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WEREND SPORTS

Windies exact sweet revenge

By Asrarul Islam Chowdhury

The last time the Aussies toured the Caribbean in 1991. they became the first team to clinch a one-day series by a convincing 4-1 margin. However, on this occasion the West Indies came out the vic-

In the fourth one-dayer at the Bourda Oval, Georgetown, Guyana: the West Indies created a world record. Their 287/5 is now the highest runs accumulated by a team batting second to win. The previous record was also held by the Windies, their 285 against



CARL HOOPER

Pakistan at Sharjah in 1993. The Aussie total of 286/9 in the one-dayer at the Bourda Oval, is now their highest against the Caribbeans erasing the previous highest of 283/6 at Kensington Oval. Bridgetown, Barbados in 1991.

Brian Lara and Ricky Ponting topped the batting averages for the hosts and the tourists respectively. However, the former could bat only in the first three matches, before a buttock injury, while the latter appeared in only the fifth and final one-dayer.

In the bowling department Carl Hooper and Mark Waugh shared the honours.

The four Test rubber, The Sir Frank Worrell Trophy to be precise, starts from 31st March and concludes on 4th May. The Tests will be played at Barbados, Antigua, Trinidad and Jamaica respectively.

lf skipper Richardson is fit, then the onus of his side's batting will be on him. Eight of his 15 Test tons have come against the Aussies, which is more than what more gifted players like Worrell, Sobers and Richards

managed to amass. For the Richie - Aussies however, David Boon is their most seasoned player. Courtney Walsh seems to be getting better at the twilight of his career. The Caribbean bowling attack will no doubt look to him for breaking those long partnerships.

BATTING & BOWLING AVGS

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Arabia's prince refuses to be a British loser

Naseem Hamed is setting boxing alight with his extraordinary ability and looks set for a world title. Born and brought up in England, he is equally famous in Yemen from where his family came. Gemini News Service looks at the rise of the pugilist who has chosen to reclaim his roots.

E is loud, he is brash and weight for weight. Let's arguably the best boxer in the world not currently holding a world title. And Prince Nascem Hamed is proud to proclaim. Tam a Yennersi.

Hamed's parents moved from Yemen to the English city of Sheffield, famed for its steel, to open up a grocery shop over 40 years ago.

Hamed has just celebrated his 21st birthday and is English born and bred. But he has made the decision to reclaim his heritage: "Yemen means a lot to me because it is my parents' homeland. My father taught me all about Yemen so I suppose in some respects I am as much Yemeni as I am

If successful in his challenge for a world title, which is likely to come in May or June, he will become the first world champion with roots in the Arabian peninsula.

Naz, as he has rapidly become known in the argot of the ring, has become European bantamweight champion in only 15 fights, winning all of them, 13 of them inside the distance.

His lightening hands, powerful punch and unorthodox footwork have marked him out as an outstanding prospect within the ring, but he has come to equal notice for his antics outside it.

He somersaults over the ropes into the ring, resplendent in leopard-skin shorts and an orange turban, and likes donning a crown for photographs as if to emphasise his claims to being a king of the

False modesty is not part of his vocabulary. "I'm an outstanding world champion of the future," he predicts. Few who have seen him in action doubt that his prophecy will be fulfilled.

Among his admirers are

by Phil Minshull

millions in Yemen where he has become a national hero. His fights are televised live on Yemeni TV and the Yemen flag hangs alongside the British one when he enters the ring: "This is 1995 and British people still like losers. I'm not a loser. I'm a winner. Maybe its partly because rm from the Yemen big heart."

Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Sala regularly telephones the boxer to check on his progress and presented him with a \$20,000 Rolex watch when he visited Yemen

The reason for the affection is simple. He has given some sporting pride to a people who are extremely proud but have few sporting traditions.

"England means so much to me and my family but I'm looking forward to giving the people of Yemen their very own world champion to cheer on," says the Prince.

"The President has offered to help me with a house because a fighter of my stature needs to have a house in London even though I am going to continue living in Sheffield with my mum and dad.

"It's now looking certain I'll have a title fight of some kind in Yemen this year. Thousands of people turned out there when I gave an exhibition.

In addition to the adulation he enjoys in his adopted home he is also a hero to more than 3,000 Arabs, many of them Yemeni, who live in Sheffield.

