



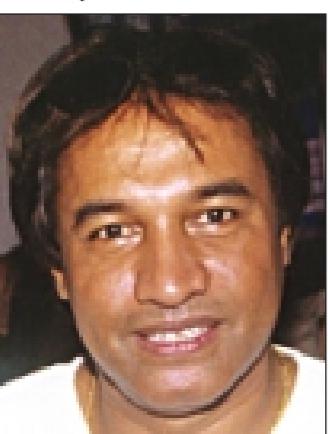
Did U Know?

Sania Mirza is the first Indian woman to reach the Australian Open third round this year.

What to WATCH

ESPN
Football Crazy
Live at 5:00 pm
Sportscentre
Live at 8:30 pm

TALK TURKEY



Shafiqul Islam Manik

(Former Muktiyoddha football coach)

"Mohammedan officials have offered me to take over the job and the talks are at an advanced stage."

PREMIER DIV HANDBALL Rifles remain best in business

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Rifles maintained their monopoly in domestic handball when they successfully retained the Cate Premier Division Handball League title on Monday.

BRD's 12th league crown in 13 attempts was confirmed when they defeated Narinda Progoti Boys 25-10 in the last league match at the handball ground at the Bangabandhu National Stadium.

Since the inception of premiership in 1984, only Surjodoy Krira Chakra have won the title in 1991-92.

BRD finished the seven-team fray with maximum 18 points while runners-up Narinda were three points adrift. It was the third time they have clinched the runners-up spot.

In the day's match, the winners led the first half 11-9. Aliru netted six goals while Mojammel, Khairuzzaman and Kamrul scored five each.

Sulton scored four and Shibli three for the vanquished.

Narinda's Amjad Hossain was adjudged the player of the league.

Bangladesh Handball Federation general secretary Asaduzzaman Kohinoor distributed prizes among the winners.

MSC, Abahani ready to roll for NFL

SPORTS REPORTER

Mohammedan Sporting Club's residential camp for the coming Nitol-Tata National Football League will begin on Thursday.

All the footballers have been requested to report to the club tent at Motijheel on Thursday at 4 pm.

The black and whites are expected to begin training under new coach Shafiqul Islam Manik, who has yet to sign a contract.

An ex-Mohammedan player, Manik was sacked by Muktiyoddha Sangsad in the middle of the Dhaka Premier Football League and was replaced by Austrian coach George Kottan.

Mohammedan's archrivals Abahani, meanwhile, will start their preparation on October 8 at the club ground in Dhanmondi. The players have been requested to join the camp on the day before.

TIGERS' TOUR OF INDIA Saber's views rejected

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

President Ali Asghar clarified the Bangladesh Cricket Board's (BCB) position regarding Sunday's comments made by his predecessor Saber Hossain Chowdhury on the Tigers' tour of India.

"I would like to assure everyone concerned that both the BCCI (Board of Control for Cricket in India) and the BCB are committed and eager to stage the tour as per the FTP (Future Tour Programme) commitment," Asghar said in a statement on Monday.

Saber Hossain blamed present Board of Dillydallying over Bangladesh's pending tour of India which was already postponed twice.

"Bangladesh's tour of India remains pending for quite a while and BCB has been dragging its heel on the issue. We are yet to hear a final word

about when the tour is going to take place, and this does not project BCB as a smart board," Saber was quoted by an Indian news agency as saying.

Asghar however explained the reasons behind the delay and confirmed that the tour was still on.

"I would like to mention that the BCB has been communicating with the BCCI and the ICC to reschedule the tour which was to be held in April '05. Unfortunately there were number of conflicting events such as the Pakistan tour of India (February to April '05) and Bangladesh tour of England, that the said tour could not take place. Subsequently we had a meeting with the BCCI and the ICC at the AGM held in London, June '05 and number of options were discussed.

"Keeping in mind the international commitments the available time frame also clashed with the ICC Super Series and Super Tests. Later on, at the Scheduling Meeting held in Dubai the BCCI agreed to host Bangladesh from

15th September '06 to 10th October '06. We must bear in mind that all the Test playing nations follow the FTP and makes necessary mutual adjustments with the respective Board," explained Asghar.

Saber also alleged that the present board dented the warm relationship with their Indian counterparts, which they had during their tenure.

