



(Pakistan cricket captain)

"My father has always been a source of inspiration for me since my childhood and he patted me on the back when I was coming to the stadium.

After scoring a century in his 100th

NAT'L SCHOOL CRICKET

#### Natl'I Bank steal opening day's thunder

SPORTS REPORTER

Mahmudul Hasan led the way as National Bank Public School massacred Dhanmondi Tutorial by 352 runs in one of the opening day matches of the Standard Chartered Young Tigers Under-17 National School Cricket Championship which began under a new format yesterday at different city venues.

Hasan (130) and Mirai Ahmed (96) pummeled the Dhanmondi Tutorial bowling as National Bank amassed 428 in 47.3 overs. In reply, Dhanmondi Tutorial were bundled out for 76 in 23.4 overs at the Lalmatia Housing School ground.

At the RMSG (Residential Model School Ground)-1 ground, Natun Paltan Line High School (301-10) also registered a huge 109-victory over Scholastica (192-10).

Manarat (126-6) beat Mastermined (125-10) by four wickets at

At the Gulshan Youth Ground, Tejkunipara High School (222-9) handed 63-run defeat on Rashid Adarsha High School (159-8) in rain-reduced 30-over over match.

Blue Bird International (67-6) defeated Bangladesh International Tutorial (66-10) at Uttara Friends Club Ground. Maple Leaf (142-2) outplayed

BM Abdur Rouf Rifles College (138-10) by eight wickets at Dhanmondi Club Ground.

At the Mirpur outer stadium, Bangladesh International School (176-3) beat Paramount High School (173-10) by seven wickets.

The day's other match between Cephalon International and Parajoar Kalindi High School was abandoned due to rain.

### Blue Berry, BAF post wins

**SPORTS REPORTER** 

Blue Berry Travels and Bangladesh Air Force earned comfortable wins against their respective rivals in the Independence Day hockey tournament at the Maulana Bhasani National Stadium yesterday.

Blue Berry outplayed Old Dhaka Hockey Development Board 6-1 after leading the first half 4-0.

Bangladesh Air Force blanked Bangladesh Police 3-0.

### I was under

FROM PAGE 12 bowling this delivery.'

"Questions over my bowling action were raised before, but such things happen in cricket." Harbhaian said, adding the pitch was still good for batting.

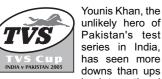
"The pitch was not offering any spin, but I extracted some bounce after tea and got two wickets after that."

### Harbhajan

	,						
ROM PAGE 12							
Balaji	29	4	114	2			
Kumble	46	8	159	2 0 6			
Harbhajan	51.5	9	152	6			
endulkar	3	0	14	0			
Sanguly	4	0	13	0			
NDIA: First innings							
3ambhir no	13						
Sehwag no	39						
Extras: (b-1	3						
Total: (For no loss in 10 overs) 55							
Bowler	0	M	R	W			
Sami	5	1	23	0			
Razzaq	3	0	23	0			
Kaneria	1	0	6	0			
Arshad	1	0	2	0			

# The only way is up

REUTERS, Bangalore



unlikely hero of Pakistan's test series in India has seen more downs than ups in international

However, the 27-year-old has now finally cemented his place in the team after his inspired careerbest 267 in the third Test on Friday came on the back of a brilliant 147 in Calcutta (Kolkata).

It was Younis' eighth Test century in 35 matches, the highest score by a foreign batsman in India and the sixth best by a Pakistani in history.

His marathon 11-1/2 hour knock helped his team score a mammoth 570 in their first innings and Younis believes Pakistan should win from

"We must go for victory, capitalising on the cracks on the wicket that could be very helpful to our spinners," Younis said.

The team cause notwithstandng, the innings was a big personal landmark for a man who started with a century on debut against Sri Lanka in 1999 but has always been under pressure to prove himself.

"I never worry about my failures, try not to take any extra pressure,"

"Even when I'm dropped, I play my natural game. I never think my cricket will end."

One of the few batsmen who retained his place in the team after Pakistan's disastrous World Cup campaign in 2003, Younis lost it soon after due to a poor run in the home series against Bangladesh and South Africa that year.

He came back into the side for the one-day series against India, but failed to consolidate a permament place in the test side.

When he finally did start getting into his batting groove in Australia

this year with a fighting 87 at Melbourne, there was team and personal disaster in store

Pakistan were routed 3-0 in the Test series and Younis had to return home from the one-dayers because his father died.

When he was appointed vicecaptain for the current India tour in



**YOUNIS KHAN ...267** 

place of Yousuf Youhana, he came under severe criticism from several quarters. Captain Inzamamul Haq was also not too thrilled by the

Eager to win his skipper and team's respect on the India tour,

Younis could not have done it in a more emphatic manner.

