

PHOTO: AFP

India cricket captain Saurav Ganguly examines the Eden Gardens pitch in Calcutta yesterday. His team meet Australia in the final of the TVS Cup tri-series here tomorrow.

Hosts in final with a bang

Cricket

AFP, Hyderabad

Sachin Tendulkar and Virender Sehwag struck explosive centuries to help India qualify for the TVS Cup triangular one-day cricket series final with a 145-run win over New Zealand here on Saturday.

India will now clash with world champions Australia in the final at Calcutta on Tuesday following their emphatic victory in the decisive last league game.

Australia topped the table with five wins from six matches, followed by India (2 from 6) and New Zealand (1 from 6).

India batted the Kiwis out of the match by posting their third-highest total of 353-5 after electing to bat, thanks to Tendulkar's robust 91-ball 102 for his 36th century and Sehwag's career-best 130 off 134 balls for his sixth.

New Zealand, led by Chris Cairns of the match by posting their third-highest total of 353-5 after electing to bat, thanks to Tendulkar's robust 91-ball 102 for his 36th century and Sehwag's career-best 130 off 134 balls for his sixth.

The Kiwis drew a two-Test series and then shared points in a rain-hit game at Madras before beating the hosts by four wickets at Cuttack in their previous two league games of the one-day tourna-

ment.

"Overall, the tour was a success because it is always difficult to play in this part of the world," said Cairns.

"India began well and their openers (Tendulkar and Sehwag) took the game away from us."

India lifted their performance when it mattered most, while New Zealand's bowling and batting left a lot to be desired.

All-rounder Scott Styris alone gave a good account of himself, following his two-wicket effort with a brisk 54.

New Zealand's chase was virtually over when they lost three wickets for 48 runs in the opening nine overs as Indian seamers Ajit Agarkar dismissed Chris Nevin and Chris Harris and Zaheer Khan accounted for Lou Vincent.

It soon became a no-contest as New Zealand kept losing wickets at regular intervals.

Zaheer finished with 3-30, while spinners Anil Kumble and Murali Kartik each grabbed two wickets.

"We've done well at Calcutta and we hope to do well against Australia in the final," said India captain Saurav Ganguly.

"I think the toss played a crucial role today and then we battled really well to reach 353. It was a big match for us and our batsmen applied themselves well under pressure."

Tendulkar and man-of-the-match Sehwag played key roles in demoralising

New Zealand with a record 182-run stand for the opening wicket before Rahul Dravid hit a 22-ball 50 not out to hammer the second-fastest fifty by an Indian.

Dravid smashed three sixes and five fours in a sensational closing-overs onslaught to miss compatriot Agarkar's record of 21-ball fifty (v Zimbabwe at Rajkot in 2000) by one delivery.

The stage was set by Tendulkar, who exploded with a flurry of big shots after a cautious start. He upstaged Sehwag during their big stand, cracking one six and 12 fours.

Sehwag returned to form after four successive failures, hitting two sixes and 15 fours to surpass his previous best of 126 against England in the Champions Trophy at Colombo last year.

The pair's stand was India's best against New Zealand for the opening wicket, the previous highest being 169 between Tendulkar and Ganguly at Bangalore six years ago.

"I was good to play a long innings as I had been struggling for runs in the previous games. He (Tendulkar) gave me confidence because he was striking the ball very well from the other end," said Sehwag.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard of the day-night match between India and New Zealand in the TVS Cup triangular one-day cricket series on Saturday:

INDIA: 357 for 5 in 50 overs (Sehwag 130,

Tendulkar 102, Dravid 50, Ganguly 33; Styris 2-46)

NEW ZEALAND

Nevin b Agarkar	1
Vincent lbw b Zaheer	22
Harris lbw b Agarkar	1
Styris c Agarkar b Kartik	54
McMillan c Dravid b Kumble	20
Cairns c Zaheer b Kumble	23
Oram st Dravid b Kartik	11
McCullum lbw b Zaheer	31
Vettori run out	19
Mills not out	7
Tuffey lbw b Zaheer	0
Extras: (b-2, lb-9, nb-1, w-7)	19
Total: (All out in 47 overs)	208
Fall of wickets: 1-8, 2-25, 3-48, 4-110, 5-118, 6-136, 7-154, 8-187, 9-208	

Bowler

	O	M	R	W
Zaheer	8	1	30	3
Agarkar	6	0	28	2
Tendulkar	8	0	40	0
Kumble	10	1	36	2
Kartik	10	0	38	2
Yuvraj	5	0	25	0

Result: India win by 145 runs.

