



Did U Know?

Each king in a deck of playing cards represents a great king from history: Spades -- King David, Hearts -- Charlemagne, Clubs -- Alexander the Great and Diamonds -- Julius Caesar.



What to WATCH

TEN Sports

Copa America
Costa Rica vs Paraguay
Repeat at 4 pm
Copa America
Brazil vs Chile
Repeat at 9.30 pm
Copa America
Colombia v Bolivia
Live at 4.15 am (Saturday)
Copa America
Peru v Venezuela
Live at 6.30 am (Saturday)

ESPN

Australia v Sri Lanka
2nd Test, Day 1
Live at 5.55 am
Sportscentre
Sports News
Live at 8.30 pm

STAR Sports

Sportsline
Sports News
Live at 8 pm
Australia v Sri Lanka
Highlights at 1 am (Saturday)



TALK TURKEY



Deco

(Portuguese midfielder)
"I'd like to send a clear message to the Barca fans: Trust me, I'm coming here to win."
After joining Spanish giants.

Star WHIZZ KID COMPETITION 214

Tick the correct answers, post to
The Daily Star
Win attractive prizes
Competition closes at 8 pm
July 9, 2004 and draw
shortly afterwards

- How many Test matches will India play against Bangladesh in December?

Three Two Four

- Who is Pakistan's new cricket coach?

Miandad Woolmer Marsh

- Who won the Rating chess title?

Rajib Rakib Reefat

- Who is the youngest scorer at UEFA Euro 2004?

Rooney Vonlanthen Ronaldo

- Who scored the first goal at Euro 2004?

Zidane Karagounis Figo

Name

Class

School Address

Phone: (If any)

Pioneer soccer

SPORTS REPORTER

Tipu scored the lone goal in Avijatrik's 1-0 win over Jatrabari Jhotika Sangsad in yesterday's east zone match of Shinepukur Ceramics Pioneer Football League at Dhupkholagound.

Nasreen Sports Academy blanked Najirabazar 2-0 in another match at the same venue.

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Nat'l tennis ends quietly

SPORTS REPORTER

The climax to the National Tennis Championship yesterday was definitely one to look forward to for finalists, fellow players, parents and enthusiastic officials alike at the Ramna National Tennis Complex.

The seven-day competition brought together 115 tennis players including some regulars like Amal Roy and an irrepressible Shifat Nusrat Baishakhi.

But sadly though there was hardly a good crowd in the stands to cheer as the national championship passed off yet again unnoticed.

It was no surprise when Amal won the men's title in the afternoon defeating Murad Hossain 7-5, 6-2, 6-0. The top seed raced to a 5-2 lead in the first set before his tall challenger from BKSP almost staged a turnaround by taking it into a tiebreaker.

But Murad ran out of gas in the second and third set against the aggressive left-hander, who took only 50 minutes to win the last two sets.

"I feel good that I've defended the title. But to be honest I want to play on better surfaces and against better opponents to improve my own game," said Amal after the final.

The youngster from Gopalganj also said that he wanted a sponsor for better training so that he could make his mark on international circuit.

Amal was expressing the views of fellow players, who lamented that tennis is not being treated in the same way as other sports.

"Our activities are only confined to either Rajshahi or Dhaka. Besides, we are not getting enough patronage either from the sponsors or media," said the men's champion.

While Amal defended his title Baishakhi did one better in the women's section.

The undisputed queen of Bangladesh tennis not only won the final against Ishrat Sultana in straight set (6-3, 6-1) but also did so without dropping a set in the entire tournament.

While the scenario remained unchanged at the top, the age-group finals produced plenty of energy and excitement.

excitement.

Ranjan Ram rallied from a set down to win the boys' Under-17 title with a 4-6, 6-4, 6-3 victory against Anwar Hossain.

Javed Hossain lifted the boys' Under-13 title defeating Omar

Faruque 6-4, 3-6, 6-2 in the other court.

The girls Under-13 final between Mahin Mohid and Rahima Akhter was still going on even after the prize distribution ceremony had taken place under fading light.



