

**BCB condoles Rahman's death**

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) expressed deep shocks over the death of grounds supervisor Mohammad Abdur Rahman.

BCB president and directors extended their condolence and deepest sympathy to the family members of Rahman.

Abdur Rahman, the son of former head groundsman late Abdul Latif and a very known face in the sports arena, breathed his last at Chandpur last Friday. He was 85.

**Bowden takes Rauf's place**

CRICINFO, undated

Billy Bowden, the New Zealand umpire, will replace Asad Rauf for the first Test between India and England scheduled to begin in Chennai on Thursday. The official announcement from the International Cricket Council (ICC) comes after Rauf, one of the two Pakistani representatives on the Elite Panel of umpires, failed to obtain the correct visa to travel to Chennai.

Pakistani and Indian nationals require city-specific visas to travel to either country and Rauf had a valid visa for Ahmedabad, Mumbai and Bangalore -- the first two for the India-England Test series and the third for a Champions League game.

But following the terror attacks in Mumbai last week, the Test venues were changed to Chennai and Mohali, cities for which Rauf had to get visas again. But due to the weekend, followed by Eid holidays, there has been a delay in the issuance which has meant him stepping down for the first match.

However, the ICC hoped that Rauf would be able to stand in the second match of the series in Mohali, starting December 19.

Bowden, 45, has officiated in 127 ODIs and five Twenty20 internationals and will be standing in his 51st Test. He last stood in the fourth Test of the Border-Gavaskar Trophy between India and Australia in Nagpur last month.

**Security on**

**FROM PAGE 17**  
An enhanced Test championship. The promotion of Test cricket will also be discussed as will the proposed amendments to the Code of Conduct, specifically to do with Levels 3 and 4 charges (offences such as intimidation, assault and verbal abuse of another player, official or spectator) being referred to an independent legally qualified adjudicator.

On Monday the members will attend a strategy workshop to discuss various issues including the long-term landscape of cricket and business models for growing the game.

**A modest**

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do. I must carry on my apprenticeship, individually and collectively.

"This Ballon d'Or is the first step on a journey that will go forward."  
Ronaldo, who was closely linked with a move to Real Madrid last summer, said that Manchester United were like a home from home for him and with whom he won not only the title but also the Champions League last season.

"I have played for five years with Manchester United, a club where I feel at home," said Ronaldo.

"I arrived there very young, and I have won individual and team titles."

"Today (Sunday) I have this individual reward which makes me happy."  
"It is the culmination of work which I put in place a long time ago, but I am ambitious."

"It is imperative that I continue to win both individual and team titles."

Ronaldo beat Barcelona's Lionel Messi and Liverpool striker Fernando Torres to the honour on the back of a phenomenal 2007-08 season in which he scored 42 goals.

**Mahela**

**FROM PAGE 17**  
from Sri Lanka's one-day squad was a surprise, but Jayawardene said the door had not been closed on him. "The selectors have spoken to him and he has said he will fight for his place which is very good news because no one can deny the fact that he is a major asset. Overall what I believe is that we have a very good team and can defeat any side if we play to our potential."



Inter Milan star Zlatan Ibrahimovic (R) celebrates with teammates after scoring a goal against Lazio during their Serie A clash at the Olympic Stadium in Rome on Saturday.

**Inter cruise past Lazio**

AFP, Rome

Inter Milan went nine points clear at the top of Serie A after a stunning 3-0 win at Lazio on Saturday as AS Roma wracked up their 1,000th top flight victory with a 1-0 success at rock-bottom Chievo.

Jose Mourinho's reigning champions are looking unstoppable as headers from Walter Samuel and Zlatan Ibrahimovic and a Mobido Diakite own goal gave Inter an easy evening in the capital.

The pressure is now on pursuers AC Milan and Juventus, who play Catania and Lecce respectively on Sunday, not to slip up a week before they meet in a crucial clash at the Stadio Olimpico in Turin.

Despite their lead, Mourinho played down talk of the title.

"The scudetto? Halfway through the season we're nothing but experience tells me that this is a real team," said the former Chelsea boss.

"It's a pleasure for me to be the coach but I don't want to get too excited right now, we have to keep our feet on the ground. I don't want to be winter champions, I want to be champions in May."

Inter got off to a dream start in the Roman Stadio Olimpico as Samuel headed home a cross from Ghana midfielder Sulley Muntari on two minutes.

Lazio had the better of the rest of the first period but

Aleksandar Kolarov and Ousmane Dabo thrashed vicious shots while Lorenzo De Silvestri had another deflected just past the post.

