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# Star SPORT

DHAKA THURSDAY NOVEMBER 25, 2004, E-MAIL: dssports@gononet.com

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## Wait for Premier League over

SPORTS REPORTER



Domestic cricket gets its soul back when the much anticipated 2004-05 Dhaka Premier Division cricket league reappears after a year's break today.

The most intense, lucrative and popular local event was not held last year because of a bitter tussle between clubs and the authorities over the scheduling of the competition. However, the Cricket Committee of Dhaka Metropolitan (CCDM), organisers of the competition, promised an uninterrupted league which kicks off at three different venues across the capital.

Doubts have surfaced regarding the continuation of the 12-team event as per schedule as top clubs could lose key players because of their international commitments in the middle of the league.

India arrive in Bangladesh on November 7 to play two Tests and three one-day matches against the Tigers and just after the completion of that series, Zimbabwe are due for two Tests and five ODIs.

But the CCDM assured at a press conference yesterday that there was no chance of stoppages as all clubs have agreed on nonstop action despite the prospect of missing star names for a number of games.

There was only one problem with the Sri Lankan Academy team

touring in the first week of December. But we have rescheduled their tour by keeping only five limited-over matches instead of four-day games. We promise you that the league will be finished by January 30 without any break," said Khondokar Jamil Uddin, the chairman of CCDM.

In another development, the CCDM made changes to the fixture

to accommodate the match between defending champions Victoria Sporting Club and newcomers Agrani Bank at the Bangabandhu National Stadium (BNS) on the opening day. The game was originally scheduled at the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium which sparked sharp criticism as no champion team in the past have been deprived of playing their opener in

the next season at the BNS. "We have decided to respect the 33-year old tradition. But we did not have any ulterior motives in the first place," said Jamil.

The scheduled match at the BNS between last year's runners-up City Club and big-spending Old DOHS will now take place at Dhanmondi. Mohammedan Sporting Club will face Orient Sporting Club in the other game at the BNS.

Abahani, Uttara SC, Brothers Union, Young Pegasus, Indira Road, Bangladesh Biman begin their campaign on Sunday.

Green Delta, a leading insurance company of the country are sponsoring this year's league. The CCDM has estimated a budget of 35 lakh Taka to run the show. Green Delta will provide 25 lakh Taka.

The competition will be played in a single-league format. The authorities have asked groundsmen at the venues to prepare green-top pitches.

"It is the Bangladesh Cricket Board's wish that the league is played on sporting wickets considering the demands of international cricket. We know this might not be welcomed by all the clubs but we are ready to face the challenge," said Jamil.

Jamil informed that the two bottom finishers would be relegated to the First Division. The champions can expect to receive Tk 1.5 lakhs as prize money while the runners-up Tk one lakh although this has not been to approve by the BCB yet.



DHAKA LEAGUE IS BACK: BCB advisor and chairman of Commercial Committee Aziz Al Kaiser Tito (C) makes a point while officially announcing Green Delta Insurance Company as sponsors of the 2004-05 Premier League.



HE'S REALLY SERIOUS ABOUT IT: Young batsman Aftab Ahmed, who was a revelation as a bowler during the one-day series against New Zealand last month, sends down a delivery in the nets while Mushfiqur Rahman (L) looks on at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.



**Did U Know?**

The first ODI was played in India on 25-11-1981 (It was India's 26th ODI).



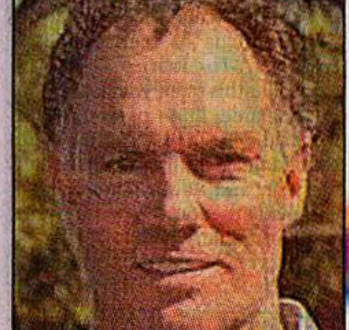
**What to WATCH**

**ESPN**  
Football Crazy  
Live at 5:00 pm  
Sportscentre  
Live at 8:30 pm

**STAR Sports**  
Sportsline  
Live at 8:00 pm  
UEFA Champions League  
Barcelona vs Celtic  
Same Day Delay at 12:00 am (Friday)



**TALK TURKEY**



**Greg Chappell**

(Former Australian cricket captain)  
"The art of batting is like walking a tightrope and New Zealand are not walking it very well at the moment -- they have to rethink their strategy."

**Abul Hashem TT Double delight for Soma**

SPORTS REPORTER

The Beximco Pharma-Abul Hashem Smriti Table Tennis Tournament ended with a consolation trophy for hosts Wari Club when Rocky clinched the boys' singles title yesterday.

