



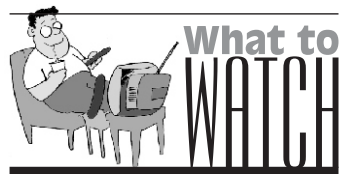
Did U Know?

Riddick Bowe is the only fighter to have held all four world title belts - IBF, WBA, WBC and WBO.



Carlo Ancelotti

(AC Milan coach)
"It's a truly extraordinary moment for Milan - the team are enjoying themselves and the fans are being entertained, but we cannot afford to look any further than the next match."
After their Serie A victory over Parma on Saturday.



ESPN

Football Focus
Live at 6:30 pm
Sportscentre
Sport News
Live at 8:30 pm
UEFA Champions League
AC Milan vs Deportivo
Live at 1:30 am (Wednesday)

STAR Sports

Sportline
Sport News
Live at 8:00 pm
UEFA Champions League
FC Porto vs Olympique Lyonnais
Live at 1:30 am (Wednesday)
TEN Sports
West Indies vs England
Second Test, Day Five
Live at 8:00 pm

Star Whizz Kid COMPETITION 208

Tick the correct answers, post to
The Daily Star
Win attractive prizes
**Competition closes at 8 pm
March 27, 2004 and draw**

- How many runs did Bangladesh score against Zimbabwe in the third ODI?
230 242 238
- Who clinched the first Division Football League title?
Farashganj Victoria
Younghen's
- Who won the Qatar Open tennis title?
Hings Henin Myskina
- Who won the four-day National Cricket League title?
Name
Class Roll No.
School Address
Phone: (If any)



Bangladesh A vs Zimbabwe A (Day One)
Second Four-Day Match
Venue: Shaheed Chandu

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

Desperate cricketers anxious over their future, met with Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) officials yesterday to express their concern at the uncertainty surrounding the Dhaka Premier Division and First Division leagues.

The livelihood of some seven hundreds players have been thrown into turmoil after the Cricket Committee of Dhaka Metropolis (CCDM), the organisers of the Dhaka leagues, failed to come to a settlement with top clubs over completing the players' transfer for the 2003-2004 season on schedule. The clubs are reluctant to play in this time of the year arguing that the rainy season is fast

approaching but that view is spelling disaster for the cricketers who are dependent on club contracts for their financial existence.

Some thirty players including former national skippers Akram Khan, Minhazul Abedin and Naimur Rahman went to BCB's Gulshan office yesterday and talked in length with BCB advisor Arafat Rahman and chief executive officer Macky Dudhia.

"We decided on meeting Arafat Rahman and Macky Dudhia because a big number of cricketers will be face unimaginable suffering if the league is not played this season," said Akram.

Akram also informed that Arafat, the influential chairman of the development committee, assured them after that the Board would go to any length to compensate the cricketers if there is no

league.

"He told us that they would try their best to convince the clubs. He was adamant that the four leading clubs were mainly responsible for the stalemate but the Board was prepared to embrace a new concept if that would benefit the players," said Akram.

It was learnt that the board has already received positive responses from eight corporate houses including Bangladesh Biman, Bangladesh Railway and Grameen-Phone in its plan for arranging a 12-team first-ever corporate cricket league where players will be recruited by the office teams. That would also put an end to the club monopoly of control over the fortune of cricketers.

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India get triple boost

AFP, New Delhi



Experienced leg-spinner Anil Kumble, seamer Ajit Agarkar and opener Akash Chopra will join the Indian team for an upcoming

Test series against Pakistan, a top official announced here on Monday.

"Kumble and Agarkar have recovered from injuries and Chopra is our regular Test opener who the selectors want to persist with," cricket board secretary Karunakaran Nair told reporters.

Kumble (shoulder) and Agarkar (shin) missed the ongoing one-dayers due to injuries but were picked to strengthen the bowling attack for the three-Test series starting in Multan on March 28.

"They have not played any first-class match after recovering but have been certified fit and we have

got reports that they are bowling well in practice sessions," Nair said.

The board secretary said that one-day specialist Mohammad Kaif, left-handed batsman Hemang Badani and seamer Amit Bhandari would return after the one-dayers.

"Bhandari was sent as Ashish Nehra's replacement for the one-dayers and since Agarkar is joining the team we are asking Bhandari to return," he said.

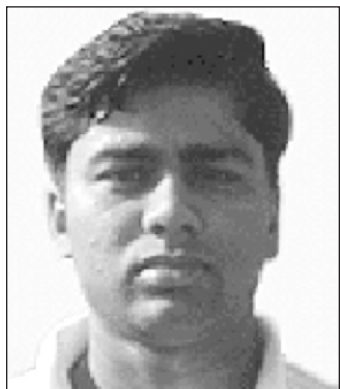
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ANIL KUMBLE



AJIT AGARKAR



AKASH CHOPRA

Pakistan divided within

AFP, Lahore



A war of words broke out between two Pakistani cricket legends on Monday after arch-rivals India en-

neered a remarkable comeback to level the one-day series 2-2.

