



## Did U Know?

Harbhajan Singh of India took 5/31 in the first ODI against England. It was his best performance, the fourth time that he has taken four wickets or more in a match and his second against England.



PHOTOS: STAR

HERE COME THE CHALLENGERS: (From L-R) The Sri Lanka, Philippines, Brunei, Pakistan and Cambodian teams on their arrival at Dhaka and Chittagong. They will take part in the AFC Challenge Cup from April 1.

## Cruciani names his squad



### SPORTS REPORTER

Diego Cruciani yesterday drafted in four newcomers and also decided to gamble on injured defender Mohammed Sujan when he announced the Bangladesh squad for the AFC Challenge Cup that kicks off in Dhaka and Chittagong on April 1.

Fullbacks Ebnul Siraji and Wali Faisal, midfielder Zahid Parvez and striker Mehdi Hassan Topu are the fresh recruits in the 20-member squad that surprisingly included Sujan.

Sujan was ruled out for injury during the camp but the Argentine coach wanted to take a chance with the central defender, who has

played pivotal roles for national team and his club Brothers Union.

"With senior fullback Hassan Al Mamun unavailable due to injury, we wanted to give the defence more solidity. The doctor has said that Sujan won't be fit for our opening game but as the tournament progresses, he has every chance to recover," Cruciani said during Bangladesh's last training session at BKSP yesterday.

"Sujan is a very important player and even if he is not fit for the second game, we can use him later in the tournament. The experts feel he would be fit before our second game unless another accident occurs," he informed.

Bangladesh, who have yet to win a single game at home since their 2-1 extra-time victory over India in the SAFF Championship semifinal in March 2003, face

Cambodia on the inaugural day of the 16-nation meet. The hosts are also pitted against Palestine and unfancied Guam in Group C.

Apart from Hassan, Sunny, Rintu, Faisal Mahmud, Zahid and Abdullah Parvez were axed from the preliminary squad.

"I was very impressed by the young players who were in the camp. They have responded well, especially Zahid Parvez. He was the best performer during our brief camp," said Cruciani referring to the inclusion of the diminutive Abahani midfielder.

Cruciani dropped four senior players Arman, Matiu Muna, Titu and Farhad after his side lost away in Uzbekistan 5-0 and suffered a 1-0 home defeat against Hong Kong in their previous two internationals in the 2007 Asian Cup qualifiers.

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## Ton-up Mubarak

### SPORTS REPORTER

Sri Lanka A captain Jehan Mubarak continued his superb form with a sublime 121 as Bangladesh A had yet another poor first day in the second four-day Test at the Shaheed Chandu Stadium in Bogra yesterday.

Sri Lanka A ended the day on a commanding 342 for 5.

Deciding to bat first, the visitors made a shaky start when national paceman Mashrafe Bin Mortuza, who is playing a first-class match after a long gap due to back pain, gave the hosts an early breakthrough in the fifth over.

Mashrafe caught behind by Mushfiqur Rahim with the scoreboard reading 15 for 1. Mubarak then joined Ian Daniel to launch a counter-attack to take away the home side's early initiative.

They shared 183 runs for the second wicket with left-handed Mubarak hammering 15 boundaries and four sixes in his 115-ball knock. He also hit a solid 140 and 99 not out in the drawn first Test at BKSP.

Ian Daniel scored a patient 68 off 107 balls. Mendis also hit a half-century coming into bat at number four.

Left-arm spinner Enamul Haque took two wickets to remove both the batsmen, while Jamaluddin took the wicket of Mendis.

### SCORES IN BRIEF

**SRI LANKA A:** First innings 342 for 5 in 90 overs (Daniel 68, Mubarak 121, Mendis 60, Gajjanayake 26 batting, Silva 14 batting; Enamul 2/79, Mashrafe 1/77, Jamal 1/59).

