



We wish you a joyous Eidul Adha
in the spirit of Peace, Love
and Charity for all.
Eid Mubarak!

More Than Just A Job Site

DHAKA MONDAY DECEMBER 24, 2007, E-MAIL: sports@thecricketstar.net

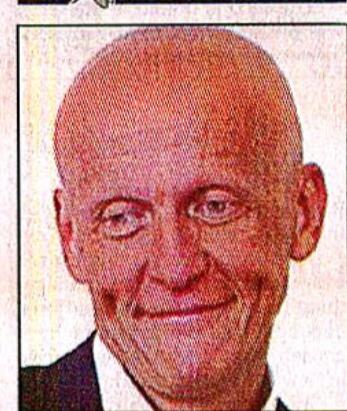
Presents

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Did U Know?

The Australian Open was first played in 1905 as the Australasian Championships. Because of its geographic remoteness historically, the event did not gain attendance from the top tennis players consistently. As late as 1980s, the event lacked participating from top ranked tennis professionals. Since its move to Melbourne Park in 1988, the Australian Open has been widely regarded as a Grand Slam.



Pierluigi Collina
(Former FIFA referee)

"Football needs respect from every angle. We can speak about different situations where respect is needed and certainly this is one. We need respect between players and referees on the field, and between managers and players as well."



What to WATCH
ESPN
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Sport News
Live at 8:30pm

Eid in foreign land

TIGERCRICKET.COM, Hamilton

Celebrating Eid-ul-Azha away from the closest and dearest ones in a foreign land cannot be on the year-planner for the Bangladesh cricket squad members but professionalism demands sacrifices and therefore if the Eid day has to be spent among teammates and Bangladeshi expatriates, so be it.

At 7:30am (12:30am BST) the team bus escorted by compatriots living here left for the Hamilton Gardens where the main Eid congregation for local Muslims was scheduled. Most of the players wore the Punjabi brought from home especially for this occasion and the prayer cap. The Eid prayer was held inside an exhibition hall which sits between the lush embankments and botanical beauties of the Gardens and the Bangladesh team's arrival there was announced by the Imam. Among the many nationalities there the 50-odd presence of Bangladeshi men, women and children, some of whom had made the two-hour drive from Auckland just to share the Eid with the players, looked joyfully significant.

SEE PAGE 18 COL 6

Kumble banks on videos

CRICKINFO, undated

Anil Kumble, the Indian captain, rued the fact that weather curtailed the only practice game before the first Test in Melbourne but said the team was practicing hard indoors and working out strategies by studying videos of the Australian players.

"We're doing the best we can, using the indoor facilities at the MCG to prepare ourselves. We're watching videos of the Australian players to have as many plays as possible imprinted in our heads and generally trying to ensure that the four days we have left are put to the best possible use," Kumble wrote in his column for the Hindu.

Only 48 overs of play were possible before rain intervened in the three-day game against Victoria and Kumble regretted the missed opportunity to have a look at the young fast bowlers.

"The whole purpose of my missing out on this game was to

SEE PAGE 18 COL 8

repeated call from the PA system announcer to stand by the people of Bangladesh in this month of giving was heartwarming.

The Tigers played a highly-motivated game. All the bowlers did their part in bowling at the right areas and Shahadat Hossain was the pick of the lot with 3 for 15 off four overs. The highlight of his spell was probably the time when he softened Tim Southee with a bouncer and then delivered the perfect yorker to knock the off stump of the highly-rated rookie.

Bangladesh rested first choice bowlers Mashrafe Bin Mortaza and Abdur Razzaq to keep them fresh for the three-match ODI series that starts on Boxing Day in Auckland but the reserves never allowed their absence to be felt. Sajidul Islam bowled with zip and Farhad Reza was once again spot on with his yorkers. Ashraful meanwhile picked up his customary T20 wickets. The fielding was outstanding and Farhad Reza's diving catch at mid-wicket from a flat hit from Ross Taylor was the pick of the effort.