Man-of-the-match: Virender Sehwag.

Toss: India.

Umpires: David Shepherd (England) and K Hariharan (India).

Final: India v Australia, Nov 18.

Rugby WC Wilkinson kicks Eng into final

REUTERS, SYDNEY

Jonny Wilkinson has kicked England to a 24-7 victory over France in the World Cup semi-finals to join Australia in next Saturday's final.

French flanker Serge Betsen scored the only try of the match but Wilkinson guided England home with five penalties and a hat-trick of drop goals.

The match deteriorated into a kicking contest after heavy rain and wind made the conditions slippery and France paid dearly for their poor discipline.

Winger Christophe Dominici was sin-binned for tripping Jason Robinson and Betsen was yellow-carded for a late tackle on Wilkinson.

Next week's final is a rematch of the 1991 decider which Australia won 12-6 at Twickenham. France, runners-up in 1987 and again four years ago, face New Zealand in the third place playoff on Thursday after the All Blacks were beaten 22-10 by Australia on Saturday.

With a place in the final at stake, both teams shows signs of nerves and there was little fluency to the game as the teams struggled to hold on to the ball.

England opened the scoring in the ninth minute when flyhalf Wilkinson potted his first drop goal with his right boot but France responded immediately with a try to Betsen.

The blindside flanker won the ball at the back of the lineout and darted through a gap. He was tackled just short of the line but his momentum carried him over and New Zealand referee Paddy O'Brien raised his arm to award the try after consulting the video official.

Frederic Michalak converted from near the touchline but France failed to add to their tally after the flyhalf missed four penalty shots.

Wilkinson also missed three penalties and a drop goal but succeeded with eight other shots to swing the game England's way.

He missed his first penalty attempt when Dominici was sin-binned for a trip on Robinson that not only cost him 10 minutes in the bin but forced him to limp off injured.

Wilkinson made amends for his early miss to put the European champions 12-7 in front at halftime with two penalties and two drop goals, both off the right foot.

Veteran England prop Jason Leonard set a world record for test appearances when he came on for his 112th international.

Leonard, 35, took sole ownership of the world record he had previously shared with former French centre Philippe Sella.

Michalak and Wilkinson both missed long-range penalties shortly after the re-start before France paid the penalty for their ill-discipline.

Betsen was yellow carded for a late tackle on Wilkinson and the English flyhalf punished them by kicking his third penalty to put his side 15-7 in front.

Federer versus Agassi

Tennis

AFP, Houston

Wimbledon winner Roger Federer completed a sweep of rival Grand Slam champions here Saturday by ousting top-ranked Andy Roddick and booking a final date with Andre Agassi at the ATP Masters Cup.

The 22-year-old Swiss star blasted 12 aces to defeat top-ranked US Open champion Andy Roddick 7-6, 6-2 while Agassi began 90 minutes late due to rain then struck like lightning to eliminate Rainer Schuettler 5-7, 6-0, 6-4.

Federer has lost his first three career matches against Agassi but beat the Australian Open champion 6-7, 6-3, 7-6 on Monday in a round-robin match at the season-ending 3.75 million-dollar showdown of 2003's top players.

"Both players took something out of that match and in the final we will try and do better," Federer said.

"I prefer my position. He had to work really hard to get to the final. I think that's more advantage (for me) than disadvantage."

Beating Agassi in Sunday's best-of-five final would bring Federer a year-end number two ranking, an ATP-best seventh title of 2003 and 1.5 million dollars as only the fourth man with an unbeaten run in the ATP year-end event.

"Roger doesn't allow you to just lay off shots. He has firepower from a lot of different points," Agassi said. "The difference is how you play those real crucial points."

