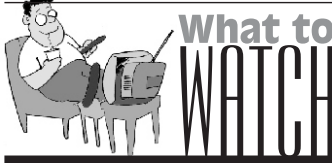




Did U Know?

Ganguly became the most successful Indian captain with the Rawalpindi win. Friday's win was the 15th under his captaincy, bettering Mohammad Azharuddin's 14 wins.



ESPN
English Premier Football League
Liverpool vs Fulham
Repeat at 2:30 pm
Sportscentre
Sport News
Live at 8:30 pm
STAR Sports
Monaco Masters Series
First Round
Live at 2:00 pm
Sportline
Sport News
Live at 8:00 pm



Imran Khan
(Pakistan cricket legend)
"I can't say that this is the best Indian team ever but it has shown remarkable qualities and can be compared to India's all-time best teams."

Star WHIZZ KID COMPETITION 210
Tick the correct answers, post to
The Daily Star
Win attractive prizes
Competition closes at 8 pm
April 23, 2004 and draw shortly afterwards

1. How many gold medals did Bangladesh win in the recently concluded SAF Games?	5	4	3
2. Who is the coach of Chelsea?	Eriksson	Wenger	Ranieri
3. What is the title of the official Euro 2004 song?	Forma	Forza	Forca
4. Who clinched the WTA Key Biscayne title?	Venus	Henin	Serena
5. What was the score of the India-Pakistan one-day series?			
Name			
Class			
School Address			
Phone: (If any)			

Where's Al Shabb?

SPORTS REPORTER
The Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) officials were mystified yesterday over the arrival of Yemen's Al Shabb Ibb FC for an AFC Cup match against Mukti-joddha Sangsad Kirira Chakra. The match takes place tomorrow but the Yemen club, who were expected to reach Dhaka last night, were yet to land. BFF general secretary Anwarul Haque Helal said that they had even arranged visas after a request was made by Al Shabb. "We couldn't convey the message to Yemen due to technical problems. However the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) has been informed," Helal said.

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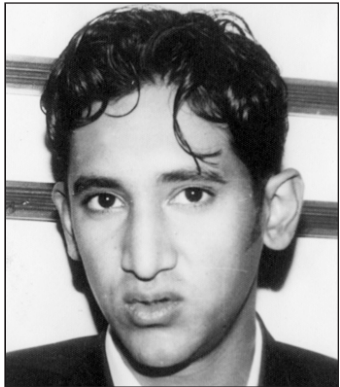
Mehrab's 1-year ban CityCell's late charge

SPORTS REPORTER



The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) yesterday imposed a one-year ban on former national opener Mehrab Hossain from all cricket for dishonouring contract terms. Mehrab, the only Bangladeshi player with a one-day international hundred had signed for GrameenPhone to play in the first ever Corporate Cricket League (CCL). However, another team in the competition Acme Laboratories claimed that the right-hander had taken Tk 15,000 in advance from them as assurance that he would appear for Acme in the CCL well before he had joined Grameen. Acme lodged a complaint with the CCL's organising committee in this regard. Chairman of the committee Khondokar Jamiluddin placed the case during yesterday's board meeting where the decision to punish Mehrab was taken. "On the basis of the complaint

from Acme, I had set a time for hearing for Mehrab today morning at the BCB's Navana Tower office. However, he never arrived. "I went through all the papers submitted by Acme including a voucher of Tk 15,000 paid to Mehrab and found no reason to



MEHRAB HOSSAIN

doubt their claim. The board acted on the organising committee's recommendation," informed Jamiluddin during the players' registration for the CCL at the

Bangabandhu National Stadium in the afternoon. Yesterday's registration was dominated by cellular company CityCell who appeared for the first time. MM Ispahani and Partex Group also bolstered their teams with some key signings just a day ahead of the tournament's kick-off. CityCell went on a recruiting spree and put 19 cricketers under contract including Test regulars and national pool members Rajin Saleh and paceman Tapas Baishya. Mohammad Moniruzzaman, top run-getter in last season's Dhaka Premier Division League and seamer Alamgir Kabir were the other star names to join CityCell. Another exciting addition in their line-up was hard-hitting Under-19 batsman Nazimuddin. Meanwhile Tigers skipper Habibul Bashir and Test opener Hannan Sarkar both opted for Acme. Partex Group confirmed the services of seasoned campaigner Javed Omar, who is expected to return to the Test fold after a long injury lay-off.

