Super Cup from Mar 6

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SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) has finally decided to launch the Super Cup, the richest ever tournament in history of the country. on March 6.

The tournament committee, headed by Harunur Rashid, had a meeting yesterday where the decision was taken to move to March 6 from the earlier announced starting date of March 3.

The top eight teams of the recently concluded B. League will play in two groups with champions Abahani expected to play in the opening match.

Although the organisers have yet to announce the groupings, it looks certain that Abahani will draw Sheikh Russel, Chittagong Mohammedan and Rahmatganj in a tough group. Runners-up Dhaka Mohammedan will lead the other group involving Brothers Union, Farashganj and Chittagong Abahani.

Meanwhile, national coach Edson 'Dido' Silva has decided to wait till the Super Cup to call his first national squad for next May's AFC Challenge Cup qualifiers in Dhaka.

The head coach from Brazil, who has preliminary SEE PAGE 18 COL 1



The International Badminton Federation (IBF) was founded in 1934 with nine members and now has over 150 members.





Roman Pavlyuchenko (Tottenham's Russian striker) "I don't like English dishes. A the Spurs training ground, the food is modest. All they have



there is a simple canteen."

ESPN Sportscentre India Sports News

Live at 8:30pm Kalabagan, Agrani on

UNB, Dhaka

Kalabagan KC and Agrani Bank CC won their respective matches in the Dhaka First Division Cricket League yesterday.

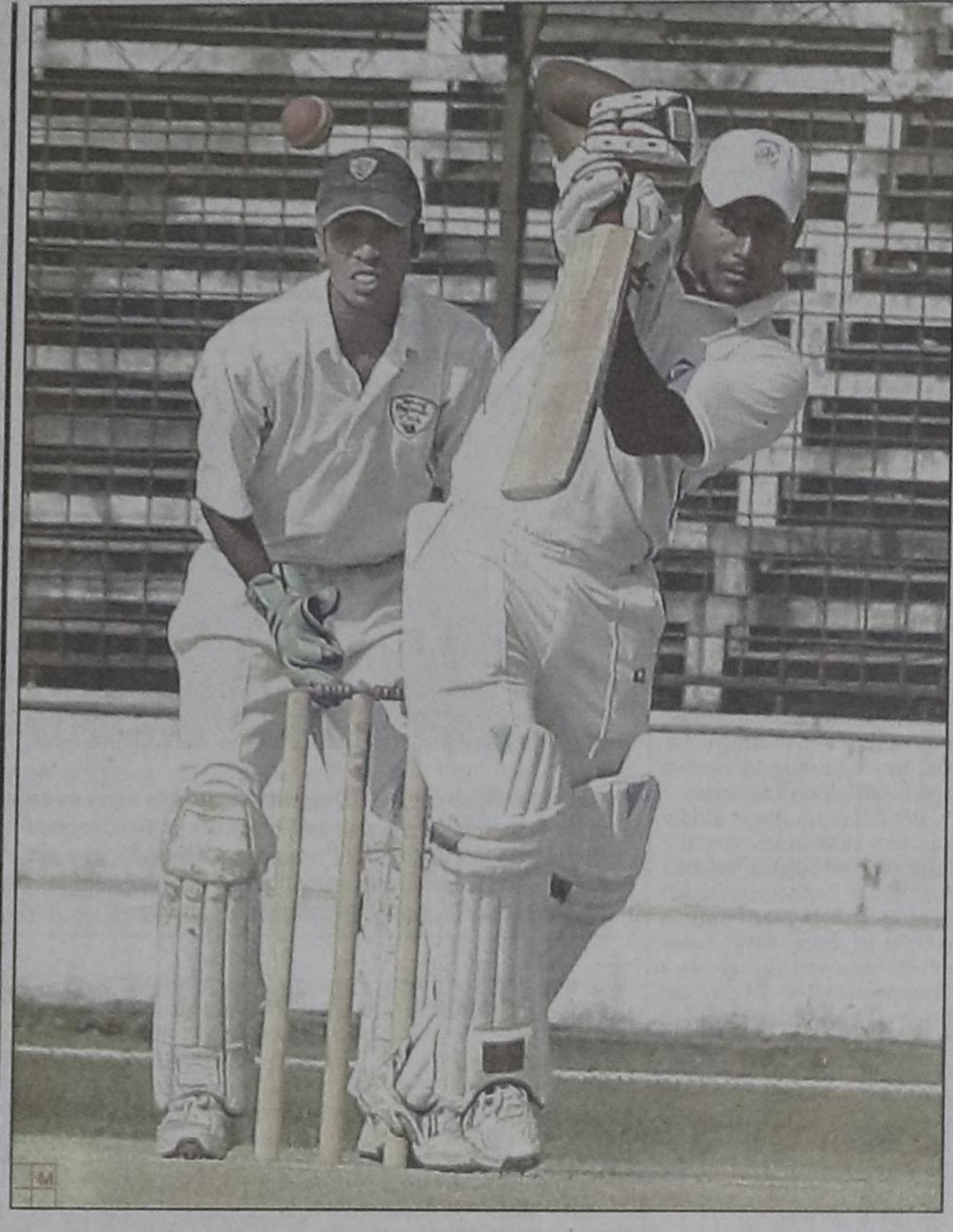
Kalabagan KC (158/7) beat Baridhara Dazzlers (157/10) by three wickets at Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium while Agrani Bank CC (251/6) defeated Prime Doleshwar (204/10) by 47 runs at the Dhaka University ground.

