



Did U Know?

Australia's two-run triumph in the second ODI against New Zealand on December 7 is the narrowest victory margin by any team at the Westpac Stadium. New Zealand's four-run win over Pakistan on 17.1.2004 was the previous narrowest victory-margin at this venue.



Wasim Akram

(Former Pakistan cricket captain) "I am against ICC. The reason is it's run by all the 'goras' (whites). Passion is here (in India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka), money is here and talent is here. All the cricketers who get retired after playing two matches... They work for ICC. From Pakistan, Sri Lanka, nobody gets there (to ICC)."



- DD Sports**
India vs Sri Lanka
Second Test, Day One
Live at 10:00 am
- TEN Sports**
Pakistan vs England
First ODI
Live at 12:00 pm
- ESPN**
New Zealand vs Australia
Third ODI
Live at 7:00 am
- English Premier Football League**
Liverpool vs Middlesbrough
Live at 6:40 pm
- Chelsea vs Wigan**
Live at 8:55 pm
- Newcastle vs Arsenal**
Live at 11:10 pm
- STAR Sports**
English Premier Football League
Bolton vs Aston Villa
Live at 8:55 pm
- SuperSport-3**
Primera Liga
Real Sociedad vs Villarreal
Live at 2:45 am (Sunday)



Leonine atop alone

SPORTS REPORTER

Holders Leonine Chess Club maintained their solo lead in the Dutch-Bangla Bank First Division Chess League after the end of the 13th round at the federation hall room yesterday.

Leonine beat BJMC 3.5-0.5 to push their tally to 45.5 points while Biman increased their collection to 44.5 after a 4-0 victory over Dolphin Chess Club.

Muktijoddha Sangsad Krira Chakra also won their board against Mohakkhal Prodip Sangha 4-0 to secure 44 points.

In the day's other matches, Destiny 2000 beat Farashganj Sporting Club 3.5-0.5, Sonali Bank beat Titus Club 2.5-1.5, Narayan-ganj City Chess Club beat Dhaka University Chess Team 2.5-1.5, Faith Chess Club beat Shahid Mufti Kashed Daba Dal 3.5-0.5 and Anushillan Daba KC beat Friends Chess Power 2.5-1.5.

Bangladesh await a tough fight from Nepal

AL MUSABBIR SADI from Karachi



Holders Bangladesh face a tougher opposition in Nepal in their second match of the Fourth SAFF Championship here today.

The celebration of an easy win over rank-outsiders Bhutan over, Argentine coach Diego Cruciani has chalked out a different strategy for the speedy and attacking players from the Himalayan Kingdom who lost 2-1 to India two days earlier.

The 41-year-old, who gave a long look into the India-Nepal match on Thursday, have decided to field the same eleven that blanked Bhutan 3-0 but he has more duty for the midfield.

"They keep the ball on the grass and have three-four very intelligent players. Their weak points are lack of an efficient scorer and the

defence. But number 10 (Basanta Thapa) is a dangerous player with good skill and shooting. We should take care of him. Basanta, a known face to the Bangladeshis, will be marked closely, said Cruciani adding that no particular one would be deployed for the ace Nepalese striker.

"I have told the players that every match is important and you have to fight for 90 minutes. They would be attacking but in the first minutes, we will wait. We will block their moves, rob the ball and don't let them have possession much. Also we will attack by surprise from both sides when Hassan or Titu go up.

When asked about Emily, the Brothers Union forward who scored a spectacular goal on his international debut against Bhutan, Cruciani said that he would like to take some time before giving the young player a permanent place.

"He should go step by step, slowly. I don't want to give him big

responsibility now. It's better he comes for 15 or 20 minutes at this stage.

I think the result of tomorrow's match would be close, may be 1-0 or 2-1. I hope we finish on the winning side. They are a very difficult team. They dominated the second half against India but had no luck.

India won because they have more intelligent players and are a tidy team.