## Gunners outclass Juve



AFP, London

Patrick Vieira endured a torrid return to Highbury on Tuesday as Arsenal produced one of their most exhilarating European performances to beat Juventus 2-0 in the first leg of their Champions League quarterfinal.

Cesc Fabregas, the teenager whose prodigious talent convinced Arsene Wenger he could afford to sell Vieira to Juventus last summer, justified that faith by scoring Arsenal's opening goal then setting up Thierry Henry for the second.

It could easily have been a much more convincing win for Wenger's men, who will travel to Turin next week confident of securing their first semifinal appearance in Europe's premier competition.

"We could have scored more but that's football and if we play like that in Turin we should go through," said Fabregas.

Wenger was delighted with the quality of his side's game.

"The performance had everything you would want. We were

disciplined defensively, we played the football we wanted to and we scored two good goals.

"There is still a lot to do, but this is a good start. The one regret I have is that I think that there was one more goal in this game for us."

To cap a miserable night for Vieira, the French midfielder picked up a late booking for a foul on Jose Antonio Reyes and will miss the second leg through suspension, as will his midfield partner Mauro Camoranesi and defender Jonathan Zebina, who were both sent off in the dying minutes.

"We deserved to lose the game," admitted Juve coach Fabio Capello. "Up until the first goal it was quite balanced but we gave away too much in the second half without being dangerous at all."

"I feel for Patrick Vieira because we never gave him a chance to celebrate."

The home side had an early let-off after Philippe Senderos brought down Zlatan Ibrahimovic on the edge of the area; the Swedish striker's shot from the resulting free-kick piercing the wall but catching just enough of a deflection to carry it wide of Jens Lehmann's left-hand post.

## BCB set for record deal

### SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) is expected to receive a record sponsorship deal for next month's home series against Australia.

It was learnt that there is a heady two-way battle between two premier cellular operators for the bragging rights to the series.

The sources said that BCB is set break the one crore Taka barrier

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### TEN Sports

Sri Lanka vs Pakistan  
First Test, Day Five  
Live at 10:30 am



### Fernando Martin

(Real Madrid president)  
"Ronaldo is a great player, the best striker in the world when in the right condition."



### 4-day Test (Day Two)

Bangladesh A vs Sri Lanka A  
Venue: Shaheed Chandu Stadium, Bogra

## Half of them arrive



### SPORTS REPORTER

The AFC Challenge Cup began to take real shape when seven teams arrived in the country for the 16-nation meet kicking off on April 1 in Dhaka and Chittagong.

Pakistan were the first team to land in Dhaka on Tuesday, followed by Chinese Taipei, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Brunei and Afghanistan who flew direct to Chittagong where half the group matches and one semifinal will be held.

Cambodia and Guam, both drawn with hosts Bangladesh, also arrived in the capital on Wednesday.

With half the teams already settled in, India, Bhutan, Palestine, Macau, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan are due today. Nepal will be the last

team to reach the day before the start of the 2.5-million-dollar event.

The preparation at the Bangabandhu National Stadium is all but finished as pressure from the Asian governing body of football has seen months' of works done inside a week including the renovated press box and its adjacent new VIP gallery, which remained incomplete for more than a year.

### CHITTAGONG READY

Chittagong correspondent adds: The port city is all set to co-host its first international tournament at the MA Aziz Stadium, which will stage fifteen matches including two quarterfinals and one semi final.

India will take on Afghanistan and Chinese Taipei face Philippines on the opening day on Saturday.

Initially the CJKS in consultation with the AFC officials selected four practice grounds: District Police Line Field at Agrabad, City Police

Line ground at Dampara, Physical Education College field at Halishahar and Customs Excise and Vat Academy field at Sagarika Road. But the Chittagong Metropolitan Police (CMP) authority refused to give their Dampara ground at the last moment.

CJKS officials were surprised by the unexpected incident.

