



Did U Know?

Richie Benaud took three wickets without conceding a run against India at Delhi in 1959-60. His figures 3-4-3-0-3.



What to Watch

TEN Sports

French Open
Live at 4:00 pm

ESPN

England vs Zimbabwe
Second Test, Day One
Live at 3:30 pm
Sportscentre Hindi
Sport News
Live at 11:00 pm

STAR Sports

Harsha Online
Cricket Talk Show
Repeat at 8:30 am
Sportsline Tonight
Sport News
Live at 8:00 pm
Harsha Online
Cricket Talk Show



Talk Turkey



Waqar Younis

(Former Pakistan cricket captain)
"This will probably be my last season in county cricket but I'm a professional cricketer, I enjoy it and my appetite is there."
After signing a one-year contract with Warwickshire.

Star WHIZZ KID COMPETITION 19

Tick the correct answers, post
The Daily Star

Competition closes at 8 pm
June 13, 2003 and draw shortly afterwards

1. Who clinched the national youth hockey title?		Dhaka BKSP Dinajpur	
2. How many Test matches has Wasim Akram played?		112 104	
3. Who became UEFA Cup champions?		Dortmund Celtic Porto	
4. How many Grand Slam titles does Pete Sampras have?		13 14	
Name			
Class..... Roll No.....			
School Address			
Phone: (if any)			

Dev Cup hockey starts today

UNB, Dhaka

Jessore will take on Gaibandha in the inaugural match of the first ever Development Cup Under-14 hockey tournament at the Maulana Bhasani National Stadium today.
Dhaka will encounter Munshiganj in the other opening day match at the same venue.
Six teams, split into two groups, will compete in the six-day juvenile



(L) The pitch at the MA Aziz Stadium in Chittagong remained under cover throughout the day yesterday due to rain, prompting the organisers to call off the 26th National Cricket Championship final between Bangladesh Biman and Rajshahi. (R) Rajshahi captain Mushfiqur Rahman and his Bangladesh Biman counterpart Faruque Ahmed hold the National Cricket Championship trophy after the teams were declared joint champions.



PHOTO: STAR

Rain-enforced jt champs



STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Bangladesh Biman and Rajshahi DSA were declared joint winners of the 26th National Cricket Championship as inclement weather forced the organisers to call off the final at the MA Aziz stadium here yesterday.

Moderate drizzle throughout the day prevented any play. However the toss was made and Rajshahi opted to bat. But just as their openers were walking out, rain intervened.

The decision to abandon the match and declare both teams joint champions was made by chairman of tournament committee Nurul Kabir Shahin MP, who incidentally flew all the way down to Chittagong from Dhaka along with secretary of tournament committee Khondakar Jamil Uddin. They had a meeting with CJKS officials before announcing the match dead without a ball being bowled.

SEE PAGE 14 COL 4

ROLL OF HONOUR		
Season	Champions	Runners up
1974-75	Comilla	Barisal
1975-76	Faridpur	Comilla
1976-77	Comilla	Dhaka
1977-78	Biman	Rajshahi
1978-79	Dhaka University	Biman
1979-80	Dhaka University	Biman
1980-81	Biman	Chittagong
1981-82	Biman	Dhaka
1982-83	Sylhet	Dhaka
1983-84	Dhaka University	Biman
1984-85	Dhaka University	Barisal
1985-86	Dhaka University	Barisal
1986-87	Dhaka University	Biman
1987-88	Biman	Barisal
1988-89	Chittagong	Dhaka University
1989-90	Dhaka University	Narayanganj
1990-91	Not held	
1991-92	Chittagong	Sylhet
1992-93	Chittagong	Biman
1993-94	Chittagong	Dhaka University
1994-95	Sylhet	Dhaka
1995-96	Sylhet	Biman
1996-97	Chittagong	Biman
1997-98	Chittagong	Chittagong
1998-99	Biman	Jessore
2002-03	Biman/Rajshahi	

Is it U-19 or U-23?

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) is yet to make a decision whether they will send an under-19 or an under-23 team in Sri Lanka for a friendly tour this month.

Although the selectors, in presence of national coach Dav Whatmore and captain Khaled Mahmud, have chosen the primary team but the BCB has not announced that as they need more clarification from Sri Lanka before naming it officially.

"We have not yet got the outline of the selection as the Board of Control for Cricket in Sri Lanka has not mentioned so far who would be our opponents. Sometimes they say it will be the under-19 team and again at times they say it to be the development squad. That's why we are delaying naming the team, and we will take another couple of days before any announcement," said BCB Cricket Committee secretary Ali Asif Khan yesterday.

