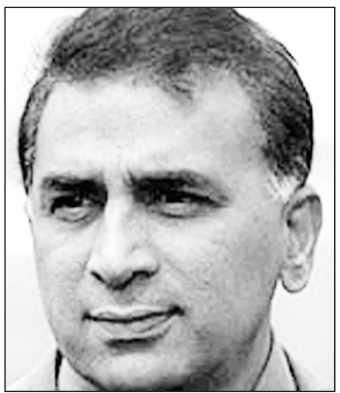




Steve Waugh made 87 consecutive ODI appearances for Australia, and was then dropped, only to be replaced by his twin brother Mark Waugh.



Sunil Gavaskar
(Indian cricket legend)
"The way they played in the World Cup and on this tour of Australia, I'd put India right at the top."
Believing that Australia are no longer the best.



ESPN
Sportscentre India
Sports News
Live at 8.30 pm
STAR Sports
Sportslive
Sports News
Live at 8 pm

Star WHIZZ KID OMPETITION 20

Tick the correct answers, **Post to The Daily Star**

Competition closes at 8 pm Feb 13, 2004 and draw shortly afterwards

1. Who won the 25th National Women's Chess Championship title?	Shabana Parveer	Rani Hamid	Zakia Sultan
2. Who lifted the Hopman Cup tennis title?	Australia	America	Russia
3. Steve Waugh has played how many Test matches?	132	168	
4. David Seaman quit football at the age of	38		40

Name

Class **Roll No.**

School Address

Phone: (If any)

Astle to have further tests

REUTERS, Auckland

New Zealand batsman Nathan Astle, who has been troubled by persistent problems in his left knee, is to undergo scans to determine the cause of discomfort in his right knee, the New Zealand Herald reported on Tuesday.

Astle, who had surgery on the patella tendon in his left knee in April, missed the mid-year tour to Sri Lanka and returned home from India in October after the second Test in an effort to get fit for the domestic international programme.

WI 304-2

STAR SPORT MONITOR

West Indies batting first in the fifth and final one-day international against South Africa piled up a massive 304-2 in 50 overs at the New Wanderers Stadium in Johannesburg yesterday.

Destructive opener Chris Gayle smashed 152 net out off 153 balls as the Calypso cricketers attempted to square the series.

Nat'l cricket from Friday

SPORTS REPORTER

The eighth round of the Mirzapore Ispahani Tea Fifth National Cricket League resumes tomorrow after a nine-day Eid break at three different venues across the country.

Dhaka will take on Rajshahi at the Rangpur Cricket Garden while Chittagong meet Sylhet at the Sylhet Stadium and holders Khulna faces Barisal at the Barisal Stadium in the one-dayers which will be followed by the four-day competition.

Chittagong dominate the one-day table with ten points and they are followed by Dhaka, Rajshahi and Sylhet, all with eight points. Khulna have bagged six and Barisal two from seven matches.

On the other hand, Dhaka enjoy a six-point advantage from their nearest rivals Sylhet in the longer-version with 30 points. Chittagong occupy third spot securing 18 points while Khulna, Rajshahi and Barisal jointly share third place with 16 points.

Max commentary team due Feb 15

SPORTS REPORTER

A SET Max commentary team will arrive in Dhaka on February 15 to cover nine matches of the upcoming ICC U19 Cricket World Cup.

Former Australian batsman Dean Jones, ex-Indian Test players Arun Lal, Laxman Shivarama-krishnan, Anshuman Gaekwad and anchor Charu Sharma form the commentary team.

Although matches get underway from February 15, SetMax's coverage starts from the next day with the India-Scotland game.

SetMax has bought the television rights of the event and the channel is expected to telecast live three group stage games involving India, three

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Tigers sweep one-dayers



SPORTS REPORTER

Opener Shahriar Hossain blasted 72 as Bangladesh completed a 3-0 whitewash of Namibia in the limited-over series with a five-wicket victory in Windhoek yesterday.

The Tigers' top order had another useful batting practice as the visitors rattled up the 199 runs required for victory with eight overs and five wickets to spare.

