

**Sr Div football resumes today**

SPORTS REPORTER

Top-seed Arambagh will look forward to their first win as the Senior Division Football League resumes today after a four-day break.

A troubled Arambagh, who have failed to register a single win so far, will take on City Club -- also winless -- in the third round match at the Birshreshtha Shaheed Mostafa Kamal Stadium. The match will kick-off at 3pm.

The league was postponed for four days as a concert was held at the venue on January 11.

Although the 13 senior division clubs had asked for compensation from the National Sports Council -- Tk 25,000 each for running extra days of camp -- the sports authority has provided five footballs only to each of the clubs.

**Good start for Bangladeshi chess players**

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladeshi players got off to bright start in the 6th Parsvnath Open International Chess in Delhi with all four winning their first round matches against Indian players on Sunday.

Grandmaster Ziaur Rahman defeated A Sudarshan, International Master Enamul Hossain Rajib beat DS Shashaank, FIDE Master Taibur Rahman beat DB Pulekar and Sohail Chowdhury won against Chaitanya Hari Singhania.

A total of 391 players including 15 GMs, 25 IMs are taking part in the 10-round Swiss League which concludes on January 20.

**Handball camp gets underway**

UNB, Dhaka

A handball training camp for the Under-16 boys, organised by Bangladesh Handball Federation (BHF), began yesterday at the Outer Stadium handball court.

BHF vice president Kazi Mahtabuddin Ahmed inaugurated the weeklong camp for the new handball players. General secretary Asaduzzaman Kohinor was also present.

Thirty-five budding players from different metropolises schools are taking part in the training programme to be held for two hours everyday.

Japanese handball coach Sympe and local coach Amjad Hossain are conducting the camp.

**Sufian champ in AFR Hall sports**

SPORTS REPORTER

Abu Sufian emerged champion and Rafiqul Islam runner-up in the annual sports of Dhaka University's AF Rahman Hall yesterday.

Over 100 students took part in 15 events of the daylong competition at the DU playground.

VC of Dhaka University Dr SMA Fayed declared the meet open. In the afternoon, treasurer Prof Syed Abul Kalam Azad distributed prizes.

**Saif posts solo lead**

SPORTS REPORTER

Abdullah Al Saif led the table of the 28th National Sub-junior Chess Championship yesterday with maximum five points.

Saif defeated Arifa Khatun Moni in the fifth round at the Chess Federation hall-room to maintain his winning run in the Under-16 competition.

Shahidul Alam Abir, still unbeaten, was at second placed with 4.5 points.

Twelve players shared the third place with four points.

**Hosts off to bad start**

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

Rajnagar beat Moulvibazar 3-2 in tiebreakers after being locked at 1-1 in the opening match of the DC Gold Cup football tournament at the local M Saifur Rahman Stadium yesterday.

Salik of Moulvibazar and Sanu of Rajnagar scored a goal each during normal time.

Earlier in the inaugural function, local Police Superintendent Md Khurshid Hussain, district and session judge Md Zahurul Haque and Lt Col Jahid Hasan, commander of Moulvibazar Army Camp were present as guests.

A total of eight teams from the district are participating in the tournament.



NSC chairman and Army Chief General Moeen U Ahmed gives away a bouquet to sponsors of the Olympic Day Run at the NSC building yesterday.

**Gen Moeen keen on sporting activities**

SPORTS REPORTER

Chairman of National Sports Council (NSC) and Army Chief General Moeen U Ahmed said the government is expected to communicate with FIFA to inform the world football governing body about the real condition of the game in the country.

Moeen, who is also the chairman of Bangladesh Olympic Association (BOA), was talking to reporters yesterday after the NSC after officially thanking the sponsors of the Olympic Day Run.

Stressing on the need of involvement of district administration in the FAs (football associations) in districts and divisions, General Moeen said it was difficult to run football in districts without the help of local administration.

"FIFA has given a guideline for the BFF election. Things are proceeding according to that prescription but it is also true that if the district administrators are excluded from the FAs, football in districts will be jeopardised," he told after the thanksgiving programme.

It is believed that FIFA's roadmap to the federation polls, which excludes all types of government officials' involvement, was prescribed due to Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) presenting a negative image about the government to the world football body.

"We will contact the FIFA very soon to discuss about this and try to make them realise the real condition here," said Moeen, who has already received invitation to visit FIFA and AFC.

