

Bankers in Khulna soccer final

KHULNA, July 21: Bankers Club defeated Moheswar Pasha Club 3-1 in the first semifinal of the KDSA football tournament at the local stadium this afternoon, reports BNA.

The first half ended 1-1 when Joshi of Moheswar Pasha equalised the Bankers' lead scored by Badal from a penalty.

In the second half Kamal and Yahya scored the other goals to elbow out Moheswar Pasha.

Referee Bakhtiar booked Yahya and Mukul of the Bankers and Joshi, Shaheen and Durga of Moheswar Pasha for rough play.

Brothers Union will play against Mongla Port Sporting Club tomorrow (Tuesday).

Hockey league suspended

Sports Reporter

The matches of the Green Delta First Division hockey league have been suspended till July 24, Saturday, because of unplayable ground condition, which resulted from incessant rain.

The league will resume on July 25, Sunday with the match between Dhaka Mariner Young's Club and War Club, originally scheduled yesterday but could not be held owing to heavy downpour.

Zafar Imam named "match commissioner"

Zafar Imam, a member of the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF), has been appointed "match commissioner" for the 4th Asian Cup Winners' Cup football tournament yesterday, reports UNB.

Veteran sports organiser Imam, who is also the deputy secretary general of Bangladesh Olympic Association (BOA) and a member of competition committee of Asian Football Confederation (AFC), will supervise the match between East Bengal Club of India and Zawra Club of Iraq.

The double leg basis match will be held in the Indian city of Calcutta and Siliguri on August 6-8.

Chinese trainers in city

A five-member Chinese experts arrived in the city Tuesday night to prepare Bangladesh boys and girls for the opening and closing ceremonies of the 6th SAF Games to be held in the capital December 20-27, reports UNB.

The team comprises callisthenics experts — Madam Guan Huaixiu, Lou Xiyu and Li Zafu, music composer — Jiang Yan and designer-cum-artist Wu Lihong.

Interpreter Li Guoying, who failed to accompany the team, will, however, join later this month.

H'ball referees' course begins

Sports Reporter

A three-day refresher course for handball referees got underway at the conference room of the National Coaching Centre yesterday.

Forty-five participants, including female referees, are taking part in the three-day long programme which concludes on July 23.

Prime Sports to cover India-SL one-dayers live

Prime Sports presents exclusive, live coverage of the three Shri Lanka/India one-day internationals. Prime's broadcast of the first one-dayer begins July 25th. The second and third one-dayers will take place August 12th and 14th respectively.

Coverage begins at 10 am local time.

Prime Sports' commentary team, comprises Indian Test legend Sunil Gavaskar and former Shri Lankan player, Ranjit Fernando. Both will be in Shri Lanka offering viewers expert analysis on upcoming play.

Schools TT from August 2

The Green Delta Schools table tennis tournament will be held in the capital from August 2 to 5, reports UNB.

The competition, organised for the second time by the Bangladesh Table Tennis Federation (BTTTF), is aimed at inspiring school boys in the game and also to improve its standard.

Interested school teams and organisations are requested to send their entry by July 27 at the BTTTF office at the Dhaka Stadium.

Four events — boys' team, girls' team, boys' singles and girls' singles — have been included in the four-day contest for which no entry fee is required.

Another day docked down

BCCSL faces wrath of fans

KANDY, Sri Lanka, July 21: The Shri Lankan cricket board has come in for harsh criticism after the first Test against India was a virtual wash-out due to the rainy weather in this central city, reports AFP.

Umpires K T Francis and T M Samarasinghe called off the fourth day's play at the scheduled lunch break after the match failed to get underway in the morning session due to rain at the Asgiriya Stadium.

"It is unlikely that we will have to play today," Francis said.

"The outfield and the area around the wicket is slippery. Water has seeped in through holes in the covers (on the pitch)," he said.

With only 50 minutes of play possible in the first three days, newspapers and local cricket officials blamed the Board of Control for Cricket in Sri Lanka (BCCSL) for displaying ignorance of weather conditions in fixing the dates for the first Test.

"Obviously the cricket board has acted with no consideration for their (spectators) feelings by scheduling a match in Kandy during the rainy season," The island newspaper said in an editorial.

"The least these sport sports can do is to apologise to the cricket fans," it said.

A separate story in the same newspaper said Kandy was seething with anger over the board's decision to set the match dates during the rainy season.

