



Participants of the Grameenphone Pacer Hunt programme enter the Chittagong Divisional Stadium on Wednesday.

PHOTO: STAR

Dunga wants

FROM PAGE 20
Belgium, which we need to win."
Scolari revealed he made Manchester United winger Cristiano Ronaldo captain after a request from the Portuguese Football Federation's vice president Carlos Silva, who died on Saturday.
He said: "It was a request from Carlos Silva on Saturday. He asked me if I could give Cristiano the opportunity to captain in the country where he plays and where he might have some difficulties with the public."
"I understand he is not yet ready to be captain of a team, but Carlos asked me to do it and I am very happy with it."
"It was a request from a manager that we admire very much and is no longer with us. It was an opportunity to stimulate him before the game against Belgium."

Rahul blasts

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have sent it to the BCCI and cannot reveal anything on it.
"I have written whatever has happened and given it to the board. I am not supposed to talk on it."
Sehwag, who performed poorly on the South African tour, was dropped for the recent one-day series against the West Indies but has been picked for the four Sri Lanka one-dayers.

Abahani beaten

FROM PAGE 17
SCORES IN BRIEF
ABAHANI: 179-8 in 42 overs (Zahirul 1, Kuntal 23, Nazimuddin 64, Fernando 17, Naeem 15, Mashud 20 not out, Shuvo 1, Manzarul 16, Ziaur 0, Shahajada 11 not out, extras 11; Mahmuduzzaman 3-17, Nahidul 1-35, Rashedul 3-40).
KALABAGAN: 180-9 in 41.3 overs (Uttam 13, Kamrul 76, Shahbaz 18, Mahbubul 5, Nahidul 9, Ararat 15, Imtiazur 1, Rashedul 21, Monirul 5 not out, Shahin 7, Mahmuduzzaman 0 not out, extras 10; Ziaur 1-31, Shahajada 1-46, Shuvro 4-24, Manzarul 1-39, Fernando 1-20, Naeem 1-11).
Result: Kalabagan won by one wicket.
INDIRA: 212-5 in 43 overs (Arif 37, Ashiqur 17, Rasel 14, Mehedi 17, Sumon 65 not out, Golam Mowla 14, Kamrul 18 not out, extras 30; Tareq 1-54, Khadem 1-24, Mortuza 1-42, Arif 2-27).
CITY: 201 all out in 41.3 overs (Salahuddin 59, Anwar 0, Khadem 0, Mukter 11, Sonnet 19, Hossain 46, Mazharul 20, Farid 0, Tareq 15, Arif 9, Kamrul 1 not out, extras 21; Sumon 2-30, Ariful 1-25, Mowla 1-39, Ashiqur 1-32, Younis 1-43, Tariqul 2-28).
Result: Indira Road won by 11 runs.

Ayala to join

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but the two sides patched up their differences and he has been a regular in the starting line-up once again this season.
Ayala began his career with Argentine side Ferro Carril Oeste, before joining River Plate in 1993.
His performance for the Argentine giants earned him a transfer to Italian side Napoli in 1995 where he remained for three seasons before signing for AC Milan.
Ayala joined Valencia in 2000 from AC Milan and since then has been the most influential player in the club's back four.
He played a vital role in helping the club reach the Champions League final in 2001, win the Spanish league title in 2002 and win both the league and UEFA Cup in 2004.
Villarreal also announced on Wednesday that they had reached an agreement to sign Chile under-20 international forward Mathias Vidangossy from Union Espanola.

Captaincy hurts Flintoff

Cricket
BBC ONLINE, undated
England coach Duncan Fletcher says Andrew Flintoff is much happier without the burden of captaincy in Australia.
The all-rounder struggled as he led his team to Ashes defeat but his bowling has improved in the one-day matches.
Michael Vaughan has captained in three of the nine games so far and Fletcher has noticed a difference in Flintoff.
"We feel when he's not captain he feels a little bit freer, his bowling is a lot more confident and there's a weight off his shoulders," he explained.
"He seems a lot more relaxed. Anyone who's not captain of the

side would be a little bit more relaxed.
"I don't think there's a captain who goes in there and feels very relaxed when he's leading his country."
Vaughan has been struggling with a hamstring injury during the triangular one-day series and is doubtful for the first match in the best-of-three finals against Australia on Friday.
He felt sore after Tuesday's win over New Zealand and will be reassessed on Thursday.
England name their final 15-man squad for the World Cup next week and there have been suggestions that Vaughan should be left out for fitness and tactical reasons.
But Fletcher said: "He's captaining England successfully and is a very important factor for us."
"You always worry with Michael