SEE PAGE 14 COL 4

A lot to play for Zim



AFP, Chester-le-Street

Zimbabwe will be desperate to avoid a repeat of their innings and 92-run Lord's thrashing when they take on England in the second and final Test at the Riverside here on Thursday.

It took England less than three days to send Zimbabwe to an eighth consecutive Test defeat and the Africans' coach Geoff Marsh, the former Australia opening batsman, will be looking for a positive reaction to that reverse from his players.

However, the signs are not encouraging ahead of what will be the first Test ever played at north-east county Durham's home ground.

Zimbabwe have only one batsman in their party, Grant Flower, who has made a Test hundred and just one bowler, captain and attack spearhead Heath Streak, who has taken more than 50 Test wickets.

And Lord's provided proof, if any were needed, of how much

India in no hurry



AFP, New Delhi

India will not send its cricket team to Pakistan for a much-awaited Test series until political relations between the arch-rivals improve considerably, the government said on Wednesday.

"It's too early to commit anything," federal Sports Minister Vikram Varma told a news conference here when asked if cricket ties with Pakistan will resume following the recent upswing in diplomatic relations.

"We will assess the overall situation and observe to what extent the relations have improved before taking a decision," the minister said.

Varma, however, acknowledged there was a perceptible change in the government's stance towards playing bilateral cricket matches against Pakistan.

"Earlier we used to outright reject any proposal by cricket officials to

play against Pakistan, now we are willing to consider such proposals," he said.

Varma disclosed the government had received a request from the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) to play two one-day matches against Pakistan in September.

The matches, one each in India and Pakistan, will be followed by a three-Test series in Pakistan in March next year, according to the BCCI proposal.

Varma, however, ruled out playing Pakistan at neutral venues.

"If we at all decide to play, why should we go to a neutral venue to restore ties," he said. "We might as well go to Pakistan and further improve relations."

The Indian government banned bilateral cricket matches with Pakistan three years ago due to political tensions, but allowed the teams to play in multi-nation events like the World Cup.

India played against Pakistan in the preliminary league of the recent

SEE PAGE 14 COL 5

Thirty-six-team NFL qualifiers

SPORTS REPORTER

Thirty-six districts out of 64 have confirmed their participation in the qualifying round of forthcoming third National Football League (NFL).

Although Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF), the organiser of the event, expected more districts to take part in the meet, 28 districts responded in negative to BFF's offer. Yesterday was the deadline for registration.

BFF will now divide the 36 teams into five zones for the qualifying round that begins mid-June. Besides, four services teams Bangladesh Army, Bangladesh Navy, Bangladesh Air Force and Bangladesh Rifles will also feature in the qualifiers as a separate zone.

The following districts are taking part in the NFL:

Shariatpur, Jamalpur, Faridpur, Gopalganj, Tangail, Mymensingh,

SEE PAGE 14 COL 4

Akram accepts PCB offer



AFP, Karachi

Retired fast bowler Wasim Akram responded positively Wednesday to a Pakistan Cricket Board offer of a farewell appearance in a one-day international against South Africa before his home crowd.

"It's a nice gesture on the part of PCB that they have plans to give me a farewell one-day before the home crowd," Wasim, 37 on Tuesday, told this news agency from Hampshire in England where he is playing county cricket.

"It would be nice to end the career where I started."

With 502 wickets in 356 one-day internationals both world records and 414 Test wickets, Wasim announced he would retire from international cricket last month after a 19-year career.

PCB chairman Lieutenant General Tauqir Zia said Monday the board was planning a fitting farewell for Wasim by playing him in a one-day game against South Africa



WASIM AKRAM

before the home crowd in October. "It's still four months away but I may give it a try," Wasim said.

"I wanted to retire by giving the World Cup to my countrymen but we fared poorly and my dreams were shattered."

Wasim was one of eight senior players dumped after Pakistan's first-round exit from the World Cup in March this year.

"But I am sure it would be just a one-off match because I don't want to block a youngster's career," said Wasim, who has yet to choose between commentary and coaching as his future job.

He said it was his dream to have another chance to play against arch-rival India.

"I have heard there are efforts to stage two one-day games between Pakistan and India in September this year. It would be a dream come true if I get one chance against India in Pakistan," he said.

