



Chittagong Mohammedan and Abahani players observe a minute's silence before the start of the second half of their B. League match as a sign of respect to Bangladesh cricketer Manzarul Islam who died in a tragic road accident yesterday.

Tigers mourn

FROM PAGE 17 World Cup we will dedicate that to Rana," added Bashar. Bashar also expressed his grief at the sad demise of Setu who was on the back seat of the same motor-bike Rana was riding. "It is a great loss for our cricket. Our heartfelt sympathy goes out to Setu's young family," said Bashar. The Bangladesh team have also decided to wear black armbands during the match to show their respect to Rana. **BANGLADESH SQUAD** Habibul Bashar (Captain), Shahrir Nafees, Tamim Iqbal, Aftab Ahmed, Shakib Al Hasan, Mohammad Ashraful, Mushfiqur Rahim, Mashrafe Bin Mortaza, Mohammed Rafique, Abdur Razzak, Syed Rasel, Tapash Baishya.

Dhaka giants

FROM PAGE 17 marks, beating Arambagh 1-0, but the local giants have been far from impressive even under the guidance of Shafiqul Islam Manik, the wily coach who does not have a very strong squad. They drew 1-1 with Sheikh Russel and a win or a draw will keep them atop the table until they take on perennial foes Abahani in the next week. With leaders Brothers having a break, Arambagh will be pitted against Chittagong Abahani at home on Tuesday and the week will be rounded off with the Sheikh Russel-Rahmatganj match on Wednesday.

Irish heroes

FROM PAGE 20 The main hero of the team is 33-year-old Australian-born fitness instructor Jeremy Bray, who carried his bat for 115 off 137 balls. "The great Irish trait of never giving in earned the cricketers a stunning tie," says the Irish Independent, "It sparked scenes of jubilation both on and off the field." It said Bray's performance "must count as Ireland's finest ever innings" and the match was "Ireland's finest ever cricketing day". The game is very much a minority sport in the Republic with attitudes only changing in recent years following the Northern Ireland peace process and the arrival of immigrants from cricketing countries boosting the game. In the past, playing cricket had a political dimension. It was known as a "garrison" sport because it was associated with British army barracks around the country during colonisation. It was brought to Ireland by the English and initially thrived when it also spread through landed estates. The progress of the game was then hammered by two developments -- "land wars" of the late 1800s against mainly Protestant British landlords and the 1884 founding of the Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA) to nurture the native games of hurling and Gaelic football. In 1890s the GAA brought in a ban on "foreign games" like cricket, hockey, rugby and soccer. The ban was not rescinded until 1971.

Did U Know?

Ellis Edgar Achong, who played Tests for West Indies, is the only player of Chinese descent.

LOCAL SNIPPETS

SPORTS REPORTER

BDA tour of SL The Bangladesh A team left Dhaka for Colombo yesterday to play two Tests and three ODIs against their Sri Lankan counterparts. The 14-member team is led by Tushar Imran was expected to reach Colombo at midnight yesterday. **DIV 1 CRICKET** Shakil Haider and Sajed Khan slammed hundreds to help their sides win in the Kai-Altech First Division League. Young Pegasus B skipper Sajed lead the charge in a thrilling 275-run chase against Jatrabari, with his 108 while Shakil, opening for Surjo Torun, hit exactly hundred and was unbeaten as Torun beat Sadharan Bina by eight wickets. Pegasus B won by 6 wickets at the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium.

In the other match of the day, Kathalbagan beat CCS by 19 runs in a low-scoring affair. **SCHOOL CRICKET** In the zonal final of the Standard Chartered School Cricket tournament, Rayer Bazar High School beat Dhaka Ideal High School by 55 runs at the East End Club ground. Rayer Bazar was bowled out for 194 in 40.1 overs but then went on to bowl out Dhaka Ideal for only 139 runs in 45.2 overs. Al Amin took five for 33 for Rayer Bazar. **PREMIER VOLLEYBALL** Ten teams will take part in the Premier League Volleyball competition as it begins today at the volleyball court. Two matches will be played on the day.

