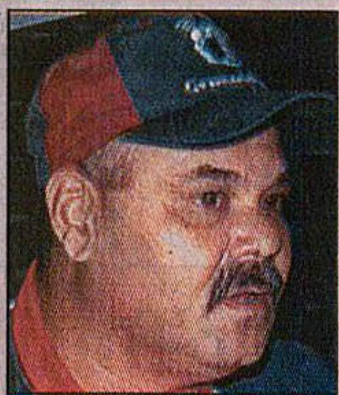




## Did U Know?

Habibul Bashar (94 off 128 balls against Zimbabwe) became the first batsman from Bangladesh to be dismissed in the nineties twice. Against Pakistan at Peshawar in 2003, he got 97.



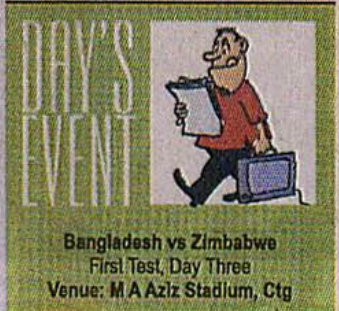
**Dav Whatmore**  
(Bangladesh cricket coach)  
"One thing is certain that whenever this man (Bashar) is at wicket, he will get runs. He has been like this although his career and it is something that is good for batting teams. He may not be as polished as some top-class batsmen but he is effective because if he is not getting out, he is getting runs."  
On Habibul Bashar.



**BTV & ESPN**  
Bangladesh vs Zimbabwe  
First Test, Day Three  
Live at 9:20 am

**ESPN**  
FA Cup (Third Round)  
Ipswich vs Bolton  
Live at 8:55 pm  
Everton vs Plymouth  
Live at 11:25 pm

**STAR Sports**  
FA Cup (Third Round)  
Man City vs Oldham  
Live at 8:55 pm  
Primera Liga  
Valencia vs Levante  
Live at 2:55 am (Sunday)



## BKSP Jr tennis

**SPORTS REPORTER**  
Bangladeshi pair Amol Roy and Ranjan Ram clinched the boy's doubles title in the Third BKSP International Junior Tennis Championship yesterday.  
They came from a set down to beat Sumit Prakash of India and Oshidha of Sri Lanka 3-6, 6-2, 6-1 in the final.  
Earlier, Kittipong of Thailand became boy's singles champion with a 6-2, 6-0 victory over Indian Sumit Prakash while Russian Tchernikova Elena won the girl's crown defeating Waratchaya of Thailand 6-3, 6-0.  
In the girl's doubles final, Hasanova of Azerbaijan and Russian Elena won against Thai pair of Parichart and Kamonthip 6-2, 6-2.

## Rafique's vow, Nkala's growl

SPORTS REPORTER from Chittagong



It is hard to recall when Bangladesh last dominated two successive days of a Test match but now they find themselves on top against Zimbabwe with three days to go.

On a bright day, Mohammed Rafique stood tallest among the heroes with an all-round show. Rafique, whose only previous 50-plus Test knock was 111 against the West Indies, made a brisk 69 and took two wickets in the final session to remind the opposition to prepare for more assault on a third-day track that is bound to turn more.

"I will only rest when we have won this Test match," said Bangladesh's leading wicket-taker.

"I haven't seen too many changes in the wicket. There are some rough spots but I am not the kind of bowler who would try to exploit those patches. My style is bowling on a straight channel. But as the ball gets older, I expect to get some assistance from the wicket," Rafique said.

"We have never been in such a good position. I want to make the best out of this advantage," he added.

With fellow left-arm spinner Enamul Haque (11) fighting the ball from the other end, Rafique hoped together they could bowl Zimbabwe out.

"I always inspire Enamul and I think we will be able to do the job tomorrow," he added.

Rajin Saleh, who made a career best 89, was disappointed at missing out on a hundred but was delighted with a return to form.

"My mother told me yesterday to score forty more runs for her but I failed. Moreover, my plan was to bat till the end of the innings. They put the mid-off fielder near the fence and I tried to drive the ball but I mistimed," said Rajin, who had started the day on 60.

"I am more happy to get back my form. Not only the innings (82 in the 3rd one-day international) against India but the talks with Sourav Ganguly helped me.

"I went to his room and he told me to have self-belief. He said that you are a good batsman and you will score runs. My parents also gave their support. These things really boosted my confidence."

The Zimbabweans meanwhile, refused to throw in the towel.

Christopher Mpofu, who had taken four wickets on debut,

SEE PAGE 14 COL 2



BEGINNING OF A DREAM QUEST: Players rush up to congratulate Bangladesh's ace left-arm spinner Mohammad Rafique (L) after he captured a Zimbabwe wicket on the second day of the first Test at MA Aziz Stadium yesterday.

## Tsunami match official ODI

AFP, Sydney

The International Cricket Council (ICC) said the World Cricket Tsunami Appeal matches will have official one-day international status.

