



Did U Know?

In 1971, at a time when the US had no diplomatic ties with China, the US Table Tennis delegation visited the People's Republic of China - creating front page news around the world with the history making 'Ping Pong Diplomacy.'



Ricky Ponting

(Australia cricket captain)
"I just don't think that will happen, I don't think we'll bat for long enough, to start with, for that to happen in this series."
Dismisses the prospect of Matthew Hayden reclaiming the world record for the Test score in Zimbabwe.



- ESPN**
 English Premier Football League
 Liverpool vs Newcastle United
 Live at 7:55 pm
- STAR Sports**
 Sri Lanka vs Zimbabwe
 Second Test, Day Two
 Live at 1:50 pm
- English Premier Football League**
 Arsenal vs Leicester City
 Live at 7:55 pm
- TEN Sports**
 Bangladesh vs West Indies
 First ODI
 Live at 7:30 pm

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

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

Name
 Class Roll No.
 School Address
 Phone: (If any)

Sharma plunders Partex

SPORTS REPORTER



Indian Sandeep Sharma made a swashbuckling century as favourites Bashundhara Group romped into the Cup semifinal of the GrameenPhone Corporate Cricket League with a facile nine-wicket victory over Partex Group at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

The victory undoubtedly delighted Bashundhara who finished Group X champions with two wins but it relieved GrameenPhone, who sneaked into the semifinal at the cost of winless Partex.

GrameenPhone beat Partex in their first match in the group.

Partex, whose attempts to rope in a star player from Pakistan fell flat, won the crucial toss but the youthful side failed to set a challenging target for their formidable opponents as they were restricted to 197-8 in 50 overs.

The target looked very small when the big Indian opener Sharma, fresh from his 60 against GrameenPhone in the previous match, sent the Partex bowlers on a leather hunt.

His blazing 105 off 101 balls saw

Bashundhara race to 199 in 36.4 overs for the loss of Nafees Iqbal (20).

The right-hander from Delhi smashed 16 fours including the winning boundary off left-arm spinner Hasu Mia just after completing his century. His stroke-play also inspired his partner Al-Shahriar, who joined him after young opener Nafees was trapped leg before by left-arm spinner Samsul Huda. The national discard helped himself to six fours and two huge sixes on way to an unbeaten 59 off 78 balls during the unbroken 133-run stand for the second wicket.

Earlier Mehrab Hossain and Pappa Sharma began the Partex innings cautiously after captain Mizanur Rahman decided to use the batting-friendly wicket but former national paceman Hasibul Hossain separated the pair in the ninth over.

The breakthrough came when Pappa offered a return catch to Hasibul on 19 off 23 balls. The inexperienced side lost wickets at regular intervals with only Rafiqul Islam holding the fort later.

There was only a half-century partnership in the middle between Ashraf Islam and Rafiqul, who shared 57 runs for the fourth wicket.

Rafiqul, who has played only one Test for the country, remained not out with 57 off 91 balls, featuring six

boundaries. Ashraf made 27 off 42 balls.

Veteran left-arm spinner Enamul Haq was the pick of the Bashundhara attack claiming three wickets for 41 from 10 overs and off-spinner Naimur Rahman took 2-32.

SCORECARD

Scoreboard of the GrameenPhone Corporate Cricket League (Cup) match between Bashundhara and Partex at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday:

PARTEX

Mehrab b Enamul	20
Pappa c and b Hasibul	19
Tariq st Shahin b Naimur	22
Ashraf run out	27
Rafiqul not out	57
Kuntal b Enamul	7
Rezaunul b Sabbir	1
Mizanur b Naimur	11
Azad c Shahjada b Enamul	10
Hasu not out	1
Extras: (lb-5, w-17)	22
Total: (For 8 in 50 overs)	197
Fall of wkts: 1-31, 2-75, 3-77, 4-130, 5-141, 6-146, 7-172, 8-196	

Bowlers

O	M	R	W	
Hasibul	5	1	21	1
Shahjada	5	0	16	0
Sandeep	2	0	15	0
Naimur	10	0	32	2
Enamul	10	1	41	3
Sabbir	10	0	37	1
Saifullah	8	0	30	0

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Bashundhara's Indian recruit Sandeep Sharma goes on the back foot to pull one during the GrameenPhone Corporate Cricket League (Cup) match against Partex at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

Calypso Cocktail

Cricket

RABEED IMAM from St Vincent

"Lara is not popular here," came the stunning declaration from Oswald, who was driving us to the Government House for the cocktail reception in honour of the Bangladesh and West Indies teams.

"You know he never comes to St Vincent and it's for his attitude that people here don't like him," Oswald went on.

It has been a stunning awakening for some of us who have travelled hundreds of miles expecting Brian Lara to be God in the Caribbean but the anti-Lara sentiment in this part of the West Indies has been far too distinct to ignore.

