

## Dhaka-Tangail final today

SPORTS REPORTER

Tangail and Dhaka moved into the final of the Spectra Group 1st inter-district women's kabaddi competition after they won their respective semifinals at the Kabaddi Stadium yesterday.

The final will be held today at the same venue.

On way to the final, Tangail crushed Narayanganj 67-27 with four lolas in the first semifinal after which Dhaka snuck past Rajshahi 40-38 in the day's other semifinal.

Dhaka eased past Manikganj 52-8 in their day's first match while Narail, Narayanganj and Rajshahi won their respective matches while the match between Gaibandha and Jamalpur ended in an exciting 33-33 draw.

## Surprise early

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counting the rain breaks), it is special. The way we batted and bowled in the first innings was simply amazing. We played good cricket and didn't allow Bangladesh to raise their heads. We wanted to knock them off every time we bowled and batted and that's what happened," said the champion off-spinner who became only the second bowler to achieve the 700-wicket milestone after Australian leg-spinner Shane Warne.

"Taking 700 wickets is a big achievement. I think I can achieve a little bit more than the world record. I hope to play until the next World Cup in 2011 and the challenge is that before I retire, I am thinking of taking 1000 Test wickets," said the 35-year-old spin wizard.

He said that he was looking forward to their next assignment in Australia in November.

"I want to go to Australia and try and win the series because we have never won it there. Also I have not taken five wickets in an innings in Australia. They are the No 1 team in the world but we can also be better than them if we play to our strengths" he added.

## Lawson close

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However, 49-year-old Lawson looks set to get the nod after players and team management gave him backing.

Meanwhile, Pakistan's Cricket Board (PCB) will conduct out-of-competition dope tests on the 30 players they have named in their preliminary squad for the Twenty20 World Cup in South Africa in September.

The dope tests would be conducted soon as part of Pakistan's zero tolerance policy against drugs in sports.

## Nakamura

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Japan coach Ivica Osim acknowledged how much the weather is playing a part after his team's victory on Friday.

"Most of all, I am happy that it has ended without any of our players and staff suffering a heart attack," he said of the match.

"It was such harsh weather conditions."

## Mohammedan

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bigger victory when he screwed his twin-shot. After his first effort was partially stopped by Mamun, the yellow-haired Mohammedan forward put the rebound wide of the open goal.

Farashganj, who suffered their seventh loss in 18 outings, remained on 21 points.

## TEAMS

MOHAMMEDAN: Himel, Arif, Oafe, Biplob, Zahid, Kamal, Divine, Mithu (Rony), Sharif, Paul (Farhad) and Emeka.

FARASHGANJ: Mamun, Liton (Kutub), Mamun Mia, Faisal, Jamal (Rajib), Khaled (Murad), Kabir, Arup (Rajib), Puma, Rony and Robin (Ali).

Referee: Abdul Hannan.



## Did U Know?

The high jump method of jumping head first and landing on the back is called the Fosbury Flop.

## El Finale

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Baptista said the Brazilian midfield will concentrate on preventing Riquelme from controlling the game and helping Lionel Messi and Carlos Tevez.

"What they do best is their midfield," Baptista said. "Riquelme commands their game, he sets the rhythm of the game, and he's great at dead balls. And then there is Messi's speed on the counter-attack."

Baptista and his teammates are unfamiliar with the tag of underdogs but they are also keen to point out they have a few aces of their own up



PHOTO: COURTESY

Players of the Daily Janakantha celebrate after they clinched the Pepsi-DRU six-a-side cricket tournament at the Maulana Bhasani Stadium yesterday.

## Janakantha lift DRU cricket title

SPORTS REPORTER

The Daily Janakantha lifted the title of Pepsi-DRU six-a-side cricket tournament after they romped past Channel i by five wickets at the Maulana Bhasani National Hockey Stadium yesterday.

Chasing 52 to win, Janakantha openers Asif Iqbal and Jasimuddin stormed to the target after captain Asif took two wickets to restrict Channel i. Partha Tanvir Noved made 30 for the runners-up.

Jasimuddin, who took a wicket and scored 15 not out, was adjudged man-of-the-match.

## Tendulkar warms up well

AFP, Chelmsford

Sachin Tendulkar warmed up for next week's first Test at Lord's with a hundred against England Lions here Saturday.

Tendulkar, 99 not out at tea, completed his 63rd first-class hundred in the first over of the second day's final session with a single off Tim Bresnan. He reached the landmark in 140 balls with one six and 13 fours.

The Little Master is Test cricket's leading all-time century maker with 37 from 137 matches.

Earlier, Bresnan scored 126 not out in the 'A' side's total of 413 for eight declared before skipper Andrew Strauss, likely to open the innings at Lord's, called a halt in this three-day match.

India then suffered a top-order collapse and were 65 for four before Tendulkar and Yuvraj Singh came together to staunch the flow of wickets.

Tendulkar, 34, who was a teenager when he scored his first Test century at Old Trafford in 1990, has indicated this is likely to be his last England tour.

The Lord's match, due to start on Thursday, is the first of a three-Test series.

## Iran coach hits

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on Thursday.

"This is just amazing. It was an unfair action by the referee. I threw a bottle at one of my players and I didn't deserve to be sent off but I left the pitch without complaining," Ghalehnoei said.

"I'm amazed they're suspending me for this game."

The triple champions trail China on goal difference in Group C with the team finishing top avoiding a punishing travel schedule in the knock-out stages.

