

Did U Know?

During the first several modern Olympics, the marathon was always an approximate distance. In 1908, the British royal family requested that the marathon start at the Windsor Castle so that the royal children could witness its start. The distance from the Windsor Castle to the Olympic Stadium was 42,195 metres (or 26 miles and 385 yards). In 1924, this distance became the standardized length of a marathon.

What to WATCH

- BTV**
Athens Olympic Games
Opening ceremony
Live at 11.45 pm
- ESPN**
England v West Indies
Third Test, Day Two
Live at 3.30 pm
Sportscentre
Sports News
Live at 10.30 pm
- STAR Sports**
English Premier League
Preview Show
Taped at 7.30 pm
Sportsline
Sports News
Live at 8 pm
- TEN Sports**
Sri Lanka v South Africa
Second Test, Day Three
Live 10.15 am

TALK TURKEY



Ramnaresh Sarwan
(West Indies cricket vice-captain)
"Every young man in the Caribbean dreaming of becoming a cricketer wants to lead the West Indies team and it is no different for me."

Star
WHIZZ KID
COMPETITION 215
Tick the correct answers, post to
The Daily Star
Win attractive prizes
Competition closes at 8 pm
August 20, 2004 and draw

1. Who clinched the national tennis men's crown?	Pasia	Amal	Murad
2. How many Test wickets has Shane Warne taken?	519	527	434
3. Who won the Wimbledon men's title?	Agassi	Federer	Henman
4. Who lifted the Wimbledon women's crown?	Serena	Sharapova	Venus
Name		
Class Roll No.		
School Address		
Phone: (If any)		

Windies keep faith in Lara

REUTERS, London
The West Indies Cricket Board appointed Brian Lara as captain on Wednesday for the International Cricket Council Champions Trophy.



PHOTO: STAR
Bangladesh Army stick wielders celebrate their tenth national title after beating Faridpur 5-4 on penalties at the Maulana Bhashani National Stadium yesterday.

Army nat'l champs

Hockey

SPORTS REPORTER

Goalkeeper Rafiqul Islam turned out to be the hero for Bangladesh Army when they lifted the ANAS Group 25th National Hockey Champion-ship title defeating Faridpur District Sports Association (DSA) 5-4 in the tiebreaker at the Maulana Bhashani National Stadium yesterday.

Rafiq, a member of the national youth team, stopped a penalty by national forward Musa Mia after the entertaining final ended in a goalless drawn regulation and extra time.

Experienced Musa was taking the side's second attempt from the spot but his low drive was foiled by the diving Army keeper who stretched to his right.

Titu, Miraj, Shamsuddin and Yamin converted Faridpur's remaining penalties but the soldiers showed nerves of

steel to end hundred per cent successful with captain Maksud, Ferdous, Jamal, Mafizur and Thuinu all finding the mark to ensure Army's tenth national title.

Faridpur, playing for the first time in the final after 27 years, began brightly with as many as six national stars but the first chance came to Army.

Maksud set Rahaj with a fine chance after 21 minutes but the forward scooped the ball over the crossbar. Three minutes later, unguarded Sanwar found a pass from Alo but misfired his effort.

The wake-up calls inspired Faridpur to go for an all-out attack and Miraj came close to score in the 29th minute. However, his powerful hit was brilliantly punched over by Rafiqul. Faridpur still could have gone ahead on the stroke of the break but Titu, who intercepted a cross from Sharafat, placed the ball inches wide of the near post.

The Faridpur boys, who also failed to make any impact from three penalty

corners, seemed to run out of steam after the breather and in extra-time when Army defender Enamul wasted a good chance to score the golden goal, forcing the match into shootout.

Faridpur's national defender Issa Mia was adjudged the player of the meet while Bangladesh Navy striker MM Hossain, who scored two hattricks in the tournament, won the top scorer's award.

NAVYTHIRD
Earlier, in the morning, an 82nd minute golden goal by Gazi helped Navy come from a goal down and clinch the third place with a 2-1 win over last year's runners-up Dhaka University at the same venue.

Tarek put Dhaka University ahead in the 56th minute but Rashid cancelled the lead seven minutes later.

Kumar, Sanath shine

Cricket

AFP, Colombo

Kumar Sangakkara slammed a superb double-century as Sri Lanka took command of the second and final Test against South Africa at the Sinhalese Sports Club ground here on Thursday.

The stylish left-hander struck 232 in Sri Lanka's big first innings total of 470. South Africa were 116-3 at close of the second day's play, with Graeme Smith (49) and Jacques Kallis (four) the not out batsmen.

Sangakkara ensured that the home side, without the services of an indisposed Muttiah Murali-tharan, got enough runs to put them in with a chance of winning their first Test series against South Africa.

The 26-year-old showed his penchant for getting big scores. He has now

converted three of his six centuries into double-tons, having already crossed the 200-run mark against Zimbabwe and Pakistan.

