

Amjad's dream may come true

AFP, Canterbury

Amjad Khan, a Danish fast bowler with Pakistani roots, has set his sights on winning an England cap after being told that his application for British citizenship has been accepted.

Khan, 26, was born in Copenhagen and became the youngest player to have represented Denmark at the age of 17.

Nicknamed 'Ammy', he joined Kent in 1999, broke into the first-team squad in 2001 and has subsequently qualified for citizenship on residence grounds, making him immediately eligible for selection for England.

"Ever since I came to Kent in 1999 I have wanted to play for England and this confirmation of my eligibility is a real boost to my ambition to play cricket at the highest level," Khan said on Thursday.

"I am working hard this winter at all aspects of my game and hope very much that next season I will continue to perform well for Kent and ultimately be successful in achieving further honours with England."

Kent Chief Executive Paul Millman, added: "We were all delighted to hear Amjad's news."

"The Kent coaching team have worked really hard with him since he came to us in 1999 and now that the pathway to England selection is clear I am sure Amjad will work even harder to make the most of his undoubted talents."



PHOTO: AFP

China's Lai Zhongjian dives into the pool in the men's 4x100m medley relay swimming heat 2 while his teammate Zhang Bodong looks up at the Hamad Aquatic Centre during the 15th Asian Games in Doha yesterday.

Tragedy hits Games

AFP, Doha



China hauled in more gold medals Thursday as it neared the magic 100 mark on a day overshadowed by the death of a South Korean equestrian rider who was crushed in a fall.

Midway through day six, China had 84 gold medals to Japan's 23 and South Korea's 17. Kazakhstan has 10.

But proceedings were blighted when Kim Hyung Chil died after his horse Bundaberg Black reared and fell as it attempted a fence during the individual cross-country competition.

Kim, 47, an experienced rider, was thrown from the saddle and crushed by the horse which landed on him.

A minute's silence was held at various venues around Doha as a token of respect.

"We have opened a formal inquiry into this tragic accident," said Chris Hodson, vice-president of the International Equestrian Federation.

"To my knowledge it is the first time this has happened at the Asian Games."

The unstoppable China started the day on the right foot, with Han Yucheng of China winning the men's 20-kilometre walk in appalling conditions with rain bucketing down.

Despite this, he crossed the finish line in 1hr 21mins 40sec, collecting the first athletics title of the Games ahead of Kim Hyun-Sub of South

Korea and Japan's Koichiro Morioka. His teammate Liu Hong won the women's race.

Han though was not happy despite his convincing victory.

"I am not satisfied with the result," said Han. "Before the Games I wanted to set a new Asian Games record but I didn't."

The rain created havoc, with the tennis team finals, baseball final, soft tennis finals and eventing all delayed. They eventually got underway and Taiwan beat Japan 8-7 to take the baseball crown.

In the Al-Arabi Indoor Hall, China's Ma Lin and Wang Nan won gold in the table tennis mixed doubles final by defeating South Korea's Lee Jung Woo and Lee Eun Hye 3-2.

"It was a difficult match for both of us because I lost in the doubles Wednesday and Wang Nan lost two matches also yesterday. But we played well today and we are really happy that we won," Ma said.

China is guaranteed at least one gold in the men's finals late Thursday - an event that it dominates around the world.

World No.2 Ma takes on his teammate and world No.4 Wang Hao.

But, in an upset, Hong Kong's Tie Ya Na has sneaked into the women's final after beating China's world No.3 Wang Nan in the semis. She plays Guo Yue of China for gold.

The weather won't impact the swimming where China and Japan are fighting to be crowned swimming champions and to gain the psychological shot in the arm it will give

ahead of the world championships in Melbourne in March.

China's head swimming coach Zhang Yadong was targeting at least 20 golds but will almost certainly have to revise this downwards.

With just Thursday's session to go, China have 15 gold to Japan's 13 and must win five out of six to achieve that target and equal their performance in Busan at the last Asian Games four years ago.

A close finish is expected in the men's men's 4x100m relay but it should be Japan in the 200m breast-stroke with Olympic champions Kosuke Kitajima in action.

China's best chance of gold is with their women, who again have proved far better than their men.

Defending champion Qi Hui starts in the 200m individual medley while Xu Yanwei and Zhou Yafei should battle for honours in the 50m butterfly.

On the water, China's women rowers added a hat-trick of gold to their ever-increasing haul. Among the men, the medals were shared between South Korea, Japan and China.

Meanwhile, India finally got a gold on the shooting ranges when Jaspal Rana overcame illness to snatch a dramatic victory in the men's 25m Standard Pistol.

Vaughan won't return, says Fletcher

BBC ONLINE, undated

England coach Duncan Fletcher has ruled out former captain Michael Vaughan's return in this Ashes series.