Inter goalkeeper Julio Cesar also tipped a shot from Pasquale Foggia onto the outside of the post as the hosts piled forwards.

But disaster struck in first half injury time as Diakite inadvertently turned a Maicon cross past Juan Pablo Carrizo in the Lazio goal.

The match was over as a contest 10 minutes into the second period as Ibrahimovic headed home an Esteban Cambiasso free-kick, although it looked to have gone in off a defender's head.

Lazio did get the ball in the net direct from a Kolarov free-kick but the referee disallowed the effort because he had blown his whistle for an infringement.

Luciano Spalletti's Roma finished with 10 men as they won for the fourth match in a row with French winger Jeremy Menez celebrating a rare start by scoring the only goal of the game with a stunning volley, just days after suggesting he would leave the club he joined in the summer due to his limited starting opportunities.

Chievo remain rooted to the foot of the table while Roma moved up to 12th but crucially they are now only four points off a Champions League qualifying position.

For a team who harboured hopes of winning the title before beginning the season

with six defeats in their opening nine matches, they now seem firmly back on the right track.

"Right now I'm just happy to see my players in a good condition psychologically and physically," said Spalletti, referring to their troubles of earlier in the season.

"There was a risk that they would lose their self-belief but instead they reacted in the right way and now we can allow ourselves to aim for something important."

Roma had much the better of a tame opening spell with Menez proving a particular threat.

On 10 minutes he beat two players as he slalomed into the area but Chievo goalkeeper Stefano Sorrentino was equal to his effort.

On 26 minutes Menez turned creator, dancing into the area and crossing to the edge of the six-yard box where Matteo Brihi somehow failed to score, directing his close range effort straight at the sprawled Sorrentino.

Roma turned the screw after the break and despite Sorrentino coming to the rescue again on 65 minutes to repel a Simone Perrotta volley they went ahead four minutes later.

Once again it was Menez who proved decisive, running onto a header forwards from Daniele De Rossi before steering a delightful right foot volley from 15 yards across Sorrentino and into the far corner.

The only sour note was Brihi's sending off five minutes from time for a second booking.

**Race to intensify after**

**FROM PAGE 17**  
after a similar act had salvaged the draw against their archrivals Abahani but missing half the men from their regular eleven saw them slump 1-0 to Rahmatganj and a goalless draw against Chittagong Mohammedan.

Mohammedan even failed to score from the penalty on both occasions to waste a great chance to catch Abahani in the table.

The Black and Whites have had unhappy players and the coach who did not get salary for long and the club must settle the issue before playing their first match of the league away from Dhaka although the oppositions are bottom-table Khulna Abahani.

Brothers, however, managed to put end to a poor run which saw them take just three points out of maximum 12 in four games.

They bounced back in the race with victories against Abahani and Rahmatganj to join Mohammedan at third place and hope to improve when they meet Farashganj next.

Although not tagged as serious title contenders, Chittagong Mohammedan -- still unbeaten at home -- can well claim a place among the top three as they host Mukhtijodha, who have suffered seven defeats in nine

outings.

Apart from team contest, fight for individual glory also has been tight with the national players finally starting to show superiority.

Although Russel marksman Alfaz Ahmed and Mohammedan's Nigerian forward Alamu Bukola looked like runaway leaders in the scorers' list early, Abahani duo Emeke Christian of Nigeria and Zahid Hasan Emily have been consistent recently to catch them both.

Brothers winger Zahid Hossain and national team discard Enamul Haque of Farashganj also fired three goals in the last few days to climb up the list after rather quiet starts.

**11TH WEEK FIXTURES**  
Dec 18: Ctg Abahani v Arambagh, Khulna Abahani v Mohammedan, Farashganj v Brothers.

**B. LEAGUE SCORERS**  
7 goals: Alfaz (Russel), Emeke (Abahani)  
6 goals: Bukola (Mohammedan), Emily (Abahani)  
5 goals: Robin (Mohammedan), Idris (Rahmatganj)  
4 goals: Youness (Russel), Enamul (Farashganj)  
3 goals: Mehdi (Khulna Abahani), Zahid, Divine