It was a comfortable win for Habibul Bashar's men who had to be satisfied with two squeaky victories by six and 11 runs respectively in the first two matches against the Vipers.

Bangladesh will now play a three-day match against the home

team starting tomorrow as they continue their build-up for the tour of Zimbabwe later in the month.

Shahriar apart, Mohammedan Ashrafu was the other notable scorer with an unbeaten 43 while vice-captain Rajin Saleh added 29.

Namibia had earlier struggled to 198 for nine in the stipulated 50 overs with Burger making the highest 42.

Left-arm spinner Manjarul Islam Rana led the way for the Bangladesh bowlers claiming three wickets for 29 runs from his quota of ten overs. Right-arm paceman Mushfiqur Rahman captured two for 31 from his ten while pace bowlers Tareq Aziz Khan, Monjurul Islam and occasional spinner Rajin Saleh claimed a wicket each.

On Sunday, the Tigers had

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Nafees nails Nepal



SPORTS REPORTER

Richard McInnes' charges finally blazed when the Bangladesh Under-19 team scored a massive 191-run victory over Nepal Under-19 in a limited-overs practice match at the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium on Tuesday.

Nafees Iqbal led the way with a brilliant century as the home side outplayed the visitors, who arrived on Saturday as the first team to take part in the ICC Under-19 World Cup starting from February 15 across the country.

The stylish right-hander Nafees, who lost the captaincy to Ashiqur

Rahman recently, smashed 101 as the hosts reached 285 for six in the stipulated 50 overs after deciding to bat.

While McInnes might have been happy that top order all made runs but he would not have been pleased with the running between the wickets as he watched four batsmen run themselves out.

Nafees belted seven fours and four sixes in his 132-ball knock and featured in a 96-run second wicket stand with his Chittagongian mate Aftab Ahmed, who made 48 off 64 balls with four hits to the fence.

Wicketkeeper Dhiman Ghosh was in marauding mood when he blasted seven fours and a six to score unbeaten 44 off 26 deliveries.

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Kallis spree not enough



AFP, Centurion

Jacques Kallis continued his hot batting streak but it was not enough to stop a rampant West Indian side run off a spectacular victory by seven wickets at Centurion Park on Sunday.

Kallis made an unbeaten 95 in a South African total of 297 for four, but he was outshone by a sparkling collective West Indian batting performance as the tourists won with five overs to spare to keep alive their hopes of sharing the series.

South Africa lead 2-1 with one match to play.

Shivnarine Chanderpaul was the star for the tourists, hitting 92 off just 75 balls, with ten fours and two sixes, but Chris Gayle, Ricardo Powell and Ramnaresh Sarwan all made important contributions before skipper Brian Lara sealed the victory with a thrilling unbeaten 59

off 37 balls.

"We were very positive from the start," said Lara of the run chase.

"Things haven't gone well for us on this tour, so to finally get a victory is great."

Lara said his team were looking forward to the final match of the series in Johannesburg on Wednesday, while South African captain Graeme Smith said his team needed to re-group.

"We weren't precise enough with the ball," he admitted.

The West Indies attacked from the start of the highest successful run chase in their one-day history, with Gayle slamming 26 off 22 balls, hitting two sixes and two fours off opening bowler Andre Nel.

The pace was maintained by Powell, who hit 34 off 34 balls, before Chanderpaul was joined by Sarwan (77 not out) in a third-wicket stand of 108.

Chanderpaul was caught behind when Shaun Pollock, the only South African bowler who escaped a pummeling, returned to the attack

in the 33rd over.

But any thoughts the home side had of getting back into the game were destroyed by Sarwan and Lara, who thrashed the bowling in an unbeaten partnership of 100 off 75 balls.

Fast bowlers Nel and Makhaya Ntini were targeted early on, with Nel conceding 38 runs off three overs and Ntini 17 off two when he replaced Nel.

The West Indies were always ahead of the required run rate.

Kallis was stranded five short of his sixth hundred against the West Indies during the season as South Africa made first use of the first batsman-friendly pitch of the one-day series after Smith, on his 23rd birthday, won the toss.