NATIONAL WOMEN'S CHESS Sharmin Sultana and Rani Hamid will play-off against each other today after both players were tied at 10 points each after the end of the last round of games in the final phase of the 28th Aromatic Gold National Women Chess Championship at the Federation Hall Room yesterday. **BKSP CUP** Green Herald and BKSP will contest the final of the BKSP Cup basketball tournament at BKSP today. Green Herald advanced after beating St Gregory's 65-40 while BKPS got the better of Chittagong Basketball Training School 72-51 in the other semifinal.

Cup matters: Flintoff

AFP, Gros Islet



Andrew Flintoff found his way into the World Cup matters just as much to England as the Ashes. All sections of English cricket -- players, fans and media -- tend to prize Test success above all else, with victory in the Ashes series against Australia, which England last achieved in 2005, considered the ultimate achievement. With Test matches routinely sold out in England, something that doesn't always happen elsewhere, this has led to suggestions that winning one-day matches is a long way down the list of English cricket's priorities. The fact that England have failed to make the second round of the last two World Cups hasn't helped the cause of those players who say they do care about limited overs success. However, after their recent 5-0 Ashes series thrashing in Australia, it was the one-day format that gave England something to cling to as they overcame a poor start to win a triangular tournament also featuring New Zealand -- their opponents in their World Cup Group C opener here Friday. "To me it's on a level," giant all-rounder Flintoff told reporters at the Beausejour Cricket Ground here Thursday when asked to compare the Ashes and the World Cup. "In Test match cricket you've got the Ashes which is obviously the biggest thing and the World Cup is the one-day format is huge. "If you look at any other sport the World Cup is the pinnacle of all players' careers. In the one-day format this is it. This is what you build for, this is what you want to play in." In South Africa four years ago, England's World Cup campaign was overshadowed by protracted wrangling which ultimately led them to boycott their scheduled group match in the Zimbabwe capital of Harare on safety and political grounds -- a decision which cost them valuable points. However, there have been no such distractions this time around and Flintoff said of the team's preparation for this tournament: "It's gone miles better. We haven't been sat in a room for three days discussing things. "We've been able to get out there, train and practice, just building up. We're in a nice position." Looking ahead, Flintoff added: "I've played in two World Cups and

not got to the second round yet and I am keen to do well in this one. "It is a big stage and it is a chance for people and teams to shine. "If you look at our team, we have a side of match-winners and each one of those will want to perform and show what they can do. It's something which excites me and it's definitely something exciting the rest of the lads as well." England will look to Flintoff to lead their pace attack and provide some quick runs in the middle-order. And the Lancashire star said he was ready for the challenge. "At 29, I've played far more one-day international cricket, I'm better equipped. I'm expecting to perform." "I think its quite wide open. If you look at the top six or seven sides everyone's got a chance," he added. "The one thing we've got to find is consistency to play well for a long period of time. "We can win one-off games but we've got to keep going from where we left off in Australia, winning four games on the bounce."

SL rejoice big win

FROM PAGE 20 "We also didn't stretch the West Indies or England in the 1975 World Cup, but we came back strongly to win in 1996," he said. "There should be a proper development and I'm sure the ICC is monitoring the progress of these countries. The more games they play at this level, the more they will improve. "For us, it is always good to have these countries playing in big tournaments. That was how we learnt. Hopefully, they will do the same. We have to take into consideration that they are making their debut." **SCOREBOARD** Scoreboard of the World Cup Group B match between Bermuda and Sri Lanka at the Queen's Park Oval in Port of Spain on Thursday: **SRI LANKA** Tharanga c Minors b Hurdle 30 Jayasuriya c Pitcher b Mukuddem 22 Jayawardene c Hurdle b Cann 85 Sangakkara c Tucker b Leverock 76 Silva not out 55 Dilshan c Tucker b Hurdle 12 Maharooof c Hemp b Mukuddem 9 Arnold not out 2 Extras: (lb-13, nb-14, w-13) 30 Total: (For six wkts in 50 overs) 321 Fall of wickets: 1-62, 2-78, 3-228, 4-267, 5-305, 6-316. **Bowler** O M R W Hurdle 9 1 61 2