The tourists kept their cool in the make-or-break game under lights at the Gaddafi Stadium here on Sunday to overtake Pakistan's 293-9 with five overs to spare and set up the decider at the same venue on Wednesday.

Former Pakistani captain Imran Khan and current coach Javed Miandad differed on the idea of appointing a bowling coach for the team after the hosts sent down a staggering 58 wickets and 40 no-balls in the four matches.

Fiery fast bowler Shoaib Akhtar was the worst culprit on Sunday, conceding 14 wickets in his 2-63 in nine overs. New-ball partner Shabbir Ahmed gave away five no-balls and a wide in 0-62 from seven overs.

"It does not need a rocket scientist to realise the team needs a bowling coach to sort out its problems," said Imran, one of the game's great all-rounders who led Pakistan to World Cup victory in 1992.

"No team can afford to concede so many extra runs and hope to win. Both the captain (Inzamamul Haq) and coach (Miandad) are batsmen and do not have the expertise to look after the bowlers' troubles.

"When we have former seamer Aaqib Javed as the junior coach, there is no reason why he cannot be called on to help the senior bowl-

ers."

Miandad conceded the undisciplined work by his bowlers was a worry, but did not agree with Imran that a specialist bowling coach was the need of the hour.

"What can a bowling coach do when the player himself does not want to improve?" Miandad told this news agency.

"A coach can only guide from outside, it is up to the bowler to improve and overcome the flaw.

"Bowlers like Imran, Wasim Akram and Waqar Younis used to work hard at the nets and sort out their problems. The current bowlers need to work harder and show

some discipline.

"The Indians have proved what a world class batting side they are. We were supposed to have a better bowling attack but it has been found wanting."

Inzamam, caught in the crossfire between the former greats, chose to play safe.

"We did not bowl well at all," he said. "But I have a lot of faith in my bowlers and I am confident they will do better in the decider."

Sunday's defeat was Pakistan's first in their last eight matches at the Gaddafi Stadium here since 2000.



PHOTO: AFP

India's young paceman Irfan Pathan bowls during a practice session at the Gaddafi Stadium in Lahore yesterday.



GOOD LUCK: (L) Bangladesh's SAF Games football coach Shahidur Rahman Shantoo fixes the knot of captain Monwar Hossain's tie at the Zia International Airport lounge while (R) gold-prospect shooters arrive at the airport before the departure of Bangladesh's advance party for the ninth edition of the regional meet in Islamabad yesterday.



PHOTOS: STAR

2nd 4-dayer in Bogra from today

SPORTS REPORTER

The second and final four-day match between Bangladesh A and visiting Zimbabwe A starts at the Shaheed Chandu Stadium in Bogra today.

National team vice-captain Rajin Saleh will lead the second string home selection that includes Test stars Hannan Sarker, Mohammad Ashraful and Alok Kapali. Paceman Tareq Aziz Khan, who was impressive in the one-day international series against Zimbabwe earlier this month, is also on the side.

The home side lead the two-match series 1-0 after they pulled off an exciting five-run victory under the leadership of Tushar Imran in the first game at the Rajshahi Divisional Stadium.

TEAMS

BANGLADESH A (from): Rajin Saleh (captain), Hannan Sarker, Nafees Iqbal, Mohammed Ashraful, Alok Kapali, Tushar Imran, Dhiman Gosh, Alamgir Kabir, Enamul Haque, Gazi Alamgir, Tareq Aziz Khan, Jamaluddin Babu, Faisal Hossain.

ZIMBABWE A (from): Alester Maregwede (captain), Richard Sims, Vusumuzi Sibanda, Brendon Taylor, Elton Chigumbura, Ryan Bennett, Jordane Nicolle, Trevor Gripper, Tinashe Panyangara, Waddington Mwayenga, Charles Coventry, Piet Rinke, Gavin Ewing, Stuart Matsikenyeri.

'Control wides and no balls'

REUTERS, Lahore

Pakistan coach Javed Miandad has slammed his bowlers for failing to control wides and no-balls in their one-day international series against India.

"This tendency of gifting runs through extras is letting us down badly," he told Reuters on Monday. "It's time the bowlers stand up and take responsibility."

Pakistan have conceded 98 runs in wides and no-balls in the first four matches of the series.

"We might have to think about seeking specialist help if this is not solved," Miandad said. "But it's time the bowlers themselves worked on what is proving a costly problem. They are professionals."

Miandad said his team faced a tough fight in the deciding match on Wednesday against a solid Indian batting lineup.

Premier pat for Indians

AFP, New Delhi

Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee Sunday congratulated the Indian cricket team for its five-wicket victory against Pakistan in the fourth one-day international match in Lahore.

"You won that match and also the hearts," Vajpayee told skipper Sourav Ganguly, according to a Press Trust of India report.

He also congratulated Pakistan captain Inzamamul Haq for scoring a century.

England 319

AFP, Port-of-Spain

England were all out for 319 in their first innings of the second Test against the West Indies at Queen's Park Oval here on Monday.

The tourists have a lead of 111.