"I can't forget our defeat against India in the World Cup so if I get another chance I will definitely end

SEE PAGE 14 COL 5

Costa's narrow escape



AFP, Paris

Defending champion Albert Costa came back from two sets down before beating fellow Spaniard Tommy Robredo 2-6, 3-6, 6-4, 7-5, 6-2 to reach the semifinals of the men's singles at the French Open on Wednesday.

Costa, who advanced after a 3hr 29min match, now meets either Spanish third seed Juan Carlos Ferrero or Chilean 19th seed Fernando Gonzalez for a place in Sunday's final.

"I felt pretty good out there even at two sets down," said Costa, who served out to take the tie with a neat dropshot as he became only the second man ever to win four five-setters at the same claycourt tournament, emulating Goran Ivanisevic, who performed the feat at Barcelona 11 years ago.

Costa has not won an event since his win over Ferrero in last year's final - but he says he is now back to his top form.

"There's not much difference really between this year and last year. I am back on my game. Why

shouldn't I carry out a repeat win? "I've surprised myself though. I am very tired even if I am not showing it. Next time I'll try to finish up a bit quicker!"

The 28th seed Robredo ripped through the opening set in just

37min, breaking serve three times. He then broke for 4-3 in the second to establish a stranglehold on the match against the 27-year-old Costa, who came into the encounter on a five-match losing streak to Spanish players.



PHOTO: AFP

Spaniard Albert Costa celebrates after beating compatriot Tommy Robredo at the French Open in Paris yesterday.

Kader Mia no more

SPORTS REPORTER

Abdul Kader, the groundsman of Bangladesh Handball Federation (BHF), suffered a tragic death yesterday.

He was 65. Popularly known as Kader Mia, the ever-energetic employee was electrocuted while watering the Handball court adjacent to the Bangabandhu National Stadium (BNS).

It was just like another busy day for Kader, who was preparing the ground for the Second Division Handball League scheduled to start on June 15.

It was learnt that Kader was killed by electric shock when he was unplugging the power point from the water pump situated just outside the Handball Court. The incident took place at around 4.30 pm. Kader was immediately rushed to the hospital where the attending doctors declared him dead.

Kader had been an ever-present character in the Stadium arena for the last three decades and was loved by everybody. Although he retired as a NSC (National Sports Council) groundsman five years ago, his love

SEE PAGE 14 COL 4

Test going to Riverside



AFP, Chester-le-Street

The Riverside will become only the eighth English cricket ground in history to stage a Test match when the second and final Test between England and Australia gets underway at the home of north-east county Durham on Thursday.

Not since 1902 when Edgbaston and Bramall Lane made their Test debuts have English authorities granted a ground Test status.

And Durham chiefs will hope they end up emulating Edgbaston's example, not Bramall Lane's.

The Birmingham home of Midlands county Warwickshire is still in use as a Test venue whereas Bramall Lane where English First Division football club Sheffield United still play only ever staged one Test and was dropped by Yorkshire as a county venue thirty years ago.

Stephen Harmison, the only Durham player currently in England's Test team, is no doubt

about what the significance of the match means for local cricket fans.

"It means a lot," Harmison said.

"The ground looks fantastic," he added.

The north-east is known as a football hotbed Newcastle United, Sunderland and Middlesbrough are all based in the region but Harmison insisted there was a passion for cricket in the area too.

"Definitely. But the Durham crowd are a fair crowd. They'll applaud when Zimbabwe take wickets or score runs," the fast bowler said Tuesday.

The Riverside's rise is all the more impressive given that Durham only became a first-class county in 1992 and the ground itself only became operational in 1995, having taken two years to build.

Lumley Castle may provide a historic backdrop but otherwise everything else about the Riverside is modern.

Meanwhile Durham have installed 5,000 temporary seats to take the overall capacity to 12,000.

SEE PAGE 14 COL 5

Schools soccer from June 10

SPORTS REPORTER

The Metropolis Schools Football Championship will commence on July 10.

The first-ever inter-school football competition will feature 60 educational institutions of the capital. The Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) has decided to launch the competition to popularise the game among the schoolboys. The football officials drew inspiration from the success of the popular Nirman Schools Cricket Championship that was launched two decades ago.

The first round matches of the juvenile tournament will be held at five venues. Sixty teams will split into five groups from where the top two teams will advance into the final round.

The BFF has decided to provide the team kit and three footballs to each participating school.

"Besides, we might give more incentive provided that we get a sponsor for the competition," said secretary of the tournament committee Ashrafuddin Ahmed Chunnu.

The exciting dribbler of the 70s and early 80s also said that they were planning to stage the final round of the competition at the Paltan ground.