



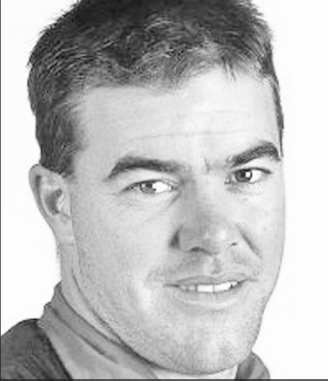
Did U Know?

India were all out for 54 in October 2000, their lowest ever total in one-day internationals against Sri Lanka.



ESPN
Sportscentre
Sports News
Live at 8.30 pm
Goals
Football programme
Repeat at 10.30 pm

STAR Sports
Nat'l Bank Series
First ODI
New Zealand v S Africa
Live at 6.57 am
Sportsline
Sports News
Live at 8 pm



Heath Streak
(Zimbabwe cricket captain)
"He [Robert Mugabe] is the president of our country and that's why he is the top authority of the cricket union in Zimbabwe. That's the rule in our country. But we have no problems with him and vice versa. I think things are far more settled now in Zimbabwe."

Star WHIZZ KID COMPETITION 20

Tick the correct answers, 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 Sultana
2. Who lifted the Hopman Cup tennis title?	Australia	Russia	America
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)			

Gibbs gets touch of rugby success

AFP, Auckland

Beaming South African cricketer Herschelle Gibbs got to do Thursday what South African rugby players have never done - hold the Super 12 trophy aloft.

Gibbs, a former South Africa schoolboy rugby star, could barely contain his excitement as Auckland Rugby Union officials led him to their laden trophy cabinet at their Eden Park headquarters ahead of Friday's first cricket international between South Africa and New Zealand.

"No South African's ever done this before," said Gibbs with a mile-

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Shahriar Nafis of CCDM Green (L) pulls one for four on way to making 101 against India Under-19 side at the Bangabandhu National Stadium in Dhaka while two England U-19 batsmen have a talk during a break at the MA Aziz Stadium in Chittagong during their respective practice matches yesterday.



PHOTOS: STAR

Warming up in style



SPORTS REPORTER

It was time to get the limbs moving as participating countries took the field for practice games around the country yesterday before the business got serious with the ICC U/19 Cricket World Cup matches starting on Sunday.

While there was a countrywide day-long strike called by the main opposition party Awami League in progress, the practice games passed off without any untoward incident under heavy security cover.

Top favourites Australia and their possible challengers to the throne India, South Africa, England and the West Indies all had comfortable wins over their locally assembled

opponents. However, the young trainees of the country's premier sports institute Bangladesh Krira Shikkha Protisthan (BKSP) stunned New Zealand, who many believe are one of the contenders for the championship.

Hosts Bangladesh also made short work of their opposition a Narayanganj District Sports Association (NDSA) selection.

DHAKAZONE WARM-UPS
The four Group C teams were all in action.

India, boasting a number of Ranji Trophy regulars, showed their batting depth by overhauling Cricket Committee of Dhaka Metropolis (CCDM) Green by four wickets at the Bangabandhu National Stadium (BNS).

Shahriar Nafis, a member of the Bangladesh under 19 side that played in the four-nation Asian youth tourney late last year, cracked 101 in CCDM Green's 217. But the charges

of ex-Indian star Robin Singh had little trouble chasing as they reached their target of 218 with 12.3 overs of the stipulated 50 to spare losing just six wickets along the way. Number four Suresh Raina hammered a 45-ball 55 while skipper Dinesh Kartik made a run-a-ball 48.

At the Fatullah Stadium, Bangladesh U-19s blazed past NDSA by 155 runs.

Opener Nafees Iqbal (72 off 81 deliveries) and Abul Bashir (72 off 73) laid the foundation while all-rounder Nadif Chowdhury blasted 59 from 54 deliveries with three sixes as the junior Tigers reached 272 for nine.

The NDSA were never in contention and were dismissed for 117 in 40.4 overs with left-arm spinner Enamul Haque Jr. and Naeem Islam equally sharing six wickets.

New Zealand were rattled by the BKSP side at the institute's ground.

