

## 100th Test 'just another match'

AFP, Kolkata

Steve Bucknor will become the first umpire to stand in 100 Test matches when he officiates in the second Test between India and Pakistan starting at the 90,000-capacity Eden



STEVE BUCKNOR

Gardens here on Wednesday.

But the 58-year-old Jamaican has dismissed the landmark Test as "just another match", saying he will be as nervous as he was in his first international game 16 years ago.

"The preparations will be the same, probably more because the Eden Gardens, like most places in the Indian sub-continent, is the toughest place for an umpire," Bucknor told reporters Monday.

SEE PAGE 13 COL 4



## Did U Know?

Anil Kumble's feat of reaching 450 wickets in 93 Tests is the second fastest in Test annals, next only to Muralitharan (80). McGrath took 100 Tests, Warne 101 and Walsh 118 for this milestone.



John Major  
(Former British prime minister)

"I am honoured to be given the honour and to be amidst so many greats of the game. I will cherish it forever."

After he was made an honorary life member of the Cricket Club of India.



**ESPN**  
Football Focus  
Live at 6:30 pm  
Sportscentre  
Live at 8:30 pm  
UEFA Champions League  
Inter Milan vs Fc Porto  
Live at 1:30 am (Wednesday)

**STAR Sports**  
Indian Wells Tennis Masters Series  
Third Round  
Live at 9:30 am  
Sportsline  
Live at 8:00 pm  
English Premier Football League  
Chelsea vs West Bromwich  
Live at 1:30 am (Wednesday)  
Indian Wells Tennis Masters Series  
Fourth Round  
Live at 4:00 am (Wednesday)



Ispahani Sixth Nat'l Cricket League  
(Four-dayer, Day Four)  
Rajshahi vs Barisal (RDCS)  
Khulna vs Sylhet (KDCS)

## Dhaka in the saddle



SPORTS REPORTER

Dhaka took a solo lead halfway through the first-class table of the Ispahani Sixth National Cricket League when they stormed to an innings and two-run victory over hosts Chittagong yesterday.

Injury-plagued Chittagong fought bravely on the third day of the four-dayer at the Chittagong Divisional Stadium but even a swashbuckling 96 by Aftab Ahmed and half-centuries from Ehsanul Haque and Yasin Arafat were not enough to make up for the absence of three injured top order batsmen.

Barisal wicketkeeper Shahin Hossain finished with a record seven catches in an innings as Rajshahi conceded a first-innings lead against the visitors but Saifullah Jem's five-wicket haul helped the hosts set a moderate 166-run victory target on the final day.

At Khulna, Mashrafe-bin-Mortuza's batting heroics kept the home side's hopes alive to avoid a follow-on against Sylhet.

### CHITTAGONG-DHAKA

Without key batsmen Nafees Iqbal, Nazimuddin and captain Azam Iqbal who suffered injuries during the match, Chittagong's chances to enforce a draw looked unlikely. But they fought valiantly to close on 295 in their second innings.

Dhaka paceman Anwar Hossain Munir struck early as the home side, resuming on 29-1, lost makeshift opener Ilias Sunny on his overnight score of one.

But Ehsanul Haque, the top scorer for Chittagong in the competition, led their fightback with a fine 66 off 108 balls.

Ehsanul, who hit nine boundaries, put on 41 runs with Faisal Hossain (33) for the third wicket and a further 127 runs with Aftab for the fourth wicket to weather the early storm.

Aftab stole the show with an explosive 83-ball knock that featured a dozen fours and four sixes. But the national cap was dismissed just four

runs short of what would have been his first century of the season.

Yasin Arafat delayed the inevitable when the young spinner made 51 off 70 balls with help of nine fours before Dhaka's reserve wicket-keeper Anwar Hossain scalped him.

The first three wickets went to Munir but it was national star Mohammad Ashraful who destroyed the Chittagong middle order with his part-time leg-breaks, taking 3-89. Ashraful, who removed Ehsanul, Aftab and Habib Moballik, was adjudged man-of-the-match for his sparkling all-round display including a superb 126 in the Dhaka innings total of 443.

After five matches, Dhaka now moved to 24 points with their second successive outright win while Chittagong, who fell to their first defeat in the run, stuck to 18.

### RAJSHAHI-BARISAL

Rajshahi recovered from an early disaster to take command at the Rajshahi Divisional Stadium when seasoned left-arm spinner Saifullah's 5-65 during a 23.5-over

SEE PAGE 13 COL 1



PHOTO: STAR

THEY PLAY FOOTBALL HERE? Visibly unhappy Al Faisaly team members look at the Birshreshtha Shaheed Mostafa Kamal Stadium pitch in Kamalapur yesterday after arriving there to train.

