

CA chief favours Warne comeback

Shane Warne might have plenty of things to worry about at the moment, but his cricketing future need not be one of them.

Speaking to Herald Sun, Merriman said: "We are certainly looking forward to February 10 next year [when Warne's ban expires] and Shane Warne coming back as a respect player."

"We have not discussed player X or player Y, but certainly a hell of a lot of work has been generated in the board office because of the issues of the last four months."

"Obviously we are hopeful that issues in his private life remain private, like any person. That's probably a pious hope given the high-profile sports person he is."

MSC go atop

FROM PAGE 13 goal eight minutes later to extend the winners' tally. Indian Bikramjit found the Mohammedan goal from a penalty-corner in the 52nd minute.

TODAY'S MATCH

Abahani KC v Ajax SC (4pm)

WHIZZ KID-197 winner

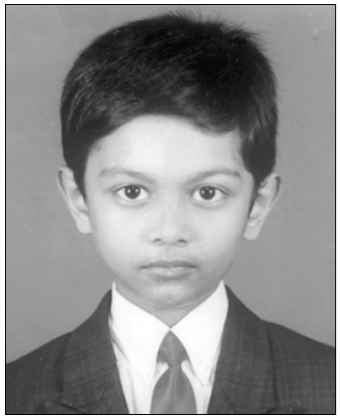
Nurul Haque (Chakaria Govt School, Cox's Bazar)

Please produce your ID card and an attested passport size photograph while collecting the winner's prize from the Sports Desk of The Daily Star at 7:30 pm on September 7.

WHIZZ KID-197 correct answer

- 1. How many runs did Bangladesh score in the first innings of the 2nd Test against Australia? Ans: 295

WHIZZ KID-196 winner



Abdullah Nur Sobhan (Saint Judes Int'l School, Dhaka)

Agassi on course



AFP, New York

World number one Andre Agassi dispatched stubborn Swedish southpaw Andreas Vinciguerra 7-6 (7/1), 6-1, 6-4 here Thursday to book a third-round US Open date against a familiar foe -- Yevgeny Kafelnikov.

Vinciguerra, ranked 92nd, was playing only his second hardcourt match since February. But he tested Agassi in the first set and duelled him through seven deuces in the seventh game of the final set before giving up a service break.

"He was hitting his shots effectively," Agassi said. "I was being solid with my game but it wasn't good enough. I had to step up my game and pick up my shots. Once I settled down I hit my shots a lot cleaner."

Eight-time Grand Slam champion Agassi, at 33 the oldest man here and ever to be ranked number one, has only failed to reach the US Open's fourth round once since 1993, but knows he will be tested Saturday by the 28th-ranked Russian.

"We both will try to control the baseline," Agassi said. "He controls points and knows how to win. I have to take it seriously. I have to be on him from the get if I'm going to win."

"Y-man, he's a talented player. His career speaks for itself."

Kafelnikov, who turns 30 in February, won the 1996 French Open and 1999 Australian Open but has struggled to a 26-21 record this season and has not gone past the third round of a Slam since a semi-final run here in 2001.

Until ousting Kenneth Carlsen and rising to 6-0 against the Dane, Kafelnikov had not won back-to-back matches since May. He had considered retirement before a change of heart after helping Russia win the 2002 Davis Cup.

"He's very talented," Agassi said. "I think he could have accomplished a lot more than he has. He's still out here because of his game."

Agassi is 7-4 against Kafelnikov, having won the past five in a row. They have not played each other since the 2000 ATP Masters Cup.

"We go back a long time. We have had a lot of battles," Agassi said. "It's going to be a good match. We've played some great matches in the past."

It will be the fifth Grand Slam meeting between the rivals and the earliest they have ever faced each other in a Slam.

Agassi beat Kafelnikov in the 2000 Australian Open final, a 1999 US Open semi-final and a 1995 Australian Open quarterfinal. The Russian's lone Slam victory over Agassi came on French Open clay

in a 1995 quarterfinal. French Open champion Juan Carlos Ferrero, the third seed from Spain, beat Austria's Jurgen Melzer 1-6, 7-6 (7/2), 6-2, 6-4 and Argentina's fifth-seeded Guillermo Coria, a French Open semi-finalist, bounced Czech Bohdan Ulihrach 6-2, 6-1, 6-4.

Australian sixth seed Lleyton Hewitt rallied to oust South Korea's Lee Hyung-Taik 5-7, 6-2, 6-2, 6-4. Lee lost nine matches in a row entering the Open but made a valiant effort in his first match against the two-time Slam winner.

"He was a fighter on the court," Lee said. "His balls were very deep. I couldn't attack as much as I wanted."

Hewitt lost the final eight points of the first set but broke Lee to open the second and third sets and saved four break points in a dramatic final game before finishing off Lee on his fourth match point.

"It was a tough match. As I played better he played better," Hewitt said. "He stepped it up. He took it to me. I just had to hang tough."

