



Did U Know?

Laszlo Kiss of Hungary is the only substitute to have scored a hat-trick in the World Cup football. Hungary were 5-1 ahead when Kiss scored his first of three in this match against El Salvador which ended 10-1 in Spain in 1982! That is by the way the biggest victory in World Cup history.



What to Watch

ESPN
English Premier Football League
Aston Villa vs Blackburn Rovers
Repeat at 8:30 am
Football Focus
Repeat at 11:00 am
Sportscentre Hindi
Sport News
Live at 8:30 pm
Cricket Programming
Super Selector
Repeat at 10:30 pm

STAR Sports
English Premier Football League
West Ham United vs Liverpool
Taped Version at 12:30 pm
Sportline Tonight
Sport News
Live at 8:00 pm
Harsha Online
Cricket Talk Show
Taped Version at 10:00 pm



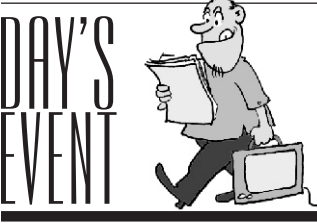
Talk Turkey



Shoib Akhtar
(Pakistani speedster)
"I can't tell you how anxiously I'm waiting for this match. We'll win it and show the world we're there to win the Cup."

Star WHIZZ KID COMPETITION 18
Tick the correct answers, post to The Daily Star. Win attractive prizes.
Competition closes at 8 pm Feb 7, 2003 and draw

- Who clinched the national junior chess title?
Parag Ali Zia
- Bangladesh lost to Namibia by 20 runs 2-wkt 7-wkt
- Who became MVP in the SAFF Championship?
Arman Rajani Alfaz
- Who will lead Kenya in the cricket World Cup?
Odumbe Tikolo Suji
- Ronaldinho plays for
Name:
Class: Roll No.
School Address:
Phone: (if any)



DAY'S EVENT
GrameenPhone Premier Cricket League
Victoria SC vs Orient SC
Venue: Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium.
Young Pegasus vs City Clubs
Venue: Fatullah Cricket Stadium

Mehrab on song

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

Opener Mehrab Hossain smashed his second successive half-century to steer title aspirants Abahani to a convincing eight-wicket win over Brothers Union Club in one of the three GrameenPhone Premier Division Cricket League matches at the Bangabandhu National Stadium

stipulated 50 overs, captain Halim Shah top-scoring with 33.

Off-spinner Ali Arman took three wickets for Abahani conceding 28 runs in 10 overs.

The second win in as many matches helped Abahani collect maximum 12 points.

KALABAGAN KC V UTTARASC

Away at the Fatullah Cricket Stadium, Uttara Sporting Club

atop the 13-team league table with full 12 points from two matches.

On the other hand, it was the second successive defeat for Kalabagan.

SURJO TARUN V BIMAN

Elsewhere at the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium, an unbeaten century from middle-order Nasiruddin Faruque propelled Surjo Tarun Club to an exciting four-wicket win over Biman.



PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Abahani's former Bangladesh opener Mehrab Hossain whacks one through widish mid-wicket during the GrameenPhone Premier Division Cricket League match against Brothers Union at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

yesterday. The national discard hit an undefeated 90 as the popular Dhanmondi club overhauled the target of 165 in only 28th overs.

Mehrab, who scored 56 against Surjo Tarun, spiced his 79-ball knock with two sixes and thirteen boundaries.

Together with captain Akram Khan, Mehrab produced 99 runs after Abahani lost their second wicket for 69 in the 14th over.

Akram was not out on 33 off 43 balls that included five fours.

Electing to bat first, Brothers were restricted to 165 for nine in the

trounced Kalabagan Krira Chakra by seven wickets.

Put into bat first, Kalabagan could muster only 147 before being bowled out in 49.3 overs. One-down Nahidul Haque notched 32 while Ziaur Rahman added 23.

The north Dhaka outfit lost three wickets and took 30.2 overs to reach home.

Opener Shahriar Nafis scored a sedate 90-ball 50 and Monir-uzzaman a breezy 45 that included eight fours.

With that win, Uttara joined Abahani and Orient Sporting Club

The tall left-hander slammed 115 not out as Surjo Tarun, chasing a fighting 236, went on to hand the national airliners their second defeat on a trot. Tarun toppled the target in the third ball of the last over, losing six wickets.

Nasir's 120-ball knock included eight sweetly-timed hits across the rope. He was ably supported by lower-order Ilyas Sunny, who chipped in with an unbeaten 36 off 42 balls.

