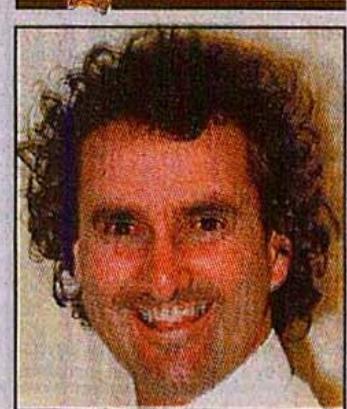




Did U Know?

For the first time the FIFA World Cup was staged outside Europe or South America when South Korea and Japan co-hosted it in 2002.



Billy Bowden

(New Zealand Test umpire)

"I believe in honesty whether it's on the field or off the field. I just think for the good of the game, for the spirit of the game, it's unfair to have someone knowing that they have not caught the ball and (the batsman) has been given out, or (the fielder) has caught the ball and (the batsman) has not been given out. I'd like to see some loyalty and integrity put back in the game."

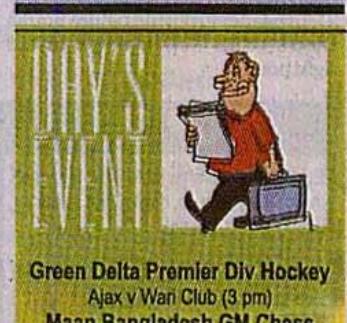


ESPN

Sports Centre
Live at 6.30 pm
Sports Cricket Show
Taped at 9 pm

STAR Sports

English Premier League
Fulham v Man United
Repeat at 12.30 pm
Sportsline
Live at 8 pm



Zia goes to top alone

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladeshi Grand Master Ziaur Rahman took solo lead in the Maan Bangladesh Grand Masters Chess Tournament defeating previous round's co-leader GM Uildachev Saidali of Uzbekistan in the seventh round at the National Sports Council conference room yesterday.

Zia pushed his collection to 5.5 points while Uzbek International Master Vakhidov Tahir followed him in the second place with five points.

Six players -- local GM Niaz Moshied, Vietnamese GMs Dao Thien Hai and Nguyen Anh Dung, Saidali and local players IM Reefat Bin Sattar, FM Taibur Rahman Sumon and Syed Mahfuzur Rahman Emon -- were in the third position with 4.5 points each.

In the seventh round, Emon drew with high-esteemed player in the event GM Dao Thien, Sumon beat Pakistani IM Mahmood Lodhi, Reefat drew with Tahir, Niaz drew

SEE PAGE 14 COL 1

Ctg gets set for second Test

Cricket

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Chittagong is all set for the second and final Test between Bangladesh and India that begins at the MA Aziz Stadium on December 17. The country's second Test venue will also stage the first of the three-match one-day internationals a week later.

Both teams are expected to fly into the busy port city this morning. After arriving, the home side, who lost the first Test in Dhaka by an innings and 140 runs on Monday, will begin training at the ground.

Meanwhile, preparations for the second Test are going on at the venue that has remained out of bounds to the general public since December 7.

A four-member Indian security team visited the MA Aziz Stadium on December 8 and gave the all-clear. A huge team of ESPN camera crews and other technicians already reached the port city on Monday while the equipment of ESPN, who would air the matches live, also arrived at the stadium yesterday.

Unprecedented security mea-

sures have been taken up in and around the stadium to ensure the security and law and order for smooth holding of the matches.

Though the security was relaxed for sometime immediately after the Indian security officials departed, it has been tightened again since December 12.

As many as eight close-circuit cameras are being set up in and around the pavilion and dressing-rooms while some 1,000 forces from police, mainly in riot gears, and other law-enforcing agencies were likely to be posted guards to ensure the safety and security of both the touring and home sides at both the teams' Hotel Agrabad and Stadium.

Besides, having both the main entrances (north and south) in front of the stadium remaining restricted for the public, Chittagong Jila Krira Sangsata (CJKS) also decided to sell match tickets from counters other than those adjoining to the pavilion and outside the stadium premises.

Pitch curator Badiul Alam Khokon also arrived Chittagong and went round the pitch.

