



Did U Know?

British Chess Association (BCA), the first national body to promote chess, founded in 1884. Winston Churchill's father was once the president of the BCA, while Lord Tennyson was the vice president.



What to WATCH

ESPN
Sportscentre
Sport News
Live at 9:00 pm

STAR Sports
Sportsline
Sport News
Live at 8:00 pm



TALK TURKEY



Irfan Pathan
(Indian pace bowler)
"I am in the team as a bowler. I have to concentrate on bowling first although it is my heartfelt desire to do well as a batsman. But I don't want to put pressure on myself by thinking about my batting."

Star WHIZZ KID COMPETITION 21

Tick the correct answers, post to The Daily Star. Win attractive prizes.

Competition closes at 8 pm May 21, 2004 and draw shortly afterwards.

1. Who is Bangladesh's fastest woman?	Iva	Chumki	Sabrina
2. Who is Zimbabwe's cricket captain?	Taibu	Streak	Olonga
3. Name the man-of-the-series in the India-Pakistan Test series.	Sehwag		
4. How many runs did Brian Lara score in the first innings of the final Test against England?	400	388	380
5. Who won the Singer 30th national...			

Bond stakes his claim

AFP, Worcester

New Zealand's quickest bowler Shane Bond stepped up his bid for a place in the first Test against England at Lord's on May 20 with a fiery spell on another rain-shortened day against Worcestershire here on Saturday.

Although only two hours of play were possible, Bond enjoyed a spell of 2-8 from six overs before the English county declared their first innings on 270-9.

Skipper Ben Smith hit 92 but it was Bond who was attracting the attention as he continues his comeback from a year's absence from a back injury.

The 26-year-old took the wickets of Kadeer Ali who was caught at square leg by Michael Papps before dismissing South African Test star

Abahani in the balance

Football
SPORTS REPORTER

Abahani will be at the mercy of an executive decision to win a place in the final round of the fourth Nitol-Tata National Football League (NFL).

Having not missed a rightful berth in the previous three editions, Abahani face the prospect of sitting on the sidelines after a disappointing last season that also marked the return of Brothers Union in the top flight and a fairy-tale run of Premier League debutant Sheikh Russel Kriha Chakra.

The Dhanmondi outfit and their loyal band of supporters, who failed to win a single title last season, will now have to wait till May 12 when the organising committee sits to decide whether both Abahani and their challenger Sheikh Russel will be included in the final round of the competition.

In that event the organisers will have to bend the rules. The competition offers automatic qualification for four teams in the final round – the winners and runners-up of NFL, the Premier League and the Federation

Cup champions. Muktijoddha Sangsad and Mohammedan Sporting Club get automatic entries as the top two finishers of the last NFL while Brothers qualify as the Premier League champions.

The fourth place fell vacant as both Muktijoddha and Mohammedan finished champions and runners-up of the Federation Cup.

But the organisers are in a dilemma over the fourth team as no play-off between the losing Fed Cup semifinalists Abahani and Sheikh Russel was held last year.

"We will talk about this in our first meeting and there is only two ways to separate the two teams. We will probably go for a toss as it would be easier than going for a play-off," said organising committee secretary Malu to reporters yesterday.

"There is no denying Abahani is a popular team and their presence will attract big crowds which is vital for the game. But we are in no position to bend rules to accommodate a team," said Malu.

