



Did U Know?

Grand Master Bobby Fischer, who became famous in the teens for his chess-playing ability, is the only US-born player who became the official world chess champion and he achieved it in 1972.



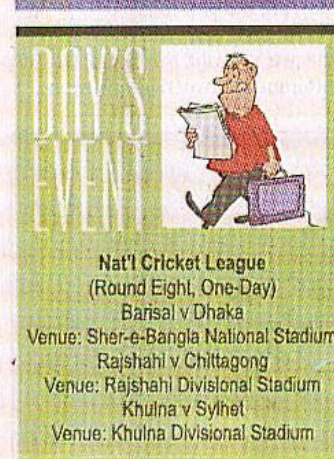
Nari Contractor

(Former India cricket captain)
 "My lifetime was associated with bouncers but the sweetest bouncer I received was when (Sharad) Pawar told me that I would be receiving the award."

When he was receiving the Board of Control for Cricket in India's Lifetime Achievement Award on Sunday.



TEN Sports
 Sri Lanka v England
 Third Test, Day One
 Live from 10:30am
ESPN
 Sportscentre India
 Sport News
 Live at 8:30pm



Bhaji rates Brad lowly

CRICINFO, undated

Harbhajan Singh has taken aim at Brad Hogg by saying he believes there are no quality spinners in Australia behind Shane Warne and Stuart MacGill. With India due to arrive to prepare for the Boxing Day Test, Harbhajan has landed an early verbal blow as Australia consider whether to employ four fast bowlers or look to Hogg.

The Indians would love Hogg to be picked for the MCG. "From our point of view, we would be happy to see how Hogg would go against the best players of spin in the world," Harbhajan told the Sydney Morning Herald. "It would be a big test for him, and we all know how he bowls."

Harbhajan said Hogg was "not close to the class of Warne and MacGill". "If they play Hogg, I will wish him all the best because I have nothing against him, but I would be happy to see him bowl at our batsmen."

Hogg has been a major weapon for Australia in one-day games, but he has not appeared in a Test since the Zimbabwe series in 2003. He has played only four Tests and was part of the squad for the first match against Sri Lanka in November. MacGill was due to be the No. 1 spinner after Warne's retirement, but that changed when he had surgery on his wrist in the hope of correcting carpal tunnel.

Geoff Lawson, the Pakistan coach, said Australia would be better off not using Hogg on Boxing Day.

Sajidul replaces Rasel

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

The national selectors on Monday picked up uncapped Sajidul Islam as like-a-like replacement for injured left-arm seamer Syed Rasel.

The Barisal left-arm seamer who is one of the two fast bowlers in the standby list, will fly today to join the team in New Zealand.

"It was an unanimous decision as we thought that no one could have been better than Sajidul at the moment because of his recent performance in domestic cricket. We have full confidence in him as a very good young prospect," chief selector Rafiqul Alam said explaining the selection.

"I am impressed by his last two years' improvement," he added.

Bangladesh team management in Hamilton has called up for a replacement bowler as Rasel, who displaced his collarbone after landing hard while fielding during their first warm-up game in Hamilton, is unlikely to return to action soon.

Sajidul got the nod because of his table-topping 38-wicket haul in

the ongoing National Cricket League four-day competition besides nine wickets in the one-day competition.

The young bowler has the ability to move the ball both ways.

"It's unexpected. I got the



SAJIDUL ISLAM

opportunity because of Rasel's injury but I have had the belief that the national call was not far away. I was very much focused on my game in the domestic competition to fulfil my dream of playing for the

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Injury-plagued Tigers' second match today

TIGERCRIKET.COM, Hamilton

Handicapped by the injury to Syed Rasel, the Bangladesh team have been forced to ring in changes for the second warm-up match against the State Northern Knights today at Seddon Park.

The match starts at 12pm Hamilton time (5am Bangladesh Standard Time).

The Tigers lost the first warm-up game against the same opponents by seven wickets.

Rasel, who has a dislocated left collar bone from the first warm-up match against the Knights on Sunday, was examined by an orthopaedic surgeon in Hamilton yesterday and the specialist's report is expected this morning.