(Brothers), Raphael (Ctg Mohammedan), Nasir (Mohammedan), Nicodemus (Arambagh)  
2 goals: Oniya, Manju, Tapu (Brothers), Towhidul (Ctg Mohammedan), Mithun, Sakawat Rony (Ctg Abahani), Kanchan (Muktijoddha), Ibrahim (Abahani), Nayan (Arambagh), Francis (Rahmatganj)  
1 goal: Zakir, Felix (Rahmatganj), Abul, Mamun, Zahed, Tipu (Abahani), Arman Aziz, Sharif, Hazem, Faisal (Mohammedan), Kabir, Yusuf, Johnson, Emeke (Farashganj), Manjurul, Tariqul, Ripon (Khulna Abahani), Camara, Ridon (Ctg Mohammedan), Oniya, Shuva, Munna (Brothers), Biddiyut, Walid (Muktijoddha), Imrul, Sirajul, Monu, Moudud (Arambagh), Monwar, Said, Aminul, Igir, Bulbul (Russel)

**Moore's eyes**

**FROM PAGE 17**  
one didn't want to go it would be because they didn't feel it was the right thing to do at the time.

"And if that did happen we would respect it, otherwise I hope we take our full team there and our strongest side and we go and play excellent cricket."

Tottenham travel to London rivals West Ham on Monday, a match that sees Spurs' former Hammers boss Harry Redknapp returning to Upton Park.

**Amjad in for Ryan**

AFP, London

Kent fast-bowler Amjad Khan has been called up by England to replace the injured Ryan Sidebottom in the squad for the scheduled two-Test tour of India.

Born in Denmark, Khan will join Kevin Pietersen's squad if they decide later on Sunday to return to India following last month's terrorist attacks in Mumbai. That decision will follow scrutiny of the latest security reports from the country.

Yorkshire leg-spinner Adil Rashid will also travel with the squad but has not officially been added to it.

Sidebottom is not among those currently preparing in Abu Dhabi for a series set to start in Chennai on Thursday, having suffered a side strain during the aborted one-day leg of the pre-Christmas tour.

**WI practise batting**

AFP, Auckland

The West Indies warmed up for the first cricket Test against New Zealand with valuable time in the middle as their three-day match against Auckland ended in a draw on Sunday.

After Auckland had declared at 587 for seven, the West Indies had reached 431 for seven when stumps were drawn.

It was never a realistic run chase and opener Sewnarine Chattergoon contented himself with a deliberate 93 off 247 balls, while Ramnareesh Sarwan top-scored with 158 before he retired.

After starting the final day at 82 without loss, the West Indies added eight runs before Xavier Marshall became the first wicket to fall, bowled by left-arm paceman Michael Bates for 47.

As the tourists crept along at just more than two runs an over, Chattergoon and Sarwan put on 116 for the second wicket before Chattergoon's five hours at the crease ended when he was bowled by spinner Tarun Nethula.

**Manik's job**

**FROM PAGE 17**  
in two tournaments saw the national team concede just six goals, less than South East Asian superior oppositions like Myanmar, Malaysia and Vietnam.

Vietnam and Myanmar won the Merdeka Cup and the Grand Royal Challenge Cup respectively and Manik's side drew with both the teams.

The thing that goes against Manik mainly is that the national team have no international commitment before the under-23 side are due to take part in the SA Games at home, scheduled for December 2009 or January 2010.

The NTMC members feel that it would be unwise to waste salary for a national coach, who will have no work but to watch the players from the bench.

Whatever, the BFF president Kazi Salahuddin, now abroad, will have the final say after talks with NTMC chairman Badal Roy.

**L'pool in pole**

**FROM PAGE 17**  
off goalkeeper Ross Turnbull for an own-goal.

Hull, fifth in the table, then went ahead through Marlon King's 85th minute penalty, with Boro's David Wheeler sent-off for the foul on Geovanni that led to the spot-kick.

At St James' Park, Owen gave Newcastle the lead when he turned in an eighth-minute cross from Jonas Gutierrez before making it 2-0 in the 24th minute after good work by Obafemi Martins.

Stoke though pulled a goal back on the hour mark when Mamady Sidibe scored from close range.

And they were level in the dying seconds when Abdoulaye Faye scored against his former club, although the draw still left promoted Stoke searching for their first away league win this season.

Aston Villa will have a chance to go fifth when they face Everton on Sunday while Portsmouth will look to recover from the disappointment of their UEFA Cup exit away to bottom-of-the-table West Brom.

Tottenham travel to London rivals West Ham on Monday, a match that sees Spurs' former Hammers boss Harry Redknapp returning to Upton Park.