because that experience is immense."
Flintoff was one of the keys to England's 2-1 Ashes triumph in 2005, when Vaughan was skipper, scoring 402 runs and taking 24 wickets.
But as captain in the 2006-07 series he managed 254 runs in five Tests -- all of which his team lost -- and claimed only 11 wickets, although he only returned to action in the Champions Trophy in November following ankle surgery in the summer.
Some critics had argued that opening batsman Andrew Strauss should have been put in charge but Fletcher refused to accept they had made a mistake.
"Strauss is very inexperienced and to come out here and captain in Australia is a very difficult job," he insisted.

PCB challenges CAS

Cricket
AFP, Geneva
Pakistan's Cricket Board has challenged the Court of Arbitration for Sport's (CAS) right to rule on a doping case involving bowlers Shoaib Akhtar and Mohammad Asif, sport's top court said on Tuesday.
However, Pakistani cricket authorities have agreed to allow a CAS arbitration panel to decide on the issue, the court said in a statement.
"The parties have been invited by the CAS to make written submissions concerning CAS jurisdiction, after which, the Panel will

Hair suing ICC, PCB

AFP, London
Umpire Darrell Hair is suing both the International Cricket Council (ICC) and the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB), claiming racial discrimination after he was prevented from appearing at Test matches, the BBC reported on Wednesday.
Though Hair's contract as a top official is till 2008, he is now only allowed to officiate for matches between non-Test nations and he believes he is being wrongfully targeted following the ball-tampering row during the forfeited Oval Test last summer between England and Pakistan.
However Billy Doctrove, who was also involved in the same match, has already returned to his umpiring duties.
PCB chairman Dr Nasim Ashraf claimed he was aghast when told of what Hair intended to do by his lawyer.
"This is adding insult to injury. Race has nothing to do with this," Ashraf told BBC Radio 4's Today programme.
"Mr Hair was removed from the elite panel of umpires by the full ICC board, which has many countries, because of his poor judgement."
"This is the most preposterous thing I have heard. This is another manifestation of Mr Hair's mental status."
Hair believes the PCB was involved in inducing the ICC in action which could be described as discrimination when the Pakistan cricketing authorities urged for his suspension on the run-up to a meeting in November.
Officials at the ICC however had already stated, prior to that November meeting, they were hopeful Hair would be back in action on their elite umpire panel.

Irish venue for India, Australia

AFP, New Delhi
India and Australia will play three or five one-day internationals at the unlikely venue of Ireland in June, the Indian cricket board said Wednesday.
Ireland was chosen to host the lucrative made-for-television games after organisers failed to secure venues in the United States or Canada.
The series will be played ahead of India's tour of England in July, which comprises three Tests and seven one-dayers.
"We will play against Australia in the last week of June," secretary of the Board of Control for Cricket in India Niranjan Shah told reporters.
"We have chosen Ireland as the venue and details are being worked out."
The matches in Ireland add to the previously arranged home-and-away series between India and Australia over the next 12 months and leave the Indian cricketers facing a hectic schedule.
After the World Cup ends in the Caribbean on April 28, India will tour Bangladesh in May for two Tests and three one-dayers.
This will be followed by tours of Ireland and England, which end on September 8.
Australia then tour India for seven one-day internationals in October, after which India host arch-rivals Pakistan for three Tests and five one-dayers in November-December.
India pay a return visit to Australia in late December for three Tests and the tri-series against Sri Lanka and the hosts, which ends in the first week of March 2008.
Returning home, the Indians will host South Africa for a Test and one-day series in March-April.