He shared in a 324-run stand with Inzamam (184) and later said he could not play like his skipper. "He is always an inspiration,

can't bat like him." The 35-year-old Inzamam returned the compliment by saying

Younis batted better than him. Younis and Inzamam had once famously scuffled, in front of the team and media, during a practice football match in Bulawayo. But that

Younis is a Pathan, a collection of tribles who are fabled guardians of the wild mountains of Pakistan's Northwest Frontier bordering Afghanistan

now seems to be well behind them.

He resembles fellow-Pathan and his cricketing idol Imran Khan when he dances down the track against spinners, hair sticking out from under his baggy cap.

Especially strong in the arc from backward point to extra cover, he enjoys getting down on one knee and driving extravagantly. "I never think of records, so I'm

not disappointed at missing a triplecentury," Younis said after his 504ball knock

"It was really never on my mind."

List of top-10 individual Test scores for Pakistan after Younis Khan hit 267 in the third and final Test against India on Friday:

Batsman	Runs	Against	Venue	Season
Hanif Mohammad	337	West Indies	Bridgetown	1957-58
Inzamamul Haq	329	New Zealand	Lahore	2002
Javed Miandad	280*	India	Hyderabad	1982-83
Zaheer Abbas	274	England	Birmingham	1971
Javed Miandad	271	New Zealand	Auckland	1988-89
Younis Khan	267	India	Bangalore	2005
Javed Miandad	260	England	The Oval	1987
Wasim Akram	257*	Zimbabwe	Sheikhupura	1996-97
Zaheer Abbas	240	England	The Oval	1974
Saleem Malik	237	Australia	Rawalpindi	1994-95
(*denotes not out)				



LET THE BATTLE BEGIN! Batsmen of Natun Paltan Line High School await their turn during the match against Scholastica at the Residential Model School Ground on the opening day of the Standard Chartered Young Tigers National School Cricket championship yesterday.

known European clubs, they have

these players because they've

shown enthusiasm and a desire to

win, without fear," said Pekerman.

players but structurally it's new."

"I've got a lot of confidence in

"This is a team of well-known

The coach tried to play down the

altitude factor but added: "The basic

thing in La Paz is not to lose the ball,

because this will force us to run

more to get it back and will wear us

down. And that will lead us to dis-

His counterpart Messa said he

Bolivia are missing experienced

central defender Juan Manuel Pena

through injury and their team is

centred around veteran midfielder

club Oriente Petrolero, has made an

excellent comeback after previously

announcing his retirement with

Sanchez, who now plays for local

PHOTO: COURTESY

wanted to make use of the altitude

advantage.

Frwin Sanchez

Portugal's Boavista.

Deputy Commissioner of Narayanganj SM Harunur Rashid giving away the cham-

pion's trophy to last season's winning team during the inauguration ceremony of the

Seraj Memorial Premier Cricket League 2005 at the Osmani Stadium in Chashara

recently. The league is being held under the patronage of Arab Bangladesh Bank.

little international experience.

## **PREVIEW:** BOLIVIA V ARGENTINA Altitude test

REUTERS, La Paz



Argentina coach Jose Pekerman says that keeping possession will be the key for Argentina when they face

Bolivia at 3,600 metres in Saturday's World Cup qualifier in La Paz.

Bolivia coach Ovidio Messa, the latest man to occupy the hot seat, will be making his debut in a match which pits the top and bottom teams in the 10-nation South American

Table-propping Bolivia, who have already gone through two coaches in their campaign, have 10 points from 11 games, while Argentina have 22.

Argentina coach Jose Pekerman is taking a young, experimental side to La Paz and resting his top players, who are staying in Buenos Aires to prepare for Wednesday's game at home to Colombia

Although most of the squad for

BDR kabaddi champs

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Rifles became unbeaten champions in the Independence Day Kabaddi tourna-ment when they inflicted 31-13 defeat on Bangladesh Army in the final at the Outer Stadium yester-day.

day.
The winners led the first half 13-4.

### No room

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more time to become match-fit," a PCB release said.

The one-day series opens in the southern coastal town of Cochin on April 2. The other matches will be played in Visakhapatnam (April 5), Jamshedpur (April 9), Ahmedabad (April 12), Kanpur (April 15) and New Delhi (April 17).

SQUAD: Inzamamul Haq (capt), Younis Khan, Salman Butt, Mohammad Hafeez, Shahid Afridi, Yousuf Youhana, Asim Kamal, Kamran Akmal, Abdul Razzaq, Shahid Nazir, Rana Navedul Hasan, Mohammad Sami. Rao Iftikhar Danish Kaneria, Arshad Khan and Shoaib Malik.

