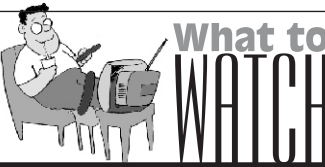




Did U Know?

A soccer ball is made up of 32 leather panels, held together by 642 stitches.



ESPN

South Africa vs West Indies

First Test, Day Five

Live at 2:27 pm

Sportscentre Hindi

Sport News

Live at 9:30 pm

STAR Sports

Australia vs India

Second Test, Day Five

Live at 6:30 am

Sportsline Tonight

Sport News

Live at 8:00 pm



Graham Thorpe

(England batsman)
"Not too many of us tell tales out of school."

On Muttiah Muralitharan's decision to report comments allegedly made to him by Nasser Hussain during the Kandy Test.

Star WHIZZ KID

COMPETITION 202

Tick the correct answers, post to
The Daily Star
Win attractive prizes

**Competition closes at 8 pm
Dec 19, 2003 and draw**

- Who has been named Australia's Test captain?

Gilchrist

Ponting

Martyn
- Who won the Rugby World Cup?

Australia

England

New Zealand
- Who will lead the Bangladesh A team to Pakistan?

Rajin

Mushiq

Hannan
- Who won the Federation Cup title?

Name

Class. Roll No.

School Address

Phone: (If any)

Biman move further up

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Biman kept their solo lead in the First Division Chess League intact at the end of the seventh round at National Sports Council's conference room yesterday.

Biman raised their collection to 27.5 points after winning their boards 4-0 against Narayanganj City Chess Club.

GM Ziaur Rahman and IMs Reefat Bin Sattar Abdullah Al Rakib and Enamul Hossain Rajib won against Shamim, Prosenjit, Mainuddin and Zahid Choudhury.

Leonine Chess Club followed the leaders with 22 points as they beat Rajshahi Daba Unnyan Sangstha by identical 4-0 margin. GMs Alexander Fominyh, Alexie Barsov and Niaz Murshed and Abdul Maleq beat Rabiul Islam, Abdul Muttalib.

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Swadhin Bangla: More than a football team

HASAN MASOOD

If the power of football was ever used as a weapon to fight a war then the name of Swadhin Bangla Football Team will go down in the history of the people's game as second to none.

It was in 1971 when blood and tears were shed by millions of peace loving people during the War of Liberation against the brutal Pakistan occupational forces that some bold footballers and sports organisers floated the idea of a team to spread the word 'Independence' throughout the rest of the world.

The glorious journey of Swadhin Bangla had its roots in Kolkata in June of that turbulent year. Shamsul Haq formed a sports association titled Bangladesh Krira Samity and on the same day it decided to organise a football team that would play a series of exhibi-

tion matches across India to generate public support for the creation of a new country on the world map.

The dream was rapidly becoming a reality when Aakashbani, a popular radio channel transmitted from Kolkata during the Liberation War, appealed to players to gather under one umbrella to inspire their brothers and sisters in arms.

Three men with a vision the first secretary of Bangladesh Krira Samity Lutfur Rahman, former footballer and coach Ali Imam and former East End Club footballer Saidur Rahman Patel set the wheels in motion.

And very soon around thirty players signed up for trials under the supervision of coach Nani Bashak. The father of famous movie star Shabnam (Jharna Bashak) then selected 25 to attend the camp. A few more players were later included in the team once it started to tour India.

A room was hired in the Coca-Cola building near Park Circus for the accommodation of the players while the Park Circus ground was designated as a practice venue.

The day finally dawned on Swadhin Bangla football team when Zakaria Pintoo had the honour to lead the pioneering footballers at the Khishnanagar Stadium in West Bengal's Nadia district on July 24.

The game against the Nadia District Eleven ended in a 2-2 draw. But impact had a far-reaching consequence.

Former BCB vice-president Tanveer Mazhar Islam Tanna was the manager of the historic team that played sixteen matches across India. And for the record they won

SEE PAGE 15 COL 2



COURTESY PHOTO: ZAKARIA PINTOO

The Swadhin Bangla football team.

History beckons India



AFP, Adelaide

India were a tantalising 193 runs from a stunning come-from-behind victory over Australia with all 10 wickets intact after the fourth day in the second cricket Test at the Adelaide Oval on Monday.

Australia collapsed from a position of strength at 556 in their first innings to be bundled out for 196 off 56.2 overs in their second innings, leaving Sourav Ganguly's team a target of 230 runs off 100 overs for their first Test victory in 22 years in Australia.

Only four teams in the history of Test cricket have lost after scoring 500 or more in the first innings with

India's resurgence conjuring memories of their legendary fightback to win the "miracle" Calcutta Test by 171 runs two years ago.

Victory on Tuesday's final day will put India one-up in the series with two Tests to play in Melbourne and Sydney in Steve Waugh's farewell Test series.

At stumps, India had knocked 37 off the target without loss from 10 overs with Virender Sehwag on 25 and Akash Chopra on 10.