It was learned that FIFA and AFC have admired Moeen's role in providing land to the BFF for two FIFA projects that were on the verge of cancellation.

"We have to give top priority to hold sports at district, thana and village levels. It should be the only roadmap for us," he added.

The NSC chief has inspired the district sports associations to strengthen activities since July 2007 through NSC, which reflected in staging of many tournaments, especially football, across the country although the capital has suffered from lack of sports.

Although top footballers of the

country missed action in the capital for half of last year, they have managed to earn their bread playing in different in DC Gold Cup tournaments and district leagues.

The Army Chief's visit to the NSC also brought good news for the BFF. He signed the documents of handing over the BFF Bhaban adjacent 'balur math', where the FIFA will build a synthetic turf under its second 'Goal' project.

He also approved the revised design of the football centre to be built in Barisal under FIFA's tsunami fund.

NSC's new secretary Akbar Hossain informed that the ground adjacent to the BFF Bhaban will now belong to the federation, which also gets the land from the NSC for the centre in Barisal.

However, the NSC has yet to provide land in Cox's Bazaar for another centre to be built under the tsunami fund.

It was learned that the NSC was interested to hand over charge of maintenance of the Sher-e-Bangla Mirpur National Stadium to the Bangladesh Cricket Board for the next ten years.

**Clarke clears**

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sat and waited for a couple of hours dying to get out and have a bat," Clarke said.

"I was really excited to get out there and do well, with family and friends all at the game, after failing in the first innings. When I went to cut the ball and it came off my glove and went to slip it was more just the shock and disappointment of failing and getting my first first-baller in Test cricket."

"In hindsight and if I had my time again, I wish I had just walked straight off the field. I hope it doesn't happen too many times, I hope I don't get too many ducks in Test cricket, but if it happens again, I'm certain I will react differently."

Clarke would not be drawn on the Harbhajan-Symonds controversy but said there was no room for racism in the game. "That's why the ICC and the Indian board dealt with the stuff with spectators in India (during the ODI series in October)."

He said he was not sure how Australia would have reacted if "we were in their shoes" but hoped that India would not boycott the series. "Fingers crossed I'm hoping they definitely stay for the rest of the Test series and the one-dayers because you look forward to every chance you get to play India. It's up to BCCI and Anil and whoever is in charge."

Clarke said he was positive the Perth Test, which starts on

Wednesday, would be played in the right spirit after the problems in Sydney. Australia will be pushing for their 17th consecutive Test victory, a triumph that would break the world record set by Steve Waugh's Australians between 1999 and 2001.

"The Australians are keen as mustard to get out here and win this 17th Test match in a row," he said. "It's a reminder about why we are the best cricket team in the world, what we do to achieve such highs in all forms of the game except Twenty20 at the moment. I think he (Ricky Ponting) will want to remind us about that and make sure that we keep playing it like that for a long time."

It might one day be Clarke who sets out to guide an Australian side past the record again, as there has been much speculation that he is being groomed to eventually succeed Ponting as the Test captain. But Clarke said he was unsure how he would have handled the events of the past week had he been in Ponting's shoes.

**Euro tickets**

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apply to buy a ticket will go away empty handed to the delight of the black market where tickets at 850 euros are already available.

"And that leads to the question: football is it now just for the rich?"

**Eto'o brace fires Barca**

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perfect Henry pass.

Zambrotta hit the post after 84 minutes but three minutes later Eto'o signed off for Barca before departing for African Nations Cup with his fourth league goal in as many games, connecting with a cross from substitute Giovanni.

Barcelona's victory confirmed that they stay in second place at the halfway point in the Spanish season, with 40 points from 19 games.

Real Madrid, the reigning champions, are in pole position with 44 points but a game in hand and play at bottom club Levante on Sunday.

Casillas, who is one of a handful of Spanish first division players who have played every minute of the season so far, has been struggling to overcome a bad bout of gastro-enteritis.

Fernando Gago is expected to start in the midfield in place of the absent Mohamadou Diarra, who is with the Mali squad ahead of the African Nations Cup which starts in Ghana on January 20.

Athletic Bilbao - who are one of only three clubs to have been ever-present in the Spanish first division along with Real Madrid and Barcelona - started the weekend

**Ex-BFF gen sec**

FROM PAGE 17  
Akmal, an engineer, was the top executive of the BFF from May 1992 to July 1996. The eminent sports organiser was also a life member of Mohammedan Sporting Club, where he acted as the club's treasurer and chairman of the football committee.