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Heroes home quietly

REUTERS/AFP/PTI, New Delhi



The Indian cricket team made a triumphant return home on Saturday evening after securing a historic maiden Test series victory in Pakistan. But captain Sourav Ganguly and his teammates left hundreds of eager fans, who burst crackers and danced to drumbeats, bitterly disappointed after failing to make an appearance, whisked away through a side entrance of the chaotic Indira Gandhi International Airport in New Delhi on arriving from Islamabad. "I came to see Sachin Tendulkar, but I just managed to catch a

glimpse of (Ashish) Nehra," said eight-year-old fan Reshma, who had been waiting with her father for over three hours. Secretary of the Board of Control for Cricket in India Karunakaran Nair said the players were not paraded before the fans for fear of being mobbed. "Everything is chaotic. We had no other option but to ask the players to quickly leave," he said. With Delhi lads Virender Sehwag, Nehra, Akash Chopra and Murali Karthik going home straight, Ganguly led a group of his boys to a city hotel for overnight stay. Neither the captain nor the other players talked to the waiting newsmen. At the hotel, Rahul Dravid, Venkatesh Laxman and Laxmipathy Balaji received loud cheers from a crowd gathered at the entrance, as

the players were given a traditional welcome with the hotel staff garlanding them. Yuvraj Singh, Anil Kumble, Irfan Pathan and his father and Laxman's wife Shailaja also got into the hotel. Millions of cricket-mad Indian fans celebrated on Friday after India inflicted an innings defeat in the deciding third Test in Rawalpindi to clinch the series 2-1. The tourists also won the one-day series, making a clean sweep and marking India's first overseas Test series win in a decade. India had gone into their first Test series in Pakistan for over 14 years without a single victory in 20 previous matches. The welcome party at the air

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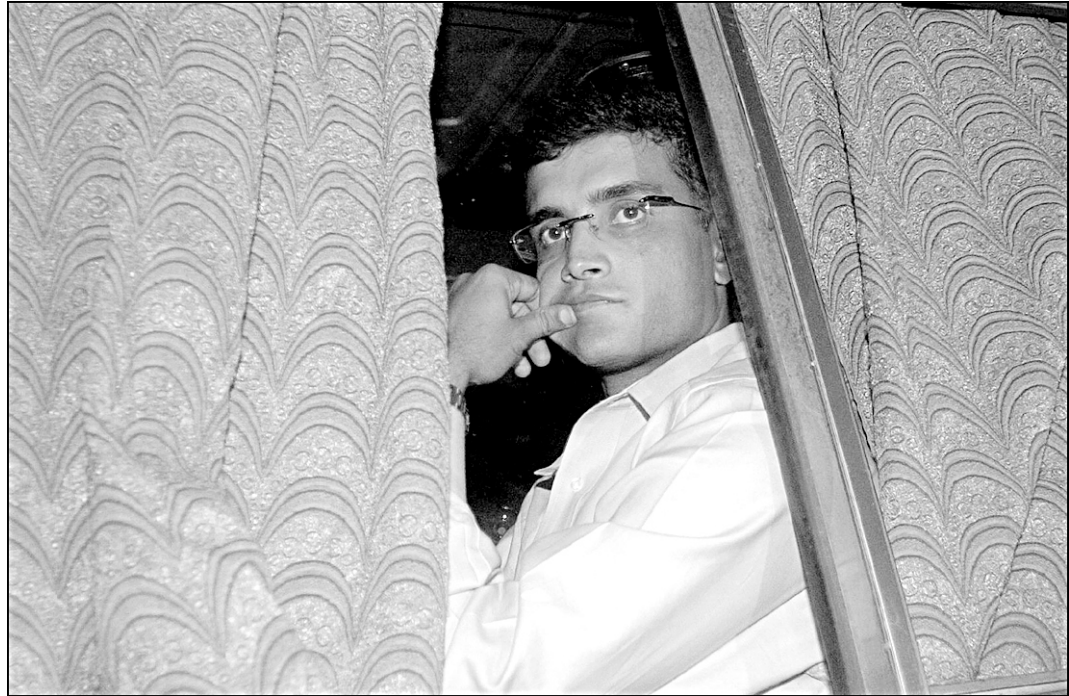


