

Mark Benson coming again

SPORTS REPORTER

English umpire Mark Benson will again be in Dhaka to conduct the India-Bangladesh Test and one-day series next month.

Benson, who made his international debut during Tigers' home series against New Zealand in October, will have experienced and highly rated Pakistani umpire Aleem Dar as his companion for the two Tests.

Dar will be replaced by Jeremy Lloyd of England for the three-match one-day series.

Former England opening batsman Chris Broad will act as ICC match referee.

Leonine take the lead

SPORTS REPORTER

Leonine Chess Club continued their impressive run in the Dutch-Bangla First Division Chess League when they won their second round boards against Titas Club at the federation hall yesterday.

With their second consecutive 4-0 victory, the all Grand Master-studded Leonine dominated the table with maximum eight points.

Title contender Mukti Jodha Sangad and defending champions Bangladesh Biman, which dropped

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Third defeat for kabaddi team

UNB, Dhaka

The Bangladesh kabaddi team lost their third game against India in a row when the home side inflicted a 46-33 points defeat on the visitors in the six-match Test series at the Nehru Stadium in New Delhi yesterday.

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Did U Know?

Sourav Ganguly and Anil Kumble wear contact lenses while playing.



ESPN

English Premier Football League

Fulham vs Blackburn Rovers

Live at 6:40 pm

Chelsea vs Charlton Athletic

Live at 8:55 pm

Man City vs Aston Villa

Live at 11:10 pm

Primera Liga

Espanyol vs Atletico Madrid

Live at 3:00 am (Sunday)

STAR Sports

Australia vs New Zealand

Second Test, Day Two

Live at 6:25 am

English Premier Football League

Bolton Wanderers vs Portsmouth

Live at 8:55 pm



Azad Sporting Club custodian Mehrab makes one of his series of spectacular saves during the Premier Hockey League opener against Abahani Krira Chakra at the Maulana Bhashani National Stadium yesterday.

Shamim returns with a bang

Hockey

SPORTS REPORTER

Shamim Reza celebrated his 'pre-miership' return after two seasons with a brace in Abahani Krira Chakra's 3-1 win over Azad Sporting Club in the Green Delta Premier Hockey League opener yesterday.

The former national striker, who was banned after staying back in the United Kingdom while touring with the national hockey team a couple of years ago, put the defending champions ahead inside the first minute at the Maulana Bhashani National Hockey Stadium and scored another in the early second half. Newcomers Azad pulled one back through Mahbub but Musa Mir sealed Abahani's three points with a last-minute strike.

Shamim, who played in the Club

Cup hockey tournament earlier this month, saw his ban lifted by the Bangladesh Hockey Federation prior to the league and made no mistake to score with a reverse hit after playmaker Musa drilled the ball through the rival defence inside the penalty area.

Abahani won four penalty corners in the next nine minutes but Azad's young goalkeeper Mehrab Hossain, who was in tremendous form throughout the 70 minutes, made two brilliant saves to keep the Sky Blues at bay.

With the youthful exuberance of BKSP players, Azad not only survived the pressure but also fought neck and neck with their mighty rivals. They came close to equalise half way through the first half when Namnu got into the rival area down the left flank. But his final pass evaded Mominul who was unmarked in a scoring position.

Abahani had a golden chance to make it 2-0 just before the break but Musa's fierce reverse hit was kept out by Mehrab. The Azad keeper, however, could not stop a cool finish by Shamim who scored his second goal four minutes into the second half after receiving a pass from fellow forward Jimmy.

While the champs failed to beat their rival defence from as many as seven penalty corners, the Azad boys showed some innovation during their only penalty corner when Mahbub reduced the margin four minutes from time with a fine angular hit.

But experience prevailed as Musa finally utilised the last penalty corner when he dribbled two defenders before pushing the ball past Mehrab.

Abahani officials have decided to reward their best player of every

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series but there was a hole in the contract by virtue of which the satellite company, who have a five-year contract with the Board, are making their claim," said Mamun without elaborating.

If the debate lingers on, further complications could arise with the series facing a television blackout which could in the process, even put India's tour in jeopardy.

Mamun however said that the Board was even prepared to fight it in court if it is not resolved amicably although that might not be required.

"We are hopeful of reaching a settlement shortly as both parties are aware of what is at stake. But we will not mind going to the Court of Arbitration in London to uphold our legitimate demands," said Mamun.

"Our legal expert assured us that there is a clause in the contract that empowers us to seek fifty per cent of

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WE STILL MAKE THE HEADLINES! Two former national cricket stalwarts and Chittagong mates Minhazul Abedin and Akram Khan (R) met by chance yesterday when they came to the Bangabandhu National Stadium as match adjudicators in the Pepsi Media Cup.

England land in Zim

First ODI now Sunday

Cricket

REUTERS, Harare

England's cricket team touched down in Harare on Friday, two days later than planned due to a row over accreditation for the majority of British media covering the Zimbabwe tour.

