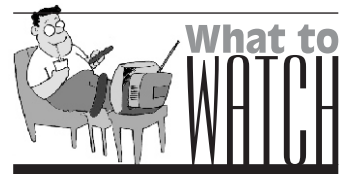




Did U Know?

The 1999 Cricket World Cup semifinal between South Africa and Australia was one of the finest one-day matches in history and maybe regarded as the real final.



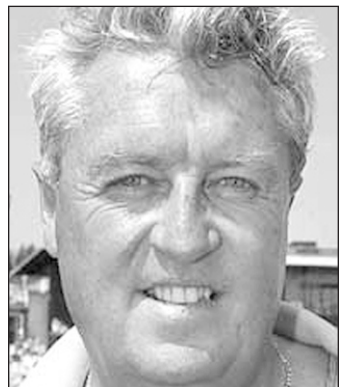
What to WATCH

ESPN

Football Focus Repeat at 2:30 pm
Sportscentre
 Sport News
 Live at 8:30 pm
STAR Sports
 English Premier Football League Highlights at 9:30 am
 Harsha Online Cricket Talk Show Repeat at 4:30 pm
Sportline
 Sport News
 Live at 8:00 pm
 Futbol Mundial Repeat at 8:30 pm



TALK TURKEY



Bob Woolmer
 (Former South Africa cricket coach)
 "While the gap on Australia is closing, the Indians are realising how good it can be. They are growing up."
On India's new-found maturity.

Star WHIZZ KID

COMPETITION 2004

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 Parveen | Rani Hamid | Zakia | Sultana |
| 2. Who lifted the Hopman Cup tennis title? | | | |
| Australia | America | Russia | |
| 3. Steve Waugh has played how many Test matches? | | | |
| 132 | 168 | | |
| 200 | | | |
| 1. David Seaman quit football at the age of | | | |
| 38 | 40 | | |
| Name | | | |
| Class | | | |
| Roll No. | | | |
| School Address | | | |
| Phone: (If any) | | | |

Babu persona non grata

SPORTS REPORTER

Amirul Islam Babu, manger of Mohammedan Sporting Club, has been declared persona non grata for the rest of the Western Union Senior Division Football League. The disciplinary committee of the Dhaka Mahanagari Football League Committee (DMFLC) took the decision against the black and whites official for his improper act against assistant referee Mahbub Rahman. Babu knocked the linesman out of the match after a decision by him went against the Motijheel-based side in the match against Sheikh Russell Krira Chakra on February 8.

SEE PAGE 14 COL 5

Mani amazed



SPORTS REPORTER

President of the International Cricket Council (ICC) Ehsan Mani said that the gala opening ceremony of the fifth ICC U-19 World Cup on Tuesday set a benchmark for the others to follow and more importantly gave an indication that this

cricket-crazy nation had the ability to stage even bigger events. Speaking at a briefing the day after being moved and marvelled by a spectacular opening ceremony at the Bangabandhu National Stadium, never experienced to this magnitude in last four editions of the youth carnival, Mani said that it was a pleasantly surprising experience. "Which we saw yesterday was excellent and we were very impressed by the spectacle. I can say this exceeds any previous show



PHOTO: STAR

ICC president Ehsan Mani (C) takes questions from reporters during a press conference at Sheraton Hotel in the city yesterday. On the left is Bangladesh Cricket Board president Ali Asghar while ICC chief executive Malcolm Speed is seen on the right.

so far and the government support was tremendous," said the bearded ICC chief. But a witty Mani said that he wanted more than the warmth, enthusiasm and the hospitality that gave the youth World Cup, one of the three major events on ICC calendar, a perfect start. "We will sit again at the Bangabandhu National Stadium on February 15 to see how our boys perform against New Zealand," he said referring to the opening match between the home team and the boys from down under. While Mani, a London-based chartered accountant, was visibly happy to see the otherwise development event getting enormous crowd attention ICC chief executive Malcolm Speed looked more than excited. He bracketed three-hour-long opening ceremony in front of a 40,000 audience as high standard. "Bangladesh people should be proud for what they put on display yesterday night. I believe you will certainly be a contender when the World Cup travels to the subcontinent again," said Speed. The ICC chief executive also hoped that the tenth Test nation would definitely put on an equally impressive display on the field. "We must be patient. I believe Bangladesh will start winning

SEE PAGE 14 COL 1



PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

WHAT IF I WERE A RICKSHAW-PULLER: Ugandan team manager Frederick Meya gives coach Tom Tikolo a ride on the three-wheeler on the parking area of Purbani Hotel yesterday.