MSC INTER-SCHOOL CRICKET

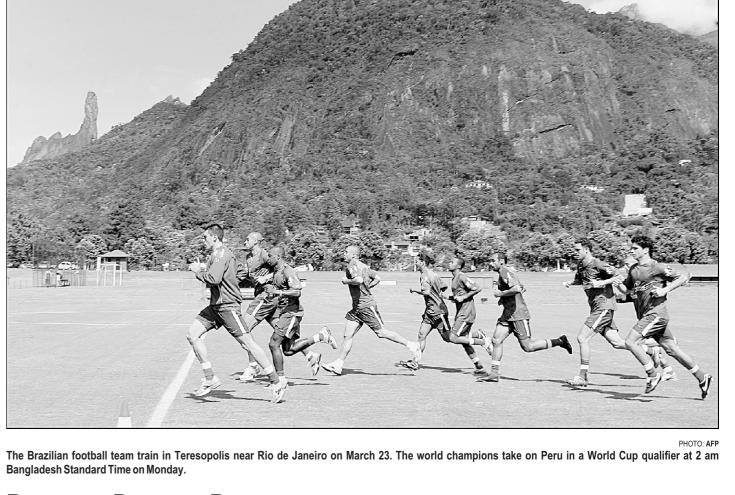
## **Motijheel Govt** champions

SPORTS REPORTER

Anan hammered a half-century as Motijheel Govt High School beat Kurmitola High School by eight wickets to clinch the title of the Mohammedan Dhaka Metropolis Inter-School Cricket Tournament at the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium yesterday.

Batting first Kurmitola scored 163 for 9 in the stipulated 40 overs with Mahfuz Alam making the team highest 56. Rasool picked up four wickets for 26 for the Motijheel

In reply, Anan showed the way as Motijheel Govt easily posted 164 for 2 in 28.3 overs. Anan was adjudged man of the match for his 73-ball 67.



PREVIEW: BRAZIL V PERU

# The Robinho question

REUTERS, Rio de Janeiro



Brazil coach Carlos Alberto Parreira may bow to public opinion and field 21-year-old Santos forward Robinho in his team for Sunday's World

Parreira is often criticised for being unnecessarily conservative and Brazilians are hoping that this time, he will throw caution to the wind and field Robinho alongside Ronaldo, Ronaldinho and Kaka.

Cup qualifier at home to Peru.

The formation is already being dubbed the Fantastic Four even before it has been used.

Robinho, whose speed and cheeky skills have made him a favourite with the public, has started

only one international so far -- the 7-1 friendly win over Hong Kong in February.

Parreira needs to find some inspiration to put Brazil back on track in the qualifying competition and, with Inter Milan's Adriano missing through injury, Robinho could be his answer. Although Brazil are second in the

10-nation South American group and still on course for the Germany finals in 2006, they have taken only one point from their last two games against Colombia and Ecuador and have failed to score. Their lack of imagination when

last November's goalless draw was especially worrying. Parreira was offering no clues on

facing a packed Colombian defence

whether Robinho would start the match in Gioania on Sunday after fog curtailed Thursday's training "I'm going to decide on the day of

the game." he told reporters.

Peru, who have drawn 1-1 in their last two meetings with the world champions, will be happy to repeat the scoreline as they attempt to qualify for their first World Cup

They are seventh in the standngs with 13 points from 11 games but are only three points behind third-placed Ecuador and Parreira s wary of the attack formed by Dutch-based striker Jefferson Farfan and Bayern Munich's Claudio Pizarro.

"It's not going to be easy

because they have an experienced team with good players and a dangerous counter-attack," Parreira warned. Paolo Guerrero. Pizarro's team

mate at Bayern and another hope for the future, is nursing a thigh strain and will not start, though he could be used as a substitute. The top four teams in the group

qualify directly for the finals and the fifth plays off against the Oceania region winners.

Peru, coached by Brazilian Paulo Autuori, have already said that they are not afraid of the fivetimes world champions.

"We're going there to win, we know Brazil are strong and I'm sure we'll play a great game," said

Bahrain pip

## It's tight in Europe



Europe's big guns play World Cup 2006 qualifiers this Saturday in the knowledge they have little room for error with just one

There is only a point separating the strong quartet of The Netherlands,

automatic group qualifying spot up for

Romania, Finland and the Czech Republicin Group 1. The Dutch, leading on goal difference, face a testing trip away to secondplaced Romania and coach Marco van Basten has called up newcomers

Hedwiges Maduro and Ryan Babel of

Aiax for the clash. Martijn Meerdink of AZAlkmaar was a late withdrawal with a serious knee injury, but van Basten has been boosted by the return to fitness of Manchester United's Ruud van Nistelrooy, Chelsea's Arjen Robben, and PSV duo Wilfred Bouma and Phillip Cocu.

