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Did U Know?

A record number of 605,735 fans flocked to the Australian Open this year, some 50,000 more than last year.



What to WATCH

TEN Sports

Pakistan v Zimbabwe
Fourth ODI
Live from 12:00pm
ESPN
Sportscentre India
Sports News
Live at 8:30pm
English Premier League
West Ham v Liverpool
Live from 1:30am (Thursday)



V-Day Club Cup Football

Abahani v Badda Jagarani (6:00pm)
Venue: Bangabandhu National Stadium



TALK TURKEY



Anil Kumble

(India's Test team captain)
"I was very happy with the way we played our cricket. I believed we could win the series and I thought we came pretty close to it. We had our moments, everyone knows that, and I'm really proud of what a great month of Test cricket it was."
At the end of the 4-Test series against Australia on Monday.

Three chess stars off to Moscow

UNB, Dhaka

Grand Master Abdullah Al Rakib, International Master Enamul Hossain Rajib and FIDE Master Nasir Ahmed left here Tuesday to take part in the Moscow Open chess tournament that will be held from February 2.

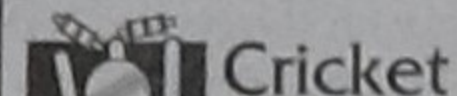
They will also participate in Aeroflot Open chess tournament beginning on February 13, three days after the Moscow event concludes.

National Sports Council (NSC), Bangladesh Chess Federation, Bangladesh Biman and Destiny 2000 Limited have sponsored the players to participate in both the events.

Meanwhile, the 29th National Junior chess championship begins today at 3:30 pm at the Bangladesh Chess Federation hall-room.

More than a hundred junior players have so far submitted their names to participate in the 9-round Swiss-League system meet.

BCB wants adjustments in Nimbus deal



SPORTS REPORTER

After burning the proverbial midnight candle for the last three working days a core negotiation team of Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) put forward some 'adjustment' proposals to the Nimbus delegation yesterday before finalising a long-term TV deal.

Nimbus Sports International won BCB's Worldwide Marketing TV rights (for six years) in November last year with a groundbreaking bid of 56.88 million dollars during the tenure of Ali Asghar. But in the changed scenario after the 1/11 the new board led by Major General Sina Ibn Jamali has decided to give a long hard look into the sensitive financial deal, which was supposed to be finalised by the end of 2007.

MA Momen, head of BCB's negotiation committee, said that

they have proposed some adjustments in the initial contract and if everything goes accordingly they would put pen to paper sooner than later.

"I am hopeful about a positive end of it especially after the way the discussion has progressed in the last three days. We put forward our observations on the legal and financial aspects of the agreement and the Nimbus delegation agreed to place those issues on their board," Momen told The Daily Star sport over telephone last night.

"What we felt that we have to make some adjustments in the agreement to protect our interests. If we fail to make those adjustments then ultimately we will be a loser in the long-term agreement," observed Momen, who also headed the review committee.

Momen also did not rule out the possibility of making a fresh start if ultimately Nimbus authorities do not go for the desired adjustments.

"I am hopeful about a good

solution because we discussed in a very friendly atmosphere and I think nothing is better for both sides than reaching an agreement if we are a little bit more compromising," he said.

While pointing out the loopholes Momen said: "Minimum guaranteed clause made totally based on the series that included India and we found that we will be the loser in seven series where India would not be taking part. And it was evident when Zimbabwe toured here last year. That's why we wanted the adjustments in this regard."

"There were also some observations on the allowable production expenses where we specified some areas that needed to be solved for our interest. It is too much to out-flow more than 19 millions dollars. We believe it should have been 15 million dollars," he said adding that there were also some problems the way the issue of insurance was

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Mohammedan's ex-national footballers (R to L) Ayaz, Kaiser, Pintoo, Salam and Sabbir signs footballs at the club premises on the eve of the Protiti Pharma Victory Day Club Cup football tournament, which starts today.

TRANSFERS MAR 15-APR 14? Prime Bank to sponsor 2nd B. League

SPORTS REPORTER

Although the inaugural professional football league -- the B. League -- was held last year without any sponsors, the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) confirmed getting financial support for the second edition even before the transfer dates have been announced.

Prime Bank has agreed to sponsor the 2nd B. League, confirmed BFF's acting president Monir Ahmed yesterday.

The news, however, was broken by Bangladesh Olympic Association's acting secretary general Kutubuddin Ahmed earlier in the afternoon.

It was learned that the chairman of Prime Bank has given his consent officially to sponsor the B. League this year although the BFF had requested the bank for two tournaments.

"Yes, they will sponsor the B. League. They haven't said anything about the National Football League (NFL) but we have their promise of further assistance in the future. Whatever we are happy to get a

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BCB accepts Axiom's offer

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) has accepted Axiom Technologies' offer as title sponsor for Bangladesh's home series against South Africa in February-March although the firm's bid was far below the board's target.

The BCB had announced Tk 1.20 crore for the title sponsorship under Package One, Tk 40 lakh for the in-stadium advertising under Package Two and same amount for Package Three as the floor price.

BCB's chief executive officer Mahmudur Rahman informed that Axiom came as the highest bidder for the whole package by offering an amount near Tk 1.12 crore.

"We are surprised by the response but we have no way rather than accepting the offer of the highest bidder though the total amount is almost half from our floor price," said Mahmud.

AB Bank was the other company who submitted tenders for the rights but was well behind the offer of Axiom.

"We feel that the unwillingness of the cellular companies is one of the major reasons behind the poor response," he observed.

South Africa will arrive on February 14 to play two Tests and three one-day internationals besides a three-day and one limited-overs warm-up games during their month-long stay.



Bangladesh Olympic Association acting secretary general Kutubuddin Ahmed pushes a laptop key at the NSC yesterday to unveil the logo (R) of next month's 2nd Indo-Bangladesh Bangla Games to be held in Dhaka.

Bangla Games logo unveiled

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Olympic Association (BOA) acting secretary general Kutubuddin Ahmed yesterday unveiled the logo of the 2nd Indo-Bangladesh Bangla Games with the slogan 'Sports for Friendship'.

The second edition of sports rivalry between athletes of Bangladesh and West Bengal will be held in Dhaka from February 22-26.

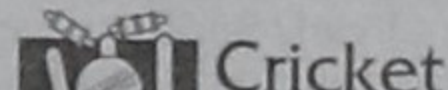
After West Bengal's domination in the inaugural version in 2006, Kutubuddin hoped that the hosts will do better at home in the competition of nine disciplines.

"If the boys do better and maintain the performance, it would give them an edge in the next South Asian Games," said the BOA secretary general after beaming the logo on a projector at the NSC conference room.

BOA vice president and Games

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Anil hails decision



PTI, Adelaide

India's Test captain Anil Kumble on Tuesday welcomed the decision to drop the racial-abuse charges against Harbhajan Singh and said it was important for the game of cricket that "we move on".

"I would like to express my thanks to all those who have supported our cause -- the Australian cricket team, Cricket Australia -- for coming together with us to ensure we move on," Kumble said.

"This matter was lingering on for last two weeks although we played cricket. I am happy and relieved not only for Harbhajan but also for cricket... It's been a fantastic result and I am sure cricket would be the winner," he said when repeatedly asked why India did not press the charge against Andrew Symonds for provoking Harbhajan

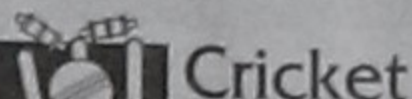
and whether he should also have been similarly fined.

ICC-appointed Appeals Commissioner Justice John Hansen on Tuesday overturned the racial-abuse case against Harbhajan but held him guilty of using offensive language against Australia's Symonds, ending a bitter controversy which had posed a threat to the remainder of Indian cricket team's tour of Australia.

The 38-year-old Kumble, who will return home before the start of the tri-series, wished luck to the team under ODI skipper Mahendra Singh Dhoni and advised them to hold the country's honour at the top.

"I take the opportunity to wish everyone in the Indian one-day team -- skipper Mahinder Singh Dhoni and his young team -- best of luck and I am sure they would play the game in the spirit of the game, and the prestige and honour of our country will be upheld."

Tired Tait leaves



CRICINFO, undated

Shaun Tait has walked away from cricket indefinitely, citing physical and emotional exhaustion. Cricket Australia announced that Tait will be rested from all levels while he undergoes a programme to help him recuperate, and the length of it will be dependent on his progress.

"This is a very difficult situation for me to be in at this time, this is not an overnight decision but something that I've been struggling with for sometime," Tait said. "A break from professional cricket will hopefully give me a clear mind and a chance for my body to rest and recover."

"My love and enjoyment of the

game is struggling due to these issues and if I continue to go on it will be unfair on my teammates and support staff of both the



SHAUN TAIT

SEE PAGE 18 COL 1

Australian and South Australian cricket teams -- and most importantly my family and close friends."

