshire, before starting with the ball in the Standard Bank tournament in South Africa.

Returning to Barbados, Drakes' accurate spells helped his island to their Red Stripe Bowl win and finally made him eligible for selection in the West Indies squad. Drakes won an unexpected recall to the international side for the 2002 Champions Trophy in Sri Lanka.

But like vintage wine, Drakes has made his return to international cricket an occasion to behold. After a steady performance in the memorable one-day series win against India, Drakes turned on the style in Bangladesh taking three consecutive four-wicket hauls in the ODIs in Chittagong and Dhaka. He was rewarded with his first Test cap at 33 and as if he is making up for lost time, Drakes took an impressive match-haul of seven for 77 to send Bangladesh packing in the first Test at the Bangabandhu National Stadium.

With his unerring line and length, clever change of pace and unmistakable hostility, Drakes is giving examples of his pedigree and experience match after match. He is also a handful with the bat as his four first class centuries would suggest.

A humble and honest professional, Drakes spoke to RABEED IMAM and LENIN GANI of THE DAILY STAR SPORT about his new found fame, career and future before the first Test at Dhaka.

Daily Star Sport (DSS): How does it feel coming back into international cricket after such a long break?

Vasbert Drakes (VD): Definitely it's a nice feeling to get an opportunity to appear at the highest level again by first going to India and playing in those seven one-day matches and now I am having a great time in Bangladesh.

DSS: Yes, you're having a wonderful time and you're under the focus of the international media. How are you coping with all this attention? Don't you worry that there could be ordinary days ahead?

VD: Well, I have been playing cricket long enough to know that sometimes humiliation can really help to build you up and the next day you can have a very bad game and you'll be the worst cricketer around. So I know when not to get caught up in the hype. But it's nice when you work hard and get some sort of recognition off the field also.

DSS: Do you remember your international debut in 1994-95? What was the reason for your eight-

year absence since then? Was anything wrong?

VD: I certainly remember my debut. I came up against Australia at home for the ODIs. Then while I was playing for Sussex one of the guys from the touring West Indies team was sent home from England, I think it was Kenneth Benjamin. So I came in the latter half of that tour of England.

Regarding my absence, well, I don't think anything really went wrong. Actually there were rules and regulations at the time that meant a player had to be available for first-class cricket in the West Indies. But it coincided with my professional career in England and South Africa.

Funnily enough, this year I did not have to sacrifice my professional career because of a situation that saw the domestic competition brought forward. And this season I was not playing in England so I had time to represent Barbados in the first-class competition.

I played quite well and everything fell into place. Then I went back to Border in South Africa after the

Champions Trophy in Sri Lanka. However I had to break my contract to a certain extent before going to India.



VASBERT DRAKES

DSS: Why didn't you make an attempt to return earlier by playing domestic cricket? Did you lack motivation to represent the West Indies?

VD: I never said I didn't feel

motivated to play for the West Indies. My problem was that I was a bit disillusioned with my career in the West Indies. So I needed a challenge and I found playing in South Africa realised my dream of playing against the top cricketers. I enjoyed it there and that's why I stayed longer away from the West Indies than I had planned to.

DSS: Have you gone through any changes with your bowling over the years?

VD: I guess at a certain point you analyse your bowling action by working in the nets. Obviously you want to take your game to a different level. Anytime you get a chance you try to improve and see what can be done or added to your game. For example, the tour of India put me in good stead because the margin for error was very small there indeed. In a way that helped me realise what to expect in Bangladesh. I guess you learn these things after playing over a period of time. You can work it out for yourself how the wicket will behave and how to bowl on it.

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India feel AFC's wrath

AFP, Kuala Lumpur

The Asian Football Confederation (AFC) on Wednesday imposed a one-year ban on India hosting any international football tournaments after failing to provide a report on a mass brawl.

AFC general secretary Peter Velappan said the body was "seriously upset" that Indian officials had not made a report on a punch-up between players from Calcutta's Mohan Bagan and Brazilian side Palmeiras.

"Despite numerous reminders and time extensions, the AIFF (All India Football Federation) had yet to submit this report to the AFC," he told reporters.

