

Cricketers' caucus

LONDON, Aug 20: A group of distinguished former Test players will meet here on Monday to discuss international cricket's most pressing problems, reports AFP.

Federation Cup basketball on

Angels Club recorded a massive 127-41 victory against Barisal Cadet College in the inaugural match of the 6th Federation Cup basketball championship that got underway at the wooden floor gymnasium yesterday.

Although his team got a dunking, Sayeed stole the honours of being the top scorer with 27 points. Angel's national player Dulal managed 26 while his teammate James bagged 22 points.

V'ball squad for Asian meet named

The Bangladesh Volleyball Federation (BVF) yesterday announced the squad for the seventh Asian Volleyball Championship to be held in Thailand from September 11 to 20.

Zakir Hossain of Army is the captain of the 12-man team. The other members are: Naim Chowdhury (BDR), Sohrab Hossain (Army), Ali Farhad (Navy), Asit Kumar Nandy (BDR), Maftuz Islam (Stragjan) DSA, Faruq Hossain (BDR), Alam Mustafa (Air Force), Mumtaz Hossain Murad (Bogra DSA), Kabir Hossain (Army), Nur Ahmed (Army) and Abul Kalam Azad (BDR).

Three players have been kept in the waiting list. They are: Irtazul Islam (Army), Jaane Alam and Abdus Salam (Navy). The officials are: Sharif Hossain Chand (manager), Hi Chin Guan (coach), Harun Ur Rashid (asst coach, Army), Golam Rasul Mehd, (asst coach) and Anisur Rahman (international referee).

Two more Thai booters for Arambagh KS

Arambagh Kriya Sangtha have roped in two more Thai players yesterday, the officials of the Star Premier Division league team completed the registration formalities of Chalyong Kampian, the number two goalkeeper of the Thai national team and midfielder Prasong Pansawath.

Both these players are from Police Club, one of the leading sides in the Thai soccer league. Earlier, Arambagh signed a Thai striker, Narkasampurana, who scored twice on his Premier League debut.

Smooth sail for Lendl

NEW HAVEN, Connecticut, Aug 20: Second seed Ivan Lendl cruised into the quarter-finals of the 1.04 million dollar Volvo International when he disposed of young Australian Sandon Stole 6-2, 6-3 in just 69 minutes on Thursday, reports Reuter.

Lendl, who had shaky moments in his first match here, will next face Andre Agassi, who got an equally easy ride over seventh-seeded Israeli Amos Mansdorf 6-1, 6-4. "I played better than I did the day before but not my best," said Lendl. "I feel Sandon had a terrible time getting any kind of rhythm and I hope I had something to do with that."

MSC take on Radiant today

DMFA Cup champions Mohammedan Sporting Club take on Radiant Club, the champion team of Maldives, today at 6 pm at the Dhaka Stadium in their home match of the 4th Asian Cup Winners' Cup second round. Although doubts loom large over Mohammedans' away match scheduled for August 28 in Male, capital of Maldives, the black and whites will go all out to improve upon their impressive record against their old foes.

In a press conference held at the conference room of the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF), Mohammedan manager Badal Roy, a reputed player of the yesteryears and Russian coach Ivanovich shed light on the possible line-up for today's match. Syed Haasan Kanan, Mohammedans' suspended goalkeeper, will replace Abdullah Labul under the bar as the disciplinary action of six-match suspension does not apply in international matches. Kanan was earlier suspended for his misdemeanour with the referee in the vital Star Premier league encounter against Abahani

Kriya Chakra. Roman Chaplin, Kaisar Hamid, Jewel Rana, and Barun Dewan will from the four-man defence. Coach Ivanovich is likely to field four midfielders — skipper Ruman Bin Wali Shabbir, Saiful Bari Titu, Arman and Russian Tanguive Mourat to ensure a steady supply of balls for two strikers Russian Oleg Jivotnikov and veteran Sheikh Mohammad Aslam. Imtiaz Ahmed Nakib the leader scorer of the Premier league is unlikely to be in the first eleven. An opportunistic goal-getter as he is, Nakib has not really delivered the goods this year as a team player. With or without Nakib, Mohammedans are the clear favourites in today's encounter. At least the past records say so. Way back in 1991 Mohammedans trounced Radiant 5-1 in Dhaka and then rounded it off with a two-nil victory in Male, in the twin engagements of club championship. But success in today's match may not bear any fruit for Mohammedans as the chances of Mohammedans going to Male for the away match according to club sources are dim for more than one reason.



