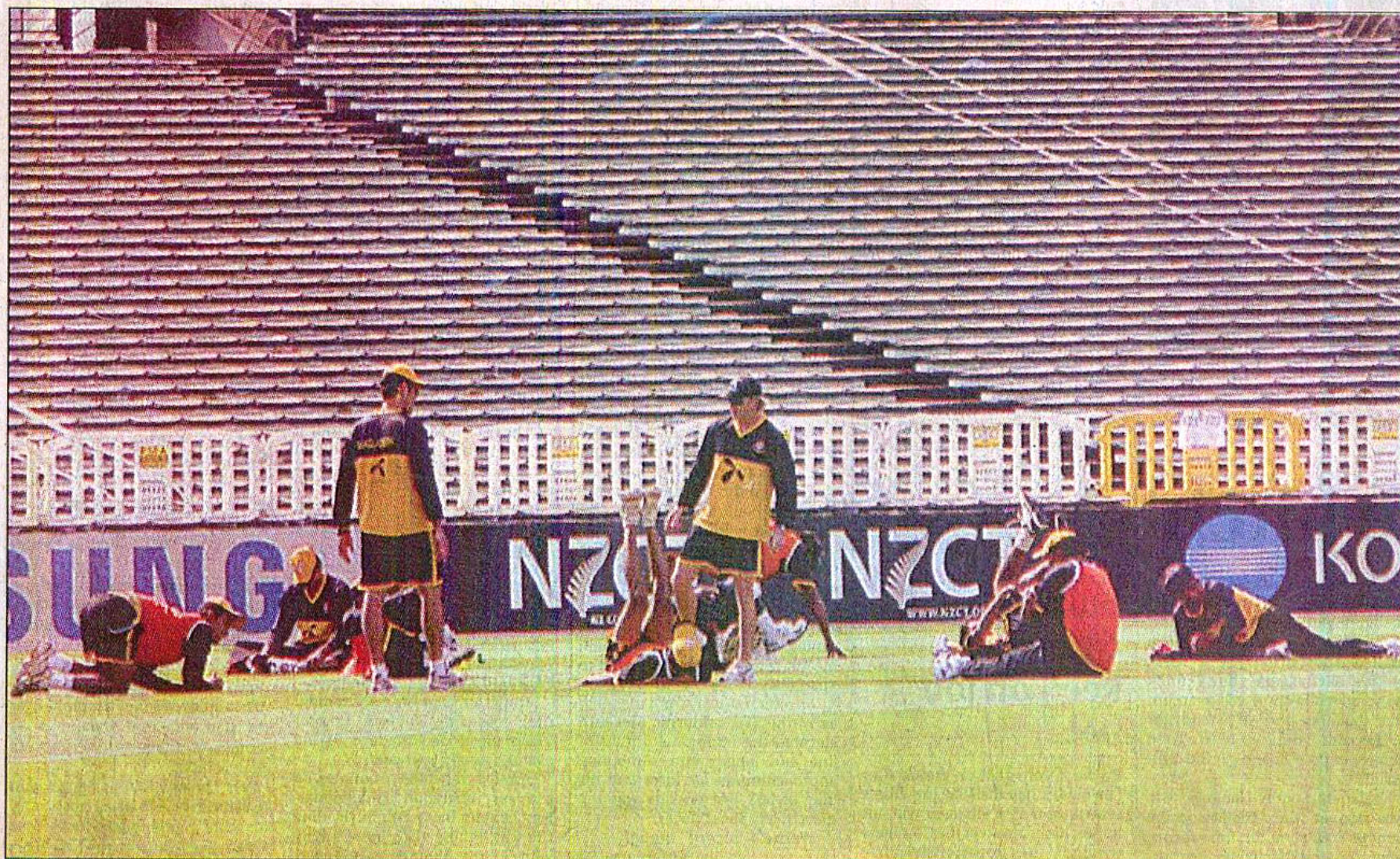


LIPRO
Presents
HIMOINSA
DIESEL GENERATORS
FROM SPAIN
Lipro Energy Ltd
Cell: 8817427, 8817916, 8818062

More Than Just A Job Site
A Platform for Employers and Job Seekers to Meet and Exchange Information.
চাকরি
chakri.com.bd
Sign Up Now!!
www.chakri.com.bd



Bangladesh players stretch ahead of a practice session at the Eden Park in Auckland on Tuesday.