"I'm proud to be an Arab. proud to be a Muslim. I love the nightlife of London and Sheffield but as a Muslim I don't drink and don't smoke so I won't be getting into trouble in any clubs."

Some of Hamed's biggest battles have been outside the ring, winning over colour prejudice to get the recognition he

"At the end of the day, a lot white people here think a

nigger's a nigger. Don't matter if you're black or brown. I identify strongly, with the black community." he comments.

"I boxed once in London. A was bashing this kid and all I could hear from the crowd was. 'He's only a dancer, the black bastard. Nigger'. It affected me by making me bash him up harder."

Naz's introduction to boxing was as a result of the racism that existed, and still persists, in parts of Sheffield.

His father took some of his nine sons along to the local boxing gym where they were introduced to veteran Irish trainer Brendan Ingle and taught how to defend themselves against bullies in the school yard.

Boxing provides enough fighters claiming to be The Greatest by Hamed's ability seems to justify the hype.

His most recent fight in January saw him despatch the experienced Mexican, Armando Castro, with three world title fights to his credit, in just four rounds.

Currently in Hamed's sights is Puerto Rico's Wilfredo Vazquez, the World Boxing Association super-bantamweight champion. Hamed's manager is negotiating to get the two together.

He has yet to fight in the United States but the notoriously insular US fight community is casting glances across the Atlantic at the new boxing whirlwind and wondering what it will cost to get him to the States to fight for a world title.

The British-cum-Yemeni fighter is also on the verge of a multimillion pound deal with a British TV company which will forever banish the memories of his modest upbringing in the backstreets of Sheffield. -Gemini News

About the Author: Phil Minshull is a British sports journalist and broadcaster.

Sino flag hoisted in Taiwan

TAIPEL Taiwan, Mar 23: Taiwan flew the Chinese flag for the first time Thursday as it pitched for Beijing's support in its bid to stage, the 2002 Asian Games, reports AP.

But the Chinese delegation appeared unmoved by the gesture by its ideological foe, saying it continued to back a rival bid by South Korea.

The Chinese flag was among Korea in May.

. China, whose decision is considered critical, has said it will support a bid by Pusan,

"There has been no change,

Wei's remarks prompted a Taiwanese official to question whether China was sincere when it appealed last month to expand sports and cultural ex-

China is "saying one thing while doing another," Chang Liang-jen, an official of Taiwan's government Mainland Affairs Council, told reporters.

Last week, Premier Lien Chan urged China to support Taiwan's bid for the Asian Games as the first step toward further rapprochement.

The flags were put up by Kaohsiung municipality, and provoked some opposition. Several blocks away from the hotel where the meeting was held, police stopped a convoy carrying dozens of people who planned to demonstrate against displaying the Chinese

Taiwan has long banned officials contact with China, and the hoisting of a Chinese flag on Taiwanese soil would have been unthinkable a few years

But hostilities have given way to booming trade and travel since the late 1980s.

Chang Feng-shu, chairman of the Taiwan Olympic Committee, said China should support Taiwan's bid so that the Chinese national anthem can be played on the island.

Taiwan in the seat of the Nationalist government that fled Mao Tse-tung's Communist takeover of the China mainland in 1949. China considers the island a renegade province with no right of selfgovernment.

the 37 banners of member countries of the Olympic Council of Asia, meeting in the southern port city of Kaohsiung, which hopes to stage the 2002 games. The OCA is to take the final vote on the venue at a meeting in South

South Korea.

and there won't ever be any change," Wei 'Jizhung, secretary general of the Chinese Olympić Committee, told reporters.

changes with Taiwan.

Naseem Hamed:

'I'm outstanding'

'Shut up' plea to keep out the 'Nigeria factor'

T IGERIANS have been

The aim is to make sure

right to host this year's Under-

The logic of the nervous

sports organisers is simple: if

no Nigerian speaks ill of their

country or spreads bad news.

the Federation of International

Football Associations (FIFA)

will not withdraw "Nigeria '95"

- as it has done once already.

when after months of frenzied

preparation for the contest.

they were told that FIFA had

decided the country was un-

After returning from a save-

the-cup mission to FIFA head-

quarters in Switzerland, Baba-

sola Rhodes, head of Nigeria's

National Sport Commission.

blamed the cancellation on a

FIFA official if he was aware

that there were outbreaks of

cholera and meningitis in

Enugu and Kaduna respectively

(two of the four proposed cen-

tres for the competition), "says

Rhodes, "and the man was

Rhodes, the FIFA official re-

layed the information to his.

though it cannot now be in

March as originally planned.