Biman's 236 for eight was built around a superb 70 from opener

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Nat'l chess qualifiers

SPORTS REPORTER

Fide Master Sheikh Nasir Ahmed become first and Syed Mahfuzur Rahman came second in the qualifying round of the Professor Abdur Razzak 29th National Chess Championship yesterday.

The positions were decided in tie-breakers after eight players finished with eight points each.

The other positions: 3rd - Khandakar Aminul Islam, 4th - Monjur Alam, 5th - Sawkat Hossain Pollab, 6th - Syed Ejaz Husain, 7th - FM Rezaul Haque, 8th - FM Taibur Rahman Sumon and 9th - Mohammad Javed.

The top 9 finishers have qualified for final phase. Mehdi Hasan Parag become 10th with 8 points and was unable to qualify.

The 11th and last round of games were held yesterday at Bangladesh Chess Federation Auditorium. In this round: Nasir drew with Javed, Emon drew with Monjur, Pollab drew with Ejaz, Amin drew with Arif, Taib beat Debaraj and Reza beat Uten.

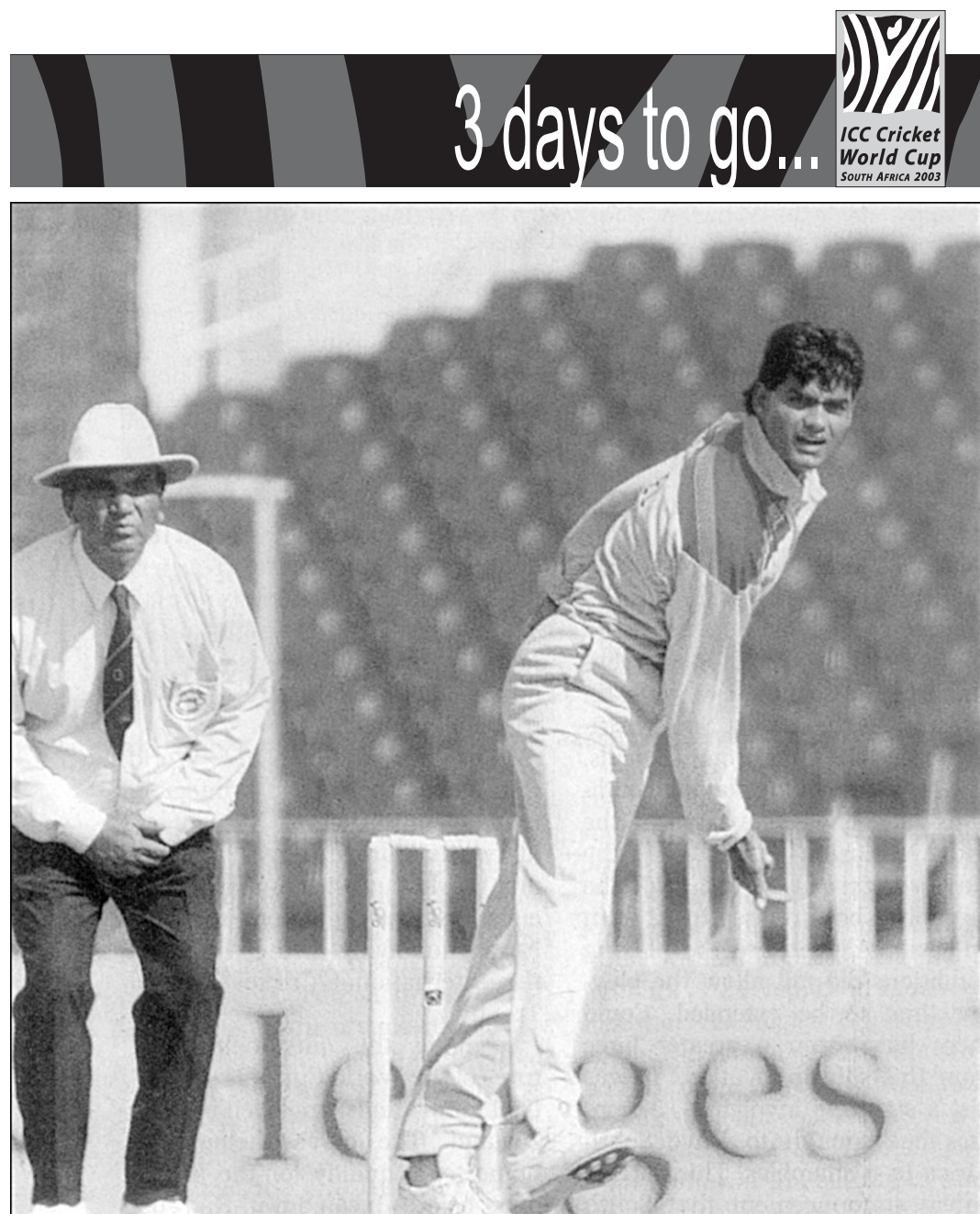
Grand Master Ziaur Rahman, Grand Master Niaz Murshed, International Master Reefat Bin Sattar, International Enamul Hossain Razib and International Mastwer Abdullah Al Rakib will have direct entry into the final phase.