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India A blank England A

AFP, Madras

India A survived a three-wicket burst from paceman Sajid Mahmood to complete a sweep against England A with a five-wicket victory in the third and final one-dayer here on Thursday.

Needing 211 to win, the hosts were tottering at 34-4 before Sridharan Sriram and Venugopal Rao put on 155 for the fifth wicket to ensure the victory with nearly five overs to spare.

Sriram cracked a 115-ball 105 not out with 12 fours and middle-order batsman Rao made a fine 66.

Fast bowler Simon Jones, trying to prove his fitness ahead of England's tour of the West Indies, went wicketless but bowled 10 tidy overs for 38 runs.

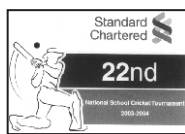
The Glamorgan paceman lost his Test berth after suffering a keen injury during the opening match against Australia at Brisbane two years ago.

The tourists, who lost the first match by 55 runs and the second by two wickets, were without captain Alex Gidman, who was scheduled to return home after failing to recover from a hand injury.

Middle-order batsman Ed Smith (76 not out) and opener Scott Newman (68) slammed impressive

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St Xavier's clinch Khulna crown



STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Saint Xavier's School emerged Khulna champions of the Standard Chartered Bank National School Cricket Tournament defeating Khulna Zila School by 35 runs in the final at the local Circuit House ground on Wednesday.

Batting first the winners made 157 for seven in the stipulated 30 overs.

In reply, Khulna Zila School were bundled out for 125 in just 26.1 overs.



PHOTO: STAR

Abul Bashir of Bangladesh U-19s, who hammered 62, square-drives during the practice match against a Narayanganj District Sports Association selection at the Fatullah Cricket Stadium yesterday.

Streak targets Bangladesh



AFP, Harare

Zimbabwe captain Heath Streak has licked his wounds and is already thinking of victory after seven defeats and a 'no result' from a triangular series against Australia and India.

Bangladesh begin their tour here on Saturday the newest and weakest Test nation taking on the Zimbabwe second string in preparation for two Tests and five one-day internationals during the next month four weeks.

When Bangladesh made their only previous tour to Zimbabwe two years ago, they lost both Tests by big margins and also the three ODIs played.

Streak told AFP: "It was really hard work against Australia and India. We tried hard not to be discouraged and we learned a lot. There was a great deal of pressure to make a fist of it and we did improve in the latter stages."

"But now we are not the underdogs for a change. We must and we

will impose ourselves on Bangladesh. We will be taking the initiative. I don't want to disparage them in any way, but we must be favoured."

Zimbabwe lost their best top order batsmen Mark Vermeulen and Craig Wishart through injuries in Australia and Grant Flower struggled with a damaged finger knuckle.

Vermeulen and Flower should be fit for the first Test in Harare and Wishart for the second in Bulawayo. This would make a big difference because Zimbabwe's most glaring weakness in Australia was the repeated failures of the top order to make runs or stay any worthwhile time at the wicket.

Bangladesh, who see a real chance here to push Zimbabwe down to the bottom of the unofficial Test status list, say they will take the game to the home side and play positive, attacking cricket.

Manager Latif Khan said: "We are an improving outfit and we will make a good fight of it. We gave England a scare or two just recently. We have some good youngsters in a balanced side."

India may delay Pak tour



AFP, New Delhi

India's first Test tour of Pakistan in almost 15 years, scheduled to begin next month, is in doubt because the Indian government wants it postponed until after general elections, media reports said Thursday.

Any delay, however, would mean cricket ties between the arch-rivals would be stalled for at least a year due to unsuitable weather between April and August and prior commitments of both teams thereafter.

The Indian government, which had initially cleared the high-profile trip, wants the tour to take place after the parliamentary poll expected in April-May, the Times of India said.

The Indian government's advice, conveyed through non-official channels, had lengthened the odds against the series, the paper said in a front-page story.

The Calcutta-based Telegraph newspaper, meanwhile, reported that Home Minister Lal Krishna Advani wanted the revival series to be put on hold since the government wanted to "play a risk-free game till the polls."

The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI), it said, may have to defer the tour of Pakistan "not owing to a change of heart, but because New Delhi has issued an advisory against a trip in the lead-up to the general elections."