PHOTO: AFP

SORRY FANS, WE CAN'T MEET YOU: India captain Sourav Ganguly looks outside as he sits in a bus at the Indira Gandhi International Airport in New Delhi after their arrival from Islamabad on Saturday.

The peerless prince



"Tomar Tulana Toom", wrote poet Rabindranath Tagore. Transported into the world of cricket, those words fit only one person and he is Brian Charles Lara, the West Indies captain. It had taken someone -- Australian opener and another left hander Mathew Hayden -- nearly ten years to surpass Lara's highest Test innings of 375, made against England at the Antigua Recreation Ground in 1994. And it took the batting genius from Trinidad and Tobago only seven months to not only regain the crown that is naturally his by beating Hayden's landmark of 380, but to go where no cricketer has gone before -- 400 runs in an innings. Therein lies Lara's unmatched greatness to explore uncharted territory of unique cricketing achievements, be it in a Test or in a first-class match as the highest individual first-class score of 501 also belongs to him. This mammoth total which he accumulated within a few months of his then unique 375,

still stands. If another Caribbean, paceman Michael Holding was the poetry in bowling, Lara is the same in batting. There is a natural grace in the batting of a rookie. But in Lara, it is not merely grace but beauty and



BRIAN LARA

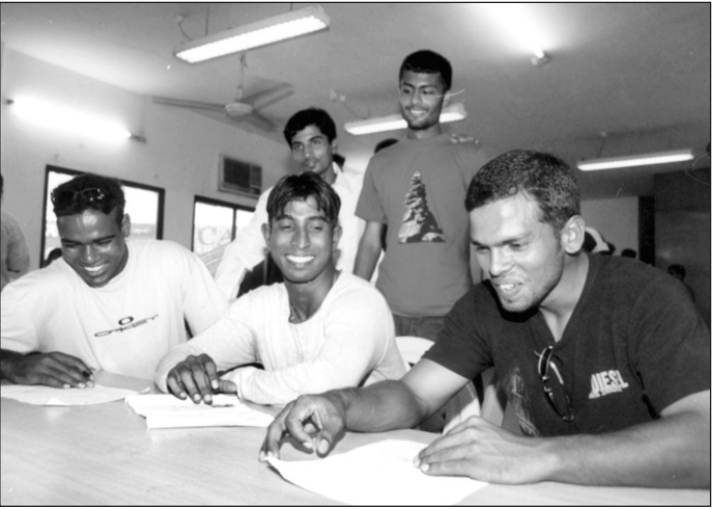
flamboyance never seen in any other batsman. Throughout his career so far, Lara has seldom been dominated by bowlers. One has just to recall the way he hit former Indian all-rounder Kapil Dev and former Pakistan captain Imran Khan in the

1992 World Cup as a debutant. Watching those innings of Lara, one could not discern any expression in his face. The impression apparently given by Lara was that it was natural of him to play like that. Be it any sort of wicket and against any bowling, Lara has shown his genius, scoring runs at will. His innings of 277 in the Sydney Test against Australia about seven years ago had prompted the immortal Don Bradman to say that he was willing to walk miles to watch such batting. It is one of the tragedies of cricket that Lara is in a West Indian team whose other members are qualitatively far inferior to him. When he single-handedly won matches for his country at times, there were more occasions that his stupendous batting efforts have not been supplemented by his teammates. Imagine what would have happened had Lara been a member of the team of the eighties under the inspirational captain of Clive Lloyd. But let us not get into the realm of fantasy. For, the reality is that Lara has translated into reality what for most remain in the annals of dream and imagination.