Federer beat French Open champion Juan Carlos Ferrero on Friday so improving to 5-1 against Roddick gave him a one-week sweep of the 2003 Slam championships.

"It's always nice to beat such great players," Federer said.

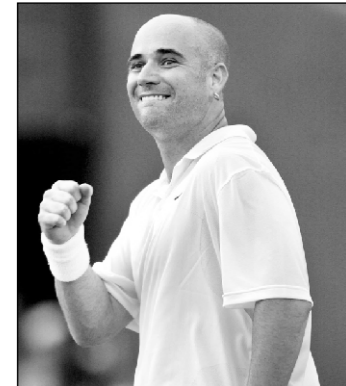
"I had a bad record against top-10 players this year. It's nice to polish that up."

Federer defeated Roddick in a Wimbledon semi-final and was just as dominant here four months later against the 21-year-old American, now 1-2 since sealing year-end number one honors.

"He kicked my ass then and he kicked my ass tonight," Roddick said.



ROGER FEDERER



ANDRE AGASSI

Sometimes we get that in the ATP but not usually against such a tough player," Federer said.

"He's going to make you work. It's my last match of the year. I'm going to give it everything I have."

Federer won his first set in 38 minutes, finishing Roddick with his eighth ace, then broke with a backhand winner for a 3-2 lead in the second set and again with a forehand winner for a 5-2 edge before ending it after 62 minutes.

"He played super out there," Roddick said.

"I just felt like he was a step faster than me. He just outplayed me. That's the bottom line."

Eight-time Grand Slam champion Agassi, who won the ATP year-end event in 1990 and lost in the 1999 and 2000 finals, is the event's oldest semifinalist since Arthur Ashe in 1978 and could become its oldest champion.

"I've spent the better part of my career being older," Agassi said.

"My age is irrelevant to me when I'm on the court."

ranked Schuettler, overwhelmed the German 6-2, 6-2, 6-1 in January's Australian Open final, the shortest Aussie final since 1926 and the biggest rout in a Grand Slam final in nearly 19 years.

Schuettler won the first set's only break point to end it, but fifth-ranked Agassi answered by winning the next eight games.

"I picked up the pace of my shots," Agassi said.

"I felt like I had no choice but to step up the level on my shots and he came down a notch."

Schuettler broke back to level at 2-2 but Agassi broke back in the next game and held out to win after two hours and eight minutes.

"He stepped on the gas a little bit. That's why he's a great player," said Schuettler.

"He knows when he has to play one step better and he did. If you give him a little bit of space, he just takes over."

Impressed himself

FROM PAGE 13

play and it is important not to try something that is not my game because that leads to trouble.

"Someone like Ian Blackwell takes the pressure off because you know he is going to score at six or seven-an-over without even trying so I have to get the ones for him and the likes of Freddie (Andrew Flintoff) and Marcus Trescothick.

"There is a role for a nigger around, it is not a glamorous one, unfortunately, but it is definitely there."

Solanki, who made a combined 11 runs in the 3-0 series win in Bangladesh, fell without scoring.

However he can consider himself very unlucky as he was adjudged leg

before wicket when he got well forward to a ball from left-armed Nandika Ranjith, which appeared to be missing off-stump.

Strauss felt sorry for Solanki's lack of form.

He added: "When you are going through a bad patch, bad luck seems to follow you around a little bit."

"He (Solanki) is a quality player who will come back and score runs again."

Meanwhile, England have called up Glamorgan spinner Robert Croft for the Test series in Sri Lanka.

He becomes the 16th member of the Test squad and gives England an extra spin option, alongside Ashley Giles and Gareth Batty.

Croft took nine wickets during the

2001 series win in Sri Lanka.

"The selectors feel the need to have an extra spinner present in Sri Lanka as past history indicates that spin might have a bigger part to play than in Bangladesh," said chairman of selectors David Graveney.

"Ashley Giles and Gareth Batty were the original picked for the tour and they played their part in the success in Bangladesh."

"Selection for the first Test match in Galle will be based, as you would expect, on form and fitness."

Croft led England's team to victory in the recent Hong Kong Sixes and made no secret of his desire to regain his place in the Test side.