Kallis has been in phenomenal form against the West Indies on the current tour, scoring 712 runs at an average of 178 in the Test series, hitting centuries in each of the four matches.

SEE PAGE 14 COL 1

Zia finishes joint third

SPORTS REPORTER

Grand Master Ziaur Rahman had to be content sharing third place after the 13th and final round of the first International Chess Tournament in Chennai on Wednesday.

Zia and four other GMs (Russians Alexander Fominyh, Pavel Smirnov and Sergey Iskushnyh and Safin Shukhrat of Uzbekistan) all earned 9.5 points.

Zia drew his board with GM Safin Shukhrat of Uzbekistan. In the previous round he defeated another Uzbek GM in Dzhumayev Marat.

GM Koneru Hampy of India and IM Vakhidov Tahir of Uzbekistan became joint champions with 10 points each.

Meanwhile, IWM Rani Hamid, Zakia Sultana and Afroza Khanam Bably collected six points each.

U-17 booters sink Lanka

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Under-17 team ride on captain Atiqur Rahman's hatrick made a flying start in the BIMST-EC Youth Football Tournament when they handed Sri Lanka a 5-1 thrashing in Phuket yesterday.

After a barren first half, Atiqur pumped in four times and Rony Islam netted the other goal to virtually confirm the team a place in the semifinals on February 7.

Coached by Shahidur Rahman, the juvenile booters will play their second and last Group A match against hosts Thailand today.

Pakistan under match-fixing cloud again

CRICINFO, undated

Pakistan cricket has been hit by a fresh match-fixing scandal after the leak of a confidential report from the ICC's Anti Corruption Unit (ACU) to the Pakistan board which suggested that the team may have deliberately under-performed in two one-day tournaments in 2002.

A story in The News, a Pakistan daily, claims that two letters were sent by Lord Condon, director of the ACU, expressing concern about the conduct of some Pakistan players in tournaments in Morocco and Kenya.

Pakistan performed poorly in both the tri-nation tournaments: they lost three out of four matches in Morocco, and made it to the final in Kenya only because the host nation was the third team in the competition.

Kapil finally gets his due

AFP, Bombay

Cricketer legend Kapil Dev was this week offered a luxury that was denied him almost three decades ago when he was a fledgling young fast bowler extra helpings of chapatis (Indian bread).

In 1976, Kapil, then a 17-year-old tearaway hoping to play big-time cricket, was rebuked by officials when he asked for more bread during a training camp for young cricketers at the Cricket Club of India (CCI) here.

"Why do you want more chapatis?" thundered camp commandant Keki Tarapore, who had the reputation of being a strict disciplinarian.

SEE PAGE 14 COL 8

Sumathipala withdraws

AFP, Colombo

Sri Lanka's cricket chief Thilanga Sumathipala, in custody on charges of breaking immigration laws, Sunday announced he would not seek re-election to the governing body.

Sri Lanka Cricket said its president Sumathipala will not contest for another term at its annual general meeting next month.

Sumathipala, who was ordered on Friday to be remanded in custody for 10 more days pending further police investigations, will also not attend the International Cricket Council's meeting in Auckland next month.

He chief appeared before a magistrate on Friday, 11 days after being taken into custody on allegations that he helped a criminal travel abroad on a forged passport.

The magistrate refused him bail and fixed the next hearing for this month.