The left-arm pacer will undergo further investigation and treatment before a final assessment of his injury condition is made.

Batsman Tushar Imran will also sit out the second warm-up game with a sore left shoulder but he is expected to be fit ahead of the Twenty20 match against New Zealand on December 23.

Rasel and Tushar are both carrying their left arms in slings at the moment.

The Tigers, who will again field 12 players in today's game might also rest pace spearhead and vice-captain Mashrafe Bin Mortaza.

Sultan goes!

Football

SPORTS REPORTER

The rumour surrounding Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) president SA Sultan's resignation materialised as a document supporting the fact was available yesterday.

Sultan has sent his resignation letter to FIFA president Sepp Blatter on December 15, stating: "I hereby resign from the post of president of the Bangladesh Football Federation due to unavoidable circumstances and personal reasons. Kindly accept my resignation."

It was learnt that Sultan has also given a copy of the resignation letter to National Sports Council chairman and Army Chief General Moeen U Ahmed on Saturday when the BFF chief met the latter to hand over the money earned from the charity matches for cyclone affected people of the country.

However Sultan could not be reached for his comments. The BFF officials including acting general secretary Manzoor Hossain Mali were also in total darkness about the resignation.

Sultan and the executive com-

mittee, whose tenure expired last April, were given a year's lifeline by FIFA to hold an election according to its new directives.

However, the EC's desire to keep aloof of the football fraternity and form the district and divisional football associations (DFAs) on its own were heavily criticised from different quarters.



SA SULTAN

Sports Adviser Tapan Chowdhury's dissatisfaction over the issue irked Sultan, who went on to publicly criticise the adviser last week.

In a last-gasp effort, Sultan had a meeting with the non-BFF

organisers and footballers on December 12 before deciding to turn to FIFA and request its permission to allow the BFF to go for the polls according to the old constitution (2003).

The BFF had sent a letter to the FIFA -- which enjoyed a virtual holiday till last Sunday as its top brass was busy for the World Club Cup in Tokyo -- but Sultan had to step down before getting answers as incidents moved faster than he could handle.

Sultan lodged official complaints against Tapan Chowdhury in a letter to the NSC chairman but as soon as the contents of the letter were published, his days, perhaps, were numbered.

It can be mentioned that when Sultan was selected president of the federation in 2001, he disbanded the elected body of the BFF to bring the wrath of FIFA, which banned the federation instantly.

Only when the elected executive committee was reinstated, the FIFA lifted the ban.

During his tenure as BFF president -- the first to be elected -- general secretaries Harunur Rashid and Anwarul Hoque Helal and vice-president Kazi Salahuddin resigned from the federation.

Subhashis ensures series win for Bangladesh U-19s

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Under-19 cricket team maintained their recent success when they clinched the five-match limited-overs series against visiting Sri Lanka with a match in hand.

The Bangladesh youth team, who came back from a 2-0 deficit to win the away series against Pakistan 3-2 earlier this month, took an unassailable 3-1 lead when they recorded a 49-run victory in a low scoring match at the Fatullah Cricket Stadium yesterday.

Pacer Subhashis Roy bagged five wickets for 24 as the home side bowled out the Sri Lanka U-19s for 118 while defending a paltry 167.

Bangladesh recovered from early blows when they lost the opening pair for nine runs after electing to bat. But 40-plus knocks by the remaining of the top order -- Nasimuddin Mintu (41), Nasir Hossain (46) and inform Marshall Ayub (42) -- gave them something to fight for.

Mintu and Nasir put on 94 runs for the third wicket before the Lankans cut the middle order in quick succession, claiming five wickets in the space of 12 runs as the home side crashed to 115-7.

However, Marshall's single-handed effort added some invaluable runs although eight batsmen fell under the double figure mark.

NM Kaviranga was the peak of the Lankan attack with 3-22.

The tourists, who won the second match in Bogra, got off to a bright start as Dilshan Muhawera (40) and Dinesh Lokuge (25) added 65 runs for the opening wicket.

