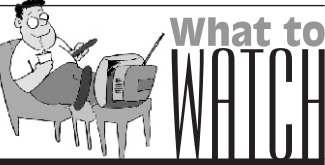




Did U Know?

As well as being the youngest man ever to win the World Heavyweight Championship Mike Tyson was also the youngest man to lose it.



What to WATCH

BTV

India vs Pakistan
Fifth ODI (D/N)
Live at 3:00 pm

ESPN

Sportscentre
Sport News
Live at 8:30 pm
Chelsea vs Arsenal
AC Milan vs Deportivo
Live at 1:30 am (Thursday)

STAR Sports

Sportsline
Sport News
Live at 8:00 pm
UEFA Champions League
Real Madrid vs Monaco
Live at 1:30 am (Thursday)

TEN Sports

Sri Lanka vs Australia
Third Test, Day One
Live at 10:00 am
India vs Pakistan
Fifth ODI (D/N)
Live at 3:00 pm



TALK TURKEY



Imran Khan

(Pakistan cricket legend)
"When the two countries are trying to become friendly, trying to ease tensions, then cricket plays a healing role, cricket becomes a cement in bonding the countries together."

No Premier Division Here comes Corporate League

SPORTS REPORTER

There will be no Premier Division cricket for the ongoing 2003-2004 season as the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) virtually gave up on the possibility and started planning for a first-ever Corporate Cricket League (CCL) in an attempt to compensate the players.

The Board convened an emergency meeting yesterday at its management office in Gulshan to resolve the deadlock between clubs and the Cricket Committee of Dhaka Metropolis (CCDM) over holding of the players' transfer and the league. But sources said that the meeting concentrated mainly on the idea of the CCL rather than organising the lucrative Premier Division, the source of livelihood for most active cricketers.

CCDM chairman Khondokar Jamil Uddin has been entrusted with working out a detailed programme and format to hold the Corporate League.

"Most of the clubs were reluctant to play the Premier Division in April-May. That's why the Board came up with this new concept to help the players out," said Jamil after the meeting yesterday.

"I will sit with chief executive officer Macky Duddhia tomorrow to finalise the terms and conditions of the league and then we will issue a circular for registration and will seek potential sponsors," added Jamil.

He informed that they were looking at April 15 as a tentative date for the start of the competition.

"It will not be possible to arrange the players' transfer for the CCL this time around but that will be the process to recruit players from the next season. Offices based

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Latif could be sued by PCB

AFP, Lahore

Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) said on Tuesday it was considering legal action against former captain Rashid Latif for alleging the fourth one-day against India was fixed.

Latif went on television on Monday night to claim that Sunday's game was "fixed" after India fought back from the brink to win by five wickets and level the five-match series 2-2.

"Rashid's allegation was unpatriotic and shameful. We are considering taking legal action against him," PCB chairman Shaharyar Khan told reporters ahead of Wednesday's deciding match at the Gaddafi Stadium.

Latif, regarded as the original whistle-blower in the match-fixing scandal which hit cricket in 2000, laughed away the threat from the PCB.

"I am willing to face any court action," Latif told AFP.

"I have dealt with such threats from cricket administrators in the past and I am ready to do so again."

Meanwhile, officials of the International Cricket Council's anti-corruption unit (ACU) monitoring the series rubbished Latif's charges.

"It is a clean series, no worries about it," said ACU inspectors Nuruddin Khawaja of Pakistan and Martin Hawkins of England.

Cricket goes to Bollywood!

AFP, Bombay

The current nerve-fraying cricket series between arch-rivals India and Pakistan may be firing up the fans on both sides of the border but for Bollywood it has ushered in a prolonged cinema drought.

Most producers have bowed to the inevitable and, acknowledging cricket has a far greater audience pull than cinema, have postponed their new releases until after completion of the series on April 17.

"Cricket is like a religion in India," said Nestor D'Souza, president of the Cinematograph Exhibitors Association of India, the body representing film exhibitors.

"The stakes are high if India and Pakistan are playing. Be it old men, young men, children or even housewives -- they all watch the games and no producer likes to take the risk of releasing his film when the two rivals are clashing on the cricket ground."

"India and Pakistan rarely play cricket against each other," said producer Nitin Keni, who made the Pakistan-bashing super-hit film "Gadar" in 2000.

Key film releases that have been

SEE PAGE 14 COL 4



STAR PAIN! (L) India's under-performing batting aces Sachin Tendulkar (L), captain Sourav Ganguly (C) and Venkatsai Laxman discuss something while (R) Pakistan coach Javed Miandad (R) tries to draw fast bowler Shoaib Akhtar's, who has been unusually erratic in the current series, attention to something during their respective training sessions at the Gaddafi Stadium in Lahore yesterday ahead of today's high-voltage fifth and final one-day international.



PHOTOS: AFP

Mercury goes up in Lahore

AFP, Lahore



India-Pakistan 2004

Cricket rivals India and Pakistan were gripped by big-match jitters as they prepared for Wednesday's decisive fifth one-dayer that one expert said would be "too close to call."

With the series locked 2-2, it's all to play for at the day-night encounter at the Gaddafi Stadium with the winner gaining a psychological edge ahead of the three Tests to follow.

Sourav Ganguly's Indians go into the showdown buoyant after securing a series-levelling win on Sunday, but are wary of their poor record in one-day finals over the past year.

Pakistan, on the other hand, are concerned about undisciplined bowling which allowed India to bounce back when a decisive 3-1 lead for the hosts was on the cards.

Ganguly's tourists have previously come unstuck when it mattered most, losing four consecutive finals to world champions Australia, starting with the 125-run defeat in the World Cup final in South Africa in March last year.

The Indians were then beaten on their home turf in Calcutta in November in the tri-series final and were blanked 2-0 in the best-of-three finals in Australia in February.

"We have not played well in crunch finals," Indian vice-captain Rahul Dravid conceded. "That is something we definitely want to improve upon on Wednesday."

"But our morale is high after Sunday's win and this should help us in the next game."

The tourists kept their cool in the make-or-break fourth game here to overtake Pakistan's seemingly unbeatable 293-9 with five overs to spare.

India have been helped along in the series by the wayward Pakistan bowlers, who have conceded a staggering 58 wickets and 40 no-balls in the four matches so far.

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

"We are very happy to get that kind of support from our rivals," Dravid said. "We hope they continue to give us so many extra runs and deliveries."

Pakistan captain Inzamamul Haq, who has twice ended up losing despite scoring centuries in the first match at Karachi and on Sunday, was exasperated.

"I would be happy to be out for a duck if Pakistan win the last game," he said.

"The advantage we held after taking a 2-1 lead at Peshawar is gone. India now have the upper hand. After Sunday's win, they will

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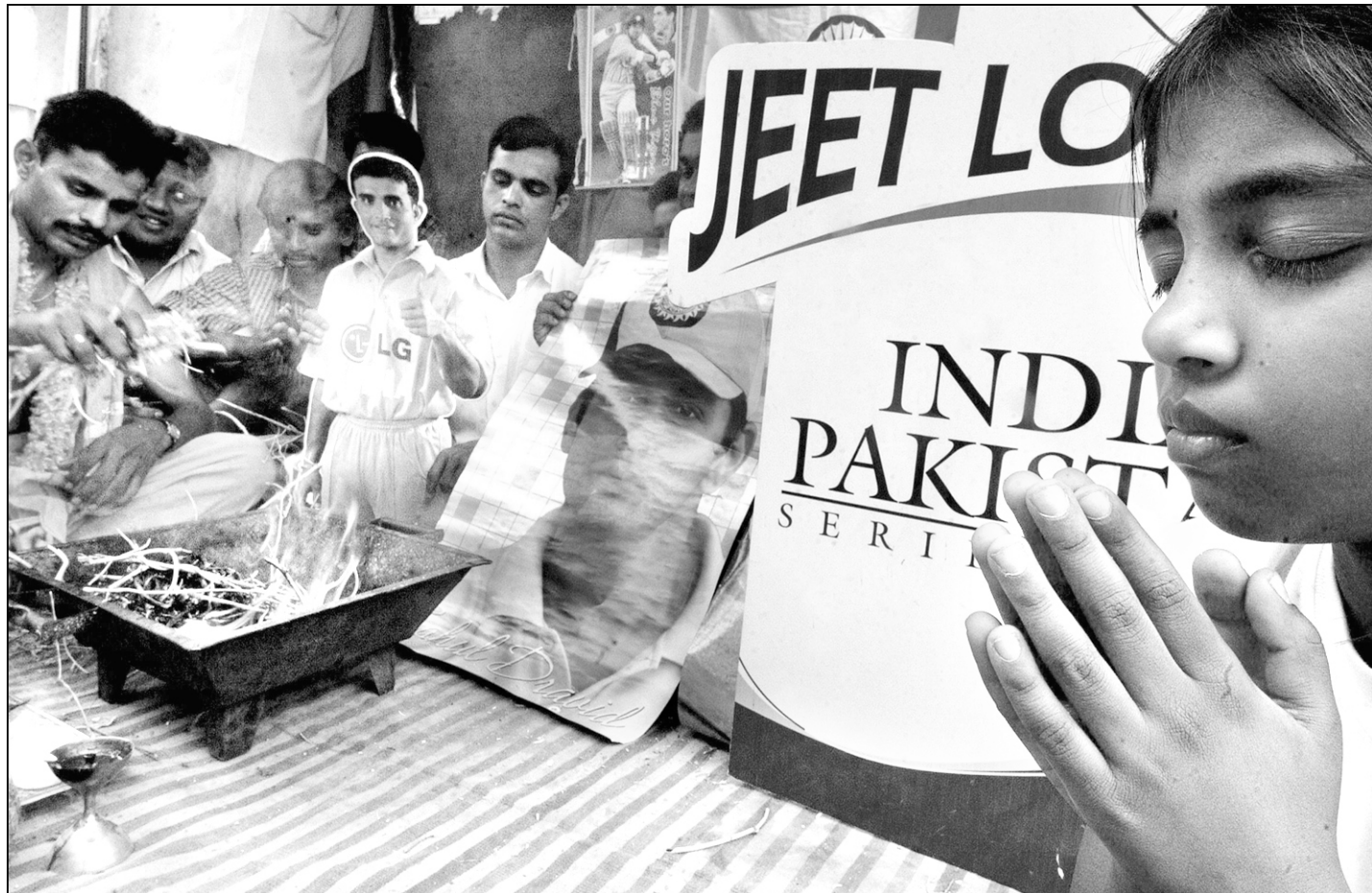


PHOTO: AFP

PRAYING FOR VICTORY: A young Indian girl in Bangalore yesterday prays along with others while a Hindu priest performs yajna-holy fire ritual to seek divine blessings in today's one-day international against Pakistan.

Sims rescues Zim A



SPORTS REPORTER

A fighting half-century by Richard Sims rescued Zimbabwe A on the opening day of the second four-day match against their Bangladesh counterparts at the Shaheed Chandu Stadium in Bogra yesterday.

By the close of play the tourists made 254-6 with Sims hitting 80 off 149 balls in front of only a few hundred spectators of the 18,000-capacity stadium.

Coming in at number four, he smashed his way to 15 boundaries and a mighty six. Sims was also responsible for rebuilding the innings, which at one stage was tottering at 117-5, thanks to a 74-

run sixth wicket partnership with captain Alesler Mareguwede after Bangladesh A skipper Rajin Saleh called the coin correctly and put the southern Africans into bat.

Test cap Tareq Aziz Khan made full use of the morning conditions and removed both Zimbabwe A openers within 38 runs.

The right-arm pacer, who was one of the heroes in the senior team's tour of Zimbabwe, put their second string opponents into strife when he sent back experienced campaigner Trevor Gripper for one and Vusumuzi Sibanda for 15.

Tareq and left-arm spinner Enamul Haque were the most effective local bowlers. Tareq finished with 2-57 while Enamul bagged two for 46.

The Zimbabweans, who lost the

first four-dayer by five runs at the Rajshahi Divisional Stadium on March 17, were never at ease against the seam and spin of Bangladesh A and so they lost wickets at regular wickets.

Mareguwede was batting on 42 with the help of six fours and Gavin Ewing remained unbeaten on 30 when stumps were drawn for the day.

Test paceman Alamgir Kabir and occasional spinner Faisal Hossain took a wicket each.

SCORECARD

Scoreboard on the first day of the four-day match between Bangladesh A and Zimbabwe A at the Shaheed Chandu Stadium in Bogra yesterday.

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BJP abides by cricket

AFP, New Delhi

The ruling party has brought cricket to the campaign trail and the New Delhi city council rescheduled its session to be in front of TVs as India geared up for Wednesday's decisive one-dayer with Pakistan.

Two Indian fans are reported to have died from heart attacks watching the high-drama matches since the series, now locked at 2-2, began on March 13.

Deputy Prime Minister Lal Krishna Advani is taking no chances that fans would choose cricket over his election campaign rally Wednesday in the northern city of Chandigarh.

The local chapter of Advani's

SEE PAGE 14 COL 3

Indo-Pak rivalry on ICC table too

AFP, Lahore



India-Pakistan 2004

their rivals in the cricket ratings.

If the tourists win the final game and clinch the five-match series, currently deadlocked 2-2, they will climb above Pakistan in the International Cricket Council

(ICC)'s official one-day rankings to fifth place.

However if Pakistan win the day-night game at the Gaddafi Stadium, Inzamamul Haq's side will retain its fifth place with an improved rating while India will stay at seven.

Pakistan are currently on 107 points, behind world champions Australia (135), South Africa (113), and Sri Lanka and New Zealand with 109 each.

India, last year's World Cup finalists, are tied with England on 106 points, but if Sourav Ganguly's

SEE PAGE 14 COL 5

Warne after history



AFP, Colombo

The Shane Warne show is threatening to overshadow Wednesday's third and final Test here between Australia and Sri Lanka as the star spinner begins his assault on the world bowling record.

Warne needs just nine more victims to surpass retired West Indies pacer Courtney Walsh's world mark of 519 Test wickets. The task does not look beyond his reach as he has already captured 20 scalps in two Tests.

Australian skipper Ricky Ponting believed the leg-spinner could make history if he maintained his current form.

"He has got a chance to set the world record if he keeps bowling like he has been doing in this series,"

Ponting said Tuesday. "He has been bowling really well. He is keeping it tight and looking very keen."



SHANE WARNE

Warne is also one five-wicket haul short of becoming the first

bowler in Test history to claim five scalps in as many successive Test innings of the same series.

The Australian captain said his team would stay competitive despite having already clinched the series with victories in the first two matches.

Australia overcame Sri Lankan off-spinner Muttiah Muralitharan's threat with their strong batting performances in the second innings of each Test to set stiff targets for the hosts.

"Our batsmen did a fantastic job against him. They made him work hard for wickets," said Ponting, who has passed a fitness test after being struck on the helmet by a Shaun Tait delivery during Monday's practice session.

Muralitharan has also bagged 2

SEE PAGE 14 COL 2



DAY'S EVENT

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