Tigers raring to go Zunaed to make ODI debut

Cricket

TIGERCRICKET.COM, Auckland

Bangladesh's confidence-boosting victory in the Twenty20 fundraiser against a strong New Zealand XI at Hamilton has given a totally fresh complexion to tomorrow's opening ODI of the three-match series. As the Tigers practiced at Eden Park on an eerily quiet Christmas morning many scurried for tickets only to get disappointed.

The 42,000-capacity stadium is the largest among all sports grounds in New Zealand and with more than a quarter of the local population housed in Auckland it is no wonder that a good number of people would show interest in the Boxing Day fixture. Around 4000 Bangladeshi expatriates also live in this city and the Tigers' impressive showing in the Twenty20 match has added some much needed spice to the encounter.

"Even many New Zealanders, who would have otherwise given the match a miss have bought tickets online following Sunday's game. The team's vibrancy, fearlessness and youth has created an instant fan base comprising our children and the young Bangladeshis here," said a Bangladeshi businessman based in Auckland.

For the first ODI the Tigers have

left out opening batsman Javed Omar and pacers Nazmul Hossain and Sajidul Islam. Tushar Imran is still recovering from a sore shoulder and Rajin Saleh was not considered as he only arrived from Bangladesh on Tuesday afternoon. This means that left-handed opener Zunaed Siddiqui was going to make his ODI debut.

"I was expecting this as I have come here determined to win a place in the Bangladesh side and I have worked hard. It is my debut match but I don't have any butterflies in my stomach. I just want to

go out there and give it my best shot. I am a positive and confidence person and I want to do well," said Zunaed who had top-scored for Bangladesh in the first practice match in Hamilton against the Northern Knights.

"The wickets here are good for batting if you are prepared to leave the balls. If you see it till the end then batting can be enjoyable as there is consistent bounce," Zunaed added.

For 107 years Eden Park has the main sports ground in Auckland

SEE PAGE 18 COL 6

FACTFILE



Full name: Zunaed Siddiqui
Born: October 30, 1987, Rajshahi
Age: 20 years
Major teams: Bangladesh, Rajshahi
Nickname: Imrose
Batting style: Left-hand bat

CAREER BATTING AVERAGES

	M	I	Runs	HS	Ave	SR	100	50
T20s	1	1	71	71	71.0	145	0	1
FC	14	26	714	114*	28.6	50	1	3
List A	20	20	616	120	30.8	80	2	4

Note: *T20s: Twenty20 Internationals; *FC: First Class; *List A: National Cricket League one-day matches

100 Tests of character Ganguly joins Indian elite

Cricket

INTERNET, undated

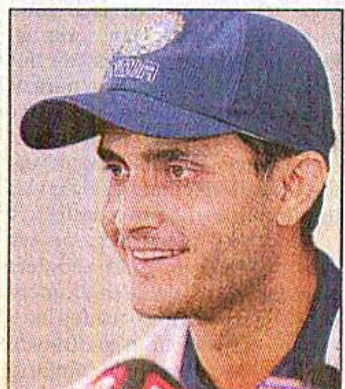
If there is a man who has defied odds and surprised admirers and critics alike it has to be Sourav Ganguly. Now, after 11 years of international cricket, the man, known for his fiery aggression on the field, but radiating calm equanimity off it, tells the world that he thought that two days from now he will be playing his 100th Test gives him a very "satisfying feeling".

Satisfying it has to be for any cricketer who lasts for more than a decade at the top, and from a purely personal point of view, it is something to be really proud of. Not that it is for the first time that someone will be achieving this landmark and neither will it be the last time. It's just that to have come so far means that you have been good enough to withstand the ravages of time and age. And in his case he has survived all the slurs, slings and arrows of a world, which has accepted him grudgingly as someone who belongs.