India last won in Australia by 59 runs at the Melbourne Cricket Ground in February 1981 and they have never won in seven previous Tests at the Adelaide Oval.

Australia's last loss in Adelaide was against England by 106 runs in the fourth Test in 1995.

India whittled Australia's first innings lead to just 33 runs after a record knock of 233 by Rahul Dravid and then ripped through the Australian batting order with Ajit Agarkar taking Test-best 6-41 off 16.2 overs.

The paceman was the Indian hero taking 4-4 off his last 19 deliveries as Australia lost their last five wickets for 13.

Only Adam Gilchrist (43), skipper Steve Waugh (42), Damien Martyn (38) and Simon Katich (31) offered resistance as the vaunted Australian batting lineup succumbed in the face of India's spirited bowling and fielding.

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PHOTO: AFP

AGARKAR TAKES OFF! India paceman Ajit Agarkar celebrates taking the wicket of Australia opener Justin Langer on the fourth day of the second Test in Adelaide yesterday.

Flying 'Bombay Duck'



REUTERS/AFP, Adelaide

Ajit Agarkar otherwise known as 'The Bombay Duck' took his revenge on Australia on Monday, a revenge which will seem even sweeter if his Test-best bowling is capped by Indian success in the second Test.

Agarkar, a slim-as-a-stump bowling all-rounder, has been a figure of fun in Australia for years.

On India's last Test visit Down Under, Agarkar earned his sobriquet after ending the series with five consecutive ducks, his batting efforts lasting one ball, one ball, one ball, one ball and then two.

To make matters worse, Agarkar then made a pair in the one Test he played against the Australians in 2001, giving him an extraordinary seven noughts in a row against the world champions.

When he scored his first run of 12 in the drawn first Test in Brisbane earlier this month, he raised his bat to acknowledge the crowd's mocking cheers.

If Australia underestimated the 26-year-old player from Bombay on Monday, however, they should not have done.

Despite his batting problems against them, Agarkar has always featured with his whippy fast-medium seam bowling.

Four times in his previous 17 Tests Agarkar has taken three

wickets in an innings, with Australia the opponents each time.

He eclipsed that with six for 41 off 16.2 overs and four for four off his last 19 deliveries on the fourth day of the second Test on Monday. "I probably got lucky," he said.

If India seal a spectacular victory 24 hours later "if we're patient and keep our heads we should get the job done" Agarkar will surely be remembered for those six wickets rather than those seven brief innings.

He said the Australian batsmen's penchant for going for their shots contributed significantly to his

Test - SEE PAGE 15 COL 5

Hossain on a high

SPORTS REPORTER

A blistering unbeaten hundred by a reborn Shahriar Hossain gave Bangladesh A a solid start against Defence Housing Authority (DHA) in their four-day match of the Inter Departmental Cricket Championship (Patron's Trophy) at the Karachi National Stadium in Pakistan yesterday.

Hossain blasted his way to a typically pugnacious 176 not out as the second string Bangladesh side turned a worst possible start to a pleasing end of the day effort by finishing on 300 for four wickets in 85 overs.

For Hossain, the right-handed opener from Narayanganj, it was a fantastic personal triumph on his return to the national colours after making the team's highest 78 in a limited-over match against the same opposition on Sunday.

He led the A team's counter-charge after DHA new ball bowler Nasir Khan had sent back Bangladesh Test batsman Hannan Sarkar off the very first ball of the match.

Hossain hammered 30 boundaries and an over boundary in his 276-ball innings and got good support from Mohammed Ashraf (45 off 145 ball) as the two stroke-makers dominated the home side's bowling. They shared a significant 183-run fourth wicket stand after the visitors were reduced to 95 for three with Ehsanul Haq (16) and Rajin Saleh (11) failing for the second time on the tour.

The partnership was broken when Ashraf was caught by Rezwana Sajid off Ameer Iqbal.

Sajid was the most successful bowler of the day picking up two wickets for 55 runs from 18 overs.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard at stumps on the first day of a four-day Inter Department Cricket Championship (Patron's Trophy) match between Bangladesh A and Defence Housing authority (DHA) at the Karachi National Stadium yesterday:

| BANGLADESH A: First innings | | | | |
|---|-----|---|----|---|
| Hannan c Waseem b Nasir | 0 | | | |
| Shahriar not out | 176 | | | |
| Ehsanul lbw b Rizwan | 16 | | | |
| Rajin c Amir b Rizwan | 11 | | | |
| Ashraful c Rizwan b Ameer | 45 | | | |
| Mushfiqur not out | 3 | | | |
| Extras: (b-8, lb-10, nb-25, w-6) | 49 | | | |
| Total: (For 4 wks in 85 overs) | 300 | | | |
| Fall of wickets: 1-0, 2-45, 3-95, 4-278 | | | | |
| Bowler | O | M | R | W |
| Nasir | 17 | 5 | 60 | 1 |
| Umair | 15 | 2 | 40 | 0 |
| Rizwan | 18 | 6 | 55 | 2 |
| Ameer | 10 | 1 | 58 | 1 |
| Qurashi | 9 | 1 | 36 | 0 |
| Waseem | 16 | 4 | 42 | 0 |
| Asmat | 0.0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |

PM hands over Nat'l Sports Awards Dec 23

BSS, Dhaka

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia will hand over the National Sports Awards for 2003 at the International Conference Centre at Prime Minister's Office on December 23.