BCCI president Jagmohan Dalmiya told AFP on Thursday that a final decision on the tour will be taken after a three-member delegation of the cricket board returns from Pakistan next Monday.

"So far I have not heard from the government so it will not be right for me to comment on these reports," Dalmiya said. "We will have to wait till the delegation reports its findings."

The delegation, which is touring match venues in Pakistan to study the security and players' arrange-

ments, includes a security expert from the Home ministry.

The Telegraph said only Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee could save the tour, but added he was unlikely to intervene.

Vajpayee had so far refrained from expressing a view and it was unlikely that he would overrule Advani, who is recommending a postponement, the paper said.

However, Vajpayee would have to consider that deferment of the tour could affect his ongoing peace initiative with the Pakistani government, it added.

When the government okayed bilateral sporting ties with Pakistan on October 22 last year as part of an olive branch to Islamabad, parliamentary elections had not been announced.

The BCCI, which had been pushing for resumption of cricket t

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Losing comeback



AFP, Melbourne

Australia's leading Test wicket-taker Shane Warne took another three wickets but was on the losing side as he completed his comeback cricket match with the Victoria second eleven here on Thursday.

The champion leg-spinner, playing his first match since the expiry of his 12-month drug suspension on Tuesday, took 3-120 from 19.5 overs as the Queensland Academy of Sport won by three wickets on the penultimate ball of the match.

With 10 runs needed off the last over of the match Warne's 20th in succession - former Australian off-spinner Nathan Hauritz finished off beautifully smashing a six over mid-wicket and then hitting a single off the next ball to steer the QAS to a

thrilling win.

Hauritz finished on 54 not out from 29 balls and set up the win with a sixth wicket stand of 68 with Chris



SHANE WARNE

Hartley (51) QAS finished on 306 for 7 in 57.5 overs.

Warne's match figures of 5-152

from 35.5 overs will hold him in good stead for the next match in his comeback, Saturday's one-day match against Tasmania here.

Victoria will on Friday name Warne in their side and for the Sheffield Shield match against Tasmania starting Tuesday to help him reclaim his Test spot in next month's series against Sri Lanka.

Victorian second XI captain and wicket keeper Peter Roach said Warne bowled his full set of variations and had shown no effects of soreness.

"We asked him if he wanted to keep bowling and he said he did," Roach said.

"He said it was the perfect preparation for him to bowl in a pressure situation, as much as he can be under pressure in a 2nd XI game, but he felt he was under pressure so it was good for him."

"He's happy with the way he came through."

McGrath runs out of time

AFP, Sydney

Australia's premier fast bowler Glenn McGrath has run out of time to prove his fitness for next month's Test cricket series in Sri Lanka.

McGrath's ankle problems have kept him out of the New South Wales side for Sunday's one-day match against South Australia here.

With a 10-over spell in a one-day match considered the best way to ease McGrath back into competitive cricket after such a long lay-off, he is also unlikely to be named in the NSW Sheffield Shield team for the match against South Australia, starting Tuesday.

That means McGrath will have played no cricket when the selectors sit down to finalise the Test squad for the Sri Lanka series, which starts in Galle on March 8.

The Test squad will be named on Friday, with Jason Gillespie and Brett Lee most likely to spearhead the Australian attack and Michael Kasprovicz, Brad Williams and either Nathan Bracken or Andy Bichel to be included as the other quicks.

It is highly unlikely McGrath, who turned 34 on Monday, will be granted a spot in the squad without

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Kenya eyes Test status

CRICINFO, undated

Andy Moles, Kenya's coach, has not given up hope that his team might be awarded Test status next year, but believes that they should be introduced into a second tier alongside the likes of Bangladesh and Zimbabwe.

Kenya were the surprise package of last year's World Cup, progressing to the semifinals after victories over Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Zimbabwe.

But they have played just three more international matches in the intervening 11 months, and all their good work could go to waste if they are not given more opportunities to play at the highest level.

"The ICC are aware of our problem," said Moles, speaking to the BBC from Barbados, where Kenya are currently competing in the Carib Beer tournament.

"But the problem is they have a 10-year plan which means all the Test-playing nations are playing a lot of cricket all the time. We are now asking individual boards if we can play against A-sides or against some of the counties in England."

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