ICC President Ehsan Mani said the decision was confirmed by a vote of the ICC Executive Board because of the exceptional nature of the matches in which players from all ICC full member countries are available to play.

The first of the two appeal games takes place at the Melbourne Cricket Ground on Monday between Asia

SEE PAGE 14 COL 4

## The race nobody won

AL MUSABBIR SADI from Chittagong



Two brand new cars -- a pearl-grey sedan and a pearl-white SUV (sports utility vehicle) -- were waiting inside the MA Aziz Stadium for new owners to pick up the keys and drive them home. And a few Bangladeshi eyes were certainly fixed on the vehicles when the Bangladesh-Zimbabwe first Test began in Chittagong.

The first Tiger to score a hundred in Test would take the sedan while the luxurious SUV was for the bowler to take eight wickets first.

There was a fierce competition -- by no means unhealthy and every-one worked for Team Bangladesh -- but the race was eventually lost yesterday. Four knocks in the 90s, 80s, 60s and 50s and two in the 40s raised hopes but in the end, nobody had any regrets.

Many thought that Mohammed Ashraf was the pre-match favourite in this unique race. But the young man, who smashed a career-best 158 not out against India at the same venue last month, did not come even close. Ashraf missed out in a match that saw Bangladesh amass their highest-ever Test total. The prodigy scored just 19.

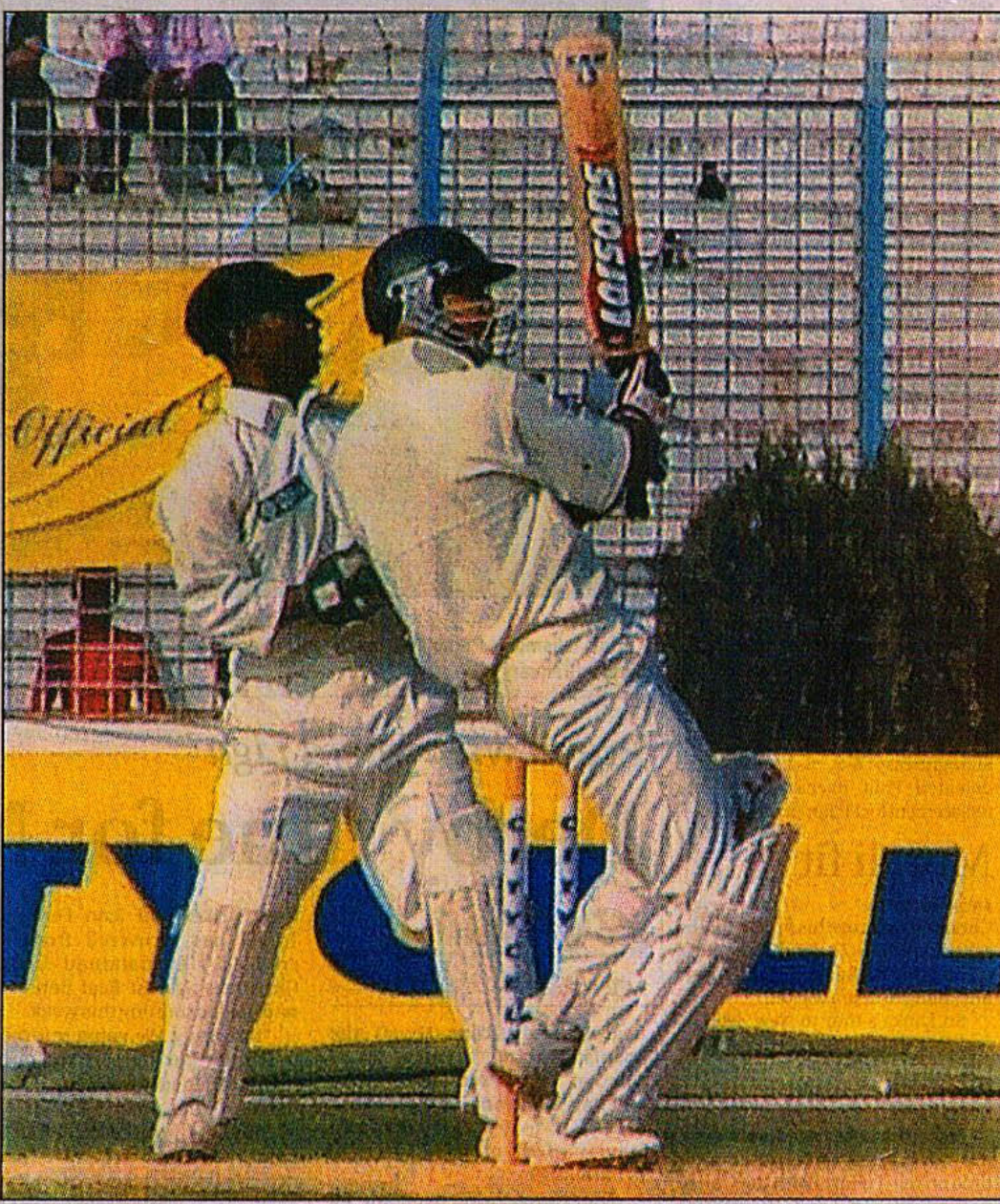
Local boy Nafees Iqbal made the most of an early life to reach his second Test half-century on the first day but he also frustrated the home crowd.