It is a story with so many twists and turns that a scriptwriter can make a living off it. When only 19 he played his first One-day International in Australia and immediately after that was dumped following accusations of having the attitude of a man spoilt by the affluence of his parents. Six years later, he was picked to play for India again and the whole journalistic community screamed in a

crescendo that his selection was unjust. When he met a few of his embarrassed critics a few moments after he had scored a ton at Lord's on his Test debut, he greeted them with a disarming smile and calmness that conveyed not just good manners but also an impression that he was not a vindictive man.

That hundred spiraled him into an international career of fame and success and to Indian captaincy



SOURAV GANGULY

post the match-fixing convulsions that shook cricket to its core. It was again a choice that was greeted with skepticism but the results proved that the man had the steel in him that did not care for reputations but did care for results.

All international captains, be it a Nasser Hussain or a Steve Waugh, found to their dismay that they were dealing with a man who had the knack of getting under their

skin and inspiring his team to perform above themselves. Not since the days of the Nawab of Pataudi had there been a leader who rallied his troops behind him. All that mattered for Ganguly was the skill of the player and not which region or state he belonged to. He may not agree, but captaincy dulled his cricketing skills and then walked in Greg Chappell as India coach.

Chappell humiliated him and manipulated the press to such an extent that the only viewpoint that appeared in print was that of the coach. It hurt the man, it still hurts him. "I didn't mind being dropped; anyone can be if he is not making runs. But the kind of things that were said about me were depressing," Ganguly said.

There were not many who believed he could make a comeback, except the man himself. The eight months he was out of the team were spent in physical training the likes of which he had never done before and in preparing himself for a comeback. You would tell him "give up, what is the point, you won't be picked again" and the answer would be, "I will give it a try and if I am not there before the World Cup I will give up."

He is back now and the kind of cricket he has played in this last year has not only raised his stature as a batsman but has made even his bitterest critic finally accept him as someone who belongs. When he steps out in Melbourne for his

SEE PAGE 18 COL 1

Rest of the Test team after today's match

SPORTS REPORTER

The national selectors will decide who will join the Bangladesh Test team in New Zealand after today's first one-day international of the three-match series in Auckland is over.

There are six players in contention out of nine standbys and the Rafiqul Alam-led selection panel will pick up maximum three for the two-match Test series which starts from January 4.

Former national skipper Habibul Bashar and left-handed opener Shahriar Nafees are all but guaranteed to join the party down under but the axe may fall on veteran wicketkeeper Khaled Mashud.

It was learnt that the selectors have seriously considered lacks of fitness and form of Mashud, who kept away from the first two days' training due to fever, to come to a negative conclusion although the 34-year-old stumper scored valuable runs in the ongoing National Cricket League.

The selectors, however, were in a dilemma to choose between the

SEE PAGE 18 COL 5

British minister in Dhaka

SPORTS REPORTER

British Aviation Minister Jim Fitzpatrick, MP, arrived in Dhaka yesterday on a six-day personal visit to promote a youth football development programme.

Fitzpatrick has arrived at the invitation of Canary Wharf, UK, a British-based group, which sponsors a four-year youth football development programme.

He will visit BKSP today to look at the coaching camp -- where 34 players are undergoing training of the third session of the second year. He is also expected to hold discussions with the country's football bosses and BKSP officials on building a proposed football academy.

The British minister will then depart for a three-day trip to Sylhet, home to the largest British-Bangladeshi expatriate community in Bangladesh.

ICL wants 40m rupees from Yousuf

PTI, Mumbai

Indian Cricket League (ICL) Tuesday filed a statement of claims before the arbitrator, seeking damages of 4 crore rupees from Pakistani cricketer Mohammad Yousuf for alleged breach of contract.

Yousuf had signed up for the rebel league's T20 championship, which concluded earlier this month in Chandigarh, but later, backed out. ICL took the dispute to the arbitrator, BP Saraf, a retired High Court judge.

Yousuf was not present before the arbitrator, but his lawyers sent an application from Pakistan seeking time. The hearing has been adjourned till January 28.