On the women's side, French Open champion Justine Henin-Hardenne, the second seed from Belgium, beat Croatia's Silvija Talaja 6-1, 6-2 in 51 minutes, while sixth seed Jennifer Capriati took 63 to down Slovakian Martina Sucha 6-1, 6-1.

Capriati, a three-time Slam champion, faces France's Emilie Loit next. The American has yet to be tested.



Andre Agassi pumps his fist after beating Andreas Vinciguerra of Sweden at the US Open on Thursday.

SA-Derby match washed out

AFP, Derby

Rain prevented any play on the first day of South Africa's three-day tour game against Derbyshire here Thursday in what was the tourists' last match before next week's fifth Test against England at The Oval.

South Africa lead England 2-1 in the five-match series following their crushing 191 run fourth Test win at Headingley concluded Monday.

The Proteas are due to rest several key players for the Derbyshire game with batsman Gary Kirsten - who scored 190 runs in total at Headingley - and fast bowler Makhaya Ntini among those expected to sit out this match.

All-rounder Andrew Hall - who made a Test-best 99 not out at Headingley - has been released to play for Worcestershire in Saturday's C and G Trophy final against Gloucestershire at Lord's.

Leading pace bowler Shaun Pollock, who missed the fourth Test to be present for the birth of his daughter in Durban, is not due back until Monday.

PAKISTAN DIARY

FROM PAGE 13 In this match Bangladesh have left-arm slow bowler Mohammad Rafique operating.

Former opener Athar Ali Khan and now a Bangladesh Cricket Board selector agreed the team needed a specialist spinner but there were no wicket-taking spinners in the country.

"Of course we need an off-spinner or a leggie. But there is none to choose from right now. There are a few youngsters but they need more time to develop their skills," he said during the lunch break.

B'DESH-PAK SCORECARD

Table with columns: Bowler, O, M, R, W. Rows include Ashraf, Akhter, Shabbir, Gul, Kaneria, Toss: Bangladesh, Umpires: Steve Bucknor (WIS) and Russell Tiffin (ZIM)

Kapali: Good, better, great!

Table with columns: Name, Country, City, Year. Lists cricketers like H Trumble, W Rhodes, T Matthews, etc.

Q'land need Law & order



AFP, Brisbane

Australian Stuart Law may be in the runs for Lancashire in English county cricket but his state Queensland desperately want him to continue that form into the next domestic season.

The 34-year-old has been enjoying a purple patch of form with Lancashire, scoring 1,400 runs at 82.35 but for Queensland last southern summer injury-riddled Law struggled making only 169 runs at 14.08.

New South Wales smashed Queensland by 246 runs in last season's Sheffield Shield final taking the interstate title off Queensland for the first time in four years.

With Matthew Hayden, Jimmy Maher, Martin Love and Andrew Symonds set to be unavailable at different times with the Australian Test and one-day teams next summer, coach Terry O'Neil says Law's experience is vital to his side's success.

"We're looking for a bigger season from Stuart," O'Neil said on Friday.

Oliver said Law's run harvest, including five centuries, for Lancashire showed that last season's form loss was an aberration for the former Australian batsman.

"He hasn't lost his skill," he said. "He didn't hit as many balls as he would have liked. He was always playing with niggling injuries and by his own admission he wasn't as focused as he was in the past."

CROSSWORD

Crossword puzzle grid and clues. Clues include: 1. Open a little, 5. Hired transport, 8. Dead man's hand, etc.

Cryptopquip puzzle grid and clues. Clues include: 1. Allom, 2. The second Trumble and the Griffin hat-tricks, etc.



Australian Jana Pittman holds her national flag after winning the women's 400m hurdles gold at the 9th Athletics World Championships on Thursday.

Pittman, White enlighten



AFP, Paris

Jana Pittman and Kelli White made light of the absence of women's athletics icons Cathy Freeman and Marion Jones here on Thursday as they landed the 400 metres hurdles and 200m respectively at the World Championships.

Pittman - the anointed successor to Freeman in Aussie eyes - admitted to watching a Rocky movie where the Sylvester Stallone character humbled his Russian opponent in the ring.

Out on the track on Thursday, her main rival was Russia's world record holder Yuliya Pechonkina.

White succeeded where Jones failed in achieving the sprint world championship double and emulated East Germany's Katrin Krabbe's feat back in 1991.

However, the hosts' hopes of two of their fairest and hottest medal fancies stepping up to the plate were dashed as Muriel Hurtis finished fourth behind White while Manuela Montebrun took bronze in the women's hammer behind Cuba's Yipsi Moreno.

France still has hope with heptathlon silver medalist Eunice Barber easily qualifying for the long jump final.

While America's male 200m sprinters carried on their work to repair the damage caused by the antics of Jon Drummond, who was disqualified from the 100m, the news hardly got better for 400m winner Jerome Young.

While the 27-year-old shrugged off the revelations that he had tested positive for steroids, and then competed in the Sydney Olympics

after being cleared by an internal inquiry, the IOC entered the fray.