"The million dollars question is who should be blamed. Certainly, not the weathers," the newspaper said.

BCCSL secretary Neil Perera told reporters three days ago that the board could not be blamed.

"I had personally studied the rainfall in Kandy for the past five years and found that this period was the least affected by rains," Perera said.

But local cricket officials said they had advised the board against play at this time, since rain hits the hill city during this period every year.

"We were given the match and the dates. This type of weather at this time is well known here," said Asgiriya curator Bertie Wijestingham.

Only 50 minutes of play was possible on the second day on Sunday when Shri Lanka crashed to 24 for 3.

The frustration of both teams was obvious and has even led to acrimonious debate over the resumption of play.

Shri Lankan cricket manager Duleep Mendis rejected suggestions that his team was involved in the decision not to resume the match on the third day when the weather had improved.

"We had no say in the matter," Mendis said.

"We were the batting side. The wicket was all right. But we cannot speak for the others," he said.

Indian captain Mohammad Azharuddin had said he would not take any chances if the ground was unfit for play.

"I don't want to take any risk. Don't want my bowlers or fielders to be injured," Azharuddin said.

The Test match is now destined to be abandoned as a draw on the fifth day on Thursday.

Mendis said the rainy weather had prevented the team from having batting practice for the past five days.

"I hope the weather is fine for the next two Tests in Colombo," Mendis said. "We did not think that rain would interrupt this match so badly."

Merv Hughes back in harness

LEEDS, England, July 21: Match-winner Merv Hughes, who epitomises Australia's heart and commitment, has bounced back from injury and is set to spearhead their attack in the fourth Ashes Test starting on Thursday, reports Reuters.

Hughes, whose 19 wickets have helped to thrust Australia to a 2-0 lead in the six-match series against England, said on Tuesday he was "fitter and fresher than ever" after limping out of the third Test two weeks ago.

The big Victorian pacemaker's comeback from a groin injury adds another ingredient to a heady cocktail of possibilities for Headingley, the venue for definite results, seamers and swing bowlers — and heroic hundreds by Graham Gooch.

England captain Gooch is now at the helm of a reshaped team, short on experience but brimming with youthful enthusiasm, who have perhaps their best victory chance of the series.

English optimism has been rekindled after Gooch's side, with four players making their debut, drew the third Test at Trent Bridge, a result that ended a sequence of seven consecutive Test defeats.

Such was England's improved form that they had Australia on the ropes at tea on the final day — 115 for six in the pace of a victory target of 371 — but could not apply the knock-out punch.

Now, at the ground that often produces the most typical of English conditions, favouring the bowler who swings and seams the ball rather than delivering it at high pace, Gooch and his young charges can tilt

nique to cope with movement in the air and off the pitch, though Australia will recall one of the more comfortable run-scoring occasions was in the 1989 Test when they were put in and scored 601 for seven declared.

England omitted their only spinner and relied on an all-pace attack in that match, and they will again face the question this time of whether to bank exclusively on their pacemen or include off-spinner Peter Such to give variety.

Having named an unchanged 12, England will almost certainly repeat the policy adopted at Trent Bridge and play all seven specialist batsmen, with Alec Stewart keeping wicket.

Australia's worries have eased with the almost certain return of Hughes, whose role has become even more significant since leading strike bowler Craig McDermott withdrew from the tour following surgery for a twisted colon last month.

The touring team's back-up pace attack looked unimpressive in their recent matches against Derbyshire and Durham, and captain Allan Border admitted: "It's fairly obvious we need Merv. I'm very optimistic about him."

Hughes bowled for an hour at Headingley on Tuesday and then said: "I'll probably work up to flat-out pace when we practise again tomorrow."

"Not playing for a fortnight has also left me more mentally relaxed and I've come back feeling a lot fresher."



MERV HUGHES
The balance of what was shaping up as a massively one-sided series after their heavy defeats in the first two games.

The last 11 Tests at Leeds have produced a definite result, with five wins by England for whom Gooch has scored match-winning centuries in the last two, carrying his bat for a masterly 154 against West Indies in 1991 and scored an equally vital 135 not out against Pakistan last season.

Headingley invariably demands a sound batting technique to cope with movement in the air and off the pitch, though Australia will recall one of the more comfortable run-scoring occasions was in the 1989 Test when they were put in and scored 601 for seven declared.