Fletcher does not believe there are enough tour games for Vaughan to regain full fitness after having knee surgery to play in the remaining Tests.

"There's not much cricket between now and the third, fourth and fifth Tests."

"Especially cricket where he has to stay in the field for a long time, probably two days standing on that leg and for a long innings," Fletcher said.

"So until he can do that and he's confident in his knee, we won't consider Michael Vaughan."

Vaughan, the 2005 series winning captain, himself had targeted the fourth Test, which starts in Melbourne on Boxing Day.

But he has struggled with the bat in his first two matches since undergoing surgery.

He was out for a duck playing for an England Academy side against a Western Australia XI and then hit just nine runs on Wednesday against a WA Second XI.

The third Test starts in Perth on 14 December with Australia leading the series 2-0.

England play two matches, a one-day game against CA Chairman's XI at Lilac Hill on Friday and a two-day game against Western Australia, starting on Saturday.

Vaughan will play in the two-day game in a side featuring the squad members who have not played in the Ashes thus far, and filled up with players from the Academy.

China humble

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Qatar led the table with 5.5 points. IM Enamul Hossain drew with GM Ehsan Ghaem Maghami, GM Reefat Bin Sattar lost to GM Elshan Moradiabadi while Samima Akhter Liza earned full point defeating WIM Atousa Pourkashiyani.

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Cricket

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Cricket at the Fatullah Stadium. "I'm really excited to watch the match at the new venue. I was looking forward to this occasion for long. Whether its incomplete or not does not matter, the most important thing is that an international match will hold within a mile of my residence," said Maksudur Rahman, a colleague student who stood in a long queue in front of City Bank's Mirpur branch to get a ticket.

"Oh, now we don't need to go to Narayanganj," added one of his friends from the line. The ticket and seating committee of the board, which has printed 30,000 tickets for the near 42-thousand capacity ground, informed that most of the tickets have been sold out in the vicinity.

"We learned that there was a rush in City Bank's Mirpur branch but the ticket selling in the other branches were low. We are expecting nearly 20,000 spectators tomorrow," said Khondokar Jamiluddin, chairman of the committee.

Samuels and Daren Ganga (21) repaired some of the damage during a 46-run third-wicket partnership before first-change bowler Rao Iftikhar had Ganga caught in the covers off a miscued flick.

Master batsman Lara (14) hit Abdul Razaq for a boundary and was shaping up well before he was run out after being sent back by Samuels while attempting a single in the 30th over -- one of three run-outs in the innings.

Left-arm spinner Rehman removed Samuels and Dwayne Smith (0) in successive overs to finish with 2-20. Samuels hit two boundaries during his snail-paced 86-ball knock of 37.

Morton, however, added an invaluable 57 runs for the seventh wicket with Denesh Ramdin (23), hitting four boundaries in his 66-ball knock. He was the ninth man out, holding out to Naved, who finished with 2-32.

Gul took 2-19 off his 9.5 overs. "The West Indies' total was the lowest in 13 one-day internationals at the venue.

Extras: (lb-13, w-1, nb-6) 20
Total: (All out in 52.4 overs) 154
Fall of wickets: 1-11, 2-17, 3-37, 4-87, 5-87, 6-106, 7-110, 8-121, 9-132

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Bond	13	2	43	3
Martin	16.3	2	37	1
Franklin	12	0	30	3
Oram	10	5	30	2
Astle	1	0	1	0

NEW ZEALAND: First innings Cumming not out 37
Howlbw b Malinga 0
Sinclair c P Jayawardene b Vaas36
Fleming not out 7
Extras: (nb-5) 5
Total: (For 2 wkts in 33 overs) 77
Fall of wickets: 1-3, 2-73

To bat: Astle, Oram, McCullum, Vettori, Franklin, Bond, Martin
Bowler O M R W
Vaas 11 2 34 1
Malinga 7 2 14 1
Maharoor 7 2 25 0
P Jayawardene 8 1 12 0

Toss: Sri Lanka.
Umpires: Simon Taufel and Brian Jerming.

"We played a good game, had many chances to score a few more, but once again paid the price for our mistakes," he said.

"Overall, of course, I'm very disappointed with our Champions League showing this year."

It was the 10th meetings between the two sides in Europe's premier club competition, with the Spanish giants holding a sizable edge with four wins against one for Dynamo seven and a half years ago.

ICC slams PCB decision



AFP, Dubai

The Pakistan Cricket Board's (PCB) decision to lift the doping bans imposed on fast bowlers Shoaib Akhtar and Mohammad Asif was heavily criticised by ICC president Percy Sonn on Wednesday.

The head of the International Cricket Council (ICC) claimed the PCB's stance highlighted inconsistencies in its stance on doping.

