



Mohammedan players practise at the Residential Model School ground in Mohammadpur on Thursday.

## A different derby

Mohammedan, Abahani face off today

SPORTS REPORTER

Premier Bank Service First Senior Division Football League

Traditional giants Mohammedan and Abahani will be hoping that the rain-gods stay clear of the Bangabandhu National Stadium at least until kick-off today. Twice the big match has had to be postponed due to an unplayable ground condition.

Although the arch-rivals have joined together for the first time to wage a campaign against Brothers Union's alleged match-fixing, they will put that aside when their Premier Division game begins at 5pm at the Big Bowl.

Besides, the blood and thunder clash will also be treated as a benefit match for former national footballer Monwar Hossain Nannu, one of the finest midfielders of the country who graced both the sides in his heydays. Nannu has been suffering from cancer for long and the extra amount earned from the game will be donated for his treatment.

The Metropolis Football League Committee has revised the prices of tickets for the benefit fund and pass

holders for VIP gates 1 and 2 will be charged Tk 50 and 30 respectively. Gallery tickets will cost Tk 30 each.

There have been rumours that Abahani, all but out of the title race, would 'help' Mohammedan in a bid to stay in the race. But both parties have shrugged off the idea as simply gossip.

"If they win all the matches, Abahani will be the league champions. So, why would they do this?" questioned Mohammedan coach Jashimuddin Joshi.

Abahani manager Satyajit Das Rupu also echoed the same sentiment.

"We have a chance to win the league if Muktiyoddha can beat both Brothers and Mohammedan. So, there is no reason to give up," Rupu told on the eve of the two sides' fourth meeting of the season.

The extra three-day gap between the 15th and 16th rounds has given the tired legs enough rest to have a go at each other but a soggy pitch could restrict the most popular teams of the country from producing dazzling displays.

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Abahani players stretch during their training session at the club's ground in Dhanmondi on Thursday.



### ICC unlikely to ban Zimbabwe

CRICINFO, undated

Despite coming under pressure from the governments of Australia, New Zealand and Britain, the International Cricket Council (ICC) is expected to ignore requests to take action against Zimbabwe when it meets in Dubai this week.

The three governments have called on the ICC to ban Zimbabwe because of the country's dreadful human-rights record which culminated in the controversial slum clearance programme Operation Murambatsvina -- which translates as "drive out rubbish" -- which has left 700,000 people homeless.

Last week, Jack Straw, Britain's foreign secretary, wrote to Ehsan Mani and Malcolm Speed, the ICC's president and chief executive, urging them to take action, but Speed on Wednesday hinted that nothing was likely to change.

"For the past three years at least, we've been asked that players be allowed not to comply with their agreements with Zimbabwe, or that cricket not be played in Zimbabwe," Speed said.

"The ICC position has been consistent: we say to governments that we don't take decisions based on political judgments. We expect governments to do that."

### Tigers land in Lanka

MI Cricket

AFP, Colombo

A 15-man Bangladesh cricket squad led by Habibul Bashar arrived here on Thursday to play two Tests and three one-day internationals against Sri Lanka during a month-long tour.

The tourists are brimming with confidence after recording a stunning five-wicket win over world champions Australia in the recent tri-series in England.

Bangladesh coach Dav Whatmore, who earlier coached Sri Lanka and masterminded their successful World Cup campaign in 1996, said his cricketing minnows were capable of beating the former champions in the one-day series.

"We had two very good (one-day) wins -- one against India in December last year and the other against Australia in Cardiff in June," Whatmore said before the team's departure from Doha.

"We need to show a few more wins along the way to confirm to

everyone that we are moving in the right direction."

Bangladesh, granted Test status in 2000, have lost 33 of their 38 Test matches and won just one, against a depleted Zimbabwe at home earlier this year.

In 112 one-dayers, Whatmore's men have won 10, including the Cardiff win which prompted tens of thousands of fans to pour on to the streets of Dhaka in celebration.