"We had an excellent relation with the BCCI and they were instrumental in giving us the Test status. I remember how Jagmohan Dalmiya (the then BCCI president) fought for that, along with representatives of Pakistan and Sri Lanka. But since getting the Test status, we have lost the plot," observed Saber.

But Asghar dismissed the allegation.

"On behalf of Bangladesh Cricket Control Board I would like to recognise the warm relations and support we receive from Mr Jagmohan Dalmiya and the BCCI."

Ganguly served notice

Cricket

PTI, London

The curtain will fall on the second edition of the metropolitan school football tournament today with Residential Model School and College meeting Emarat Hossain High School on the final.

The Pran-Cola school football final will kick off at 4 pm at the Bangabandhu National Stadium. Bangladesh Football Federation vice-president and former national football captain Kazi Salahuddin will distribute prizes as chief guest.

Residential were eliminated from the semis when they lost to Dolairpar High School on penalties after the regulation time was locked 1-1. However, following a protest by Residential, the league committee disqualified winners Dolairpar from the tournament for using illegal players.

Emarat Hossain School, however, moved into the final without any such controversy, defeating Rayer Bazar High School 2-1 in the first semifinal.

"You should give some time to the selection committee and the players, particularly Sourav himself. If in the coming days, the performance does not improve, the selection committee, would be keeping in mind the feelings of crores of cricket fans and take an appropriate decision," Mahendra told BCB in an interview on Sunday.

To a specific question on whether Ganguly should continue as captain, Mahendra said: "It is for the committee to decide and the Board does not interfere in the matter."

The BCCI chief also rebutted suggestions that the Board was turning a blind eye to Ganguly's poor form and his tendency to get embroiled in controversies.

"What you are saying could also be the feeling of many other cricket fans in the country. But let us all not forget that recently Ganguly has scored a Test hundred in Zimbabwe," he said.

Gilchrist queries Super Series status



CRICINFO, undated

Adam Gilchrist believes Test matches should be country versus country affairs and has questioned the ICC's decision to award the Super Series games official international status.

Gilchrist said the three one-day games and the six-day Test formed a "wonderful" series, but thought it was wrong for the matches to count in players' records when those of World Series Cricket in the 1970s missed out.

"I don't feel so strongly that it's putting me off," Gilchrist said in The Australian.

"It's a very exciting concept and will be a terrific showpiece event for world cricket. It's going to be absolute, full-on cricket, but if it needs official status to get that, I'm not sure. I believe that Test

match status is country versus country."

Gilchrist said it was important to remember where World Series Cricket took the game.

"We've got one-dayers, the players got a bit of a voice, the game's more professional," he said.

"It became a real entertainment industry, which is what it is now. Yet still those records are not recognised when an event like this is, even though this is a wonderful event."

The paper reported Dennis Lillee as one of the big losers from the unofficial world contests. Lillee was credited with 355 Test wickets from 70 matches, but he claimed another 24 victims against the Rest of the World in 1971-72 and 79 in World Series Cricket, taking his overall tally to 458.

Australia open the Super Series with the first ODI on Wednesday and Gilchrist said interest in the series was "amazing" following the Ashes.

"In the two weeks I've been home the general feeling from the public has been that it was just so positive for cricket," he said.

"Put the result aside, people who usually don't watch cricket were up until 3 am glued to their television sets."

Gilchrist said he had never faced an attack that bowled so well as a pack.

"There was no let-up," he said.

"And again, it's going to be like that over the next two weeks."

Gilchrist also believes Damien Martyn has the credentials to his new opening partner for the three one-day matches.

The Australian vice-captain will face the new ball with a new partner following the axing of Queensland's Matthew Hayden from the one-day side.

The wicketkeeper says it could be a choice between two players.

"I think Damien Martyn's one,

SEE PAGE 13 COL 8



A FEW GOOD MEN: Members of the World XI team listen to a question during a press conference in Melbourne on Monday ahead of the Super Series ODIs and six-day Test against Australia. The series starts on Wednesday.

What Tigers really want

SPORTS REPORTER

The members of the national cricket team hailed their first of its kind meeting with the high-ups of the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) as a healthy practice.

But the only problem was that the board imposed an embargo on the players to disclose the details of the marathon meeting that took place at BCB's management office in Gulshan on Sunday.

The board invited Habibul Bashar's men in an open discussion so that it could assess what went wrong in Sri Lanka where the Tigers lost both the Test and one-day series badly.

