



## Did U Know?

Andrew Sandham of England was the first batsman to reach 300-mark in the history of Test cricket. Don Bradman and Brian Lara are the only two cricketers in Test annals to register two 300-plus innings.



## Shoaib Akhtar

(Pakistan fast bowler)  
"I am disappointed at not being selected for the West Indies tour. Missing the Indian tour due to injury was bad enough, but this is a big let down."

## What to WATCH

- TEN Sports**  
West Indies vs South Africa  
First ODI  
Live at 8:00 pm
- ESPN**  
English Premier Football League  
Chelsea vs Charlton Athletic  
Live at 5:25 pm
- Everton vs Newcastle United  
Live at 7:55 pm
- Man United vs West Bromwich  
Live at 10:10 pm
- STAR Sports**  
English Premier Football League  
Crystal Palace vs Southampton  
Live at 7:55 pm
- Primera Liga  
Real Madrid vs Racing Santander

## ACTIVE CHESS

### Zia, Rakib jt champs

**SPORTS REPORTER**  
Grand Master Ziaur Rahman and International Master Abdullah Al-Rakib finished unbeaten to become joint champions in the active chess tournament at the federation hall-room yesterday.  
They bagged 6.5 points each from seven matches.  
FIDE Master Abu Sufian Shakil followed them with 5.5 points in the day-long Swiss-league competition.

## BIT, Green Herald school volleyball champions

**SPORTS REPORTER**  
BIT-1 clinched the boys' title while Green Herald won the girls' crown in the Shah Sports School Volleyball tournament beating their respective rivals in the final at the Mirpur Shaheed Suhrawardy Indoor Stadium yesterday.  
BIT-1 beat Children Academy 3-1 while Green Herald thumped Scholastica 3-0.  
BIT-2 finished third in the boys' section and Viganunnisa Noon School in the girls' group.

## Friendly cricket

**SPORTS REPORTER**  
European Standard School (ESS) Teachers' XI defeated their Students' XI by five wickets in a friendly Twenty20 cricket match at the Dhanmondi Cricket Academy ground yesterday.  
In reply to the Students' 93 all out, the Teachers reached the target with two overs to spare.  
Zamirul Haq took four wickets and scored 50 for the winners.

# DMFLC sweat over sponsor apathy

## Football

**SPORTS REPORTER**

There was high hope among the country's football bosses that the sponsors will jump at the opportunity to be part of the Dhaka Premier Division football league since it was going to be held at the crowd-pulling Bangabandhu National Stadium.  
But the reality has been different. With just two weeks to go till the scheduled kick off of the most anticipated local football event, the Dhaka Metropolitan Football League Committee (DMFLC) has still not managed a sponsor.  
Western Union Money Transfers had sponsored the league during the last two seasons spending some 50 lakh Taka. But they were reluc-

tant to come forward this time around. League committee secretary Mozammel Haque Mukta expressed his frustration yesterday over the issue.

"We are trying hard to get a sponsor but the reality is nobody is showing any interest. We are in talks with two companies at the moment but that is also just in the preliminary stages," said Mukta.

Sources said the companies were Tibet, the sponsors of the recently concluded Federation Cup, and GrameenPhone.

The Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) is preferring to play a waiting game over the matter.

"They (league committee) have to take the initiative first and get a sponsor. Only then we will lend a helping hand. We expected that companies would show interest with matches at the BNS. But unfortu-

nately that is not happening," said BFF general secretary Anwarul Haque Helal.

"We will only move for a sponsor if the league committee concedes failure," he added.

There was another issue the BFF has to resolve before the league starts with three top clubs last year's runners-up Sheikh Russel, Abahani and Mohammedan - demanding an increase in the number of foreign booters.

"It is true that we have a lack of quality players in the country. That's why there is a huge gap between the teams. Foreign players could help bridge that gap. We hope to address the matter in our next meeting," said Helal.

According to this year's bylaws, a team is allowed three foreign booters at most but can field only two in a match.

# India turn to ex-captains to find new coach

**REUTERS, New Delhi**

India's cricket board included three former Test captains in a committee set up on Friday to appoint a successor to New Zealander John Wright, who departed as national coach last month.

The six-member panel of Sunil Gavaskar, Ravi Shastri and S Venkatraghavan plus three Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) officials will hold their first meeting on Sunday, a board release said.

An Australian candidate is favoured to replace Wright, who ended his 4-1/2-year tenure as India's first foreign coach after the home series against Pakistan to spend time with his family.

Former Australia captain Greg Chappell and his compatriot Dean Jones have shown interest and have already forwarded their CVs to the BCCI, secretary Karunakaran Nair said.

However, a third Australian, former all-rounder Tom Moody, is seen as the front-runner.

Moody, 39, a member of the World Cup-winning squads of 1987 and 1999, is the director of cricket at English county Worcestershire and is said to have been recommended by Wright.

India's media have criticised the board for not moving quickly to find Wright's replacement.

However, Nair said the BCCI had until July because India's next match is not until August when the team is due to play a one-day tri-series in Sri Lanka.