All matches on the Sri Lankan tour will be played at the capital Colombo with the Sinhalese sports club ground hosting the first one-day international on August 31, followed by two games at the Premadasa Stadium on September 2 and 4.

The Premadasa Stadium will also host the first Test from September 12-16, the first at Sri Lanka's biggest cricket facility in eight years after complaints that the pitch was too favourable for batsmen.

The second Test from September 20-24 will be played at the Saravananthu Stadium.

### Liverpool, Chelsea in same group

UEFA CHAMPS LEAGUE

AFP, Monaco

Champions Liverpool were drawn in the same group as last season's English league winners Chelsea in the group stages of the Champions League here on Thursday.

Liverpool, who beat Chelsea in the semifinals in last season's competition, were without country protection in the draw after UEFA granted them special dispensation to defend the trophy.

Belgian club Anderlecht and Real Betis of Spain make up the group.

The money-spinning group stages of European football's most prestigious competition also saw Italian champions Juventus draw German counterparts Bayern Munich.

Spanish giants Real Madrid were drawn in the same pool as four-time French champions Lyon, while Swiss minnows Thun face games against Arsenal, Ajax and Sparta Prague.

#### GROUPINGS

**Group A:** Bayern Munich (GER), Juventus (ITA), FC Bruges (BEL), Rapid Vienna (AUT).

**Group B:** Arsenal (ENG), Ajax (NED), Sparta Prague (CZE), Thun (SUI).

**Group C:** Barcelona (ESP), Panathinaikos (GRE), Werder Bremen (GER), Udinese (ITA).

**Group D:** Manchester United (ENG), Villarreal (ESP), Lille (FRA), Benfica (POR).

**Group E:** AC Milan (ITA), PSV Eindhoven (NED), Schalke 04 (GER), Fenerbahce (TUR).

**Group F:** Real Madrid (ESP), Lyon (FRA), Olympiakos (GRE), Rosenborg (NOR).

**Group G:** Liverpool (ENG), Chelsea (ENG), Anderlecht (BEL), Real Betis (ESP).

**Group H:** Inter Milan (ITA), FC Porto (POR), Rangers (SCO), Artmedia (SVK).

### Rain holds England back

MI Cricket

AFP, Nottingham

Rain frustrated England after they'd made a bold start to the first day of the fourth Ashes Test against Australia at Trent Bridge here on Thursday.

Bad weather meant only 20 balls were possible between lunch and tea, England adding five runs to their initial interval score to be 134 for one.

Marcus Trescothick was 65 not out and England captain Michael Vaughan, who'd won the toss, 15 not out.

Australia, without Glenn McGrath because of a right elbow injury, did not help their own cause by bowling 19 no-balls, 18 coming in a profligate first session where one of them 'bowled' Trescothick.

McGrath's place was taken by Michael Kasprowicz, who played when an ankle problem ruled the miserly quick out of the second Test at Edgbaston where England won by two runs to level the series at 1-1.

Tescothick did have a lucky break when, on 12, he inside-edged Kasprowicz past his stumps and he was fortunate when a miscued drive off the Queenslander sailed through a gap in the offside field for a four that brought up the fifty-stand.

Tait came on in the 10th over and the 22-year-old South Australian's slingshot action, likened to that of Australia great Jeff Thomson, was soon helping him bowl at over 90mph.

Meanwhile such was the dominance of England's left-handed openers that Australia captain Ricky Ponting had to bring on master leg-spinner Shane Warne as early as the 18th over after Kasprowicz's costly spell of eight overs for 37 runs.

England were then 78 without loss and in Warne's second over, Trescothick struck him straight back over his head for a disastrous six.

Tescothick, who in the course of his innings surpassed Trevor Bailey's record of 875 runs - the most by an Englishman against Australia without scoring a century - clipped Lee to make a 77-ball fifty with one six and six fours.