Sangakkara, 157 overnight, continued in the same vein to hit some sweet drives on either side of the wicket. His 529-minute innings saw him face 357 balls and unleash 32 fours and a six over square-leg off left-arm spinner Nicky Boje.

He was eventually out flashing the bat outside off stump with Kallis pouncing the catch at first slip off paceman Shaun Pollock, who also removed Tillakaratne Dilshan to finish with figures of 4-81.

Sangakkara could not improve on his career-best 270 against Zimbabwe at Bulawayo earlier this year but did go past his second highest score of 230 against Pakistan at Lahore two years ago.

Sangakkara, who survived a chance on Wednesday, was lucky to be let off

again as Pollock failed to latch on to a difficult return catch when the batsman was on 177.

Upul Chandana, coming in at number nine, contributed a useful 40 as he put on 33 runs with last man Lasith Malinga. Chandana was out stumped by Mark Boucher off Boje after hitting six fours off 81 balls.

Pace bowler Makhaya Ntini and Boje finished with two wickets apiece.

South Africa's reply did not start on a bright note as they lost opener Herschelle Gibbs in the very first over.

Gibbs, who missed the drawn first Test in Galle because of an ankle injury, was trapped lbw by an in-swinging from left-arm seamer Vaas before he could get off the mark.

Van Jaarsveld faced some tense early moments with young pacer Lasith Malinga in operation and also survived an appeal for a catch by

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PHOTO: STAR
Selectors (R-L) Faruque Ahmed, Athar Ali and coach Dav Whatmore look on as net bowler and former national cricketer Mahmudur Rahman, formerly known as Bikash Ranjan Das, runs in at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

U-19 on the back foot

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh U-19s were struggling to save the second Test against England as they slumped to 53-3 at tea on the third day at Taunton, Somerset yesterday.

Trailing England U-19s by 123 runs in the first innings, the young Tigers resumed third day's play at 13-1 shortly before the scheduled tea after the start was delayed because of rain.

Nafis Iqbal was the only man to be dismissed on Wednesday when he was caught behind for six.

During the 11 overs available before the break, Luke Wright sent back opener Shahriar Nafees and number four Dhiman Ghosh to reduce Bangladesh to 38-3.

Aftab Ahmed, who cracked four fours to score 21 off 44 balls, and his Chittagong pal Nazimuddin (4) were at the crease. Bangladesh need further 70 runs to wipe out the lead.

On the second day, paceman Nazmul Hossain, who has been called to the senior team for next month's ICC Champions Trophy along with Nafis Iqbal and Aftab, grabbed three quick wickets as England were all out for 396.

James Hildreth was the last man out after spearheading the hosts with a magnificent 210. Having hit 29 fours and six sixes from 255 balls, his five-hour essay ended when he was bowled by fast bowler Shahadat Hossain who took 3-58. His new ball partner Nazmul finished with 3-101.

Left-arm spinner Nadif Chowdhury took the remaining four wickets conceding 109 runs from 36 overs.

SCOREBOARD
Scoreboard at tea on the third day of the second Test between Bangladesh U-19s and England U-19s at Somerset yesterday:
BANGLADESH U-19S: First innings 273

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Murali off to Australia

REUTERS, Colombo

World record Test wicket-taker Muttiah Muralitharan will fly to Australia later on Thursday for shoulder surgery.

The Sri Lanka off spinner pulled out of the second and final Test against South Africa which started here on Wednesday because of intense pain in his bowling shoulder, and he is also expected to miss the one-day series that begins next week.

"We spoke to Dr David Young (Sri Lanka's Melbourne-based surgeon) last night (Wednesday) and he (Muralitharan) will now be leaving tonight (Thursday)," team manager Ajit Jayasekera told Reuters.

According to team physio CJ Clarke, Muralitharan, 32, is suffering from general wear and tear, and a build up of fluid around a nerve.

Sri Lanka's medical team are hopeful he will be fit for next month's ICC Champions Trophy in England but the full extent of the injury will not be known until his operation.

"Until we know what the surgeon has done we cannot speculate on how long he will be out of action," Clarke said.

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Kaneria comes back to Essex

AFP, London

Pakistani leg-spinner Danish Kaneria is to resume playing for Essex after Australian Scott Brant was forced to fly home for a possible operation on a serious foot injury.

Kaneria started the season with Essex but left in June to join up with Pakistan for the Asia Cup.

He failed to make the Pakistan squad for next month's Champions Trophy here and, as a result, is likely to be back on duty for Essex when they take on Durham in a County Championship match at Colchester next week.

Kaneria will join New Zealander Andre Adams as the county's two overseas players for the remainder of the campaign. Adams was originally signed as a replacement for Kaneria but will now cover for the injured Brant.

