



Left-arm spinner Arafat Sunny (R) celebrates his wicket against Sylhet at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

## Dhoni finds few friends

PTI, New Delhi

Mahendra Singh Dhoni's threat to resign to back a player of his choice did not find much support among former cricketers, who Tuesday insisted that while a captain does have the right to give his inputs, the final call should rest with the selectors.

The former cricketers said while a captain's views should be given priority the ultimate responsibility and authority lies with the selectors, who have been entrusted with the job.

"The inputs of captain and coach in selection matters are very important. It's also important for the selection committee chairman to have a quiet word, informally, on the day before the selection panel meeting with the captain and coach. I used to do it most of the times, but not always," former chairman of selectors Dilip Vengsarkar told PTI.

"If the captain's demands are reasonable then it's okay to go with him as he formalises the team strategies. Every captain will put forth his views in selection meetings and Dhoni is no exception. But the final decision rests with the selectors," he added.

Former captain Bishan Singh Bedi said that the captain's views should be considered as much as possible.

"The captain is a co-opted member of the panel. His views should be considered as much as possible. But the selectors also have their plans and they should mutually sort out the issues if there are any," Bedi said.

Former captain and selection panel chairman Chandu Borde said the captains are given their due say during the meetings.

"During our times we used to include captain and manager (now coach) in selection committee meetings for discussions. Generally 85-90 per cent players select themselves on merit and performance. Only one or two players need to be picked."

## Muktijoddha

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repay the loans with the sponsors' money.

"We had taken loans to meet the budget of running the club earlier and we are trying to pay them back," Feroz said.

There was rumour that Muktijoddha would not be able to field a team in their Friday's B. League match against Abahani as their temporary residence was closed by the owner following no payment for five months.

But the club official claimed things would be all right and they will continue playing in the league.

"We are looking forward to start our club activities in Gulistan before Eidul Azha, which I hope would take care of things," added Feroz.

## No hair, no

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not believe in astrology but rather rely on his own skills when it comes to ruling the 22 yards. Fed up by suggestion and recommendations that he should wear jersey with specific numbers on it while playing, the flamboyant Indian opener went on to wear a numberless shirt in the fourth one-dayer against England on Sunday.

"I don't believe in astrology but my family members do. Too many people used to call up and pest me and my family to use different numbers."

"I was so fed up that I decided not to take any of their advices. We play Test matches without numbers and hence I don't use any number on my T-shirt," Sehwag, adjudged man-of-the-match for his scintillating 69 in Bangalore, said.

## An unusual celebration

### Cricket

PTI, Bangalore

The entire Indian squad came out onto the field hours after play got over. They had the run of the empty stadium, and a jubilant team made the most of it. Running, screaming and having fun -- a victory lap and a victory dance away from the fans, but in the middle of the stadium -- the perfect way to celebrate.

As dark clouds hovered over the Chinnaswamy stadium India started with a fresh opening pair as Sachin Tendulkar came in. But the master batsman looked rusty and he was put out of his misery by Stuart Broad. That brought together the red hot pair of Sehwag and Gautam Gambhir and they raced along to 82 for one when the skies opened up.

The rain stopped play twice and the match was reduced to only 22 overs per side. Sehwag opened with a bang again but fell to Graeme Swann at 69, trying to up the tempo. However, with Yuvraj Singh at the crease run-rate was never a problem.

## Plan damage limitation

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generally bouncy and we need to cope with that if we are to improve our performance," Ashraful observed.

"Our top-order failed to score in the last match. But if we get a good start and then at least one batsman carries his bat for a long time, the second Test would be different," he said.

Bangladesh could bat only 88.3 overs in two innings of the first Test.

About his struggle against the South African pace attack the right-hander agreed with his coach's observation that his height or the lack of it was a factor.

"Yes, my height is a concern but I have to be good enough

to handle this," he said.

The Tigers skipper informed that they had worked out their first Test mistakes over the last three days, but he believed that there were few things that could not be solved overnight with practice in the nets and on the drawing boards.

"We have to improve facilities at home if we want to cope with this kind of condition. You can't survive if you are not habituated with this kind of pitches. Unfortunately we have a very wrong thinking that the bouncy pitch should be grassy, now we need sporting wickets where the ball comes onto the bat at a particular height," he demanded.