Mukuddem	10	0	50	2
Tucker	10	0	50	0
Leverock	10	0	67	1
Borden	3	0	27	0
Cann	5	0	34	1
Romaine	3	0	29	0
BERMUDA				
Smith lbw b Vaas	0			
Pitcher b Maharooof	6			
Mukuddem c Sangakkara b Malinga	0			
Hemp c Jayawardene b Malinga	14			
Romaine lbw b Malinga	0			
Tucker b Muralidaran	4			
Minors c Sangakkara b Maharooof	4			
Cann c Sangakkara b Maharooof	28			
Borden c sub (Kulasekara) b Maharooof	6			
Hurdle not out	6			
Leverock lbw b Muralidaran	1			
Extras: (lb-6, w-3)	9			

LOWEST WC TOTALS				
AFP, Port of Spain				
Lowest World Cup totals after Bermuda were bowled out for 78 against Sri Lanka in the Group B match at Queen's Park Oval here on Thursday:				
Lowest totals (Team, score, opponents, venue, year):				
Canada 36	Sri Lanka	Paarl	2003	
Canada 45	England	Manchester	1979	
Namibia 45	Australia	Potchefstroom	2003	
Scotland 68	West Indies	Leicester	1999	
Pakistan 74	England	Adelaide	1992	
Bermuda 78	Sri Lanka	Port of Spain	2007	
Namibia 84	Pakistan	Kimberley	2003	
Sri Lanka 86	West Indies	Manchester	1975	
England 93	Australia	Leeds	1975	

'No Urdu ban'

AFP, Basseterre

The International Cricket Council (ICC) has denied it has stopped Pakistani players from speaking in Urdu in post-match press conferences during the World Cup, an official said Thursday. "At no point did the ICC say it cannot allow the Pakistan team management to hold press conferences in Urdu. The ICC doesn't tell the participating teams in which language they have to speak," an ICC spokesman told AFP. There have been reports in Pakistan claiming that the ICC asked Pakistan to avoid holding media conferences in their native language. "The issue of Pakistan players speaking in Urdu was discussed with the Pakistan Cricket Board chairman Naseem Ashraf in Kingston earlier this week and he agreed with the ICC that for all media events happening inside the playing field players will speak in English. "While for all media events outside the playing field, Pakistan players will talk in Urdu," added the ICC spokesman. Pakistan last week announced that its players would speak Urdu in order to stop them being misquoted. The team's media manager Perviz Mir has been acting as an interpreter. Pakistan lost their first match in Group D to the hosts West Indies by 54 runs in Jamaica on Tuesday. They next play Ireland on Saturday. The top two teams will qualify for the next round of Super Eights. **A cruel** Condoling the death, Bangladesh Cricket Board, his club Abahani, Kalabagan Kira Chakra, Young Pegasus, Bangladesh Sports Journalists Association, Bangladesh Sports Writers Association and Sammilito Kira Paribar expressed deep sympathy for the bereaved family and prayed for the salvation of the departed soul. For any sports writer, it was heartbreaking to create a career compilation after a player who is just 22 years old had appeared six Tests and 25 one-day internationals. The man was set to leave for Colombo on March 24 to play for his country once more, but destiny took him into eternal darkness.

A tough game

FROM PAGE 17 match, they beat Namibia by 171 runs, and Wasim Akram collected five wickets for 28 runs. In 1987, Pakistan batsman Manzoor Elahi hit 109 off 65 balls, including 10 sixes, during a limited-overs (60 overs) tour match against Ireland in Dublin. **SQUAD PAKISTAN (from):** Inzamamul Haq (captain), Azhar Mahmood, Danish Kaneria, Imran Nazir, Kamran Akmal, Mohammad Hafeez, Mohammad Sami, Mohammad Yousuf, Navedul Hasan, Rao Iftikhar Anjum, Shahid Afridi, Shoaib Malik, Umar Gul, Yasir Arafat, Younis Khan. **IRELAND (from):** Trent Johnson (captain), Andre Botha, Jeremy Bray, Kenny Carroll, Peter Gillespie, Dave Langford-Smith, Kyle McCallan, John Mooney, Paul Mooney, Eoin Morgan, Kevin O'Brien, Niall O'Brien, William Porterfield, Boyd Rankin, Andrew White. Umpires: Billy Bowden (NZL) and Brian Jerling (RSA)

