



Did U Know?

In 1994, the United States hosted the soccer World Cup. Brazil got the trophy. It was the first World Cup ever held in the US.



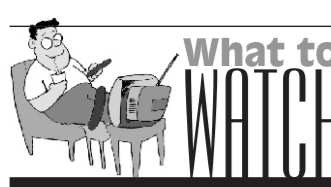
Talk Turkey



Saurav Ganguly

(India cricket captain)
"That's how they play their cricket, which is good and tough. They use their media quite a bit against opposition teams and you've just got to forget about it and get on with your game."

On the way Australia approach their cricket.



TEN Sports

Sri Lanka vs England
First Test, Day Four
Live at 9:30 am

ESPN

UEFA Champions League
Galatasaray vs Juventus
Taped Version at 6:30 pm
Sportcentre Hindi
Sport News
Live at 8:30 pm

STAR Sports

Australia vs India
First Test, Day Two
Live at 6:00 am
Football Mundial
Repeat at 4:30 pm
Sportsline Tonight
Sport News
Live at 8:00 pm

Star WHIZZ KID COMPETITION 201

Tick the correct answers, post to The Daily Star. Win attractive prizes.

Competition closes at 8 pm Dec 5, 2003 and draw

- How many runs did Bangladesh score against England in the last ODI?
143 190 182
- Who is the International Cricket Council (ICC) president?
Malcolm Speed Ali Asghar Ehsan Mani
- Who became Asian Under-19 cricket champions?
Pakistan Bangladesh India
- Who clinched the women's title in the Asian Zonal Chess?
.....

Name

Class

School Address

Phone: (If any)

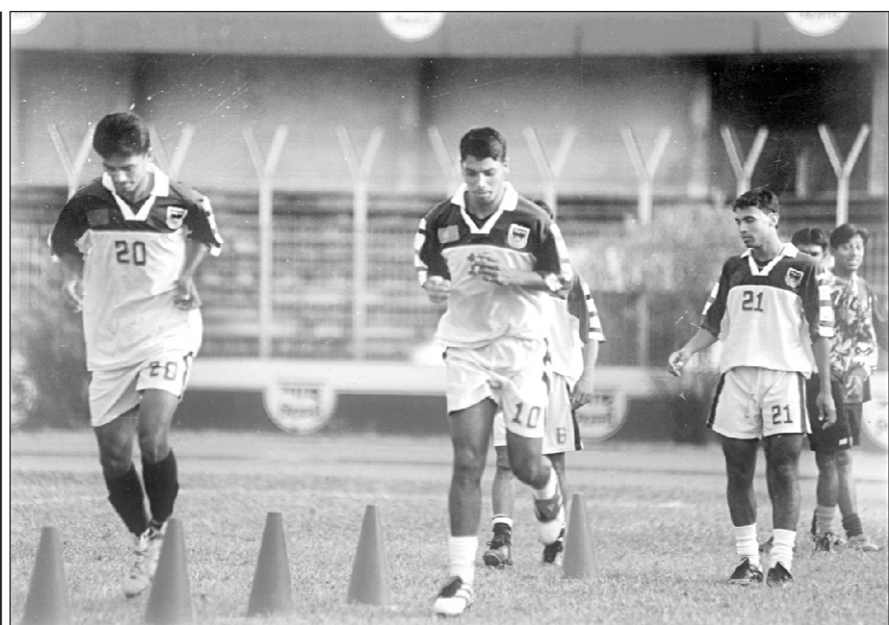
Akram's denial

CRICINFO, undated

Wasim Akram has denied claims that he coached the Indian side, or had plans to do so, and insisted that an action against him accusing him of doing so was born out of malice and was little more than an attempt to gain cheap publicity by the petitioner.

Akram was appearing in front of a civil court in Lahore on Thursday in a bid to have the petition, which seeks to prevent him coaching any Indian players, dismissed.

