

## V-Day hockey

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Air Force played out a 1-1 draw with Bangladesh Navy in the day's only match of the Dhaka Bank Victory Day Hockey Competition at the Maulana Bhashani National Hockey Stadium yesterday.

After a barren first half, Dinar put Air Force ahead from penalty corner in the 40th minute (1-0) while Rajib of Navy equalized the margin in the 61st, also from a penalty corner.

## Parbatipur ride on Azim strike

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha

Azim netted the solitary goal as Parbatipur beat Rajshahi in the Palash Gold Cup football tournament at the Palashbari SM Pilot High School ground yesterday.

A total of sixteen teams from different districts will participate in the tournament, which was formally inaugurated by Palashbari UNO Akhtaruzzaman. Unique Sporting Club organised the event.

## Madaripur crush Jhenidah

SPORTS REPORTER

Madaripur annihilated Jhenidah with a 19-5 scoreline in their opening match of the inter-divisional women's handball competition that began at the Dhanmendi Women's Sports Complex yesterday.

In other matches, teams from Dhaka, Jhenidah and Jessore also won their respective matches.

Sixty teams from six district sports associations (DSAs) -- Barisal, Bhola, Jessore, Jhenidah, Dhaka and Madaripur -- are taking part in the two-day meet, organised by Bangladesh Women's Sports Association.

## Ayami ladies' champion

SPORTS REPORTER

BKSP's Japanese coach Ayami clinched the women's singles title of the Prestige Bengal Victory Day tennis tournament beating Sathi Sarker of National Tennis Complex 6-3, 6-0 in the final at the Ramna National Tennis Complex yesterday.

Another from BKSP, Sheikh Hasibul Haq, emerged champion in the boys' singles (under-13) beating Biplob Ram of NTC 6-3, 6-1 in the event's final.

In the men's singles, Amal Roy of Engineers Club and Dipu Lal of NTC reached the final winning their respective semifinals. They will play the final on Friday afternoon.

Amal beat Prithul Mondal of BKSP 6-2, 2-6, 6-2 while Dipu Lal of NTC defeated teammate Ranjan Ram 6-4, 6-4.

In the men's doubles, NTC pair Niranjan Ram and Dipu Lal reached the final eliminating Anwar and Delwar partner 6-2, 2-6, 6-2 in the semifinal.

Bangladesh Tennis Federation president AAM Nasiruddin will be the chief guest at the closing function Friday afternoon and distribute the prizes.

Manager of tournament sponsor Prestige Bengal Limited Ajmat Moyn will be present as special guest.

## Brown wants Zimbabwe's tour shelved?

AFP, London

The British government has told English cricket's governing body that it wants them to pull the plug on Zimbabwe's planned tour here next year, the Sun newspaper said Thursday.

The daily tabloid quoted an unnamed government source as saying that ministers had informed the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) that they did not want the tour to go ahead.

"England's cricket authorities wanted assurance from us about what to do and now they have it," the source was quoted as saying.

## Debutants

FROM PAGE 21 Thursday's training was held under perfect sunshine and the tourists will hope the weather stays that way tomorrow also. The green grasses seen yesterday on the pitch have been taken out but there is still a distinct grass cover on top of the wicket.

"It looks a decent wicket. We just have to play our own game and if everyone performs to their potential then we can have a very good game," said Ashraf.

"We just need a couple of good sessions and that would bring the confidence back," Ashraf said.



Action from yesterday's Victory Day Hockey tournament clash between Bangladesh Air Force and Bangladesh Navy at the Maulana Bhashani National Hockey Stadium.

## Strauss set for return

CRICKET

CRICINFO, undated

Andrew Strauss is expected to be recalled to England's Test squad for the tour of New Zealand in March, while Essex's wicketkeeper, James Foster, could make a return as Matt Prior's understudy, when the party is unveiled at Lord's on Friday.

Strauss was dropped for the first time in his 43-match career ahead of England's three-Test series in Sri Lanka in December, but he could slot straight back into the side at No. 3, following a disappointing showing from his teammates.

Although Alastair Cook, Michael Vaughan and Ian Bell all

showed glimpses of form on the trip, England didn't manage a single century until Cook chipped in on the final day of the third Test at Galle. Lower down the order, Strauss's direct replacement, Ravi Bopara, endured a terrible trip with 42 runs in five innings, including three ducks in a row.

