

BVF picks 25 for SAF Games

Bangladesh Volleyball Federation initially selected 25 players and two coaches for the forthcoming 8th SAF Games to be held in Kathmandu in September, reports UNB.

The selected players have been asked to report at the Dharmadhi Sultana Kamal Women's Sports Complex on May 18 by 6 pm.

Selected players: Akherunnessa, Sultana Akhter, Janatul Ferdous Diana, Shahnaz Akhter, Jesmin Khan, Syeda Asma Begum, Jharna Rani Sarker, Mahmuda Khan (BJMC), Putul Rani Ghosh, Lubu Akhter, Nasima Akhter, Rahima Akhter (Ansar), Selma Khan, Sohel Nasrin Shammi, Nargis Nasrin Nimmi (Khulna DSA), Shahnaq Parveen (Dinajpur DSA), Aleya Khatun, Farhana Akhter (Rajbari DSA), Rawshan Ara, Asma Begum (Comilla DSA), Irina Nahar, Lipi Begum Hira (Rangpur DSA), Krishna Kaberi, Remy Samad-dar and Dulali Halder (Pabna).

Selected coaches: National coach Shaimon Al Mamun and Farida Begum.

Pallima cricket coaching

Sports Reporter

Pallima Cricket Centre, a cricket coaching programme for under-17 cricketers organised by the Malibagh-based Pallima Sangsad, will begin functioning from June 15, says a press release.

Interested youngsters have been asked to enrol any day at the Pallima Sangsad in Malibagh Chowdhury Para from 4 to 8 pm.

Former national captain Roquibul Hasan will act as the coaching director of the centre.

Zidane needs surgery

STRASBOURG, France, May 11: World footballer of the year Zinedine Zidane will undergo a knee operation on Wednesday, the player revealed on Tuesday, reports AFP.

"My season is over but my health comes first," the Juventus and French playmaker said.

The 26-year-old, whose two goals put France on the way to a 3-0 World Cup final win over Brazil last July, will miss his country's European Championship qualifiers with Russia on June 5 in Paris and Andorra on June 9 in Barcelona.

Zidane, who damaged the meniscus of a piece of cartilage which acts as a shock absorber inside the knee during their Champions League quarter-final tie against Olympiakos in Athens in March, recently confirmed he would stay with Juventus for another season after speculation that he would move to Spain.

Asian youth women's v'ball from June 4

SINGAPORE, May 11: Eight teams will participate in the Asian Youth Women's Volleyball Championships held here from June 4 to 9, the Singapore officials said, reports Xinhua.

Besides the host country, China, Japan, South Korea, Thailand, the Philippines, Australia and Chinese Taipei will compete for the top four in order to qualify for the World Youth Women's Volleyball Championships to be held in Portugal in September.

The officials of the Singapore's Volleyball Association said their team will cherish the event as a learning opportunity.

Their target is to grab a medal at the 2001 East Asian Games.

Kafelnikov ends losing run

ROME, May 11: Newly-crowned world number one Yevgeny Kafelnikov broke a depressing six-match losing streak to beat American Chris Woodruff in the Italian Open on Monday, reports Reuters.

Kafelnikov, who rose to the top of the rankings courtesy of an injury to Pete Sampras despite losing every ATP match he has played since late February, triumphed 7-6 (7-1) 5-7, 6-4 in a gruelling first round tie on Rome's red clay.

He had to fight back from 4-0 down in the first set and his overall performance was less than spectacular but he was nevertheless relieved when he came off court.

"I'll take any win I can get at this stage," said the Australian Open champion, whose last win on the circuit was against Zimbabwe's Byron Black in the last 16 of an indoor tournament in London in February.

"When I lost 6-2, 6-1 in Monte Carlo (last month) I was quite depressed and upset with myself."

When the newspapers of the world are saying "Who the hell is Yevgeny Kafelnikov? It's an embarrassment to have him as world number one," it feels really bad, believe me.