## Kamalapur disgusts Al Faisaly

SPORTS REPORTER

Jordanian club Al Faisaly arrived in Dhaka yesterday to play their away fixture in the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) Cup against local giants Muktijoddha Sangsad Krira Chakra.

The match kicks off at 4 pm at the Bangabandhu National Stadium tomorrow.

The 19-member squad, which features six national players and two professionals from Syria and Iraq, is looking to earn full points after being held 1-1 by Nebitichi FC of Turkmenistan in their Group A home encounter.

"We have no idea about our opponents (Muktijoddha) but we are full of confidence. Although we performed well against Nebitichi, it was not enough in the end," said coach Mohammad Yamani.

"This is the first time we're taking part in the AFC competition. Earlier, we only played twice in the Arab Cup. Still, we boast an impressive domestic track record by clinching the league title 30 times," he added.

The visitors, who flew into the capital in the morning, said they felt at home because of the pleasant weather conditions.

"It is almost like being at home because the weather here is so similar to ours. And that is an important factor in a football match," said the Al Faisaly coach.

The visitors were scheduled to practice at the Birshreshtha Shaheed Mostafa Kamal Stadium in Kamalapur in the afternoon but no sooner had the team stepped off the bus, they decided against training

SEE PAGE 13 COL 5

## Musharraf may watch 1st ODI

AFP, New Delhi

Pakistan's President Pervez Musharraf may travel to Cochin in southern India to attend the one-day international between the two nations on April 2, a cricket board source told AFP here on Monday.

"There are indications that he may come to Cochin," the source said. "We should have a confirmation in the next few days."

Cochin, a popular tourist town in the Indian Ocean state of Kerala, will hold the first of six one-dayers between India and Pakistan at the conclusion of the ongoing three-Test series.

Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh last week invited Musharraf to watch one match during Pakistan's first tour of India since 1999 after he publicly expressed an interest, but did not name a venue.

Pakistan's foreign office said Friday that Musharraf had accepted Singh's invitation but was still to confirm which match the president will attend.

Musharraf last visited India during an India-Pakistan summit in Agra in 2001 when Singh's predecessor Atal Bihari Vajpayee was prime minister.

### ANNOUNCEMENT

The Daily Star Sport is going to change its e-mail address to [sports@thedailystar.net](mailto:sports@thedailystar.net) from March 16, 2005. Please direct your mail to the new address after that date.

--Sports Editor

## Goodbye Batigol



GABRIEL BATISTUTA

### FACTFILE

Factbox on Argentina striker Gabriel Batistuta, who announced his retirement on Sunday:

**1969:** Born on February 1 in Reconquista, Argentina

**1988-89:** Makes debut for Argentine side Newell's Old Boys. Scores four goals in title-winning season before moving to River Plate.

**1989:** Leaves River and crosses Buenos Aires to city rivals Boca Juniors.

**1991:** Signs for Fiorentina for \$2.3 million.

**1992-93:** Despite his 16 goals in 32 games, Fiorentina are relegated. Batistuta turns down offers to move to other Serie Asides.

**1993-94:** Scores 16 goals in 26 matches to take Fiorentina back into the top flight at first attempt.

**June 1994:** Hits hat-trick in his World Cup debut against Greece.

**1994-95:** On target in each of his side's opening 11 matches of the season to set a new Italian goal record. Ends campaign as Serie A's top scorer with 26 goals from 32 games.

**April 1996:** Grabs his 34th goal for Argentina in a 3-1 victory over Bolivia, equalling Diego Maradona's record.

**May 1996:** Scores in both legs of Italian Cup final as Fiorentina beat Atalanta Bergamo 3-0 on aggregate to claim their first major trophy in 21 years. It was the only title Batistuta won in his nine years in Florence.

**April 1997:** Hits superb equaliser in UEFA Cup semi-final in Barcelona. Photos of "Batigol" holding his finger to his lips to silence a 100,000-strong Nou Camp crowd become part of Italian football folklore.

**November 1997:** Recalled by Argentina after being dropped for 10 months.

**June 1998:** Grabs hat-trick at World Cup in 5-0 drubbing of Jamaica. Becomes father for third time the day before Argentina's quarter-final win

SEE PAGE 13 COL 3



REUTERS, Buenos Aires

Argentina's record goalscorer Gabriel Batistuta has decided to quit soccer at the age of 36.