Pathan gets

FROM PAGE 13

tough tour.

"I feel bad that spinner Murali Kartik missed out, but then there was no role for a third spinner in Australia where wickets will suit seam bowling," he said.

"We have two of the world's best slow bowlers in Harbhajan and Kumble and the five seam bowlers in the squad give us more options."

The Indians, who leave for Australia on Friday, will play two warm-up matches before the first Test at the Gabba in Brisbane from December 4.

The second Test will be played in Adelaide from December 12-16 followed by the third at Melbourne (December 26-30) and the fourth at Sydney (January 2-6).

The team for the subsequent one-day series also featuring Zimbabwe will be named later.

History suggests that India, who have not won a Test series outside the sub-continent since 1986, face a har-

rowing time in Australia.

They have failed to win a series in seven previous tours of Australia, with the last of their three victories in 28 Tests down under coming way back in 1981 on a rare spinning wicket in Melbourne.

On the last two tours of Australia in 1991-1992 and 1999-2000, India lost seven of their eight Test matches, five of them inside four days.

SQUAD

BATSMEN: Saurav Ganguly (captain, 68 Tests), Rahul Dravid (vice-captain, 71), Akash Chopra (2), Virender Sehwag (16), Sachin Tendulkar (107), Venkatesh Laxman (46), Sadagopan Ramesh (19)

SEAMERS: Zaheer Khan (26), Ajit Agarkar (16), Ashish Nehra (13), Irfan Pathan (0), Aavishkar Salvi (0)

SPINNERS: Harbhajan Singh (35), Anil Kumble (78)

WICKETKEEPERS: Parthiv Patel (9), Deep Dasgupta (8)

COACH: John Wright

MANAGER: Shivlal Yadav

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS	41 Dirigible frame-work	DOWN	23 HHS agency
1 Big disturbances	43 Sprite fee, for short	1 Mater precursor	24 Moray
5 Bookie's recipe	7 Thinly distributed	2 "Buenos"	25 His life's gone off without a hitch
8 Iowa city	10 Italian coin	3 Demons	4 Indian term
12 Old	13 Equin	4 Guest	5 Doctrine
14 Partner	15 Excessive virility	6 Hold	7 Explode
17 Home-stead Act measure	18 St.	8 Olympic athlete, usually	29 What 25-Down hasn't said
19 Pop	21 Small amount	9 Underbrush hackers	30 Without delay
22 Take off	23 Calendar abbr.	10 To be, in Toulon	32 Most offensive
26 Turf	28 Yeltsin's successor	11 Prognosticator	34 Plaster works
31 Unwilling to listen	33 Ump	12 Cup activity	37 Completely
35 Start over	36 Knoxville suburb	13 Cupid's alias	39 Yanadu's headed goddess
38 Lingerie item	40 Emulate Johnny Apple-seed	14 Eagerly expectant	42 Attempt at a basket
		15 Pop Segment	44 Deadly
		16 Cow-units (Abbr.)	45 Get ready
		17 Enactments	46 Emanation

Solution time: 21 mins.

ACROSS

41: DIRIGIBLE
1: DISTURBANCE
5: BOOKIE
8: IOWA
12: OLD
14: PARTNER
17: HOMESTEAD
19: POP
21: SMALL
22: TAKEOFF
26: TURF
28: YELTSIN
31: UNWILLING
33: UMP
35: START
36: KNOXVILLE
38: LINGERIE
40: EMULATE

DOWN

23: HHS
1: MATER
2: BUENOS AIRES
3: DEMONS
4: INDIAN
5: GUEST
6: DOCTRINE
7: EXPLODE
8: OLYMPIC
9: UNDERBRUSH
10: TO BE
11: PROGNOSTICATOR
12: CUPID
13: ALIAS
14: EAGERLY
15: POP
16: COW
17: ENACTMENT
24: MORAY
25: HIS LIFE
29: WHAT
30: WITHOUT
32: MOST
34: PLASTER
37: COMPLETELY
39: YANADU
42: ATTEMPT
44: DEADLY
45: GET READY
46: EMANATION