Next ball he cover-drove Lee for a resounding boundary to bring up the century partnership, the seventh time he'd put on a hundred with Strauss.

But on 105 England lost their first wicket when Strauss, on 35, bottom edged a sweep off Warne, the first man to take 600 Test wickets, onto his boot and was caught by Matthew Hayden as the ball ballooned to slip.

It seemed as if veteran umpire Steve Bucknor had given Strauss out but, with Warne continuing his appeal to within feet of the batsman, the West Indian consulted with Pakistan's Aleem Dar at square leg before the decision was handed to the third umpire.

Australia's no-ball problems caught up with them when Trescothick, on 55 played on to Lee.

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## Touts cashing in on Ashes fiesta

MI Cricket

BBC ONLINE, undated

Tickets for the Ashes series are changing hands at up to six times their original value as touts cash in on the surge in popularity of cricket.

Tickets for the fifth Test at The Oval are fetching up to 450 pounds a pair on internet auction sites, thanks to a legal loophole that allows resale.

An ECB spokesman said: "This is the sort of situation we want to eradicate."

"We are asking the government for similar legislation to that which prevents sales of football tickets."

Tickets for every one of the Ashes Tests sold out in record time, including those for the fifth Test.

More than 15,000 people were

turned away from the gates of Old Trafford as tickets sold out for the fifth day of the third Test.

The ECB spokesman added: "Clearly, with the series being so exciting and so close, these tickets are getting a premium on internet auction sites."

"But at the moment, selling

Ashes tickets is not illegal."

"We want to make sure that these tickets are available to the majority of cricket fans, not just the minority."

The current Test at Trent Bridge has attracted huge interest as England hunt their first Ashes series win since 1987.

Nottinghamshire County Cricket Club deputy chief executive Lisa Purhouse said: "Unlike certain sports, like football and rugby, it is not illegal to sell cricket tickets."

"However, we do have strict

terms and conditions which state that, if we become aware that anyone has sold on a ticket for more than face value, they will be blacklisted and unable to buy any tickets in the future."

Tickets for this summer's Ashes series were priced at an average of 40 pounds per day.

But punters are selling on seats at a huge mark-up, with a set of four for the third day at The Oval currently on sale on one website at 1050 pounds, with higher bids coming in every hour.

Surrey chief executive Paul Sheldon admitted that the threat of hugely inflated prices for tickets from touts and internet sales was a concern.

"Sadly there isn't enough we can do," he said. "They are going to be at a premium."

## Fleming surprised at India's late arrival

NZ take on Ganguly & co in Bulawayo today

MI Cricket

PTI, Bulawayo

"They have always been a very strong side but I expect the pressure to be on them to perform. They are naturally gifted players, although I haven't followed their form."

"We intend to exert pressures on individuals in the Indian team. Obviously playing against them is a step up but we have played with confidence in recent times."

Fleming said one of the reasons why his team has been in top form is because all the players have been fit and available for selection including Nathan Astle.

Bulawayo gets extremely hot in the afternoon and Fleming described it as "a sense of burning in the lungs" during daytime. He also said India would be under pressure to perform well against his galvanised side.

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"I am a bit surprised at Indians' late arrival at the venue," said Fleming.

"It will be interesting to see how they manage their energies. If they

win then obviously it is a smart move but if they struggle, as I expect them to struggle, it wouldn't be such a smart move."

The Indians arrived in Zimbabwe on Monday but spent the next two days in Harare, fine-tuning their preparation and letting go an opportunity to acclimatise themselves to the difficult conditions in Bulawayo on Friday.

They took an early morning flight to arrive in Bulawayo only on Thursday.

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ESPN

India vs New Zealand

Second ODI

Live at 1:30 pm

Sportscentre

Live at 10:00 pm

STAR Sports

England vs Australia

4th Test, Day Two

Live at 3:30 pm

UEFA Super Cup</