However, the curator was tight-lipped about the type of the pitch

SEE PAGE 14 COL 1



WILL IT BE SAME AS BANGABANDHU? A groundsman checks a portion of the MA Aziz Stadium in Chittagong while others roll it yesterday afternoon. The second and final Test between Bangladesh and India begins here on Friday.

Indians shop, Tigers rest

SPORTS REPORTER

India and Bangladesh both will fly to Chittagong this morning for the second and final Test of the two-match series.

The Chittagong Test begins on December 17 but the Indian team lost a valuable day's practice due to lack of co-ordination between authorities.

India, having won the first Test in Dhaka by an innings and 140 runs inside four days, opted to train yesterday. But they had to cancel the idea as the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) lost possession of the Bangabandhu National Stadium even before the fifth and the final day of the Test match.

The Old DOHS ground was arranged for Sourav Ganguly's men but they refused to train at any other venue but the BNS.

It was learned that officials of the National Sports Council (NSC), which is the owner of the Test venue, handed over the ground for the Victory Day programme even without consulting the BCB grounds committee.

Members of the Indian team finally decided to roam the city for shopping, sources said.

Number one on their list were Tangail saris and the players went to shops on Bally Road first. They also

SEE PAGE 14 COL 1

Pakistan up against Australia mountain

Cricket

REUTERS, Sydney

Australia and Pakistan have been involved in some classic cricketing confrontations but the spin doctors have their work cut out this time in trying to generate any real hype in the build-up to their Test series.

Nine years have passed since Pakistan's last Test win over Australia and there is a depressingly familiar feel about their hopes of ending their barren run.

While the Australians have been ruthlessly crushing everyone in

their path, the Pakistanis are badly out of form going into the first Test starting on Thursday in Perth.

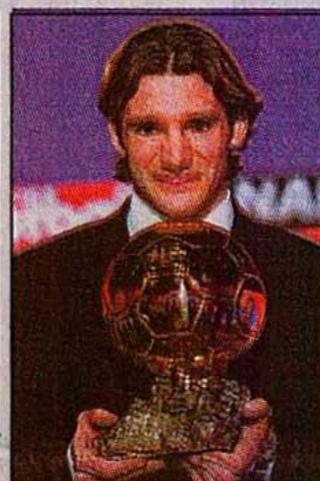
Although they are firm favourites, however, the Australians are taking nothing for granted.

"All of us have seen Pakistan be hot and cold, whether it's a tour match or an international game, so we'll be wary of them still," Australia captain Adam Gilchrist told reporters.

Despite Australia's insistence the series will be close, their domination of world cricket shows no sign of ending.

Top of the world rankings in Test and one-day cricket, they have not lost a home series in over a decade.

SEE PAGE 14 COL 4



AC Milan's Ukrainian superstar Andriy Shevchenko poses with the Golden Ball trophy in Paris on December 13 after being awarded as European Footballer of the Year by the French sport magazine France football for the first time while bringing the brave unbeaten run of Agrani Bank to an end in one of the most significant matches yesterday.

Opener Saqib Chowdhury's swashbuckling century took Abahani to the top of the Green Delta Premier Cricket League table for the first time while bringing the brave unbeaten run of Agrani Bank to an end in one of the most significant matches yesterday.

While Abahani's 74-run win was being recorded, City Club were inflicting a morale crushing defeat on Mohammedan Sporting Club.

Agani, who had won their first four matches, lost solo lead but the promotees, however, managed to stay joint top with Abahani and Old DOHS, all level on eight points after five rounds.

City Club's hero was out of favour medium pacer Tareq Aziz Khan who grabbed six wickets as the Mirpur team beat Mohammedan by 45 runs.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh Biman returned to winning ways with a

consecutive win.

The young opener shared two significant partnerships to steer

Abahani to an impressive total of 262-7 in 50 overs after captain Naimur Rahman had elected to bat at the BKS ground in Savar.

Man-of-the-match Saqib, who hit 14 boundaries during the fourth century of the ongoing league, shared 50 runs with fellow opener Imran Ahmed (22 off 38 balls) and a further 105 for the second wicket with Pakistani international Taufeeq Umar (40 off 50 balls). Saqib's hundred was the second by a Bangladeshi in this year's league.