For England it's do or die

By A M Chowdhury

Halfway through, the Ashes series is very interestingly poised. After a clean sweep in the one-day series Australia rode high in the first two Tests and took a 2-0 lead in the six-match series. But England seemed to have at last found their combination right at Trent Bridge to break their streak of seven consecutive Test match losses and in the drawn third Test they, after a long time, held the upper hand. At least they have succeeded in pulling away from their losing habit and the draw came as a great relief for the 're-designed' English team. Thus they take the field at Headingley, Leeds, in a mood to keep the series alive for which they shall have to win the fourth encounter. Otherwise the Ashes are certain to remain in Aussie hands. More or less it is a 'do or die' situation for England.

But the task is not going to be easy. Last year they called on the 'horses for courses' at Headingley to clinch a victory over the Pakistanis. Last July debutant pace-bowler Neil Mallered had figures of 3-72 and 5-50 in Pakistan's totals of 197 and 222. Graham Gooch's 135 was mainly responsible for England's first innings total of 320. Memories of their last outing on the same ground are going to serve as a great incentive. Would that be sufficient to enact a repeat performance? I guess not.

England selectors have at last reposed their confidence in fresh blood, who served them pretty well at Trent Bridge. One fails to understand why did not they do it right from the very beginning. Aussie-breed Martin McCague, English-breed Mark Holt and Kiwi-breed Andrew Caddick (what a good cocktail!) seem to have put some fire in the English attack, as was evident at Trent Bridge. But whether they are good enough to run through the Aussie batting twice in the course of five days remains to be seen.

What is heartening for England is that their batting, rid of a few big names, stood

English team. In the earlier two Tests, they could hardly withstand the aggression of ferocious-looking Merv Hughes (8-151 and 4-127) or tackle the guile of Shane Warne (8-137 and 8-159). At Trent Bridge Merv Hughes (7-133) and Shane Warne (6-182) were not really mastered, though England's totals of 321 and 422 for six declared were impressive and for the first time in the series they were not trailing.

Headingley is a seamers' paradise. Under occasional cloud cover the ball moves a lot, making life difficult for the batsmen. In these conditions England may play Martin Bicknell, who is reputed to have the ability of moving the ball. Australia may also add Paul Reiffell to their attack leaving out Tim May. If Merv Hughes is back to full fitness and finds his aggressive mood he may very well put Ashes on the English pudding. The focal point of the fourth Test is going to be: how profitably the 'new-look' English attack would utilise the Headingley syndrome?

But one should not forget the Aussie trump card, Shane Warne, who could easily be their match winner once again. Last July Pakistan's Mushataque Ahmed (3-60) was largely responsible for England's slump from 270-1 to 320 all out.

England's skipper Graham Gooch, enjoying the last flicker of the lamp, with two hundreds in the last three Tests, would also fondly wish to repeat his last year's feat on Headingley wicket. If the new-found spirits persist, England's chances of keeping the series alive are definitely brighter at Headingley than on any other venue.

That, of course, does not mean that the task is easy. With a 2-0 lead under their belt and in a situation where a draw at Headingley would enable them to retain the Ashes, the Australians may prove too difficult a proposition. For them the outcome at Trent Bridge had very little to panic.



PAUL REIFFELL
well against the Aussie attack at Trent Bridge. The newcomers — Mark Lathwell (22 and 33), Graham Thorpe (six and 114 n.o.) and Nasser Hussain (71 and 47 n.o.) — boosted up the batting strength of the

Fed Cup basketball from August 20

Sports Reporter

Federation Cup basketball championship will begin in Dhaka from August 20. Champions and runners-up of the Second Division along with all the First Division teams will be able to take part in this meet.

Interested teams have been requested to complete their entry formalities by August 5 with a deposit of Taka 500, which covers affiliation and entry fees of Taka 300 and 200 respectively.

Pak trio under investigation

ISLAMABAD, July 21: Pakistan captain Wasim Akram, fast bowler Waqar Younis and batsman Javed Miandad are under investigation by cricket authorities here for allegedly violating the Mage's code of conduct, reports AFP.

Pakistan cricket board secretary Shahid Rafi said the three star players could face sanctions if a disciplinary committee found them guilty. But he did not say how stiff the penalties would be.

A British tabloid, The Sun, claimed in May that both had admitted they were under the influence of alcohol when they were arrested on charges of possession of marijuana during Pakistan's West Indies tour earlier this year. Charges were subsequently dropped.