Batting great Chappell was also in the race in 2000 when ex-New Zealand captain Wright was chosen.

Australia's Dav Whatmore, who guided Sri Lanka to the 1996 World Cup and renewed his contract with Bangladesh last month, has also shown interest in the post.

## Inzy spills the beans

**CRICINFO**

Shoaib Akhtar was left out of the Pakistan squad for the tour of West Indies on disciplinary grounds, Inzamamul Haq has said.

It was widely assumed that Shoaib had been left out because he was unfit. Akhtar, who had recovered from his hamstring injury, was asked to shed some weight to be fully fit.

"Shoaib has disciplinary problems and I believe no player is bigger than the team," Inzamam was quoted as saying by The News.

"We've had these problems with him in the past and my concern is that it has a negative impact on other players also."

Akhtar has been questioned several times in the past for his off-field activities and his approach towards the game.

Inzamam also brushed off the suggestion that the team would miss its spearhead.

"What I learnt in India was that when every player contributes and you play strictly as a team, the absence of even the best player is not felt. In the West Indies to be successful we've to again play as a team and with spirit to do well. The strength of our bowling attack is not such a big issue."

Pakistan have never won a series in the West Indies and are scheduled to play in three one-day international and two Tests. The first one-day is on May 18 in St Vincent.

Younis Khan will lead the side in the first Test, in the absence of Inzamam, who has to serve a one-match ban for showing dissent in the third Test against India in Bangalore.

Inzamam remarked that Younis

SEE PAGE 13 COL 1

# Team first for Dravid

## Cricket

**AFP, New Delhi**

Indian vice-captain Rahul Dravid says he does not believe in running after the captaincy and would rather work in the interests of the team.

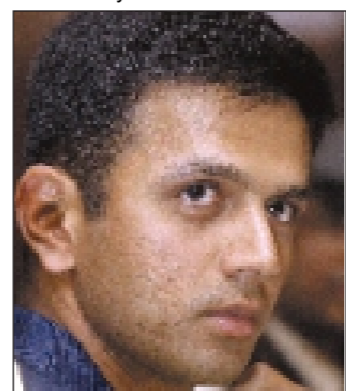
"I don't believe you need to be desperate to go out of the way to pursue it (captaincy)," Dravid told the weekly Outlook news magazine.

"That definitely does not help the team dynamics," said Dravid, who led the team in the last two one-dayers against Pakistan after skipper Sourav Ganguly was slapped with a six-match ban for a slow over-rate.

"I believe that when we are young and growing up, wanting to be cricketers, we aspire to play for India. Once we realise that ambition and establish ourselves in the team, the challenge is to perform consistently.

"Then, perhaps, the ambition of being captain comes in. This is true for everyone and I am no different," said Dravid, who has led India with reasonable success in six Tests and 12 one-dayers.

The 32-year-old said he felt he



RAHUL DRAVID

had the aggression needed to succeed at the helm over a longer period of time.

"To me aggression is about putting up a good performance under pressure, consistently, and when the team needs it the most," he said.

Dravid, who has scored 7,696 runs in 89 Tests and 8,134 runs in 252 one-dayers, felt outgoing coach John Wright of New Zealand had laid a solid foundation.

"John has done a very good job and set a nice platform for the next person. Hopefully, John's successor will be able to take the team to a higher level," he said.

India are looking for a new coach as Wright decided to part ways after nearly five years.

India's next assignment is in August when they travel to Sri Lanka for a tri-series also featuring the West Indies.

## 2007 WORLD CUP

# Windies going slow

## Cricket

**REUTERS, ST JOHN'S, Antigua**

On an average weekday morning in Barbados the drive from Bridgetown's prestige hotel district to Kensington Oval can take 45 minutes.

The journey is less than seven kilometres.

Kensington Oval is scheduled to host the 2007 World Cup final, when around 20,000 cricket fans from across the globe will add to an already crippling load on the narrow, clogged and, in places, crumbling roads.

Plans are afoot to alleviate the potential crisis, with the building of elevated freeways the latest idea put forward.

The Kensington Oval is due to be knocked down in June after Pakistan's tour of West Indies, and is due to be rebuilt, World Cup organisers say, by the end of 2006.

The ground's capacity will be more than doubled to 28,000, and its facilities will be dramatically improved.

At least, that is the blueprint, though so far nothing has been demolished or constructed.

Despite the problems, many people are confident the Caribbean will be ready.

"I do fully believe that not only will

the West Indies and Caribbean region be ready to host the next cricket World Cup, but I expect that the world would be shocked into understanding that we in the Caribbean are as special as they come when it comes to putting on a wonderful show," Colin Croft, the former West Indies fast bowler and now a respected commentator, wrote in the Trinidad and Tobago Express.

"I do have my reservations about our attitudes of accelerating at the last minute to get it all done, but despite the traumas that we have suffered, I also know that Caribbean people, individually and collectively, are tremendously resilient people."

"I know that we will be ready, spectacularly so."

Others, however, are less convinced.

"They'd better get a move on," a taxi driver said as he nudged his cab through the morning traffic during last month's third Test between West Indies and South Africa at Kensington Oval.

