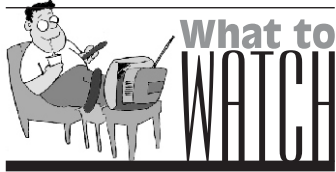




Did U Know?

Gymnasiums were introduced in 900BC and Greek athletes practised in the nude to the accompaniment of music. They also performed naked at the Olympic Games.



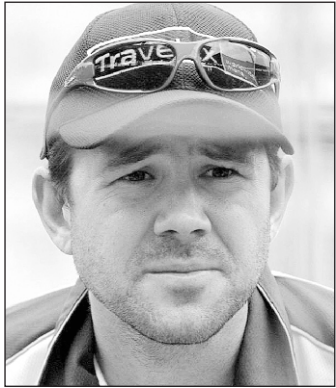
What to WATCH

ESPN

New Zealand vs South Africa
First ODI, Highlights
Repeat at 5:00 pm
Primera Liga
Real Madrid vs Valencia
Live at 2:00 am (Monday)
STAR Sports
Mumbai Int'l Marathon
Live at 7:30 am



Talk TURKEY



Ricky Ponting
(Australia cricket captain)
"I think it's a huge challenge for us - anywhere in the sub-continent has always been a huge challenge for Australia."
Before the team's departure for Sri Lanka.



Star WHIZZ KID COMPETITION 2004

Tick the correct answers, **only in The Daily Star**

Competition closes at 8 pm Feb 27, 2004 and draw shortly afterwards

- How many teams are taking part in the ICC U-19 Cricket World Cup?
16 12 20
- How many months was Shane Warne banned from cricket?
12 13
- Who won the Pan Pacific Open title?
Davenport Clijsters
- Who won the Tokyo Marathon?
Njenga Sebastian Osaki

Name
.....
Class Roll No.
School Address
Phone: (If any)

Dalmiya expects Indian stars to tour Pakistan

AFP, Calcutta

Indian cricket board president Jagmohan Dalmiya Saturday said he was confident that India's top players would be part of the team on their upcoming tour of Pakistan.

"The team is going to play cricket not to war. There is no question of putting pressure on players to go, but they will go," Dalmiya told reporters at a press conference here.

The Indian government earlier on Saturday gave the go-ahead for the first Test tour of Pakistan in almost 15 years, which was welcomed by Dalmiya.

"We welcome the government's decision which is a cricket-friendly one. Security was one of our primary concerns, for which we had no expertise and were dependent on the government's advice," said

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PHOTOS: STAR

PRACTICE WILL MAKE YOU PERFECT: Bangladesh Under-19 team's (L) Abul Bashir bats while New Zealand U-19s have a workout during their respective net sessions at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday. The two teams lock horns in the first match of the ICC Under-19 Cricket World Cup at the big bowl today.

India touring Pakistan



AFP, New Delhi

India's first Test tour of Pakistan in almost 15 years will go ahead as scheduled next month, the government said on Saturday, ending days of uncertainty caused by security concerns.

Indian Foreign Minister Yashwant Sinha announced the green light for the ice-breaking tour following a high-level meeting called by Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee at his residence earlier in the day.

"After taking into consideration all aspects, it was decided that the two countries should go ahead with their cricket matches as proposed," Sinha told reporters after the meeting.

Vajpayee okayed the tour after meeting with Deputy Prime Minister Lal Krishna Advani, Finance Minister Jaswant Singh, National Security Adviser Brijesh Mishra and Sinha, the Press Trust of India reported.

The decision comes two days before India and Pakistan begin secretary-level talks in Islamabad on Monday to further the peace process initiated by the political leaders of both countries.

India are due to play three Tests and five one-day internationals in March and April on their first full tour of Pakistan since 1989.

The itinerary for the tour will be finalised by the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) after its security delegation returns from Pakistan on Monday.

The delegation, comprising BCCI officials Ratnakar Shetty and Amrit Mathur and the home ministry's security expert Yashovardhan Azad, is currently visiting match venues in Pakistan to study security and players' arrangements.

The series was surrounded by uncertainty after media reports over the last two days suggested the home ministry wanted the tour to be postponed until after parliamentary polls expected from late April.

Junior home minister Swami Chinmayanand, who had on Friday expressed reservations about the tour taking place, also backed the cricketers' visit to Pakistan.

"From the inputs we have received from the BCCI delegation in Pakistan and our own intelligence agencies, the Pakistani government appears to have taken adequate measures for the team's security," Chinmayanand told the Hindi-language Aaj Tak channel on Saturday.

BCCI official Rajiv Shukla welcomed the government's decision, saying the board was expected to announce the itinerary next week.

