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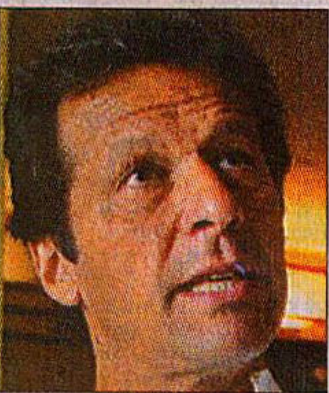
Did U Know?

Sunil Gavaskar and Mohammed Azharuddin have led India in the maximum number of Test matches (47).



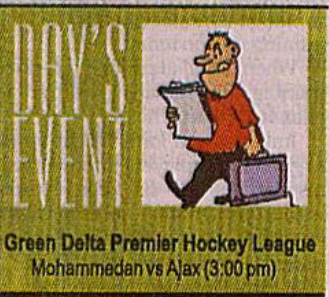
What to WATCH

ESPN
Sportscentre
Live at 8:30 pm
Primera Liga
Real Madrid vs Sevilla
Live at 2:00 am (Thursday)
STAR Sports
Sportsline
Live at 9:30 pm



Imran Khan
(Pakistan cricket legend)

"The hallmark of a champion team is that they hung in during bad times and when they got an opportunity showed the killer instinct. Pakistan should have been a pack of wolves once they caught Australia, but they weren't."



Selection trial for U-13 booters from Jan 2

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Football Federation will hold a selection trial to prepare two Under-13 football teams which will take part in the AFC U-13 Football Festival in Dhaka next April.

Pakistan, Nepal, Bhutan, Sri Lanka and two teams from Bangladesh will participate in the weeklong football fiesta. The BFF has requested the district sports associations to send players who were born after January 1, 1992, for the trials to be held at the Shaheed Mostafa Kamal Stadium in Kamalapur from January 2-4, 2005.

Meanwhile, the BFF named a 37-member preliminary squad for the women's football team which will take part in the AFC Under-17 women's football tournament in South Korea in April, 2005.

The players have been asked to report to women's football committee general secretary Quamrunnahr Dana or coaching coordinator Abdus Sadeq on December 25 at the Dhanmondi Women's Sports Complex.

Former national goalkeeper Mosharraf Hossain Badal will be in charge of the long-term camp which starts from January 1, 2005 with 30 booters.

Tigers begin ODI training



SHAHIDUL ISLAM, Chittagong

With the Test series over, Bangladesh began their preparation for the first one-day international against India at the MA Aziz Stadium tomorrow.

And once again coach Dav Whatmore was keen to work on the batting department after the 2-0 whitewash in the Test series, where apart from a benchmark 158 not out by Ashraf and some inspiring bowling from Mashrafe-Bin-Mortuza it was the same old story from the rest of the team.

The 50-year-old Australian, as he has always been doing, tried to stay position after two innings defeats inside four days.

"A one-day match is surely a different ball game and you can't compare it to a Test. In Tests you've got to get enough time to put things right but in ODIs every decision must be one-touch and requires instant precision," Whatmore told reporters after an intensive training session at the venue.

The Tigers spent three-and-a-half hours at the MA Aziz Stadium mostly devoting their time to batting.

Bangladesh skipper Habibul Bashar put in an extra effort in the nets with Mohammad Ashraf and left-arm spinner Manzarul Islam volunteering with the ball even after training ended.

