

## Did U Know?

Serena Williams's favourite place to visit is the mirror in her house, whilst her sister Venus claims her favourite place is anywhere that accepts credit cards!

## TALK TURKEY



**Rahul Dravid**  
(India cricket vice-captain)

"I think enough has been said and done about the security bit, it's now time to think about the cricket."

While talking to reporters during the trophy unveiling function for the Test and one-day series against Pakistan.

## What to WATCH

- BTV**  
ICC U-19 Cricket World Cup Super League Final  
Pakistan vs West Indies  
Live at 1:30 pm
- ESPN**  
Sportscentre  
Sport News  
Live at 8:30 pm
- English Premier League**  
A Decade of Great Matches  
Repeat at 2:00 pm
- STAR Sports**  
Sportsline  
Sport News  
Live at 8:00 pm

## Star Whizz Kid COMPETITION 207

Tick the correct answers, post to The Daily Star. Win attractive prizes. Competition closes at 8 pm March 12, 2004 and draw.

- How many runs did Bangladesh score in the first innings of the first Test against Zimbabwe?  
331    400    350
- Who is the first Zimbabwe bowler to have claimed a hat-trick in Test?  
Blignaut    Olonga    Hondo
- Who was man-of-the-match in the second ODI between Sri Lanka and Zimbabwe?  
Havard    Fernando    Federer
- Who clinched the Rotterdam World tennis title?  
Vaas

Name .....

Class ..... Roll No. ....

School Address .....

Phone: (If any) .....

## DC Gold Cup soccer on

**OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha**

Natore defeated Nilphamari-0 in the inaugural match of the Deputy Commissioner Gold Cup football tournament at the Gaibandha Stadium yesterday.

Tanvir netted the all-important goal.

State Minister for Cultural Affairs Begum Salima Rahman inaugurated the tournament.

A total of ten teams - Nilphamari, Gaibandha, Notore, Lalmonirhat, Pabna, Sirajganj, Rangpur, Joypurhat, Rajshahi and Dinajpur are taking part in the meet.

# A worthy Plate



**RABEED IMAM**

Beating Australia in any level of cricket is a mighty achievement as the men from down under have set the benchmark for excellence in the game. So when hosts Bangladesh pulled off a sensational eight-run win over the soon to be officially dethroned world U-19 champions at bouncy Fatullah yesterday, it ought to have been a huge cause for celebration. Well, not quite.

True there was the huddle-dance in the middle, numerous hugs and congratulatory exchanges and a semi lap of honour but Richard McInnes' charges largely kept it within perspective. After all Plate championship was only the consolation part of the main competition and that mood was evident in the junior Tigers' members too when reporters inquired about their plans for the night.

"We have an official reception tonight. After that I guess I'll just go home to my wife and kid," said McInnes after the match.

Skipper Ashiqur Rahman too was not getting overly excited. "We didn't qualify for the Cup and that still plays on my mind."

Nevertheless it was a successful end to a mission that became an

altogether different ball game with Australia being the opponents.

"Once we realised that we weren't going to be in the Super League we wanted to make sure that we didn't miss the Plate. But Australia being there too made it a great deal harder," said McInnes adding that he was relieved with the final outcome.

"When the Australians were putting on that sixth wicket partnership, I thought about the New Zealand game where we had them six down for 110 and still lost. I don't know whether it has got something to do with the number six but I'm glad we pulled it through in the end."

Although Bangladesh's batting clicked for the first time in the competition, McInnes was still disappointed at not capitalising on a brilliant start.

"257 was a good effort but I still thought we should have had 300. But again we have to remember that they had no previous experience of being 180 or 200 for two with more than ten overs remaining. So that was a new thing for us today and we have learnt a great deal."

Ashiqur was adamant that his side had the potential to bat like this all along but couldn't manage to do it in this World Cup.

"It wasn't a marked improvement in our batting today because Nafees (Iqbal), Naeem (Islam), Aftab (Ahmed)...they all usually bat like they did. Unfortunately we just haven't seen more of that in the tournament," said the Bangladesh captain.