Better if forgotten

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When asked, the Brothers officials pointed fingers at the ground staff as the perpetrators but when they were asked to continue play, they claimed that two of their players were 'missing'.
Umpires, in a little while, found one of them under the advertising board. Brothers' supporters then threatened their own players, most of whom live in the club tent in Gopibagh. The players, some of them ex-national players, were worried to say the least.
More than players' security, the ancient and immature mentality of clubs was exposed in Dhanmondi yesterday. Any number of players could have been hurt due to their inept thinking, that too at a Premier League match. The match referee left with the umpires, without mentioning the match decision, with anxiousness in their face.
The match events were dwarfed and Partex were declared winners by eight runs as per Duckworth-Lewis method. Earlier, Brothers scored 244 for six to which Partex were in striking distance of a win with their score on 239 for six in 48.2 overs.
SCORES IN BRIEF
BROTHERS: 244-6 in 50 overs (Shahriar 35, Hannan 44, Imran 47, Fahad 69, Anisur 26*, Bashar 0, Apu 4, Taposh 2*, extras 17, Rezaul 4-37, Hasan 1-61, Raihan 1-40).
PARTEX: 239-6 in 48.2 overs (Rajin 46, Mizanur 10, Raqibul 18, Tariq 8, Rafiqul 37, Rashed 45, Rezaul 29*, Hasan 13*, extras 33, Saiju 2-37, Shaiful 1-36, Bashar 1-48, Taposh 1-45).
Result: Partex won by 8 runs (D-L method).

WC prep

FROM PAGE 17
"Coming back to India again is doing the whole recycle. It's another way of saying let's compare where we were in India one year ago and now."
SQUAD
INDIA (from): Rahul Dravid (captain), Sachin Tendulkar, Virender Sehwag, Robin Uthappa, Yuvraj Singh, Sourav Ganguly, Dinesh Karthick, Mahendra Dhoni, Irfan Pathan, Ajit Agarkar, Anil Kumble, Harbhajan Singh, Zaheer Khan, Harshakumaran Sreesanth, Munaf Patel.
SRI LANKA (from): Mahela Jayawardene (captain), Kumar Sangakkara, Upul Chandana, Russel Arnold, Marvan Atapattu, Malinga Bandara, Tillakaratne Dilshan, Dilhara Fernando, Sanath Jayasuriya, Nuwan Kulasekara, Farveez Maharoof, Lasith Malinga, Chamara Silva, Upul Tharanga, Nuwan Zoysa.

79mph highest for the day!

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Chittagong
Iqbal Hasan Ronny notched up the highest speed of 79mph on the first day of the GrameenPhone Pacer Hunt campaign that got underway at the Chittagong Divisional Stadium yesterday.
Besides the Noakhali lad only local boy Mozammel Haque Robin hit a speed beyond 70mph out of around 500 aspirants who took part on the first day of the three-day campaign in the port city.
Robin, who plays under-19 cricket for the Chittagong District team, came up hitting the 73-mph mark on the speedometer.
A total of around 1,400 youth registered their names for the three-day selection and screening sessions supervised by former fast bowler Sarwar Imran, who was aided by Golam Faruk Suru.
Earlier in the day, GrameenPhone Chief Marketing Officer Stein Naevdal formally inaugurated the programme, second of its kind after two years.

Sub-Junior Chess Majumdar takes solo lead

SPORTS REPORTER
Aniruddah Majumdar of St. Joseph School took solo lead in the 27th National Sub-Junior Chess Championship when he secured the maximum five points after winning his fifth round board against Sharif Hossain at the federation hall-room yesterday.
Sharif, Rezaul Islam Babu, Siddiqur Rahman, Abdullah Al Saif, Abir, Olib Bin Manzil and Mahmudul Hasan followed the leader with four points each.
Meanwhile, the BASIC Bank 28th National Junior Chess Championship will begin on February 12.

DU Sports Saturday

SPORTS REPORTER
The annual sports competition of Rokeya Hall of Dhaka University will be held on Saturday at their own ground.
The interested students have been asked to be in contact with the office.

Bangladesh

FROM PAGE 17
only bright presence for the hosts, who twice threatened to score from long range in the second half.
Zahid Hossain's freekick bounced off the rival keeper but Sharif put the rebound over the bar from a difficult angle while substitute Nasir hit the top of the crossbar to dash hopes of reducing the margin.
Bangladesh coach Abu Yusuf complained that his boys did not follow instructions.
"They forgot about the briefing and were too attacking. It resulted in a midfield collapse," the frustrated coach said.
"In the end, we lost to a better team. It was proved today that with short preparation, we would never be able to match the standard of a team like Hong Kong."
TEAMS
Hong Kong: Jian, Tong, Lin, Li, Wu, Yip (Chun), Leung, Wai, Sham (Cheng), Chan (Ming) and Kwok.
Bangladesh: Himel, Aurup, Zahirul, Ariful, Waly, Zahid Hossain, Maruf (Mamun), Sharif (Nasir), Zahid Parvez, Ujjal (Robin) and Emily.