Kiwis' home history

Cricket

AFP, Auckland

A towering six by captain Stephen Fleming ended 72 years of waiting for New Zealand cricket as they pulled off their first home Test victory against South Africa Monday.

They achieved their historic nine-wicket win in comprehensive fashion against the second-ranked team in the world.

After compiling a 299-run lead on the first innings, New Zealand dismissed the Proteas for 349 in their second innings and were left with a mere 51-run target to win.

They achieved that with the loss of only Mark Richardson's wicket, which brought Fleming to the crease and he was in no mood to delay the inevitable, blasting 31 runs from 11 balls.

Everything fell into place for New Zealand on the final day, as recalled fast bowler Chris Martin picked up his fifth wicket of the innings to have 11 for the match and Chris Cairns joined the elite club of cricketers to achieve 3,000 Test runs and 200 Test wickets.

South Africa had started the Test boldly on the first day, reaching 177 before the first wicket fell, but the turning point came on the second morning as Martin exploited the cloud cover to move the ball and the tourists were all out for 296.

South Africa captain Graeme Smith was in no doubt that was where the game was lost.

"It's very disappointing, it all went wrong for us on the second morning. Chris Martin bowled superbly and we never really recovered," he said.

Martin was New Zealand's star, taking five for 104 in the second innings for a match haul of 11 for 180, the eighth-best match analysis and just the 19th 10-wicket haul by a New Zealand bowler.

South African No. 3 Jacques Rudolph was the only batsman to show any resistance on the final day and was left unbeaten on 154 as Martin and Cairns mopped up the tail.

Fleming said the win was more satisfying, given the strength of the opposition.

"It's against a team that we respect so much. They're a quality side," he said.

"To play well here and get our first win at home is very exciting for the team."

Rahul wary of final jinx

REUTERS, Lahore



India's dismal record in tournament finals has given them something to prove in the decisive one-day international against Pakistan on Wednesday.

The day-night match at the Gaddafi Stadium is the final one-dayer with the series tied at 2-2 after four close games.

"We haven't played well in crunch finals," Indian vice-captain Rahul Dravid said. "That's something we definitely want to improve upon in Wednesday's match."

The Indian team has lost four one-day tournament finals in a row, all of them to Australia, starting from their crushing 125-run defeat in the 2003 World Cup final in South Africa.

They lost a triangular series final at Calcutta last November, managing only 198 while chasing a target of 254, and went down 2-0 in the best-of-three tri-series finals in Australia this year, losing by seven

wickets and 208 runs.

"It's not just about winning or losing. We just hope we can play to our potential on Wednesday. Our biggest problem of late in finals has been that we've badly underperformed," Dravid said.

But coach John Wright said an indication of India's overall consistency was that they were making so many finals.

"It's better to lose in the final than not get there at all," Wright said.

"We've lost to Australia, and that's something we need to do something about, but we've done very well against all other teams."

Dravid meanwhile heaped praise on "level-headed" Mohammad Kaif, who cracked an unbeaten 71 in his team's five-wicket one-day win over Pakistan on Sunday.

Dravid scored 76, off 92 balls, sharing with Kaif in an unbroken 132-run sixth-wicket stand which ensured India levelled the series.

"Kaif played a superb knock under pressure," Dravid said. "He kept rotating the strike and coming up with the big shots to take the heat off me."

(Smith 88, Gibbs 80; Martin 6-76)
NEW ZEALAND: First innings 595 (Styris 170, Cairns 158, Oram 90, McMillan 82; Pollock 4-113, Ntini 3-110)

SOUTH AFRICA: Second innings (overnight 277-6)
Smith b Martin 0

Gibbs lbw b Oram 61
Rudolph not out 154
Kallis lbw b McMillan 71
Kirsten lbw b Martin 1
McKenzie c Pappas b Martin 0
Boucher c Fleming b Martin 10
Pollock c Fleming b Martin 10
Boje c McCullum b Cairns 20

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PHOTO: AFP

THE SIXTH ELITE: New Zealand all-rounder Chris Cairns celebrates taking a South Africa wicket on the fifth and final day of the second Test in Auckland yesterday.

India had been reeling at 94 for four, chasing Pakistan's huge 293 for nine under lights at the Gaddafi Stadium, before Dravid added 68 for the fifth wicket with Yuvraj Singh (36).

Dravid said: "I knew Kaif and I had to hang in there because we were the last recognised pair. But the earlier batsmen had set such a scorching pace that it was only a question of playing out the 50 overs."

India finally won with five overs to spare, Kaif stroking his seventh one-day half-century and Dravid his 51st.

"I'm a big fan of Kaif," captain Sourav Ganguly added.

"He bats at number seven, the most difficult position in one-day cricket, and he keeps coming up with knocks like this."

Kaif, 24, first hit the headlines with an unbeaten 87 at Lord's as India beat England in a triangular series final in 2002. He returned for this series after missing a one-day tournament in Australia earlier this year due to a thumb injury.

"This knock will give me a lot of belief coming back from injury," Kaif said.