"I have no such intention to



Members of the Bangladesh Under-20 football team (L) practise at Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur while (R) coach of the Nepal Under-20 football team briefs his charges before their training session at Army Stadium in Banani yesterday.



PHOTOS: STAR

Win or bust for hosts

Football

SPORTS REPORTER

It will be make or break for hosts Bangladesh when they take on Nepal in the last match of the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) Under-20 Group Five qualifiers at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur at 5 pm today.

Any other result than a win would eliminate the home side and ensure the Himalayan Kingdom a berth in the 16-nation final round in Malaysia next September.

Both teams had earlier defeated Pakistan, the other competitor in the three-nation qualifying round. But if the final match ends in a draw then Nepal would advance by virtue of having a superior goal difference.

Bangladesh beat Pakistan 1-0 in the inaugural match on Monday while Nepal won 3-0 two days later. It would be a sour day if the result went against Bangladesh.

Three years ago the national youth team failed to qualify on goal difference for the final round of the AFC Under-19 tournament after being held 1-1 by Iraq in Rajshahi. Incidentally Abu Yousuf was in charge of that team also Yousuf is hoping his new side will remain calm even though they are within sight of the finishing line.

"The players were pretty tense against Pakistan. It seemed as if pressure was playing on their mind and body the whole time. Tomorrow I just want them to go out there and enjoy themselves," he told reporters at the team's hotel on Thursday afternoon.

Praising striker Ridon, who grabbed the winner in the team's opening fixture against Pakistan, as an exciting prospect, the Bangladesh coach was at the same time concerned that the young lad tried to do too much with the ball.

"Like any good striker he (Ridon) should try and learn how to wait for the chances to arrive instead of only running up and down the pitch for the ball. If he can

control himself then that will help him to conserve energy.

"He must remember it's the midfielders who create scoring opportunities for the forwards. And not the other way round."

Yousuf rated Nepal as a good team and thought that three players -- Raj Kumar, Bijay Gurung and Pradeep could pose a real threat.

But he still expected his team to use home advantage to get the result they needed against their fellow South Asian country.

On the other hand, Nepal coach Ashoke Babu believed his team was full of confidence after the impressive win over Pakistan.

"I think my players are better in terms of speed and tactics," said Ashoke.

Both teams had their final practice session in the city yesterday. Bangladesh went to Mirpur while Nepal practised at the Army Stadium in Banani.

Meanwhile, Pakistan left for Karachi last night.

BCB confirms Namibia trip

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Cricket Board yesterday officially confirmed that national cricket team will have a 12-day conditioning camp in Namibia prior to the tour of Zimbabwe next February and March.

Bangladesh will reach Namibia on January 29 and play three limited-overs and a three-day match against Namibia before flying to Zimbabwe on February 10 for two Tests and five one-day internationals.

The first one-day match is on February 1 with others scheduled for February 3 and 5. The three-day affair starts on February 7.

WC cricket BD schools post wins

SPORTS REPORTER

Two Bangladeshi schools won their respective School World Cup matches in New Delhi yesterday.

Willes Little Flower defeated Iser School of Pakistan by four wickets while Kalindi High School posted an impressive eight-wicket win over Luia High School of Delhi.

SCORES IN BRIEF

ISER SCHOOL: 156 for 8 in 40 overs.

WILLES LITTLE FLOWER SCHOOL: 157 for 6 in 37 overs.
Result: Willes Little Flower won by four wickets.

LUIA SCHOOL: 105 all out in 35 overs.

KALINDI HIGH SCHOOL: 108 for 2 in 19 overs.

Result: Kalindi High School won by eight wickets.

Senior Div football starts Dec 17

SPORTS REPORTER

The Senior Division Football League will start in the capital from December 17. It was decided in a meeting of the Dhaka Mahanagari Football League Committee (DMFLC) at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday night.

Chaired by DMFLC president Abdur Rahim, representatives from ten Premier and ten First Division clubs were present in the meeting.