Minnows offer mixed bag

AFP, Bridgetown



Bermuda joined Scotland in the World Cup hall of shame when they slumped to the second heaviest defeat in tournament history on Thursday. But fellow debutants Ireland then rode to the rescue of the game's minnows by snatching a heart-stopping last-ball tie with Zimbabwe. Bermuda, chasing 322, were shot out for just 78 by Sri Lanka in Port of Spain, the sixth lowest World Cup total ever registered. The 243-run margin of defeat was just 13 shy of the record 256-run mauling that Australia handed out to Namibia in 2003 and came only a day after Scotland had lost by 203 runs to the world champions, now the third heaviest defeat. The back-to-back humiliations will only serve to give extra ammunition to the critics who claim that Non-Test playing nations have no place in the World Cup and whose participation means that the tournament is a seven-week marathon. But Sri Lanka skipper Mahela Jayawardene backed Bermuda's involvement. "We also didn't stretch the West Indies or England in the 1975 World Cup, but we came back strongly to win the title in 1996," he said. Jayawardene (85), Kumar Sangakkara (76) and Chamara Silva (55 not out) were in rich form before Sri Lanka's seamers took over. Farveez Maharooof finished with 4-23, while Lasith Malinga grabbed three wickets with his deceptive round-arm action. Off-spinner Muttiah Muralidaran took two wickets. Lionel Cann (28) and David Hemp (14) were the only batsmen to reach double-figures in a dismal batting performance and they could face further humiliation in their remaining Group B matches when they take on free-scoring India as well as improving Bangladesh. Bermuda skipper Irving Romaine admitted that his side were bamboozled by Sri Lanka's seam attack. "The front-line batsmen could not handle Malinga," he said. "Tackling that style of bowling was a new experience for all of us." At Kingston, Ireland pulled off only the third tie in World Cup history. Zimbabwe, chasing 222 to win, were cruising at one stage with just 15 needed from 36 balls. But nerves took over and Edward Rainsford was run out on the last delivery. "We did our best to throw it away," said Ireland skipper Trent Johnston. "But we fought back in the

Cup, but we came back strongly to win the title in 1996," he said. Jayawardene (85), Kumar Sangakkara (76) and Chamara Silva (55 not out) were in rich form before Sri Lanka's seamers took over. Farveez Maharooof finished with 4-23, while Lasith Malinga grabbed three wickets with his deceptive round-arm action. Off-spinner Muttiah Muralidaran took two wickets. Lionel Cann (28) and David Hemp (14) were the only batsmen to reach double-figures in a dismal batting performance and they could face further humiliation in their remaining Group B matches when they take on free-scoring India as well as improving Bangladesh. Bermuda skipper Irving Romaine admitted that his side were bamboozled by Sri Lanka's seam attack. "The front-line batsmen could not handle Malinga," he said. "Tackling that style of bowling was a new experience for all of us." At Kingston, Ireland pulled off only the third tie in World Cup history. Zimbabwe, chasing 222 to win, were cruising at one stage with just 15 needed from 36 balls. But nerves took over and Edward Rainsford was run out on the last delivery. "We did our best to throw it away," said Ireland skipper Trent Johnston. "But we fought back in the

last eight to 10 overs to give ourselves a chance." "We have a great bunch of fighters in our team and we never know when the game is over." Ireland opener Jeremy Bray carried his bat to make an unbeaten 115 and was named man-of-the-match. Friday's games see world number one South Africa open their campaign against the Netherlands in Group A while England and New Zealand clash in a crucial Group C match. England won't decide on whether or not injured quick James Anderson can play in the match in St Lucia until the morning. The Lancashire fast bowler injured the little finger of his right hand during catching practice on Wednesday. New Zealand will have all-rounder Craig McMillan and Peter Fulton available after they shrugged off injuries but are without seamer Mark Gillespie and Jacob Oram. South Africa look likely to rest pace bowler Makhaya Ntini for the match at St Kitts. Ntini only joined the team late Wednesday after attending the birth of his daughter back home.