Essex physiotherapist Damien West said Brant was suffering from an extra bone fragment growing in his right heel.

"When he bowls the bone pinches on his joints, which causes a swelling. He has had injections to settle down the inflammation, which have helped a bit, but he is still very sore and it is difficult to predict if the condition can be resolved without surgery.

"In consultation with Queens-land it has been decided that it would be in Scott's best interests to

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Flame fiascos

AFP, Athens



Whether its doves of peace being roasted alive or mechanical glitches leaving officials red-faced, the lighting of the Olympic flame has proved memorable in more ways than one.

The climactic moment of all opening ceremonies is the moment when the treasured Olympic torch is carried into the arena at the end of a marathon trans-continental trek around the world.

At every Games, organisers try to conjure up new, ever more ingenious ways of using the torch to light the cauldron, where it will reside for the duration of the 17-day sporting extravaganza.

But recent history shows that the creative wizards responsible for

dreaming up the flame-lighting pyrotechnics might be wise to consider less elaborate methods.

The most grisly blunder came in Seoul in 1988 when dozens of doves released earlier in the opening ceremony alighted on the Olympic cauldron.

When the flame was lit, several of the birds were caught in the flames to the horror of watching spectators.

Four years later Barcelona organisers wisely saved the release of doves for the Olympic finale. At the flame-lighting, Spanish organisers recruited the services of an archer to fire a burning arrow into the cauldron.

At first glance the gimmick worked. But a closer inspection revealed that the flame had lit automatically as the arrow missed its target, sailing yards wide.

Four years later and organisers of the Atlanta Olympics recruited the services of boxing legend Muhammad Ali to do the honours.

The appearance of the former world

heavyweight champion -- shaking uncontrollably through Parkinson's syndrome -- electrified the fans.

Yet the torch lighting itself was a flop.

A pulley used to haul the flame up to the torch bowl was tortuously slow and to make matters worse the cauldron itself -- derided as looking like a carton of McDonalds french fries -- burned and blackened during the Games.

Anticipation over who would light the flame for the 2000 Olympics reached fever pitch in Sydney.

The smart money proved to be spot on with Aboriginal athletics star Cathy Freeman being handed the honour in what was billed as a gesture of reconciliation between black and white Australia.

But Freeman's moment in the spotlight nearly fell flat, when a platform supposed to rise after the lighting of the flame got stuck.

Freeman was left standing gobsmacked for nearly three min

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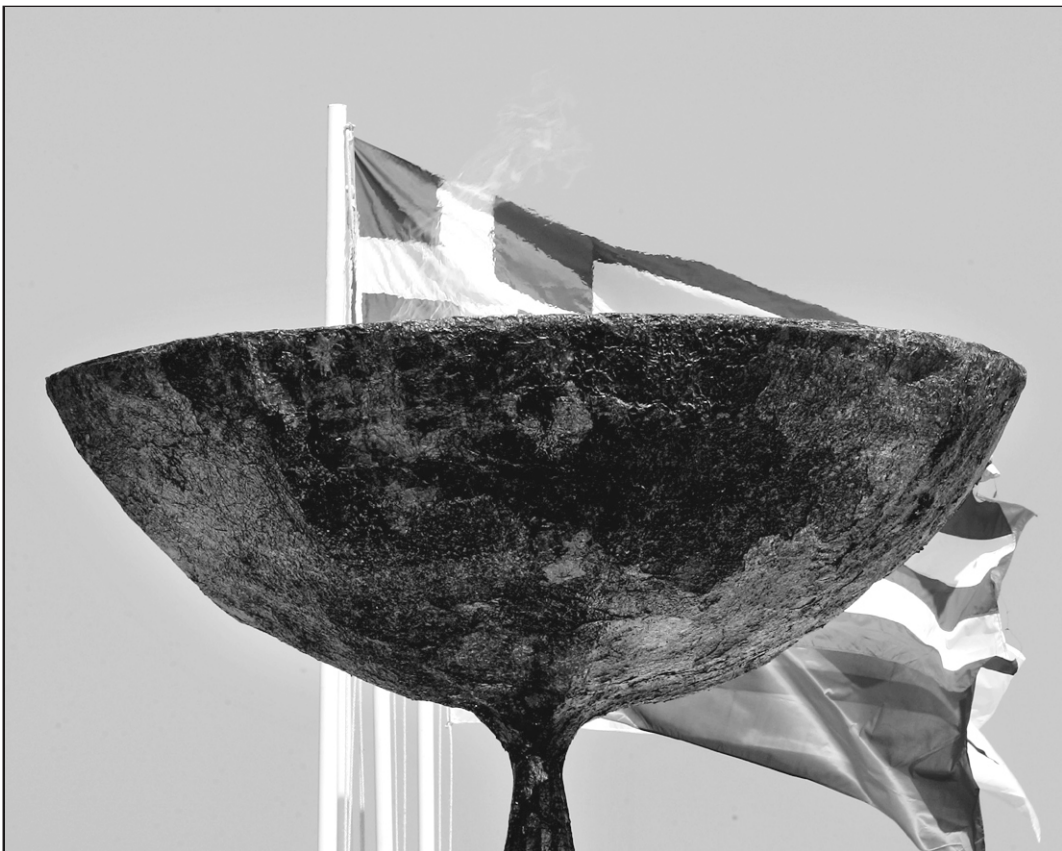


PHOTO: AFP

BLAST FROM THE PAST: A giant replica of an antique urn holds the Olympic flame in Athens yesterday.