The first of five one-day matches, originally set for Friday, had been rescheduled for Sunday, England team spokesman Andrew Walpole said.

"The rest of the schedule should follow shortly," Walpole told journalists shortly before the team flew from Johannesburg to Harare.

The whole tour was thrown into question earlier this week when the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) told the team to remain in South Africa after Zimbabwe authorities barred 13 British journalists.

But the tour got the go-ahead on Thursday when the host authorities rescinded the ban.

"We are delighted the decision has been fully reversed," said ECB director of operations John Carr, who briefed the players on Thursday.

The tour has to take place to fulfil England's commitment to the International Cricket Council's Future Tours Programme. The goalposts were moved when accreditation was denied but we are back to where we were now," he added.

Major Anyway Mutambudzi, a senior official at the Zimbabwe department of information and publicity, said the 13 barred reporters had been part of a backlog of applications which had now been cleared.

Earlier, a spokesman for President Robert Mugabe said the reporters had been banned because they worked for organisations hostile to the Zimbabwe leader.

"Bona fide media organisations in the UK have been cleared, but those that are political have not. This is a game of cricket, not politics," George Charabas said.

Top strike bowler Steve Harmison boycotted the tour before the squad was announced and several players, including captain Michael Vaughan, aired reservations before the latest crisis.

Relations between Zimbabwe and its former colonial ruler Britain have hit rock bottom since Mugabe launched a campaign of chaotic and often violent seizures of land from white farmers, many of whom held dual British citizenship.

Britain, accusing Mugabe of rigging his 2002 re-election, has spearheaded international sanctions and Mugabe in return says London has masterminded a campaign of economic sabotage and negative media coverage.

The dream ended before it actually began for The Daily Star's ensemble six-member team. Making its maiden appearance in third edition of the Pepsi Media Cup Cricket Tournament, the Star men crashed out in the first round with a three-wicket loss to Bhoror Kagoj at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

In reply to Daily Star's 65-2 in the allotted six overs, Bhoror Kagoj reached 69-2 with five balls to spare.

Rabed Imam flexed his muscles as the devastating opener got the leading English newspaper off to a decent start on a matting wicket. He clubbed four fours and two massive sixes before his mandatory retirement on 35. But thereafter the wheels fell off as none of his teammates got going.

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Mohammedan to tour Nepal

SPORTS REPORTER

Mohammedan Sporting Club will tour Nepal next month to participate in an invitational football tournament which starts from December 13 at the Dasharath Stadium in Kathmandu.

The Bangladesh Football Federation initially decided to send the national team under the banner of BFF XI but top officials opposed the idea of exposing an under-prepared team.

More than one club expressed their interest to take part in the event but National Football League and Premier League champions Brothers Union and Mohammedan stood as the final candidates.

Mohammedan, the only local heavyweights not to tour abroad this season, got the final go-ahead from the BFF on Thursday night.

Nepal and Bhutan's national teams and two Indian teams will compete in the tournament which is scheduled to end on December 19.

Also, 16 Nepalese teams are playing in the qualifying rounds for the remaining berths in the finals, according to a BFF source.

ICC withdraws ban on Ganguly

Cricket

AFP, London

The International Cricket Council (ICC) has lifted a two-match ban on Sourav Ganguly, allowing the Indian captain to play in the second Test against South Africa.

ICC match referee and former West Indies captain Clive Lloyd suspended Ganguly for India's slow over rate in their one-day international defeat to Pakistan on November 13.

The 32-year-old was allowed to play in the drawn first Test against South Africa because his appeal could not be heard before.

India face South Africa in Kolkata in the second Test, which starts on Sunday.

ICC Appeals Commissioner Tim

Castle said he had considered oral evidence from Ganguly and Lloyd as well as match paperwork and a video of the match.