Ferrari gains early edge

FROM PAGE 20 Raikkonen was runner-up behind Alonso in a Renault in last year's Australian GP and was also third for McLaren in the 2002 and 2003 Melbourne races, while Massa has only finished once in four Australian race starts. McLaren rookie Lewis Hamilton posted the third-best lap time of 1:27.829 ahead of Renault's Giancarlo Fisichella on 1:27.941. "I was so excited when I drove out of the garage for the first time this morning," 22-year-old Hamilton said. "It was an incredible feeling as I have wanted to be a Formula One driver since I started karting, and now I am enjoying every single moment. "Back at the McLaren Technology Centre we have done a lot of simulation work to prepare me for this weekend, but it was good to actually drive it for real." Alonso, at his first GP for McLaren, said he almost completed all the work he intended to in Friday's practice. "We almost completed the planned programme but the track conditions (rain) in the first session obviously had an impact," the Spaniard said. "We are heading in the right direction, which is positive, and I'm looking forward to the next two days." World champion team Renault experienced fuel pressure problems with the cars of both Fisichella and rookie Heikki Kovalainen. Fisichella, who won the 2005

Australian GP for Renault, was fourth fastest while Kovalainen languished in the 18th spot. "It was a mixed day for us," Fisichella said. "The performance of the car looked quite encouraging, especially on the longer runs, but our problems meant we didn't complete the programme. "We still need to fine-tune the set-up, but the handling is okay and now we need to try and match our long-run performance, on the first lap with new tyres." BMW-Sauber's German driver Nick Heidfeld clocked in fifth quickest with 1:27.970. "It looks like we have been able to confirm the positive impressions we had from our pre-season testing," Heidfeld said.

almost put the home side ahead in the 43rd minute but his tap on a right-flank corner by Caporale was brilliantly saved from the line by substitute fullback Sanwar at the far post. Just as port city coach Nazrul Islam Ledu had predicted, the foreign imports failed to adjust to the conditions and his young side played with more determination to thwart the rival attacks. After efforts by a lacklustre Abahani captain Joy and fellow defensive midfielder Pranotosh missed the mark, Parodi was fortunate to win a penalty on the hour when he fell inside the box after an apparently clean challenge by

Bad day for Abahanis

FROM PAGE 20 shot the ball to the lone keeper inside from the box. Emily, a shadow of the finisher he has grown into, then failed to reach a superb low cross by Ujjal inside the six-yard box. While Mariano Caporale played with authority in an impressive debut as a centre-back, his compatriot Parodi showed more skill with releasing the ball passes than having the final shot at goal. He came close though, ten minutes from the break, but blasted a left-footer over the bar after meeting Ujjal's low cross on seven yards out of goal. With the attackers struggling to finish, central defender Nazrul

opposition stopper Israfil, who was trying to clear a through by Joy. The golden opportunity, however, failed to break the deadlock as black and whites goalkeeper Titu's legworks blocked a powerful but straightforward shot by Parodi from the spot. Ibrahim, Abahani's old Ghanain attacker who was otherwise self-ish, squandered another chance to frustrate a 10,000-strong crowd in the 72nd minute when he rattled the near post while inspired defending by Sanwar denied Parodi from an attempt on goal after the Argentine was found by Ujjal's dipping cross that beat Titu. Cruciani finally replaced a tired Joy with Argentine media Mariano Sanchez with just a couple of minutes left on the clock but there was not enough time to perform a miracle. It was not a day for the sky-blues as Khulna Abahani also dropped points, losing 1-0 at home to Farashganj Sporting Club with Ugandan forward Idris Mutubi separating the two sides with a 53-minute strike at the Khulna Stadium. Dhaka riversiders Farashganj reached four points after two matches while Khulna Abahani, who won their opener, stuck to three points after two consecutive losses. Yellow cards: Israfil, Sanwar, Yousuf (Chittagong Mohammedan)