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National cricketers (L-R) Habibul Bashir, Hannan Sarkar, Alamgir Kabir, Tapas Baishya and Rajin Saleh sign for their teams in the Corporate Cricket League, which starts tomorrow, at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.



PHOTOS: STAR

Call that professionalism?



BISHWAJIT ROY

If anything the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) has decided to desperately achieve in recent times is professionalism across the board. BCB president Ali Asghar and his advisors stressed the desire at different discussions terming it sine qua non to build a high performance team. But two recent incidents hardly reflected what they are trying to preach. Firstly, the way they handled Mohammad Rafique's disciplinary issue and secondly, their love-hate relationship with the Dhaka clubs over holding of the Premier and the First Division Leagues this year. The Board might feel relieved after having dealt with the Rafique issue through its four-member disciplinary committee. But many thought that the matter was handled in an amateurish way ever since the reported heated exchange of the left-arm spinner with Bangladesh captain Habibul Bashir a day before the fifth and final one-day against Zimbabwe in Harare last month. The team management wanted

to set an example of how tough they were against indiscipline by putting Rafique on a plane for home the following morning. But all the hard talk melted no sooner had the team returned home a few days later. When it was expected that the Board would find out where and how it all went wrong on that particular day (March 13), our wise cricket officials somehow managed to strike a compromise deal by not producing the full text of the disciplinary committee report. The few lines of the report that the Board cared to make public were self-explanatory; it was clearly stated that Rafique was being punished without given the chance to defend himself. If Rafique was guilty for violating the code of conduct then Bashir was no saint nor was the team management. The captain has a role to motivate his mates and if the whisperings are to be believed true then Bashir's conversation with Zimbabwean player Raymond Price in front of Rafique certainly had a detrimental effect if anything. Besides, the hyperactive team management should have given a second thought before going nuts over Rafique ahead of the crucial one-day game considering that the

country's leading wicket-taker in both forms had a stainless disciplinary record in his association with the national team for a decade. If that was one case where the Board acted funny then their inability to deal with the pressing domestic events was exposed later on. No doubt the Dhaka Leagues provide a platform for cricketers to launch careers and also earn money. But the most colourful domestic competition was put on hold this season when the Board failed to convince the leading clubs to enter the transfer market. It's not new that the Dhaka clubs create a situation ahead of every inter-club transfer. Their grievance was two-fold this time. Firstly they blamed the weather and secondly they termed it taxing to feature in two Leagues in the same calendar year. The Cricket Committee of Dhaka Metropolis (CCDM), which runs the Dhaka Leagues, conceded defeat to the clubs after eight abortive meetings and the Board watched from the sidelines. It does not make sense how the CCDM, whose members are also part of the Board set-up, acted against the interests of the mother organisation.

If that is case than the Board should abolish the CCDM as its standing committee. Further-more, those who are holding advisory posts in the BCB from different clubs should lose the moral right to sit on Board meetings. The launching of the first Corporate Cricket League (CCL) maybe a temporary solution to curb the influence of the Dhaka-based clubs, but it cannot be a substitute for the Dhaka Leagues that have over the years earned a rich history. Few might also argue that the CCL is going to be a money-spinner event. However all that glitters is not gold. We can still recall the fate of the Office Cricket League that has now turned into a leisurely pursuit for past cricketers. Maybe the beneficiaries of the CCL are nearly 200 players. But there still remains another five hundred registered cricketers who are weeping at the thought no cricket and more importantly no money. Is that fair?