"I was certain he was not coming. You see, the St Vincent government was supposed to honour him for his 400 if he had come. But he was never going to receive any mark of honour from the Vincentians. If you get a chance you ask him and hell probably tell you that he does not like Vincentians," said a local cricket buff watching the West Indies team in practice at Arnos Vale on Thursday.

"The finger injury is just a pretext. He played with it against England so why is there a problem now?" said the man who appeared every bit as knowledgeable as the average St

Vincent resident, who know what they are taking about. He then went on to narrate the supposed background of the enmity with Lara, rather Lara's enmity with St Vincent.

"Some years ago, Lara came here and he was batting in the nets. Cameron Cuffy, our local boy, bowled him twice and the crowd who came to watch actually booed Lara. That did it.

"Since then, whenever he has appeared at Arnos Vale, Lara would just play a loose shot and get out and when he did score runs, he would not lift his bat and acknowledge the applause from the crowd."

Everybody here it seems, had a story to tell about the world record

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BRIAN LARA



Younis Khan arrives at the Bangabandhu National Stadium to sign for Bangladesh Biman yesterday.

Younis for Biman

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

Pakistan middle-order batsman Younis Khan signed for Bangladesh Biman yesterday to play in their crucial Corporate Cricket League match against ARAF Apparels.

"It's the first time I've come to play in a domestic competition abroad. And it is my second visit to Dhaka after the Asia Cup in 2000," said Younis after completing the formalities at the Bangabandhu National Stadium.

"I'll try my best to make sure my team qualifies for the semifinal," said the 27-year-old who averages 31.52 from 101 ODI matches and is yet to score a century.

The deciding Cup match takes place at the big bowl today and the national flag carrier must win to qualify for the semifinals.

ARAF won their first match against Beximco, which earlier upset Biman in their opening encounter in Group Y.

Younis said that he was confident of winning back his Test place

Sher-e-Bangla Cup N'ganj in zonal final

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

Narayanganj came from a goal down to beat Tangail 2-1 and set up a zonal final clash against hosts Gazipur in the Sher-e-Bangla Cup 22nd National Football Championship yesterday.

Momin shot Tangail ahead after 19 minutes in the Brahmaputra Zonal semifinal at the Gazipur Stadium but former national striker Ritu fired the equaliser seven minutes later.

National midfielder Liton slammed the match winner five minutes before the final whistle.

The winners of the Gazipur-Narayanganj final will be the last team to qualify for the 12-team finals in Natore.

Schools h'ball
 SPORTS REPORTER
 Bandura Holy Cross School will meet Narinda Government School in the 14th Bata Schools handball boys' final.

IM chess

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

Grand Master Ziaur Rahman clinched the seventh United Insurance and United Limited International Masters Chess tournament title with one round still to go yesterday.

Zia took an unassailable nine points lead after drawing with Indian International Master Dinesh Kumar Sharma in the tenth round games at the National Sporting Council (NSC) conference room yesterday.

In this round, Rakib drew with Gurpreet, Nasir beat Saptarshi Roy of India, Rajib beat Debaraj Chatterjee, FM Khanaker Aminul Islam drew with Arghyadip Das of India, K. Visweswaran of India beat FMAbu Sufian Shakil, Sayantan Dutta beat Abdul Maleq, IM Mahmood Lodhi of Pakistan beat Mohammad Javed, Monir Hossain beat Shawkat Hossain Pallab, Krishna Thapa of Nepal beat Mehedi Hasan Parag, International Women Master Rani Hamid beat Saif Uddin Lavlu, Imran Ali Elin drew with Sankalpa of India, FM Rezaul Haque beat Aminul Islam Polash and Arman Monir beat Sahaj Grover of India.

The last round games will start today at 10am at the same venue.

State Minister for Youth and Sports Fazlur Rahman will distribute prizes today.

Zia lifts title

Cricket

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ZIAUR RAHMAN

Barua inspires Gazi Tank

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

Sumon Barua smashed the fifth century of the GrameenPhone Corporate Cricket League to throttle unfancied Gazi Tank into the final of the Plate competition with a comfortable 81-run victory against Aktel in the first semifinal at the Fatullah Stadium yesterday.

Gazi Tank, who won only one match out of five games in the first phase, beat CityCell in the Plate group match before knocking out the other cellular phone operator.

They will face the winners of today's semifinal between Acme and Ispahani in the May 20 final at the Bangabandhu National Stadium.

Mostly featuring first division players, Gazi Tank scored 224-7 in 50 overs, thanks to Sumon's 109 not out. The number four batsman came to the wicket with his side reeling at 57-3 but went on to give the total some respectability during a 132-ball knock. He hit five fours and four sixes.

Aktel never looked comfortable in their chase before being booked for 143 in 47.2 overs. Gazi Tank's Shafiqul Alam captured three wickets for 18 from ten overs.

