

Lankan Davis Cuppers arrive

Sports Reporter

A five-member Sri Lanka Davis Cup squad arrived in the city yesterday for their Asia-Oceania Group Two second round tie against Bangladesh scheduled for June 14-16 at the Ramna Tennis Complex.

The team comprises four players — Arjun Fernando (captain), Jayendra Wijayasekera, Rohan De Silva and Sanjaya Wijemanne — and manager P S Kumara. De Silva and Wijemanne had been to Dhaka before for the international junior tennis tournament, the erstwhile Ershad tennis meet.

One of the seeded teams from Asia, Sri Lanka qualified for the second round beating Syria 5-0 in Colombo last May 3-5 while Bangladesh made it by virtue of a 3-2 win over Bahrain in the first round clash held in Manama, also last May after the ties had to be postponed because of the outbreak of the Gulf war.

The winners of the Dhaka tie will play the winners of the Hong Kong-Singapore match in the semifinals scheduled for July 19-21.

Bangladesh, whose best showing in the Davis Cup since its debut in 1986 has been a group semifinal berth which it lost 0-5 to Pakistan in 1989, is

represented this year by national number one Shovon Jamaly, former five times national champion Sarder Iftakher, Maroof Rahman and the young Hira Lal. Sandru Salam is the non-playing captain-cum-coach while Dr Rashiduddin Ahmed is the team manager.

The draw for the encounter will be held this morning at the Bangladesh Tennis Federation office, Ramna.

Peter Malik, an IIT official from India who will referee the matches, is due to arrive today.

Season tickets for the VIP enclosure will cost Taka 200

and for the galleries Taka 20. Daily gallery tickets are priced at Taka 10 each. Soon after their arrival the Sri Lankans got a look at the Ramna Tennis Complex where they had a practice session in the afternoon. The Bangladesh boys have also been practising there.

Reception

Meanwhile, the Bangladesh Tennis Players' Association will accord a reception to the players of the two teams at the BTF conference room at 5.30 this afternoon. State Minister for Youth and Sports Sadeq Hossain Khoka will grace the occasion as chief guest.



England new boy Steve Watkin (R) being congratulated by teammates Phillip DeFries (L) and Graeme Hick (C) after he took three wickets on the final morning of the first Test on June 10 to put his side in sight of their first home Test victory over West Indies since 1969. — AFP photo

BFF concedes to players' demand

Sports Reporter

Besides, the BFF also decided to complete this year's Senior Division and other league programmes by December so that the football season can be planned according to the English calendar, i.e., from January to December instead of July-June.

Sampras doubts Agassi's chances

LONDON, June 11: US Open tennis champion Pete Sampras expressed doubt on Monday over whether fellow-American Andre Agassi, beaten in the French Open final on Sunday, would compete at Wimbledon this month, reports Reuter.

Sampras added that Agassi could already have ruined his chance of victory this time. Agassi, whose only previous Wimbledon appearance was in 1987 when he lost in the first round, has insisted he would play for the second time this year.

Sampras, in London for the Queen's Club grass court tournament, was not so sure. "Andre might not even come at all," he said. Agassi has flown back to the United States.

Wimbledon — big test for Seles

NEW YORK, June 11: And now it's on to Wimbledon for Monica Seles, halfway to that most difficult of tennis achievements, a Grand Slam. The problem, she fears, is that halfway may be as far as she gets, reports AP.

"I think it's probably impossible for me to win the whole Grand Slam this year," she said after a second straight French Open crown. This is hardly an example of the power of positive thinking. It may be, however, entirely accurate.

To win the Slam, a player must conquer three different surfaces — hard courts at the Australian and US Open, clay at the French and grass at Wimbledon. Two won't do, and two is where Seles is at right now. She has solved the hard courts and clay. Grass, however, remains something of a problem for the 17-year-old, who is No. 1 in the world.

So, when they list the favourites for the fortnight in London's suburbs, names like Jana Novotna and Martina

Navratilova or Gabriela Sabatini and Steffi Graf come up. And Seles, armed with the Australian and French titles, is missing in action. This is no reflection on her ability, just the way she plays the game. Seles is a baseline specialist.