Badal Roy (R), manager of Mohammedan Sporting Club is seen with BFF general secretary Sheikh Akmal Hossain (C) and Ivanovich (L), Mohammedans' Russian coach during the press conference held at the conference room of the BFF in connection with today's first-leg match of the second round of the 4th Cup Winners' Cup between Mohammedan Sporting Club of Bangladesh and Radiant Club of Maldives. — Star photo

Torino hold an edge over AC

WASHINGTON, Aug 20: At first glance, Milan should dominate Torino. But if there is a mismatch in Saturday's Italian Super Cup, it will be the other way around, reports AP. The Super Cup, the annual kickoff of the Italian soccer season, will pit the league champion Red and Black against Italian Cup winners Torino — and this year for the first time in the event's six-year history it is being held in the United States at Robert F Kennedy (RFK) Stadium.

against Torino, who finished eighth in the league before beating AS Roma on away goals in the two-leg Italian Cup final. While AC Milan's lineup includes some of the biggest names in soccer, many of them haven't made the trip to Washington or won't play for other reasons — Marco Van Basten, still recovering from ankle surgery; Jean-Pierre Papin, on assignment with the French national team; Gianluigi Lentini, recovered from an automobile accident but still unavailable; and Christian Panucci. Torino, conversely, will have their best 11, including Uruguayan Enzo Francescoli and Carlos Aguilera, who have rejoined the team from Montevideo, where it played Brazil in World Cup qualifying on Sunday — a 1-1 draw. Speaking through interpreters, both AC Milan head coach Fabio Capello and his Torino counterpart Emiliano Mondonico on Thursday stressed the need for their squads to blend the talents of returning players with talented newcomers. "We've been together enough to teach our new players our style of play," said Mondonico, whose team lost three Italian national team players during the offseason, but added three others from the Uruguayan national team. "But we haven't been together long enough to make everyone comfortable with each other yet. Similarly, despite only a pair of losses in the last two seasons, the inability to win the European Champions Cup has led to a shakeup at AC Milan — losing Frank Rijkaard to Ajax Amsterdam and Ruud Gullit to Sampdoria, and the squad also is coping with a rebuilding or sorts. "All teams need to make changes and bring in new players," Capello said. "That's what you have to go through (to remain competitive)."

Halard hunts Sabatini down

TORONTO, Aug 20: Julie Halard had nothing to lose. That wasn't the case for Gabriela Sabatini. In the first major upset of the Canadian Open, the unseeded Halard advanced to the quarterfinals on Thursday by beating the third-seeded Sabatini 6-4, 4-6, 7-6 (7-3), reports AP. "Anyone who plays against me, I guess, has nothing to lose, so they take risks," Sabatini said. Despite blowing match point in the third set and allowing Sabatini to get even, the Frenchwoman took command in the tiebreaker, going up 4-0. Sabatini held serve on second match point, closing to 6-3, then knocked the ball into the net to end it. "I knew I had a chance today," said Halard, who had lost her four previous matches against Sabatini. "Those other times were easy matches for her. It's one of my big wins." Sabatini thought her loss was due to a combination of Halard's improved game and her own lack of concentration. "She's more consistent right now," Sabatini said. "I didn't feel I was in control of the match. I wasn't hard on her, with my serve, and that makes a difference." Halard didn't think the victory was a sign that her game is stepping up. "I'm not very consistent," she admitted, adding that her success seems to go in cycles of