Div III soccer

SPORTS REPORTER

Anirban Sangha and Swadhinata Krira Chakra recorded identical 1-0 wins in the Citycell 3rd Division Football League yesterday.

A late goal by Shishir gave Anirban full points against Rahmatganj SC while Masud struck in the 15th minute to ensure Swadhinata's win over Tongi KC at the Birshreshtha Shaheed Mostafa Kamal Stadium in Kamalapur.



Gazi Tank opener Imrul Kayes plays a lofted drive during his fine knock of 78 against Young Pegasus in their Premier League match at the Fatullah Stadium yesterday.

A day for openers

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

Gazi Tank returned to wining ways in the Premier Cricket League with their top order shaping a five-wicket victory against lowly Young Pegasus yesterday.

Gazi Tank, who crashed to fellow newcomers CCS in the previous round for their second loss, were throttled by Imrul Kayes and Anwar Hossain's 99-run opening stand on way to their second win in four rounds.

Surjo Torun remained joint-second with defending champions Abahani after a 16-run win over CCS while BKSP dumped City Club by six wickets in the other match of the day.

GAZITANK-PEGASUS

This year's losing finalists of the Twenty20 competition Gazi Tank have not had the best possible start. Mohammad Ashraful's men, however, carved a comfortable victory at the Fatullah Stadium to improve their statistics.

Chasing Pegasus's 219-9, Kayes (78 off 110

balls) and Anwar (50 off 69 balls) gave a perfect start but the partnership broke one run short of the three-figure mark.

Kayes, adjudged man-of-the-match for an entertaining knock laced with seven fours and two sixes, went on to consolidate their position with another half-century stand, with Nafees Iqbal (30 off 59 balls), as they cantered to 220-5 with almost three overs to spare despite skipper Ashraful spent very little time on the pitch.

Earlier, Pegasus whose only point in the league came from an opening round tie with Mohammedan, opted to bat first. But they could not bank on a decent start -- Arif Reza and Rahat Sadek put on 55 for the opening partnership and Humayun Kabir's 51 off 77 deliveries to gather a fighting total against the left-arm spin of Enamul Haque who grabbed four wickets for 47.

SURJOTORUN - CCS

Indian batsman Sandeep Sharma was in charge for Surjo Torun who stormed to their third win. Captain Khaled Mashud did not hesitate to bat first at BKSP and opener Sharma played the sheet anchor with a slow but steady 64.

The Indian, who hit five boundaries and

SEE PAGE 18 COL 2

India seek elusive win

Cricket

AFP, Mumbai

Mahendra Singh Dhoni's all-conquering India flew out to New Zealand on Thursday with confidence high they can redress a miserable Test record there. Not only have India had just one Test series

victory in New Zealand -- way back in 1968, under Mansur Ali Khan Pataudi -- they have not even won a Test match there for more than 30 years stretching back to 1976.

But coach Gary Kirsten said the team, riding high on the back of home series wins over Australia and England, were now capable of dealing with the country's unfamiliar weather and pitches.

"We have a very balanced team -- in batting, pace and spin bowling," said the South African. We are capable of playing in any conditions. "Conditions will be vastly different and the

weather would be cold with a bit of rain. But we have the players to overcome these."

The six-week tour opens next Wednesday with the first of two Twenty20 internationals India and New Zealand will also play five onedayers and three Tests.

The previous tour in 2002 was a nightmare for India, who under Sourav Ganguly lost both Tests in "windy" Wellington and Hamilton inside three days, before being thrashed 5-2 in the one-day series.

Seamer-friendly pitches and cold and windy conditions all made life difficult for the tourists, with only Sachin Tendulkar and Rahul Dravid scoring a half-century apiece.