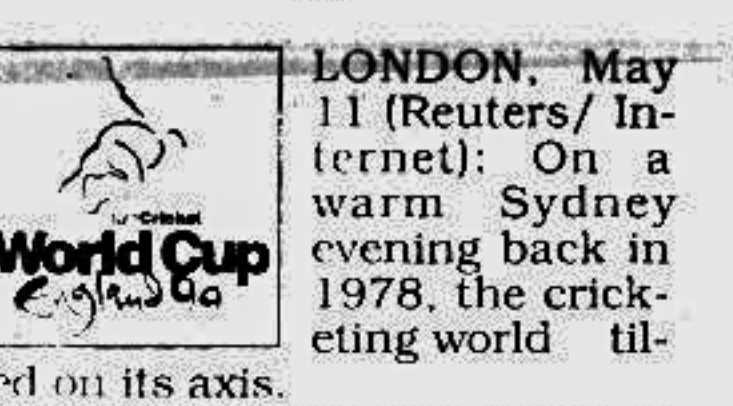
Kafelnikov appeared destined for another immediate exit when Woodruff broke serve twice in the first three games.

The Russian vented his frustration on a ball, smashing it into the crowd to earn a warning from the umpire.

When you're not won for two months and you're 3-0 down and then 5-2 down in the first set you think it's never going to end and you're just going to keep losing and losing," he said.

Despite the bad start he took the set and then, after dropping serve in the 12th game of the second set to lose it 7-5, fought back in the third with breaks for 3-2 and 5-4.

Packer transformed face of cricket



LONDON, May 11 (Reuters/Internet): On a warm Sydney evening back in 1978, the cricketing world tilted on its axis.

Night cricket had come to the Sydney Cricket Ground and nothing in the game has ever been quite the same.

Kerry Packer, outraged when his bid for exclusive television coverage of Australian Test cricket was contemptuously rejected, had bought the best players in the world for his own World Series Cricket tournament.

But the public in the summer of 1977-78 stayed away from his SuperTests, preferring instead to watch the official Australian side play India in a riveting series.

In the following season Packer threw an audacious counter-punch at the establishment.

The Australian media millionaire had six floodlight towers built around the Sydney Cricket Ground and staged the first limited overs day-night match between Australia and West Indies on November 28, 1978.

World Series Cricket officials hoped for 20,000 spectators. Around 50,000 poured in to the famous old ground to celebrate an Australian win.

Thousands more stretched out at home after work and watched on television.

Packer knew he was on to a winner and by the time he reached a truce in the following year with the game's authorities so did the players and public.

One-day cricket had been introduced in England in the 1960s in an attempt to counter declining gates at county matches, although it was regarded by the traditionalists as an inferior version of the real thing.

International one-day cricket began in 1971 when 46,000 spectators gathered at the Melbourne Cricket Ground to watch Australia beat England in a one-off match hastily organised to appease fans after the first three days of the third

Ashes Test match were rained off.

But it was the Packer years which transformed the game and the face of cricket.

By the end of the 1970s, Australia was evolving into a vibrant, cosmopolitan society looking more to the west coast of the United States for its entertainment and inspiration than to Britain.

Night cricket appealed to a young audience looking for instant entertainment and Packer's Australian side of the era—rebellious, irreverent and successful—were perfectly equipped to deliver.

Dennis Lillee, man of the match in the inaugural day-



KERRY PACKER

nigh match, was a marketing man's dream with his aggression, perfect fast bowler's action and flowing black hair and the West Indians were equally exciting and equally successful.

Paradoxically, Ian Chappell's Australians had been slow to embrace one-day cricket but soon adapted when it became clear that this was what attracted the crowds and generated the money needed to pay the significantly higher salaries they were to command.

Nearly all the innovations which have made one-day cricket a distinctive game in its

own right, bearing increasing affinities to baseball and its intense concentration on every ball, came from the Packer series.

A white ball, black sight-screens and coloured clothing were introduced. Later, restrictions on the positions of fielders, based on a South African experiment, were also successfully added.

West Indies won the first two World Cups in 1975 and 1979 and turned up in Australia almost every other year for the annual triangular World Series Cup.

Under Clive Lloyd West Indians played both test and one-day cricket with ruthless efficiency, based on a quartet of relentlessly accurate express bowlers.

They failed to win a third World Cup in 1983, losing unexpectedly to Kapil Dev's Indian side, an upset which sparked a cricketing revolution on the Indian sub-continent.

One day tournaments proliferated and it was now the one-day internationals rather than traditional test matches which began to attract the crowds in India, Pakistan and New Zealand.