PHOTO: STAR

Baishakhi returns a backhand during the women's singles final of the National Tennis Championship at the Ramna Tennis Complex yesterday.

Ponting frightens SL

Cricket

AFP, Cairns

Skipper Ricky Ponting believes the Sri Lankans don't have the stomach to resist Australia's pace attack and he wants to keep them under the cosh in the second cricket Test starting here on Friday.

Ponting senses Sri Lanka's batsmen will buckle against Australia's pace trio of Glenn McGrath, Jason Gillespie and Michael Kasproicz on a hard, bouncing wicket.

The Sri Lankans crumbled to a 149-run loss in last week's Darwin Test inside three days and with the likelihood of a fast bowlers' paradise, the odds don't favour a sudden turnaround in fortunes here.

It was Australia's fourth consecutive win over Sri Lanka after sweeping their three-Test series in Sri Lanka last March.

Ponting, heading into his fourth Test as Australian skipper and first at home after missing the Darwin Test through a family bereavement, says he intends to stick with the philosophy of his predecessor Steve Waugh and keep the heat on Sri Lanka.

"You always like to bat first in Test matches if you can, but if conditions suggest that you should bowl then certainly that will come into consideration tomorrow morning,"

Ponting told a press conference here on Thursday.

"Their batsmen are going to be under pressure coming into this Test match."

"If that is the case it's nice to get them back in there quickly and try to put some more pressure on them so that's what I will be thinking about heading into tomorrow."

"That was the way Steve Waugh

ing forward to batting out there."

But Ponting does not want a repeat of last year's Cairns Test when Waugh won the toss and sent Bangladesh into bat only for the new-ball attack to squander the initiative with wayward bowling to allow the Bangladeshis to see out the first day.

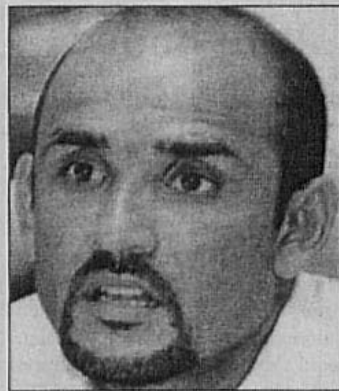
"That was spoken about at our team meeting, we did win the toss



RICKY PONTING

used to think. When you've got them under pressure get them back out there as soon as you can again and try to keep them under pressure."

"And the way our fast bowlers are going they will be looking forward to bowling in these conditions and I'm not sure their batsmen will be look-



MARVAN ATAPATTU

last year and decided to stick Bangladesh in and the fast bowlers probably got a bit carried away with the conditions."

"It's a bit like Brisbane and Perth in that if you bowl well it would be a very hard wicket to bat on, but if you

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Tigers' 2nd warm-up today

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh will rest middle order batsman Faisal Hossain and pace-man Tareq Aziz for their second warm-up match against a Sri Lankan Invitational XI in Colombo today, a Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) source confirmed yesterday.

Although the Lankan squad will play under the same banner, the Tigers are expected to get a stronger opposition including some experienced cricketers. Some former Test players could also be playing for the local selection according to information provided by coach Dav Whatmore over telephone.

The Bangladesh team wanted to play the game at the Sinhalese Sports Club (SSC) ground as their first match in the Asia Cup will be there on July 16. However they could not avail the venue.

The playing eleven of the Tigers will be finalised in the morning.

Bangladesh, who won the first practice match by 29 runs on July 6, will play their last warm-up match on July 12.

Bangladesh begin their Asia Cup campaign against Hong Kong.

BKSP Cup semis today

SPORTS REPORTER

The BKSP CUP Under-16 football tournament will not become an all BKSP affair as the two teams of the sports institute were left facing each other in one of today's semifinals.

Group A champions BKSP Greens will take on the BKSP Reds in the second semifinal while Chittagong Division meet Khulna Division in the first.

Chittagong emerged Group B champions when they edged Dhaka 2-1 in yesterday's match.

Waisi, who scored four goals in their 5-1 win over Barisal on Wednesday, put Chittagong ahead in the fourth minute while Abu Hanif made it 2-0 in the 46th minute. Shankar reduced the arrears for Dhaka two minutes later.