Bowlers ready: Ponting

Cricket

AFP, Melbourne

Skipper Ricky Ponting is certain the Australian bowling attack still pack a punch in the post-Shane Warne and Glenn McGrath era and will prove it against India in the Boxing Day Test.

Pace spearhead Brett Lee shoulders a heavy responsibility leading an inexperienced bowling attack at the Melbourne Cricket Ground, but Ponting said there is more variety in the current crop.

This will be the first major examination for Australia's bowlers since the retirement earlier this year of leg-spinner Warne (708 wickets) and paceman McGrath (563), who are in Test cricket's all-time top four.

Ponting and selectors want more time to analyse a MCG wicket, which has had its preparation ham-

pered by rain over the past week.

With conditions likely to favour fast bowling on the first morning, Australia must decide between using a four-prong pace attack for the first time in almost 16 years, or going in with wrist-spinner Brad Hogg and three quicks.

Left-arm Mitchell Johnson and tearaway Shaun Tait will battle for the third pace spot if Hogg plays.

Regardless of which attack Australia get as they chase a 15th successive Test victory, Ponting said he was confident it would be more dangerous and boast more variety than the ones which struggled to bowl India out in the corresponding home series four years ago, when McGrath was injured and Warne was suspended.

Ponting said spearhead Brett Lee was in career-best form, after a man-of-the-series performance against Sri Lanka last month. Stuart Clark's record was among the best in the world and Johnson had been

impressive. "I'm very confident in the attack that we've got, that it's going to be good enough to take 20 wickets in every Test we play this summer, so I couldn't ask for anything more," Ponting told a match-eve press conference on Tuesday.

Ponting said even with McGrath and Warne and their combined 1271 wickets now gone, Australia had the bowlers to trouble India's star batsmen.

"(Lee) is a wicket-taking bowler (but) for different reasons (than) Shane was," he said. "That's what Tait is as well."

"If Tait happens to play in this game he's exactly like that, he's a guy who can break a game open in a couple of overs."

"So the wicket-taking options we lost with McGrath and Warne, we've just gained other guys in different roles to do that for us," he added.

Lee (247 wickets in 61 Tests) has

SEE PAGE 18 COL 6

Cloud over Gayle First SA-WI Test from today

Cricket

AFP, Port Elizabeth

Captain Chris Gayle remained a doubtful starter two days ahead of the first Test against South Africa as he continued to struggle to overcome a hamstring injury.

Gayle, who has yet to lead the West Indies in a Test match, attended the captain's pre-match press conference in Port Elizabeth Monday but said he was not sure whether he would fit enough for the start of the three-Test series at St George's Park Wednesday.

"It's improved a lot the last couple of days," he said. "There is still Wednesday and then the match day and we will have to assess it then. It's coming on pretty good."

Even with Gayle in the side, the West Indies' batting looks brittle following the retirement of Brian Lara and the knee injury which kept Ramnaresh Sarwan out of the tour. Gayle and Shivnarine Chanderpaul are the only experienced, reliable batsmen in the touring party.

If Gayle cannot play, the side will be led by Dwayne Bravo, who also has yet to captain them in a Test

match although he is unbeaten in international matches since taking over from Gayle, who was injured in the first one-day international in Zimbabwe last month.

Bravo led the West Indies to three one-day wins against Zimbabwe and an upset Twenty20 international victory against South Africa in Port Elizabeth.

But the West Indies' batting frailty was exposed when they were beaten in three days by South Africa A in their only first-class outing ahead of the Test, which Gayle admitted had been a big disappointment.

With South Africa boasting a strong fast bowling line-up, spearheaded by Dale Steyn, who took 20 wickets in two Tests against New Zealand last month, the hosts will start strong favourites.

Bravo was one of only three West Indians to record a half-century in two innings against South Africa A, prompting tour manager and former captain Clive Lloyd to comment that the tourists needed to show more patience at the crease.

Gayle said the West Indies would have to play well, whether he was fit or not. "We have to play basic cricket and get the job done," he said.

Coach John Dyson said Monday

that the players had shown good form in net practices. "I've been very impressed with the professionalism and enthusiasm the players have shown in the nets," he said.