Rocky came from behind to beat Biman's Rimon in the final. He conceded the first set 7-11 but bounced back to win the next four sets 11-7, 11-8, 11-7 and 11-9 at the Woodenfloor Gymnasium.

In the semifinals, Rocky eliminated Hasib of Kushtia 11-6, 11-4.

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## SAFF heroes honoured

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia yesterday handed over documents of plots to the players and officials of the 3rd SAFF Football Championship winning Bangladesh team.

The Prime Minister handed over the allotment papers of five katha plots of RAJUK's Purbachal housing project to each of the 20 players and five officials at International Conference Centre of the PMO complex.

By handing over the documents of plots to the members of the national football team, which clinched the SAFF trophy for the first time beating Maldives in the final in Dhaka in 2003, the Prime Minister kept her earlier commitment.

She made the commitment at a reception to the players and officials of the national football team last year for their glorious achievement that brought honour and dignity for the country.

Expressing his instant reaction after receiving the plot document from Prime Minister Khaleda Zia, national midfielder Parvez Babu told UNB that he was feeling very lucky.

Works and Housing Minister Mirza Abbas, State Minister for Youth and Sports M Fazlur Rahman, State Minister for Housing Alamgir Kabir and Bangladesh Football Federation President SA Sultan MP also spoke at the function.

## Div I chess Biman take on Destiny 2000 in opener

UNB, Dhaka

The number draw ceremony of the Dutch-Bangla First Division Chess League was held yesterday at the National Sports Council (NSC) conference room.

The 16-team league begins today at the federation hall-room.

According to the draw, defending champions Bangladesh Biman will take on Destiny 2000 in one of the opening day's eight matches.

In other matches, Mohakhali PS will play Narayanganj CCC, Parashganj SC meet Friends CP, Ansar meet Leonine CC, Titas Club face Sonali Bank, Dhaka University meet Rajshahi DUS, Muktioddha SKC play Star Vision and Anusilom DKC face Kamalapur SKP.

## Parag loses again

UNB, Dhaka

Bangladesh national junior champion Mehdi Hassan Parag lost his eighth round match to Arghyadip Das of India in the boys' group of the 43rd World Junior (Under-20) Chess Championship in Cochin, India yesterday.

Parag, who earned 3.5 points from eight matches, will play Giancarlo Braschi of Italy today.

## What happened in the dressing room?

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

The preliminary camp of the Bangladesh team for next-month's home series against India reportedly experienced an unsavory incident involving Bangladesh Under-19 coach Richard McInnes and a senior cricketer at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

It was learnt that the Australian coach, who has been supervising training in the absence of Dav Whatmore who returns today following a break in Australia, was locked in a heated exchange with former Bangladesh captain Khaled Mashud in the dressing room.

According to sources, McInnes had asked at the beginning of yesterday's practice whether they were interested to train at the camp or join the practice of their respective clubs of the Dhaka Premier league. 14 out of the 21 players in the preliminary squad who had matches today, took the second option.

This reportedly infuriated the 30-year-old Australian who told them to leave the ground. McInnes later found Mashud taking a message in the dressing room and the two ended up having a fight as the coach wanted explanation on why the wicketkeeper hadn't already left.

Chief selector Faruque Ahmed visited the BNS and discussed the incident with Bangladesh captain Habibul Bashar and McInnes. When asked, Faruque however expressed his ignorance about anything untoward taking place. But Bangladesh Cricket Board's advisor and chairman of the media committee Reazuddin Al-Mamun admitted the confrontation.

"I have heard about it. I think it was a misunderstanding between McInnes and a player. We can only elaborate after knowing all the facts," said Mamun.

Mamun said the board was considering releasing players from

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## Premier hockey begins tomorrow

SPORTS REPORTER

The Green Delta Premier Hockey League will begin tomorrow with defending champions Abahani Krira Chakra taking on newcomers Azad Sporting Club in the opening match.

The day's lone match will kick off at 3pm at the Maulana Bhashani National Hockey Stadium.

Challengers Mohammedan Sporting Club will go into action on the next day when they meet Wari Club.

This year's Club Cup runners-up

Mariner Youngs Club are pitted against Sonali Bank also on the second day of the ten-team fray while other title challengers Usha Krira Chakra will play Bangladesh Railway on the third day.