Bopara's participation in New Zealand is likely to be limited to the one-day squad, although Owais Shah -- the man whom he edged out of the No. 6 position -- is expected to keep his squad place. Although Strauss has not lifted a bat in anger since the end of the English summer, he is this week due to play his first match for the New Zealand state side, Northern Knights.

Apart from the obvious experience that Strauss can bring to the Test side, his role as a specialist slip catcher cannot be overlooked. England were noticeably weak in that area all through the Sri Lanka series, with crucial chances going begging in all three Tests.

Three of those were dropped by the wicketkeeper, Prior, although his place is safe for the moment thanks to some pugnacious batting at Kandy and Colombo. However, Foster's selection would add a notch of pressure to his position. It is five years since he played the last of his seven Tests -- against Australia at Melbourne -- and he has matured considerably in the intervening years. He is also familiar with the conditions in New Zealand, having

kept in all three Tests of England's last series there in 2001-02.

## PROBABLE TEST SIDE

Michael Vaughan (captain), James Anderson, Ian Bell, Stuart Broad, Paul Collingwood, Alastair Cook, James Foster, Steve Harmison, Matthew Hoggard, Monty Panesar, Kevin Pietersen, Matt Prior, Owais Shah, Ryan Sidebottom, Andrew Strauss, Graeme Swann.

## PROBABLE ODI SIDE

Paul Collingwood (captain), James Anderson, Ian Bell, Ravi Bopara, Stuart Broad, Alastair Cook, Dimitri Mascarenhas, Phil Mustard, Monty Panesar, Kevin Pietersen, Matt Prior, Owais Shah, Ryan Sidebottom, Graeme Swann, Luke Wright.

## A brisk 50

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cricket. Sure there is a lot of hue and cry whenever a Test is lost in three days; once a commentator predicted that it will take only one day to bring down the Tigers, only to see Bangladesh giving Australia a real go in Cairns.

It could be the same old story against New Zealand in Dunedin but having seen 49 Tests where they have fought, wilted and then fought again, hope still remains.

## Lampard will

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"Nothing has changed since the club and I decided that we wouldn't talk until the end of the season," he said. But I don't want the fans to think there is anything sinister about it because I'm desperate to get it done.

"I see that Peter Osgood is on 150 goals for the club and I'd love to get to that level.

"I think I will carry on playing until I am around 35. I like to think I'm pretty fit and don't rely on pace to get me through a game. Plus I will keep improving the more experience I get."

## Misery for

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Kirkland - who had an injury-marred spell at Liverpool - then made a brilliant double save from Gerrard as the England midfielder followed up his own long-range strike.

"It was immensely frustrating," said Liverpool manager Rafael Benitez. "When you have chances you need to take them and finish the game. They had just one chance and took it."

"We needed to do everything perfect before this game and this makes it even more difficult," Benitez added when asked about Liverpool's title hopes.

Derby twice hit the woodwork and saw Bolton keeper Jussi Jaaskelainen make several fine saves at the Reebok Stadium. It seemed they were on course for a point only for a defensive lapse to let in Stelios Giannakopoulos late on as he lifted the ball past Lewis Price and snatched victory.

Sunderland missed a chance to take a 50th minute lead at Wood Park when, after Christopher Samba fouled Daryl Murphy, Dean Whitehead's poorly-struck penalty was saved by Brad Friedel.

Shortly afterwards McCarthy showed Sunderland how it should be done, when after Danny Higginbotham hand-balled in the box, he scored from the penalty-spot.

Sunderland were then reduced to 10 men when experienced former Blackburn striker Dwight Yorke - a former teammate of Sunderland manager Roy Keane and Rovers boss Mark Hughes at Manchester United - was sent-off for a second bookable offence 19 minutes from full-time.

## India looking back

CRICKET

AGENCIES, Sydney

India are hoping that history will repeat itself after staging a brave fightback in the second Test against Australia on Thursday.

Vangipurappu Laxman and Rahul Dravid rekindled memories of their past heroics against Australia with an inspiring 175-run partnership on the second day at the Sydney Cricket Ground.