Seven personalities have been selected for the coveted awards for their contribution to their respective fields.

They are Abdus Salam Murshedi and Mohammad Kaiser Hamid (football), Jahangir Shah Badshah and Aminul Islam Bulbul (cricket), Mahbub Alam (athletics), M Abdus Salam (swimming) and Lt Col (ret'd) Heshamuddin Ahmad (sports organiser).

Each awardee will receive a gold medal, a certificate and a cash award of Taka 20 thousand, an official handout said.

Shaheed President Ziaur Rahman had introduced the award for sports personalities for their special achievement and contribution to their respective fields.

Premier Division football is here

SPORTS REPORTER



The Western Union Dhaka Premier Division Football League kicks off tomorrow at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium.

Season's most popular local football event will be played in a return league format between ten teams. All the Premier Division matches will take place at the Sher-e-Bangla Stadium.

Country's top two crowd-

pulling clubs Mohammedan Sporting and Abahani are both in action on the opening day against lowly opponents.

Defending champions Mohammedan will launch their campaign by taking on youthful Sheikh Russell Krira Chakra at 4pm and last year runners-up Abahani face Dhaka Wanderers Club under floodlights at 6pm.

Meanwhile, the ten-team First Division League, also sponsored by the USA based Western Union, will begin on December 18 at the newly built Bir Sreshtha Shaheed Mustafa Kamal Stadium in Kamalapur.

Rahmatganj Muslim Friends Society will face Dipali Jubo Sangha at 3pm while Farashganj Sporting Club will play the second match against Mohakhali Ekadosh at 5pm on the first day.

This season's Premier League promises to be an unprecedented four-horse race with Muktiyoddha Sangsad Krira Chakra firmly establishing their reputation as the best team in the country and Brothers Union Club roping in virtually the whole Bangladesh national squad in a bid to revive their past glory.

A press conference in connection with the leagues was organised by the Dhaka Mahanagari Football League Committee yesterday.

Chairman of the league committee Abdur Rahim informed that they were going to clamp down on the match-fixing syndrome with an iron-fist and for the first time in the history of local football, the detective branch of police will help them in this regard.

"Fixed matches are the main reason for the game's degradation in

SEE PAGE 15 COL 5

Chasing an elusive title



SPORTS REPORTER

The officials of the major football houses in the capital spent sleepless nights last August when they came to know that most of their top players had silently joined Brothers Union after receiving hefty sums of money from the Gopibagh-based club.

It was all the more amazing considering the fact that Brothers, who had been struggling for a number seasons and finished seventh in the ten-team elite League last year after going through an arduous relegation battle.

The top brass of Mohammedan,

Abahani and Muktiyoddha were powerless in preventing the new 'Band of Brothers' being unveiled on the opening day of transfer bourse in September.

A look at the team Brothers have

assembled reads like a who's who of Bangladesh football. From Muktiyoddha came national captain Rajani Kanta Barman, country's number two goalkeeper Biplab Bhattacharya, central defender Mohammad Sujon, mercurial midfielder Arman Mia and ace striker Alfaz Ahmed.

Abahani lost defender Nazrul, Parvez Babu, midfielders Iqbal Hossain and Liton. And Mohammedan saw defender Firoz Mahmud Hossain Tito and midfielder Monwar Hossain both leave the popular Motiheel club.

No sooner had Brothers staged the coup then speculation grew that the plot was hatched with the full financial backing of Dhaka City Mayor Sadeq Hossain, who is has been associated with the club for a long time.

The manner in which the signings were brought to the Dhaka Mahanagari Football League Committee (DMFLC) office was also unique.

In a scene reminiscent of a team

winning a major title, the players and officials arrived at the Bangabandhu National Stadium in a ceremonial parade of horse-driven carts.

Naturally all the talk in the sports arena was whether Brothers would mount a serious challenge against the big three in the Federation Cup. But to everybody's surprise it never happened as the glamour outfit of the mid-seventies and early eighties crashed out after a losing to Bangladesh Army at the nascent stage of the competition.

The sensational loss sparked off all kinds of theories. Some suggested that despite being regarded as the best team on paper, most of the Brothers players were either way past their prime or nearing the ends of their careers. Others said that senior members were yet to settle into the squad.

But according to Brothers U n i o n

SEE PAGE 15 COL 2



PHOTO: STAR

DMFLC chairman Abdur Rahim (2nd from R) makes a point during a press conference, organised in connection with the Senior Division Football League, at a city hotel yesterday.