Kiwi-Windies tie rained off

AFP, Southampton

Rain forced the NatWest Series one-day international between New Zealand and the West Indies at the Rose Bowl here Thursday to be abandoned without a ball being bowled.

Earlier rain had seen the match reduced in length from 50 overs per side to 20 but as the umpires took the field shortly before the new start time of 1532 GMT a fresh downpour ended any hopes of play.

Both sides had already qualified for Saturday's final at Lord's.

BSWA prize distribution

SPORTS REPORTER

The prize distribution ceremony of Bangladesh Sports Writers Association (BSWA) for the years 2000, 2001 and 2002 will be held today at Sonargaon Hotel's Ball Room at 3.30 pm.

President Dr. Iajuddin Ahmed will attend the programme as chief guest and State Minister for Youth and Sports Fazlur Rahman as special guest.

Channel I, a Satellite TV channel, will telecast the programme live.

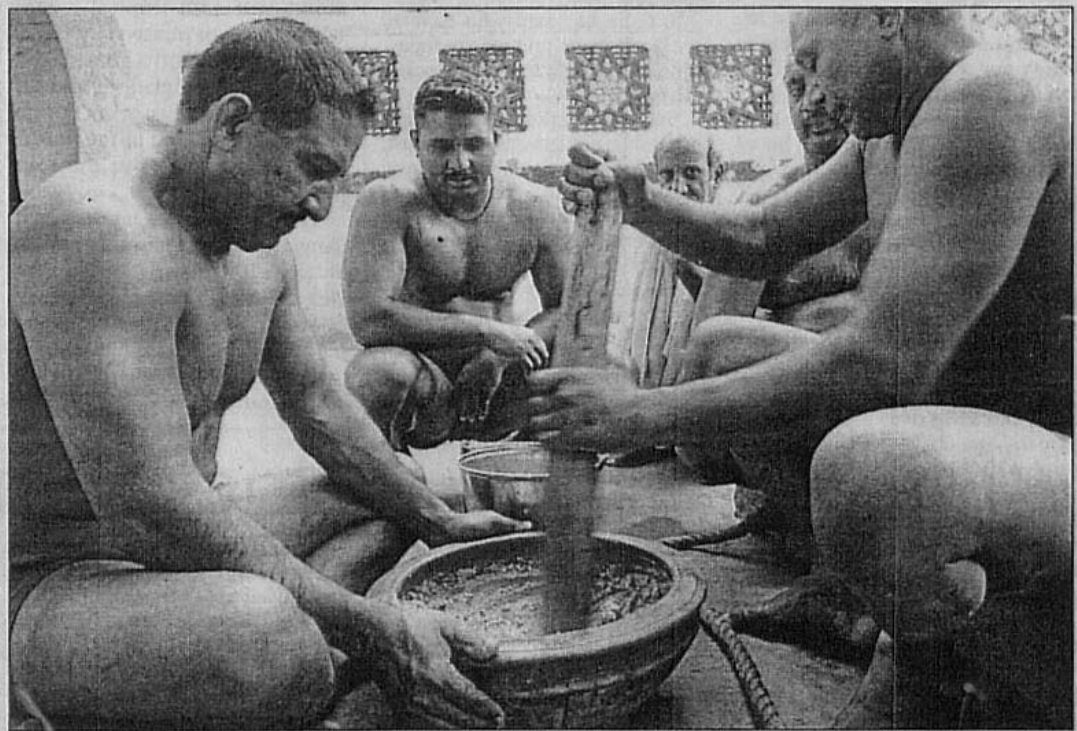


PHOTO: AFP

KEEPING UP THE TRADITION: A photo taken on June 22 shows Pakistani wrestlers prepare food at an 'akhra', an institute of local wrestlers, in Lahore. The wrestlers, known as 'pehalwans', are among the few who still practice this ancient, traditional sport in the Pakistani city.

NFL a day later

SPORTS REPORTER

Heavy rainfall in Mymensingh has forced the organisers to delay the start of the 12-team finals round of the fourth Nitol-Tata National Football League by a day.