Abahani were reduced to 216-8 from a comfortable 193-2 as left-arm spinner Russell Khan returned emphatic figures of 5-51. But handsome contributions from in-form Naimur (30 off 39 balls), Neeyamur Rashid (23 off 17 balls) and Ali Arman Rajan (22 off 23 balls) saw them rattle up 105 for the last five overs.

Having lost opener Golam Mabud without scoring, Agrani came back strongly with 77-run second wicket partnership between Rakibul Hassan (41 off 52 balls) and Islam Khan (37 off 47 balls).

SEE PAGE 14 COL 2

Shevchenko rules Europe

AFP, Paris

AC Milan's Ukrainian striker Andriy Shevchenko was on Monday named European footballer of the year for 2004.

The 28-year-old becomes the third Ukrainian to win the award after Oleg Blokchin in 1975 and Igor Belanov in 1986, who both appeared for the then-Soviet Union.

Shevchenko, with 175 votes, beat off competition from two Barcelona players, Portugal's Brazilian-born midfielder Deco and Ronaldinho of Brazil, with 139 and 133 votes respectively.

"I'm very pleased to have

SEE PAGE 14 COL 2

Saqib ends Agrani run

City clip Mohammedan's wings

SPORTS REPORTER



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table for the first time while bringing the brave unbeaten run of Agrani Bank to an end in one of the most significant matches yesterday.

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SCORES IN BRIEF

Venue: BKSP	Venue: Fatullah Cricket Stadium	Venue: Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium
ABAHANI: 262-7 in 50 overs (Saqib 102, Umar 40, Naimur 30, Neeyamur 23 n.o.; Russell 5-51).	210-9 in 50 overs (Nafees 56, Mahmud 53, extras 43; Munir 5-56, Manjurul 2-33).	BIMAN: 182 all out in 49.1 overs (Humayun 29, Hasanuzzaman 24, Ayaz 25, Sajid 25; Arif 2-21, Rezwana 2-17).
AGRANI: 188 all out 46 overs (Rakibul 41, Islam 37, Iqbal 54; Naimur 3-42, Umar 2-48, Ahsanullah 2-30, Rajan 2-25).	165 all out in 43.4 overs (Tikolo 25, Wasel 49, Sunny 36; Tareq 6-26).	PEGASUS: 166 all out in 47.4 overs (Asadul 56, Junaid 23, Farhad 25; Sharif 3-22, Rubel 2-28, Humayun 2-26).
Result: Abahani won by 74 runs.	Result: City Club won by 45 runs.	Result: Biman won by 16 runs.



PHOTO: STAR

A Mariner Youngs attack at the Azad goalpost during their Green Delta Premier Division Hockey League encounter at the Maulana Bhasani National Stadium yesterday.

Barred by male desire!

Cricket

AFP, Myso

Indian men's desire for brides with fair skin undercuts efforts to promote women's cricket in India, a nation otherwise besotted with the sport, the captain of the national women's team says.

Women's cricket in India took off in the mid-1970s and India hosted the 1997-98 women's World Cup cricket. Today they rank third in the world.

But only a handful of spectators turned up for a women's one-day match against Australia, the leading fair sex side, in this southern Indian tourist city at the weekend. And

India lost.

In contrast, when Australia's all-conquering male heroes toured India in October, grounds where packed. South Africa followed and 50,000 turned out at Calcutta's Eden Gardens last month.

The Man of the Match generally receives a cash award of 50,000 rupees (1,086 dollars), while the best woman player during Saturday's match took home just 5,000 rupees.

"If you take men's cricket out, no other game exists in the country," concedes former Indian captain Shanta Rangaswamy.

Maben says Indian culture

SEE PAGE 14 COL 2

Mariner's third win

SPORTS REPORTER

Mariner Youngs Club recorded a hard-fought 1-0 win over Azad Sporting Club in the Green Delta Premier Division Hockey League at the Maulana Bhasani National Stadium yesterday.

Defender Issa Mia separated the two sides from a penalty corner three minutes before half-time.

It was Mariner's second win in a row. With three wins and three draws, the Arambagh outfit now have 12 points from six matches.

Azad on the other hand, stuck to one point after four losses and one draw in five outings.