In a statement released on Thursday, they seemed to sweep aside the line taken by the USATF and the IAAF that they were both bound by the ruling at the Court of Sports Arbitration (CAS) last November that all cases between 1996-2000 were closed and the athletes' identity would not be revealed.

"The IOC has written to the IAAF and the USOC, strongly urging them to pursue the matter. It has also written to the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) calling on it to assist in finding the truth by using all means and powers at its disposal," said an IOC statement.

After the disgraceful behaviour of Drummond and the cloud over Young, the organisers will have been delighted that the mouthwatering 5,000m clash between Ethiopia's 10,000m champion Kenenisa Bekele and Morocco's 1,500m master Hicham El Guerrouj is on for Sunday.

Both came through their semi-finals but while Bekele will have his other two team-mates with him, the 29-year-old El Guerrouj will just have one and by all accounts Abderrahim Goumri is no friend of his.

However, it nearly didn't happen at all as the indefatigable Moroccan revealed that after just over three hours of sleep following his wonderful success in the 1,500m on Wednesday he had his doubts about competing.

"When I woke up my first thought was whether I really wanted to do the 5,000 but here I am and I feel really good now and I feel really motivated."

Pittman was as expected in ecstasy after her victory. She showed no signs of nerves as she chased down Pechonkina.

"I spent the day watching Rocky movies particularly the one where he beats the Russian."

"I turned to my coach and I said: 'That's me - I'm going to beat the Russian.'"

That revelation would warm the heart of her fellow Australian, tennis ace Lleyton Hewitt who has admitted in the past that he too uses the Stallone character to fire him up before he goes on court.

Mohammedan

FROM PAGE 13 Arambagh started the second half brilliantly, especially Imrul Hasan Emu who produced some good passes from the left but Winu wasted all of them.

After the match, it was came as a real surprise when striker Farhad, who managed to get away manhandling Arambagh defender Mustafa Kaba, was declared man-of-the-match. Everybody was expecting Arif Khan Joy to collect the award.

TEAMS

Mohammedan SC: Nizam, Jewel Rana, Masud Rana, Mahmudul Hasan, Titoo, Joy, Monwar (Salisu), Pappu, Dabran (Sentu) (Faisal), Kanchan and Farhad. Arambagh KS: Piru, Kamruzzaman, Aziz Al Arman, Mustafa Kaba (Kamrul), Rezaul Karim Biplob, Kamal, Saif, Biddyt, Emu, Winu and Chu (Ashrafu Awal).

Yellow cards: Biddyt (Arambagh KS)

Referee: Taybeeb Hasan.3

England defer naming squad



AFP, London

England have delayed until Sunday naming the side to play South Africa in the fourth Test at The Oval next week because of injuries to key players.

England, 2-1 down in the series, have lost Sussex fast bowler James Kirtley with shin splits.

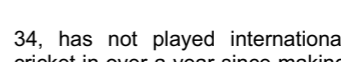
And Martin Bicknell, recalled for Headingley 10 years after his last Test, is battling to overcome a hamstring problem.

"We need more time to re-assess our options in light of the injuries to James Kirtley and Martin Bicknell," said chairman of selectors David Grayney.

"Delaying the announcement will enable us to make further checks on the form and fitness of possible replacements."

England had been expected to recall Graham Thorpe for former captain Nasser Hussain who broke a toe in South Africa's 191 run third Test win at Headingley. Left-handed batsman Thorpe,

Shoaib allowed to rejoin Durham



AFP, Peshawar

Pakistan will allow Shoaib Akhtar will rejoin English county side Durham after the second Test against Bangladesh last week.

Pakistan had second thoughts about releasing the fast bowler after Mohammad Sami was ruled out of the ongoing test series against Bangladesh with a hairline fracture of the ankle.

But Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) chairman Lieutenant-General Tahir Zia told reporters on Friday: "Akhtar will join the English county soon after the second test."

He said the bowlers' enforced absence would allow the selectors to try out new bowlers in the third test and one-day internationals.

Durham had released Shoaib under the understanding that he would return to them after the second test, which ends on Sunday.

Shoaib and Sami have headed Pakistan's new-ball attack since the axing of Wasim Akram and Waqar Younis after the World Cup.



Members of the Star Vision Chess Team pose for photographs yesterday.

Star Vision Div II chess champs

SPORTS REPORTER

Star Vision Chess Team clinched the Second Division Chess League title with maximum 29 points after the final round at the NSC yesterday.

Bangladesh Muktiyoddha Sangsad became runners-up with 27 points while Friend Chess Power finished third with 24.5 points.

In the final round Star Vision beat Alam Nur CC 4-0, Muktiyoddha Sangsad beat Faith Chess Club 3-1 p, Hazaribagh FSC beat Friends Chess 2.5-1.5, Protiva Daba Goshti beat Uttara Daba Goshti 3-1, Dhaka Chess Vision beat Seikhdi Jubo 2.5-1.5 points.

Star Vision, Muktiyoddha Sangsad and Friends Power qualify for the First Division Chess League for the year 2004.