MONICA SELES

is secure in her groundstrokes, more than happy to sit back and wait for a break. Let others play the serve-and-volley game, rushing the nets, forcing the issue.

That is fine on the slow red clay of Roland Garros, but hardly recommended on the quick green grass of Wimble-

don. On clay, the ball comes up higher. There is time to compensate for the bounce. The same is true on hard courts. On grass, though, the bounces are low, often skidding off the surface. To a non-player it might seem like a small thing, like a baseball hitter adjusting to different pitchers from one inning to the next. To a finely-tuned tennis player, however, it can make a world of difference. Seles knows that.

"A groundstroke player can't play Wimbledon," she said after winning the French. That's not entirely true. Bjorn Borg spent a lifetime on the baseline and won Wimbledon five straight times. And Chris Evert's groundstroke game earned her three titles at the All-England Club.

Evert, though, understands Seles' concerns. "Wimbledon is the big test for her," she said. "She's won the Australian and the French. She could win the US Open. But Wimbledon, I don't know."

"When you look at the past, you don't have to be a serve-and-volley player to win, but you have to have flexibility and movement. Her ground strokes and passing shots are great, but her mobility and flexibility are in question."

There are other factors at Wimbledon besides the serve-and-volley game. You have to have a big weapon. Monica's big weapon are her groundstrokes. But on grass, the others could jerk her around."

Evert said this Wimbledon seems wide open and that could give Seles a shot. "I'd be a little surprised, though, if she won," she said.

So would Seles. "I'd have a much bigger chance of winning if I could go in and serve and volley," she said. That, Evert said, could be

difficult for a player who has never displayed that game before. "She doesn't have a big enough serve right now to serve-and-volley," Evert said. "It doesn't come over a two-week period."

It's not like Seles' baseline game can't achieve some success at Wimbledon. A year ago, at age 16, she reached the semifinals there. She lost in three sets to Zina Garrison, dropping the last, 7-9.

How many points away was she from a berth in the finals? A drop shot here, a passing shot there and it would have been Seles, not Garrison, playing Martina Navratilova for the crown.

And she would have done it from her regular location — the baseline.

Could she get through the early rounds from the baseline and then when Wimbledon turns serious, try to adapt a serve-and-volley strategy? Evert didn't think so. "That would be feeding herself to the wolves."

To win Wimbledon, Seles must adjust her game. That doesn't mean discarding one style. It means finding a middle ground that will suit her on all surfaces. Others have done it. It is not impossible.

So she promises to move in that direction in an attempt to conquer Wimbledon. She shouldn't expect to become an overnight expert, though.

And if the grass intimidates her, Seles can console herself in the knowledge that by the end of Wimbledon, after two weeks of pounding, most of the green stuff is long gone.

The problem is that by that time, Seles thinks she will be too.

Viv vows to bounce back

LEEDS, June 11: West Indies cricket captain Viv Richards warned England on Monday to be wary after his side slumped to their first Test defeat in this country since 1969, reports Reuter.

England bowled out West Indies for 162 in their second innings at Headingley to win the match by 115 runs and

take a 1-0 lead in the five-Test series.

Richards paid tributes to England's performance but said his side would bounce back.

"England played the better cricket in this match but we have to show the character to fight back. And knowing what has happened in the past I think England should be wary," he said.

"England have looked a rejuvenated side but I will only be totally convinced (if) we are still losing after five Tests, he added.

The West Indies lost to England in the first Test in Jamaica last year but came back to take the series 2-1.

Richards held a team meeting in the dressing room immediately after the game but stressed there had been no reprimands.

"It hasn't been a post-mortem. It's more a question of keeping everyone's spirits high."

"We have made sure in our meeting that everyone was reminded about their strengths which we have demonstrated before in similar situations."

He added that West Indies, widely acknowledged as the world's best Test team over the past 15 years, would try to identify specific weaknesses in England's game.

"We've got to look at ways of knocking England down — and I don't mean with bouncers," he joked.

Chatrier says money is cancer in tennis

LONDON, June 11: The head of tennis's leading worldwide body, Philippe Chatrier, has warned that too much money could be killing the game, reports AP.