The game even spread to the desert when Sheikh Abdul Rahman Bukhatir built a stadium in the Emirate of Sharjah, to provide entertainment for the masses of labourers from India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh working in the Gulf.

The sheer number of games and the amount of money bet on the outcome led to serious allegations of bribery, a shadow which hangs over the current Pakistan side now in England for this month's World Cup.

Fears that test cricket would be adversely affected have been largely discounted by the ease with which modern cricketers adjust to both games.

A contrary argument can be advanced, claiming that the current crop of players, including that wonderful trio of batsmen Sachin Tendulkar, Brian Lara and Aravinda de Silva, are as good as any in the history of the game.

All have been raised on the one-day game.

Lara's European Cup dreams shattered!

LONDON, May 11: West Indian World Cup captain Brian Lara has been refused permission to take a break from the tournament to watch the European Cup football final in Barcelona later this month, reports AFP.

Lara wanted to cheer on his friend Dwight Yorke of Manchester United against Bayern Munich on May 26, a day before West Indies play Scotland in a World Cup preliminary round tie at Leicestershire.

But team manager Clive Lloyd has turned down Lara's request, according to media reports.

The World Cup starts on Friday.

Lara, sacked then reinstated as West Indies captain at the end of last year, has a history of taking breaks from his teams.

He was fined by county Warwickshire when he failed to return for a match after taking time off to visit his home in Trinidad and he walked out on the West Indies touring England in 1995 after a dressing-room row before being persuaded to return.

Bombay faces WC shutdown

BOMBAY, May 11: India's financial centre Bombay is bracing for a sick-leave epidemic during the cricket World Cup that begins in Britain later this week, reports AFP.

The Cup kicks off Friday when hosts England play holders Sri Lanka, and for the next five weeks upwards of 80 million cricket-mad Indians are expected to remain glued to the television rather than the workplace.

"Of course there will be absenteeism," said Vijay Kalantri, at the All India Association of Industries.

"But then one can't really expect much else, as so many companies here have contributed to the hype through World Cup advertising and sponsorship," Kalantri said.

Bombay faces it a special stake in the World Cup in the form of local boy Sachin Tendulkar, who is widely regarded as the world's best batsman and theynchpin of the Indian side.

Scores of Bombay firms have spent small fortunes on advertising campaigns and contests around the event, offering prizes ranging from trips to watch the matches to free television sets.

Sunder Rajan, general manager at Lloyds Steel Industries, agreed that absenteeism would be a problem, but stressed that things could have been far worse.

Most matches will begin at around 3:30 pm Indian time, shortly before the end of office hours, and few will extend beyond 10:00 pm.

"I can't imagine what would happen if the matches were starting in the morning and lasting the whole day," Rajan said.

"As it is, there will be lots of people playing hockey, arranging to leave work early, or just not concentrating on their work."

Scots will go for play-off next season

GLASGOW, May 11: The Scottish Premier League (SPL) on Tuesday announced the final promotion and relegation places next season will be determined by a play-off, reports AFP.

Because of a commitment to increase the top flight to 12 clubs in the 2000/1 season next term will see a shift from the current one-up, one-down system.

The team finishing top of the first division will receive automatic promotion as they currently do, with the second and third-placed sides entering the play-offs.

They will be joined there by the team finishing bottom of the Premier League, which means a mid-league will then take place between the clubs.

The precise format of the play-off is to be finalised, but what is clear is that only one of the three will miss out on gaining or retaining Premier League status.

However, the SPL have stressed that every division one side must meet the 10,000 all-seated stadia criteria if they wish to be considered for promotion.

Neither of the two clubs who finished second and third this season in division one, Falkirk and Ayr, would have been granted entry with their current grounds.

Graveney's vote of confidence



LONDON, May 11 (Internet report): David Graveney today said the chances of "Alec Stewart and Nick Knight" his opening partnership continuing in the World Cup will not depend on an improved performance in the final warm-up match against Hampshire at Southampton.

The failure of both players to emerge from a disappointing sequence of scores during England's victories over Kent and Essex during the last few days has fuelled speculation the selectors may be considering a change for the World Cup opener against Sri Lanka on Friday.

Pressure was increased on the pair by Nasser Hussain's superb 82 opening for Essex on Sunday after England gave him permission to play for his county in an attempt to give as many players as possible an outing before the start of the

tournament.