"We wanted the tour to take place between early March and April and that is how it is going to be," Shukla said.

The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB), which has reportedly gar-

nered sponsorship worth 20 million dollars for what is one of sport's ultimate rivalries, heaved a sigh of relief.

"We are delighted Mr Vajpayee has cleared the tour, but we never doubted the tour would not take place," PCB chairman Shaharyar Khan told AFP from Lahore.

Indian spinner Harbhajan Singh, who will miss the tour due to a hand injury, said it will be a special occasion for both teams.

"There will be great excitement on both sides of the border," the off-spinner said. "The players were worried about the security in Pakistan but I am sure the team will be looked after well."

The Indian team, which returned from a gruelling 10-week tour of Australia earlier this week, has three weeks to rest and prepare for the tour.

The Indian government ended a three-year ban on bilateral sporting ties with Pakistan in October 22 last year following a thaw in diplomatic relations with Islamabad.

An opinion poll in the latest issue of the Delhi-based "Outlook" magazine said 77 percent of respondents favoured the Indian team playing in Pakistan.

India will also send a 400-strong contingent to the South Asian Federation Games to be held in Islamabad from March 29 to April 7.

Top three gear up



SPORTS REPORTER

Defending champions Australia, Asian powerhouse India and dark horse West India warmed up well yesterday ahead of launching their ICC U-19 World campaigns.

The three top teams in the 16-nation meet will get down to business on Monday.

India thrashed Narayanganj District Sports Association by 122 runs at the Fatullah Stadium. It was their last practice match before a meeting against lightweight Scotland at the Banga-bandhu National Stadium.

The mighty Indians put on a massive 321 before being all out in 49.1 overs with Praful Waghela hammering an unbeaten 100 off 90 balls and with the help of ten boundaries. The local team, in reply, was shot out for 199 with one ball to spare.

While India cruised, Scotland, their opponents on Monday, crashed to a 93-run defeat at the hands of BKSP. The students of country's lone sports institute made 268-7 in 50 overs with Ashrafal leading from the front with 79.

The British Isles team could manage 175-9.

"The outfield here is very fast and grass is very firm. I think if a team scores more than 250 then that's good enough to defend on these types of wickets," said Scotland coach William Morton to Ripon Biswas at BKSP.

On the other hand BKSP coach Salahuddin, whose charges also upset Bangladesh's opening day opponents New Zealand in the previous game, said that his play of using four spinners did the trick

in both games.

Away at Rajshahi our correspondent Himu reported of two contrasting results.

Australia handed Mayor X1 a 102-run defeat at the District Stadium while Canada prevailed by one wicket over the Rajshahi Divisional X1 at the Divisional Stadium.

Although the victory margin for the boys from down under was impressive but the amount of runs they scored after batting first was not inspiring. They posted 212 before being all out in 47.3 overs. But it was a four-wicket haul from O'Keefe that carried them through.

Australia will launch their title

defence against Canada at the Rajshahi Divisional Stadium on Monday.

West Indies continued to build momentum with another easy 176-run win over the local selection at the Shamsul Huda Stadium in Jessore. Assad Fudadin hit 125 off 117 balls, his second century, as West Indies scored 290 before being all out in 50 overs. In reply, the local boys crashed to 114.

West Indies will play their first match of the competition against Ireland tomorrow. The Irish had a rude shock at the Khulna Stadium, where they suffered a three-wicket loss against Khulna DSA.



PHOTO: STAR

A Mayor Ekadosh batsman drives one through covers for a boundary during a practice game against Australia Under-19 team at the District Stadium in Rajshahi yesterday.

Tigers 199

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh collapsed against Zimbabwe A on the first day of their three-day tour opener yesterday in Harare.

Left-handed batsman Manjaraul Islam Rana hit highest 40 and Anwar Hossain Monir scored 20 as the visitors managed 199 in 77 overs.

However, right-arm pacer Alamgir Kabir brought the Tigers back in the match claiming four wickets as the second string Zimbabwe side lost five wickets for 71 in 26 overs when balls were drawn for the day, according to Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB).

Another new ball bowler Monir took the other wicket.

Zim name squad Bangladesh welcomed

CRICINFO, undated

Zimbabwe have on Saturday announced the national squad to face Bangladesh.

However, the Zimbabwe selectors have announced that they will finalise their starting eleven for the first Test, on February 19, on Wednesday 18.

Meanwhile, the Minister of Education, Sport and Culture Aeneas Chigwedere has commended the Bangladesh cricket team for touring Zimbabwe at a time when there are some efforts to have the country isolated.