The are alleged to have accepted 17,000 pounds between them from the newspaper for the story.

Miandad, the former captain and top batsman, has also spoken out to the media against Pakistan's cricket board, saying of they could remove him from the captaincy following the unsuccessful triangular tournament in Australia, then Akram too should be sacked for failing as skipper in South Africa.

Rafi admitted that it was difficult to handle the "superstars" but said "all players are bound by the International Cricket Council law and no one is above it."

Tavare to retire from county cricket

LONDON, July 21: Former England batsman Chris Tavare announced on Tuesday he would retire from county cricket at the end of the season, reports Reuters.

The 38-year-old Somerset captain played in 31 Tests between 1980 and 1989 with a highest score of 149 against India at Delhi in the 1981 2 tour.

Tavare, a dogged defender and patient accumulator of runs, made his debut for Kent in 1974 and moved to Somerset three years ago.

He earned a place in the county's history books against Sussex in 1990 when he shared a record ninth wicket stand of 183 with Neil Mallender on his way to a career-best 219.

Tavare's announcement follows the retirements on Monday of England all-rounder Ian Botham, with whom he shared a memorable 149-run partnership against Australia at Old Trafford in 1981 to halt an England slump and help win the Ashes.

Anand storms into lead

BIENNE, Switzerland, July 21: India's Viswanathan Anand, recovering from a slow start, has stormed into a five-way tie for the lead as the Bienne International Grandmasters chess tournament entered the sixth round Wednesday, reports AP.

Also in the lead, with four points each, were Evgeny Bareev and Valery Salov of Russia, Mikhail Gurevich of Belgium and dark horse Paul van der Sterren of the Netherlands.

Anand, ranked second in the world and the top-rated player at Bienne, handily beat Alexander Khalifman in the fifth round, knocking the Russian out of first place. Bareev drew with Gurevich, Salov beat his countryman Evgeny Pigusov, and Van der Sterren defeated Dilyndu Barua of India.

Viktor Korchnoi of Switzerland, at 62 the oldest player in the tournament, played to a draw with Jonathan Speelman of Britain. Both Korchnoi and Speelman stood with Khalifman and Gata Kamsky of the United States with 3.5 points just behind the leaders. Kamsky drew with Boris Gelfand of Belarus.

Judit Polgar of Hungary, the youngest player and only female in the tournament, was in the middle of the pack at 2.5 points after defeating Ferdinand Hellers of Sweden.

Medvedev makes no fuss

STUTTGART, Germany, July 21: Andrei Medvedev got off to a quick start in his defence of his title at the 1.04-million-dollar Mercedes Open today, reports AFP.

The third seed, who became the first qualifier to win an ATP Tour event here last year, needed only 70 minutes to dispatch Croat Goran Prpic 6-2, 6-4 and move into the third round.

Competing in his first tournament since Wimbledon, the 18-year-old Ukrainian showed a complete recovery from the groin strain that forced him to miss the Swiss Open at Gstaad.

In a first round match interrupted by rain on Tuesday, Austria's Horst Skoff continued a miserable week for French left-hander Rodolphe Gilbert, beaten in the last set of the deciding Davis Cup singles on Monday by Indian Ramesh Krishnan.

Fernandez's easy flight to qtrs

MAHWAH, New Jersey, July 21: Top seed Mary Joe Fernandez had an easy time in her first match of the 150,000-dollar Pathmark women's tennis Classic on Tuesday, reports Reuters.

Seventh seed Todd Martin of the United States beat Mauricio Hadad of Colombia 6-3, 6-3, in the day's only second-round match.

Thirteenth seed Derrick Fernandez, who had a first-round bye, held serve easily in the second-round match, facing only one break point in disposing of Sprung 6-0, 6-2 in 76 minutes.

The 21-year-old from Miami, ranked seventh in the world and runner-up to Steffi Graf at the French Open seven weeks ago, was the first player to reach the quarter-finals here.

"It was hard hitting winners on the slow court, but the victory was satisfying," said Fernandez, who started the hardcourt season with this cutting.

Medvedev makes no fuss

STUTTGART, July 21: Germany's Bernd Karbacher struggled past France's Guillaume Raoux 6-4, 4-6, 6-3 Tuesday to become the first player to reach the third round of the rain-plagued Mercedes Cup, reports AP.