TEAMS Abahani: Biplab, Siraji, Nazrul, Caporale, Waly, Joy (Sanchez), Pranotosh, Ujjal, Ibrahim and Parodi. Chittagong Mohammedan: Titu, Tareq (Sanwar), Sohel, Saikat (Towhid), Israfil, Doulat, Camara, Asif (Pavel), Zahid, Yousuf and Dipu. Referee: Azad Rahman.

Ireland win a tie

FROM PAGE 20 the sixth over. Justice Chibhabha arrived and with Sibanda playing the aggressive role, they put Zimbabwe on course for victory with a stand of 66 for the second wicket. They were just beginning to get into the swing of things, when Chibhabha was caught at mid-off off Irish captain Trent Johnson for 12 in the 21st over. His dismissal precipitated a purple patch for the Irish. They collected the wickets of Sean Williams, Sibanda, and Chigumbura in the space of 29 balls to leave Zimbabwe wobbling 133 for five after 30 overs. Earlier, Bray, a 33-year-old fitness instructor born in Sydney, Australia, remained steadfast, despite wickets tumbling around him and reached his landmark, when he square drove Mpofu to third man for the last of his 10 boundaries.

ZIMBABWE AND IRELAND SCOREBOARD

FROM PAGE 20									
Chigumbura	6	2	21	2	3.50				
Brent	10	1	40	2	4.00				
Utseya	10	0	29	0	2.90				
Williams	6	1	21	1	3.50				
Matsikenyeri	1	0	6	0	6.00				
ZIMBABWE	R	M	B	4s	6s				
Duffin c NJ O'Brien b Rankin	12	23	22	2	0				
Sibanda hit wicket b White	67	121	84	9	0				
Chibhabha c Langford b Johnston	12	66	36	1	0				
Williams c Rankin b McCallan	14	10	13	2	0				
Matsikenyeri not out	73	122	76	9	1				
Chigumbura c Bray b McCallan	4	5	9	0	0				
Taylor run out	24	57	40	3	0				
Brent lbw b Botha	3	15	12	0	0				
Utseya c Morgan b KJ O'Brien	1	3	3	0	0				
Mpofu run out	0	3	5	0	0				
Rainsford run out	1	10	1	0	0				
Extras: (lb-1, w-7, nb-2)	10								
Total: (All out in 50 overs)	221								
Fall of wickets: 1-26, 2-92, 3-107, 4-128, 5-133, 6-203, 7-212, 8-213, 9-213, 10-221.									
Bowler	O	M	R	W	Econ				
Langford-Smith	9	0	34	0	3.77				
Rankin	7	1	43	1	6.14				
Botha	10	2	32	1	3.20				
Johnston	10	2	32	1	3.20				
McCallan	9	1	56	2	6.22				
White	3	1	15	1	5.00				
O'Brien	2	1	8	1	4.00				
Result: Match tied.									
Match-of-the-day: J Bray.									
Toss: Zimbabwe									
Umpires: I Gould (England) and B Jerling (South Africa)									
TV umpire: B Bowden (New Zealand)									
Match referee: R Mahanama (Sri Lanka)									

Utseya blames

FROM PAGE 20 Monday, and Pakistan next Wednesday. "We will have to pick ourselves up," he said. "We played some good cricket in patches, but we will have to go out there and give it our best shot. "If we remain positive, you never know what could happen. Look what happened in this game." There have been two other tied matches in World Cup history. Eight years ago, South Africa, chasing 213, tied with Australia at Birmingham, and four years ago, Sri Lanka, chasing a revised target of 230 off 45 overs, tied with the Proteas at Durban.