



## Did U Know?

Alex Wharf became the 183rd Englishman to play in a one-day international for his country during a NatWest Series match against India in Nottingham. Interestingly, the first England player to do so was none other than Geoffrey Boycott way back on January 5, 1971.

## What to WATCH

### ESPN

Sportscentre  
Live at 8.30 pm  
Here We Go  
Football programme  
Taped at 10.30 pm

### STAR Sports

English Premier League Preview  
Taped at 7.30 pm  
Sportsline  
Live at 8 pm  
Boxing Classic  
Jack Dempsey: The Early Years  
Taped at 9.30 pm



### Michael Vaughan

(England cricket captain)  
"This is the first time England have got to a final since 1992 so we'll be well up for the game on Saturday." While talking about his side's chances in the ICC Champions Trophy final against the West Indies.

## Star WHIZZ KID COMPETITION 21

Tick the correct answers, post  
The Daily Star

Competition closes at 8 pm  
Sept 24, 2004 and draw shortly afterwards

- Who won the first gold medal in the Athens Olympics?  
Du Galkina Devers
- Who became Asia Cup cricket champs?  
India Pakistan Sri Lanka
- Who clinched the Cincinnati Masters tennis title?  
Federer Henman Agassi
- Who lifted the 25th nat'l hockey crown?  
Usha MSC Bangladesh Army

Name .....

Class..... Roll No.....

School Address .....

Phone: (if any) .....

## Mashrafee back in the fold

### 21-man preliminary squad announced



SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) yesterday named four players who have just recovered or still nursing injuries in the preliminary squad of 21 for the Test and ODI series against New Zealand next month.

Captain Habibul Bashar, who returned home on Wednesday night from Australia following a successful surgery on his right thumb, has been included in the list after missing the ICC Champions Trophy in England. Another welcome return is that of injury-prone fast bowler Mashrafe bin-Mortuza who last played for the country a year ago.

Left-arm spinner Enamul Haque Junior, who captained Bangladesh U-19 team in England recently before a ruptured posterior cruciate ligament sidelined him mid-way through the tour, is also in the side and so too is his U-19 mate Talha Jubair. Pacesman Jubair has fought his way back from a persistent back

injury.

Bashar is expected to recover fully before the series but the others have a lot more to prove if they are to convince the selectors of their fitness.

22-year-old Mashrafe, regarded as the country's fastest bowler, has only started bowling recently after recuperating from a career threatening knee damage and looks an unlikely candidate to make the team as there is very little time and opportunity to show that he is match-fit before the series gets underway.

#### THE PROBABLES

Habibul Bashar, Rajin Saleh, Khaled Mashud, Khaled Mahmud, Javed Omar, Mushfiqur Rahman, Hannan Sarkar, Alok Kapali, Mohammad Ashraf, Mohammed Rafique, Manjarul Islam, Tapash Baisya, Faisal Hossain, Alamgir Kabir, Mashrafe Bin Mortuza, Enamul Haque Junior, Nazmul Hossain, Tareq Aziz, Nafees Iqbal, Aftab Ahmed and Talha Jubair.

Jubair could be considered for only the three-match ODI series after his reasonably good performance in limited overs games in England for the under 19s. It is believed he is not fit enough yet to take the load of Test matches. His last Test was against the West Indies in Chittagong in December 2002. Enamul too has not played a Test after the second game against England in Chittagong in his debut series last November.

The selectors, desperate to find a solution to the team's brittle batting, have brought back opener Hannan Sarkar and middle-order batsman Alok Kapali.

Sarker was dropped after a miserable tour of the West Indies in May-June while Kapali was axed from the Champions Trophy squad after a prolonged form slump.

Three Under-19 cricketers Nafees Iqbal, Aftab Ahmed and Nazmul Hossain, who were involved in the Champions Trophy

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## Bashar eyes Oct 4 return

SPORTS REPORTER

Habibul Bashar hopes to resume batting again within two weeks and begin his preparation for the coming home series against New Zealand, the Bangladesh cricket captain said yesterday.

Bashar returned from Australia on Wednesday night following surgery on his damaged right thumb in Melbourne.

"I have been not been feeling much pain after the plate was removed," he told The Daily Star over phone yesterday.

Bashar, who missed the ICC Champions Trophy, said that he is expected to join the national camp on Sunday.

"The surgeon (Greg Hoy) has told me that it takes total six weeks to fully recover from such injuries. So I am hoping by October 4 I can

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## 5-match bans for Hassan, Pradeep

SPORTS REPORTER

The disciplinary committee of the National Football League yesterday slapped Muktijoddha Sangsad defenders Hassan Al Mamun and Pradeep Poddar with five-match bans.

The Bangladesh internationals were penalised for assaulting members of the gate committee during the NFL semifinal between Muktijoddha and Mohammedan Sporting Club on September 7.

Hasan and Pradeep were involved in a fistfight at the entrance

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## Invitational hockey India agree to take part

SPORTS REPORTER

India confirmed their participation in the Invitational International Hockey Tournament which begins in Dhaka from September 30.