But first-change bowler

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11 stars for Kiwi Masters team

SPORTS REPORTER

Eleven former New Zealand cricketers will feature the Samsung NZCPA Masters team to play the New Zealand Under-19s in a Twenty20 match for the World Vision Cyclone Relief fund at Seddon Park, Hamilton on Sunday.

Former Kiwi pacerman Dion Nash will lead the side in a game which will act as a curtain raiser for the New Zealand XI v Bangladesh Twenty20 match later on the day.

The NZC has organised the charity matches to raise fund for World Vision's relief effort after the devastation caused in Bangladesh as a result of Cyclone Sidr.

The Masters XI: Dion Nash, Mark Bailey, Grant Bradburn, Ian Butler, Matt Horne, Andrew Jones, James Marshall, Adam Parore, Justin Vaughan, Kerry Walsley and Matthew Hart.

Twin tons save Sylhet

Mosharraf shines for Dhaka

SPORTS REPORTER

Sylhet pair Rajin Saleh and Alok Kapali dictated terms on the final day with twin hundred to force a draw but Khulna still managed to snatch a solo lead in the four-day table after the end of the eighth round yesterday.

Khulna are now eight points clear from their nearest rivals Rajshahi who suffered their second defeat at the hands of Chittagong despite valiant efforts in the second innings. They added only four bowling bonus points to increase their tally to 84.

In Mirpur, unlike the other two venues, bowlers dominated the day as left-arm spinner Mosharraf Hossain spun Dhaka to a huge 217-run victory against pathetic Barisal to secure their third win and keep them in fourth position, one point shy from Chittagong.

KHULNA-SYLHET

It seemed unlikely that Sylhet would save the match when they resumed the day on 39 for two but captain Rajin led from the front to defy the home team at the Birshreshtha Matiu Rahman Stadium. Sylhet scored 362 for five in their second innings to draw the match but Khulna benefited from their first innings lead.

Nightwatchman Enamul Haque, who started the day on naught, made a confident start on the day before he was dismissed for 29 off 150 balls and then Rajin joined Imtiaz Hossain in a 89-run partnership to consolidate their position.

POINTS TABLE (FOUR-DAY)									
TEAM	M	W	L	D	BB	BB	TOTAL		
Khulna	8	2	0	6	22	32	92		
Rajshahi	8	4	2	2	14	30	84		
Chittagong	8	3	2	3	13	32	77		
Dhaka	8	3	1	4	14	30	76		
Barisal	8	2	5	1	10	29	59		
Sylhet	8	0	4	4	11	31	52		