But as England prepare for their final warm-up game against Hampshire today, Graveney indicated he is not prepared to give up on his most tried and trusted partnership—even if they do suffer another failure at the County Ground.

"We are starting from a position where we have to rebuild the innings, but I don't think that's going to be a unique situation in the World Cup," explained Graveney.

"If the weather continues as it is, the ball will offer a lot to start with and it depends how you cope with it. Some teams will choose to battle it out and others will go on the attack and we will soon see which is the better option."

Hussain has already indicated he would prefer to play closer to the top of the order rather than disrupt the emerging middle order trio of Graham Thorpe, Neil Fairbrother and Andrew Flintoff, and it is clear Graveney is confident he can switch to that role successfully.

"We asked Essex if he could open the batting and he is obviously in good form," conceded Graveney.

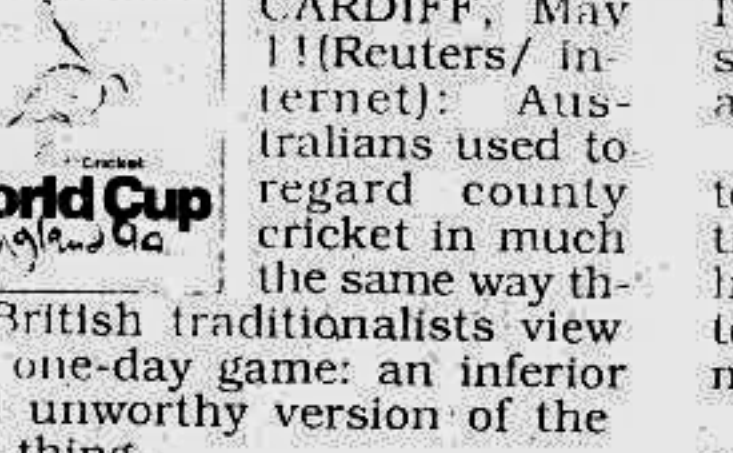
"I don't think there is a great deal of difference between batting three or four or opening, but Nick and Alec are our most experienced and potent opening partnership and it would take a lot for us to change that."

The pressure from outside is being put on Alec and Nick and they remain positive, but they are only human beings and I hope they will get a bit of luck and get some runs although it hasn't changed my view of them."

"You are judged by what you do on the stage at international level and there have been a lot of players who have had greater records playing international cricket than the domestic game."

"I'm sure both of them are concerned about their form dropping, but they will proceed in coming out of that because that's why they are successful at the highest level."

County bait lure Aussies



CARDIFF, May 11 (Reuters/Internet): Australians used to regard county cricket in much the same way that British traditionalists view the one-day game: an inferior and unworthy version of the real thing.

But times have changed. This season 12 of the 18 overseas players with English counties are Australian.

And now, on the eve of the World Cup, fast bowler Glenn McGrath has come out and said he wants to play a county season.

With leg-spinner Shane Warne also expressing similar intentions, it will soon be difficult to find a corner of an English county dressing room that is not forever Australian.

Speaking in Cardiff, where the Australians are based for the opening group stage of the World Cup, McGrath said: "I think if (county cricket) is an option for me, it's something I would like to do."

"I have talked to a few clubs and my manager is coming over to discuss whether or not I will be coming out here next season."

A country boy from Dubbo, New South Wales, McGrath has lost his heart to an English woman, Jane Steele.

"Jane grew up in the Midlands, lived in the Cotswolds, around Worcester, before moving to Australia," So hopefully

will have a chance to get out and see a little bit of the country side around there.

"Wherever I'm touring I like to get out and see what the country has to offer," said McGrath, his attitude a marked contrast to the depressing insularity of many English cricketers.

The Australian cricket hierarchy has been particularly concerned about the effects of a long county season on their bowlers, worrying that their top wicket-takers will pick up injuries that will force them to miss internationals.

But McGrath, 29, reckons he can last the course. "I look at guys like Courtney Walsh and Allan Donald who have played a lot of county cricket and they seem to be able to keep going and going."

So whether there's a secret to playing cricket 12 months a year and you just find a level I don't know. But it seems to me that it is in the pre-season, when your body is getting used to bowling again, when I am in the biggest danger of injury. So if you play all-year round, maybe you remove that injury risk."

McGrath said a number of people in Australia had attempted to dissuade him from playing county cricket because of the risk of injury.