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	
12					13			14			
15				16				17			
18						19	20				
			21				22				
23	24	25	26	27			28		29	30	
31			32	33		34	35				
36				37		38	39		40		
			41			42	43		44		
45	46					47			48	49	50
51					52	53					
54						55			56		
57						58			59		

CRYPTOQUIP

B M R K F L V E L V S P R Z V R

L T U V E Q N E Z N S G R M F R

M R T E V B F K R M R

M F B Q Q B C U G V Q S N Q P R C E V

Yesterday's Cryptiquip: SICK OF HOW HIS FAMILY ALWAYS TREATED HIM, THE ANGRY TYKE DECIDED TO GO ON TRIKE.

Today's Cryptiquip Clue: Q equals R

The Cryptiquip is a substitution cipher in which one letter stands for another. If you think that X equals O, it will equal O throughout the puzzle. Single letters, short words and words using an apostrophe give you clues to locating vowels. Solution is by trial and error.

SCHEDULE

AFP, Hyderabad

India's itinerary on the tour of Australia starting later this month for four Tests and a one-day series also featuring Zimbabwe:

WARM-UP GAMES AND TESTS

Nov 25-27: Tour match v Victoria, Melbourne

Nov 29-Dec 1: Tour match v Queensland, Brisbane

Dec 4-8: First Test, Brisbane

Dec 12-16: Second Test, Adelaide

Dec 19-21: Tour match v Australia A, Hobart

Dec 26-30: Third Test, Melbourne

Jan 2-6: Fourth Test, Sydney

ONE-DAY TRI-SERIES

Jan 9: Australia v India, Melbourne

Jan 11: Australia v Zimbabwe, Sydney

Jan 14: India v Zimbabwe, Hobart

Jan 16: Australia v Zimbabwe, Hobart

Jan 18: Australia v India, Brisbane

Jan 20: India v Zimbabwe, Brisbane

Jan 22: Australia v India, Sydney

Jan 24: India v Zimbabwe, Adelaide

Jan 26: Australia v Zimbabwe, Adelaide

Jan 29: Australia v Zimbabwe, Melbourne

Feb 1: Australia v India, Perth

Feb 3: India v Zimbabwe, Perth

Feb 6: First final, Melbourne

Feb 8: Second final, Sydney

Feb 10: Third final, Brisbane (if required)

Tokyo marathon goes to Alemu

AFP, Tokyo

Elfenes Alemu of Ethiopia broke Japan's Sydney Olympic champion Naoko Takahashi's winning streak to take the Tokyo international women's marathon on Sunday.

The Ethiopian runner was left behind once by Takahashi after passing the 22 kilometre (13.6 mile) mark, but caught up with her at the 39 kilometre point before crossing the finishing line in two hours 24 minutes 47 seconds.

Takahashi, who was aiming for her seventh straight marathon victory to qualify for the Athens Olympics, slowed down after the 35 kilometre mark to come in second in 2:27:21.

Third place went to Kiyoko Shimahara of Japan in 2:31:10, followed by Bruna Genovese of Italy in 2:34:32 and Atlanta Olympic champion Fatuma Roba of Ethiopia in 2:37:03.

Alec staying

FROM PAGE 13

for the 2004 season because of financial constraints.

And having already called time on his England career, he decided against trying to find another club.

Stewart appeared in 133 Tests, 15 as captain, and also played in 170 one-day internationals.

"He will be concentrating particularly on the immense opportunities brought about by our redevelopment project," Sheldon added.

Ganguly in doubt

FROM PAGE 13

expected to pack into Eden Gardens and India have got a good record at the ground.

But Rahul Dravid said India would have to curb Australia's free-flowing strokeplay early in the game if they were to win.

He said: "The first 15 overs is a crucial area we need to work on."

"We all know that the Australian batsmen will come hard at us during this period."

"Australia have a 2-1 win record against us in this competition but that doesn't matter going into the final."

Captain Lara

FROM PAGE 13

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Dillon	8	2	17	1
Collymore	15	6	29	2
Hinds	9	2	20	2
Banks	15	3	35	3
Sarwan	2	1	3	0

Result: West Indies won by 128 runs.

Man-of-the-match: Brian Lara.