In his final newsletter Chatrier, who is giving up his position as president of the International Tennis Federation, described money as a cancer in the sport.

"The biggest problem we face in tennis is that there is too much money around. Tennis is such a perfect sport for exposure on television," he said.

"You cannot blame a brilliant young player who takes, say, the 200,000 dollars he or she is offered to play for just one night," said Chatrier, who is taking up a post with the Olympic Commission.

Euro Cup hockey begins today

PARIS, June 11: An Olympic place is at stake as well as the continental title when the men's European Cup hockey finals begin at the Stade Jean Noel in Paris on Wednesday, reports Reuter.

Only eight of the 12 teams can win the Olympic place and none will do so if the European champions are either the Netherlands, Spain, England or Wales since the Dutch, as World Cup holders, Britain, as reigning Olympic champions, and Spain, as hosts, have already qualified for next year's Barcelona Games.

The International Hockey Federation (FIH) has stipulated that finishing as runners-up to a team already qualified is not enough. A place in the Olympics for each of the men's

continental champions is a new rule introduced after the 1988 Seoul Games.

The sixth European Cup is the second of the four continental events to be staged. Pakistan having qualified as Asian champions at Beijing last October. Five of the countries in Paris — Germany, the Soviet Union, France, Ireland and Poland — will have a second chance to qualify for the Barcelona Games at the Olympic qualifying tournament in Auckland in October.

Germany must have the best chance of finishing above the Netherlands, England and Spain, the Olympic silver medalists were third in the Champions Trophy in Melbourne in November and fourth at the 1990 World Cup.

Burrell is the man to beat

NEW YORK, June 11: Leroy Burrell and Michael Johnson, seeking an early edge in the long run-up to August's World Athletics Championships, clash over 200 metres at the US National Championships beginning on Wednesday, reports Reuter.

Six-times Olympic champion Carl Lewis is also likely to feature in outstanding duels over 100 metres with Burrell and in the long jump as US teams are determined for the World Championships, Pan American Games and World Student Games.

Lewis's 10-year long jump winning streak appears in danger as the Olympic champion faces Mike Powell and Larry Myricks, the 1988 Seoul Games' other medalists.

Lewis, 100 metres world record-holder, should be Burrell's chief rival in a sprint showdown featuring the event's top two performers.

But that race is likely to be overshadowed by the 200 metres clash between Burrell, the world's top-ranked 100 metres runner, and Johnson, who ranked number one at 200 and 400 metres last season.

Both have clocked 20.02 seconds this year, with Burrell's time wind-assisted.

It's going to take a fast time to win, very fast," Burrell said. "I know four of us will break 20 seconds and it may take a time in the 19.70s to win."

Only three men — Italian Pietro Mennea, whose 1979 world record stands at 19.72 seconds, and Americans Lewis and Joe DeLoach, who share the US record at 19.75 — have run under 19.80 without an assisting wind.

Time, though, is not on Johnson's mind, his coach

said. "His main goal is just to get out of there qualified for the World Championships, and then go on about his business in Europe," said Clyde Hart.

That business includes breaking Minnea's world record.

But the US championships



LEROY BURRELL

will be his first hurdle since only the top three finishers in each event qualify for the World Championships.

Lewis, who clocked 10.19 in a low-key 100 metres in Austin, Texas, last Friday, said he was ready for some fast times in New York.

"I felt much better than last time," said Lewis, who was a well-beaten second at 10-30 in his previous outing on May 30 in Seville.

The four-day meeting also features Olympic winners Steve Lewis in the 400 metres and Jackie Joyner-Kersey in the heptathlon and women's long jump, plus 1983 double world champion Mary Slaney, who at 32 is making a comeback from injury.

Courier overtakes Agassi

PARIS, June 11: Andre Agassi was supposed to be the leader of a new and impressive generation of American tennis players.

But, instead, his third loss in as many Grand Slam finals has left him riddled with self-doubt, reports Reuter.

"Who knows how many shots you have at a Grand Slam," said Agassi after watching another of his generation, Jim Courier, receive the French Open winner's trophy at Roland Garros.

