



**Did U Know?**

Former India star Manoj Prabhakar opened both batting and bowling in a Test match 21 times and 38 times in one-day internationals.



**Jacques Kallis**  
(Star South Africa all-rounder)  
"I had dinner with [girlfriend] Shamone that evening and she asked whether we had any chance. Normally I would probably have said 'no', but this time I didn't. I said, 'Cricket is a strange game and I've seen some really weird things happen. There are still three days left, we'll see.'"  
After the second day, he was optimistic about his team's chances of winning the Melbourne Test.



**ESPN**  
Sportscenter India  
Sports News  
Live from 8:30pm  
**STAR Cricket**  
Australia v South Africa  
Third Test, Day One  
Live from 5:30am (Saturday)



National Cricket League  
(one-day match)  
Barisal v Khulna  
Venue: BKSP  
Rajshahi v Chittagong  
Venue: Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium  
Sylhet v Dhaka  
Venue: Fatullah Cricket Stadium  
Citycell B. League  
Arambagh v MuktiJoddha  
Venue: Bangabandhu National Stadium  
Time: 4:00pm  
Ctg Mohammedan v Abahani  
Venue: MA Aziz Stadium, Chittagong  
Time: 2:30pm

**Ganguly won't call India No 1 side right now**

PTI, New Delhi  
Amid a raging debate whether India or South Africa are possible successors to Australia, Sourav Ganguly on Thursday said it would be "a bit too early" to rank Mahendra Singh Dhoni's men as world's number one team as it still needs to prove itself overseas.  
The former captain said India had a very good team but the "real test" would come when they play well abroad where the conditions are different.  
Asked specifically whether India could be the number one team after Australia's decline, Ganguly said, "To say that India would be number one, I think it's a bit too early. Look at the ICC rankings, Australia, although they have not played good cricket for the last 3-4 months, they are still a few points away from the rest."  
"India has a very good team but I believe this team's real test would be overseas, when India go to New Zealand and when they start travelling abroad. If you look at the last  
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**Ash smiling again**

NUR UDDIN ALAMGIR, Chittagong

Bangladesh skipper Mohammad Ashraful, who had to leave the port city amid huge criticism in October last year, returned here yesterday with a smile on his lips. While attending a practice session, he seemed determined to wipe out the criticism that he had earned with his earlier struggles.  
Cricket fans in Chittagong hope that Ashraful and his men will offer good cricket like they did in the first match against the touring Sri Lanka in Dhaka.  
Ashraful had been on the receiving end of heated comments and criticism from the cricket lovers in Chittagong following his continuous failures in Test's, with New Zealand last year being the most recent example of this.  
Although the match was competitive, Ashraful contributed nothing allowing the critics to raise their voices.  
In the first innings against the Kiwis, Ashraful scored two runs off 35 balls before falling for nought during a crucial moment in the second innings.  
But, his superb 101 off 193 balls against Sri Lanka in Dhaka helped the Chittagong cricket fans to not only forget his earlier failures but also ushered hope amongst them that the skipper would be able to show his calibre in the match that will be held tomorrow at the Chittagong Divisional Stadium.  
Meanwhile, first Test man-of-the-match, Shakib Al Hasan kept up his high level of performance with both ball and bat. His form gives continued hope to the cricket lovers to be optimistic about the second and series deciding match.  
The Chittagong memories surrounding Shakib is joyous for his outstanding performance in the venue with both bat and ball that forced the Kiwis in October last year, to praise the strength of the Tigers. He bemused the islanders with his seven-wicket haul while also contributing a fantastic 71 in the second innings.  
The cricket fans are also very eager to watch good cricket from local hero Tamim Iqbal who scored 47 in the last match against Dhaka.  
Though Tamim could not make any remarkable contribution in the last match with the Kiwis, his patient batting to tackle the opponent earned applause from his fans.  
Tamim bagged 18 runs off 90 balls in the first innings while scoring 33 off 100 balls in the second innings against the Kiwis at his home venue.



CHECK OUT THE BLADES: Sri Lanka batsman Kumar Sangakkara (R) puts some finishing touches on his bat while Bangladesh captain Mohammad Ashraful (L) takes a good look at his willow during the first practice session in Chittagong yesterday ahead of the second Test that starts tomorrow.