Toss: West Indies.

Umpires: R Koertzen (South Africa) and S Taufel (Australia).

Giants battle

FROM PAGE 13

The foreign legion is vital for Mohammedan's prospects this season as they have suffered badly in the local booters' transfers bureau. Midfielder Olinga Alaain is a Cameroon international while defenders Effengue Dillan, strikers Etola Aklou and Itogomark and playmaker Barsola Barsolami also have impressive credentials. All of them joined the club's practice session yesterday at the Rajabagh Police Lines ground and are fit to play if they get the green signal.

On paper Abahani have the better crop of players but their relative struggle in the Federation Cup gave a different impression. A major problem for Abahani has been goal scoring and they have been forced to play Brazilian midfielder Alesandro Pedrosa as a supporting striker. But with national striker Rokonuzzaman Kanchan expected to be back after missing the last game against Muktiyoddha, Abahani can heave a sigh of relief. It was Kanchan, a Mohammedan player just a few months ago, who doomed Abahani with a fantastic goal from an acute angle when the two sides last met during a National League semifinal.

Abahani also have another ex-Mohammedan player in midfield dynamo Arif Khan Joy who has had an impressive time in the field so far for

the sky blues.

Both sides have some injury problems.

Abahani captain Rakib has been suffering from viral fever and is uncertain for the match while key defender Kingshuk has been ruled out because of an ankle injury suffered against Muktiyoddha.

"Our main problem is with the forward line besides the poor form of the foreign recruits," said Rakib, who missed yesterday's light training session at the club ground.

Mohammedan will be missing the services of their number one goalkeeper Bijon Barua again. But captain and veteran central defender Jewel Rana was delighted with the form of two revitalised players Amin Rana and Sourav Raju. Jewel also believed that new recruit Bakhtiaruddin was an ideal booter to fill the role left vacant by Joy.

Jewel was praying that the match doesn't go to tie-breakers. Mohammedan lost two finals this year in tie-breakers and that's why the Mohammedan skipper was eyeing to finish the game within regulation time.

"We have to take the chances. I am confident we can score in normal time if we get the service of our foreign players," said Jewel.

Bogra Shaheed Zia Smriti football champions

UNB, Dhaka

Bogra Zila emerged champions in the Shaheed Zia Smriti football tournament outplaying Rajbari Zila 3-0 in the final at the BUET ground yesterday.

Home Minister Ataf Hossain Chowdhury distributed prizes as chief guest.

American twins lift doubles crown

AFP, Houston

Top-ranked American twins Bob and Mike Bryan captured the ATP Masters Cup doubles title here Saturday, defeating France's Fabrice Santoro and Michael Llodra 6-7 (6/8), 6-3, 3-6, 7-6 (7/3), 6-4.

The Bryans, the first brothers to own the year-end world number one doubles ranking, won their fifth title of the year and 14th career crown by outlasting the fifth-ranked French duo in a duel that lasted three hours and 15 minutes.

The US duo took home 220,000 dollars for winning the first year-end doubles ATP championship tournament staged since 2000. It was the first winner in the year-end title match since 1994. The French pair won 105,000 dollars.

Paes named Davis Cup captain

AFP, New Delhi

Leander Paes has been appointed Indian Davis Cup captain after former player Ramesh Krishnan quit for personal reasons.

The 30-year-old Paes, out of action since August following treatment for a non-malignant brain lesion, will be a playing captain. All India Tennis Association (AITA) secretary Anil Khanna said on Saturday.

Khanna said Krishnan wanted to quit the job he took up in 1999 to travel with his tennis playing daughter Gayatri and spend more time with his family.

Paes, India's leading Cup player, is expected to return to action by January and will guide the side for the first time in February's Asia-Oceania Group I tie in New Zealand.

Saber, Quader

FROM PAGE 13

Federation (BFF) general secretary Harunur Rashid, Bangladesh Olympic Association (BOA) vice-president Mizanur Rahman Manu, former BFF assistant general secretary Badal Roy, former BCB director Dewan Shafiq Arefin Tutul and BFF assistant general secretary Ashrafuddin Ahmed Chunnur.