"It is rare when somebody gets to experience that moment in time. As far as my career is concerned, this is the most disappointing moment of my life," added Agassi, close to tears.

The 21-year-old Agassi had played superbly throughout the Roland Garros fortnight, knocking out world number two Boris Becker in the semifinals, to reach the final for the second year running.

But, as in Paris last year and the US Open in September, he

fell at the last hurdle, playing an error-ridden game to lose 3-6, 6-4, 2-6, 6-1, 6-4 to Courier.

The ninth-seeded Courier, who also nudged Agassi out of fourth place in the world rankings with his victory, was, like Andres Gomez last year and champion Pete Sampras at Flushing Meadow, playing his first Grand Slam final.

But the irony of the French Open in recent years is that its surprise winners have then faded fast, throwing a cloud of doubt over the value of the clay court tournament as an accurate reflection of the state of world tennis.

Michael Chang, another of Agassi's American contemporaries, won the 1989 French title in his first Grand Slam final. Though he has reached the quarter-finals twice since and helped the American squad to win the Davis Cup last year, Chang has not had a particularly brilliant run and won only one title, the Canadian Open, in 1990.

Gomez's star was extremely

brief. After beating Agassi in four sets at last year's French Open, the Ecuadorian shrimp farmer slumped so badly he decided not to come back to defend the title this year.

In the 1980s, players such as Bjorn Borg, Ivan Lendl and Mats Wilander were crowned French Open champions, accurately reflecting their achievements elsewhere.

Faster balls, and, this year, harder courts have changed the nature of the tournament, the only Grand Slam event played on clay.

Agassi's mental anguish, magnified by having to cope with two rain breaks in the second set, contributed largely to his defeat.

His only consolation is that his triumphant opponent, who like Agassi and women's champion Monica Seles is a product of the Nick Bollettieri Tennis Academy in Florida, still believes in his compatriot.

"He will have his day, there is no doubt it," said Courier. "He is too good a player to be denied in his whole career."

IOC advises caution on SA

BIRMINGHAM, June 11: Officials of the International Olympic Committee on Monday cautioned international sports federations against moving too hastily in welcoming South Africa back into the fold, reports AP.

The process of South Africa's return to the Olympic movement was the focus of the first day of meetings of the IOC Executive Board. The full IOC session opens Wednesday.

With South Africa dismantling the last remaining pillars of apartheid, the IOC and other international sports federations have begun laying the groundwork for the republic's reinstatement.

But the IOC has stressed that the ban on South Africa should not be lifted until all apartheid laws have been repealed.

There has been worry in IOC circles that some federations, such as the International Amateur Athletic Federation, might be pushing too hard on South Africa.

"Our preoccupation is to maintain the realm of leadership" in the campaign to rein-

state South Africa, IOC Vice President Kevan Gosper told reporters after the first round of closed-door meetings.

"Our responsibility is to retain that leadership and provide guidance to the federations. So far they have followed. This is not the time to see a breakdown in cohesion of behaviour. We want the federations to stay behind us and not compromise this."

The IAAF, the world governing body for track and field, has already taken steps toward South Africa's rehabilitation.

Last month, it partially lifted its ban on South African athletes in international meets and said they could start competing again in Africa.

The IAAF said it would consider a broader lifting of the ban after a delegation studies the situation later this month.

IAAF President Primo Nebiolo, one of the most powerful figures in international sport, is eager to have South Africans make their return on the world stage at the World

Track Championships in Tokyo in August.

But Nebiolo said his organization was not in a race against the others to be first to welcome South Africa back.

"We don't want to be first in the class, or even second," Nebiolo said at an IAAF news conference in London. "We are looking for the right moment to allow the young athletes of South Africa to compete with their colleagues all over the world."

He did not accept the IAAF was moving too fast.

"These young athletes have been isolated for 22 years. They want to compete," Nebiolo said. "We don't have any interest in pushing but sometimes in life some people must take some decisions."

South Africa was expelled from the IOC in 1970 for its policies of racial segregation. The IAAF followed suit in 1976.