A pal of gloom cast over the sporting arena after the news of his death.

Condoling the death of Akmal, the BFF, Mohammedan, Sammilito Kirira Paribar, metropolis Football League Committee and Bangladesh Sports Journalists Association prayed for the salvation of the departed soul and expressed their deep sympathy over the bereaved family.

The Mohammedan club flag will remain half-mast for three days to pay tribute to the organiser.

**Schuster elated**

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extension with the defending Spanish champions which will keep him at the club through to 2010. No financial details were disclosed.

Van Nistelrooy joined Real Madrid from Manchester United in July 2006 for 15 million euros (22 million US dollars).

The former PSV Eindhoven player was the Spanish league's top scorer in his first season at Real Madrid with 25 goals and has scored nine goals in 18 matches this season.

**A United**

FROM PAGE 20  
Aston Villa maintained their push for a place in Europe next season with a comfortable 3-1 win over Reading which lifted Martin O'Neill's side to sixth place.

A John Carew double either side of a Martin Laursen strike secured the points with James Harper scoring a consolation goal for Reading in stoppage time.

At the bottom, Antoine Sibierski's 82nd-minute strike was enough to earn Wigan a valuable 1-0 win over ten-man Derby which lifts Steve Bruce's side three points clear of the drop zone.

Derby played most of the second half a man down after defender Claude Davis was sent off for a second bookable offence.

Second-from-bottom Fulham's woes deepened as they allowed West Ham to come from behind to claim a 2-1 win at Upton Park. A Dean Ashton header cancelled out Simon Davies' early strike and Anton Ferdinand struck the winner with 20 minutes left.

**'Friends can be racist with me'**

AFP, Perth

Australian Andrew Symonds has further muddied the waters of cricket's latest racism row, telling a newspaper that racial taunts were okay as long as they came from friends.

Symonds, who claimed that India's Harbhajan Singh called him a "monkey" during the second Test at the SCG, said racism was unacceptable, though he had become used to taunts and had learnt to tolerate it -- but only from friends.

"You can have a joke to me about anything and any part of racism and I'll laugh about it," he told The Sunday Telegraph. But if I'm not your friend, if you're an opposition player or something like that, it is unacceptable."

Singh received a three-match suspension for allegedly making the remark, prompting India to threaten to cancel the tour. A date has not been set for the appeal of the suspension.

"Even with opposition players if I do know them well and they want to joke about something like that, it doesn't stir me up, so what's happened is something I and the Australian boys have taken very seriously."

Symonds and Harbhajan had agreed before the series not to sledge each other, after a similar dispute between the pair during the one-day series in India in October.

Speaking on Sunday as his team started preparing for the third Test at the WACA in Perth starting Wednesday, Symonds said there was no place in the game for racism.

"In my opinion, the one thing I have been taught coming up playing international cricket is that racism is not allowed in our game, end of story," he said.

**CPA KO cricket**

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

Durbar Tarun Sangha defeated Super Nova by 27 runs in the opening match of the 10th CPA knock-out cricket tournament at the Nabin Chandra High School ground yesterday.

Durbar's centurion Khokon was the man-of-the-match.

Cricket Players Association (CPA) of Kulara has organized the tournament while the 'Bangladeshi Association of USA' (an organisation of Bangladeshi expatriates) is patronising the tournament.

A total of 40 cricket teams are participating in the tournament.

**Neighbours in eves' kabaddi final**

UNB, Dhaka

Jatrabari KC and Matuail Milon Smriti Sangsad moved into the final of the EXIM Bank Women's Kabaddi League winning their respective semifinals yesterday at the Outer Stadium kabaddi court.

The final of the two neighbours will be held today.

In the first semi, Jatrabari outclassed Dhaka Wanderers 66-35 points with four lonas while Matuail beat Jurain Janata 54-46 points in the second semis.

**There have**

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comes in the tour. You know it is not quite easy to score 200-plus runs in New Zealand conditions but they have achieved it twice. Our performance in the two one-day matches was also not too bad," said Rafiq.

"Our new coach (Siddons) just took over the team and he is trying to introduce something new to get a solution and you have to give us some time, at least one year, to say whether we have improved or not," he added.

The new performers in the series also impressed Rafiq.

"It was beyond my expectation what Tamim Iqbal did in the Test series and the other new guys were also not too bad. Let's see what happens in the next six months," he said.