Sonn, in a statement on the Dubai-based ICC's website, said: "Cricket has taken significant strides forward in addressing the important issue of drug use in our sport."

"However, this judgement emphasises that much more work needs to be done to educate players and to synchronize our Members' efforts to attain a totally drug-free sport."

He added: "The judgement high-

lights inconsistencies in the Pakistan Cricket Board's (PCB) anti-doping processes and regulations.

"It is vital that cricket takes heed of the judgment and that the lessons it provides are disseminated amongst all our Members."

A tribunal had banned Akhtar, 31, for two years and Asif, 23, for one year following their positive tests for the banned steroid nandrolone.

But the pair won their appeals against the suspensions on Tuesday.

The PCB's appeals committee concluded the players honestly believed that the nutritional supplements they were taking did not contain banned substances.

And the PCB said it was satisfied with the decision and any reservations from the International Cricket Council (ICC) or World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) would not affect the players.

Despite that assertion from the PCB Wednesday's statement from Sonn left little doubt over the ICC's disquiet at the way the case had been

handled.

Sonn said it was now important that each ICC member revisited their own regulations and aligned them both with the ICC's and WADA's Anti-Doping Code.

"The issue of player education is also of vital importance and the ICC will, with WADA's continued assistance, do its utmost to make it easier for our members to provide this service to their players and officials," Sonn said.

He continued: "The key fact is that it is vital for all our Members to maintain a zero tolerance on the use of drugs in our sport."

"That is the idea behind the ICC's drug-testing regime at all our events since 2002 and our adoption of the WADA Code in July of this year."

"I would now urge all our Members to ensure appropriate action is taken so cricket can show just how committed it is to being known as a drug-free sport."

Panesar on call



AFP, Perth

Much-vaunted England spinner Monty Panesar says he is ready to produce if given an Ashes call-up, despite a lack of match practice on the tour.

The left-arm finger spinner was a frustrated onlooker for the first two Tests, with England selectors preferring Ashley Giles' extra experience and superior batting ability.

However, there was widespread criticism of that decision in the wake of England's stunning second Test loss in Adelaide, following on their defeat in the first Test, and Panesar seems certain to be recalled for the third which starts December 14 at the WACA Ground.

Panesar gets his chance to impress the selectors in Friday's Lilac Hill festival match and England's subsequent two-day tour match against Western Australia on Saturday and Sunday.

The 24-year-old hasn't played since taking just two wickets in the tour match against South Australia from November 17-19, but said he was ready to tackle the Australians.

"I played in the warm-up games and I'm going to play in the warm-up games this week," Panesar said here Thursday.

"I think I have bowled a fair bit

and also in the nets during the two Test matches I haven't played in. I have got a fair bit of bowling done already since I have been in Australia.

"I am pretty happy with the way the ball is coming out and the way I have been bowling."

"I just have to continue to build on the way I have been bowling in these conditions."

Panesar said his third Test chances hinged on bowling well at Lilac Hill and in the match against Western Australia.

"There is a chance for me, if I bowl well, to put my name in the hat and obviously the coach and captain would take notice," Panesar said.

"It is up to me to try and bowl well and hopefully give myself a chance."

Despite the outcry, particularly in England, over his omission from the first two Tests, a philosophical Panesar said besieged coach Duncan Fletcher had told him he was overlooked in the interests of team balance.

"The balance of the side is important and he told me it was important that we bat down to eight," he said.

"I can understand the balance of the team... I am disappointed I didn't get a chance but all you can do is focus on the next Test match coming."

Panesar, who has 32 wickets in 10 Tests in a promising start to his

career, said he would be able to cope with the enormous pressure of expectation that would come with the Ashes recall many outside the team are demanding.

"It is flattering to see people wanting me to play and it is nice to hear that, but I am not going to put any pressure on myself," he said.

"I just have to bowl the way I have been bowling since I've been playing international cricket."

Panesar said he used his time on the sidelines to do some important homework.

"I have looked at how the Australian batsmen played Ashley Giles, and how Shane Warne bowled as well."

"It gave me a good opportunity to watch the game and see what I could pick up."

Panesar said the English were capable of rebounding despite their demoralising loss in Adelaide and said the gap between the second and third Tests was a blessing.

"We have got character in our team," he said.

"It (Adelaide) was a massive shock and it wasn't easy to take."

"We have to lift ourselves, but we have got a break now before the next Test match and hopefully it gives everyone a chance to mentally and physically get a break and be ready for the third Test."

2011 World Cup

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cricket operations Saleem Altaf at the meeting to be chaired by Pawar.

"Pawar has called for a meeting to discuss the progress over the 2011 World Cup on December 11. Representatives of the cricket boards of Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh would be attending it," BCCI chief administrative officer Ratnakar Shetty told PTI.