**Dhoni's security upped**

Cricket

PTI, Ranchi  
India cricket skipper Mahendra Singh Dhoni's family has received back-to-back extortion letters from suspected local criminals threatening harm if 50 lakh rupees were not paid following which police have stepped up security.  
The first letter, written by a person claiming to be a member of underworld don Dawood Ibrahim's gang, was received on December 29 and the second yesterday afternoon, family sources here said on Thursday. Both the letters were sent by post.  
Under armed escort, 27-year-old Dhoni, along with his brother-in-law Gautam Gupta, drove to Jharkhand

Armed Police premises and handed over the second letter to Inspector General SN Pradhan. The contents of both the letters were almost similar, the sources said.  
Emerging from the hour-long meeting with senior police officers, Dhoni, who was in a t-shirt and jeans, just smiled but did not take any  
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India skipper Mahendra Singh Dhoni leaves after a meeting with a Ranchi police official on Wednesday.

**Football's new hope**

SPORTS REPORTER

As the entire nation is looking forward to the new government to be sworn in and run the country the right way to relieve people of their distress, the sports arena is no exception.  
Especially, the supervisors of country's football are eagerly waiting for the backing of the new government in a bid to run the game properly nationwide.  
The Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) executive committee, which won a 'beyond question' election in April last year, has rolled football to the ground but the impact is seen only in the capital.  
BFF president Kazi Salahuddin has roped in Citycell as football's partner in progress, which is sponsoring Tk 16.5 crore, and the affiliation is already looking good. But the BFF has been facing challenge while giving momentum to the game in districts.  
The FAs (divisional and district Football

Association) have not been effective yet as they have been involved in a 'cold war' with the government controlled district sports associations that were responsible for running football in districts and divisions previously.  
"We have managed to start football in the capital with private fund but only three teams are involved in the professional league. If we want to start the district leagues and other competitions outside Dhaka, we need government support," Salahuddin told yesterday.  
"We had been eagerly waiting for the new year and a new government. We want to know the new government about our plans and needs. A report has almost been prepared and we would submit it to the government," he added.  
The BFF faced various bureaucratic problems while running the show in the last year and it will now go to the new government directly.  
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Sri Lanka spinner Ajantha Mendis takes it easy during their training session at the Chittagong Divisional Stadium yesterday. The mystery bowler missed the first Test due to injury and is set to return for the second game.

**Premier T20 schedule revealed**

SPORTS REPORTER

The Premier League Twenty20 tournament will begin in the third week of this month.  
This decision and several others regarding the Dhaka leagues were taken in the first meeting held under the new chairman of Cricket Committee of Dhaka Metropolis (CCDM) GS Hasan Chowdhury Tamim at the BCB offices in Bangabandhu National Stadium on Wednesday.  
The committee has decided to hold the tournament either from January 22 or 24 and start the 50-over Premier League two days after the Twenty20s end.  
The same will be applied with the First Division League in which the Twenty20 meet will begin on January 20 or 22 and then the league proper will start in February.  
The inter-club player transfers that were earlier announced to be held from January 10-12, will take place at the BNS offices from 3pm to 7pm everyday of the bourse.  
The Second and Third Division transfers will be decided in CCDM's next meeting with the club representatives.  
Meanwhile, the league by-laws and playing conditions have also been ratified.

**Tigers, SL arrive in Chittagong**

CU CORRESPONDENT

Both the visiting Sri Lanka and hosts Bangladesh have arrived in the port city to meet for the second and series-deciding match at the Chittagong Divisional Stadium on Saturday.  
The tourists arrived on Wednesday night after winning the first Test in Dhaka while the hosts reached yesterday afternoon.  
The visitors held a training session in the morning before the arrival of the hosts at the ground in the afternoon.  
Bangladesh skipper Mohammad Ashraful initially declined to face the media saying that it creates 'additional pressure' on him and that he wanted to concentrate on the matches.  
"Leave me considering interest of the nation," Ashraful defended.  
However, later the captain acquiesced after repeated requests.  
"This is the first match of the new year. We want to do  
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**Sylhet's perfect day**  
Chittagong, Barisal also win