"We have enjoyed the lively discussion and most of the players addressed some off-the-filed issues to be solved for a better performance," said a cricketer on condition of anonymity.

"It is not wise to allow too many people in the dressing room. The players always feel uncomfortable if any selector sits with them in the dressing room. Besides, the practice schedule before and during any series has been far from the desired standard."

The players however welcomed the board's recent policy of domestic cricket as a must for any senior call ups.

"To be honest we have never felt the urgency of playing in domestic competitions before because we were confused about its importance in the selection process. Besides, the players showed reluctance to play especially in the National League because of a loose confederation with their respective divisions," said a senior player.

It was learnt that vice-captain Khaled Mahmud, former national captain Khaled Mahmud and two young players were vocal in the meeting. Bashar was however surprisingly submissive and only showed his interest about financial issues.

BCB general secretary Mahbub Anam, joint-secretary Reazuddin Al Mamun and CEO Macky Duhduh spoke on behalf of the board.

Sabu Khatun of Bangladesh Jute Mills Corporation (BJMC) grabbed the headlines by setting three national records on Day Three of the Keya Cosmetics 21st National Swimming Championships in Mirpur Monday.

She won gold in the 200m and 800m freestyle and 200m backstroke respectively.

In the 200m freestyle Sabu clocked 2 minutes 30.65 seconds. It bettered her own mark of 2mins 32.55 secs set in 2004.

In also broke her own record in the 800m freestyle finishing the distance in 11 mins 2.43 secs. The old record stood at 11 mins 17.33 secs.

Her third record-breaking swim saw Sabu clinch the 200m backstroke in two minutes 52.94 seconds. Earlier, the record belonged to Kamal Aktar (two mins 55.50 secs).

Mahfuz Khatun of BKSP won the 50m breaststroke in a time of 36.31 seconds.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh Navy dominated medals table with 12 gold medals. They claimed eight on the opening day. BKSP were a distant second with two golds.

On the women's side, BJMC remained in first position clinching six gold. Ansar and BKSP shared second with four each. The championships end today.



PHOTO: STAR
Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina hands over the trophy to captain of the Mirpur Thana team after they won the Sheikh Russel Under-14 Football Tournament on Monday. They defeated Shyampur 1-0 in the final at the Abahani club ground.

SHEIKH RUSSEL FOOTBALL

Mirpur shine in the rain

SPORTS REPORTER

Even the torrential rain for the last three days could not dampen the spirits of the young footballers and the die-hard fans as the Sheikh Russel Under-14 football tournament ended amid huge outpouring of enthusiasm on Monday.

All the thanas in the city participated in the tournament which was organised by Awami League's central sub-committee for youth and sports in memory of late Sheikh Russel's 41st birth anniversary.

Awami League chief and Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina witnessed the final and distributed prizes as chief guest.

In a short speech, she requested the organisers to continue their support for the youngsters.

"I hope we would try to organise this tournament country-wide at national level and create future stars. It will also help the juveniles to concentrate on sports and build a healthy environment," said Hasina.

The winners received Tk 30,000 and the runners-up Tk 20,000 as prize money.

SEE PAGE 13 COL 5

Pele, Maradona, Ronaldo ... Montu!

Football

RAFIQUE SARKER, from Rangpur

Football means Pele, Maradona, Ronaldo ... then there is Montu.

Montu who?

The next time you plan to visit Rangpur be sure to ask the inhabitants of the northern Bangladesh town how is Nazmul Haque Montu doing these days considering he is now 68 but his passion for the game is known far and wide.

Montu has earned the admiration of countless people young and old because of his tireless efforts to develop the standard of sports in the far-flung part of the country.

Even today he never misses a moment to play a game of football along with other District Sports Association (DSA) players. And more often than not his on-field antics draw most attention. At times Montu's behaviour leaves those around him thinking he runs with the intensity of a 28-year-old.

It is no wonder why the affection for Montu runs deep in the hearts of a new generation of football players and athletes under Rangpur DSA. They feel honoured to play alongside him. According to team mates his presence makes a difference.

But more for the man himself the global game has a different meaning.

He said: "His first tournament

SEE PAGE 13 COL 5

Nazmul Haque Montu on the ball in Rangpur.

"I've been playing football since I was twelve."

The self-described football maniac believed the success of his uncle Mozammel Haque, who was