But the question now is that how long we will 'give them time' because eight years in Test cricket might not be a long time, but not a short period either.

**India hint**

FROM PAGE 17  
with Brown. We are very hopeful that a compromise can still be worked out even at this late stage.

"All they (Australia) have to do is to withdraw the complaint and we will be doing the same. But it is not easy and we are working towards it," the player was quoted as saying.

Indian officials were tight-lipped on any compromise scenario Sunday, offering a stern "no comment".

India had put the four-Test tour on hold while they appealed the ban on Harbhajan, but their officials later decided to go ahead with it after world cricket chiefs intervened.

**Sunny slams Procter**

Cricket  
AFP, New Delhi

Legendary former India captain Sunil Gavaskar on Sunday called for revoking the ban on Harbhajan Singh, saying the match referee's decision was based not on facts, but emotion.

Indian off-spinner Harbhajan was suspended by South African match referee Mike Procter for three Tests after being found guilty of racially abusing Australian Andrew Symonds during the second Test in Sydney last week.

The tour was in jeopardy following racism and umpiring rows, but Indian officials later confirmed it would go ahead after their demand for removing an umpire was accepted by the sport's world governing body.

Harbhajan will be allowed to play the final two Tests in Perth and Adelaide till the International Cricket Council Code of Conduct commissioner, appointed to adjudicate on India's appeal against Procter's decision, completes his inquiry.

Gavaskar said the charge against Harbhajan should be dropped immediately for lack of evidence.

"The off-spinner has denied having used the word which has caused offence and in the absence of any audio recording and most

crucially with both umpires not having heard it, the charge should have been dropped straight away for lack of corroborating evidence," Gavaskar wrote in his Hindustan Times column.

"By accepting the word of the Australian players and not the Indian players, the match referee has exposed himself to the charge of taking a decision based not on facts, but on emotion."

The 58-year-old Gavaskar, who is also the head of the ICC's rule-making committee, said it had incensed millions of Indians who had been asking why his decision should not be considered a racist one.

"Millions of Indians want to know if was a 'white man' taking the 'white man's' word against that of the 'brown man'. Quite simply if there was no audio evidence nor did the officials hear anything then the charge did not stand," he wrote.

"This is what has incensed the millions of Indians who are flabbergasted that the word of one of the greatest players in the history of the game, Sachin Tendulkar, was not accepted. In effect, Tendulkar has been branded a liar by the match referee."

Tendulkar was one of the five Indians present at the racism charge hearing, others being skipper Anil Kumble, Harbhajan, manager Chetan Chauhan and media manager MV Sridhar.

Former opener Gavaskar said

the moment a charge was upheld without any "tangible proof" it left the door open for similar charges to be made.

"Just suppose a team wants to get rid of a player who is a threat to them. The simplest thing to do is to have some players to say that there was a racist taunt directed at them," he wrote.

"Then it's their word against the player who is accused, if one goes by the recent verdict. That's the danger in this verdict and that's why the Indian cricket board is absolutely right in backing its man."

Gavaskar also lauded the Indian board for demanding the removal of West Indian umpire Steve Bucknor as the team had lost faith in the official.

"Here the ICC too deserves praise for the swiftness with which it tried to defuse the tension by removing Bucknor from the duties of umpiring at Perth (venue for the third Test)," he wrote.

"But the ICC will do well to keep in mind that there were two umpires out there who had a bad game and not penalise only one or it could be up against a racist charge too."

"Throughout, as the controversy unfolded, it was only Bucknor that the Aussie media was pillorying and not (Mark) Benson. You form your opinion whether it was racist or not."

**A meek surrender**

FROM PAGE 17  
wicket. Only Habibul Bashar remains among the top order with 21 not out. Bashar playing his 49th Test became the first Bangladeshi to cross 3000 career runs when he reached 8 with a trademark pull shot for a single.

"Landmarks are always nice but you feel better when the team is doing well. If you play 50-odd Tests then you are bound to get 3000 runs or more. I still believe I should have scored more runs. I am not happy with my batting in the last few Tests but hopefully I can convert this start into something big which will help the team. At the moment this achievement is of secondary importance because the team is struggling in this match," said Bashar.