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'Treat Russell fairly'

Football

SPORTS REPORTER

Sheikh Russell Krira Chakra's president Nurul Alam Chowdhury has called for his club to receive fair treatment after finishing Dhaka Premier League runners-up in its first season in the top flight.

The Russell boss made an official request to the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) yesterday stating that they didn't want to miss out on playing in the coming fourth national football league (NFL).

After Muktijoddha Sangsad, Mohammedan Sporting Club and Brothers Union won automatic qualifying spots for the final round, the spot for the Federation Cup representatives fell vacant.

The third-placed side in the Fed Cup usually earns an automatic entry but there was no play-off between the losing semifinalists Abahani and Sheikh Russell.

The organising committee of the NFL agreed that Abahani should be given the remaining automatic berth as the third-place finisher in the last NFL but asked the BFF to give a ruling on the matter.

"We have no reservation against Abahani. It's okay if they play directly but we don't want to be left out too.

That would really belittle our brilliant first season in Dhaka football," Alam told The Daily Star Sport.

"The BFF should have staged the third-place play-off match in the Federation Cup to avoid this hassle. I also believe that as the fans of big clubs like Abahani and Mohammedan are the soul of the country's football, no big tournament should be played without them."

"However, it is wise that at least three top teams from the Dhaka Premier League qualify directly to the NFL. It is the biggest league in the country and the big teams here spend big money. They should be rewarded for it. The BFF should extend the quota of automatic entries by taking more teams from the Federation Cup and the NFL as well," Alam opined.

"They could start thinking about a new format to deal with the situation," he said adding that BFF general secretary Anwarul Haque Helal has assured him that the BFF would make sure no team suffers to make way for another.

The BFF general secretary said that he has received Sheikh Russell's plea and it will be discussed in an executive meeting.

"We are aware of the situation but have yet to take any decision," Helal said.

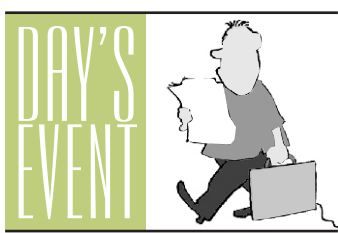
Three Tigers fly to Windies

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

Opening batsman Javed Omar Belim, pacer Alamgir Kabir and left-arm spinner Enamul Haq will fly out to the West Indies today to join the Bangladesh team for the two-match Test series.

Habibul Bashar's Tigers will play Brian Lara's side in the first Test starting May 28 at St Lucia after the three-match one-day series, which begins today.



GP Corporate Cricket League CUP GROUP
 Araf Apparels vs Biman
 Venue: Bangabandhu National Stadium
PLATE SECOND SEMIFINAL
 Acme vs Ispahani
 Venue: Fatullah Cricket

African showdown today Bid for 2010 World Cup

Football

REUTERS, Zurich

Pele's prediction that an African country would win the World Cup by the end of the 20th century was one of only a few things he's got wrong in football.

The nearest any African side has come to it was when Cameroon reached the quarterfinals in 1990, an achievement equalled by Senegal two years ago.

But one African country will emerge with an even bigger prize than the World Cup trophy itself on Saturday when it wins the right to stage the 2010 finals which FIFA awarded to the African continent four years ago.

The social, cultural and sporting history of either South Africa, Morocco or Egypt will be altered forever by the decision taken on Saturday morning in Zurich by the 24-voting members of FIFA's executive committee who will decide which of those countries will stage the 32-team finals in six years time.

Libya and Tunisia, who are also bidding, have absolutely no chance

of succeeding.

Whoever loses out in the final voting will no doubt feel aggrieved and there will be no hiding the disappointment of delegates who, it is safe to say, will not be involved the next time an African country bids for the finals in 2030.

But while emotions will run high

on Saturday with jubilant victors and downcast losers, the overall winner is already undoubtedly the continent of Africa and African soccer.

In a sense the seeds of Africa's World Cup were sown over 30 years ago when Joao Havelange wrested the FIFA presidency from Sir Stanley Rous, the patrician Englishman who had been FIFA president from 1961 until 1974.

Havelange promised a greater say for the majority of FIFA's members. He re-organised the voting procedures, handing each association one vote. He promised more help with development and infrastructure for the smaller poorer nations and he promised more competitions.

Havelange had his critics for his autocratic style of leadership -- but he did deliver on those promises.

The first South American to lead FIFA, he had a greater global vision than the Europeans who had dominated the "world game" since FIFA's founding in 1904 -- and it seems entirely apt that in the week before FIFA celebrates its centenary, the African continent learns who its first

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How the polls go

AFF, Zurich

The host nation of the 2010 World Cup, the first to be held in Africa, will be decided by a vote of the 24-member Executive Committee of world football governing body FIFA here on Saturday.

If one of the five candidates - South Africa, Morocco, Egypt, Tunisia and Libya - obtain an absolute majority of 13 votes in the first round they will win. If not, the country with the

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