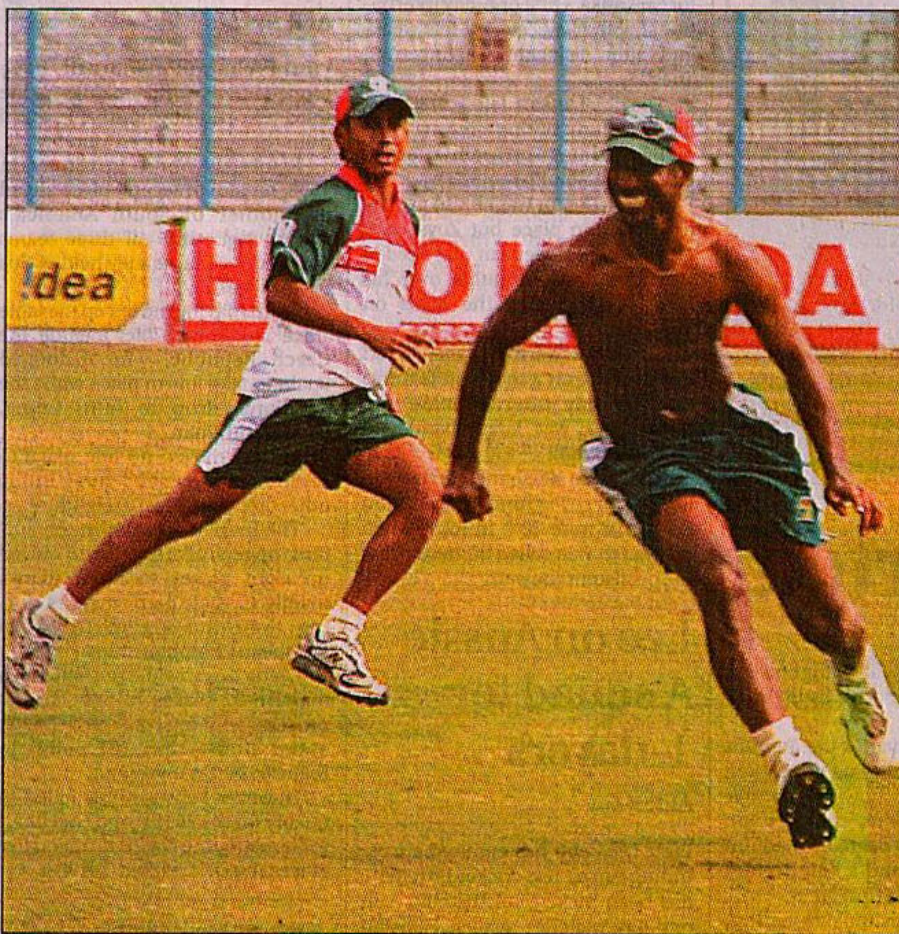
All-rounder Khaled Mahmud also had a busy day after being recalled to the 14-member one-day squad.

Wily left-arm spinner Mohammad Rafique however focused on his batting than turning his arm.

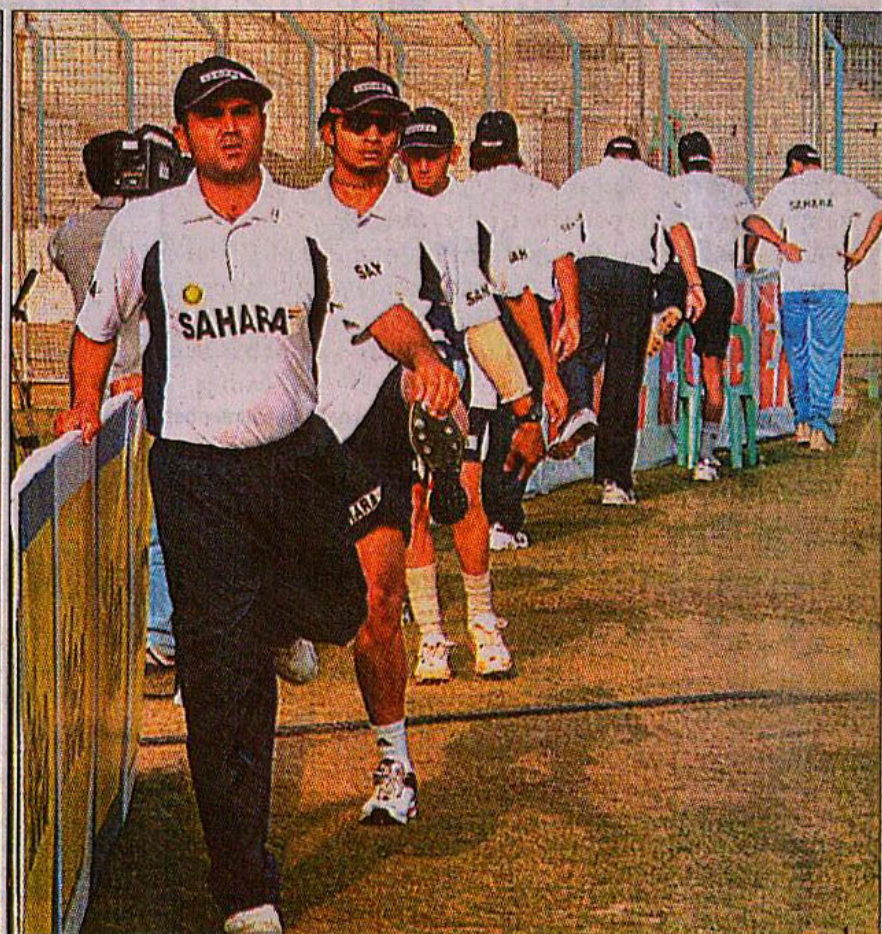
Ashraf was the centre of attraction for fans after his heroic knock in the first innings of the second Test that took him past Aminul Islam (145) as the country's highest individual Test scorer. Also considered the cheerleader of the team, the 20-year-old enjoyed some fun and games.

