

## Mancini denies Tevez fight

Manchester City manager Roberto Mancini has dismissed suggestions he and club captain Carlos Tevez came to blows at half-time during Sunday's 2-1 Premier League victory over Newcastle. Newspaper reports in England claimed the pair had had an angry dispute with Tevez swinging an arm at his boss. But speaking to the Gazzetta dello Sport, Mancini said that simply wasn't true. "What nonsense. What happens in our dressing room is like any other and when we need it, it's good that it happens," he said. "Against Newcastle the team slept in the first half, the confrontation with Tevez woke everyone up."



# Tigers in pace puzzle

SPORTS REPORTER

The characteristic buzz, which follows every Bangladesh one-day victory, was omnipresent yesterday. The Bangladesh players who turned up for the optional practice and the coaching staff were all beaming as they worked at the indoor facilities at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur.

The players were also excited about a dinner party that their captain Mashrafe Bin Mortaza would host at the Westin later in the evening.

But gray clouds hover over the Bangladesh think-tank ahead of the second match against New Zealand. The one-day on Friday will definitely see a fresh new-ball attack, as both Mashrafe and Nazmul Hossain will certainly miss the game.

While Nazmul will be out for at least ten days with a finger injury, it seems certain that the Narail Express will be missing for at least six weeks. According to sources, the swelling is still present and it is a problem with his right ankle ligament, though the injury didn't affect his bone.

Mashrafe confirmed that he had tried to avoid a no-ball and it was too slippery around the popping crease area.

But he was not too worried about his absence in the team. "I can't say now [how long it will take to heal], but I can tell you tomorrow [Thursday]. I don't think there would be problems without me because our spin attack is vital," he said.

"I was really looking forward to the series but its unfortunate," he added. Tigers' bowling coach Ian Pont said that it looked like a "freak accident" and that is extremely rare for two bowlers to get injured in the same match.

"It looked like he slipped. Watching it on the TV, he looked like



**NO MORE FREAKISH INJURIES:** Bangladesh bowling coach Ian Pont (C) has a tough task ahead to find injury replacements before the second one-day on Friday. Here the Englishman comes out with his two yet-to-be-fit pacers Shafiul Islam (R) and Rubel Hossain after having an indoor practice session at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

he lost his footing," said Pont.

"There is nothing wrong with his bowling action or fitness, but it was just a freak accident," he added.

Rubel Hossain and Shafiul Islam are the other pacemen in Bangladesh's 14-man squad and the national selectors added Dollar Mahmud and Syed Rasel as cover for the two injured bowlers. The two were playing for Khulna in a National Cricket League match against Dhaka

at Rajshahi but were released by their division to join the Tigers.

Both Rubel and Shafiul were injured earlier this week, forcing the selectors to bring in Nazmul who himself got hurt off the last ball of the game on Tuesday. Both however looked at ease while bowling in the nets yesterday, Pont said that a decision on the new-ball attack will only be made on Friday morning.

"We have got two guys who've

joined us today. We are having a look at the four pace bowlers. Obviously we won't be picking a team until the day of the match.

"We are doing a final assessment on Shafiul today. We'll see what happens after today's net session," he said.

Pont though remained confident of the outcome from Friday's game.

"We are 1-0 up in the series, it is a little bit unexpected. We can't wait

for Friday. I feel that whichever eleven Tigers put on the field, it's going to be good," he added.

Pont was also quite happy to have been part of the winning team on his first game as Tigers' bowling coach. "It is fantastic. Cricket doesn't get better than beating sides who are ranked above you. Let's be honest, Bangladesh have a few teams above them to win against. But I'm happy," he said.

# Tendulkar the best



CRICINFO

Sachin Tendulkar has won his first ICC award, the Sir Garfield Sobers Trophy, by being named the Cricketer-of-the-Year during the 2010 ICC Award ceremony in Bangalore. Tendulkar, however, lost out in the other major categories he was nominated in, with Virender Sehwag winning the Test Cricketer-of-the-Year award and AB de Villiers claiming the ODI prize.