"We keep hearing that this or that is going to happen, that Canadian engineers are going to rebuild our road system, which is not good because a lot of the streets are built on sand."

"But it's all talk -- nothing ever seems to happen, and the time is getting short."

Crickets fans hoping to find answers to their questions by going

to www.worldcupbarbados.com, the website published on official World Cup promotional material, are informed that they have reached the future home of a travel industry site.

When former West Indies captain Brian Lara, perhaps the most recognised person in the Caribbean, travels from his home in Trinidad to Guyana, he is required to present his passport to an immigration official.

He has to pay departure tax and if he needs to change Trinidad dollars for the Guyanese variety.

That is because Guyana, which is just an hour's flight from Trinidad, is a sovereign state, as are Barbados, Antigua, Jamaica and the other seven countries where World Cup matches are scheduled to be played.

Plans to institute travel documents that will ease movement through the region are on the cards, but they remain just plans. The same goes for an as yet unseen universal Caribbean currency.

For all his enthusiasm, Croft also asked more complex questions.

"While the Caribbean and its people are passionate for the sport of cricket, will the sustainable benefits of the World Cup slip by them, especially after the tremendous investments that would have been used to bring off a successful World Cup?," he wrote.

SEE PAGE 13 COL 1



Sheikh Russel's Moroccan forward Rachid (L) puts the ball into an open net while a Bangladesh Army defender watches during their Independence Day tournament encounter at the Rajshahi Stadium on Friday.

## INDEPENDENCE DAY FOOTBALL

# Mukti, Russel in semis

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi**

Muktijoddha Sangsad and Sheikh Russel Krira Chakra of Dhaka reached the semifinals of the Independence Day Football Tournament winning their respective matches at the Rajshahi Stadium here yesterday.

Russel KC came from a goal

down to knock out Bangladesh Army from the eight-team meet with a thrashing 5-2 win while Independence Day Gold Cup champions and Federation Cup runners-up Muktijoddha eliminated Rajshahi Mayor Eleven 1-0 with a third minute strike from man-of-the-match Rony in the day's second match.

All five goals for Dhaka Premier League runners-up Russel in the replay of the opening match came from their Moroccan forwards with Rachid slotting a hat-trick and captain Egir Mohammed adding two.

The game was abandoned due to inclement weather and power failure on Thursday as the extra time could not get started after a 1-1 draw in regulation time.

For Army, striker Mizan converted an eight-minute penalty after Ripon was tripped inside the box by Russel stopper Pradeep and substitute Tofazzal scored six minutes from time with a brilliant header.

Conceding an early goal could not demoralise Russel, who hit back to take a 2-1 lead before the game

reached the halfway mark, thanks to strikes by Egir in the 16th and 30th minutes.

Despite being criticised for missing half a dozen chances, the Moroccan forward was adjudged man-of-the-match for an outstanding game which inspired his younger colleagues.

But it was Rachid who was finding the net now and again after the break. The tall Moroccan striker netted a right-footer three minutes into the second half, connected Egir's timely pass from right flank to make it 4-1 in the 56th and completed his treble just two minutes

SEE PAGE 13 COL 4

## SA-WI ODI series from today

**BBC ONLINE, Undated**

West Indies paceman Pedro Collins is ready to shoulder extra responsibility in the one-day series against South Africa, which starts today in Jamaica.

The second ODI will also be played in Jamaica, tomorrow, followed by matches in Barbados (May 11) and Trinidad (May 14, 15).

Collins missed the second half of the Test series, which West Indies lost 2-0, because of a back problem.

But he believes they can turn the tables in the one-dayers.

"I feel confident, and as the senior bowler I know it's my job to be the spearhead," said Collins, who has taken 38 wickets in 28 one-day appearances.

"We've got to be spot-on and improve in several areas. Our lines and lengths have to be on the mark."

"We have a challenge and we need to win the one-day series to salvage some pride."

West Indies beat South Africa by five wickets at The Oval last September during the ICC Champions Trophy and went on to win the tournament.

They also came out on top when they met in the first round group phase of the 2003 World Cup.

But South Africa have a good record against them overall, having won 21 out of 33 one-day matches, including a 5-2 success in the Caribbean on their last tour four years ago.

"They are a very aggressive bunch and will be coming at us - [as a bowler] you have to target certain guys and stick to your plan," Collins added.

## REGIONAL BRIDGE

# Double delight for India

**SPORTS REPORTER**

India lifted both the Open and women's team event titles in the Asia and Middle East Regional Bridge Championships which concluded in Dhaka yesterday.

In the Open final, which was carried over from Thursday, Indian pair Kiron Nader and Subhash Gupta came from a 14-point deficit to beat Jordan duo Ghassan Ghaner and Marwan Shanen 159-143 points.

The Indian eves recorded a more convincing 132-58 win over Pakistan in the women's final, also carried from Thursday.



Scene from yesterday's Asia and Middle East Regional Bridge Championships Open team event final between India and Jordan at Hotel Sonargaon.

PHOTO: STAR

SEE PAGE 13 COL 1