While recalling Ashraf's magnificent innings Whatmore said it could serve as a source of inspiration for the rest of the team ahead of the first of the three-match one-day series.

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FUN AND GAMES: (L) Bangladesh batsman Mohammad Ashraf (L) and pacer Tapash Baisya run during their practice session while (R) India players (L-R) Virender Sehwag, Murali Kartik and Ajit Agarkar warm up with other teammates prior to their training session at the MA Aziz Stadium in Chittagong yesterday.



PHOTOS: ZOBAER HOSSAIN SKIDER

Low performing HP



SPORTS REPORTER

The Sri Lanka Cricket Academy transformed their form into the shorter version of the game as well when the visitors recorded a comprehensive four-wicket win against BCB HP (High Performance) Squad in yesterday's limited-overs match at the Bangabandhu National Stadium.

The day-night matches will be held on December 26 and 27 at the Bangabandhu National Stadium.

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Chasing HP Squad's modest 213, the tourists raced to the target with 22 deliveries to spare after overcoming a brief middle-order collapse.

Amila Sandarwan, who shared 52 runs with fellow opener Ishan Muttalip (27), smashed 62 off 82 balls but his departure saw the Academy boys struggling at 116-5 by the 31st over.

Having hit eight boundaries, the right-handed opener was trapped leg before by part-time medium-pacer Wasel Uddin whose three-wicket haul gave Al Shabir's side some hope.

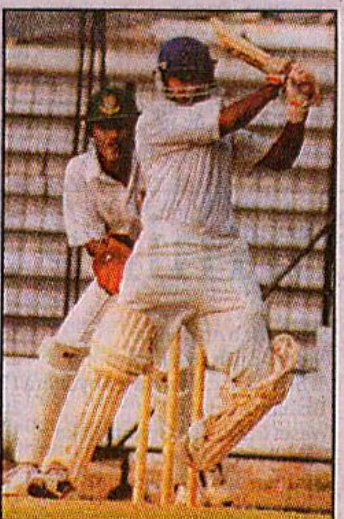
But wicketkeeper Gihan de Silva's quickfire 43 not out during two significant partnerships with Chanaka Wijaysingha (16 off 21 balls) and Damith Indika (37 not out off 32 balls) cantered them home.

Tipped to become Sri Lanka's next Test wicketkeeper, Gihan hit one four and a six in his 49-ball essay. He shared 35 runs with Wijaysingha for the sixth wicket and a further 63 runs for an unbroken seventh wicket with Indika, who clobbered half a dozen boundaries in an entertaining knock.

Earlier, the HP Squad failed to build a challenging total after being put into bat due to lack of a big partnership. Opener Shamsur Rahman scored a sedate 36 off 89 balls while number nine Sakib Al Hassan's combative 27-ball 35 with three fours helped them go past the 200-run mark before being booked in exactly 50 overs.

Left-arm pacer Chanaka Wellegedera was the pick of the

SEE PAGE 14 COL 5



AMILA SANDARWAN ... 62

The Lankan Academy, who opened their Bangladesh tour thrashing the local boys by eight wickets in a four-day match, will play their second and final limited-overs match against the same opponents today at the same venue.

Div I cricket 7-star Nasir

SPORTS REPORTER

Nasiruddin bowled Sonargaon Cricketers to a massive 103-run victory over Nabin Sangha with a fantastic seven-wicket haul in the First Division Cricket League at the Jagannath Hall ground yesterday.

The new-ball bowler grabbed 7 for 40 from ten overs as Nabin Sangha were skittled out for 74 in reply to Sonargaon's 177-9.

Despite half-centuries by Rezwan (50) and Kamrul (68), Dhanmondi Club (225) suffered a six-run defeat to Bangladesh Boys (231-8) at the City Club ground.

In the day's other match, an unbeaten 50 by Mohammed Rana led Eskaton Sabuj Sangha (177-8) to a two-wicket win over Wari Club (176) at BKSP.

Jemi V-Day TT champ

SPORTS REPORTER

Jemi of Gaibandha clinched the singles crown of the Victory Day Women's Open table tennis tournament defeating Seema of Jessore 11-3, 11-7, 13-11 in the final at the Dhanmondi Women's Sports Complex yesterday.

Jemi reached the final eliminating Jasmine in the first semifinal while Seema ousted Sumi in the other semi.

Jemi, paired with Sumi, also led Gaibandha to win the team title blanking Jessore 3-0.

Gaibandha beat Narail 3-1 while Jessore defeated Patuakhali in the semis.

World's best to fight racism

AFP, Zurich

Brazil's newly-crowned FIFA World Footballer of the Year Ronaldinho said he was committed in the fight against racism in the sport.

Ronaldinho, who beat out Thierry Henry of France and Ukrainian 2004 European Footballer of the Year Andriy Shevchenko for the prize, said the scourge of racism had to be stamped out.

"Personally, I have never been the victim of racism but I got to know about several incidents. That's why I decided to take part in a campaign against racism with Thierry Henry," Ronaldinho said at Monday's gala evening at the Zurich opera house.

"We are trying to get through to football supporters that they must not think of this sort of ideology during the 90 minutes of a football match. I am very committed in the fight against racism."

FIFA president Sepp Blatter said once again he was determined to

SEE PAGE 14 COL 5

Nayeem keeps Usha atop



SPORTS REPORTER

Two goals by Pakistani forward Nayeem Ahmed helped Usha Kirra Chakra remain on top of the Green Delta Premier Hockey League table with an impressive 3-1 win against Mariner Youngs Club at the Maulana Bhashani National Stadium yesterday.

Fresh from their 5-1 rout of Mohammedan Sporting Club, Usha stretched their tally to 21 points with seven victories in eight outings. Their only loss came against Abahani last week. Even a draw against mid-table Ajax in their last round match will guarantee the old Dhaka outfit pole position at the end of the first-leg.

Mariner, on the other hand,

remain on their previous collection of 15 points following their first league defeat in eight matches.

In a rather dull first half, Nayeem put Usha ahead from a goalmouth scramble in the 18th minute after his fellow strikers failed to utilise a free hit by Asif-e-Noor from the left side.

The match came alive after the break and Mariner were denied twice by brilliant saves from Usha's Under-21 national custodian Zahid who blocked Issa Mia and Chandan's attempts from two penalty corners.

Nayeem then scored his second goal in the 46th minute to put Usha on top, diving forward to connect a left-side free hit by his compatriot Mohammed Nadim.

Veteran striker Rafiqul Islam Kamal then inspired a fightback by Mariner, setting up a goal for

Pakistani striker Yamin Bhatti in the 58th minute. Kamal dashed down the left before switching the ball to

SEE PAGE 14 COL 4

Open squash

SPORTS REPORTER

Title contenders Bhola Lal, Ram Jagadish and Swapan Parvez won their respective Premier Division matches of the Sharp Blade Open Squash Tournament yesterday.

Bhola blanked Ram Gopal 3-0, Jagadish outplayed Delwar Hossain 3-0 and Parvez beat Asif Anwar by the same margin at the Dhaka Club squash court.

In another match, Masud Rana ended his losing streak defeating Bishu Nath 3-0.

Nine other matches were held in different divisions yesterday.

Strauss leads Eng home



REUTERS/AFP, Port Elizabeth

Andrew Strauss led England to a record eighth successive Test victory on Tuesday as they beat South Africa by seven wickets in the first Test.

