



## Did U Know?

Rahul Dravid, by playing in his 93rd Test in Chennai against Sri Lanka earlier this week, has extended his world record for the most Test appearances without missing a single Test since debut.

## What to WATCH

### ESPN

Sportscentre  
Live at 8:30 pm  
New Zealand vs Australia  
Third ODI  
Live at 7:00 am (Friday)  
**STAR Sports**  
FIFA World Cup Draw  
Live at 1:30 am (Friday)



## Greg Chappell

(India cricket coach)  
"He (Ganguly) wants to play cricket for India. I want to be a good coach. And I want to be the coach of a good Indian team."



U-19 Tri-Series Cricket  
Bangladesh vs England  
Venue: Fatullah Cricket Stadium

## Narrow win for India

SPORTS REPORTER from Karachi

A brace of goals from Mehtab Hossain gave India a hard fought 2-1 win over Nepal in yesterday's second Group B match of the Fourth SAFF Championship here at the People's Sports Complex Stadium.

Mehtab, skipper of Kolkata giants Mohun Bagan, put two-time winners India ahead after seven minutes with an angled drive into the far post just from outside the box. The young forward, who hails from Kashmir, added the second 20 minutes later when he was unmarked in the box and neatly placed a low right-footer after Sukumar Singh cut the ball back from right flank.

Veteran striker Basanta Thapa reduced the arrears for Nepal in the 36th minute with a close-range header on a rebound after Surendra's shot was partly blocked by Indian keeper Sandip Nandy.

India could have widened the margin, but star footballer and captain Baichung Bhutia shot a penalty kick wide just before the final whistle.

India are now second in the group although they are level with Bangladesh on three points after one round. Bangladesh took the first place for better goal difference.

## U-19 ties brought forward

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) rescheduled two matches including the final of the ongoing Under-19 tri-nation cricket tournament.

According to new fixture, the match between Bangladesh and Sri Lanka will take place on December 11 instead of December 12 at the Fatullah Cricket Stadium.

The final will be held on December 13 instead of December 14 at BKSP.



PHOTO: AFP

**TOAST OF BANGLADESH:** Bangladesh striker Farhad (C) is being congratulated by his teammates after he scored one of his two goals against Bhutan during their SAFF Championship Group B match in Karachi on Thursday.

# Farhad fires holders home

**BANGLADESH 3: BHUTAN 0**

AL MUSABBIR SADI from Karachi

Two-goal Ariful Kabir Farhad gave defending champions Bangladesh a confident start in the Fourth SAFF Championship with a 3-0 thrashing of Bhutan in the Group B opener at the People's Sports Complex Stadium here yesterday.

Farhad broke the resistance of the tiny mountain kingdom in the 42nd minute and doubled the lead in the 58th while substitute Zahid Hossain Emily, buoyed by a 12,000-strong crowd supporting the Bangladesh team, sealed the victory four minutes from time with a sublime shot on his international debut.

Playing in their second-choice all white, the holders began lively with a string of neat passes and rushed early blood, but Arman's 20-yard freekick went just wide when the match was not even one-minute old.

Two minutes later, the eight-pack Bhutanese defence kept out Farhad's header on an Arman corner from their line before Farhad wasted a fine left-flank cross by Titu, placing the ball wide from close.

Having survived the early blitz, the tight Bhutan backline managed to keep the rivals at bay until Matir Munna's freekick in the 42nd minute proved too good for them.

Munna floated the ball from 20

yards out and Farhad, the Abahani striker who has returned to the national fold after a decade, separated the two sides with a deft header.

Bangladesh goalkeeper Aminul, who was not required to make a single save in the first 45 minutes, was stretched in the injury time when he had to foil Wangay Dorji's long range effort in the injury time.

Bangladesh enjoyed superior ball possession and it was Farhad who found the mark again 13 minutes after the break. Dashing down the right flank, the diminutive forward dribbled past Kinley Wangchuk before lobbing goalkeeper Jigme Singye with a right-footer from a tight angle.

Wangay, one of the two senior players of the squad, came close to reducing the gap in the 66th minute, but his 20-yard drive went over harmlessly after kissing the top of the crossbar.

There was no respite and Emily, who had replaced Kanchan, took the ball from a throw-in at the left flank and fired a dipping volley into the top right hand corner, giving the rival keeper no chance.

It could have been 4-0 shortly but Alfaz, receiving the ball from Emily near the penalty spot, miskicked his chance in injury time.