## Fergie fires

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ment this summer only Liverpool have attempted to match them by spending almost 40 million pounds on Fernando Torres, Yossi Benayoun and Ryan Babel. Chelsea have spent 13 million pounds on Florent Malouda, the Lyons winger, but Tal Ben Haim, Steve Sidwell and Claudio Pizarro have arrived at Stamford Bridge on free transfers.

Arsenal have spent 8 million pounds on Eduardo da Silva, the Croatia striker, although the sale of Thierry Henry for 16.2 million pounds has left them lacking their usual goal threat. Ferguson, however, claims that Arsene Wenger, the Arsenal manager, was right to let the France striker leave the Emirates Stadium for Barcelona.

"Arsenal are still a big threat and they'll be in the top four, even without Thierry Henry," Ferguson said. "I just think it was time for him to go and I think Arsene knew that. I believe they will be better."

## Galaxy unveil

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is better suited now to raise the profile of the game than it was in the 1970s when Pele joined the now defunct North American Soccer League.

"In those days people pumped a lot of money into one team," he said, referring to Pele's New York Cosmos.

"The MLS is a lot more stable than when Pele and George Best moved to America."

Yallop, whose Galaxy side is currently second-worst in the MLS, sounded relieved that Beckham had at last arrived.

"Since we signed David in January, it has been a long wait believe me, but I feel David is the last piece of the puzzle to get us moving in the right direction."

"He's a winner on and off the field, his teammates like him, he wins games and he's a great leader. We're all very excited and cannot wait to get him on the field, get him in his jersey, get his boots on and win some games."

## 'Win changed everything'

### Cricket

CRICINFO, undated

Watching West Indies celebrate their win over England in the one-day series was special, and marked a remarkable transformation in fortunes for such a brittle side. And for Daren Powell, their fast bowler who suffered during the preceding Tests, the win was a relief as much as anything else. For once, his team could walk tall on this tour.

"It was a big relief because we'd been losing, and we didn't want to be going home with our heads down," Powell told Cricinfo after West Indies' thumping win over Netherlands in Dublin on Monday.

"For the past year or so, I've been saying that I really want to come home from a series with my head up, smiling -- and it's so good that we beat England, you know, it was a real good one."

"When we travelled down on the bus to London, I spent some time looking at everyone on the bus... and was just completely changed, a different bunch of players. Happy, joking, laughing and having a nice time. It's good to see everyone smiling, happy about what we did, and how we felt."

For a team whose decline in the past 10 years has been as stark as it has been depressing, the victory was a timely fillip, especially as they now have to pit their wits against some of the lesser teams of the world. The squad has decamped to Ireland for a Quadrangular tournament that also involves Netherlands and Scotland, and the onus is on them to maintain the same intensity

they showed against England.

"It's pretty hard when you're playing a team that's less competitive," said Powell. "But we haven't been winning much cricket, and then had a really good series in the one-dayers against England. And after those one-dayers, we just forget everything that happened in the (preceding) Tests."

"It just showed that it's good to win," he said. "And whatever happens here, we just have to remember how good it is to win. Winning gives you confidence, and then you know how to carry on in other games, when you reach tougher opposition. (In the past) West Indies haven't pulled off the victory we should."

Why has it been a tour of two halves, though? West Indies were

so dismal during the Test series that few gave them much hope of even challenging England in the one-dayers. Yet they lifted themselves to a new, thrilling level -- and, crucially for them, they were clearly enjoying it all so much. Powell, too, was a man reborn, consistently bowling in excess of 90mph and showing excellent control, picking up six wickets at 21.83. Could it have had anything to do with the identity of his captain, Chris Gayle?

"Chris really is tremendous you know," Powell, a good friend of Gayle's, said. "Maybe people will take this the wrong way, because we're from the same country (Jamaica), but really, I've played under so many other captains in the past. He doesn't say much, but he knows how to get the team together -- to spark off your plugs and stuff -- and it's very pleasing to see someone like him generating this team spirit."

"He's a funny guy -- always jovial around the team, not like what you see on TV when he probably has a serious face. He's a jovial kind of guy and often in team meetings, he'll just say 'believe in yourself.' He just has a way with people. To me, the whole team has changed since the day he took over."

That's quite some statement. Who, honestly, would have thought Gayle -- as laid back as a flattened deckchair -- could inspire so much from his troops? Gayle himself has been very quick to maintain that he's keeping the seat warm for Ramiresh Sarwan, who left their tour of England through injury. But inspiration, fortune and success can manifest themselves from the most unlikely of sources and people.

Gayle to captain the Test side, then? A broad smile and a revealingly guffawing laugh from Powell suggests he's already given it some thought. But why the laugh? "Well, because of the name Sarwan! (even more laughter.)

"Sarwan is also good, but it's up to what the selectors want to do now," said Powell. "To me, if they want to have different captains for the one-day side and the Test side, that would be nice. And if they pick Sarwan again, that too would be tremendous, you know, as long as the guys can keep up the same momentum as with Chris."

And the impression you get from Powell -- a character almost as hypnotically relaxed as Gayle -- is that West Indies are in no mood to let up the pressure on Ireland, Scotland -- or anyone else. Maybe Gayle is the man for the job, after all.



England A all-rounder Tim Bresnan sweeps the ball during his 126-run knock against India on the opening day of their three-day practice match at the county ground in Chelmsford on Friday.

### CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

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