Nat'l athletics from March 2

UNB, Dhaka

The three-day 28th National Athletics Competition will begin on March 2, instead of February 27.

All affiliated organisations of the Bangladesh Amateur Athletic Federation have been asked to entry their name before February 25.



3 days to go...
ICC Cricket World Cup South Africa 2003

PHOTO: STAR FILE
INNOVATIVE: In the opening match of the 1992 World Cup, New Zealand skipper Martin Crowe asked off-spinner Dipak Patel to bowl at the start of the innings against rivals Australia when they chased. The experiment proved to be an instant success as the Kiwis, under the imaginative-thinking of Crowe, made best use of the talents at the disposal.

Mashud's perfect scenario

ICC Cricket World Cup SOUTH AFRICA 2003

AFP, Johannesburg

Bangladesh skipper Khaled Mashud is all set to quit the captaincy after the World Cup in South Africa, but not before helping his team end a record sequence of defeats.

"We just hope to win a couple of matches in the World Cup," said Mashud, whose team is winless since the last World Cup in England in 1999 having suffered a record 26 consecutive defeats in one-dayers.

Mashud said he is confident he has the team to fulfill their limited ambitions as they could beat non-Test playing nations, and group rivals, Canada and Kenya to end the losing streak in his first and last

World Cup as captain.

Bangladesh are clubbed with South Africa, the West Indies, New Zealand, Sri Lanka, Canada and Kenya in the preliminary group. The top three teams qualify for the Super Six.

"I just want to play as a member of the team after the World Cup in order to spend more time with my family," said Mashud who is nicknamed Pilot.

Teams sources, however, say Mashud is stepping down as captain because he is unhappy with the Bangladesh Cricket Board for ignoring his advice to improve the team.

"He is resigning as captain in sheer disappointment," the sources said. But Mashud was determined to bow out on a high note, saying he only expected his team to repeat the last Cup performance in England

where they managed to win at least two matches.

"We just want to repeat the same



KHALED MASHUD

performance this time also," said Mashud, the only player to have figured in three Bangladeshi wins so

far in 61 one-day internationals.

"We are capable of beating both Canada and Kenya. It will be nice to pull off an upset win like we did in the last World Cup," Mashud said, referring to his team's controversial win over eventual runners-up Pakistan.

Mashud, who made his one-day debut against India in the 1994-95 Asia Cup, is not an exciting stroke-player but a gutsy lower-order batsman capable of putting up a stiff resistance in crisis.

He is the highest run-getter in the current team, having made 659 in 51 one-dayers.

Mashud, 27, is also tidy behind the stumps as he has accounted for 47 dismissals in one-dayers, including nine stumpings.

Observers say Mashud is an asset as a captain also because of his positive attitude and the ability to lead from the front.

Vermeulen's lucky escape

INTERNET, Harare

Zimbabwe World Cup opening batsman Mark Vermeulen escaped injured after being involved in a car smash near Harare yesterday.

Vermeulen and his brother Roland were driving from Bulawayo when their car veered off the road and plunged into an embankment at Suka Park, 13 miles from the capital.

Cricketing friends following in another vehicle picked up the badly shaken brothers and took them to a city hospital where they were given the all clear.

"They were both unhurt, but obviously very shaken and the car was badly damaged," said Zimbabwe Cricket Union communications manager Lovemore Banda.

The 23-year-old right-hander, who is also the Matabeleland captain, is expected to open the batting in the tournament with Craig Wishart.

He won a place in the 15-mansquad ahead of former captain Alistair Campbell and has an impressive average of 38.40 after figuring in seven one-day internationals.

Zimbabwe's first match in the tournament is on 10 February, against Namibia in Harare.

Sirajganj cricket

OUR CORRESPONDENT

Shahjadpur Ekadosh defeated Sirajganj Sadar (Green) by five-wicket in the inter-upazila cricket tournament at the Shaheed Shamsuddin Stadium yesterday.

Winning the toss, Sadar decided to bat first and collected 125 all out in the stipulate 40 overs. In reply, Shahjadpur made 129 for five in 35.1 overs.

Magic fingers

ICC Cricket World Cup SOUTH AFRICA 2003

AFP, Johannesburg

If spin magician Muttiah Muralitharan is allowed to bowl unchanged from one end, Sri Lanka have a better chance of containing runs in the World Cup.