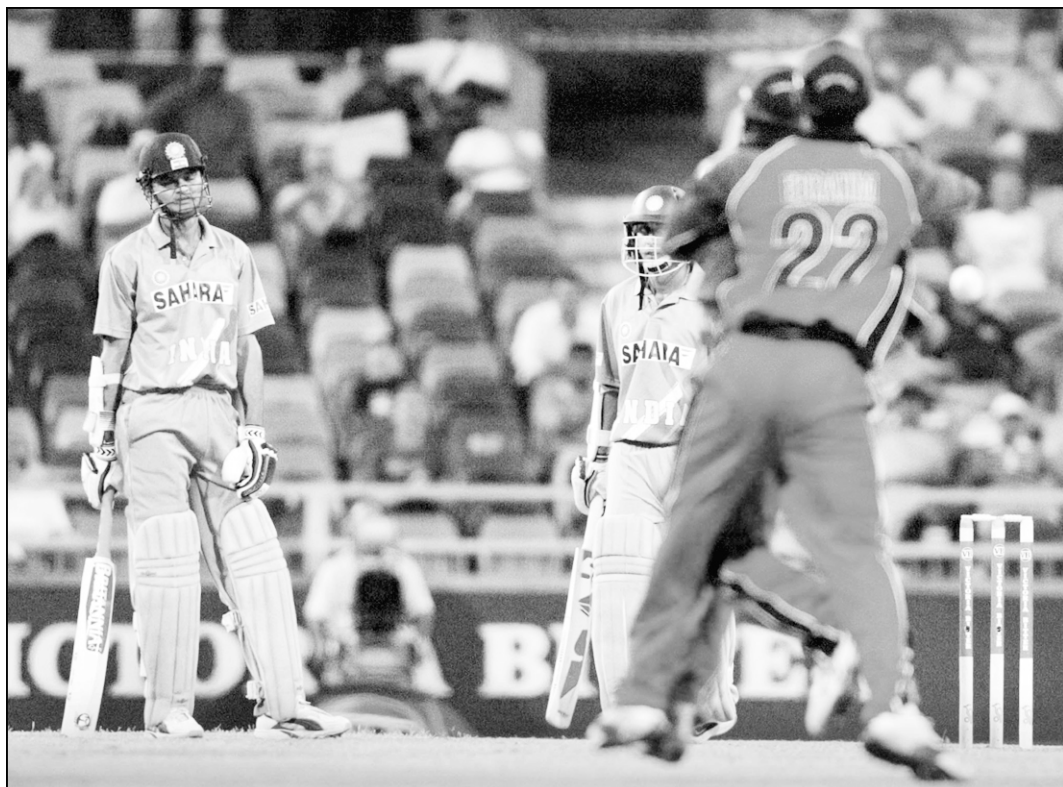


PHOTO: AFP

Zimbabwe players (R) celebrate running out Rohan Gavaskar (C) during their VB Series encounter at the WACA in Perth on February 3.

Zim make India sweat



AFP, Perth

India's uncharacteristic batting jitters continued on Tuesday as the top order struggled once again before finally overcoming a modest Zimbabwe total of 135 in the triangular international series one-day cricket match.

In the last preliminary match before the finals begin on Friday, India was given an almighty scare before scrambling to 136 for six off 30.3 overs to give them a four-wicket win and deny Zimbabwe a single victory in the series.

Zimbabwe's cause looked lost after Indian left-arm paceman Irfan Pathan ripped through the batting, which has been suspect all summer, to finish with figures of 4-24 off his 10 overs.

India, which also struggled on the lively Western Australian Cricket Association ground surface when it lost to Australia on Sunday, seemed set for a comfortable victory.

But Zimbabwe's bowlers had

other ideas, with paceman Andy Blignaut, captain Heath Streak and Sean Ervine all causing the top order major problems.

Ervine finished with 2-29 off 8.3 overs while Blignaut took 2-41 off 10 overs.

Streak, who has been the shining light for Zimbabwe throughout the summer, finished with 1-36 after seven overs.

India, without captain Saurav Ganguly who was being rested prior to the finals series against Australia, began shakily with opener Sachin Tendulkar first to go for three, caught behind by Tatenda Taibu off the bowling of Streak.

Tendulkar's opening partner Virender Sehwag was next, caught by Stuart Matsikinyeri at deep third man off Blignaut for 23 runs, leaving India at 34 for two.

Once again Zimbabwe's bowlers made an effort where the batting failed and but for several dropped catches, they could well have had India in very deep trouble.

Sehwag, VVS Laxman and Hemang Badani were all dropped on low scores, with the easiest chance put down by Streak.

Push peace forward



AFP, Karachi

Next month's cricket series between Pakistan and India will boost peace moves and improve bilateral ties between the south Asian nuclear rivals besides bringing the people closer, Pakistan cricket chief said.

"The bilateral relationship between the two countries has improved and this tour will further help in bringing people of the two countries closer," chairman of Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) Shaharyar Khan told AFP.

India is scheduled to play a side game, three Tests and five one-day games on the tour, their first in Pakistan for 14 years.

India stalled all bilateral cricketing relations with Pakistan following an attack on Indian parliament in December 2001 and only allowed its team to compete against Pakistan in multi-national events like the World Cup.

In October last year, New Delhi lifted the ban in one of the confidence building measures that were part of recent peace process and gave permission to its team to undertake a tour to Pakistan.

The Indian team will get top security, equivalent to the one provided to heads of the state, Shaharyar said.

"A three-member Indian security team is due here (in Pakistan) after three-day Eid festival to assess the situation, but I don't see any problem as people are anxiously waiting for the series," Shaharyar said.

Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf has changed the image of Pakistan to being a foreign friendly and tolerant nation, he said.

"The international view of Pakistan has gone through a difficult phase since 9/11. Foreign teams had refused to tour, foreign tourists had gone, diplomats had gone. But things have improved now with cricket teams touring our country," Shaharyar said.

Not only was the Indian cricket

team coming, but a large number of the Indian public is also expected to witness the series in Pakistan, he said.

"India have been here before, but I think in our history this is the most important series," Shaharyar said.

In reply to a question, he agreed that any incident could have a magnified impact, both from the cricketing point of view as well as diplomatically.

"We have to make sure that few individuals don't create problems and I am sure the tour will go on. But yes, one incident could have a magnified impact," Shaharyar said.

India has not raised any objections to its cricket team playing in the port city of Karachi or North West Frontier Province (NWFP) capital Peshawar, some 45-kilometres (27 miles) from border with Afghanistan, he said.

"The matches will be played both in Karachi and Peshawar," he said.

The New Zealand team aban

SEE PAGE 14 COL 4

India happy to be at MCG

Kumble returning, Bichel dropped



AFP, Melbourne

Indian batsman Rahul Dravid admitted on Wednesday that his side was delighted to be returning to the more docile wickets of Australia's eastern seaboard after two difficult one-day cricket matches in Perth.

India's seemingly unbeatable batsmen were suddenly exposed by the fierce bounce of the Western Australian wicket where they lost to Australia on Sunday and then lost six wickets in pursuit of Zimbabwe's paltry 135 on Tuesday.

On both occasions the Indian batting line-up looked more fragile than it has done all summer.

On Wednesday, India returned to Melbourne in preparation for their first match in the best of three finals of the tri-nation VB Series one-day competition against Australia on Friday.

"It will be nice to get back to that part of the country, we have had a lot of success there," Dravid said prior to leaving Melbourne.

Friday's first tri-series final at the Melbourne Cricket Ground presents India's opportunity to erase some of the memories of the heavy losses to Australia in the World Cup final and November's tri-series final in Calcutta.

Australia have a 3-1 lead in the preliminary games going into the final but that form will count for little in Melbourne and Sydney.

"We are quite confident and we are looking forward to the big occasion we knew who we were going to be playing in the finals two or three games ago so it is something everyone is looking forward to," Dravid said.

Dravid was not concerned over the disappointing batting efforts in Perth, when the side was bowled out for 203 against Australia and then put on a lacklustre run-chase

against Zimbabwe.

He said he and opener Sachin Tendulkar had failed in both matches in Perth, with the side's top score in the west Yuvraj Singh's 47 against Australia.

"I think our batsmen have been in very good form right through the two and a half months of this tour and I don't think the batsman will have anything in the back of their minds," Dravid said.

"I think it is going to be a fresh game and a fresh start. There won't be any psychological winners or losers when we start."

Indian leg-spinner Anil Kumble is expected to be available for the finals after overcoming a shoulder injury and missing the past two matches.

Meanwhile, another report from Perth adds, India's bowling stocks are likely to get a major boost for

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