Pakistan apparently is keen to either host the final or get more matches of the tournament. After a preliminary meeting of the four countries earlier this year, it had been decided that India would host the final and Pakistan and Sri Lanka the semifinals.

Ganguly

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which lifted outside his off-stump. His assurance was reflected in the manner he found gaps, sometimes in an off-side field populated with seven fielders.

Twice in succession he made rubbish of such tactics by first flapping and then cover-driving Mornantau Hayward for boundaries.

United exact

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competition, in the second minute after collecting the ball from a throw-in, rounding a defender and powering a shot past Celtic keeper Artur Boruc.

Winger Jesper Gronkjaer scored Copenhagen's second goal after 27 minutes with a close-range shot as they dominated the first half before Celtic looked more hungry in the second.

Swedish international Marcus Allback put the result beyond doubt with Copenhagen's third in the 57th minute before Celtic's Jiri Jarosik scored a consolation goal 15 minutes from time.

Celtic dropped from first to second place in the group as Manchester United finished top by beating Benfica 3-1 at home.

Why blast

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however, has been found highly superfluous.

The only unsporting 'comment' made by the players was the demand of the resignation of the federation high-ups due to their failure; the 'indecent' comments must be the booters' repeatedly reminding the BFF officials of their failure to hold a league; and the 'uncalled for act' the sit-in itself on BFF grounds.

The BFF has been humiliated in these so-called activities, the press release claimed, and found a behind-the-scene third party. It cautioned the so-called third party (probably the ex-footballers) from their interference in football matters and warned the players not to make any such comments in the future.

The BFF also has taken a decision to investigate and bring the culprits to justice.

With the whole incident happening before their own eyes, does the BFF really need an investigation or is this just an eyewash?

The BFF's attack against players is nothing new and its president SA Sultan's breaking the promise earlier this year had resulted in the resignation of the footballers who were involved with the game's governing body.

However, the language of the press release to blast the footballers sounded like the text of a press note issued by an autocratic government -- naturally detached from people -- which is so familiar in the country.

Now, has the BFF decided to run the game without footballers, this question will pierce the fans until football rolls on the ground.

Sheva wants

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"I'm not finished as a player. On the other hand I have nothing to prove. Everybody knows what Andrei Shevchenko is capable of."

Shevchenko has scored six goals in 20 matches in all competitions for Chelsea and was signed in the summer from AC Milan for about 45 million euros on a weekly salary of 180,000 euros.

Inter want

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Messi was also recently praised by Diego Armando Maradona, who told Moratti that he should do anything to sign the highly-rated youngster.

The Argentine international has previously been linked with Inter, when it seemed that the Via Durin outfit might offer Adriano to Barcelona in part-exchange for Messi.

The striker started his career at Newell's Old Boys in Argentina, moving to Barca at the age of 13, where he made his first team debut in a friendly against Porto in 2003-04.

Messi was also voted Player of the Tournament in Argentina's Under-20 World Cup triumph in Holland in 2005.

FIFA sets

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and there will be a similar play-off for the last berth in the South America and CONCACAF region.

FIFA on also opened the bidding for the 2014 World Cup and said that it would make a decision on its choice of South American host in November 2007.

FIFA's executive committee said in a statement after it's meeting in Zurich that it would accelerate the procedure if only one candidate submitted a bid and met all its requirements.

Brazil is widely fancied as a likely host for the World Cup in 2014, which will take place in Latin America under the world governing body's policy of rotating the event between its major regions.

However, Blatter told journalists that high standards had been set in recent World Cups. He warned that the governing body would be ready to look "further north" if no decent candidates came through from the South American confederation.

Watson almost out



AFP, Perth

Injury prone all-rounder Shane Watson's slim hopes of playing for Australia in the third Ashes Test all but disappeared when he was ruled out of Queensland's one-day clash with Victoria on Friday.

The game against Victoria was Watson's last chance to prove his fitness and gain some match practice before the third Test, starting December 14 at the WACA Ground.

However, Watson was ruled out at Queensland training on Thursday and as a result seems certain to miss the Perth Test.

Australia are expected to name an unchanged squad for the third Test on Friday.

A comeback in the fourth Test in Melbourne, on December 26, seems the best case scenario for the 25-year-old, who is adamant he will be fully fit by Christmas.

Watson's misfortune is good news for struggling middle order

Bond disbands

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hitting for a 22-run final partnership with Lasith Malinga.

Franklin also took three wickets, including Tharanga and Kapugedera just after lunch, to return the figures of three for 30.

Chris Martin's dismissal of Prasanna Jayawardene saw the right arm become the 11th New Zealander to take 100 Test wickets.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard at stumps on the first day of the first Test between New Zealand and Sri Lanka at the Jade Stadium in Christchurch on Thursday: