

# Where no Indian has gone before

AFP, New Delhi



Congratulations, champagne and cash flowed in India Friday after Sourav Ganguly and his boys in blue snatched a maiden cricket Test series victory on Pakistani soil.

A delighted cricket chief Jagmohan Dalmiya immediately announced a five million rupee (1.2 million dollar) reward for the players, while national leaders clogged with phone lines with good wishes and fans uncorked champagne at home.

Indian President Abdul Kalam led the nation in hailing skipper Ganguly and his team, minutes after they beat Pakistan by an innings and 131 runs in the third and final Test to clinch the series 2-1 in the city of Rawalpindi.

"My hearty congratulations to all of you on this historic and fantastic win that you have registered..." Kalam, the architect of India's nuclear missiles, said in a message relayed to Ganguly.

"The whole nation is proud of you... this has been made possible by admirable team effort," Kalam said.

Ganguly's squad also won the one-day series, making a clean sweep in India's first full tour of Pakistan in almost 15 years, which came amid warming ties between the two South Asian nations who have fought two of

their three wars over Kashmir since 1947.

India's Deputy Prime Minister Lal Krishna Advani appeared happy beyond words.

"This is a dream come true for the Indian players and the people of the country," Advani said, adding that he was euphoric that the 40-day tour had "ended on a happy note."

Political pundits say Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) party had gambled on a win in Pakistan to gain mileage in upcoming parliamentary polls which are being fought on the planks of robust economy, good ties with Pakistan and the cricket.

"The one-day and the Test series has generated a lot of expectations and goodwill," Advani said as motorists tapped their horns and fans burst firecrackers across the country.

The BJP has credited the premier for paving the way for the tour of Pakistan but Vajpayee in an overnight television chat show said the idea for the clash of willows had first come from Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf.

Parliament Speaker Murli Manohar Joshi counted the benefits of the historic tour, which has also generated more than 20 million dollars in advertisements and TV endorsements.

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PHOTOS: AFP/AP

(Top) TEAM-HISTORY! Unbounded joy in the faces of the Indian team members as they make the balcony of the dressing room their temporary stage for what is surly going to be the start of endless celebrations. (Bottom L-R) THE SCRIPT: Morning shows the day as Pakistan wicketkeeper Kamran Akmal's off-stump is sent cart-wheeling by the lively Laxmipati Balaji -- the first wicket to fall on the day. Anil Kumble, the wily old fox, then gets into the act and rips the heart out of Pakistan's batting. Finally, the moment every Indian had been waiting for decades and decades -- Sachin Tendulkar uproots a stump at the non-strikers end after seeing his skipper Sourav Ganguly catch last man Danish Kaneria off his bowling.

## Proud to be captain

AFP/REUTERS, Rawalpindi



career.

"It's one of my biggest successes no doubt," said Ganguly, who became India's most successful Test captain ever after his team won the decisive third Test here by an innings and 131 runs to clinch the series 2-1.

"This is indeed a very special moment for the team," he said.

"Beating Pakistan is always very satisfying and to win our first ever series on Pakistani soil has to be something big.

"The enormity of it all has not sunk in yet, but I am sure it will over the next three or four days, especially after we return home.

"We have played well over the last few years and it showed in our

performance during the tour. First the one-day series came to us 3-2 and now this. It's a dream come true.

"It has taken us a few years to become a good side. We have played well both at home and abroad. All this is a result of the hard work we have put in over a considerable period of time," Ganguly said.

"Pakistan and India cricket series always mean a lot to the players," he told reporters.

"This is bigger than the Ashes," he added referring to the full-blooded contests between England and Australia.

"It was a competitive series and the charm of beating Pakistan in Pakistan is huge. But it shouldn't hamper good relations between the two countries. This is just a game and should be treated as one," Ganguly said.

India were playing a first full series in Pakistan after 14 years due to political tensions between the south Asian neighbours.

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## Bashundhara, GP call the shots

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

Bashundhara Group and GrameenPhone look like the teams to beat in the forthcoming Corporate Cricket League (CCL) after the two top business houses signed some of the biggest names in domestic cricket yesterday.

Bashundhara came alive on the final day of the two-day players' registration for the competition at the Bangabandhu National Stadium conference room, securing the services of 15 cricketers including former national captains Akram Khan and Naimur Rahman.

Out-of-favour Test batsman Al Shahriar, veteran left-arm spinner Enamul Haque Moni and in-form Chittagong batsman Faisal Hossain the highest run-getter in the last National Cricket League were among Bashundhara's big catches yesterday.

The corporate group had already completed the signing formalities of Bangladesh U-19 opener Nafees Iqbal and his Chittagong teammate Shabbir Khan late on Thursday. Bashundhara have also roped in Test paceman Tapash Baishya, their only collection from the nine-member national pool, prolific wicket-taker Saifullah Khan and quick bowlers Hasibul Hossain and Gazi Alamgir.

Khaled Mashud, the country's

number one wicketkeeper who was released from the original pool of ten, joined ARAF Apparels who also signed his understudy Mohammad Salim as a contingency measure as Mashud could miss a number of matches of the CCL because of his commitments with the national team.

GrameenPhone, the largest cellular company in the country and

title sponsors of the event, were seen busy on both days and have put together a formidable unit on paper.

Khaled Mahmud, the immediate past national skipper and a member of the pool, committed himself to GP yesterday. He was joined by national opener Shahriar

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PHOTO: STAR

Khaled Mahmud (L) having a chat with his GrameenPhone teammates Shahriar Hossain (R), Manjurul Islam (2nd from right) and Bashundhara's Enamul Haque on the final day of the Corporate Cricket League's players' registration at the Bangabandhu National Stadium conference room yesterday.

## Al Shaab Ibb arrive Sunday

SPORTS REPORTER

Yemen's Al Shaab Ibb Club is expected to arrive here tomorrow to play their AFC Cup away match against Muktiyoddha Sangsad Kirira Chakra. The game kicks off on April 20 at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur.

It will be the Reds' second home match against Al Shaab Ibb.

Earlier, Muktiyoddha conceded full points against the Yemenis after failing to play the away fixture on April 7.

They lost their previous matches last February against Nisa Club of Turkmenistan (away) and Al Nejme of Lebanon (home) 1-0.

The Dhaka giants play Nisa at home on May 5 and fly to Lebanon on May 19 to face Al Nejme.

## CJKS-Ispahani cricket

CU CORRESPONDENT

Chittagong Abahani Kirira Chakra won a tied match in the CJKS-Ispahani Premier Division Cricket League against Friends Club at the MA Aziz Stadium yesterday.

Both teams finished on identical score of 218 but as Chittagong Abahani lost fewer wickets, so they were declared winners.

Put into bat, Chittagong Abahani scored 218 for five in a 42-over-a-side game. Inclement weather delayed the start of play.

Imran Ahmed top-scored with 71 with seven hits to the fence.

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## Inzy attacks Akhtar!

AFP, Rawalpindi



Pakistan captain Inzamam-ul-Haq on Friday lashed out at his premier fast bowler Shoaib Akhtar, saying his poor

form led to the Test series defeat against India.

"We depended a lot on Shoaib because he is one of the fastest bowlers in the world, but he let us down badly," a visibly agitated Inzamam said.

Inzamam's outburst came after India completed a historic maiden series victory on Pakistan soil after crushing their arch-rivals in the decisive third Test by an innings and 131 runs here.

The Pakistan captain was particularly annoyed at Akhtar for declining to take the field on Thursday when India were batting after complaining of a side strain.

Akhtar, however, battled on Friday, smashing 28 off 14 deliveries with four boundaries and two sixes.

"I can't say if the side strain had affected Shoaib's bowling, but it is difficult to bat like this when one is injured," Inzamam said.

"Everyone has seen his attitude. I don't have to comment on it. But only those who are interested in playing for Pakistan should be picked.

"I have heard that Shoaib told someone that he did not want to bowl because I was not giving him the field he wanted.

"If what he said is true, I will insist that action be taken against him because comments like this have a negative impact on the whole team.

"You are not expected to behave like this in professional cricket."

Inzamam said the poor form of Akhtar, who managed just seven wickets in the entire series at an average of 42, and injuries to key bowlers was the major reason for the defeat.

"I expected a lot from the bowlers, but they allowed India to post big scores in the first and third Tests which we lost badly," he said.

"We had one good Test in Lahore,

but then we lost the main bowler in that match, Umar Gul, due to a back injury.

"We also did not have the services of Abdul Razzaq and Shabbir Ahmed for two Tests. These injuries cost us dearly but I am not offering any excuses.

"We lost because India played better cricket than us and we did not play to our potential."

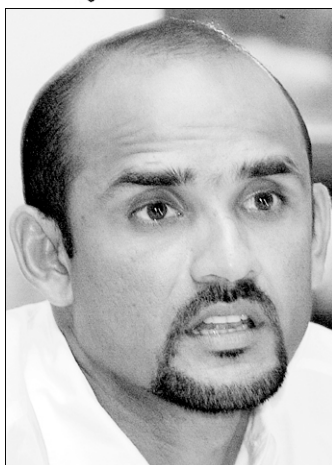


INZAMAMUL HAQ



## Did U Know?

Boris Becker is another tennis record breaker. In 1985 he became the youngest, the first German and the first unseeded player to ever win Wimbledon.



## Marvan Atapattu

(Sri Lankan captain)  
"When you get runs, get the maximum. Lara's innings is a classic example which can help us improve our game."