The competition will now kick off on July 14 at the Momenshahi Stadium, NFL tournament committee secretary Manzoor Hossain Malu confirmed yesterday. The organisers had earlier planned a July 13 start.

The draw will be held tomorrow at Hotel Sheraton in presence of veteran footballers and some celebrities of the silver screen, informed Malu, who is also the deputy general secretary of Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF).

State Minister for Youth and Sports Fazlur Rahman will be present as chief guest.

Defending champions Mukti-joddha Sangsad and runners-up Dhaka Mohammedan Sporting are the top seeds in two groups and the tournament committee has also decided to put Dhaka giants

Abahani and Brothers Union in separate groups.

This year's surprise package of Dhaka Premier Division League Sheikh Russel Krira Chakra, who finished runner-up in the country's most popular competition, and Chittagong Mohammedan Sporting Club, the last of the six automatic qualifiers, will also be kept apart.

The six qualifiers -- Kararchar Sporting Club of Narshingdi, Najirpara Krira Chakra of Chandpur, Panchagarh Brothers Union, Unmochon Club of Bagerhat, Jhenaidah Mohammedan and Bangladesh Air Force -- will be drawn by lottery.

Bangladesh Television will telecast the opening match live from Mymensingh. However, the state-run media will not be able to broadcast some of the matches of the NFL when it will be showing the Asia Cup cricket championship taking place in Sri Lanka from July 16-August 2.

BTV will telecast seven Asia Cup matches live and won't be able to show the NFL games that coincide with the cricket.

Cricket makes Asian Games

AFP, New Delhi

Cricket will be played for the first time at the Asian Games during the 2006 meet in Doha, Qatar, in keeping with the sport's growing popularity in the continent, a top sports official said on Thursday.

Limited-overs cricket will be one of the 40 disciplines to be contested at the December 1-15 Games, Olympic Council of Asia (OCA) secretary general Randhir Singh told reporters here.

"Many countries, especially the West Asian ones, were keen that cricket be played at the Asian Games and the OCA accepted the proposal at its meeting held in Doha on July 1," Singh said.

"We have spoken about it to the Asian Cricket Council and the details will be worked out soon."

There are four Test-playing nations in Asia -- India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh -- and cricket is played in almost all Asian countries, including China who were recently admitted to the International Cricket Council (ICC).

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Ganguly not complacent

Cricket

CricInfo, undated

Ganguly.

"I think after a long time we are back in full strength. Considering this we hope to do well in the Asia Cup."

"Harbhajan back in the team is a

huge bonus for us. If he can raise his standards on par with Kumble along with Zaheer, Irfan Pathan and [Lakshmi Prasad] Balaji, I am sure we will have an edge over the other teams."