Group B teams in Port City

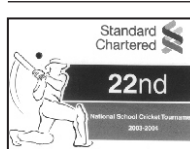
STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Chittagong

The four teams England, South Africa, Nepal and Uganda of Group B of the ICC Under-19 Cricket World Cup arrived here yesterday amid unexpected silence and lesser enthusiasm in the city, which is usually dubbed as a sports-crazy region of the country. England, led by Alastair Cook, and Nepal were the first to arrive at Shah Amanat International Airport on the same Biman flight Devon Van Wyk guided them. Protea juniors in another flight of Biman in the afternoon along with the squad of unknown faces from Uganda.

After arrival, both English and Nepalese teams looked focussed on their mission as they took no time to leave the three-star Hotel Agrabad for their allocated grounds for warm up. Captain Cook and his boys warmed up for nearly two hours at the MA Aziz Stadium while Nepalese team had their hour-long practice session at the Divisional Stadium in a hot and humid condition late in the afternoon. Africa and Uganda arrived at the hotel at around 5.30pm and opted to stay in their rooms.

Mobarak guides K'chandpur High

SPORTS REPORTER



Mobarak cracked a century to guide Kalachandpur High School a 69-run victory over Little Jewels International School in one of the six Dhaka Metropolitan qualifying matches of the Standard Chartered 22nd National School Cricket Championship at the Uttara Police Lines ground yesterday.

Mobarak scored 101 in the Kalachandpur's challenging total of 215 for 9 in allotted 35 overs after deciding to bat first. In reply, Little Jewels were bundled out for 146 in 30.3 overs when Panna finished his figure with 4 for 32. Knowledge King Child School coasted to an easy eight-wicket victory against West End High School at the Kalindi ground. Sher-e-Bangla Ideal defeated Shaheed Ramizuddin High School

by three wickets, Monipur High School handed Mirpur Laboratory School a six-wicket defeat, Badda Alattunna High School beat Adarsha Biddiyapath by four wickets and Sher-e-Bangla High School won on the match against Segunbagicha High School by virtue of losing lesser wickets.

SCORES IN BRIEF
ALACHANDPUR HIGH SCHOOL: 215/9 in 35 overs (Mobarak 101, Amir 21, Shawpan 3-25)
LITTLE JEWELS INT SCHOOL: 146/10 in 30.3 overs (Tawhiid 59, Sohel 24, Panna 4-32)
Result: Kalachandpur High School won by 69 runs.
WEST END HIGH SCHOOL: 55/10 in 16.5 overs (Ashraf 13, Mohsin 13, Kamal 5-9, Sajib 1-8)
KNOWLEDGE KING CHILD SCHOOL: 56/2 in 14 overs (Nabil 28, Monir 1-17)
Result: Knowledge King Child School won by eight wickets.

SEE PAGE 14 COL 5



PHOTO: STAR

India promised full safety



AFP, Islamabad

Pakistani authorities Tuesday assured India's visiting delegation of "foolproof" security for the forthcoming ice-breaking cricket series between the two countries, officials said. The three-member team, which includes security expert with the Yashovardhan Azad, held detailed discussions with top Pakistani interior ministry official Tasneem Noorani.

The Indian officials are also due to visit Lahore, Faisalabad, Multan, Karachi and Peshawar, where one-day matches as well as Tests will be played during the Indian team's tour from March 3 to April 15. "We assured our guests that Pakistan is making foolproof security arrangements and there is no cause for any sort of worry," Nooran told AFP after the meeting. In addition, he said a security officer would be appointed to liaise with Indian team. India's cricket tour to Pakistan will be the first for 14 years. They are due to play three Test matches and five-match one-dayers, but some

high-profile Indian players have expressed concerns over security. Following the Indian team's return from its tour to Australia, captain Saurav Ganguly said: "We are not worried about the Pakistan tour, but we are worried about the security." Newspapers in India have reported that Ganguly's family, and that of batting maestro Sachin Tendulkar, were reluctant for them to tour Pakistan due to fears over their safety. In October last year, India lifted

SEE PAGE 14 COL 1

Faruque wants bowlers to perform better

SPORTS REPORTER

Chief selector Faruque Ahmed hoped that the bowlers fared better this time when Bangladesh launch their series against Zimbabwe later this month.

The Tigers, led by new captain Habibul Bashar, reached Harare, the capital of the southern African nation, on Tuesday to play two Tests and five one-day internationals. "I think the batting was impressive in the build-up matches in Namibia, but I think bowlers performed below par. They need to show improved performance in Zimbabwe if we are to fancy any chance," said the chief of the four-member selection committee. Bangladesh moved to Zimbabwe after having a 15-day conditioning camp in Namibia, where they won all their three limited-overs practice games and drew the lone three-day fixture against the ICC associate member nation. Bangladesh will start their second trip to Zimbabwe with a three-day warm-up match against Zimbabwe A from February 14 in Harare before the first Test starts on February 19. The Tigers lost both the Tests and three ODIs in their first trip to Zimbabwe in 2000.