During an up-and-down past 12 months, Tait made his ODI debut, played a key role in Australia's World Cup triumph, finishing the tournament with 23 wickets, had elbow surgery, and returned to the Test team against India in Perth. However, he was nowhere near as destructive as Australia had hoped at the WACA and failed to claim any wickets.

Trefor James, Cricket Australia's chief medical officer, said: "After discussions with Shaun and the South Australian Cricket Association medical staff it is clear that Shaun needs a break from cricket at all levels. We'll be working with Shaun

V-DAY FOOTBALL OPENS TODAY Abahani meet Badda

SPORTS REPORTER

While their footballers were having the final preparations at the tiny ground inside the club premises, Mohammedan Sporting Club officials were proudly giving finishing touch to their efforts to hold the season's first football tournament.

The Protiti Pharma Victory Day Club Cup football tournament, organised by Mohammedan, will begin today with their archrivals and B. League champions Abahani facing rank outsiders Badda Jagarani in the opener.

Ex-Mohammedan stars including Zakaria Pintoo, who is also the tournament committee chairman, Salam Murshedi, Shafiqul Islam Manik, Kaiser Hamid, Rumman Wali Bin Sabbir, Ayaz, Panir, Titu

and Intiaz Ahmed Nakib were present at an official briefing and signed footballs that will be gifted to the fans at galleries today.

Although a colourful opening ceremony will start at 4pm at the Bangabandhu, the match will kick off two hours later.

Mahub Jamil, special assistant to the Chief Adviser of the Caretaker Government, who is in charge of the sports ministry, will declare the eight-team meet open.

The tournament, due to be held in December last year, was rescheduled for a January 26 start but had to be deferred again due to inclement weather.

Apart from four professional clubs Abahani, Mohammedan, Muktiyoddha and Arambagh, Senior Division sides Victoria, Badda,

Wanderers and Youngmen's Club Fakirerpool are competing in two groups.

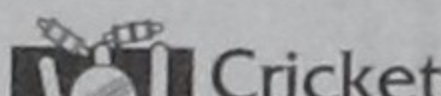
Private satellite channel ATN Bangla is expected to telecast five matches live -- the opener, the group match between giants Abahani and Muktiyoddha, the two semifinals on February 7 and 8 and the February 10 final.

Although the three giants suffered from frequent absence of their booters during the month-long training, the minnows have prepared well because of their involvement in the ongoing Senior Division Football League.

The relatively inexperienced booters of Wanderers, Victoria, Fakirerpool and Badda will be under the guidance of veteran coaches like

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Harbhajan off the hook



AFP, Adelaide

Indian off-spinner Harbhajan Singh was cleared Tuesday of racially abusing Australia's Andrew Symonds, the International Cricket Council (ICC) said.

Harbhajan pleaded guilty to a lesser charge of using abusive language and was fined 50 percent of his match fee by appeals commissioner John Hansen, ICC spokesman Sami-ul-Hasan told reporters in Adelaide.

The spinner was originally

handed a three-Test ban by match referee Mike Procter after being found guilty of calling Symonds, Australia's only black player, a "monkey" during the acrimonious Sydney Test earlier this month.

The ICC spokesman said Hansen, a New Zealand High court judge, was convinced Harbhajan was not guilty of a racial slur after a hearing lasting more than five hours.

"Justice Hansen said that he was convinced that on all evidence submitted before him the charge of a level 3.3 offence was not proven, but that Harbhajan should be charged with a level 2.8 offence," he said.

"Harbhajan pleaded guilty to this charge, and on hearing submissions on the penalty, Justice Hansen imposed a fine of 50 percent of his match fee."

The appeal decision clears the way for India to continue their tour of Australia where they are due to play a Twenty20 international in Melbourne on Friday before starting a tri-series on Sunday that also features Sri Lanka.

The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) had earlier threatened to abandon the tour if Harbhajan was not cleared of the racial abuse charge.

SEE PAGE 18 COL 2



WHAT ARELIEF: Indian off-spinner Harbhajan Singh waits for his appeal against racism charges in Adelaide on Tuesday.

CLEAR

Dandruff is more visible on black clothes... That's why CLEAR men dares you to wear Black this winter.

Only CLEAR men gives you the dandruff free confidence.

NO DANDRUFF.*

* No visible flakes with regular use ** Incidence amongst males

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