The matches will be held in two venues -- Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur and the newly built Bir Shreshtha Shaheed Mustafa Kamal Stadium in Kamalapur.

Western Union, an US-based money transfer company will sponsor the league this year by paying Taka 25 lakh.

Nat'l marathon swimming

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Chapainawabganj

The seventh National Marathon Swimming Competition takes place on the River Mahananda Chapainawabganj today at 10 am.

A total of 10 swimmers including four female from six teams will take part in the competition being organised by Chapainawabganj Swimming Club under the auspices of Bangladesh Swimming Federation.

The male swimmers will swim 15 km from Gobatala Ghat to the Mahananda Bridge while their female counterparts will swim 10 kms from Balaadanga Ghat to the Mahananda Bridge.

The participants are BKSP, Bangladesh Army, Bangladesh Navy, Bangladesh Ansars, Sagar Khali Swimming Club (Kushtia) and Chapainawabganj District Sports Association.

Rahul urges India to keep fighting

Cricket

AFP, Brisbane

Indian vice-captain Rahul Dravid on Thursday urged his teammates to keep fighting as Australia comprehensively claimed the opening day of their four-match Test series at the Gabba.

Australia were at a commanding 262 for two and looking to build a massive first innings on Friday's second day, weather permitting.

"It was a tough day, no doubt about it, we didn't bowl as well as we should have and we were disappointed at the end of the day," Dravid told a press conference after play.

"We have to keep fighting and come back and do better tomorrow."

Dravid defended his skipper's decision to send Australia into bat on a moist grassed pitch under leaden skies.

"It was hard conditions, the day was going to be drizzly, an on-off day, so we were trying to make best use of the conditions, but it didn't work out well for us and they batted through the first session and played well later on," he said.

"There was something there in the pitch, but not as much as we would have liked."

Dravid said credit was due to the Australian batsmen rather than criticising his bowlers.

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Aus prove Saurav wrong

Cricket

AFP, Brisbane

India's decision to send Australia into bat on a green Gabba pitch backfired as Steve Waugh's world-beaters powered to a commanding position after the opening day of the first Test in Brisbane on Thursday.

The alarm bells were sounding for Saurav Ganguly's tourists in the opening skirmishes of the four-Test series after the Australians saw off the early dangers of the pitch to work their way to 262 for two when bad light stopped play with Justin Langer hitting an unbeaten century.

Ganguly's plight was reminiscent of that of former England captain Nasser Hussain, who at the Gabba 12 months ago won the toss and sent Australia into bat, only for the home side to plunder 364 runs by stumps on the first day for the

loss of just two wickets.

The Indian skipper put Australia in even though he included just four specialist bowlers in his starting eleven, preferring to stack his side with seven batsmen.

India have a major mental hurdle to overcome in this series, having last won in Australia in 1981 and having gained a reputation as world cricket's poorest travellers.

When umpires ended play for the day under floodlights, Langer was not out 115 with Damien Martyn on 36 and the home side breezing along at more than four runs an over.

The pair's century partnership came up in just 94 minutes off 122 balls.

Langer raised his 16th Test hundred and second against India when he hoicked finger-spinner Harbhajan Singh over mid-wicket for four in the 57th over. His century came in 273 minutes off 155 balls.

The doctory left-hander had a

lucky break in the morning session when he pulled Ashish Nehra straight to Akash Chopra only for West Indian umpire Steve Bucknor to signal a no-ball for overstepping.

Television replays showed the decision was desperately close to a legal delivery.

India were looking to strike a psychological blow from the outset but they would have been bitterly disappointed at their lack of success, with the playing conditions in their favour.

The Test started inauspiciously for India, with pace bowler Zaheer Khan's first delivery going for four bytes.

There was only 40 minutes' play before lunch with two showers sending the players from the field, forcing the opening day to go well into overtime, exacerbated by India's snail-paced over-rate. The tourists completed just 62 overs in 307 minutes' playing time.