Sri Lanka's misfortune is that the rules do not permit one bowler to send down more than 10 overs in a 50-over match. Bowling is their dilemma that even a talented Muralitharan cannot resolve.

One thing is sure, however. The Sri Lankan off-spinner will not allow a star parade of fast bowlers, from South African Shaun Pollock to Australian Glenn McGrath to Pakistani Wasim Akram, to hog the bowling limelight.

Muralitharan has reasons to do

well in South Africa, for he is playing his last World Cup. He has already announced he will be quitting one-day cricket after the tournament.

Muralitharan, 30, has proved along with Australian leg-spin wizard Shane Warne that spinners are not redundant in slam-bang cricket as he has so far grabbed 304 wickets in 203 one-day internationals.

He is the third-highest wicket-taker in the world after Pakistani fast bowlers Wasim Akram (490 in 350 matches) and Waqar Younis (409/256).

The Sri Lankan spinner is a riddle who batsmen have often found it hard to unravel.

He has the skill to turn the ball prodigiously even on unhelpful tracks and is virtually unplayable on turning wickets.

Indians found it out in their dismay at Sharjah three years ago

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White dilemma

AFP, Port Elizabeth

England all-rounder Craig White, who bowled his first ball in weeks Monday, was facing a race against time to be fit for the start of the cricket World Cup.

White has not been included in the England squad for the warm-up match against Eastern Province on Monday but is pencilled in for a Thursday match against provincial side Border in East London.

The 33-year-old Yorkshire all-rounder tore a side muscle while bowling against Australia in the Boxing Day Test at Melbourne, and was told then it would take six weeks to recover.

His injury came as a crippling blow to the English attack as White had been their most successful bowler until that stage with 14 Ashes wickets.

"I had my first bowl in however long it's been. I was just going at about 80 per cent out there and I sort of bowled good. It's actually been better than I thought it would be," White said Monday.

"I think the big tester will come on Thursday when we play in a game situation," he said. "If I get through Thursday, we still got another week or so before the first game but at least we'll have an idea of how fit I am."

"These kind of injuries are always in the back of your mind. When you come back it's always there. But I'm just going to bowl and try and put up with the pain", he added.

"Hopefully, I won't break down. I'm going to give it everything to play in this World Cup."

England were waiting to hear from the International Cricket Council whether they will play their World Cup opener against

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PHOTO: AFP

New Zealand batsman Craig McMillan pulls on the front against Easterns in a World Cup lead-up match in Benoni yesterday.

WC warm-ups

ICC Cricket World Cup SOUTH AFRICA 2003

STAR SPORT MONITOR

Following are the results of some of the lead-up World Cup matches played yesterday.

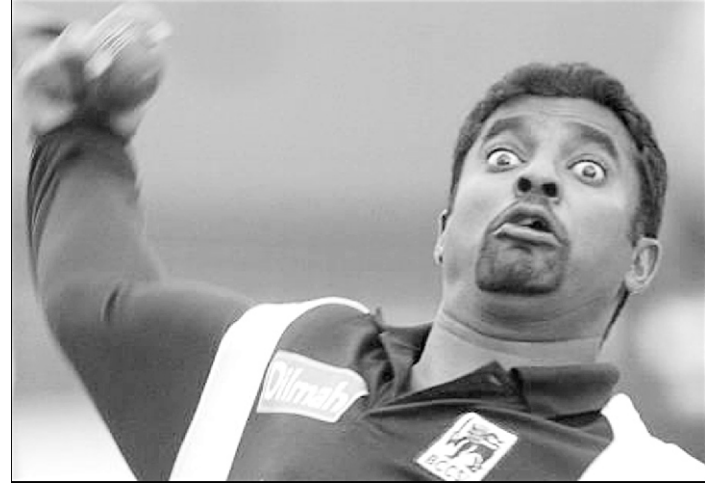
SCORES IN BRIEF

New Zealanders v Easterns
Venue: Willowmore Park, Benoni
NZ: 208-7 50 overs (Harris 51)
Easterns: 130 all out in 36 overs (D Crookes 51)
Result: New Zealanders won by 78 runs.

Canadians v Northerns
Venue: Super Sport Park, Centurion
NORTHERNS: 365-2 in 50 overs
CANADIANS: 148 all out in 39.4 overs (Sattaur 47)

Result: Northerns won by 217 runs.
Pakistanis v Gauteng
Venue: Lenasia Stadium, Johannesburg

PAKISTANIS: 264-7 in 50 overs (Younis 50, Akram 33)
SEE PAGE 15 COL 4



MUTTIHA MURALITHARAN