Bangladesh could bat only

88.3 overs in two innings of the first Test.

In the women's competition, Biman thrashed Surjo Torun 3-0 while Dewan Textile beat Maha SC by same margin.

## Crucial win for Biman

SPORTS REPORTER

Biman Bangladesh crossed major hurdle in the Fahami Group First Division Badminton League when they edged fellow title contenders Knitt Concern 3-2 in the men's competition at the NSC Woodenfloor Gymnasium yesterday.

In other matches, Gulshan SC blanked Tejkunipara KS 5-0, Ahban defeated Dewan Textile 3-2 and Maha SC beat Surjo Torun 3-2.

In the women's competition, Biman thrashed Surjo Torun 3-0 while Dewan Textile beat Maha SC by same margin.

## Barisal hand Khulna

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wickets each while Mohammad Shahzada and Saqlain Sajib snapped up two each as Chittagong had a bad second day.

The hosts were first bowled out for 80 and then had something to take home as they ended the day on 89 for two.

Rajshahi failed to match Barisal's ruthlessness but still have two days to spare and a lead of 79 runs.

### DHAKA-SYLHET

Sylhet took the key wicket of Marshall Ayub to take the upper hand when they begin the third day today.

Rising star Marshall edged a Sumon Saha delivery to wicketkeeper Mithun Ali for a 59-ball 45.

He struck seven boundaries in his 84-minute stay and was in the middle of a 61-run partnership with Mahmudullah Riyad, who remains unbeaten on 52 off 74 balls.

The pair came together when Dhaka had lost their top-order for just 70 runs with Saikat Ali taking two and paceman Shuvashish Roy claiming the wicket of makeshift opener Elias Sunny for 16.

Earlier, Sylhet piled on the runs in their first innings, with contributions from allrounder Rezaul Haque and Kamrul Islam. Both got out in the 70s but their knocks ensured Sylhet would end the day with a substantial lead.

## Russel back on top

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first-time shot wide after Bulbul inspired a counter attack from left. Bulbul then forced a fine save by Zia, who palmed away an angled shot six minutes from halftime.

Wajed Gazi's side, like their previous games, got off to a blazing start after resumption but Bulbul bluffed the easiest chance of the day two minutes into the second half when he broke in with a through from Moroccan midfielder Iqbal Mohamed but Zia parried the weak effort.

The resulting corner broke the deadlock in the 48th minute when Bulbul drove the ball into the roof of the net from handshaking distance after Zia had brilliantly stopped Youness the powerful header on Hassan's flagkick.

Brothers reassured soon but Zahid, who was fed by Matiur Munna's across-the-field pass eight minutes later, shot into the side netting.

Russel defended doggedly against tremen-

dous pressure but it told when Divine finally chipped a perfect cross from the right for Mishu -- unguarded at the far post -- to nod home the equaliser.

With both the teams waiting for the final whistle, Russel snatched a dramatic late goal when Rajan Mia, who replaced Bulbul a minute earlier, gave a lethal pass to Youness from the left flank. The Moroccan shrugged off a challenge by rival centre-back Ariful inside the area and neatly placed an angled left-footer into Zia's far corner for his fourth league goal.

Yellow card: Youness (Russel)

### TEAMS

RUSSEL: Azam, Aminul, Zahirul, Bouridup, Hassan (Parvez Babu), Youness, Monwar, Iqbal, Tanveer (Mobarak), Alifaz and Bulbul (Rajan).

BROTHERS: Zia, Shuvra, Ariful, Masud Rana, Arup, Divine, Mishu, Zahid (Liton), Matiur Munna (Shakil), Tapu (Roni) and Henry.

Referee: Azad Rahman.

left in this series and we are going to have to get something out of them," the Lancashire star said.

"We can't win the series, so it's down to our own personal pride and also trying to gain some momentum going into the Test series."

Flintoff, however, warned teammates not to think of the Test matches just yet.

"I think it would be dangerous to think about anything other than these one-day matches because we could get found out even more," he said.

"The way India have played, they've been ruthless. They have outplayed us in every department. They are very well drilled and have learnt a lot of new skills with bat and ball, and we have been found wanting a little bit."