The Indian Under-21 side was given permission from the government to make the trip although they were invited at the last moment following withdrawals by Singapore and Iran respectively.

The Bangladesh Hockey Federation (BHF) meanwhile,

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## Ponting rallies for Tigers



BISHWAJIT ROY, from London

Ricky Ponting always likes to show he is a tough customer in any situation. But off the field the Australian captain is a different kind of character.

The 30-year-old was talking to group of Bangladeshi journalists after the world champions bowed out of the ICC Champions Trophy following a six-wicket defeat against England.

Ponting however is very disturbed by the negative campaign being waged against Test babes. He believed cricket's top bosses and especially major teams like Australia had a moral responsibility to lend their support.

"Bangladesh have performed well in some series including against Australia. It is true they are yet to win any Tests but I think four years is not good enough for any new nation if you consider the past records of the newcomers," he said.

The Australian captain, who will miss the first Test against India after breaking his thumb while fielding in

the first semifinal at Edgbaston on Tuesday, was diplomatic when asked to comment on the ICC's new



RICKY PONTING

idea of a two-tier Test competition which would ultimately reduce overseas tours by the bottom two countries.

"I think the ICC knows better than me what has to be done for improving the game. What I can say is that you have to play in different conditions if you want to improve your performance. Personally, I feel that the

ICC should offer its all-out support to help Bangladesh overcome their struggle in the international arena," he said.

About Bangladesh's poor showing in the meet, the Tasmanian right-hander said that sometimes it could happen to any side.

"If I am not wrong Bangladesh played all their good and competitive series abroad. They proved that they have the potential to compete in the highest level. Yes, they are struggling at the moment but I think you can overcome the situation if you're able to find out your mistakes," he added.

"I think self-belief is the key to handle any situation. If any side has the necessary self-belief they can win in the end. I urge your cricket chiefs to make a serious effort to find out why the boys lost the tempo they showed earlier," he suggested.

"Australia is a good friend of Bangladesh and its players are always ready to help you."

The Australian skipper was disappointed with his team's failure in the Champions Trophy having

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LEGENDARY FALL! West Indies captain Brian Lara is falling to the ground after being hit by a bouncer from Pakistan fast bowler Shoaib Akhtar during their ICC Champions Trophy semifinal in Southampton on Wednesday.

## Lara relief for Windies

### Short-pitched English plan?



REUTERS/AFP, London

West Indies captain Brian Lara has been cleared of serious injury after being struck in the neck by the ball during his side's seven-wicket victory over Pakistan in the ICC Champions Trophy semifinal on Wednesday.

An ICC statement said Lara would remain under observation but is expected to lead West Indies against hosts England in the final at The Oval on Saturday.

Lara fell to the ground after being struck by a delivery from Pakistan fast bowler Shoaib Akhtar, who had produced several 150 kph deliveries in his opening salvo.

Lara appeared to lose sight of

and he said the team were now ready for England again.

Sarwan said: "The win over Pakistan was very important to us because as a country we have not won anything important in recent years."

"I'm not surprised how well England have done and it promises to be a great occasion."

The vice-captain also said, "The good news is that Brian Lara is going to be fine. I know he is eagerly looking forward to leading the team in the final, so it is a big boost."

Pakistan captain Inzamamul Haq also believes the West Indies will start as favourites to win the title because they have run into form at the right time and have the bowling discipline to succeed on the big day.

Inzamam said: "It does not surprise me that the final will be between England and the West Indies. They are both playing well at

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Zimbabwe cricketers celebrate the dismissal of PCB Patron's XI batsman Faysal Ather (with the bat) on the first day of their four-day tour match at the Gaddafi Stadium in Lahore yesterday. The home side reached 353-5 in 83 overs before bad light ended play for the day.

## Don't write India off



AFP, New Delhi

India's cricket captain Sourav Ganguly said on Thursday he was confident the switch from limited-day cricket to traditional five-day Tests would change his team's fortunes in next month's home series against Australia.

India go into the highly-anticipated clash against the world champions low on confidence after demoralising defeats in four consecutive one-day tournaments since August, including the ongoing Champions Trophy in England.

But Ganguly was certain his side

will recover to dent Australia's chances of winning their first Test series on Indian soil in 35 years.

"It is just a matter of getting our touch back," Ganguly said on the team's return after the early Champions Trophy exit.

"This same set of boys have done wonders over the last two years by reaching the World Cup final, securing a 1-1 draw in Australia and winning the first ever series in Pakistan."

"I am confident we will do well against Australia like we did the previous two times they have been in India."

India overcame Mark Taylor's tourists in 1998 and then stopped Steve Waugh's world beaters in their tracks three years later with a

sensational 2-1 triumph in what is widely regarded as one of the finest Test series ever played.

Ganguly's men, trounced inside four days in the first Test and made to follow-on 274 runs behind in the second, fought back to win the three-match series on the back of Venkatesai Laxman's magnificent 281 in the second Test and a 32-wicket series haul by off-spinner Harbhajan Singh.

"We need to recreate that magic again," said Ganguly. "The past will not win us matches. We have to ensure we are up to the task whenever we take the field."

India have their work cut out for the four-Test series which begins in

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