"This last season for the entire team has been really special," Tendulkar, who also received the People's Choice Award, said. "I think right from the start of the season, when we won in Sri Lanka and I scored a hundred in the finals, and from there on the season took off for us. We became No. 1 in the Test rankings, something we all wanted to achieve, and we've been able to maintain our performances in the last ten months."

Tendulkar fought off competition from Sehwag, Hashim Amla and Graeme Swann, the other nominees in the Cricketer-of-the-Year category. Previous winners of the Cricketer-of-the-Year award include Rahul Dravid, Andrew Flintoff, Jacques Kallis, Ricky Ponting, Shivnarine Chanderpaul and Mitchell Johnson.

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**India's cricket great Sachin Tendulkar is all smiles with his ICC Cricketer-of-the-Year and People's Choice trophies in Bangalore yesterday.**

PHOTO: AFP

## Brothers' colourful transfers

SPORTS REPORTER

Brothers Union, a former superpower of local football, brought some colour and life to the drab pre-season transfers with a show of grandeur and zest as they got 20 players registered for the upcoming football season.

The decorated Gopibagh club brought their players on

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# Asif stays where he was

ANISUR RAHMAN from New Delhi



Commonwealth Games at Dr Karni Singh Shooting Range in New Delhi.

"[Abhinav] Bindra challenged me in qualification of the 2002 Commonwealth Games and I beat him. But since then Bindra has improved, but I am still confined to a range between 588 and 594 scores," said Asif without any trace of grief on his face while talking to reporters.

The gold medalist of the 2002 Commonwealth Games frustrated everybody with poor scores of 588 in qualification to finish ninth among 16 participants.

India's world-record holder Gagan Narang once again hit a perfect 600 out of 600, the magical score he had scored in the World Cup final in Bangkok. The world's No 3 shooter hit 103.6 out of 109 in the shoot-off to finish on 703.6, just 0.1 more than his previous world record and became the first athlete to win double gold in the Games after winning the 10m air rifle pair gold along with Bindra, who settled for the silver with

a score of 698 and the bronze medal went to English shooter James Huckle.

Asif was at his best during the South Asian Games earlier this year with his best of 596, but this 588 was his worst score in recent times. The shooter had surprisingly qualified for the final eight in the 2006 Commonwealth Games in Melbourne with a score of 596.

"Today there was no pressure on me but I took a bit more time to fire so that every shot could hit the perfect place," Asif said.

"Taking more time to finish has been troubling me and I can't get out of this technical problem," he explained.

Asif made a bad start firing 97 and then went on for 96 and 97 before improving his performance in the last three series which saw 100, 99 and 99 that helped him to finish jointly seventh along with Tyren Vitler of Australia and Jin Zhang of Singapore. Both however put Asif behind in the shoot-off.

Asif demanded a quality coach who could guide them round the clock as the shooters were not capable of sorting out their own problems.

"Despite hitting a maximum score of 600, Gagan has a coach," he pointed out.

"But we have lacked quality coaches and there is no alternative to appointing a good coach if we want to fight against the world-class shooters," said Asif, who scored two points less than 590 he scored on way to clinching the

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## Khulna set 390 to win

SPORTS REPORTER

Dhaka have set Khulna a daunting 390-run target to chase on the final day of their first National Cricket League game at the Shaheed Kamruzzaman Stadium in Rajshahi yesterday.

Khulna were 14 for one in their second innings, losing Soumya Sarkar in the process, after Dhaka declared their second innings at 170 for five.

Opener Shamsur Rahman cracked 102 from 114 balls with the help of ten boundaries and a couple of sixes as Dhaka made sure Khulna were out of contention to win the game. Nizamuddin Ripon's off-spin gave him four wickets as Dhaka declared after batting for nearly three hours.

Earlier, Khulna started the day on 191 for six and were bowled out for 277 runs in their first innings. Captain Sahagir Hossain made 65 off 126 balls but the rest of the Khulna lower-order failed to

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## DELHI DIARY

SPORTS REPORTER from New Delhi

Bangladesh shooting's golden boy Asif Hossain Khan has been invited by India's Olympic gold medalist Abhinav Bindra for practising at his personal shooting range in Patiala, Punjab.