Abahani, who won the Club Cup title earlier this month, have confirmed the services of Indian player Christopher Edward and Prakash Calke for the League. Christopher is expected to arrive in Dhaka today and play the first match. Prakash, whose brilliant hattrick gave Abahani a dramatic 4-3 win over

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Dhaka Club president Geetara Safiya Choudhury addresses a press briefing in connection with Dhaka Sports Carnival at the club premises yesterday. The three-day festival will commence in the city today.

## Ganguly's hearing today

INTERNET SOURCE

Sourav Ganguly, who decided to appeal the two-Test ban imposed on him due to slow over-rates, will have a hearing via teleconference with Tim Castle, the ICC's appeals commissioner, on Thursday afternoon.

He will have help from high places when his hearing takes place after the first Test against South Africa, according to a report in The Times of India. Siddhartha Shankar Roy, a former chief minister of West Bengal and a renowned lawyer, and Ushanath Banerjee, the BCCI's legal adviser, will assist Ganguly with his appeal against the ban imposed on him after India's game against Pakistan on November 13.

It was Ganguly's second transgression within the year, which meant he would be automatically suspended, according to ICC rules. But Ganguly appealed, saying that time was lost due to the dew factor.

If his appeal is turned down by Castle on November 25, he will be forced to miss the next Test at Kolkata, as well as the first Test against Bangladesh next month.

## Dhaka Sports Carnival kicks off today

SPORTS REPORTER

The first ever Dhaka Sports Carnival involving ten elite social clubs of the country and three from India will commence in the city today.

Dhaka Club, Gulshan Club, Kurmitola Golf Club and Uttara Club are jointly hosting the three-day festival featuring seven different sports competitions.

"The Dhaka sports carnival will help to build friendship between the clubs of Bangladesh and also with clubs from our neighbouring country India," told Dhaka Club president Geetara Safiya Choudhury to reporters on the eve of the first of its kind festival.

Choudhury also hoped that it would become an annual event with even bigger participation in the future.

Dhaka Club will play host to three indoor events: squash, bridge and snooker and also fan-favourite cricket at the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium on Friday.

Gulshan Club will be the home of the tennis competition on the opening day while golf will be played at the picturesque settings of Kurmitola Golf Club on Saturday, the concluding day of the meet.

Swimming competition will be held at the Uttara Club on Saturday.

A total of 158 players including 14 from India will compete in the meet. The 13 clubs taking part in the carnival are: The Saturday Club Ltd., Calcutta Club Ltd., Shillong Club, Bhatnagar Golf Club, Cadet College Club of Dhaka, Chittagong Club, Khulna Club, Narayanganj Club, Officers' Club Dhaka, Dhaka Club Ltd., Gulshan Club Ltd., Kurmitola Golf Club and Uttara Club Ltd.

## Tame draw at Kanpur

Cricket

AFP, Kanpur

Indian spinners Murali Kartik and Harbhajan Singh were among the wickets but the first Test against South Africa ended in a dull draw here on Wednesday.

The pitch continued to be friendly to batsmen as the visiting side reached 169-4 at close after taking a 44-run first innings lead at the Green Park Stadium.

Jacques Kallis (28) and Boeta Dippenaar (31) batted through the last session of the day after Kartik and Harbhajan bagged two wickets each to instil some action in the proceedings.

Left-armers Kartik dismissed captain Graeme Smith (47) and Martin van Jaarsveld (13) in successive overs.

Smith struck seven fours before he was caught by Gautam Gambhir at forward short-leg. Van Jaarsveld was trapped plumb in front of the wicket by Kartik, who also had some other close shouts for LBW.

Off-spinner Harbhajan removed Andrew Hall (26) and Jacques Rudolph (two), both caught behind by wicketkeeper Dinesh Karthik.

"Our spinners did a fine job but I thought there was nothing in the pitch for them," said Ganguly. "I also think South Africa played well even though they batted very slowly."

"But we didn't do too badly either after they got a score in excess of 500 in the first innings," said the Indian skipper.

"We want to forget this match and go to Kolkata hoping to win the next Test. We had our positives from the game, which included an entertaining century from Sehwag," said Ganguly.

Earlier, paceman Makhaya Ntini grabbed three quick wickets as India were all out for 466 in reply to South Africa's first innings score of 510-9 declared.

Ntini seamed the ball appreciably to take 3-24 in a nine-over spell, which included the important scalps of Rahul Dravid (54) and Venkatesh Laxman (nine).