Players from both teams were involved in ugly skirmishes during the Indian Football Association Shield.

The AIFF was also hit with a 5,000 dollar-fine, Velappan said.

Mohamed bin Hammam, Asian Football Confederation (AFC) president, warned that the body would not tolerate violence and cheating in Asian football.

Hammam warned that AFC would come down harder in the future on those who commit wrongdoings or indulge in cheating.

Pakistan 335/6

SPORTS REPORTER

Pakistan piled up a huge 335 for six in their 50 overs after winning the toss in the second one-day international against South Africa at St. George's Park in Port Elizabeth yesterday.

Nafis, Javed hit tons

Cricket

UNB, Dhaka

A superb hundred by Nafis Iqbal enabled Chittagong Division take a 189-run first innings lead against Khulna in the Ispahani Tea 4th National Cricket League at the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium yesterday.

The promising right-hander hammered 117 as Chittagong, resuming on 72 for three, piled up 310 in 99.4 overs. Experienced batsman Azam Iqbal also contributed 75 off 179 balls featuring six fours and a six.

Khulna, who scored 221 runs in

his chanceless knock before being bowled by left-arm spinner Manjarul Islam while trying to pull a flighted delivery.

At the BKSP ground in Savar, discarded national opener Javed Omar belted 111 for defending champions Dhaka which enabled them take a commanding position against Barisal.

Dhaka made a mammoth 324 for nine in the allotted 100 overs in reply to Barisal's 196 all out in the first innings.

Conceding a 128-run deficit on the first innings, Barisal then lost three wickets for 59 runs in 26 overs.

Mohammad Shahin and Nahidul Haq were batting on 5 and 26 runs respectively.

Omar belted 16 boundaries and a big sixer facing 213 balls while Halim scored 98 off 194 deliveries. He hit 14 fours.

Barisal spinner Ali Arman claimed four wickets for 125 runs in 30 overs.

Meanwhile, at the Fatullah Stadium, Rajshahi took a handsome 223-run lead over Sylhet in the first innings as they scored 341 for eight in the stipulated 100 overs.

Sylhet Division, who made 118 in their first knock, were 94 for one in the second on completion of the 26th over when the balls were drawn for the day. Parvez Ahmed was at the crease with 39 and Rezaul Haq was at the other end on 9.

Earlier, a brilliant top-order batting helped Rajshahi, who resumed the day on 121 for one, reach 341.

Jahurul Islam (78 off 151 balls), Nuruzzaman (45 off 124), Anisur Rahman (54 off 95), Mushfiqur Rahman (44 off 99) and Hasanuzzaman (57 not out from 53 balls) were the notable run-getters.

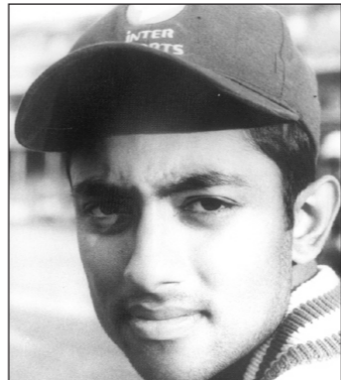
Left-arm spinner Enamul Haque junior was the most successful Sylhet bowler picking up four wickets for 113 in 32 overs.

BRIEF SCORES

KHULNA DIVISION: 221 all out in 69 overs and 13 without loss in 7 overs (Sazzadul Setu 9 not out, M Salim 4 not out).

CHITTAGONG DIVISION: 310 all out in 99.4 overs (Nafis Iqbal 117, Aftab 16, Minhazul Abedin 12, Azam Iqbal 75, Shabbir Khan 17, Ahsanullah Hasan 29; Manjarul Islam Rana 3-62, Al Amin 2-58).

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NAFIS IQBAL ... 117



JAVED OMAR ... 111

their first innings, were 13 without loss in their second innings when balls were drawn for the second day of the four-day match.

Nafis, nephew of former national captain Akram Khan, smashed 21 boundaries facing 194 deliveries in

Earlier, Javed Omar and Halim Shah shared a huge 216-run partnership for the third wicket that powered Dhaka, who started the second day on 95 for two, to the mammoth total.

In his 285-minute stay, Javed