"I am happy that we won 3-0. I told my players before the match that no match is easy. Always be serious, also against young teams. I am satisfied because they have stuck to the task and we have made a winning start," said Bangladesh's

Argentine coach Diego Cruciani after the match.

"In the first half, we made mistakes due to inefficiency. We lost too many opportunities. They also defended doggedly, packing their backline with many players. The start was shaky and nervous, the players were not moving well," said Cruciani about his first international match as Bangladesh coach.

"It can happen at the start of a tournament. The goal from Emily was superb and I am happy because he is a young player playing his first international and that too in SAFF Championship. Farhad is a fighting man and very strong mentally.

The defence left wide gaps a few times, allowing the rivals to create space for attack and the Argentine thinks there was lack of understanding between Sujun and Rajani. "Sometimes our fullbacks forgot to return in time after overlapping. Still, it is a very good take-off," added the coach before going back to the pavilion to watch his group opponents Nepal and India play later on.

Bhutan chief coach Khare Basnet said the performance of his boys against a strong team made him happy.

"We could have played better had we not been scheduled to play in this warm condition. Our boys from the mountains are not accustomed to this heat. I don't know why the organisers have given us a day match when they could have

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## Un-SAFF BTV

SPORTS REPORTER

How many people switch on the Bangladesh Television these days is anybody's guess. The growing popularity of private satellite television channels suggests that not many turn to the state-owned medium.

The BTV however got a wonderful opportunity to draw the vast majority of the country's people into its 'monotonous and at times boring screen' when a private company offered them to show live telecast of Bangladesh's games in the ongoing SAFF Championship from Karachi free of charge.

But an unsporing BTV rejected the generous offer terming that the match-time coincided with its all-important 8 o'clock news.

"We are unable to show Bangladesh's football matches live because it clashes with our news. Most of Bangladesh matches start at 7.30pm and our news start at 8pm," said a high BTV official while confirming they have received an offer from Exim Technologies three days ago.

"We have offered BTV a free telecast right but unfortunately they refused it. They have deprived the football lovers from watching their beloved national team in action," said a fuming Exim Technologies manager Shabbir while talking to The Daily Star Sport last night.

## WC draw today

AFP, Leipzig

Football's world governing body FIFA has confirmed that an assortment of footballers from every football continent will help make the 2006 World Cup draw here on Friday.

Brazil's three-time World Cup winner Pele (1958, 1962, 1970) is joined by West Germany's 1990 World Cup winning captain Lothar Matthaus and Netherlands star Johan Cruyff.

Cameroon icon Roger Milla, South African Lukas Radebe, Cobi Jones of the United States and Japan's Masashi Nakayama are also on the guestlist.

France's 1998 World Cup winner Christian Karembeu will represent Oceania as he was born on the Pacific island of New Caledonia - a French overseas territory.

## Mohammedan earn full points

BDNEWS, Cox's Bazar

Mohammedan Sporting Club managed a hard-fought 2-1 victory over their Rangamati namesake in the Nitol-Tata National Football League at the Cox's Bazar Stadium yesterday.

It was the very crucial match for the Dhaka giants as they conceded 1-0 defeat against their archrivals Abahani and shared points with Muktiyoddha Sangsad in previous two matches.

Abahani dominated the Group B

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# Taibu in City



SPORTS REPORTER

Many big names have graced Dhaka cricket before but the latest inclusion of former Zimbabwe captain Tatenda Taibu in the ranks of Wasim Akram, Sourav Ganguly, Sanath Jayasuriya and Arjuna Ranatunga added glamour beyond the game itself.

Taibu arrived in the capital yesterday and immediately claimed that his visit to Dhaka was more than a mere financial venture after quitting the captaincy of the trouble-torn Zimbabwe cricket last month.

The 22-year old wicketkeeper-batsman will play for last year's runners-up City Club in the Premier Division Cricket League that begins on December 12 across the country.

The young Zimbabwean, who quit international cricket and captaincy following a life threat, said that his Dhaka trip was never in his scheme of things.

"I was supposed to play in South Africa in collaboration with the Zimbabwe Cricket but after my retirement they just shut the window. There was no way out for me after the decision," said Taibu, who is on his second visit here after captaining his team early this year in a three-match Test and five-match one-day international series.

"It was painful for me that quite sometime I couldn't think about cricket, rather I had to concentrate on other issues. Then I got the proposal from Mamun (Reazuddin Al Mamun). Without cricket, life was so difficult to me," continued Taibu.

"I came to know the domestic league here is very competitive. I spoke with Streaky (Heath Streak) as well as Steve Tikolo. I was told that players like Ganguly, Yuvraj Singh, Akram played here. I thought that it would also be nice for me," said the exciting batsman down the order.

The veteran of 24 Tests and 84 ODIs said that he had little idea about the domestic competitions in

Bangladesh but for last few days he worked out to learn about his team as well as the opponents in the competition.

"I have little idea about my team but now I know that my team finished runners-up in the last two seasons and the club boasts five national players including Rajin (Saleh) and (Alok) Kapali. I have also been informed about the other sides," he said.

But Taibu, who held the Zimbabwe cricket together following a revolt led by his predecessor Streak, said that he was eagerly waiting to return to the international cricket soon.

"I will return to my country after one month and come back to Bangladesh after three weeks. But you know my first priority is Zimbabwe cricket that's why I am looking forward to play for my

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PHOTO: STAR

Former Zimbabwe captain Tatenda Taibu (L), who has come here to play in the Premier Cricket League for City Club, is having a lively chat with the club's general secretary Reazuddin Al Mamun at a city restaurant on Thursday.

# A reporter's nightmare

AL MUSABBIR SADI from Karachi

Karachi is not one of those best of places in Pakistan players and officials alike want to travel. Journalists cannot be an exception. But they are left with little option.

Reporters from seven countries now covering the Fourth SAFF Championship in the port city were at a loss seeing an ill-equipped media centre at People's Sports Complex. While modern technology holds paramount importance when it comes to sending reports, foreign media -- running against a tight deadline -- helplessly had to sit for hours to send their reports to different destinations.

Availability of Internet facilities, which is now a must at any international venue, has not been established even after the regional football gala entered into its second day.

The anxiousness of keeping their colleagues waiting was clearly visible on their faces as repeated attempts to restore online facilities went down the drains. A few desperate ones left the media centre and took the risk of walking down the roads of the Karachi suburb to Lyari Town to find an internet cafe and send some files after hours of failed attempts.

Some even had to read out their reports on phone, which is very expensive indeed. Those who still use pens for writing instead of keying a laptop, however, were relieved to find the fax working smoothly.

Although the organisers spent

lavishly for noisy fireworks on the opening day, they showed a totally indifferent attitude towards the basic requirements of the media.

There was no TV at the press box, the digital clock counting match-time stopped during the opening match and score-sheets and players' lists reached the reporters too late.

At the media centre, a giant screen showed reverse images. Any one relying on that screen could have easily mistaken to describe a goal being scored left-footed when it was actually struck with the right foot.

Worse for the organisers was three failed attempts to play the national anthem of Pakistan before the kick-off on Wednesday.

# A Prior-ity



AFP, Lahore

England wicketkeeper batsman Matthew Prior Thursday said he would love to open for his country in the five-match one-day series against Pakistan.

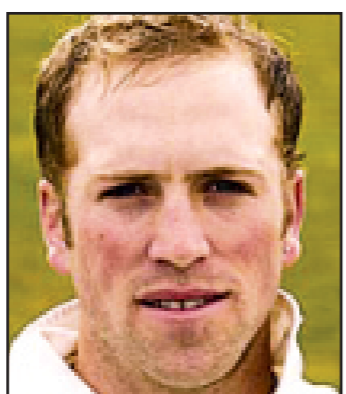
"I will be happy playing in any position for England, but if I was opening the batting I would absolutely love it," Prior told reporters ahead of Saturday's opening match.

Prior, 23, staked his claim with a brilliant 84-ball 72 in a warm-up game against Pakistan A, which his side lost by a single wicket at Lahore's Bagh-e-Jinnah Stadium on Wednesday.

First choice Geraint Jones keeps wickets for England but Prior might get a place purely as a batsman after captain Michael Vaughan was ruled out with a knee injury.

Prior, who moved to England from his native South Africa before representing England at Under-19 level, said he enjoyed playing one-day cricket.

"It is as an opener where I enjoy playing the most, especially in one-



MATTHEW PRIOR

day cricket. I have done it for Sussex for the last two seasons and I feel I play my most natural game there," said Prior.

The tourists have also kept batsman Ian Bell as a possible Vaughan replacement.

"I don't know where or how I will be involved. Some people say as a super sub, others the top of the order. I don't really know, it's out of my hands and when I get the opportunity all I can do is take advantage of it," Prior said.

Prior was tipped to be the first-ever super sub when the new rule was implemented in the tri-nation series in May in England. But instead Vikram Solanki was preferred.

"There was a lot of media speculation last summer about me being the first super sub but it never materialized. Solanki was used and he did really well so there's not much you can do about that," said Prior.