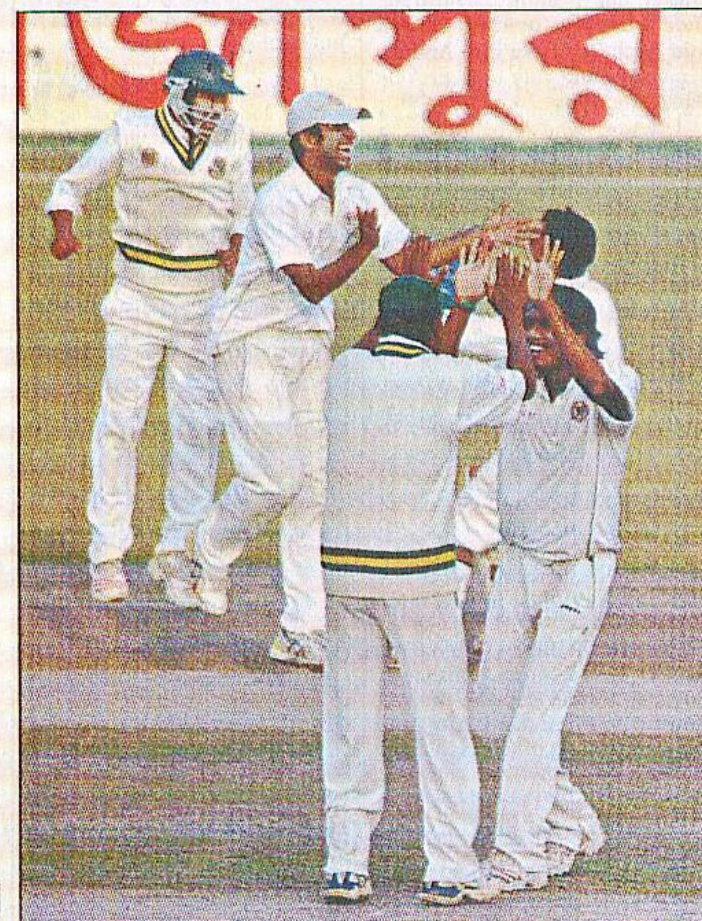


PHOTO: STAR

Dhaka bowler Mosharraf Hossain (second from L) celebrates with teammates after taking a Barisal wicket on the final day of their Isphani Mirzapore Tea Ninth National Cricket League four-day match at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

Leonine open gap atop table

SPORTS REPORTER

Leonine opened up a two-point lead atop the table when the last year's runners-up bagged full points in yesterday's First Division Chess League.

Leonine, who climbed to the top of the table in the previous round, blanked Mohakhali Pradipt Sangha 4-0 in the eighth round at the Chess Federation hall room.

Chittagong Mohammed were second with 26 points after crushing Friends Chess Power 4-0 while defending champions Biman followed at third place with 25.5 points when they also won by an identical margin over Faith Chess Club.

In other matches, Destiny 2000 drew with Pritam Priyam, Farashganj beat Sonali Bank 3-1, Sultana Kamal Smriti Pathagar defeated 12 Soft Solution 3-1 and Dhaka University edged Toyota Motors 25-1.5.

Gilly rested for last ODI

AFP, Sydney

Match-winner Adam Gilchrist will be rested from Thursday's final Chappell-Hadlee Trophy one-day international against New Zealand to ease his workload ahead of the India Test series, Cricket Australia said Monday.

Chairman of selectors Andrew Hilditch said they always intended to manage wicketkeeper Gilchrist's cricket given his time behind the stumps and his important role in the batting order.

"It was always the selection panel's intention for Adam to play in the Twenty20 International and the opening two matches of the Chappell-Hadlee Trophy regardless of results," Hilditch said in a statement.

"It's important that Adam's workload is suitably managed with four Tests against India and the tri one-day series ahead."

"This strategy is consistent with the one employed by the selection panel in recent seasons."

New South Wales' keeper Brad Haddin will deputise for Gilchrist in the third and final Chappell-Hadlee Trophy game against the Black Caps in Hobart.

Team coach Tim Nielsen denied Australia were being arrogant towards New Zealand in resting Gilchrist from the deciding one-day.

Australia lead the series 1-0, but must win Thursday's game in Hobart to regain the trophy won by the Black Caps last season.

Nielsen said the decision to rest Gilchrist was made well before game two was washed out in Sydney on Sunday.

"I don't think we're being arrogant ... we're trying to look after the workload of our senior players," Nielsen told reporters Monday.

"It was planned a month ago when we looked at the program."

"It gives us a chance for him to go home to Perth for a bit of a break and come back to Melbourne (to play India on Boxing Day) fresh, which was always important for us heading into the first Test."

Media seek apology from BFF chief

Football

SPORTS REPORTER

The three associations of sports journalists -- Bangladesh Sports Journalists Association, Bangladesh Sports Writers Association and Bangladesh Sports Journalists and Writers Community -- yesterday demanded Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) president SA Sultan's apology for trying to disgrace the media last week.

Sultan, in a letter to the National Sports Council (NSC) chairman and Chief of Army Staff General Moeen U Ahmed, claimed that 'the media cannot be controlled without exchange'. He also alleged that 'politically motivated media had launched a propaganda blitz against the BFF' in the written statement.

Speaking at a press conference at the NSC conference room yesterday afternoon, leading sports journalists condemned Sultan for his loose remarks about the media, which has always given vast cover-

age of football despite the game's decline under his rein.

"Sultan has a tendency of denying comments made by him but such a remark, which is on record, from the president of the football federation is unacceptable," said a written statement signed by the associations' officials.

"We still don't understand what he meant by saying that 'media cannot be controlled without exchange'. The comment marks the darkest hour of our football history," it added.

