



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.



What to WATCH

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
Sportsline
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."



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?

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 Muktidhoda Sangsaa Krira 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 already 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 dishonourable 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 Bashar and Test opener Hannan Sarker 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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National cricketers (L-R) Habibul Bashar, Hannan Sarker, 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

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 Kartik 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 Lakman 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 gatting them.

Yuvraj Singh, Anil Kumble, Irfan Pathan and his father and Lakman'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

Cricket

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA,
New Delhi

"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

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 bowler, 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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