good wins and awful losses. "During the Federation Cup, it helped me because I played good matches. I played a very good match against (Miriam) Oremans." Halard had also advanced in a tiebreaker Wednesday by beating Oremans, the 18th seed. Halard meets Jennifer Capriati in a quarterfinal match on Friday. Capriati trounced 11th-seeded Amanda Coetzer of South Africa 6-0, 6-2. Germany's Anke Huber also went to a tiebreaker before advancing to the quarterfinals, putting away Lori McNeil 4-6, 6-3, 7-6 (7-2). "I didn't play my best match, but I think I played the important points very good," Huber said. Huber, seeded seventh, meets second-seeded defending champion Arantxa Sanchez-Vicario, who eliminated ninth-seeded Helena Sukova 6-1, 6-1. Argentina rally to beat SA POAMAN, Poland, Aug 20: Argentina overcame an early deficit to beat South Africa 4-3 in day two of the round-robin qualifying tournament for the 5th Intercontinental Field Hockey Cup, reports AP. Roger Hickman put South Africa ahead with a goal in the 15th minute in the Group B match. But in the second period, Carlos Geneyro gave Argentina the lead with a hatrick, scoring three goals in a 13-minute span. Fernando Ferrara concluded Argentina's scoring with a goal in 68th minute. South Africa hit back with goals from Mike Cullen and Murray Anderson but the comeback effort fell short. In another game in Group B, France gave little resistance to Belgium and fell 5-0. In Group A, Malaysia edged Cuba 3-2 and one of the favourites, South Korea, easily defeated Canada 5-2.

Imran's words of wisdom for Ws

ISLAMABAD, Aug 20: Former Pakistani cricket Captain Imran Khan Thursday advised successor Wasim Akram and his deputy Waqar Younis to give up playing county cricket, reports AFP. "Too much of county cricket is useless since it puts undue stress on fast bowlers which is a serious threat to a long career," Imran told the official Associated Press of Pakistan in an interview. "The county cricket for two or three years is very good as the new bowlers learn a good deal from the international exposure, but after that it has diminishing returns in the form of severe stress on the body which threatens their future."

Imran, who led Pakistan to victory in the 1992 World Cup in Australia, emphasized that the two fast bowlers should avoid a risk of injuries involved in excessive top-level cricket. "That is the only way Wasim and Waqar can overcome the problems that often worry them on the field as has been seen in the recent series. That is the only way they can serve Pakistan for a longer time," Imran said. Referring to big money English county cricket contracts, Imran suggested the two pacemen should adopt a professional approach and cut down the number of matches they play every season. "Sure they are drawing big money right now, but for that they have to play a full season, the stress of which will eventually lead them to a breakdown," he said. Imran, who himself represented Sussex for over a decade, said the best alternative for Wasim and Waqar if they want to continue with county cricket was that they should play fewer matches under a reduced contract. Citing his own example, he said: "I asked for little money from Essex and used to play less matches. I used to tell them, 'Okay, if my contract is worth 20,000 pounds, pay me 15,000 but I will dictate the number of matches for the season.'"

Akram deadly as ever

LONDON, Aug 20: Pakistan pace bowler Wasim Akram shook off his injury worries to take a career-best 8-68 on the opening day of Lancashire's County Championship match against Yorkshire on Thursday, reports Reuter. Akram had missed four of Lancashire's previous five championship matches with a rib cartilage injury and taken just two first-class wickets since the end of June. But he exploited a green Old Trafford wicket to beat his previous Lancashire best of seven for 53 achieved against Northamptonshire in 1988 as Yorkshire were bowled out for 242. That represented a mint recovery thanks to gutsy efforts from youngsters Michael Vaughan, an England under-19 opener, and Paul Grayson. Vaughan, 18, scored 64 in 135 balls to mark his championship debut while Grayson's 64 in 117 balls was also a career-best. Lancashire were 72-3 in reply at the close.