Man-of-the-match Strauss added 94 not out to his first-innings century and hit the winning runs by cutting strike bowler Makhaya Ntini for a boundary, putting the touring side 1-0 up in the five-match series.

Fellow left-hander Graham Thorpe was 31 not out at the other end.

England, chasing 142 to win after dismissing South Africa for 229 in their second innings, resumed on 93 for three and rattled up the 49 needed off just under 10 overs as dark clouds gathered around St George's following overnight rain.

Captain Michael Vaughan, whose side lost their only warm-up match against South Africa A, was delighted.

"It just shows the amount of character and mental resolve in our team," he said. "We can improve for the second Test."

South Africa captain Graeme Smith responded: "We let ourselves down when the pressure was on. Our second innings wasn't good enough."

Strauss, whose eight-Test career coincides with England's record winning streak, went on the attack immediately on Tuesday morning. He set the tone by smashing a six and a four off quick bowler Dale Steyn in the third over of the day.

When Smith opted to bring himself on, the English pair milked his occasional off spin, Thorpe

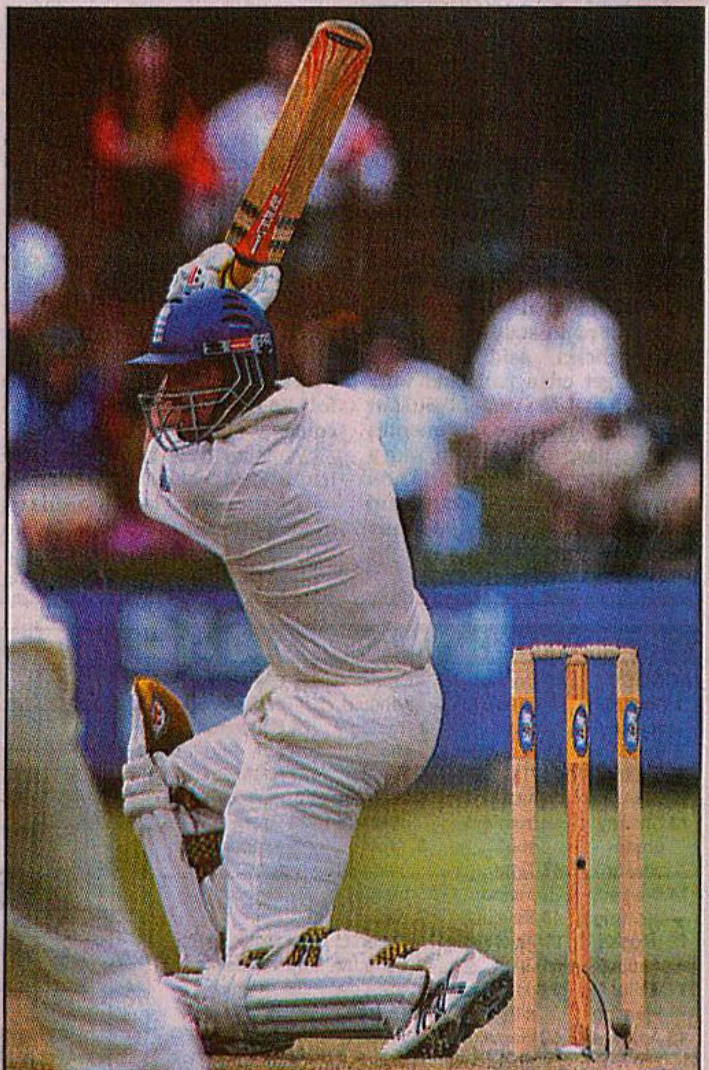


PHOTO: AFP

IN PURPLE PATCH: England opener Andrew Strauss follows through on a copy-book square-drive on the final day of the first Test against South Africa yesterday.



Bangladesh-India Series Quiz 13

Who played most ODI matches for Bangladesh?

A Rajin Saleh

B Alok Kapali

C Mashrafe Murtoza

D Khaled Mashud Pilot

Answer by sending SMS* to the number 2003

e.g. if your answer is A then write Quiz13 A and send it to 2003

For each quiz, five correct answer providers (selected by lottery) will receive attractive prizes!!

*Charge Applicable



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