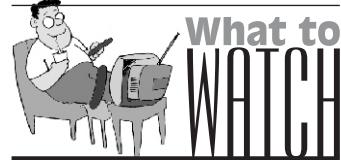




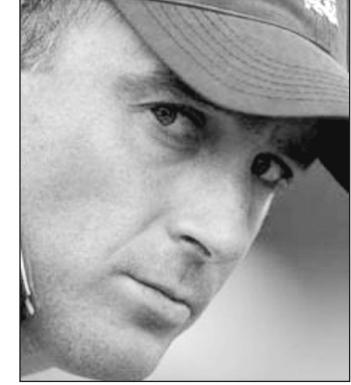
Did U Know?

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



What to WATCH

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.



Tick the correct answers, post to
The Daily Star
Win attractive prizes
Competition closes at 8 pm
Dec 19, 2003 and draw

1. Who has been named Australia's Test captain?	Gillchrist
Ponting	Martyn
2. Who won the Rugby World Cup?	Australia England New Zealand
3. Who will lead the Bangladesh A team to Pakistan?	Rajin Hossain
4. Who won the Federation Cup title?	
Name	
Class	
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.

Leonee Chess Club followed the leaders with 22 points as they beat Rajshahi Daba Unnyan Sangsta by identical 4-0 margin. GMs Alexander Fominyh, Alexie Barsov and Niaz Mursheed and Abdul Maleq beat Rabib Islam, Abdur Rabb and Md. Muttalib.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 1

Swadhin Bangla: More than a football team

HASAN MASOOD

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-

tions 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 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 Khishnagar 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



The Swadhin Bangla football team.

COURTESY PHOTO: ZAKARIA PINTOO

History beckons India

Cricket

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 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.

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

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

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 off 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.

Only four teams in the history of

Test cricket have lost after scoring 500 or more in the first innings with

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6



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'

Cricket

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.

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

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.

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

SEE PAGE 15 COL 5

Four times in his previous 17 Tests Agarkar has taken three

Hossain on a high

SPORTS REPORTER

A blistering unbeaten hundred by born 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.

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.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

Premier Division football is here

SPORTS REPORTER

WESTERN UNION 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-

FIRST WEEK'S FIXTURES

Date	Match	Kick off time
Dec 17	Mohammedan v Sheikh Russell	4pm
Dec 18	Abahani v Wanderers	6pm
Dec 19	Arambagh v Brothers Union	3pm
Dec 20	Muktijoddha v Victoria	5pm
Dec 21	Dhanmondi v Badda Jagarani	5pm
Dec 22	Abahani v Victoria	5pm
Dec 23	Muktijoddha v Brothers Union	5pm
	Dhanmondi v Sheikh Russell	3pm
	Arambagh v Badda Jagarani	5pm

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

Defending champions Mohammedi 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.

A press conference in connection with the leagues was organised by the Dhaka Mahanagar 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"

SEE PAGE 15 COL 5

Chasing an elusive title

Football

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 Mohammedi, Abahani and Muktijoddha 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 Muktijoddha came national captain Rajani Kanta Barman, country's number two goalkeeper Biplob 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 Mohammad saw defender Firoz Mahmud Hossain Tito and midfielder Monwar Hossain both leave the popular Motijheel 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 has been associated with the club for a long time.

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

But according to Brothers

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

In a scene reminiscent of a team



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.

PHOTO: STAR