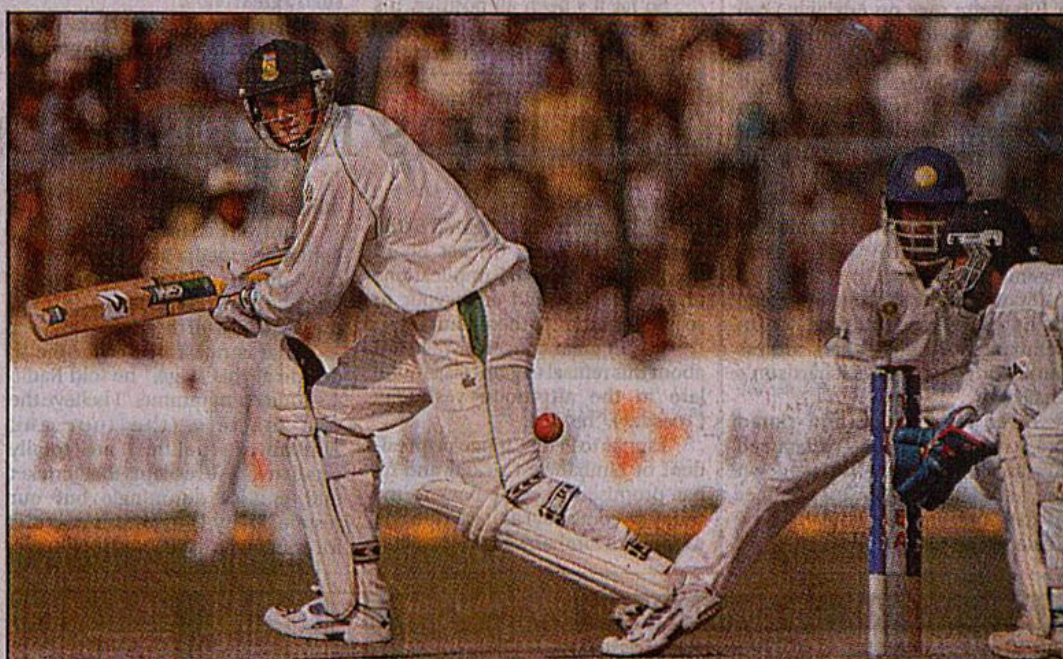
India lost four wickets for 13 runs starting with Dravid, who was caught behind by wicketkeeper Thami Tsolekile.

Laxman was bowled by an inswinging delivery before Anil Kumble (nine) was also caught behind.

Tail-enders Zaheer Khan (30) and Harbhajan Singh (17) staged a rearguard action to take the total closer towards South Africa's score.

Zaheer struck three fours in his 34-ball cameo before becoming seamer Andrew Hall's third victim.

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South African captain Graeme Smith (L) square cuts on the fifth and final day of the drawn first Test against India at the Green Park Stadium in Kanpur yesterday.

## Zim bans English scribes A concern for ICC

Cricket

AFP, London

Zimbabwe's decision to ban some journalists from entering the country for an England tour has brought about great concern from the president of cricket's world governing body ICC.

Ehsan Mani said the situation was a worrying one though, in the light of intervention by Robert Mugabe's government, he denied it was up to him to call off the tour at this stage.

The England squad and the travelling media are due to touch down on Wednesday night in Harare for the start of a 10-day, one-day tour

which has been widely condemned because of the land reform policies of president Robert Mugabe.

But on Tuesday -- just 24 hours before the arrival of a strong media contingent -- the Zimbabwe government released a list of journalists who would be banned from making the trip which included reporters from BBC radio and television, Daily and Sunday Telegraph, Times and Sunday Times, The Sun, Daily Mirror and News of the World.

Despite the ban the tour is set to go ahead.

"I expect the tour to proceed despite the unfortunate situation regarding media accreditation," confirmed England and Wales Cricket Board chairman David Morgan to the BBC.

"It's unfortunate and embarrass-

ing and something that we will be pursuing on arrival there with the chairman of Zimbabwe Cricket."

The decision to deny 13 of 36 visa requests from British media outlets wanting to cover the tour was made on political grounds, George Charamba, secretary for the Zimbabwe government's Ministry of Information, said.

"Bonafide media organisations in the UK have been cleared but those that are political have not," he told AFP on Tuesday.

"This is a game of cricket not politics. Those that want to bowl us out of politics we will have to engage them at the political stadium ... and its fixture will be in March next year."

That has prompted calls for the tour to be called off but Mani said

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