Group A in Rajshahi

STAFF REPORTER, Rajshahi

Group A teams Australia, Sri Lanka and Zimbabwe of the ICC Under-19 Cricket World Cup arrived here yesterday. On their arrival at the local airport, all four teams were received by a committee of divisional administrators formed by the ministry of youth and sports. Meanwhile, the Sri Lankan and Zimbabwean teams headed for their base in Bogra. Australia, Canada will be based in Rajshahi.

U-19 teams leave city

SPORTS REPORTER

Twelve participating teams of the ICC U-19 Cricket World Cup left the city yesterday for their respective venues across the country. Ahead of their group matches starting from February 15, the teams will play two practice matches each against the local selections. **Today's practice matches are:** Australia vs Rajshahi DSA XI Venue: Rajshahi Divisional Stadium Canada vs Rajshahi Mayor XI Venue: Rajshahi District Stadium Sri Lanka vs Bogra DSA XI Venue: Bogra District Stadium Zimbabwe vs Rajshahi Div XI Venue: Bogra Police Lines Ground South Africa vs Chittagong Div A

SEE PAGE 14 COL 1

India unlikely to come



SPORTS REPORTER

India's tour of Bangladesh in April this year looked a distant reality in the wake of the ice-breaking India-Pakistan series next month. The Indian cricket team is all set to make its first trip to Pakistan since 1989 after the Indian government decided to end its stubborn stance of severing any bilateral cricketing ties with their bitter neighbours. Although the schedule of the Indo-Pak series is yet to be finalised and a group of Indian experts are currently having a security check across the border before giving the green signal, the cricket world is convinced that the much-awaited three Tests and five one-day international series would go on as expected. "There is hardly any chance for

the Indian cricket team to come to Bangladesh in April. Rather we are now planning to host them in next winter," told Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) president Ali Asghar to the reporters yesterday. The BCB boss said that his Indian counterpart Jagmohan Dalmiya also expressed his desire to shift the scheduled tour next year. But Asghar said that he was yet to get any official response from the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI). Saurav Ganguly's men were scheduled to fly to Dhaka in mid-April to play two Tests and three one-day internationals. But Asghar said that the Indian team was reluctant to tour Bangladesh for two reasons. "It would be demanding for them to visit Bangladesh just after the Pakistan tour. Besides, the government does not want their cricket team to be out of the country during the national elections. That's why

the chance of them coming here in April is so slim," said Asghar, who is also president of the Asian Cricket Council (ACC). "Besides, in financial context the series is very important for us. April is not suitable if you consider the weather condition and if we hold the series in dry season then we can guarantee uninterrupted television coverage. You all know that there is every chance of rain and thunder-shower in April," said Asghar. If the Indian fixture is shifted then Bangladesh will tour West Indies in May after the Tigers return from Zimbabwe. Asghar had last month confirmed that India would take on their first full series to Bangladesh after an ACC meeting in Kuwait. Bangladesh played their inaugural Test against India in November 2000.

Rivals coming closer



REUTERS, New Delhi

India's teenage fast bowler Irfan Pathan had an unusual conversation with Wasim Akram at a post-match television interview in Australia last week. The 19-year-old left-arm had just won his first man-of-the-match award, picking up four wickets against Zimbabwe on a lively Perth pitch in a one-day game. Pathan began grinning from ear to ear the moment the former Pakistani paceman came on air. "So, you realise the value of getting those little details right?" a smiling Wasim told, rather than asked, the rookie.

"Now you know how to delay releasing the ball when batsmen try to charge at you?" he said. Pathan nodded like an obedient pupil, proud at having put into practice what one of the game's great left-armers had taught him just a few days ago. Akram's gesture was the latest example of the bonding India and Pakistan cricketers enjoy despite the prolonged political animosity between the two neighbours. As India prepare for their first Test tour across the border for 14 years in March, the build-up has been dominated by strong political undertones and security concerns. The trip itself was cleared only after the Indian government revoked a three-year ban on bilateral games following a recent thaw

in the political relations. The players are always reduced to gladiators on the pitch by millions of hysterical fans, for whom meeting on the cricket field is like going to battle. Cricket is the one sport where both can aspire to match the best. They are former World Cup champions and the psychological pressure brings out their best when they face each other. But despite the tension, cricketers from both countries have still sought each other out with a common language further helping them come together. In public eye, however, such instances still provoke outrage. Akram's tips to Pathan were

SEE PAGE 14 COL 4



PHOTO: ZOBAER HOSSAIN SIKDER
England under-19 players bat in the nets at the MA Aziz Stadium in Chittagong yesterday.