The fourth-placed Czechs host Finland without injured striker Jan Koller, with both sides on nine points and looking to put pressure on the top two.

In Group 2, Ukraine enjoy a six-point lead and sit out this round of matches, but second-placed Greece, the European champions, face a tough away trip to

Turkey, the 2002 World Cup semifinalists who failed to qualify for Euro 2004, are lying third in Group 2, eight points behind Ukraine albeit with a game

Slovakia have a chance to draw level

with Group 3 pacesetters Portugal, who hold a three-point advantage over their rivals with an extra game under their

The Slovaks travel to Estonia, one of three teams along with Russia and Latvia on seven points.

In Group 4, three teams are locked in top place on eight points. With all to play for, Ireland travel to Israel and France are practically obliged to win against the Swiss after being held to draws at home by two of their direct rivals.

France, who have only beaten the Faroe Islands and Cyprus so far, travel to Israel four days after their encounter with

Group 5 sees frontrunners Italy host winless Scotland without the dropped Alessandro del Piero and injured defender Alessandro Nesta. Roma striker Vincenzo Montella, the leading scorer in Italy's Serie A with 19 goals, was a late with drawal with an ankle injury.

England are in pole position in Group 6, and play home country rivals Northern Ireland at Old Trafford. England's Crystal Palace striker

Andrew Johnson was ruled out Thursday with an ankle injury, his place being taken by Birmingham's Emile Heskey. "I guess people on paper will say we should win the game but we have got to

eam the right to win, we've got to go out there and play as a team and get the three points we need," Manchester United centreback Rio Ferdinand said. There is a confident air about the team - we've got the players individually

but individuals don't win tournaments." Second-placed Poland, just a point adrift of England, host winless bottom

Mohammedan

Dhaka Metropolitan Inter-School Cricket Tournament 2005

points, visit Wales for a match both teams need to win to keep their qualifying hopes

Wales have not qualified for a major

football finals since the 1958 World Cup and new coach John Toshack admitted: The three top sides in Group 7 all have the weekend off, but strugglers Belgium and Bosnia-Herzegovina face off with

neither side having managed to yet register a victory. In Group 8, goal-happy leaders Sweden travel to second-placed Bulgaria, who have a game in hand, while

third-placed Croatia travel to Iceland.

### Lankan cricket board officially disbanded

AFP, Colombo

Sri Lanka's sports minister Jeevan Kumaratunga has sacked the country's cricket governing body amid allegations of financial irregularities, ministry officials said Friday.

Kumaratunga dismissed the Sri Lanka Cricket committee just three days before the newly-elected members were due to take office on Sunday and replaced it with a special administration team, a ministry official said.

He said the move, effective overnight, was made amid allegations of financial irregularities in what is seen as the country's richest sporting body.

## Police on Thursday arrested a female suspect who is linked to the Lisbon midfielder Rogerio Regis.

A top official from Brazil's internal security service told AFP that police pounced in an operation in the coastal city of Caraguatatuba, which is close to Campinas where the player's mother was kidnapped.

### Mukti leave

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only real chance to break the deadlock came in the 65th minute but substitute Asif's right-footed salvo was brilliantly saved by custodian Titumir, who stood under the bar in

Muktijoddha into action when the lanky Ghansha, who was given a midfield role instead of his customary defensive position, received a ball from Moni in the danger zone and within a spilt-second unleashed a powerful left-footer to put his side ahead after Abahani defender Shawkat failed to clear a Firoz Mahmud Titoo's chip.

settle a well-built striker Moni got a ball into the box from a Amin Rana throw and dribbled past unheralded Abahani right-back Nurul Amin Shipon before firing a fierce grounder that left custodian Nizamuddin helpless.



Dhaka Mayor Sadek Hossain Khoka is seen with the champion and runners-up teams of the Mohammedan Dhaka Metropolitan Inter-School Cricket Tournament 2005 at the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium yesterday.

## **N** Korea

REUTERS, Pyongyang

Husain Ali scored two breakaway goals as Bahrain snatched a 2-1 win in North Korea on Friday to post their first victory of the final round of Asian 2006 World Cup qualifiers.

Bahrain went top of Group B, at least until Japan take on Iran in Tehran later on Friday, with four points from two games while North Korea lost their second match in a row. Ali put the visitors ahead with an

eighth-minute header to stun the crowd of 60,000 at Pyongyang's Kim II-sung stadium. The Bahrain striker then scored another against the run of play in the 58th minute.

Striker Pak Song-kwan pulled one back for North Korea five minutes later and the home side put Bahrain under intense pressure as they went in search of an equaliser.

## **Kidnapped** mom released

kidnapping of the mother of Sporting Regis's mother, Ines Fidelis, has been released after three days in

absence of suspended Aminul. That opportunity triggered

And before Abahani could even