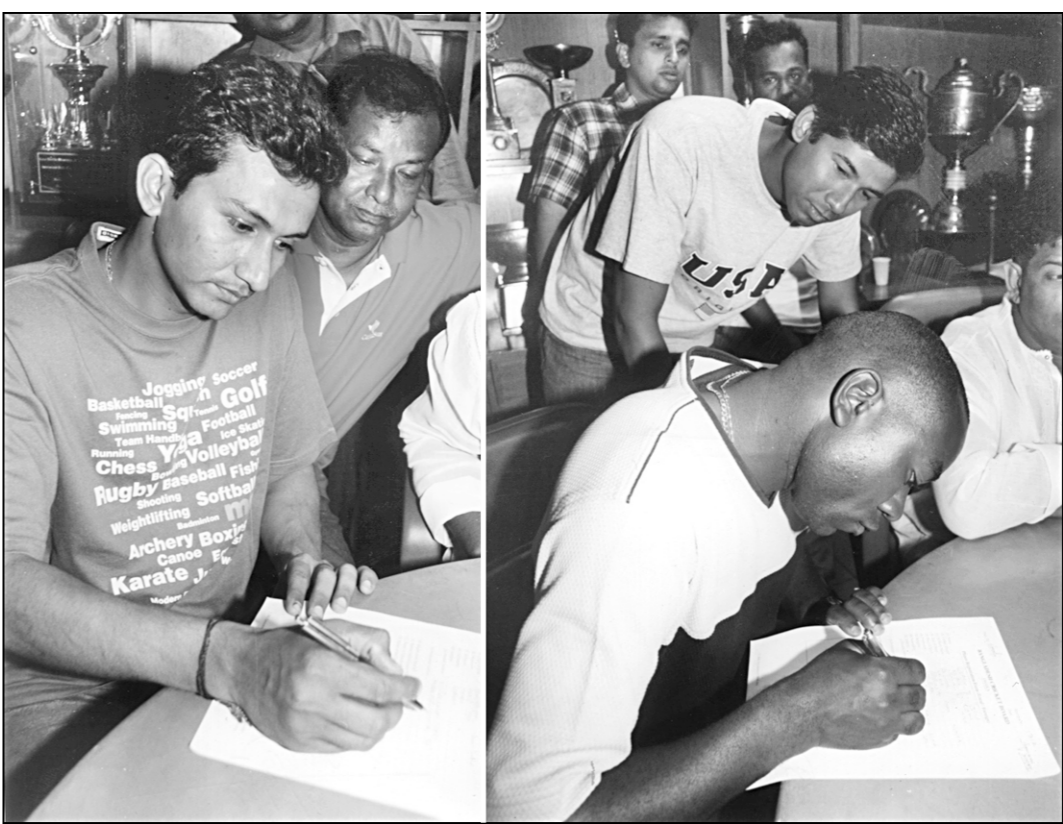
"I feel for Abahani but they did not form a strong team and it cost them dearly. Look at Brothers and they spent millions to finally win the Premier League title. Besides, the way Sheikh Russel played throughout the season was an example for other teams," he said adding that Abahani would certainly learn from their mistakes.

The league committee secretary thought that there was little chance to reduce the quota of foreign players from four to two in the coming league.

"I personally don't encourage many foreign players but we have to admit that currently, there is a scarcity of quality local footballers. Moreover, the teams who fielded four foreigners this season in the Dhaka League, won't be able to build strong squads if the quota is reduced. They cannot rope in local players from other teams," Malu said.

He also dismissed speculation regarding Nitol-Tata's reluctance to continue their sponsorship.

"We have a three-year contract and the sponsors have assured us that they are going to honour it. Nitol-Tata paid Tk 30 lakh to the BFF last year out of their promised Tk 40 lakh for the first season. We are expecting the reminder before the final round kicks off."



Indian all-rounder Sanjay Bangar (L) and Kenyan ace Steve Tikolo, who will be playing for GrameenPhone and BEXIMCO in the Corporate Cricket League respectively, sign for their teams at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

Dinajpur, Dhaka in zonal finals

SPORTS REPORTER

A late rally saw Dinajpur overcome a two-goal deficit and storm into the zonal final of the Sher-e-Bangla Cup 22nd National Football Championship with a 5-3 defeat of Kurigram at the Nilphamari Stadium yesterday.

Dinajpur, trailing 3-1 at one stage after taking a 1-0 lead in the Teestazone semifinal, scored four goals within a space of 16 minutes to steal a thrilling win.

Rubel struck twice while Sohail Rana, Kawsar and Anis scored apiece for the winners. Amanullah, Fazlul and Hasan found the net for Kurigram.

Meanwhile, Surat netted two goals as Dhaka thrashed Faridpur 4-0 at Gopalganj to set up a zonal final clash against Rajbari. Russell and Ararat added the rest for Dhaka.

Tipu and Johnny kept on their scoring spree for Bholia as they took the hosts into the zonal final against Bagerhat. Tipu opened the account after 15 minutes while Johnny doubled it in the 65th minute for a 2-0 win over Barisal.

At Comilla, Sylhet eliminated Chandpur 3-1 in tiebreaker after

Wright might stay back

BBC ONLINE, undated

John Wright's coaching contract with India may be extended when his current one ends in September, says India's cricket boss Jagmohan Dalmiya.

"We have no idea of saying goodbye to anyone at the moment," said the president of the Board of Control for Cricket in India Dalmiya.

"Wright has done a good job, but it is a decision which will be taken by the working committee at a later stage."

Under Wright's tenure so far, India have won 15 Tests, including seven overseas – which is one-third of all of India's Test victories away from home.

'Tigers can compete'

Cricket
BBC ONLINE, undated

Bangladesh coach Dav Whatmore said there was no reason his side could not be "very competitive" as the squad arrived for a tour of the Caribbean on Saturday.

He said: "We understand that every team we play against is a big challenge."

"At the same time, we have an opportunity, as young as the players are, to give their best performances."

Bangladesh play a one-day warm-up match in St. Vincent on Wednesday, then have three one-day internationals, a three-day tour match and two Tests.

Whatmore repeated a mantra that has become a familiar refrain since he started the job 10 months ago.

"If we fight every session, every day in the longer game, whether we win or lose is to me immaterial," he said.

"What counts for me is that we give a good account of ourselves."

"In order for us to do well, we need even contributions, from as



DAV WHATMORE
And they endured an 18-match losing sequence in ODIs before beating Zimbabwe by eight runs in March.

School h'ball begins today

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bata 14th School Handball Tournament (boys and girls) begins today at the Dhanmondi Women's Sports Complex.

A total of 29 schools, including 13 girls', will take part in the competition with Birshreshtha Abdur Rouf Rifles College taking on Willes Little Flower in the opening match in the boys' group.

The girls' teams are Bandura Holycross High, Banani Vidyarniketan, Baruakhali High, Scholastica, Narinda Govt High, St Jude's International, Dhaka Govt Collegiate, Rahmatullah Model High, Ansars and VDP High, Radiant International, Bhasantek High, Mirpur Bangla High, BAF Shaheen College, Birshreshtha Abdur Rouf Rifles College, Willes Little Flower High and BIS.

The girls' schools are Viquarunnissa Noon School and College, Banani Vidyarniketan, Lake Circus High, Scholastica, Agrani Girls' High, Radiant International, Dhanmondi Tutorial, Lalmatia High, Dhanmondi Quamrunnesa Govt Girls' High, BIS, Birshreshtha Abdur Rouf Rifles College, Loreto and Mohammadpur Preparatory High.

CCL hots up

SPORTS REPORTER

The real battle of the GrameenPhone Corporate Cricket League (CCL) starts today when the top six finishers of the first round return to fight for Cup glory.

Although the second phase was launched with the Plate championship a few days ago, all eyes will be fixed on the Bangabandhu National Stadium when Partex face GrameenPhone.

The match will mark the debut of Indian all-rounder Sanjay Bangar for GrameenPhone. The Delhi cricketer flew into the city on Saturday and signed for the country's largest cellular operator yesterday evening.

"This is the first time I've come here to play domestic cricket but Bangladesh is not new to me. My previous visit was with the Indian team to play in the TVS one-day

series against Bangladesh and South Africa. I've seen very passionate crowds when I came here last year," said Bangar, the right-handed batsman-cum-medium pacer.

Coach Jalal Ahmed Chowdhury informed that the hard-hitting batsman will play in the middle-order though he has sometimes opened for India in Test cricket.

Partex, who were hoping for Pakistan captain Inzamamul Haq's appearance, however will have to bank on their youthful local side after the Inzamam was reportedly barred by the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) to come to Dhaka.

Bashundhara Group, who have been placed in the so-called group of death with Partex and GrameenPhone, are pinning their hopes on Indian Sandeep Sharma currently playing in Chittagong.

Bangladesh Biman, the only unbeaten side, and surprise package ARAF Apparels and BEXIMCO make up the other group.

Meanwhile, the Plate competition also resumes today after a day's break due to hartal.

Junior tennis starts today

SPORTS REPORTER

The National Junior (boys and girls) Tennis Championship starts at the National Tennis Complex in Ramna today.

A total of 59 boys and 17 girls from BKSP, Narasingdi, Rajbari, Patuakhali, Khulna, Naongaon, Dhaka and different services teams will take part in the under-13 and under-17 competition.

Murali-mania grips SL

Cricket
AFP, Colombo

was the headline in the Sunday Island, while the Sunday Times said: "King Murali does it!"