"He always claims to be a political person and often used his power being a member of the ruling party, including disbanding the BFF executive committee as soon as he was selected president," said a veteran journalist. "Now his attempt to brand media as 'politically motivated' is really in bad taste."

"The media cannot be controlled. Sultan must prove now whether he tried to control any sector of the media and how. He also must prove which statements by the press had been politically

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Weather could mar Galle celebrations

Cricket

AFP, Galle

Rain and an unpredictable pitch for Tuesday's final Test between England and Sri Lanka may overshadow cricket's return to Galle following the 2004 tsunami tragedy that destroyed the stadium.

The series decider with Sri Lanka 1-0 up will be the first big match at the Galle International Stadium following the devastation that killed

an estimated 300,000 people in a dozen countries.

Some 31,000 people in Sri Lanka perished in the December 26 disaster and it needed a big heart -- besides 500,000 dollars in funding from Sri Lanka Cricket -- to rebuild the stadium.

The sun shone brightly for the first time in three days when Sri Lankan President Mahinda Rajapakse inaugurated the new facility on Monday, but wet weather has been forecast over the next five days.

"I promise a good result-oriented match if the weather holds," Galle's long-time stadium manager and former Sri Lanka spinner Jayananda Warnawera told AFP. "Hopefully the Lord is on our side this time."

Both teams will wait till Tuesday morning before naming their playing XIs after a good look at both the conditions and the untested wicket that in the past helped spin.

Sri Lanka, who have won six of the 11 Tests played in Galle, may include leg-spinner Malinda Bandara for the first time in the series to partner Test cricket's leading bowler Muttiah Muralidaran.

Sri Lankan vice-captain Kumar Sangakkara was unsure how the re-laid wicket will behave, but believed a low-scoring game may be on the cards.

"A few practice games produced low scores but it is difficult to predict how it will behave through the Test," he said.

Middle-order batsman Tillekeratne Dilshan, making a comeback after being dropped for last month's tour of Australia, gives Sri Lanka a third spin option with his off-break bowling.

England will be boosted by the return of fast bowler Matthew Hoggard, who missed the second Test in Colombo with a back injury sustained in the first match in Kandy.

Hoggard, who took six wickets in Kandy which England lost by 88 runs, will replace Stuart Broad, the Test debutant in Colombo who managed just one wicket in a high-scoring draw.

Uncapped off-spinner Graeme

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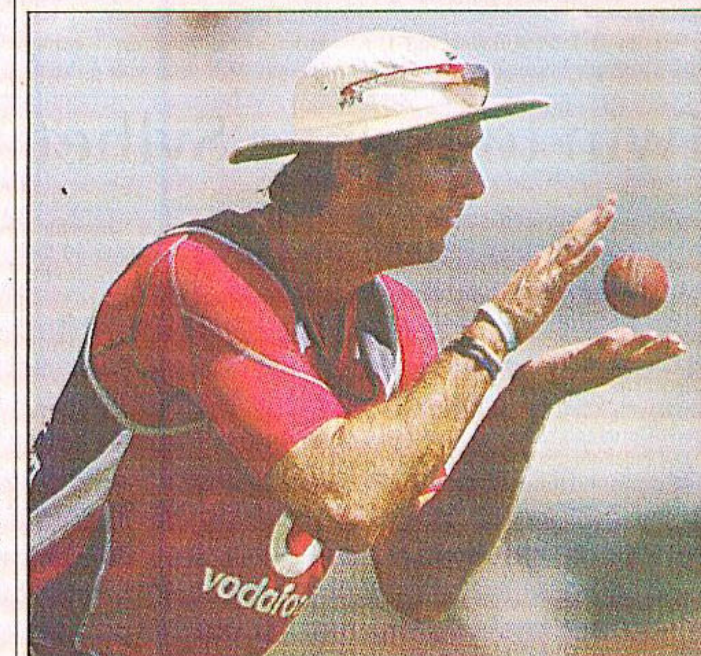


PHOTO: AFP

CATCH IT OR DROP IT: England captain Michael Vaughan practises catching during a training session at the Galle International Cricket Stadium on Monday. England take on Sri Lanka here in the must-win third and final Test that starts today.