### ARMY ATHLETICS

## Abdullah takes 100m crown

UNB, Dhaka

Corporal Abu Abdullah set a new national mark in the 100-meter sprint of Bangladesh Army Annual Athletics Championship with a timing of 10.13 seconds on the closing day of the meet at the Army Stadium in Banani yesterday.

Abu Abdullah, representing the Comilla team, bettered the event's previous record of 10.30 seconds and was adjudged the best athlete of the meet.

Jessore however emerged champions securing 128 points while Rangpur finished runners-up with 120 points.

On the closing day, Sepoy Shahidul Islam of Rangpur earned the gold in the 800-meter while Chittagong bagged the gold in the 4x400-meter relay.

Chief of General Staff of Bangladesh Army Maj Gen Sina Ibn Jamali witnessed some events on the final day as chief guest and later distributed medals and trophies.

"It is so surprising to receive this trophy," he

## Djeparov Asia's best

### Football

AFP, Shanghai

Uzbekistan's Server Djeparov was Tuesday named Asian player of the year while Gamba Osaka was voted club of the year and Japan the national team of the year at a glittering ceremony in Shanghai.

Japan dominated the annual Asian Football Confederation awards, with Gamba's Akira Nishino winning coach of the year and the Japan Football Association president Ken Naganuma handed a lifetime achievement award.

The country also won the fair play award while Homare Sawa won the women's player of the year at a separate ceremony last week.

But it was Uzbek international Djeparov who won the top honour ahead of Japan's Gamba midfielder Yasuhiro Endo, considered to be the frontrunner after being voted most valuable player at this year's AFC Champions League.

The influential midfielder, who played a key role in Kuruvchi's domestic double and their AFC Champions League campaign this year, said he was honoured.

"It is so surprising to receive this trophy," he

said. "I want to thank all Uzbekis. They told me to come home with this trophy and I am."

Nishino was named coach of the year for guiding Gamba to the AFC Champions League title, where they beat Adelaide United 5-0 on aggregate in the final and secured a place in the Club World Cup in Japan next month.

"It is incredible," he said. "Thank you to my team, they are wonderful players."

"I'll continue to work to contribute to the development of Gamba, Japanese football."

Naganuma was recognised with the special "Diamond of Asia" award for his services to football.

Naganuma, who died of pneumonia in June aged 77, was a former coach of the Japanese national team who led them to their only Olympic medal (bronze in Mexico in 1968) and then headed the IFA from 1994-1998.

United Arab Emirates' Ahmed Kalil was named youth player of the year while Uzbekistan's Ravshan Irmatov was referee of the year.



Server Djeparov of Uzbekistan holds the AFC Player of the Year trophy in Shanghai on Tuesday.

## Moles new

## NZ coach

### Cricket

AFP, Wellington

Former Warwickshire batsman Andy Moles was Tuesday appointed to replace John Bracewell as the new coach of the New Zealand cricket team, after former run-rate Matthew Mott pulled out at the last minute.

English-born Moles, 47, will



ANDY MOLES

take up the role next week in time for the West Indies series, which begins with the Test in Dunedin starting on December 11.

As a player, Moles was forced to retire in 1998 by an Achilles tendon injury, and has since gained extensive coaching experience with Free State in South Africa, Hong Kong, Kenya and Scotland.

For the past two years he has

coached the New Zealand state

side Northern Districts, taking them from bottom to top of the national championship in his first season in charge.

"Andy has an outstanding coaching background," New Zealand Cricket chief executive Justin Vaughan said.

"He also brings leadership, passion, commitment and a drive to get the best out of his teams, attributes we believe are essential for this role."

Vaughan said Bracewell would step down at the end of the current Australian tour.

"With the new coach available to start immediately, we have mutually agreed that John would step down after the Australian series, allowing Andy to take up the role during a home season rather than on the road."

Mott had kept New Zealand Cricket on tenterhooks as he weighed up whether to accept the job, saying a week ago "it's about a 50-50 split" before announcing this week he would re-sign with New South Wales.

## BCB's new

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for the Category 1 vice-president (10 directors to vote) while Aziz Al Kaiser Tito, who was in Mahbub Anam's panel during the EC election, will fight it out with Shafiqur Rahman Munna or Ahmed Sajjadul Alam Bobby for the vice-president in Categories 2 and 3 (13 directors to vote) as the Enayet-Bobby panel was yet to decide on their candidate.

### CROSSWORD</h3