Aragones cleared

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October 2004 when he was heard in a training session telling striker Jose Antonio Reyes that he was better than "that black shit", referring to the Spaniard's Arsenal teammate Henry.
The 68-year-old Aragones was originally fined 3,000 euros for behaviour "contrary to the good order of the sport" by the RFEF.
The offence was upgraded to "conduct which could be considered to be racist" by the government-run CEDD and both Aragones and the RFEF successfully appealed against that decision to the Spanish court.
The RFEF were unable to say, however, whether Aragones would still have to pay the fine for the original charge.
"My lawyer told me this morning," Aragones told Cadena Ser radio late on Tuesday. "I went to court because it was a stain on my reputation and because the offence did not exist as some judges believed."
Aragones initially apologised after widespread criticism of his behaviour, saying he had not meant to offend anyone and that his conscience was clear.
He stirred further controversy, however, by mounting an energetic defence of his comments before a friendly against England in November 2004.
That match in Madrid was marred by racist abuse of England's black players by sections of the crowd.

Vaughan worries England

Cricket
AFP, Brisbane
A resurgent England will again sweat on the fitness of inspirational captain Michael Vaughan for Friday's first triangular series final against Australia at the MCG.
Reports that Vaughan's hamstring injury was still troubling him came as England also revealed that fast bowling duo Jon Lewis and Chris Tremlett were heading home because of injury.
Few expected the English to make the tri-series finals after their horror tour, during which they have lost all five Test matches and all limited-overs games against the Australians, bar their unexpected win on February 2.
But Vaughan's astute leadership in the final qualifying game against New Zealand on Tuesday lifted them off the canvas and gave them the chance to gain some revenge for their Ashes whitewash in the best-of-three finals series.
However, Vaughan, who had missed the previous five games because of a hamstring strain, admitted he felt the injury in the field during the latter stages of the New Zealand innings.
Vaughan said he expected to play on Friday, but conceded his fitness was an issue.
"It's a little touch and go," he said here on Tuesday.
"I'll work with (physio) Dean (Conway) and hopefully be fine for Friday."
If Vaughan is unavailable it will be a huge blow to the English, even though he made a duck against the Black Caps.
His presence as a captain

steadied the English when they were under pressure, with his bowling changes pivotal to the result, and also allowed all-rounder Andrew Flintoff the freedom to concentrate on his bowling.
Should Vaughan be unavailable, Flintoff would have to take over the reins again.
The loss of Lewis with a persistent Achilles problem is a significant blow, as he had been in good form before injury struck. He last played on January 23 against New Zealand. Tremlett has a back injury.
England coach Duncan Fletcher said the decision to send Lewis home was precautionary ahead of the World Cup.
"Jon Lewis was one of those ones where we were not prepared to risk it with injuries to the bowlers, Jimmy Anderson being injured," Fletcher said on British radio.
"We didn't want to risk it any further so he is going to go back."
"It is around that Achilles area so they are going to go back and have a really good look at it in the UK."
Pace bowler Stuart Broad, the son of former Test opener Chris, will join the squad for the finals, while the English have ruled out a return by injured batsman Kevin Pietersen.
Vaughan's injury status aside, the English take plenty of momentum into the finals.
After winning just eight of their previous 33 one-day games, they thrashed Australia in Sydney before the win over the Black Caps, and the home side will be without star all-rounder Andrew Symonds.
Vaughan said the win over Australia in Sydney had been a massive boost to team morale

and he firmly believes the English can end a disastrous tour on an unexpectedly high note by upsetting the home side.
"I think the lads have to take the last two performances and take the momentum from the last two games," he said.
"If we can reproduce that sort of performance then we can put Australia under pressure."
"We want to win the finals and we want to end the tour on a good note."
He said the English, who have also been lifted by the form of Liam Plunkett with the ball, were capable of improving greatly on their performance against New Zealand.
"We were patchy at times, which is even more of a positive," he said.
"We've beaten a very good New Zealand team having not played our best cricket."
Should Vaughan miss out, opener Mal Loye would be expected to slot back into the side at the top of the order.
With Symonds missing, Australia have turned to injury-prone all-rounder Shane Watson, who will be under great pressure to both perform and prove his fitness as the World Cup looms.
Bowlers Shaun Tait and Stuart Clark have been dropped from the Australian squad, with Watson's return offering another pace bowling option.
Spinner Brad Hogg has been retained and could play in Melbourne if conditions suit, with all-rounder Cameron White struggling to deliver with his leg-spinners.
Having made an unbeaten 99 against the Black Caps, the unlucky Brad Hodge could be squeezed out by the return of Watson.