Razzak, Faisal picked for WI ODIs

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh will go into the one-day series against West Indies with three spinners. Uncapped Abdur Razzak is set to join the 15-man one-side that also includes another rookie Faisal Hossain, a left-handed batsman who is a part-time left-arm spinner. Both Razzak and Faisal performed well in the National Cricket League and shone during the recent Zimbabwe A team's tour of Bangladesh. The inclusion of the pair means the Bangladesh attack will heavily rely on its slow bowlers led by dependable Mohammad Rafique. The other left-arm twerker in the one-day side is Manjural Islam. The Board will officially announce the West Indies tour party today. But it appears that the bowling department came as a surprise when a tour to the Caribbean for any other team usually involves more pace. The team is carrying only two pace bowlers Tapas Baishya and Tareq Aziz Khan. Al Shahriar and left-arm seamer Manjural Islam are the two

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Ashraful on payroll

SPORTS REPORTER

Mohammad Ashraful was rewarded for his recent performance in the tour of Zimbabwe as the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) decided to include him in its payroll. Ashraful, the youngest cricketer to score a Test century -- on debut -- will be the 12th cricketer to get a contract from the Board. The 20-year-old middle-order batsman will join Habibul Bashir, Khaled Mahmud, Khaled Mashud, Mohammad Rafique, Rajin Saleh, Alok Kapali, Tapas Baishya, Javed Omar, Mushfiqur Rahman, Hannan Sarkar and Mashrafe-Bin-Mortuza. A meeting of the BCB's advisory committee yesterday, presided over by board president Ali Asghar made the decision. The cricket committee has been asked to finalise his salary and

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PHOTO: STAR

WAIT FOR THE GOOD NEWS: National cricket selector Athar Ali Khan (R) talks to Abdur Razzak while Faisal Hossain (2nd from L) and Mohammad Rafique converse during a practice session of the Bangladesh probables at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday. Left-arm spinner Razzak and left-handed batsman Faisal are expected to be picked for the tour of West Indies.

PCB delves into defeat

AFP, Karachi



Pakistan cricket chief Shahriar Khan launched a scathing attack on the national team here Sunday following the historic series defeat to India, lashing players guilty of "carefree unprofessionalism". Announcing plans for an inquiry into the series defeat -- the first ever suffered by a Pakistani team to India on home soil -- Khan said he was shocked at the way Pakistan had collapsed in the decider. India wrapped up a remarkable victory in Rawalpindi on Friday, clinching a 2-1 series triumph by an innings and 131 runs. But the manner of Pakistan's capitulation has angered Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) chief Khan, who accused the home team of caving in without a fight. "Obvious flaws in Pakistan's performance will be addressed in a calm and professional manner and I have taken serious notice of this lack of commitment to national honour," Khan said in a statement. The role of pace bowler Shoaib Akhtar is certain to come under

scrutiny. Akhtar, who only claimed seven wickets in the series, did not bowl for a major part of India's innings after suffering a back injury. The fact however that Akhtar subsequently went on to bat without any obvious signs of discomfort has fuelled rumours of a bust-up between the bowler and his skipper Inzamamul Haq. Inzamam accused Akhtar of letting the team down in the wake of the third Test defeat. Khan said a medical commission would be set up to assess the true extent of Akhtar's injury -- and he made it clear that any indication Akhtar had been malingering would be severely punished. "I will be wanting to interview each potentially offending player to inquire the reasons for not upholding team morale and national honour." "I want to make it crystal clear that any player who is found incapable or unwilling to give 150 per cent for team morale and national honour will have no place in the Pakistan team," he said. "My main concern for the present is the manner in which the Rawalpindi Test was lost without the semblance of a fight. "While some players, like the courageous Asim Kamal clearly

demonstrated fighting spirit there were others who patently failed the test by their carefree, unprofessional approach in Pakistan's second innings," said Khan. "I have decided to set up a medical inquiry committee to report on Akhtar's injury as also the large number of injured players who have depleted and undermined Pakistan's cricketing strength." Seamer Shabbir Ahmed (shin), wicketkeeper Moin Khan (groin) and all-rounder Abdul Razzaq (side strain) were all injured during the first Test in Multan, which India won by an innings and 52 runs. And pace bowler Umar Gul broke down with a back injury after his match-winning performance in the second match of the series, which Pakistan won by nine wickets. The inquiry committee headed by a senior orthopaedic consultant will be formed by PCB chief executive Rameez Raja and it will submit its report in a week. After Inzamam raised doubts about the severity of his injury, Akhtar responded with surprise on Saturday. "You need the whole body to be perfect when you bowl -- it is different when you are batting," he said.