The IOC has set two main conditions for South Africa's readmission: abolition of apartheid and unification of the country's sports federations into non-racial bodies.

Reynolds cleared of doping charge

COLUMBUS, Ohio, June 11: Harry "Butch" Reynolds, the world record holder in 400 metres, had his cake and ate it too when he celebrated his second wedding anniversary on Monday and topped it with news that his two-year suspension for failing a drug test had been lifted, reports Reuter.

Immediately after an arbitrator from the American Arbitration Association announced the temporary lifting of the suspension, Reynolds said he would run in The Athletics Congress (TAC) national championships this week in New York.

Arbitrator Richard Gombert said the evidence clearly showed that the urine samples, which allegedly contained traces of an anabolic steroid, did not come from the same man.

The arbitration hearing was held on Friday and the decision was released on Monday. Reynolds, who holds the record at 43.29 seconds, was suspended in November, 1990, on the basis of samples taken last August at an athletics meeting in Monte Carlo.

Monday's ruling relates solely to the TAC championships.

Reynolds is ineligible to compete anywhere else in the world because of his suspension by the International Amateur Athletic Federation (IAAF) for the doping violation.

Reynolds has a lawsuit pending against TAC seeking permanent reinstatement and 12.5 million dollars in damages. He also has appealed the IAAF suspension.

Hunt said Reynolds must "decide if he can get himself ready to compete. It may be that he will decide not to go to Europe (this summer to compete on the European circuit) and run in the pack. It may be that he might just decide to come back next year and win the gold medal."

"I will be in Barcelona in 1992 to represent the United States in the Olympics," predicted Reynolds, joined by his wife Lillie and lawyer Greg Lashutka at a press conference in Columbus, Ohio.

Reynolds' agent, Brad Hunt, told Reuter in response to a question about the runner's condition to compete this week, that "it would be tremendous if he got out of the heats (preliminary rounds)."

"We discussed this with our attorneys today and this is the ruling. We've accepted his entry," said Ollan Cassell, TAC's executive director. "He's going to compete. After that, I expect we'll have a hearing with him (about future competition)."

Gombert's decision said, "The arbitrator finds that the suspension of Mr Reynolds was improper, that there is clear and convincing evidence that the 'A' sample and the 'B' sample did not emanate from the same person... and that there is substantial evidence

that neither the 'A' sample nor 'B' sample emanated from the claimant.

"Our goal is to ensure that Butch gets a fair hearing, and



BUTCH REYNOLDS

to prove that this man is entirely innocent of this charge," Lashutka said.

Reynolds conceded his chances are slim of qualifying for the World Championships. He must finish among the top

three in the 400.

"I haven't done any track work at all — just weights and a little distance running," Reynolds said. "To be honest, I'm just looking to Barcelona in '92. They'll see the real Butch Reynolds there. I have to have something set up to go for."

The process has sapped Reynolds, 27, in more ways than one. Reynolds made an estimated 400,000 dollars to 500,000 dollars a year before his suspension.

"This has hurt me a lot more than financially. You can always make money," Reynolds said. "All this talk hurt Butch Reynolds deep inside more than anything. I mean, this is my life here."

Lashutka also downplayed the financial aspect. "The biggest blow he has suffered is having this smirching of his record for young people who look up to him," Lashutka said. "Hopefully, it's been washed away by this ruling."

Egypt crush Indonesia

KWANGJU, South Korea, June 11: Egypt crushed Indonesia 6-0 to advance to the semifinals of the South Korean President's Cup football tournament here Tuesday, reports AFP.

Egypt completely dominated the match and embarked on their goal-getting spree in the ninth minute when Magdy Tolba scored with a powerful free kick.

Ayman Mansour and Hossam Hassan got in on the act with goals in the 16th and 18th minutes, which saw Egypt go into the interval with a healthy 3-0 lead.

Kasem Farouk who came on as a second half substitute added two more goals in the 46th and 60th minutes, before Mohamed Abdelazim rounded things off with a 73rd minute strike.

The result meant Indonesia, who have lost all three of their games, were eliminated. Egypt progressed to the semifinals on the strength of two wins and a draw.