"It's going to be a tough tour," captain Dhoni told reporters here late Wednesday.

"Every place has its challenges. Foreign players come to India and struggle against spin and bounce. We would focus on planning well and in executing those plans. The results will follow."



Action from yesterday's National Women's Football Championship match between VDP and Khulna at the Bangabandhu National Stadium.

2011 ICC WORLD CUP

Opening ceremony at BNS?

Cricket

AMEERUDDIN ZAIN

The 'Home of Cricket' might be denied a chance to host the opening ceremony of the 2011 ICC Cricket World Cup with the Bangabandhu National Stadium (BNS) emerging as the front-runner ahead of the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium for the showpiece event of cricket's biggest bonanza.

The campaign for the BNS was quite evident when Bangladesh Cricket Board's (BCB's) senior vice-president Mahbubul Anam on Thursday recapped the ICC decision in Delhi where it was confirmed that the opening ceremony will take place in Dhaka and it would be a fight between three venues -- the BNS, the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium and the Osmani Stadium in Fatullah -- for the bragging

"The opening ceremony does not have any relation with the opening match of the event, and they can be held at different venues," said Mahbub.

"We will want the ceremony to be staged at the BNS (relinquished to football in 2005) as it is the birthplace of Bangladesh cricket."

However as to where the first match will be held, Mahbub stated that Mirpur seems the more viable option. "We want stadiums which have been specifically built for cricket to host cricket matches," he said.

Having just returned from the ICC World Cup 2011 organisers meeting in Delhi,

the BCB official revealed that mer players, including me, India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka have a corner in our hearts for have all nominated their the BNS. venues for the event, with only Bangladesh lagging behind, as their submissions are still

approval. said that he will inspect all three venues. Ultimately it's venue will be used," he said.

However the bearded organiser when asked was in would prefer the opening ceremony to be held.

venue. It is the very fabric of Bangladesh cricket and for-

"We have suggested that the BNS should hold the opening ceremony, and Mirpur subject to government should have the opening match because a ceremony "The sports minister has might adversely affect the sports minister is imminent. wicket."

up to the government which finalised, Bangladesh is conincluding one quarterfinal.

no illusions as to where he remaining before the World Cup rolls around, Mahbub admitted that preparations "BNS is my favourite needed to be accelerated.

> "We are lagging behind but athand. we want to do everything

professionally. An organizing committee will be formed within the next eight weeks."

BCB grounds committee chairman Shafiqur Rahman was also present at the press conference and he stated that a budget meeting with the

"We have discussed with With the event format the minister, that if our budget is passed soon, we can start firmed to host five matches working immediately. In addition we have asked the But with just 24 months ICC for funds and they said that they will look into the matter.'

> There remains a lot of work to do, and he accepted the task

SEE PAGE 18 COL 5



Bangladesh Cricket Board's senior vice-president Mahabubul Anam (C) makes a point during a press briefing in connection with Bangladesh's preparation as one of the co-hosts for the 2011 World Cup at the board's Mirpur headquarters yesterday.

LOCAL SNIPPETS

SPORTS REPORTER

Dhaka University Begum Rokeya Hall held their annual sports competition at the hall playground yesterday. Supriya Rani Das of Bangla Department became champion and Charukola's Neelima Sarkar finished as runner up.

DU Vice Chancellor Arefin Siddiq was present during the occasion as the chief guest.

SCHOOL CRICKET

Mohimaganj High School defeated Police Line School by eight wickets in the Standard Chartered Young Tigers National School Cricket Competition at the Gaibandha Stadium.

Batting first, Police Lines School were all out for 152 in 32 overs. In reply, Mohimaganj High School successfully chased their winning target for the loss of two wickets in 19 overs.

SHAHEED SMRITY HOCKEY

Usha KC earned their second consecutive victory in the sixteam Need for Speed Shaheed Smriti Hockey Tournament beating Dilkusha SC 2-0 at the Maulana Bhasani National Hockey Stadium. Rimon Kumar put the old Dhaka outfit ahead in the 19th minute with a field goal while substitute forward Krishna Kumar doubled the margin in the 65th minute from a penalty corner.

The day's other clash between Services teams Bangladesh Navy and Bangladesh Air Force ended in SEE PAGE 18 COL 5 1-1 draw. Navy went into the lead in the 33rd minute through Mamun Hossain while Dinsey Ali scored the SEE PAGE 18 COL 6

Facile victory for N'ganj

SPORTS REPORTER

Narayanganj cruised to a 3-0 win against Satkhira in the final round of the Citycell National Women's Football Championship yesterday.