"I am announcing my definitive retirement from football and I thank everyone who has helped make my career so successful," said the former Fiorentina and AS Roma striker in a statement sent to Argentine media from Qatar on Sunday.

The decision came two days after Batistuta ended his contract with Qatari club Al Arabi following an injury-plagued year in which he played only three matches and failed to score.

Batistuta, who hit 56 goals in 78 internationals, said he was planning to coach in the future.

"I will certainly continue in football in a different role," he added. "I will continue with my contractual, publicity and managerial commitments and finish my studies for coaching."

Batistuta played in the 1994, 1998 and 2002 World Cup finals, his last international goal coming in the 1-0 win over Nigeria in the 2002 World Cup finals.

His Argentina career also produced frustration when he was overlooked for long periods by former coach Marcelo Bielsa, who often preferred Hernan Crespo in attack and would not field the pair together because he said their styles were incompatible.

Batistuta made his professional debut with Newell's Old Boys in 1989. He also spent six months with River Plate before moving to Boca Juniors, becoming one of the few players to play for the two bitter Buenos Aires rivals.

He joined Italy's Fiorentina in 1991 and spent nine seasons there, including one in the second division after he preferred to help the club back to the top flight rather than move elsewhere.

Batistuta joined AS Roma in 2000 and had a brief spell with Inter Milan in 2003 before leaving for Al Arabi.

## Pakistan on a high

AFP, Kolkata



Pakistan plan to give India yet another shock treatment by raising the level of their performance in the second cricket Test starting at the Eden Gardens here on Wednesday.

The tourists defied the odds by salvaging a creditable draw from a losing position in the opening match of the three-Test series at Mohali on Saturday, frustrating India with their resilient lower-order batting.

Pakistan skipper Inzamamul Haq said his team would not rest on the Mohali laurels, but raise their performance further to win the Test series.

"I think we can win this series, but we need to improve our catching and our top-order batsmen should also deliver," said Inzamam, whose team dropped five catches in the first Test.

Pakistan's main worry was their

top-order batting after Salman Butt, Taufeeq Umar and vice-captain Younis Khan all failed in the previous match, putting pressure on their teammates.

Inzamam led from the front with two successive half-centuries before finding a saviour in wicketkeeper Kamran Akmal, who denied India victory on the final day with a maiden Test century.

Pakistan were just 53 in front with their last four wickets in hand when Akmal put on a record 184 for the seventh wicket with all-rounder Abdul Razzaq (71) to steer his team to safety.

"The fightback will help us in the series. It was a great morale-booster," said Inzamam.

Pakistan not only silenced their critics who had called the team "weak", but also infused new life into the series which was initially considered a contest between two unequal teams.

The inexperienced Pakistani side gained a big psychological edge with their resolute show after being on the ropes on the first four

days before coming back strongly on the final day.

But Pakistan will have to solve their pace bowling problems before nurturing hopes of gaining the lead in the series.

Leg-spinner Danish Kaneria alone put in a disciplined performance against a strong Indian batting line-up in the last match, finishing with six wickets.

He, however, lacked support from the other end as pacemen Mohammad Sami, Razzaq and Navedul Hasan failed to keep pressure on the Indian batsmen.

Coach Bob Woolmer, meanwhile, said he did not think there would be many changes in the team despite unimpressive performances from top order batsmen and fast bowlers in the previous match.

"I don't see the need of making drastic changes," he said. "Maybe a couple of tactical changes. That's my personal opinion because I am just one of the selectors."

## AIUB cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

The University of Dental College (UDC) managed a seven-run victory against United International University in one of the opening day's matches in the AIUB fourth inter-private university cricket tournament at the Old DOHS ground yesterday.

Batting first, the winners were all out for 208 in 39.2 overs and later restricted their opponents to 201 in 40 overs.

Ansar Ahmed of UDC stole the show with an all-round performance. He hit 33 and captured two wickets for 27 runs.

In other matches at two BKSP grounds, South East University defeated Leading University and BIFT beat City University.

## BCB Award for photojournalists

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Cricket Board has announced the Photojournalist-of-the-Year-Award for local lensmen.

The one thousand dollar award will be handed over during the BCB

SEE PAGE 13 COL 4



PHOTOS: AFP

LET'S GET A RESULT HERE: (L) Pakistan captain Inzamamul Haq explaining something to his team's senior statesmen Yousuf Youhana and Younis Khan. (R) Indian coach John Wright and skipper Sourav Ganguly have a lot to think about going into the second Test. These photos were taken yesterday at the Eden Gardens in Kolkata during the respective training sessions of the teams.