The Fatullah Cricket Stadium was not at its crowded best yesterday and there were patches of vacant corners in the stands. But a steady build up of fans eventually touched the 15,000 mark and with Bangladesh making a good enough score to defend, more poured in as the match progressed. And the supporters, majority of whom were from adjacent areas and Narayanganj came prepared for the occasion.

Drums were beating all day, rhythmic clatter was being made with empty plastic mineral water bottles and Mexican waves flowed every once in a while. So involved were the fans in the game that they even vented their displeasure by throwing bottles and other objects on to the ground when a few tantalisingly close run-out calls went against the home side when Australia were batting. But nothing untoward transpired and it was heartening to see the stadium generously applaud the Aussies when they were making it back to the change-rooms after the prize-giving ceremony.

The fan-factor was also appreciated by Ashiqur.

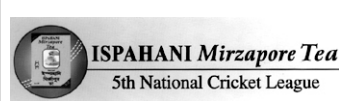
"I don't think playing in front of such a huge crowd put any pressure on us. Besides, we don't hear what they are saying in the stands. On

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AND THE CELEBRATION BEGINS: Bangladesh players are joyous after the fall of the last Australian wicket during the Plate final yesterday.

# Sylhet own day one



**SPORTS REPORTER**

Sylhet won the opening day's battle against Dhaka as the two title-contenders launched their final assaults on the four-day competition of the Ispahani Mirzapore Tea National League at different venues yesterday.

Eying for a maiden first-class title, Sylhet got off to a flying start on their home ground against Rajshahi, putting up 371 before being all out in 88.4 overs.

Dhaka, on the other hand, had reached a commanding 258-6 against defending champions Khulna at the Shamsul Huda Stadium in Jessore. Hosts Barisal also posted an impressive total of 250-9 in 97 overs against Chittagong in the battle of the no-hopers.

**SYLHET V RAJSHAHI**

Sylhet thrived on a century partnership between Imtiaz Khan and Golam Rahman to amass the highest innings total on the first day.

They gave the hosts a perfect start putting on 103 runs for the second wicket before the lower-order sent the Rajshahi bowlers on a leather hunt in the final session.

Rahman scored a swashbuckling 78 off 87 balls that included 13 hits across the rope. Imtiaz scored a sensible 73 off 127 balls that featured eight fours.

But the Sylhet innings flourished at the end with number seven Ahmed making an unbeaten 47 followed by Rezaul Haq and Rana, who chipped in with 30 apiece. Even number eleven batsman Nabil had his day with the bat, clobbering 22 runs off just 14 deliveries.

**DHAKA V KHULNA**

Illias Hany missed a maiden first-class century just for six runs, but the effort of the left-arm spinner provided

the platform Dhaka needed in the last game against Khulna.

Coming into bat at number three after opener Rasheedul Haq depart for only three, the young Sunny scored a matured 94 before he was undone by a direct hit by Khulna's substitute fielder Ripon.

Sunny struck 16 sweetly timed fours in his 190-ball vigil at the crease. Stand-in-captain Sanwar Hossain also produced a valuable 52 after the tourists lost three wickets for 87 runs.

Halim Shah was six runs short of a laborious half-century when stumps were drawn for the day.

**BARISAL V CHITTAGONG**

Left-arm spinner Mustadir Litu led Barisal with a fine 71 after the home side suffered a top-order collapse against Chittagong.

Batting at number eight the experienced southpaw struck nine boundaries in his 142-ball knock. Opener Imran scored 31 and wicketkeeper Shahin contributed 39.

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# Indians to have PM's reception

**AFP, New Delhi**

India's cricket team will call on Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee next week before they embark on the first full tour of Pakistan in 15 years, it was announced on Thursday.

Vajpayee will receive Sourav Ganguly's men at his residence here on Wednesday, a few hours before the team departs for Lahore by a special Indian Airlines flight.

"Considering the importance of the goodwill tour, the prime minister will personally meet the team members and extend his good wishes to them," a cricket board release said.

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# ICC, Lord's may part company

**BBC ONLINE, London**

The International Cricket Council (ICC) could end its 95-year association with Lord's in northwest London in 1909.

Then in 1965 it was renamed the International Cricket Council.

It now has 10 full members the Test nations plus 79 associate and affiliate members.

Brendan McClements, the ICC's corporate affairs manager, told BBC Sport: "The ICC management were asked to prepare a paper looking at cricketing and commercial reasons for being in this country."