### KYRGYZSTAN MISS

#### KEY PLAYERS

Kyrgyzstan's acting coach Boris Podkorytov has drafted 12 players from league champions Dordoi Dynamo for the tournament. The squad also has seven players from

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## Sangakkara shines



### REUTERS, Colombo

Kumar Sangakkara scored 185 and spinner Muttiah Muralidaran claimed late wickets to push Sri Lanka towards victory in the first Test against Pakistan on Wednesday.

Sharing in important stands with Mahela Jayawardene (82) and Thilan Samaraweera (64), Sangakkara propelled Sri Lanka to 448 for five in their second innings, setting up an unlikely 458-run victory target.

Pakistan were 89 for two at the close of the fourth day.

The 28-year-old Sangakkara, who became the seventh Sri Lankan to score more than 4,000 Test runs on Tuesday, cracked 23 boundaries during a ninth Test century that spanned seven-and-a-half hours.

Sri Lanka's second innings run spree, on a pitch that grew increasingly placid for the pace bowlers but was offering turn for the spinners, left Pakistan needing to bat for more than four sessions to secure a draw.

The tourists' openers, drained after two long days fielding in Colombo's wet heat, started brightly with a 59-run stand either side of the tea interval.

Muralidaran, bowling unchanged for 14 overs after an initial attack with the new ball, struck in the final hour, however, to leave Pakistan precariously placed at the close.

Imran Farhat (34) was the first to depart as he edged to slip and then Younis Khan (eight) was cleaned bowled by a big off break as he tried to cut through the off side.

Shoaib Malik, dropped on 14 by Sangakkara behind the stumps, finished unbeaten on 30 and Faisal Iqbal was nine not out at stumps.

Earlier, Sri Lanka avoided any major damage from the second new ball on the fourth morning as they added 111 runs in an extended 34-over session.

The one casualty of the morning was skipper Jayawardene, who topped an attempted hook off Mohammad Asif and was caught by

Abdul Razzaq running in from the long leg boundary.

Asif's strike with the new ball ended a marathon 158-run partnership that allowed Sri Lanka to take complete control of the game.

Jayawardene's 139-ball innings was laced with 12 fours and one glorious straight six.

Sangakkara had been content to play the anchor role while Jayawardene attacked, but the loss of his captain encouraged him to adopt a more aggressive approach.

Samaraweera, fortunate to survive an lbw appeal off leg-spinner Shahid Afridi early on, helped to add a further 144 during a hot afternoon.

Sangakkara eventually departed as he searched for quick runs before the declaration and skied a catch off spinner Shoaib Malik.

Sri Lanka then gave wicket-keeper Sangakkara 20 minutes to rest before declaring.

Fast bowler Asif was Pakistan's most successful bowler, claiming 2-71 from 23 overs.

The second and final Test in the series starts in Kandy next Monday.

### SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard at stumps on the fourth day of the first Test between Sri Lanka and Pakistan at the Sinhalese Sports Club ground on Wednesday:

**SRI LANKA:** First innings 185 (Dilshan 69, Maharooof 46; Asif 4-41, Kaneria 3-44)

**PAKISTAN:** First innings 176 (Farhat 69; Maharooof 4-52, Muralidaran 3-41, Malinga 3-30)

**SRI LANKA:** Second innings (over-

night 242-2)  
Tharanga c Farhat b Kaneria 72  
Jayasuriya c Akmal b Asif 13  
Sangakkara c Inzamam b Malik 185  
Jayawardene c Razzaq b Asif 82  
Samaraweera c Farhat b Afridi 64  
Dilshan not out 8  
Maharooof not out 5  
Extras: (b-10, lb-6, nb-3) 19  
Total: (For 5 wks decl in 128 overs) 4 4 8

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PHOTO: AFP

Arsenal captain Thierry Henry (C) glides past Juventus players Jonathan Zebina (R) and Mauro Camoranesi (L) during their Champions League quarterfinal clash at Highbury on Wednesday.