The newest members of the International Cricket Council's elite Test league, who arrived in the country on Tuesday night, were officially welcomed on Thursday night at the Harare Sports Club.

Speaking at the function, Chigwedere said that Bangladesh has further distinguished themselves as Zimbabwe's friends on the sporting arena.

"The friendly rivalry that exists between our two countries in the game has played a pivotal role in the development and upgrading of cricket in the two nations."

The reception was hosted by the trade commissioner for Bangladesh, Rashiduzzaman Khan and was attended by members of the Bangladesh and Zimbabwe cricket teams.

SQUADS
ZIMBABWE (from): Heath Streak (captain), Tatenda Taibu, Grant Flower, Dion Ebrahim, Stuart Carlisle, Stuart Matsikenyeri, Andy Bignault, Raymond Price, Blessing Mahwire, Sean Ervine, Trevor Gripper, Douglas Hondo, Gavin Ewing.

BANGLADESH (from): Habibul Bashir (captain), Rajin Saleh, Khaled Mashud, Kumar Baishya, Hannan Sarker, Shahriar Hossain, Mohammad Ashrafal, Aziz Khan, Manjaraul Islam, Anwar Hossain, Mushfiqur Rahman, Alok Kapali, Mohammad Rafique, Alamgir Kabir, Monjurul Islam, Al Shahriar.



ICC U-19 Cricket World Cup
Bangladesh vs New Zealand (9:00 am)
Venue: Bangabandhu National Stadium
Pakistan vs Papua New Guinea (9:00 am)
Venue: Khulna Divisional Stadium
England vs Nepal (9:00 am)
MA Aziz Stadium, Chittagong
Sri Lanka vs Zimbabwe (9:00 am)
Venue: Shaheed Chandu Stadium (Bogra District Stadium)

Winning start the key

Hosts take on young Black Caps



BISHWAJIT ROY

Bangladesh open their 5th ICC U/19 Cricket World Cup campaign with a crunch Group C game against New Zealand today fully aware that a win will give them an enormous advantage in the quest for a so far elusive Super League berth.

The much-anticipated clash is scheduled to start at the Bangabandhu National Stadium at 9am. Although there was a daylong strike called by the main opposition Awami League, the two teams had their last practice at the match venue yesterday amid tight security. Bangladesh has never managed

to qualify for the Cup competition in the previous four U/19 World Cups and had to be satisfied with playing in the Plate phase which is designed for the bottom placed teams.

Cup contenders India are the firm favourites to top the group which leaves the hosts and the junior Black Caps fighting for the other Super League slot. ICC associates members Scotland complete the quartet.

"We are keen to get a solid start in the tournament. After taking some good preparation, this first match is very important for us but I don't want to think too much about moving into the Cup stage or anything," said Bangladesh coach Richard McInnes.

The hosts s led by Ashiqur Rahman, have the most number of full internationals in their squad among all competing teams. Fast bowler Talha Jubair and left-

arm spinner Enamul Haque Junior are already Test caps. Former skipper and opener Nafees Iqbal has appeared in two one-day internationals. But McInnes preferred to keep a lid on the supposed advantage factor.

"We don't think we are favorites in the match at all. The experience of two or three international matches doesn't make a difference as the first class cricket structure here is not a standard one especially in comparison to what they have in New Zealand," said McInnes.

But his counterpart Dayle Hadlee without hesitation placed Bangladesh as the superior of the two.

"Bangladesh are stronger because none of our players play first class cricket. But that is also a

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BCB's appeal



SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) yesterday appealed to all political parties to ensure a healthy atmosphere for successful holding of the ICC Under-19 Cricket World Cup that begins today across the country.

BCB made the appeal when main opposition party Awami League called another hartal on Monday after two shutdowns on Thursday and Saturday.

"We are worried with the latest political development and little bit anxious about the successful ending of the country's biggest cricket event that took off with a grand opening ceremony," said a gloomy BCB president Ali Asghar at a press conference yesterday

at the Bangabandhu National Stadium conference room. His eight advisors were also present at the conference.

"We requested both the government and the opposition to create such an atmosphere where we can successfully finish the tournament. Our national image will be tarnished abroad if we fail to successfully hold it since the ICC high-ups are now in the city," lamented Asghar.

He also informed that they had talked with different political leaders including former BCB president Saber Hossain Chowdhury and sent letters to different party offices urging them to extend their helping hands instead of undertaking any agitating programmes.

But when contacted, Awami League general secretary Abdul Jalil denied the BCB president's claim and said that they didn't receive any such letter



PHOTO: STAR

Bangladesh Cricket Board president Ali Asghar makes a point during press conference at the conference room of the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

Clash of unequals



STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

It will David versus Goliath when Nepal play England in the opening Group B match of the ICC U-19 Cricket World Cup at the MA Aziz Stadium at nine in the morning.