**Our best chance: Smith**

Cricket

CRICINFO, undated

South Africa have arrived in Perth on Sunday high on confidence, with Graeme Smith saying this tour was the side's best shot at a series title in Australia since their readmission in 1991. South Africa are yet to win a Test series in Australia, but Smith, the first South African to lead his country on two tours of Australia, was hopeful of turnaround.

"The reality is, it's probably our best chance of winning out of all five tours, and everyone knows that," he was quoted as saying by the Herald Sun before leaving South Africa. "Dale Steyn, on current form, is the leading strike bowler in the world, Makhaya [Ntini] is one of the most experienced and Morne Morkel one of the most promising."

"We have a settled opening pair, the middle order has been functioning superbly for over a year, Jacques Kallis is probably the best all-rounder in the world and Mark Boucher is the most experienced and, statistically, the best wicketkeeper the game has seen."

Smith, 27, felt the left-arm spinner Paul Harris was also a key component of the team. "As a captain I'm delighted with Paul Harris," he said. "He has a very clearly defined role in the team, from first innings to second, and he gives me control. I enjoy the fact that he is underestimated by many opponents."

Harris, 30, has yet to play Australia. "We have seen some of the finest batsmen from India and Pakistan, and Kevin Pietersen in England, taking him lightly and paying the price," said Smith.

There has been speculation as to whether Australia will go with an all-pace attack for the series opener and the injury sustained by the off-spinner Jason Krejza, who failed a fitness test for Tasmania yesterday, gives Ricky Ponting a potential headache.

South African coach Mickey Arthur talked up Australia's pace attack against the visiting side's. "In the past you could predict conditions, the most obvious being that it would turn square in Sydney and Shane Warne would most likely take 10," said Arthur. "But things are different now and it's hard to see which way they will go in order to maxi-

mise home advantage. If they can produce an old-fashioned Perth wicket with pace and bounce, will they back [Brett] Lee, [Mitchell] Johnson and [Stuart] Clark against our pace attack?"

"People must realise that our guys are still young," Arthur said. "They are not the West Indies attack of the 1990s, as they were written up in England. But they are learning all the time and there's unbelievable potential. There's a huge amount of potential there [and] we are covered in all areas. You'll see three different quick bowlers, all who bring different elements to our attack, which is brilliant, lots of variation."

South Africa arrive in Australia unbeaten in their last nine Test series -- winning eight of those -- and are currently ranked No. 2 in the ICC rankings. Their last series loss was in Sri Lanka in 2006, with their only draw since then coming away against India earlier this year.

South Africa will play a one-day game on December 11 and a two-day match against Western Australia starting Friday. The first Test starts in Perth on December 17.

**Morgan's call to fans**

Cricket

AFP, Dubai

International Cricket Council (ICC) president David Morgan has urged fans to join him in attending the upcoming India-England Test series and so demonstrate that "we will not be dictated to by terrorists".

The future of the two-Test campaign was called into question following last month's terror attacks in Mumbai which left 172 people dead.

England cut short the one-day international section of their tour to fly home but have since gone out to a training camp in Abu Dhabi, where they are due to make a definitive decision on whether to return to India on Sunday.

The first Test is due to start in Chennai on December 11 and the second in Mohali on December 19 after officials

switched the venues from Ahmedabad and Mumbai respectively in response to the attacks.

Morgan, a former chairman of the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB), said in a statement issued from the ICC's Dubai headquarters: "ICC chief executive Haroon Lorgat will be in Chennai for the first Test and I will be in Mohali to show the ICC's support for India and the two teams."

"I would urge as many supporters as possible to join us during the series, not only because they will see two excellent sides playing Test cricket, the pinnacle of our sport, but also because by doing so we will demonstrate that we will not be dictated to by terrorists," the Welshman added.

"I believe the Test series will be a clear demonstration of the resilience of the Indian people and the game of cricket and an illustration that the

game has the ability to bring people together."

Morgan insisted he was sensitive to safety concerns, saying: "Safety and security of the players, officials and all stakeholders must be the key consideration at all times."

"But if security assessments indicate that the measures put in place are appropriate then we -- players, officials and all stakeholders -- have a duty to ensure cricket takes place," he added.

"I have been in regular contact with both the president of the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) Shashank Manohar and Giles Clarke, the England and Wales Cricket Board's chairman, and it's clear they both want to play the matches if at all possible."

"The players have also demonstrated an acceptance of their role in trying to put a smile back on the face of a country that has undergone a horrendous experience."