Laxman made a stylish 109 and Dravid a determined 53 to guide the tourists out of immediate danger to 216 for three at stumps in reply to Australia's 463.

They still have a long way to go but Laxman said the Indians were suddenly back into the match and had the self-belief they could win just a week after their 337-run loss in Melbourne.

"It's really balanced well but it's very important how we start off tomorrow morning," Laxman told a news conference.

"If we can build a big partnership we can have a big first innings total and put pressure on the Aussies."

Laxman and Dravid have a habit of saving their best for the Australians and their performances on Thursday brought back happy memories from the past.

Laxman has scored five centuries against Australia and the pair famously shared a magnificent 376-run partnership in the "Miracle of Calcutta" win in 2001 as well as a 303-run stand in Adelaide two years later.

"It's always a satisfying thing for any cricketer to do well against the best team in the world," Laxman said.

"For me, I'm very, very pleased that I have been able to do consistently well against them in some very tough situations so I want to carry that on."

Although he scored twice as many runs as his partner, Laxman was full of praise for Dravid's display. The makeshift opener has been struggling for form but held the Australians at bay for more than four hours to reach a dogged half-century.

"Although Rahul wasn't timing the ball well I was very pleased that he played a fighting knock. That shows a lot about his character," Laxman said.

"The important thing is not how many runs we scored individually but that we had a good partnership."

Laxman gave the Australians cause for a sleepless night when he predicted Sachin Tendulkar, playing in his farewell Sydney Test, would reproduce his double century from his last Test here in 2003. "I'm sure he's looking forward

to it, he's batting brilliantly," he said.

"I'm sure Sachin is going to get a double tomorrow," he added. Brett Lee, who scored 59 with the bat then clean bowled Wasim Jaffer with a swinging full toss at the start of the Indian innings, said the Australians were greatly relieved to dismiss Laxman and Dravid in the last hour before stumps.

"They were very crucial wickets right at the end there. They were both batting beautifully, especially Laxman. I thought he played a fantastic innings today," Lee said. "He has got this habit of scoring hundreds at the SCG. I've always held him in the highest respect as a player and a person and when Laxman gets going, he normally scores big hundreds."

Lee said the two late wickets had swung the balance back Australia's way but the key was seeing rid of Sachin Tendulkar cheaply when play resumes on Friday.

Tendulkar reached stumps unbeaten on nine but made a double-century in Sydney four years ago and once again looms as the danger man with the pitch still favouring the batsmen.

"Tendulkar is, if not the best batsman in the world, he's definitely in the top two or three," Lee said.

"He's a brilliant player, so I'll have to make sure we tie him up."

## Bond ICL-bound?

CRICKET

CRICINFO, undated

Shane Bond might have played his last game for New Zealand, with the chief executive of New Zealand Cricket (NZC) Justin Vaughan conceding he was running out of time to stop Bond joining the Indian Cricket League (ICL).

Bond's agent Leanne McGoldrick would not confirm if the fast bowler had signed up, only saying that he intended to honour his NZC contract which expires in May.

However, there are reports that Bond has accepted a lucrative deal with the ICL, which would effectively end his international career as the league does not have the backing of the ICC. Vaughan said there was still a chance Bond could stay with New Zealand, although it appeared unlikely.

"We'd love to see him playing for New Zealand and that is why we have turned over so many stones, but at the moment we are on the

back foot," Vaughan told the Dominion Post. "I can't say for certain he has signed but I understand that is what his agent is saying."

"Even if he has signed with the ICL, we'd love to see if there was a way to get him out of that contract. We'll fund all the support to get him out of it, similar to what Pakistan has done with Mohammad Yousuf."

New Zealand are desperate to retain their best fast bowler, even though his injury curse continued late last year when he suffered an abdominal tear on the tour of South Africa. The problem ruled him out of New Zealand's current series against Bangladesh, although he was expected to be fit for the series against England, which starts in February.

Vaughan said it must have been frustrating for Bond to manage only 17 Tests in his stop-start career. Despite numerous unsuccessful meetings with Bond to try and convince him to instead join the officially-sanctioned Indian Premier League, Vaughan would not criticise Bond's decision.

"I know we haven't seen very

much of him lately, but you always hope your last injury is your last one," Vaughan said. "I don't think it is a question of loyalty here. He is a champion and we'd be very sorry to lose him."