Then the best Bangladeshi batsman, who played like a man possessed, came within yards of opening the car door with some dazzling strokeplay. Bangladesh captain Habibul Bashar, however, fell six runs short of the magical three-figure.

The baton was then handed over to Rajin Saleh who resumed the second day on 60. But the musical chairs were on as the number five Bangladeshi batsman added just 39 runs to his overnight total before driving a tame return catch to off-spinner Stuart Matsikenyer. Even though he missed the opportunity to own a new car, Rajin must be happy with his return to form after lacklustre performances in the two previous series.

Three half centuries gone and the relay did not stop. Bangladesh were still going as the ever-reliable tail batted with authority against a toothless attack. Despite having Test centuries under their belt, Khaled Mashud and Mohammad Rafique's names must have not come to the thoughts as contenders for the prize for the century. But the two added 69 runs for the seventh wicket before Mashud, who had been playing cautiously, edged leg-spinner

SEE PAGE 14 COL 1



MAKING OF AN ALL-ROUNDER: Bangladesh's Mashrafe-Bin-Mortuza pulls to the mid-wicket fence on way to 48 at the MA Aziz Stadium yesterday.

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## Boucher back for South Africa

Cricket

REUTERS, Cape Town

Mark Boucher has made a shock return to the South Africa squad for the fourth Test against England in Johannesburg.

The 28-year-old got the call after South Africa crushed England by 196 runs in Cape Town on Thursday to level the five-match series 1-1.

Boucher played the last 74 of his 76 Tests consecutively before he was dropped in favour of Thami Tsolekile for South Africa's tour to India in November.

"I'm absolutely delighted, but also quite shocked to be recalled now," Boucher told Reuters from Centurion, where he was playing for the Warriors against the Titans in a SuperSport Series match.

"I thought my chance to be involved in the series had gone when I wasn't selected in the second and third Test squad because we had

no domestic cricket.  
"All I've been able to play over the festive season is beach cricket. I'd be lying if I didn't think at one stage that my international career might be over."

South Africa's selection convenor Haroot Lorgat explained Boucher's recall.

"With the series poised at 1-1 we wanted to bring more experience into the team," he told reporters.

"Whether he will be included just as a batsman or as a wicketkeeper will be debated."

Tsolekile had been sent back to provincial cricket to work on his batting, Lorgat added.

Tsolekile played both tests in India and the first Test against England before making way for AB de Villiers, originally selected as an opening batsman, in the second Test. Boucher takes Tsolekile's place in the only change to the 14-man squad. Fast bowler Charl Langeveldt, who fractured his left hand

SEE PAGE 14 COL 1

## Tsunami match Kapali off to Australia

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh batsman Alok Kapali was scheduled to leave Dhaka last night to play for the Asia XI in the charity cricket match against the ICC World XI in Melbourne on January 10.

The game has been organised to raise funds for the tsunami victims.

The right-handed batsman was the only Bangladeshi in the 14-member Asian squad.

"It's a great honour for me to be a part of this game. I am really excited with the match as it gives me the opportunity to rub shoulders with some of the world's greatest players and also for the fact that I will be involved in a noble cause," said the 21-year-old yesterday.

"Definitely I will have a chat with a number of top batsmen in order to improve my batting," said Kapali, who has been struggling for runs in international cricket.

He is expected to return home on January 12.

## Mohammedan finish third

SPORTS REPORTER

Mohammedan Sporting Club finished third in the Green Delta Premier Hockey League after out-playing Mariner Youngs Club 4-1 at the Maulana Bhasani National Stadium yesterday.

Victory in their last match helped the Motijheel outfit end with 26 points from 13 matches while Mariner had 21 from same number of outings.

All five goals in the match came in the first half.

Mamunur Rahman put the Black and Whites ahead in the 16th minute from a penalty-corner but their joy lasted only four minutes as Asaduzzaman levelled from another penalty-corner.

But Mamun struck again after three minutes from penalty-corner and then Maksudul Alam Habul and Ashrafur Islam Shishu scored one field goal each for the winners.

Meanwhile, the league committee deferred the today's final League match between new champions Usha Krira Chakra and Abahani by a day.

Usha confirmed their maiden title with an unbeatable 33 points to dethrone Abahani, who ensured runners-up spot securing 29 points.

## Pepsi handball Rajshahi champs

SPORTS REPORTER

Rajshahi emerged zonal champion in the Pepsi 17th National Handball Championship (men's) beating Chapainawabganj 27-21 in the final at the Rangpur Stadium yesterday.

The winners led the first half 12-8.

Bogra finished third with a 20-11 victory over Natore.

**SIXERS**

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