Scoreboard at close on the second day of the second Test between New Zealand and Bangladesh at the Basin Reserve in Wellington on Sunday:

NEW ZEALAND: First innings (overnight 134-3)

Bell c Rahim b Sajidul	1
Cumming lbw b Shakib	42
Fulton lbw b Mortaza	22
Fleming c Aftab b Shakib	87
Sinclair c Rahim b Shahadat	47
Oram c Rahim b Shahadat	40
McCullum c Shakib b Shahadat	1
Vettori c & b Aftab	94
Mills b Mortaza	4
O'Brien b Aftab	4
Martin not out	0
Extras: (b-5, lb-23, w-10, nb-13)	51
Total: (All out in 103.2 overs)	393
Fall of wickets: 1-2, 2-35, 3-118, 4-214, 5-216, 6-242, 7-323, 8-362, 9-390, 10-393.	

BAWLER O M R W

Mortaza	29	5	100	2
Sajidul	14	1	91	1
Shahadat	27	4	83	3
Aftab	12.2	4	31	2
Shakib	19	7	44	2
Ashraf	2	0	16	0

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Nafees c Bell b Martin 12  
Zunaed c McCullum b Mills 2  
Bashar not out 21  
Ashraf c Fleming b Mills 1  
Aftab c Fleming b O'Brien 5  
Rahim c Bell b Oram 0  
Shakib not out 4  
Extras: (lb-1, nb-5) 6  
Total: (For 5 wickets in 22 overs) 51  
To bat: Iqbal, Mortaza, Shahadat, Sajidul.  
Fall of wickets: 1-10, 2-14, 3-30, 4-44, 5-45.

**SCOREBOARD**

Scoreboard at close on the second day of the second Test between New Zealand and Bangladesh at the Basin Reserve in Wellington on Sunday:

**Kamalesh takes**

FROM PAGE 17  
Himel, Rinku, Rubel, Sabbir, Bappi; (female) Rumi, Soma, Saleha, Jayati, Tumpa, Seema, Nova, Sinigda, Cynthia, Rahima, Akhi, Binti, Nasima, Sharmin and Tamanna.

**Goodbye to grace**

FROM PAGE 17  
tertiary education once Richardson retired.

But what made him different to other sportsmen with an ultra-competitive streak was that he was gracious in victory and, after a few minutes to recover, equally gracious in defeat.

He made the play-off putt.

Woolmer rued his enjoyment of puddings and ice-creams, especially the fact that his sweet tooth demanded more the higher the tension became in the dressing room. He would sometimes help himself to a second bowl of chocolate pudding and then mutter something about not doing it again.

Pollock loved and admired Woolmer, but was equally merciless with his comments about diet and weight control. The situation presented a perfect opportunity to combine two of his favourite pastimes -- practical jokes and practical help. Having safely confirmed that all the squad were finished with the ice-cream and pudding, Pollock would pour a cellar of salt over it and then quietly tell the dressing room attendant not to clear the leftovers away. Eventually Woolmer could resist the temptation no longer and Pollock was on hand to cherish the grimace on his coach's face and to tell him that bad habits always end with a sour taste.

When Woolmer died during the World Cup (coaching Pakistan then), Pollock knew he would be asked to comment. Too emotional to do so live or in person, he wrote a statement by hand and asked team manager Goolam Raja to distribute it to whomever asked. He was devastated, yet was the first -- along with fielding coach and fellow Woolmer friend Jonty Rhodes -- to urge the rest of the players to increase their efforts on the field for the sake of the former coach rather than be deflated by his tragic death.

Pollock's easygoing nature helped him deal coolly with a sticky situation on a flight a few months ago, when he was squeezed snugly into the middle seat with his wife, Trish, to his left, and a fellow traveller to his right. The three of them became engaged in conversation, and at one point Trish waved an arm across her husband to illustrate a point. All well and good. Except that Pollock sat with two opened cans of soft drink in front of him as she did so. A long moment passed as the three of them thought about Pollock's suddenly -- not to mention strategically -- soaked trousers, and what to do about them.

Between whispered apologies, Trish fussed with paper towels. But as she was in a public place with a public figure, there wasn't much she could do without adding to the spectacle. "Don't worry," Pollock said quietly after several damp seconds. "It's fine." The conversation promptly resumed, with Pollock happy to sit on the wet spot.

Few South Africans and Australians will forget Pollock's heroic performance in the Adelaide Test in 1998. Having assumed the spearhead mantle that had fallen from the shoulders of the injured Allan Donald, the

then callow red-headed fast bowler sent down 41 overs in the first innings and took 7 for 87.