Asia, Sukhi and Munni slotted one goal each for the winners at the Birshreshtha Shaheed Mostafa Kamal Stadium in Kamalapur.

Jessore rode on strikes by Sharmin and Belly to edge Rangamati 2-1 at the Bangabandhu National Stadium while a brace by Salma gave VDP 2-0 victory against Khulna at the same venue.

England scent a win

Cricket

AFP, St John's

England were eyeing a series-levelling victory, after setting West Indies 503 to win the third Test on Wednesday and at stumps on the fourth day needed seven wickets on the final day to Indies. secure the win.

221 for eight about an hour after the scheduled tea break, and then restricted West Indies to 143 for three in their second innings when stumps were drawn.

Alastair Cook hit the top score of 51 in the England second innings, Paul Collingwood made 34, Kevin Pietersen got 33 as England batted themselves into an impregnable posi-

For West Indies, Daren Powell collected two wickets for 33 runs from seven overs, Ryan Hinds took two for 45 from 11 overs, and Sulieman Benn two for 58 from 13 overs. England then had to wait an hour and 15

minutes either side of tea before they claimed their first wicket, and then took two more to leave West Indies wobbly on 96 for three. But the visitors then met stern resistance from Ramnaresh Sarwan and Shivnarine

recognised batsmen, in the final hour. Sarwan, not out on 47, and Chanderpaul, not out on 19, added 47 - unbroken - for the fourth wicket and will carry the burden of

responsibility of saving the test.

England's progress was slowed, when West Indies captain Chris Gayle and Devon Smith had carried their side to tea on 32 without loss and then proceeded to take their opening stand over the 50 mark before the visitors broke it.

Steve Harmison had Smith adjudged lbw for 21, and this started the shaky period for West

Graeme Swann had Gayle also lbw for 46 England declared their second innings on sweeping across the line of a well-pitched delivery, and Stuart Broad deceived Ryan Hinds with a slower delivery and had him caught at mid-on for six essaying a firm drive.

But he was England's final success for the day, as Chanderpaul joined Sarwan and batted through until the close with little or no alarms. Earlier, Cook had hit his second half-century

of the match to help England beef-up their lead, as they reached 135 for three at the inter-Cook turned his 92nd ball from Benn behind square for a single to reach the landmark, as

England made steady, if not rapid progress before lunch, after they continued from their overnight total of 31 for one. Cook had been allied with James Anderson

and they frustrated West Indies for the first hour in a stand of 46 for the second. But Anderson was dismissed on the stroke of Chanderpaul, two of the West Indies' most

the drinks break, when he was caught behind for 20 off Powell. England continued to chase quick runs, and

Owais Shah struck Powell for a wonderful six SEE PAGE 18 COL 6

Against the fame game

Cricket

AFP, New Delhi

He owns a Ferrari but has not driven it for a year -- just one price that Sachin Tendulkar pays for his iconic status in cricket-mad India.

But his popularity does mean he is one of the few men in the world who can talk his way onto a plane without a passport.

Tendulkar, revered for his extraordinary exploits with the bat, said the adulation makes him "uncomfortable" and he would rather remain a regular family man at home with his wife Anjali.

"I used to receive letters written in blood," the 35-yearold was quoted as saying in the latest Indian edition of celebrity magazine "OK!" "It feels strange when a fan comes and touches your feet

and says you are God. I don't is the way they feel about you."

feel comfortable with it, but it Tendulkar regrets he cannot drive around Mumbai in the sports car with his son Arjun and

daughter Sara as they would be mobbed by wild crowds as soon as the car got stuck in the city's endless traffic jams.

"I did not get time to drive the Ferrari at all last year," he said. "I can drive only early in the morning and the kids

cannot wake up at that time." Tendulkar, however,

admitted fame can have its advantages -- as in Australia when he was once allowed to board a flight without a ticket or passport.

passports, nothing. "I got to the counter at the airport and explained the situation. The guy at the counter recognised me and he gave

"I was out with two other

"We had no way of reaching

players and when we got back

to the hotel, the rest of the

team had already left for the

them... We had no tickets, no

airport," he recalled.

us three boarding passes from Sydney to Melbourne... without passports, without tickets. "I felt that I was truly spe-

cial." The soft-spoken Tendulkar, who is the world's leading batsman with 12,429 Test and 16,440 one-day runs, said he enjoyed doing simple things like dropping his children off at school or cooking for

friends and family. He also took a swipe at the media, saying "criticism is hardly ever constructive".

Tendulkar, who began playing international cricket in 1989, left for a tour of New Zealand with the Indian team early Thursday.