The merits of Dubai, Malaysia, Monaco, Ireland, Switzerland and Singapore will all be mulled over at the executive board meeting in New Zealand.

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Bangladesh team members are on a victory lap after they defeated Australia in the Plate Championship final of the ICC U-19 Cricket World Cup at the Fatullah Stadium in Narayanganj yesterday.

# Mukti sink Abahani

**SPORTS REPORTER**

Muktijodha Sangsad salvaged a little pride in the Western Union Premier Division Football League when they handed Abahani a solitary goal defeat at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

The victory however had little bearing on the title race as both teams are out of the running.

Ugandan striker Lulenti scored the decisive goal in the 28th minute with a right-foot volley following a goalmouth melee.

It increased the Reds' tally to 29 points from 16 matches while the Sky Blues remained on 27 points from the same number of matches.

Abahani had a good chance to equalize just after two minutes but Brazilian recruit Sandro failed to

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# Aussies to go to Zimbabwe

**AFP, Bulawayo**

The Australian cricket team will tour Zimbabwe in May, manager Stephen Bernard said here Wednesday, adding that it would be stopped only if "something drastic" were to happen.

"There's no doubt we're coming, unless something drastic has to happen just before the tour. We were coming anyhow but we had to make all the necessary security checks ahead of the tour," Bernard said after inspecting the Queens Sports Country, one of the two venues for the matches.

Bernard, flanked by Zimbabwe Cricket Union's managing director Vince Hogg, said he was impressed with the facilities and an assurance from the police on the safety and security of players and officials.

"We would want to stress that the pre-checks we are conducting are not only for Zimbabwe but we have had security checks in Sri Lanka and the West Indies where our teams have played before," Bernard said.

# Teams ready for final



**BBC ONLINE**

West Indies take on Pakistan in the final of the ICC Under-19 World Cup on Friday with both sides aiming to win the title for the first time.

Pakistan won the group game between the two teams by 163 runs in Khulna and may start slight favourites in Dhaka.

"I think we will have the psychological advantage because of our earlier win," said Pakistan manager Sultan Rana.

But West Indies coach Clyde Butts replied: "We are ready to do better against them this time."

West Indies sent England tumbling to a 94-run defeat in the semifinals and Butts believes his side have improved since they lost to Pakistan in the first round.

Pakistan, meanwhile, have only come unstuck just once in the tournament.

"They beat us comfortably in the group stage, but this is a different match and I don't think the other result will affect our players at all."

The West Indies have shown flashes of brilliance to reach the final but they have also been inconsistent.

As well as losing against Pakistan, they only scraped home by six runs against Ireland in the first round.

They are capable of scoring big runs and their top three batsmen - Xavier Marshall, Tishan Maraj and Lendl Simmons - have all scored centuries in the tournament.

They can also count on skipper Denesh Ramdin who rose to the occasion in the semifinal with a match-winning 72 when his side was under pressure.

Pakistan, meanwhile, have only come unstuck just once in the tournament.

Their six victories include impressive wins over West Indies and New Zealand and a comfortable defeat of highly-fancied India in the semifinal.

Pakistan's strength has been their bowling and no side has managed to score more than 200 against them.

The highest total any side has managed against them was England's 196 in the one match that Pakistan lost.

They boast three of the tournament's top bowlers - Riaz Afridi, Tariq Mahmood and Mansoor Amjad.

Riaz has already taken 18 wickets in the tournament and will open the bowling for Pakistan in the final.

The powerful right-arm fast bowler claimed a five-wicket haul in the match against England.

Off-spinner Tariq and leg-spinner Mansoor impart prodigious spin and along with Riaz, have been touted as future interna

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# Wasim's wise words



**AFP, Lahore**

Former cricket great Wasim Akram told his fellow Pakistani players to enjoy and excel in the upcoming "pressure" series against India during a motivational talk here Wednesday.

"Playing against India means pressure and I have told the players to enjoy the pressure and try to excel in it by striving for a victory," Wasim told this news agency after his visit to Pakistan's tune-up camp for the Indian series.

India land in the city on March 10 to play five one-day games and three

Tests until April 17, their first tour of Pakistan since 1989-90.