The top seeds including 1993 French Open winner Sergi Bruguera, Michael Stich and Andrei Medvedev had their first matches Wednesday.

In other matches, Spain's Tomas Carbonell defeated Jaime Oncins of Brazil, 7-5, 6-3, Francisco Clavet of Spain topped Germany's Michael Gesserer 6-7, 6-2, 6-2 and Sweden's Magnus Larsson outlasted Russia's Andrei Cherkasov 7-6, (7-3), 2-6, 7-6 (9-7).

Larsson trailed Cherkasov 4-1 in the third set before rallying for the come-from-behind victory.



Australian Nicole Provis makes a double-fisted backhand return during her singles match against world number one Steffi Graf in the Federation Cup tennis tournament in Halle, Germany, on July 20. Provis stunned Graf 6-4, 1-6, 6-4.

Provis upsets erratic Graf

FRANKFURT, Germany, July 21: Nicole Provis ended Steffi Graf's 17 match unbeaten run in the Federation Cup to give Australia a shock win over the German defending champions here on Tuesday, reports AFP.

Provis, the Australian team captain, had only one regret after her three-set victory over the world number one.

"My parents were over here to watch the team but when I saw we were drawn to play Germany in the first round I told them to book a flight home to Melbourne for tonight.

Unfortunately there's nothing I can do about it now so they won't be here for the rest of the week."

Graf's normally lethal forehands and first serves were wildly off target. That allowed the 23-year-old from Melbourne, an experienced clay court performer who reached the French Open semifinals in 1988, to score a 6-4, 1-6, 6-1 win.

It was the German players' first Federation Cup singles defeat after 17 consecutive victories. Graf paid a warm tribute to Provis but complained of a shoulder injury.

"I've been having trouble with my shoulder since Sunday and it got worse in practice."

"At one stage I considered not playing today but I took the risk and thought it would be all right. Now I intend to take a good rest. I won't be in the team for the play off game against Australia."

"I didn't know she was hurting," said Provis after her win.

"I just kept playing. I have a game plan and I stuck to it."

"She blew me off court in the second set but when I held my serve at the start of the third it gave me confidence."

Australia's team spirit surfaced strongly after the Provis victory and they clinched their second round tie against Denmark when Elizabeth Smylie and Renae Stubbs won the doubles.

The highly rated Australian duo came back after dropping the first set to beat Anke Huber and Barbara Rittner 5-7, 6-4, 6-3.

Australia had made a disappointing start when Smylie lost the opening singles in straight sets to Huber.

Australian captain Wendy Turnbull was delighted that the women's team had kept up with men who beat Italy in the Davis Cup world group quarter final on Sunday.

She said: "We wanted to show the guys the women are just as good as them. Australia are always dangerous opponents in team events. Last year we beat two seeds and reached the semifinals here."

"Obviously we're all delighted with today's result. We knew we had a chance. We knew if we could win one of the singles we had a great opportunity in the doubles."

Top-seeds Spain, who had been scheduled to play Germany in the final for the second year running, had few problems against Britain.

Conchita Martinez outplayed Jo Durie and Arantxa Sanchez Vicario was too good for Clare Wood. Neither dropped a set. The Spaniards completed a white wash by winning the doubles.

The American fifth seeds, who have come to Germany with a relatively under strength team, also scored a 3-0 win against Switzerland.

Lindsay Davenport beat Christelle Fauche and Lori McNeil defeated Emanuela Zardo in the singles. Debbie Graham and Ann Grossman dropped only four games in the doubles.

Eighth seeds Japan, who are hoping to get past the second round in the competition for the first time in 25 campaigns, recovered from a nervous start to beat Colombia 3-0. Mana Endo won 12 games on the trot after dropping the first set to Carmina Giraldo in the opening singles.

Seventh seeded Netherlands won all their matches against Croatia, Latvia dropped a point but beat Belgium, and China produced an excellent 2-1 win against Peru.

Australia's next round opponents, Denmark, pulled off an upset by beating Austria in the deciding doubles, while South Korea beat New Zealand and Canada defeated Uruguay in the play offs.

Gilbert's gift for Joao Silva

WASHINGTON, July 21: Unseeded Joao Cunha Silva of Portugal took advantage of erratic play from ninth-seeded American Brad Gilbert for a 4-6, 6-3, 6-4 upset in the first round of the \$25,000 dollar Newsweek Tennis Classic on Tuesday, reports Reuters.

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