The Bangladesh chase was a stop-start affair and Tamim Iqbal was out in the first over. Zunaid Siddique played a lovely flick for four but skied a similar attempt before Aftab Ahmed (20) and Ashraful (20) started entertaining. With New Zealand bowling seam up both batsmen played their trademark scoop shot by improvising, Ashraful's one going for the maximum. Aftab was the first of three run outs as Ashraful and Shakib (22) followed suit leaving Mehedi Hossain (21 not out) and Farhad Reza (31 off 17 balls) to take

the side to victory.

Reza came in at 86 for 5 and took off the pressure with a scorching drive for four and a swept six. He was out with one to get and Mashrafe Rahim pushed one to mid-wicket to complete the formalities.

"This win was important, especially because of the cause this match was related to. From a cricketing point of view it gives us a lot of confidence. We wanted to improve match by match and I think we are getting there," said Ashraful.

The Tigers leave Hamilton for Auckland tomorrow (Monday) morning.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard of the Twenty20 match between New Zealand Cricket XI and Bangladesh at Seddon Park in Hamilton on Sunday:

NEW ZEALAND CRICKET XI

How Jumaid b Shahadat	10
Fleming c Sajidul b Ashraful	17
Fulton c Omar b Sajidul	3
Taylor c Reza b Ashraful	15
Styris c Mehrab b Reza	29
Marshall not out	33
Hopkins c Iqbal b Shahadat	12
Southee b Shahadat	1
Mason not out	3
Extras: (b-1, lb-5, w-4)	10
Total: (For 7 wkts in 20 overs)	133
Did not bat: Patel, O'Brien.	
Fall of wickets: 1-12, 2-19, 3-47, 4-59, 5-98, 6-116, 7-120.	

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Shahadat	4	0	15	3
Sajidul	4	1	23	1
Reza	4	0	26	1
Ashraful	4	0	28	2
Shakib	3	0	23	0
Aftab	1	0	12	0

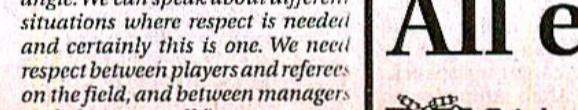
SEE PAGE 18 COL 4



PHOTO: INTERNET

CLIPPING THE KIWI WINGS: Bangladesh batsman Farhad Reza pulls the ball to the square leg boundary during the day-night Twenty20 game against a New Zealand XI at Seddon Park in Hamilton yesterday. Reza struck a brisk 31 as Bangladesh romped to a four-wicket win in their first real challenge ahead of the three-match one-day series with the opening game billed at Auckland on December 26.

All eyes on big four



TIGERCRICKET.COM, Hamilton

India will bank on their big batting four to notch up the runs to claim a historic first series win in Australia, starting with the Boxing Day Test in Melbourne.

India have won just four Tests in eight Australian tours, but pushed Steve Waugh's Australians all the way in the drawn 1-1 last series tour here in 2003-04.

Batting great Sachin Tendulkar believes India have their best chance of beating Australia on their home grounds for the first time.

Tendulkar forms the most experienced middle-order quartet in world cricket with Rahul Dravid, Sourav Ganguly and VVS Laxman, weighing in with 32,610 runs

gleaned from a total of 442 Tests and with 87 centuries between them.

"I think it would be the most important tour (ever) if we can pull it off," Tendulkar told a pre-Tést match press conference.

"Beating Australia is obviously the ultimate thing because of the way they have played for so many years, so it makes it a special tour."

"The Little Master," who ranks second to West Indian Brian Lara as the highest run-getter in Test history with 11,289 runs, is rated one of the greatest batsman of all-time and was a favourite of late Australian cricket icon Don Bradman.

The Indians fancy their chances on the strength of their impressive recent away record -- Test series victories in the West Indies in 2006 after 35 years and then in England in 2007 after 21 years, under Rahul Dravid.

SEE PAGE 18 COL 5

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