Muralitharan's parents who live in the central town of Kandy, 72 miles (112 kilometres) east of here, were jubilant as they watched television broadcast of their son play in Harare and set a new world record.

"I think I am the happiest mother in the world today," said his mother, Lakshmi Muralitharan. "I didn't think he would come this far. I never even thought he would play for the country, but once he started I knew he would do something, but not this."

Muralitharan's father, S Mutiah, said he was overjoyed and expected his son to reach the 1,000-



A Sri Lankan man and his two sons read reports on Muttiah Muralitharan's breaking the world record in a newspaper in Colombo yesterday.

Walsh wishes Murali takes 1,000 wkts

AFP, Kingston

West Indies pace legend Courtney Walsh believes Sri Lanka's Muttiah Muralitharan, who snatched his world Test wickets record, could take 1,000 victims before his career comes to an end.

"He could easily end up with between 800 and 1,000 Test wickets," said Walsh whose record of 519 wickets was broken by the spin king in Sri Lanka's first Test win against Zimbabwe in Harare on Saturday.

"To get 500 wickets in less than 90 Tests, I think he deserves whatever he gets," Walsh told Radio Jamaica.

"He has been a tremendous bowler for Sri Lanka and he is bound to get wickets as long as he is playing."

"His strike rate is phenomenal. He deserves all the credit he is getting."

Muralitharan is now poised for a lengthy battle with Australia's Shane Warne, who has 517 wickets, to hang on to top spot.

"He is younger and because he is an off-spin bowler, I think he will play a little longer than Warne," Walsh said.



Grand Master Ziaur Rahman (R) ponders his next move against Pakistani IM Mahmood Lodi during their third round game of the seventh United Insurance and United Leasing IM chess tournament at the Chess Federation conference room yesterday.

IM chess Zia, Saptarshi share lead

SPORTS REPORTER

Grand Master Ziaur Rahman and Saptarshi Roy of India shared the lead with three points each after the end of the third round games of the seventh United Insurance and United Leasing IM chess tournament at the Chess Federation conference room yesterday.

International Masters Abdullah Al Rakib, Roktim Bandyopadhyay and FM Abu Sufian Shakil were in the second position with 2.5 points each.

In this round Zia beat IM Mahmood Lodi of Pakistan, Saptarshi beat IM Enamul Hossain Rajib, IM Rakib drew with IM Roktim, FM Shakil drew with

'Inquiry a big mishap'

Akhtar and others warned

Cricket
AFP/REUTERS, undated

Former Pakistan cricket captain Wasim Akram on Sunday described an inquiry into the injury sustained by pace bowler Shoaib Akhtar in last month's deciding Test against India as a "big mishap".

Akram's comments follow a warning issued to Akhtar by the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) on Saturday telling him to improve his conduct while playing for the national team.

"The medical inquiry was a big mishap. We should have avoided it. (It was carried out) simply because India was a better team and they beat Pakistan," Akram told AFP.

Doubts had been raised over an injury Akhtar claimed during the decisive third and final Test against India in Rawalpindi after he hurt his wrist and back in a fall on his follow through on the second day.

The 28-year-old Akhtar did not take the field on the third day, but his coming out to bat seemingly unaffected on the fourth day raised suspicions over the extent of his injury.

He and three other Pakistani players appeared before a four-member medical commission formed by PCB to assess a spate of

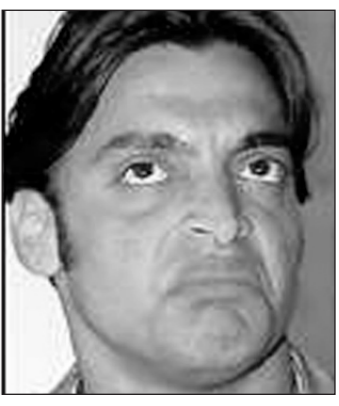
and 352 one-day games for Pakistan, said: "I think the captain, coach and the manager should handle a player and it should not happen like this. How can you assess an injury after two weeks."

"Nobody knows where the medical commission's report is and what the aim of the inquiry was."

Akhtar who left for England on Sunday to play for Durham county



WASIM AKRAM
injuries to Pakistani players during the third Test which Pakistan lost by an innings and along with it the series 2-1.



SHOAIB AKHTAR
cal commission's report is and what the aim of the inquiry was."