"The last thing I would do is play county cricket if I felt I was going to get injured," he said. "What I want to do, above all, is play test and one-day cricket for Australia. I'm not going to jeopardise that. But a couple of seasons here or there in England won't kill me."

It was in the warm sunshine of the Caribbean rather than the gloom of England that McGrath picked up his latest injury, a knock he thinks was a blessing in disguise.

"I did my ankle in the West Indies so I have had two and a half, three weeks off. So now I'm just looking forward to getting out in the middle and bowl-

ing again."

Aggression has always been a big part of the fast bowler's weaponry and McGrath has often been accused of overdoing the verbals, notably having an on-field set-to with Brian Lara during the drawn Test series in West Indies.

"I push the limit a few times," McGrath admitted. "I play a hard and tough out in the middle but I feel I play it fair. But what happens on the field stays on the field; you'll never hear us complaining about other teams' behaviour on the field."

"People say I'm two different characters, on the field and off. They are quite surprised when they meet me and I don't bite their head off!"



Middlesex batsman Richard Kettleborough is clean bowled while attempting a sweep during a warm-up match at Hove yesterday. — AFP photo

Gilchrist shines through



WORCESTER, England, May 11: Adam Gilchrist lived up to his pre-tournament billing as a man to look out for as Australia brushed aside Worcestershire in a rain-affected practice match here on Monday, reports AFP.

Gilchrist, a 27-year-old wicket-keeper-batsman, cracked a high-speed 86 off 94 deliveries and the Australians set 178 runs to win in 44 overs, cruised home with six wickets and almost 10 overs to spare.

Another rain-affected day also saw victories for the West Indies—despite the absence of injured skipper Brian Lara and pacemen Courtney Walsh and Curtly Ambrose—New Zealand and Bangladesh. Pakistan and Scotland's matches against country opposition were rained off.

Pakistan's match against Durham at Riverside was abandoned after the visitors had made 50 without loss in 10 overs.

Opener Shahid Afridi was struck on the right elbow by a scorching delivery from 20-year-old England A paceman Steve Harrison.

He was taken to hospital and an X-ray was done. It showed a fracture and should be fit in time for Pakistan's opening match against West Indies on Sunday.

Lara is nursing a four-week

Coach Mushraq Mohammad said although the elbow was badly bruised it would be okay in three or four days.

Pakistan face Lancashire at Old Trafford on Wednesday in their final warm-up game and are likely to include fast bowler Waqar Younis.

Away at Old Trafford debutants Scotland had reached 161 for three in 38 overs before no more play was possible.

Gilchrist, regarded as the world's best pinch-hitting opener by his own teammates but barely recognised outside the Australian dressing room, put on 127 off Mark Waugh for the first wicket against Worcestershire before Waugh fell for 64.

Gilchrist, who claimed the Australian one-day scoring record by clubbing 154 against Sri Lanka in February, followed near the end as three wickets went down for three runs. Skipper Steve Waugh was one of those victims, going for two.

Earlier leg-spinner Shane Warne had taken his first wicket since arriving here, finishing with two for 27 off 10 overs. Worcestershire had made 162 for seven, a total upgraded because of rain interruptions.

The West Indies, meanwhile, shrugged off the absence of Lara as they beat Warwickshire by 31 runs.

Lara is nursing a four-week

wrist injury and is desperately short of match practice. There have also been reports that Waugh is struggling with an mysterious injury.

The side, however, managed to make 224 for four off 47 overs, with Ridley Jacobs making 50, Shivnarine Chanderpaul added 49 not out from 52 balls.

Warwickshire, set a revised target of 245, were shot out for 210. Seamer Reon King took three for 34 from 10 overs.

New Zealand, meanwhile, underlined against Surrey how much they feel at home in English county conditions.

None felt more comfortable than Devon-born Roger Twose, who clipped in with four late wickets.

A batsman rather than bowler who emigrated from England after a long career with English county Warwickshire, he used his occasional spin to finish with figures of four for 30 as Surrey, chasing 328 for six, were dismissed on the penultimate ball.

Earlier opener Nathan Aspinall (58) and Craig McMillan (36 off 54 balls) led the Kiwi run spree.