The Indians had a few successes along the way, claiming the wickets of Matthew Hayden and vice-captain Ricky Ponting.

Hayden went to drive Zaheer Khan on the up and edged to Venkatsai Laxman at second slip, leaving the home side on 73 for one.

Ponting, who takes over as Test captain when Steve Waugh retires after the fourth Test in Sydney early next month, was also caught at one point by a spectator after he had crashed spinner Harbhajan Singh for a straight six into the top deck of the grandstand.

He cruised to his 20th Test half-century shortly before tea but was out skying Zaheer to wicketkeeper Parthiv Patel for 54 with Australia at 162 for two in the 42nd over.

Nathan Bracken became the 387th Test player for Australia when he was named to start ahead of fellow pace bowler Brad Williams. India nominated Sadagoppan Ramesh as their 12th man, with spinner Anil Kumble left out.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard at the close of the opening day of the first cricket Test between Australia and India at the Gabba here on Thursday:

AUSTRALIA: First innings
Langer not out 115
Hayden c Laxman b Zaheer 37
Ponting c Patel b Zaheer 54
Martyn not out 36
Extras: (b-4, lb-4, w-2, nb-10) 20
Total: (2 wkts in 62 overs) 262
Fall of wickets: 1-73, 2-162
To bat: Waugh, Katich, Gilchrist, Bichel, Gillespie, Bracken, MacGill

SEE PAGE 14 COL 1

Murali gives SL edge

Cricket

AFP, Galle

Spinners Gareth Batty and Ashley Giles shared four big wickets to lead England's fightback against a Muttiah Muralitharan-inspired Sri Lanka in the opening cricket Test here on Thursday.

Muralitharan grabbed seven wickets in a brilliant display of spin bowling as England were bowled out for 235 in reply to Sri Lanka's first-innings total of 331 on an absorbing third day when as many as 13 wickets tumbled.

Sri Lanka also failed to cope with spin on a turning track, reaching 99-5 in their second innings at stumps for an overall lead of 195.

Mahela Jayawardene was batting on 14 with Chaminda Vaas (six).

Off-spinner Batty (2-28), playing only his second Test, led the England revival when he removed well-set opener Marvan Atapattu (35) and skipper Hashan Tillakaratne (one) in three overs.

Atapattu became Batty's first victim when he stepped out to drive, but missed the line and was stumped. Tillakaratne was

adjudged leg-before offering no stroke.

Left-arm spinner Giles (2-24) also kept pressure from the other end, having Sanath Jayasuriya (17) and Thilan Samaraweera (one) caught by lone-slip Marcus Trescothick.

The England duo's successes nearly cancelled out Sri Lanka's advantage given by off-spin magician Muralitharan, who finished with 7-46 off 31.4 tight overs for his 39th haul of five or more wickets in an innings in 83 Tests.

Muralitharan looked virtually unplayable as he teased and tormented the England batsmen with his clever variations.

Even Mark Butcher, who top-scored with 51, was dropped twice off Muralitharan during his long stay at the crease first by the bowler himself and then by wicket-keeper Kumar Sangakkara.

England were comfortably placed at 142-2 before faltering against the Sri Lanka spinner.

Muralitharan, 31, sparked the collapse after left-arm paceman Vaas had broken the 75-run stand for the third wicket between left-handers Butcher and Graham Thorpe (43).

The Sri Lankan, who took two wickets on Wednesday, got rid of

debutant Paul Collingwood (one), Andrew Flintoff (one) and Chris Read (nought) in his morning's second spell.

He then returned in the afternoon session to dismiss Giles (18) and Richard Johnson (26), both caught in the deep.

But it was Vaas who provided the breakthrough when he trapped Thorpe leg-before with an angling delivery after the tourists had resumed at 97-2.

Thorpe and Butcher faced anxious moments in the opening hour when spinners Muralitharan and Jayasuriya were bowling.

Thorpe was lucky not to be given out when on 29 as TV replays showed slip fielder Samaraweera held an edge off Jayasuriya.