We have many dangerous players. Farhad, Munna, Arman, Alfaz. Also when our defence joins the attack, Titu and Hassan came be dangerous too. Sujan and Rajani are also useful in the air for their headers. Joy was also very tidy and showed good technique as a defensive midfielder.

"We know that we have the

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India in Dravid, Sehwag scare

Second Test from today



AFP, New Delhi

Indian captain Rahul Dravid and his deputy Virender Sehwag have both fallen ill, dampening spirits in the home camp ahead of the second Test against Sri Lanka starting here on Saturday.

Dravid was down with a mild fever and Sehwag with a throat infection on Friday, leaving India sweating after poor batting form in the rain-hit drawn opening Test at Chennai.

India were shot out for just 167 at Chennai to lose the psychological advantage they had gained after thrashing Sri Lanka 6-1 in a seven-

match one-day home series last month.

Sri Lanka reached 168-4 at close in reply after the first three days were washed out.

Middle-order batsman Mohammad Kaif is the third Indian on the sick-list as he left midway through a practice session with stomach cramps. However, he was not in the playing eleven for the opening Test.

India coach Greg Chappell said he hoped Dravid and Kaif would be fit for the Test. He declined to comment on who would lead the side if both Dravid and vice captain Sehwag failed to recover in time.

"That is a hypothetical question because I am hoping Rahul will be fit for the match," said the former

Australian skipper.

"Sehwag also seems to be improving, but we will wait and see what happens."

Chappell said the Indian batting line-up was still formidable despite falling at Chennai.

"The ball was keeping low when we batted and perhaps we were not very well prepared after staying put in the hotel room for three days because of rain," Chappell said.

"Most of our batsmen are experienced and it will not be a problem for them to start getting good scores. We have not played many Tests recently and it is only a matter of time before the batsmen deliver."

India played two one-day series,

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Former India captains Sachin Tendulkar (L), Sourav Ganguly (C) and master leg-spinner Anil Kumble chat during a practice session at the Ferozeshah Kotla ground in New Delhi on Friday.

Kumble looks forward to 100th Test



REUTERS, New Delhi

India leg-spinner Anil Kumble wants to make his approaching 100th Test memorable by playing a lead role to help clinch a series victory over Sri Lanka.

Kumble, 35, will return to Delhi for the second Test starting on Saturday. He will become the fifth Indian to reach 100 Tests in the third and final game in Ahmedabad.

The Karnataka bowler captured all 10 second-innings wickets to help clinch a series-levelling victory over Pakistan at Delhi's Ferozeshah Kotla ground in 1999.

England spinner Jim Laker is the only other bowler in Test history to achieve the feat.

"Even then I had no expectations I would take 10 wickets," Kumble joked to reporters on Thursday. "I hope the team does well and I play a good part in it."

The Kotla pitch was relaid a few months ago and is predicted to assist seamers. The rain-hit first Test was drawn.

"It is always nice to know you have done well on this ground," he

Lee beamers could be killer

AFP, Sydney

Australian quick Brett Lee could kill a batsman unless cricketing authorities take action to prevent the beamers that have become a regular feature of his bowling, former New Zealand wicketkeeper Adam Parore said Friday.

Parore told Australia's Daily Telegraph he accepted Lee's explanation that the beamers were accidental but that he still believed preventative measures were needed to avert a tragedy.

"I don't think he is doing it deliberately but he probably needs the ropes put on him," Parore told the newspaper. "It's a bit too regular, if he was unlucky, there is a very real possibility he could kill someone."

"If he gets through the visor, he'll probably kill someone. I'm bloody sure he wouldn't want to live with that."

Australia's thrilling victory last over victory over New Zealand in Wellington last Wednesday was overshadowed by controversy over a beamer Lee bowled to Brendan McCullum, the fifth he has sent down to Kiwi batsmen in the past year.

Parore suggested that if a bowler

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'We want to win'

AL MUSABBIR SADI from Karachi

Nepal's Japanese coach Toshihiko Shiojawa will be under pressure of elimination from the Fourth SAFF Championship if his side can not snatch at least one point against Bangladesh today.

Shiojawa, who took charge two months ago, believed that inexperienced cost them the match against India but his boys deserved better.

"They are determined to win. They are hard working and a better team than the past. We could not play to our full potential against India," Shiojawa told yesterday.

"It's a do or die match for us. So, we will fight," the 58-year-old Japanese added.

Nepal gave international debut to six booters including Biskha Malla, the young goalkeeper who singled-handedly denied Bangladesh a place in the AFC Under-19 Youth Championship finals a couple of years ago. His brilliance in the qualifying match helped Nepal hold the Bangladesh U-19s to a 1-1 draw in Dhaka and earned the keeper a call to Dhaka Mohammedan.

Although veteran goalkeeper Upendra Man Singh -- who had announced his retirement from international football after the Third SAFF Championship in Dhaka -- is captain, striker Hari Khadka will lead as stand-in skipper like the first match.

Upendra is playing the role of a guardian of a young side, according to the team management.

Dull draw at Cox's Bazar

BDNEWS, Cox's Bazar

Abahani and Muktijoddha failed to produce any result in their Nitol-Tata National Football League match at the Cox's Bazar Stadium yesterday.

The battle of two powerhouses ended in a goalless draw that enabled Abahani to maintain their lead in Group B with seven points from three matches and a place in the Super Six.

On the other hand, the draw kept Muktijoddha to the second place with five points from as many matches while another giants Mohammedan follow the Reds with four points.

Without their two key strikers Ibrahim and Bulbul, Abahani mostly concentrated in the mid-field and their Cameroon midfielder Ndem played brilliantly to control the procession to earn the best player award.

Abahani got a chance in the 79th minute but Parvez missed the opportunity while Muktijoddha failed to create a single chance to break the deadlock.

The next round will be start from December 18 at the Bangabandhu National Stadium.

SAFF CHAMPIONSHIP

Hosts, Maldives in last four

SPORTS REPORTER from Karachi

Hosts Pakistan and the Maldives moved into the semifinals of the SAFF Championship as they won their respective group matches at the People's Sports Complex Stadium in Karachi on Friday.

The hosts laboured to a 1-0 victory over a resilient Afghanistan to register their second victory while enterprising Maldives earned a comfortable 2-0 victory over tough-tackling Sri Lanka in Group-A fixtures.

Mohammad Essa netted the all-important goal for Pakistan in the 53rd minute to break Afghan resistance.

Pakistan also won their opening match against Sri Lanka by the same margin while Afghanistan suffered a 9-1 defeat to the Maldives in their first match.

Ali Ashfaq and Ali Umar scored one each to give Maldives an easy victory against 10-man Sri Lanka.

With six points and a goal difference of plus ten, the Maldives are guaranteed a place in the semifinals but will be hoping to top the group when they play their final group stage match against hosts Pakistan on Sunday.

Div I cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

Jito made unbeaten 52 as Bangladesh Boys managed a three-wicket victory over Lalmitia Club in the First Division Cricket League at the Dhaka University ground yesterday.

After deciding to bat first Lalmitia were bundled out for 205 in 49.5 overs. Mushtaq scored 47 and Shahed was not out with 42.

In reply, Bangladesh Boys raced to 208-7 with two overs to spare.

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Bangladesh U-19 batsman Raqibul Hasan plays a late cut during his 61-run knock against England at the Fatullah Cricket Stadium on Friday.

Another day, another defeat for England



SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh thrived on half centuries by Mushfiqur Rahim and Raqibul Hasan to maintain their supremacy in the under-19 tri-nation tournament with a comfortable 42-run victory against England at the Fatullah Cricket Stadium yesterday.

Already confirmed their place on December 13 final, the home team sailed to their fifth successive win against an England youth side, who will go into their last game against Sri Lanka today at the back of five straight defeats.

Bangladesh's victory also ensured Sri Lanka's progress in the final, leaving the last game at the BKSP with

only an academic interest.

Fresh from an undefeated 75 against Sri Lanka, Mushfiqur smashed another captain's knock 78 and opener Raqibul Hasan struck 61 as Bangladesh posted a challenging 242-9 in 50 overs after being sent into bat.

Mushfiqur, who is in the tournament donned a Test cap, smote eight fours while Raqibul, who hit 121 against Sri Lanka, hit 0four boundaries in his 99-ball innings.

Tamim Iqbal and Mehdi Hasan added 24 runs each in the healthy Bangladesh total.

Nicolas James was the most successful England bowler with 3-43. In reply, Moeen Ali hammered a quick-fire 72 off 63 balls with three fours and as many sixes but that was not enough for England to avoid a defeat. The

visitors were bundled out for 200 in 46.4 overs in the face of some controlled bowling from Ishraq Sonnet and Sohrwardi Shuvo, who shared four wickets among them.

SCORES IN BRIEF

Bangladesh Under-19: 242-9 in 50 overs (Tamim 24, Rakibul 61, Sakib 1, Shamsur 0, Mehraj 16, Mushfiqur 78 not out, Shuvo 5, Mehdi 24, Ishraq 7, extras 21; Waters 1-44, James 3-43, Miller 1-43, Wooden 1-33, O'shea 1-22, Hamilton 1-49).

England Under-19: 200 all out in 46.4 overs (Chopra 36, Wood 21, James 20, Ali 72, Hamilton 13, Wright 15, extras 11, Sakib 1-18, Ishraq 2-22, Shuvo 2-49, Nabil 1-37, Mehraj 1-49).

Result: Bangladesh Under-19 won by 42 runs.

Inzy fears Eng comeback

First ODI today



AFP, Lahore

Pakistan captain Inzamamul Haq said his confident team would be wary of an England comeback in the five-match one-day international series which starts here on Saturday.

"Our win in the Tests has given us confidence, but I still think England is a very dangerous team and can stage a comeback in the one-dayers," said Inzamam,

whose side won the preceding Test series 2-0 last week.

Inzamam, under whom Pakistan have won their last seven limited-overs internationals, said the outcome of the one-dayers was not a foregone conclusion despite the Test result.

"It is nice to think that we have been winning, but on the other hand it is tough to switch from Tests to one-day cricket. We won't take it lightly," said Inzamam, under whom Pakistan have won 37 of 59 matches.

Pakistan came back from a 2-0

deficit to beat India 4-2 before routing the West Indies 3-0 early this year.

Pakistan will be boosted by the return of vice captain Younis Khan and allrounder Abdul Razzaq.

Younis missed Pakistan's innings and 100-run win in the last Test here due to his brother's death, while Razzaq missed the whole series due to an elbow injury.

Pakistan, however, will miss one-day specialist Shahid Afridi who was banned for a Tests and

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'American wrestling is nothing'



Champion Japanese wrestler Antonio Inoki speaks at a press conference at the Jatiya Press Club on Friday.

SPORTS REPORTER

Champion Japanese wrestler Antonio Inoki known to the world for his famous bout with legendary boxer Mohammad Ali arrived in Dhaka yesterday on a four-day visit.

The celebrated Japanese might be at the wrong of his age but he showed a lot of mental firepower at 62 while having his first bout with a group of local reporters at the Jatiya Press Club in the afternoon.

"You can do everything if you have the power," said the giant Japanese during an animated discussion.

"Sports is my life that's why I have come here even at the age of 62. My mission is to popularise wrestling in the world," said Inoki in his short statement.

Inoki however termed American-style wrestling as a farce.

"Actually you people watch the American version of wrestling which is entertaining but not real. If you want to see the real thing come to Japan," he said.

Inoki is best remembered for the 'infamous' Ali-Inoki battle in 1976, which was televised live in Dhaka. The 'bizarre' battle between world heavyweight champion boxer Muhammad Ali and the world champion wrestler drew huge attention but the evasive actions of Inoki throughout the 16 rounds turned it into a four morning show for the Ali fans in the

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