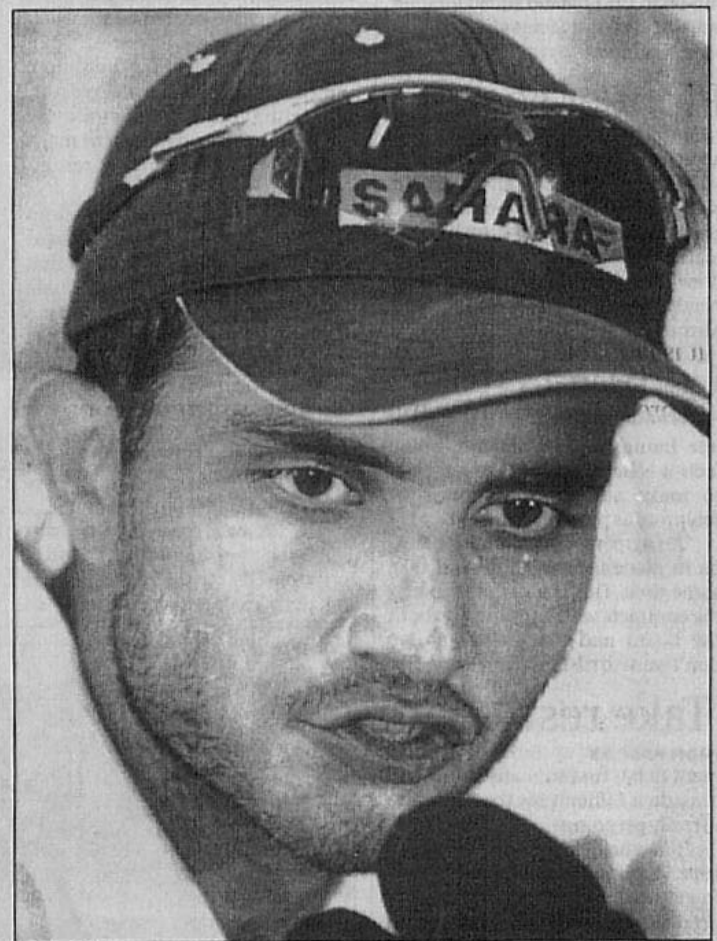


PHOTO: AFP

India captain Sourav Ganguly answers to a question at a press conference after the end of a six-day training camp in Madras yesterday.

'Take rest, Vaughan'

Cricket

AFP, London

England coach Duncan Fletcher said Wednesday that he was not overly concerned by the recent slump of captain Michael Vaughan and would be prescribing rest as the team skipper attempts to rediscover his form before the start of the Test series against the West Indies.

Vaughan scored just 47 runs in five innings during the NatWest Triangular Series where England failed to reach the final, which will be contested by West Indies and New Zealand at Lord's on Saturday.

England's leading batsman's top score was just 14 and he was out in similar manner in the last two innings attempting to chase a wide delivery.

Vaughan has said that he will spend the next two weeks before the opening Test against West Indies at Lord's working on his game.

He is also unlikely to join members of the Test line-up in the MCC side to face West Indies at Arundel next week.

"I'm not concerned about his form -- he's a quality player," said Fletcher.

"It's important these players have a bit of a break because we've travelled over a thousand miles during this tournament and played quite a lot of cricket and mentally it's tiring."

"It's important he has a break and works on certain areas of his game, but I don't think there's that much to work on -- it's a matter of getting out there in a relaxed manner and get back into the Test arena where we've done very well."

"At this stage if he played in that

MCC game he probably wouldn't come back to the Test as fresh as he should be if he travels all that way to play even more cricket -- we have to be careful that we don't make him stale."

Fletcher believes Vaughan's troubles are linked to the number of times England were forced to bat first by their inability to win the toss and face the worst conditions.



DUNCAN FLETCHER

England's only victory during the competition was at Headingley over West Indies when Vaughan called correctly and bowled first.

"I thought the team got better and better as the tournament progressed," said Fletcher.

"If we'd have had a platform for people like Andrew Flintoff and Andrew Strauss it would have made a big difference, but some of our quality players like Vaughan and (Marcus) Trescothick were not successful."

"We lost the toss in five games out of six and were put in on wickets where the ball moved around -- we were the only side in the tourna-

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Bhola Lal keeps winning

SPORTS REPORTER

Bhola Lal maintained his winning streak in the 2nd AP-Accesstel squash tournament when he beat Delwar Hossain 9-4, 9-5, 9-1 in yesterday's Premier Division match at the Dhaka Club squash court.

In other matches, Mohit Chauhan blanked Mohammed Karim 3-0, Ram Jagdish edged Swapan Parvez 2-1 and Masud Rana defeated Bishu Nath by the same margin.

Asif Anwar beat Badal Chauhan 3-0 in Division A while Dulal beat Adnan 3-0 and Samir beat Afzal 2-0 in Division B.

In the Under-18 competition, Noor Mohammed beat Badhan 2-0, and Mohammed Sumon beat Sumon Chauhan 2-0.

Contracts not before Asia Cup?

CricInfo, undated

India's cricketers will have to wait for some more time for their central contracts with the board.

"At this stage I can only say that it is possible, but not likely that the central contracts will be in place before the Asia Cup," SK Nair, the secretary of the BCCI, told yesterday.

"We had hoped that we could work out all the details, and have a meeting before the team left for Sri Lanka, but that has not been possible."

Nair added that the board wanted to tread cautiously in the matter, and not hurry things. "There

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