The paper reported that Bond's ICL deal was likely to be worth NZ\$600,000 - about three times what he earned as an NZC contracted player. If his decision is confirmed it would give New Zealand serious headaches about whether he could be chosen for future Test and ODI series.

Vaughan has previously said that the selectors should consider other players ahead of those who had already joined the ICL, including Hamish Marshall and Daryl Tuffey. Extending that to include Bond would be a hard decision for NZC, given his excellent record of 79 Test wickets at 22.39.

"Our preference is for the selectors not to choose those players," Vaughan said. "It is not a ban, but it would be fair to say if he has signed we would prefer he didn't play in the England series."

## Bayern look

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Although many names are now being banded about as possible successors, the list of candidates does not appear too long.

Van Basten will be free after Euro 2008, while fellow Dutchman Rijkaard's reign at Barcelona may also be coming to an end. At 43 and 45 respectively, both are young coaches and former top internationals who both speak German.

A van Basten appointment might not be welcomed by Bayern's Dutch midfielder Marc van Bommel, who fell out with the Dutch team coach, but that is unlikely to influence the club leadership.

Two other Dutchmen, Guus Hiddink, current Russia coach, and Louis van Gaal, now at AZ Alkmaar, may be in the frame, while former Germany coach and Bayern player Jurgen Klinsmann has also been mentioned.

British media recently reported that Bayern might be interested in

Liverpool's Spanish coach Rafael Benitez, while former Chelsea coach Jose Mourinho is a top coach who, unlike Benitez and some others, is without a contract.

Portugal coach Luis Felipe Scolari, a World Cup winner with Brazil, is another leading name, and a coach who has also expressed an interest in being in charge of a top European club.

Mourinho would certainly fit Bayern's new philosophy of wanting an internationally renowned coach for a team full of international stars.

However the 44-year-old Portuguese speaks no German, and Bayern officials said following Italian Giovanni Trapattoni's tenure they would in future only be seeking a coach who spoke the language.

There are few German candidates for the job, although both Stuttgart coach Armin Veh, 46, and Jurgen Klopp, 40, of second-division Mainz are admired.

## Serena fires

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Although ranked 40 places above Luczak at 39, Fish had his hands full with the Australian, who missed a simple forehand on set point in the second set.

"I could easily have lost in straight sets," Fish said.

"Pete makes you work really hard and is playing great tennis and I look forward to seeing his ranking go up in the next few months."

India started their final Group B tie against the winless Czech Republic with a slim chance of making the final if they could manage a clean sweep, but instead the Czechs broke their drought with a 2-1 win.

Safarova notched her first singles win of the week by beating Sania Mirza in three sets, 6-2, 4-6, 6-3.

Mirza was slightly restricted by hamstring tightness during the match, but said it was a minor niggle and wouldn't affect her Australian Open preparations.

As expected, the 14th-ranked Tomas Berdych was far too good for the 267th-ranked Rohan Bopanna, winning 6-4, 6-0.

However, the Indians maintained their unblemished record in mixed doubles here with their sixth straight win in that format, 6-3, 6-2.

## CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS		39 Summer squash	DOWN	
1 Bill	41 For the case at hand	43 Arctic seabird	44 "A pox upon thee!"	46 Cause of nasal growth?
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13 "American" —	46 Cause of nasal growth?			
14 PBS science show	50 Dry red wine			
15 "The 7 Faces of Dr. —"	55 Paint container			
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18 Recurring sequence of events	57 Ballot			
20 Dog's foot	58 Roe, e.g.			
21 Change for a five	59 Kill off a character?			
24 Serf	60 Calendar quota			
28 Airship	61 Fresh			
32 Give a makeover to				
33 Lennon's lady				
34 Eats in style				
36 Sports-caster				
37 Roster				

Solution Time: 21 mins.									
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## CRYPTOQUIP

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MHRDS WD DNQWUWPZFQ

SSQWS. YSHYFS JHRFX DGO

WN'D DYHHU-NGJRFQ

Yesterday's Cryptquip: FOR HALLOWEEN, I WONDER IF PARENTS THINK OF SENDING THEIR COLLEGE KIDS SCARE PACKAGES.

Today's Cryptquip Clue: W equals I