Gazipur soccer

From Our Correspondent GAZIPUR, Aug 20: Sarfuddin XI defeated Madhumita XI 8-4 in tiebreaker to reach the semi-finals of the Gazipur DC Cup football tournament at the local stadium today. The scheduled period of the keenly contested tie ended four-all. Oias scored a hatrick for the winners while Masud got the other one. For the losers Zakir and Siraj netted once each.



Jamaican Merlene Ottey shows her gold medal after winning the women's 200 metres at the World Athletics Championships in Stuttgart Thursday. It was Ottey's first gold in any major track and field meetings. — AFP photo

Ottey, 'Bronze Queen' no more

STUTTGART, Aug 20: Fate has finally smiled on Merlene Ottey after 14 frustrating years, reports Reuter. Robbed of gold in the World Championships 100 metres final by one thousandth of a second, Ottey captured on Thursday the global title she has been chasing since the 1980 Moscow Olympics. But it took a few heart-stopping seconds before the stadium screen confirmed that the 33-year-old Jamaican had finished the 200 metres ahead of American Olympic champion Owen Torrence by two-hundredths of a second. In fact, for the last few metres it looked as if Ottey was doing her best to gift the title to Torrence as the Jamaican appeared to lose her balance and lurched rather than ran for the line. Ottey blasted to a commanding lead around the curve but

ted up badly over the final 10 metres, starting her lean early and just making it to the line before Olympic champion Owen Torrence. "In the last 10 metres, I couldn't wait to get to the tape," Ottey said. "I lost my concentration, but I got there. I knew I could hold on because I was so far ahead." Ottey's time was 21.98 with Torrence clocked at 22.00. Russia's Irina Privalova was third in 22.13. Ottey showed little emotion at first, worried that the medal might disappear before her eyes once more. "I was still in shock," she said. "Of course, I was worried something would go wrong. This race was very stressful. I was expecting the worse to happen." But this time, Ottey's name was flashed on the stadium scoreboard as the champion. And minutes later, she held the gold medal around her neck and soaked in the wild applause from the fans.

"After all, these years, I thought for a while I was never going to get it (the gold), especially after what happened in the 100 metres," she said, wiping away tears. "I'm just happy that I stayed patient and believed I could do it. I'm overwhelmed." Ottey epitomises the modern cosmopolitan track and field athlete. Jamaican-born, educated in the United States and now resident in Italy, she has been the most consistent woman sprinter of modern times. But until Thursday she had never finished first in a major competition, winning four individual world bronze medals and four Olympic bronze medals. "I don't really know if there will be many chances to get a gold medal," she said. "I don't know what I will do next year, or the year after. For now I'm just going to finish the season."

Bubka on a fabulous flight

STUTTGART, Aug 20: Sergei Bubka is not the kind of man to make the same mistake twice. After failing to clear a height in the pole vault at last year's Barcelona Olympics, the Ukrainian bounced back with a record fourth title at the World Championships on Thursday, reports Reuter. Bubka, who developed his love for the sport as a child by vaulting over the washing line in the back garden with a clothes prop, gave a master class in pole vaulting to his rivals. He made his six-metre winning vault look as easy and as much fun as his flights over the underpants, shirts and socks at the end of the 1960s. It was only a mix-up over the amount of time allocated for vaults which hindered another world record attempt at the end of the competition. Grigoriy Yegorov of Kazakhstan, who won the silver medal with 5.90, and Russians Maksim Tarasov — the Olympic champion — and Igor Trandenkov who were equal third with 5.80, could only look on in wonder as the king of the event held court.