PHOTO: COURTESY

Winners of the Standard Chartered 18th BGCC Amateur Golf Championship are seen with the chief guest Major General Sina Ibn Jamali and Standard Chartered high officials during a prize giving ceremony at the Bhatiary Golf and Country Club on February 3.

Outrage at stadium closures

FROM PAGE 20
match between Catania and Palermo last Friday.
"The closed stadiums are a ridiculous idea. They can't impose these regulations on us. We must go on strike," he said.
Only four grounds in Serie A -- Rome's Olympic Stadium, Palermo's Barbera stadium, Turin's Olympic Stadium and the Artemio Franchi stadium in Siena -- meet the regulations.
The rest, including Milan's San Siro stadium -- home to AC Milan and Inter Milan -- risk remaining closed to spectators when play resumes at a date yet to be confirmed by the Italian Football Federation.
Clubs fear the financial consequences of having to reimburse season-ticket holders denied access to matches they have paid

for and fans and players said the game needed the atmosphere of a live crowd.
"It would be an absurd solution. The sport would lose its meaning," said Milan captain Paolo Maldini on the idea of playing matches without the fans.
"It would be better to halt play for another week because playing behind closed doors would be the death of football," said the former Italy defender.
But Melandri said the government must not compromise with the clubs which have been allowed to delay modernisation of their old-fashioned venues to comply with security measures which were initially passed in 2005.
"We have four fixed demands: closed-circuit TV surveillance, named tickets, electronic turnstiles and crowd control outside the

stadiums," Melandri told L'Unita daily.
"On these there will be no discussion. Either they are there at the stadium, or the match is played behind closed doors."
The policy will hit Italy's lower divisions even harder than Serie A. Eight out of 11 matches in the next round of second-division Serie B matches are expected to be played behind closed doors if the government pushes the measures through.

Players behind

FROM PAGE 20
Beckham come back into the team."
"If Capello wants to win over the dressing room he has to rectify things with Beckham," Marca added.
Even keeping out-of-favour Italian forward Antonio Cassano frozen out is costing a small fortune of 25,266 euros a day.
Cassano has been told to look for another club but is set to stay on the sidelines until the end of the season, wasting Real around five million euros.
"Bad business," as AS helpfully observed.
Top stars such as Raul, Guti, Michel Salgado and keeper Iker Casillas have all called for Beckham to be brought back into the fold.
"He's a player who can help us win titles," said Salgado, who has described leaving Beckham out is a "risky" strategy when young replacements have little experience as the club falls ever further behind leaders Barcelona.
Guti said Tuesday that "we'd all love it if he could play, as well as train."
AS meanwhile noted that, with Beckham out of the side and Ronaldo shipped out to AC Milan Real could hardly say they had benefited, with just 12 goals in 10 home league games their worst ever return.

Gerrard backs Benitez

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Gillett said: "This is truly the largest sport in the world, the most important sport in the world, and this is the most important club in the most important sport in the world, and what a privilege we have to be associated with it."
"We have purchased the club with no debt on the club so, in that regard, it is different (to the Glazers). We believe in the future of the club, the future of the league, the new TV contracts are outstanding and we are proud to be a part of it."
"If you look at the Premier League today, it is a strong revenue-generating body for the leading teams. I believe it has the chance to be a growing industry over time and we need all the revenues we can possibly find to compete with Manchester and Chelsea."
Gillett and Hicks will become co-chairmen, and each will have one of their sons on the board. Liverpool chairman David Moores will become honorary life president and

Parry will continue as chief executive running the club on a day-to-day basis.
The Americans had a meeting with Benitez on Tuesday and promised they would back him with funds for new signings, insisting they will not put a ceiling on spending.
Hicks said: "We are not going to put a budget on squad development, we are going to wait for Rick and Rafa to bring us those plans and requests and we are going to support them."
"Rafa's strategies and philosophies are very similar to our own, with a strong core of veterans with highly-talented young athletes."
"You need to keep your star players but also develop your young players. Young players are the lifeblood of your team, so we talked about how we can improve that side of the team."