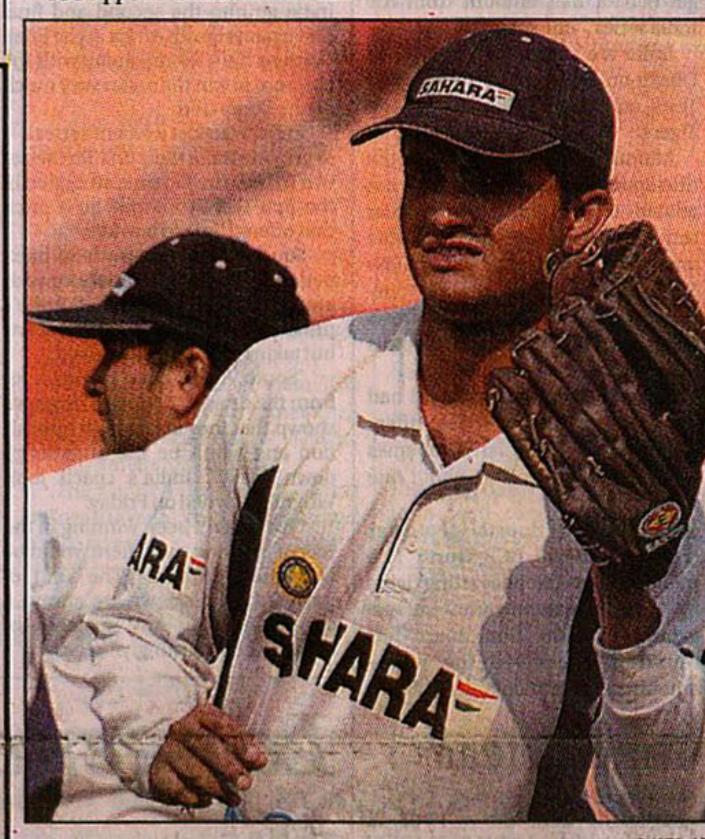
"I am of the opinion that the circumstances were particularly unusual in this game and a large number of them conspired to cause the delays which occurred," he said.

ICC Chief Executive Malcolm Speed said Castle's decision highlighted the independence of the ICC's appeals process.

"His judgement highlights the exceptional circumstances that prevailed during this particular match while also emphasising the general importance of maintaining the required over-rates during international matches," Speed added.

Ganguly, with top lawyer

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CATCH ME IF YOU CAN! Indian captain Sourav Ganguly catching with a baseball glove during a practice session at the Eden Gardens in Kolkata yesterday.

Windies rebels await meeting

CRICINFO

The prime ministers of Grenada and Barbados will mediate in a meeting between the representatives of the West Indies Cricket Board (WICB) and the players association, to help to find a resolution with the ongoing contracts dispute. The meeting is scheduled to start at 1130 local time in Grenada (10.30 pm Bangladesh time).

Dinanath Ramnarine, the president of the West Indies Players' Association (WIPA), welcomed the intervention of Dr Keith Mitchell, Grenada's prime minister, and Owen Arthur, Barbados' prime minister. "We consider that the dispute is capable of being resolved once a process of dialogue is resumed and we hope that your initiative is able to facilitate this," Ramnarine indicated in a press release.

"A failure to arrive at a satisfactory resolution of this issue can do irreparable harm to West Indies cricket".

Mitchell himself concurred: "Given the vital importance of cricket to the social and economic

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Pepsi Media Cricket Daily Star crash out

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Aussies in command Hayden refuses to walk

Cricket

AFP, Adelaide

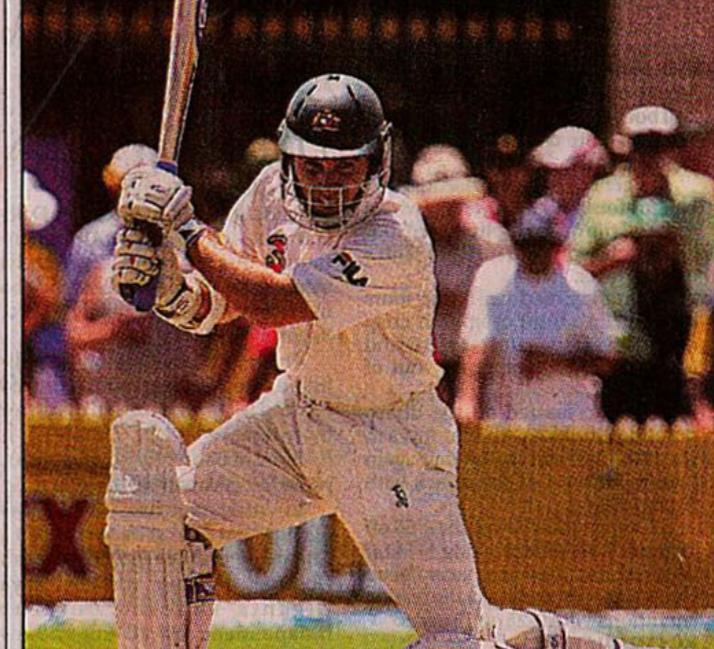
Justin Langer led an Australian roasting of New Zealand's bowling with his 20th Test century, as opening partner Matthew Hayden reigned the 'walk' debate in the second cricket Test at the Adelaide Oval on Friday.

The 34-year-old left-handed opener scorched out of the starting blocks, plundering 23 runs off the first two overs before steady for his third century on the picturesque ground as Australia powered to 327 for three at first-day stumps at 3.6 runs an over.

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Australian opener Justin Langer square drives during his century in the second Test against New Zealand at Adelaide yesterday.

English umpire David Shepherd and stood his ground as the Kiwi fieldsmen celebrated and he only left the wicket minutes later when adjudicated by the video umpire.

There has been acrimony in the series over the issue of walking or batsmen admitting they are out before waiting for the ump