**Lee has five years left**

Cricket

CRICINFO, undated

Brett Lee, the Australian fast bowler, has dismissed talk of retirement by saying he has four to five years of cricket left in him. "I'm confident in my own mind," he told the Herald Sun. "If I keep doing the right things, if I look after my body, there's at least another four or five years left in me."

"It all comes down to staying away from injury and looking after myself. Being a fast bowler, things will go wrong with your body, it's the nature of the beast. But I've got a great strength program I'm working on. The game has changed a lot in the last 10 years. It's gone to a new level. Blokes are fitter and stronger."

Lee has taken 56 wickets in 2008 -- his best return in a calendar year since his entry to the Test arena in 1999 -- and he believed he had not lost his drive. "I know I'm 32, but the truth is I have missed a fair bit of cricket with injuries, plus I was 12th man (for the Test side) for 18 months," he said. "I only feel 27 or 28 in bowling terms. I'm still improving. I

don't feel I'm ready for that [retirement] just yet."

A disappointing performance in the Border-Gavaskar Trophy in India in October-November saw him bag eight wickets from four Tests at an average of 61.62.

However, Lee came back strongly in the recent two-Test series against New Zealand where he finished as the second-highest wicket-taker behind Mitchell Johnson. He picked up 12 wickets at 21.83, including a nine-wicket haul in the second match in Adelaide.

With 309 wickets at 30.11, Lee is fourth among the Australian bowlers for the most number of Test dismissals, and close to overtaking his idol Dennis Lillee who has 355 wickets.

"To think I'm about 40-odd wickets from going past Dennis Lillee, I find it hard to comprehend," he said. "It feels like yesterday I was playing for the Oak Flats Under-8s. Dennis was the bloke I emulated in the backyard. When I was 16, I met him at a fast bowlers clinic in Sydney. I remember him saying: 'You have good pace, if you stay strong, you never know, one

day you might play for Australia.'"

Lee said he dreamt of playing 100 Tests which would help him reach 400 wickets -- a feat accomplished by only one Australian fast bowler, Glenn McGrath. And he would be keen to reach the figure by the Ashes tour in July next year.

But he would be looking to make the most of Australia's three-Test series against South Africa at home (December-January) and the three Tests in the return series (February-March) before that.

**Mixed bag**

**FROM PAGE 17**  
lost the second round game on Sunday against Indian FM Priyadarshan.

Mohammad Imran Ali Elin won the second round board against local player Vigneshraj Muthuram after losing the first round to International Master Shyam Sundar while Rezaul Islam Babu also managed full points in the second round against Kharthukheyvan after losing the first game against Vidit Santosh Gujrathi.

A total of 67 players including six IMs are taking part in the tournament.

**CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer**

**ACROSS**  
1 Informa- right  
2 Vicinity  
3 Blue hue  
4 St.  
5 "Platoon" setting  
8 Strike-breaker  
12 Enrager  
13 "Born in the--"  
14 Domes- ticate  
15 Oceans  
16 Menace  
18 Islamic leader  
20 To-do list entry  
21 Thailand, once  
23 Solidly  
24 Name  
28 Turned blue?  
41 Birth- right barterer  
42 Restitu- Francis' employer  
45 Look up to home  
5 Small, short-tailed bird  
5 Heehaw  
52 "Beetle"  
53 Common Mkt.  
54 Unrivaled  
55 Disarray  
56 Post-opposite  
57 Tolkien's tree  
58 creatures  
59 Name  
60 Tower  
22 Big fracas  
24 Courier's employer  
25 Chop  
26 Chemi- cally active substances  
27 Pest companion- out a living  
30 Lotsa noise  
33 "Zounds!"  
36 Beatin's drums  
38 Hardly con- ceited  
39 Always, in verse  
40 Dentist's abbr.

**Spelling contest**  
31 1988 movie, "Without..."  
34 Go  
35 Sailor's map  
37 Intensely  
39 Delly

**Solution time: 24 mins.**  
42 Fermi's  
43 Silent  
44 Stairway  
46 Press  
47 Carry on  
48 Spids' beds  
50 Always, in verse

**CRYPTOQUIP**  
ZGY LYXX-TNN BTKWAVG NATB  
QAWQHY AYWXUEYEM ZGWZ  
GY LTHXM XUCY ZT TOYK W  
VEYVG CUKQ VVYTHKZ  
Saturday's Cryptopuz: COMIC STRIP ABOUT A YOUNG MALE GIRL WITH THE ABILITY TO CHANGE FORMS. LITTLE MURPHIN ANNIE.  
Today's Cryptopuz: Clue: E equals Z.