More than sex symbols

AFP, Athens



Olympic acceptance gives women wrestlers the opportunity to show that they are not 'toothless ogres' or Baywatch wannabes.

A quartet of bright-eyed, educated American grapplers talked on Wednesday about their struggle for acceptance, even among family members and male wrestlers, and the racy jokes they have endured throughout their careers.

Women's wrestling will be contested for the first time at the Athens Olympics with four medals up for grabs.

"When you tell guys that you wrestle they expect you to be bigger, with just two-teeth, an ogre with a hunchback," said Sara McMann, a silver medalist at the 2003 world championships.

"We can help change that. I won a gold medal at an Olympic test event here in Athens earlier this year. I got a little teary when they raised the

American flag - it made me want to win again (at the Olympics)."

Patricia Miranda, who delayed entry to Yale Law School for a year to prepare for the Athens Games, added that the Olympics was an opportunity to silence the doubters and inspire a new generation of women wrestlers.

"This is our stage - we can show that women's wrestling is not a side joke or something that makes people think about mud wrestling," she said.

"They will see our sweat, tears and triumphs and that it is as intense as any male sport."

"People can turn on the television back home and see our pain and happiness. And other girls will say to themselves 'why can't women wrestle?'"

"If men think it is sexy to watch girls wrestling, fine. I do not hold that against them. We realise there is a long way to go, even within the sport, for us to gain respect."

Miranda added that she was sensitive to the resistance that still existed within the sport.

"There is a bit of resistance from male wrestlers," added the feisty 25-year-old, who was forced to join the men's team at school as there was no

women's squad.

"Some of them do not want things to change. They ask 'why do women want to wrestle.'"

Baby-faced Tela O'Donnell, who will be making her international debut in Athens, has heard all the jokes about women wrestlers.

"Sometimes people are not too classy with their comments," she said. "Somebody recently said some pretty unnecessary things and I thought 'Why would you say that?'"

Twenty-one-year Toccara Montgomery, who has a realistic chance of a gold medal in the 72kg division, has risen to the top despite a huge upheaval in her personal life when father Paul was jailed for double murder.

In 1998 when she was just 15, and before she turned to the sport, her dad was sent to prison for 30 years.

"I talked to him four days before I flew to Athens," she said. "He was very positive and supportive. He told me to 'do what you can' and reminded me that I still could not

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This is where he stops

Football

AFP, Paris

France's inspirational playmaker and captain Zinedine Zidane on Thursday announced his retirement from the national team after an illustrious career in which he won 93 caps and a World Cup winner's medal.

"I think that at a given moment you must say 'stop,'" Zidane said in a statement on his website www.zidane.fr.

"I have thought long and hard over this decision," he said. "It's the end of my international career with the French team."

"It's the time, it's my time. It's the end of a cycle: there have been some great players who retired in 2000 and 2002, other players are doing it and now I'm doing it. It's like that. You have

to stop one day," said the Real Madrid player.

Zidane said the decision was not taken in light of France's disappointing display in the Euro 2004 competition.

"I thought about it before Euro (2004). Independent of the result, I had anticipated quitting the French team. It is of course much easier to do that when you're losing than when you're winning," the father-of-three said.

New French coach Raymond Domenech said Monday he had not given up hope of persuading 32-year-old "Zizou" to continue an international career in which he also helped France secure the 2000 European Championship.

But on Thursday, he had bowed to the inevitable and expressed his "regret" at Zidane's announcement.

"I regret it, like most French-men. We met, we talked. Zidane thought things through and decided that it would be better to give up his place to

the young players.

"I regret it but I accept it," said Domenech. "The debate is over. We turn the page calmly over and carry on."

Zidane made his debut for France as a replacement in the 2-2 friendly with the Czech Republic in 1994, scoring both goals. He went on to score 26 goals during his 93 appearances and captained the team 11 times.

The highlight of the former Juventus and Bordeaux player's career was his starring role in the 3-0 victory over Brazil in the final of the 1998 World Cup tournament which France hosted.

Zidane stands sixth in the list of France's most capped players behind Marcel Desailly, Didier Deschamps, Lilian Thuram, Laurent Blanc and Bixente Lizarazu.

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