"If we can take that forward to the middle we'll be very competitive," he said.

South African captain Graeme Smith, meanwhile, said he was fully recovered from a virus that led to doctors ordering him to rest following a recent one-day series against New Zealand.

"I started training about a week ago and I am feeling energised again," he said.

The St George's Park pitch is expected to offer some help to the fast bowlers and the West Indies appear to have reasonable ammunition to fire at South Africa's batting.

Fidel Edwards, Jerome Taylor and Daren Powell have the ability to break through against a batting line-up which has not been wholly convincing, although South Africa have won three out of four Tests this season -- one against Pakistan and two against New Zealand.

Jacques Kallis and Hashim Amla both scored two centuries against New Zealand but the rest of the

SEE PAGE 18 COL 7

Tale of two captains

Cricket

CRICINFO, undated

You hear the bowling machine clank, hear the ball thud onto bat, and voices echo around the walls. You see Anil Kumble calmly compose himself and hear him answer every question patiently. There's a calm about the indoor nets at the MCG, an air of assurance almost.

All until Ricky Ponting walks in, rattles answers as if he's at an examination, laughs, and fills the room with an energy that was missing earlier. And all this without a microphone.

Both are tremendously aggressive cricketers but while Kumble exudes a quiet sort of energy, Ponting is more animated. It's a possible sign for the series:

Australia going all out for the kill, India preferring the silent ambush; one side intent on coming out swinging, the other hoping for the crucial, fatal, counter-punch. You feel it in the answers: one gushing about the quality of his side, the other saying, wait and watch.

Both are colossal figures for their respective sides -- one arguably the country's greatest bowler, the other being mentioned in the same breath as the Don (Bradman) -- and it's fitting that they will walk out to toss in a gigantic arena that is the MCG. Kumble's priority was predictable: "put runs on the board". He's spent most of his career traveling with a batting lineup that has unraveled abroad. He himself is a different bowler when he has the comfort of runs on the board. He thrives on applying pressure, revels in bogging the

opposition down. He's also clear that he's "first a bowler and then a captain". One cannot afford to come in the way of the other.

Ponting's career has coincided with Australia's golden age. He knows the conditions, knows the pitfalls, more importantly knows how to win. He holds forth on the Melbourne weather, the pitch and the conditions. Occasionally he throws in an 'aw, look mate' but never does he let up on the speed. He's spent the previous two hours in an optional net session, joined by around ten kids frolicking around. He mainly faced throw downs but the Christmas cheer was unmistakable -- his teammates' children having a go in the side nets.

Ponting is mostly dead-certain. The pitch isn't just damp, it's "very, very damp". He remembers Shane

SEE PAGE 18 COL 5



GILLY SHOWS OFF HIS NEW COLOURS: Annie (R), daughter of Australia wicketkeeper Adam Gilchrist, can't take her eyes off dad's new pink gloves during training at the Melbourne Cricket Ground on Tuesday.

PHOTO: AFP



Did U Know?

Rafael Nadal of Spain became first man since Swede Mats Wilander in 1982 to win the French Open title on debut. Nadal achieved the feat with a four-set victory over Argentine Mariano Puerta in June 2005.



David Beckham

(Star England footballer)
"Fabio is one of the managers players look up to and want to manage them. I hope I'll be part of his plans. I think he is going to be great for the players and the England team."

On newly appointed coach Fabio Capello.



What to WATCH

SAB tv
New Zealand v Bangladesh
First ODI
Live at 5:00am
STAR Cricket
Australia v India
First Test, Day Two
Live from 5:30am (Thursday)
TEN Sports
South Africa v West Indies
First Test, Day One
Live from 2:30pm
ESPN
Sportscentre India
Sport News
Live at 6:00pm
English Premier League
Chelsea v Aston Villa
Live from 6:55pm
Sunderland v Man United
Live from 9:00pm
Portsmouth v Arsenal
Live from 1:30am (Thursday)
STAR Sports
English Premier League
Tottenham v Fulham
Live from 6:55pm
Derby County v Liverpool
Live from 9:00pm