The boys from Nepal make little pretensions of the task ahead of them knowing that apart from their opponents South Africa are definitely the stronger teams of the four-team group that also includes Uganda.

But though the cards are heavily stacked against the colts from the Himalayan Kingdom, still their coach Roy Dias, the former Sri Lankan Test cricketer, promises to give England a good run for their money.

"England and South Africa are definitely stronger sides and it would be tough to beat them on any ground," said Dias after a long practice session in the morning.

"But it is a game of uncertainty and I feel that we can make a much of it if we can manage to bat our full 50 overs."

The experienced Dias also banked on his bowlers to create

problems in the English line-up.

"We have class bowlers in Shakti Prasad Gauchan and Monick Shrestha and they have the ability to upset any side," Dias said adding that his squad was gaining experience from every match they had played so far.

Nepal was first team to arrive for the juvenile meet and they played a couple of warm-up games against their Bangladesh counterparts. They lost all the three practice games by massive margins.

Understandably, with England, the 1998 winners, and Nepal meeting for the first time, England manager John Abrahams had little or no idea about their opponents.

"I've absolutely no idea about the strengths or weaknesses of Nepal since we've never played each other at this level," said Abrahams over cell phone.

"We have never played against them."

However, the English manager believed that his side would face no problems to get their campaign off with a bang.

"We already won two practice matches here in Chittagong so we've got idea of the local conditions and that's very useful. So our preparation has gone accordingly," Abrahams added.

SOUTH AFRICA, UGANDA

WIN WARM-UPS

While England and Nepal drew battle-lines, the Protea U-19s and Uganda had contrasting final warm-ups in the port city.

Chittagong District B team made Ugandan youths sweat before the Africans won by just one run in a low-scoring affair.

On the other hand title aspirants South Africa crushed District A team by 152 runs.

The Ugandans had to rely on a six-wicket haul by right-arm medium-pacer Daniel Ruyange as District B fell agonisingly close while chasing a modest 108 runs at the Chittagong Divisional Stadium. The local selection was dismissed in 26.5 overs with extras contributing highest 31 runs. Rajib added 30.

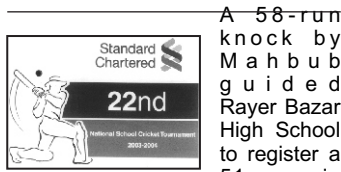
At the Dampara Police Lines ground, South Africa piled up a massive 306 in 49.1 overs with Jaco Booyesen hitting 102.

Booyesen hammered 19 boundaries in a 91-minute exhibition of stroke-play before retiring hurt. Besides Captain Divan Van Wyk gave him solid support with 78.

In reply District A were shot out for 154 in 39.3 overs. Rabbi (54) and Dalim (47) were only local batsmen that offered resistance.

Rayer Bazar High beat Government Laboratory

UNB, Dhaka



Government Laboratory High School in one of the three Dhaka Metropolitan Zone matches of the Standard Chartered 22nd National School Cricket tournament at the Residential Model High School ground yesterday.

Coin-favoured Rayer Bazar High made 215 for 8 in the stipulated 35 overs.

In reply, Government Laboratory were all out for 164 in 33.3 overs.

Bidyanketan Pre-cadet recorded a massive-110 run victory over Keya Kindergarten at Mirpur Outer Stadium.

Batting first, Bidyaniketan Pre-cadet scored 199 all out in 28.2 overs.

In reply, Keya Kindergarten were bundled out for 89 runs.

An unbeaten half-century by Pappu helped Tejgunipara High School beat Sunrise Public School by 3 wickets at the Uttara Police Lines ground.

Winning the toss, Sunrise Public were all out for 164 in 31 overs. Tejgunipara High, in reply, reached the target making 167 in 34 overs keeping three wickets in hand.

SCORES IN BRIEF
RAYER BAZAR HIGH: 215/8 in 35 overs (Mahbub 58, Sharif 36; Faisal 3/32, Sabir 3/33).

GOVT LABORATORY HIGH: 164/10 in 33.3 overs (Shanto 53, Promit 26, Sabir 26; Faisal 3/14).

Result: Rayer Bazar High School won by 51 runs.

BIDYANIKETAN PRE-CADET: 199/10 in 28.2 overs (Mizanur 30, Tanjim 26, Shamim 23; Faisal 5/30).

KEYA KINDERGARTEN: 89/10 (Omar 24, Hossain 3/33).

Result: Bidyaniketan Pre-cadet won

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