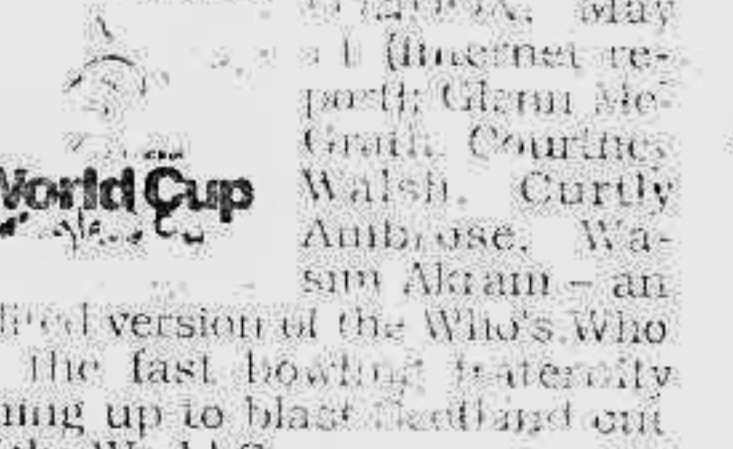
Bangladesh's win came against Middlesex. Former captain Akram Khan hit an unbeaten 80 to lead World Cup debutants to a 12-run victory.

It was Bangladesh's second successive win against a county side.



BCB president Saber Hossain Chowdhury speaking during the opening ceremony of solo photo exhibition of Abdul Muhit Rahel at the Chittagong Academy yesterday. The exhibition titled "The Face of Bangladesh Cricket" was arranged by MILO, a product of Nestle Bangladesh Limited.

Philip not afraid of fasties



LONDON, May 11: (Internet report): Glenn McGrath, Courtney Walsh, Curtly Ambrose, Wasim Akram—an all-star version of the World's Who of the last bowling battery lining up to blast Scotland out of the World Cup.

With just two qualifying pools of six teams, the Scottish minnows were always going to have it tough on their bow in one-day cricket's major international competition.

But, in terms of facing the best pacemen in the world, it couldn't have been much harder than matches against Australia, Pakistan and the West Indies.

That is not to say veteran opener Iain Philip is too fussed about the battery of pacemen in front, he's not worried at all.

"I have faced most of these guys before, and there is no point worrying about it," said the 40-year-old from Stenhousemuir.

"You can't go into any game thinking what may happen otherwise you will not be able to perform."

"You have to relax and concentrate on facing each ball, not on the man who is delivering it."

Philip now has 129 chips to his credit since, having made his Scotland debut in a Benson and Hedges tie with Worcester back in 1986.

He adds that the glamour surrounding the World Cup is not something he ever expected to experience but he is determined to enjoy the moment.

As usual Philip spent the winter in Australia playing club cricket for Midland Guildford, where over the years he has shared a dressing room with some of the humbriest of the world game.

"I know just how good these guys are," he said. "When Alec was over I used to open and he would come in at number three. They seem to find so much time to play their shots and never seem to get ruffled. You can't help but learn from people

like that."

At one time Philip's major hope for Scotland was to win a match in the Benson and Hedges, but now he has gone some hopes that coach Jim Leach can inspire his team to at least one victory—21 runs against the big boys—over a match.

Philip, who is 40, is a former Bangladesh or New Zealand, who must both look to Ednaburgh.

"We can beat Bangladesh, but the rest depends on whether the other sides are playing at full tilt."

"On paper we are outclassed but we have to go out there and be positive."

"For us it is not about winning and losing; it is about playing to our maximum potential and seeing where it takes us."

"We are a small country but in world terms we are a big cricket team; we are at 'world'."

"I would just like to see the game get a bit of a boost and a lot more publicity."

Nigeria pulls out from bidding

ABUJA, Nigeria, May 11: Nigeria has withdrawn its bid to stage the 2003 World Cup, Sports Minister Emeka Omeruah said here Monday, reports AFP.

Nigeria was originally one of five African countries bidding to host the world's largest sporting event along with Egypt, Ghana, Morocco and South Africa.

Ghana pulled out last month.

Germany, England and Brazil are also bidding to host the event.



Malaysian High Commissioner Dato Zulkifly Abd. Rahman (5th from L) distributing prizes among the winners of Malaysian Palm Oil Mini Marathon on Saturday. Minister for Water Resources Abdur Razzak (C) was also present on the occasion.