The 37-year-old Wasim, regarded as the greatest left-arm pacer with a world record of 502 one-day and 414 Test wickets, stayed for three hours and delivered a special lecture to players on how to handle the pressure of playing against India.

He gave useful tips to fast bowlers Shoaib Akhtar and Mohammad Sami on whom Pakistan will heavily rely to out-point India.

"Pakistan's young crop of players is maturing very fast and they will give a tough fight to the Indian team. I foresee a tough series between the two countries," said Wasim, who led Pakistan to their last tour of India in 1998-99.

"I tried to pass the ways to develop

mental toughness which I was told by my seniors Imran Khan and Javed Miandad in my younger days," said Wasim, who retired from international cricket in May last year.

Former captain and Wasim's mentor Imran also visited the camp on Sunday.

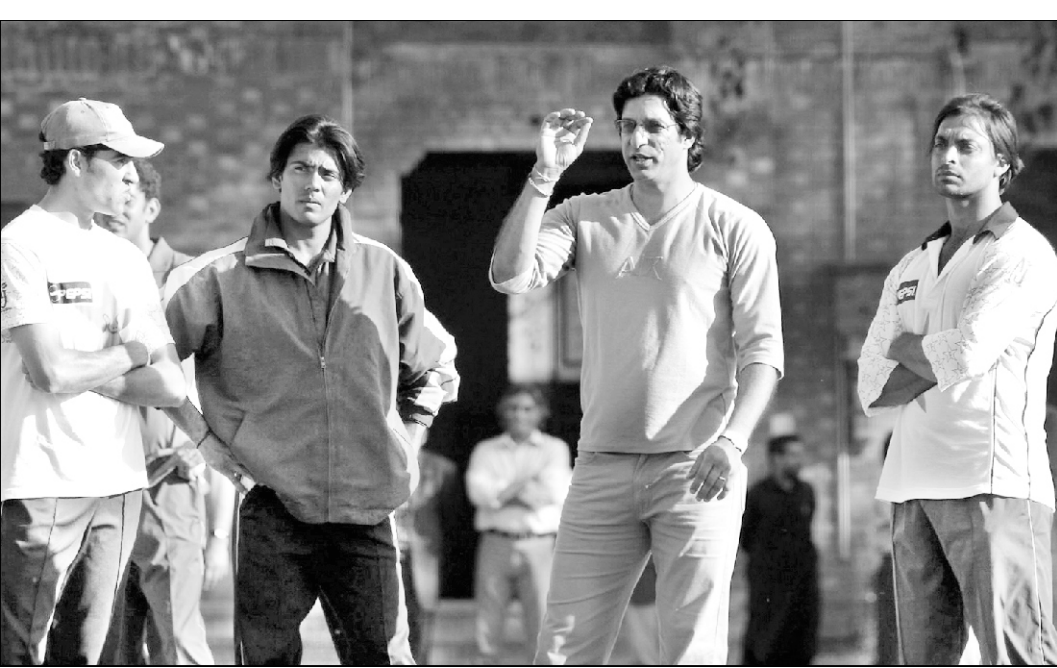
"India has quality batsmen but their bowling is inexperienced," said Wasim, who recently commented during India's tour of Australia.

India announced their 15-man squad for the one-day series on Monday while Pakistan will announce their team for the first two matches on Friday.

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## DAY'S EVENT

- Western Union Premier Football League**  
Victoria vs Dhanmondi (3:00 pm)  
Mohammedan vs Dhaka Wanderers (5:00 pm)  
Venue: Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium, Mirpur
- Nat'l Cricket League (Day-2)**  
Barisal vs Chittagong  
Venue: Barisal Stadium
- Rajshahi vs Sylhet  
Venue: Sylhet Stadium
- Dhaka vs Khulna  
Venue: Jessore Stadium
- ICC U-19 Cricket World Cup Super League Final**  
Pakistan vs West Indies  
Venue: Bangabandhu National Stadium



LEARN FROM THE LEGEND: Pakistan great Wasim Akram (2nd from R) passing some fast bowling tips to (L-R) Umar Gul, Mohammad Sami and Shoaib Akhtar during his visit to Pakistan's tune-up camp in Lahore on Wednesday.