Muralitharan's superb effort, however, was nearly undone by his team-mates with indifferent batting in the closing stages.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard at close of play on the third day of the first Test between Sri Lanka and England at the Galle International Stadium on Thursday:

SRI LANKA: First innings 331 (Sangakkara 71, Jayasuriya 48, Samaraweera 45, Muralitharan 38;

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Kenya not afraid of India and Pakistan

AFP, Nairobi

Kenyan cricket officials said Tuesday they were not intimidated by the challenge of facing India and Pakistan in next year's International Cricket Council (ICC) Champions Trophy in England.

The East African nation, which hosted the championship in 2000, have been drawn to play the two Asian rivals in Pool Three of the group matches scheduled to be held between September 10 to 25.

"India and Pakistan are among the four top teams in the world. They may be the tigers of cricket, but on any given day, the best team wins," Kenya captain Steve Tikolo said.

"We have played India many times, including the 2000 Knockout Trophy and in the semifinal of the World Cup in South Africa early this year. We have had our share of victories and losses against them," Tikolo said.

"We played Pakistan in three matches of the PSO tournament in Nairobi last year and we were unlucky not to have won one of the games, which we stood a good chance of winning."

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PHOTO: AP

Sri Lanka spinner Muttiah Muralitharan (L), who took 7-46, is about to let go yet another venomous delivery on the third day of the first Test against England at Galle yesterday.



PHOTO: AFP

Captains - Steve Waugh of Australia (R) and Saurav Ganguly of India - walk to the middle for the toss before the start of the first Test at Brisbane yesterday.

Cairns wants to win some

Cricket

AFP, Rawalpindi

With an inexperienced side on his hands, New Zealand captain Chris Cairns is looking for at least one win against Pakistan as the two sides prepare for the fourth one-day match here on Friday.

"Everybody is trying his best out there and if we can pull off a victory it will be fantastic," said the 33-year-old Cairns, whose side lost the first three encounters and the five-match series.

All-rounder Abdul Razzaq displaced the Black Caps with a whirlwind 46 off just 22 balls to help Pakistan achieve their second best target of 292 in Lahore for a three-wicket win.

At the same venue pacer Mohammad Sami rocked the tourists with 5-10 to give a 124-run win in the second match.

In the third match at Faisalabad on Wednesday Hamish Marshall hit an unbeaten 101 but failed to avert a 51-run defeat.

"We realise how hard it is when

you look at the potential match winners in both sides, we are not blessed with as many as Pakistan," said Cairns, in charge after regular captain Stephen Fleming was ruled out due to an abdominal injury.

"The way Hamish played we have

side is maturing.

"The boys are showing maturity and I am happy the way we have won the first three and hope not to lose the focus," said Inzamam, who played his 300th one-day on Wednesday.

Pakistan is likely to retain the same squad while New Zealand wait on a possible recovery of all-rounder Jacob Oram, who missed the third match due to side strain.

TEAMS

NEW ZEALAND (from): Chris Cairns (captain), Tama Canning, Craig Cumming, Chris Harris, Paul Hitchcock, Richard Jones, Hamish Marshall, Brendon McCullum, Jacob Oram, Mathew Sinclair, Daryl Tuffey, Daniel Vettori, Matthew Walker, Kerry Walmsley, Michael Mason.

PAKISTAN (from): Inzamamul Haq (captain), Imran Farhat, Saleem Elahi, Yasir Hameed, Yousuf Youhana, Shoaib Malik, Abdul Razzaq, Azhar Mahmood, Moin Khan, Danish Kaneria, Shabbir Ahmed, Mohammad Sami, Shoaib Akhtar, Misbahul Haq, Umer Gul.

Umpires: David Orchard (South Africa) and Aleem Dar (Pakistan).



CHRIS CAIRNS

to keep drawing positives as we have always said we are looking at the broader view from this series," he said.

Pakistan captain Inzamamul Haq was pleased with the way his