Bubka has dominated pole vaulting for the past decade, setting 34 world outdoor and indoor records. The success has given the father of two small children a comfortable lifestyle that would be the envy of most of this countrymen. After winning the 1988 Seoul Olympic crown and world titles in 1983, 1987 and 1991, most people thought there was more chance of snow upsetting the Barcelona Games than the Ukrainian missing out on a medal. But Bubka said he had not used the Barcelona disap-

pointment as motivation. "If I had remembered that and tried to get revenge, it would have brought me down. I tried to look at the event like any other competition and tried to stay cool," he said. Bubka made no mistakes in Stuttgart. He entered the competition clearing 5.70 at his first attempt, vaulted 5.90 with his next before the superb 6.0-metre winning vault. As usual, Bubka was ready for more for the crowd. The Ukrainian, who has done more to enhance the popularity of pole vaulting than any other athlete, tried to improve his world record of 6.13, set in Tokyo last September. The bar went up to 6.14. But Bubka seemed to lose his nerve after arguing with officials following a mix-up over the time he was allowed for his first vault. In competition, vaulters are allowed two minutes. But once the competition has finished a vaulter is normally allowed six minutes. Bubka was annoyed when he was given a red card after just two minutes for a foul. "I don't understand how an official at this level can make such a mistake," he said. "When that happened it completely killed my motivation."

Stark gives Sampras a scare

INDIANAPOLIS Aug 20: Defending two-time champion Pete Sampras survived a stiff challenge in beating Jonathan Stark 5-7, 7-6 (7-2), 6-3 Thursday in the third round of the US Hardcourts, reports AP. The victory allowed Sampras to keep alive his battle with Jim Courier for the No. 1 ranking heading into the US Open. Courier, ranked No. 2 and seeded second for the tournament at the Indianapolis Tennis Center, defeated Tomas Carbonell of Spain 6-2, 6-1 in the third round. In a night match, Boris Becker, the third seed, defeated Andrei Cherkasov 6-4, 7-5, losing only five points on first serve while overcoming 28 unforced errors. Becker won the match at the net, outscoring the Russian 31-11. Cherkasov won only 27 of his 47 first serve points and just 12 of 23 points on second serve. Qualifier Jimmy Arias lost five match points before defeating No. 4 Goran Ivanisevic 3-6, 6-4, 6-4. Arias, ranked 244th in the world, lost three match points on his serve in the ninth game and then double faulted before losing the game. He won the first three points of the final game, lost the next two and got the victory when Ivanisevic, No. 10 in the latest tour rankings, double faulted for the 14th time. "At triple match point, I choked so bad it was disgusting," said Arias, who finds himself in the quarterfinals of a tournament after not playing in one since April. "My mind just lost it." "I didn't do anything, I didn't put any pressure on him," Ivanisevic said. "I was just serving the first set and that is it. Then I got tired in the second and my serve was a little bit slower and he put some balls in."

Sampras needed 2 hours, 17 minutes to get past Stark, who lost his serve only twice while saving seven break points. Stark was able to get only one break point in the match. Courier, who lost the No. 1 ranking to Sampras on April 12 and lost the Wimbledon final to him in June, can reclaim the top ranking by reaching the semifinals this week. If he does that, Sampras will need to reach the final to hold the No. 1 position. Sampras and Courier say they're not thinking about rankings this week in their final tournament before the US Open. "I have said it all along, I will keep saying it, that the ranking counts at the end of the year," said Courier, who needed just 67 minutes to lift his match record for the year to 48-9. "Don't get me wrong, I enjoyed my time up there. It is not something I worry about."

"Three in the world, two in the world, one in the world, it is basically the same ballgame," said Sampras, who defeated Courier in the title match in Indianapolis. "It is you and the ball and you can't worry about the ranking. It is important, but I think winning major titles is more important." In other matches, No. 7 seed Cedric Pioline of France defeated Australian Jamie Morgan 6-4, 7-5; Patrick Rafter of Australia beat No. 8 Wayne Ferreira of South Africa 3-6, 6-4, 7-5.



Former Brazil national team ace-striker Careca (L) shakes hands with Kashiwa Reysols team manager Yoshitada Yamaguchi (C) after a press conference announcing that Careca and Abilio Saporito (R), nephew of former Brazilian star player Rivellino, are joining the team in Tokyo on Aug 19. — AFP photo