SPORTS REPORTER

The New Year gave Sylhet their first win of the season when they trounced Khulna by nine wickets in the opening round game of the National Cricket League one-day tournament at the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium yesterday.  
It was a welcome change for the whipping boys of this season's first-class competition after they drew five and lost five of their matches. But in the first match of the shorter version, Sylhet took just 11.4 overs to knock off the 126-run target set by Khulna.  
Chittagong rode on Rezaul Karim's fine all-round performance to beat Dhaka by five wickets in Savar while it was a close affair in Fatullah where Barisal defeated Rajshahi by two wickets in a low-scoring affair.  
**SYLHET-KHULNA**  
Deciding to bat first, Khulna were first blown away by the pacemen Shuvashish Roy and man-of-the-match Nazmul Hossain and then lost their footing when Taposh Ghosh and Nabil Samad mopped up the lower order.  
Nazmul took three wickets including those of the openers and skipper Tushar Imran before left-arm Taposh took the last three wickets to bowl out Khulna for only 125 in 33 overs. Faruquddin Masud was unbeaten on 28 off 52 balls.  
Sylhet's reply was frightening. Saikat Ali blasted an unbeaten 51 off 33 balls with six boundaries and a couple of sixes while skipper

Mohammad Mithun hit 48 off 35 balls with seven fours and a six.  
They were particularly harsh on Ziaur Rahman, who was taken for a staggering 44 runs off three overs.  
**DHAKA-CHITTAGONG**  
Dhaka's one-day captain Mahmudullah Riyad and Marshall Ayub were involved in a 65-run fourth wicket stand but left-arm spinner Rezaul Karim had Riyad stumped for 30 in the 29th over.  
That turned the match in Chittagong's favour and they never looked back, bowling out Dhaka for 173 runs in 47.2 overs. Man-of-the-match Rezaul picked up four wickets for 25 while Mohammad Younus, Sajjadul Haque and Tariq Aziz took two each.  
The bowling hero did almost the same in the batting effort when his 93-run third wicket stand with Nafis Iqbal took the game away from Dhaka. Nafis made 57 while Rezaul missed his half-century by a run, scoring 49 off 73 balls.  
**RAJSHAHI-BARISAL**  
Part-time seamer Rony Talukdar took the crucial wickets of skipper Anisur Rahman, Khaled Mashud and Mahub Alam and picked up the man-of-the-match award for his efforts.  
Rajshahi were bundled out for 144 runs in 39.1 overs with just Anisur top-scoring with 37.  
But when they bowled, Suhawardi Shuvo continued his good form, picking up four wickets that gave Barisal a good scare.  
But wicketkeeper Shahin Hossain shepherded the tail with 19 not out and gave them a  
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**Johnson inspires F'ganj**

SPORTS REPORTER

Nigerian striker Kalu Johnson struck twice inside the last two minutes to give Farashganj three valuable points in the B. League, which resumed yesterday after a six-day break.  
The 3-1 victory against Rahmatganj in the old-Dhaka derby at the Bangabandhu National Stadium also helped Farashganj topple their neighbours in the table with 17 points from 12 outings.  
Rahmatganj, who came close to a draw in their 11th match after Ugandan striker Idris Kasirye cancelled Farashganj's early lead in the 86th minute, stuck to 14 points.  
Farashganj, who held leaders Abahani in the previous round, went ahead in the 19th minute when skipper Kabir Hossain converted a penalty after Rahmatganj defender Shipon had felled Johnson inside the area.  
Ugandan playmaker Dominic was involved in two attacks after the half-hour mark but he hit the woodwork shortly after picking up Johnson, whose header on a  
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cross was palmed away by Rahmatganj shot-stopper Ali Idris then wasted a chance on one-on-one, shooting over the bar with only goalkeeper Sujon to beat as Farashganj kept their lead at the break.  
Sujan pulled off a fine save in the 78th minute when he dived to parry Hirok Joarder's effort after hard work by Idris, who equalised four minutes from time with a powerful  
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Farashganj's Emeka (top left) leaps above two-goal Johnson (bottom left) to head the ball near the Rahmatganj goal during their B. League match at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.