Since beating Bindra in the 2002 Commonwealth Games on way to winning the individual 10m air rifle gold, the careers of the two friends have gone in opposite directions. While Bindra has excelled so much as to win the first individual Olympic gold for India, Asif's performances have taken a nosedive with occasional glimpses of his former magic.

"During the practice sessions at the range, I spoke with Bindra about my problems and he has invited me to practise with him at his shooting range to sort out my problems," Asif said after failing to qualify for the final of the individual 10m air rifle event yesterday.

Asif, though, was yet to decide on whether he would go accept the invite, saying he would think about it later.

### ARCHERS BOW OUT

Bangladesh archery teams were eliminated from the Games yesterday after the participants were ousted in both individual recurve and compound events.

In the recurve bow team event, Bangladesh lost in the quarterfinals to Malaysia by 218-201 points while the compound team lost to South Africa in the pre-quarterfinals.

### JOHNNY FOLLOWS RAHIM

Jewel Ahmed Johnny followed the footsteps of compatriot and SA Games gold medalist Abdul Rahim to bow out from the first round of the boxing competition yesterday. Johnny, like Rahim an SA Games gold medalist, conceded defeat to Sri Lanka's Kamal Sameera by 6-2 points.

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## Sachin climbs to No. Three

CRICINFO

Sachin Tendulkar and VVS Laxman have moved up in the ICC Test rankings after their superb performances in the Mohali Test, which India won by one wicket. Tendulkar is in third place, his highest ranking since the Hamilton Test against New Zealand in December 2002, while Laxman moves up four places to a career-best No. 8.

Both batsmen starred in India's thrilling win in the first Test against Australia. Laxman finished the run-chase in the fourth innings with an unbeaten 73, while Tendulkar top-scored in the first innings, scoring 98, and then contributed 38 in the second. He now trails Virender Sehwag -- who is in second place with 851 points -- by 13 points. Kumar Sangakkara, the Sri Lanka captain, tops the rankings with 874 points. Tendulkar has scored 1003 Test runs this year at an average of 83.58.

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# Greatbatch happy at wake-up call

SPORTS REPORTER

New Zealand coach Mark Greatbatch said Tuesday's 9-run loss was a wake-up call for his team.

The former batsman, who took over the role as the Black Caps head coach at the start of this year, said that his charges were "very rusty" and probably got the short end of the stick as far as the rain was concerned.

He also told his batsmen to learn from the Tigers how to play on the slow, turning surface.

"The World Cup is six months away and every game is a game for learning and getting better. We got a bit of a wake up call last night [Tuesday], so we are looking forward to Friday," said Greatbatch while speaking to reporters during yesterday's practice session at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

"We did not play well enough. Bangladesh

executed their plan well, probably with a bit of help with the rain. But we were very rusty.

"We played good in phases, but I think to win in any one-day game against any team, you need to play well for longer, we just did not do that for long enough," he said.

"Their batters were patient and played with the right tempo on those surfaces so you know that is something we can learn from," he added.

Greatbatch, famous for his role as a pinch-hitter in the 1992 World Cup, was impressed with his team's start with the bat but two wickets right before the rain-break hurt their chances during the chase.

"We were very rusty with the ball at times; batting-wise we had control in the game but then we lost two wickets, which set us back with the Duckworth/Lewis," he said.

"They played very well, put us under pressure and we were just short. So you know I think with all aspects of our game we need to

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## Noble!

SPORTS REPORTER

In a noble gesture, Shakib Al Hasan handed over the prize money he received as the man-of-the-match in the first one-day international to an ailing BKSP student.

The Bangladesh vice-captain, who single handedly guided the Tigers to a nine-run victory over New Zealand at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur on Tuesday, handed over the 1,000 dollars to Dhiman Mingi, who has developed a brain tumour.

Shakib went to BKSP in Savar yesterday to see him and enquired about his health. The world's number one all-rounder, himself is a former BKSP student, has also taken an initiative to collect money from his teammates to raise a handsome amount for his treatment.

**Date : 9th Oct - 23rd Oct.**

**Venue: Dhanmondi Club Field & Banani Chairman Bari Field**

**Participating School**

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