Rhodes favours April or May

Rhodes is demanding that

the press must "be objective in

their publications and positive

in their writings on this mat-

ter because sports is the only

thing about which the world

John Obakpolor, a former

chairman of the Nigeria Foot-

ball Association, agrees: "It is

now time to tighten all lose

ends and you journalists should

keep quiet a while. After the

championship, you may begin

Association will have none of

the accusations. Rather than

scapegoating journalists, say

Association members, sports

officials should concentrate on

checking the cholera and

meningitis reports and pro

The local Sports Writers

to fight yourselves if you like."

before the rains set in.

can speak well of us."

On returning to Zurich, said

Now Nigeria has won back

"The reporter asked the

journalist.

taken back."

superiors.

Nigerians were shocked

told to do the impossi-

ble - speak with one

With the country in political confusion and amidst reports of a failed coup, Nigerians are unlikely to heed the pleas of sports officials to keep quiet in order not to jeopardise the country's right to host the forthcoming World Under-21 Cup soccer. Gemini News Service reports on an attempt to ensure that good news prevails.

By Charles Akin Ogunrinde



ducé evidence for or against.

Saturday Champion writer Henry Nwosu is particularly angry at the way government officials are always quick to accuse the press of bad faith whenever the nation suffers a

"If there is any group that rose in one voice to condemn FIFA's cancellation of Nigeria '95. it was the Nigerian press. In fact, press publications on the reactions of Nigerians aided FIFA in arriving at its decision to visit Nigeria again and inspect the health situal tion before a final decision on

the hosting rights." In an attempt to cut through the row, Raheem Adejumo, 75-year-old head of the Nigeria Olympic Committee, and several other prominent Nigerians are asking all agencies responsible for preparations for the Cup to get down to work and "see that all the requirements are put in place."

"Even the stadia and facilities already approved should be maintained on a continuous basis," advised Adejumo.,

Actions being taken to ensure there is no repeat of the earlier cancellation including the taking into care of meningitis victims in Kaduna, and improvement of water supplies in certain places to reduce chances of a cholera epidemic.

The World Health Organization office in Lagos has told endemic in the Kaduna area, its occurrence in no way approaches the sort of epidemic that could threaten international visitors. An "Operation Keep Nigeria

FIFA that though meningitis is

Clean" sanitation drive has been launched for major cities, with a two million naira award for the neatest state. More specifically, compre-

hensive insurance cover worth N3 billion has been taken out for all players and officials.

Public utilities such as the telecommunications agency. electricity board. TV and radio corporation are all beating their chests about their readiness to provide services of international quality during the 16-team championship.

Says Tayo Ekundayo, public relations manager of Nigerian Telecommunications: "Our readiness is not a pipe-dream. It is based on facts. No 'Nigeria factor' can derail our prepara-

Whether these agencies will live up to their grandiose claims remains to be seen. But it is certain that the "sweet talk" campaign run by sports organisers will not gain much support from the country's outspoken and vociferous citizens. - Gemini News

About the Author: Charles Akin Ogunrinde is editor of the National Concord in Lagos.

Tyson's things won't be sold

INDIANAPOLIS, Mar 23 (AP): Collectors are all but drooling over the prospect of latching onto some of Mike

Tyson's prison memorabilia. Prison officials will do everything they can to assure

that nothing will be available. Once the former heavyweight champion is released from the Indiana Youth Center on Saturday after serving three years for rape, officials plan to shred all items bearing Tyson's

"We don't want to keep any souvenirs around because we don't think it's proper," said Phil Slavens, assistant superintendent of the youth center.

That's disappointment for Steve Nowlin, owner of A Rare Find Gallery.

"The state could have auctioned off items Tyson signed in prison and balanced the budget," he said. "You would be amazed what items associated with Tyson and his time behind bars would bring in the

marketplace." Nowlin said anything signed by Tyson during his prison stay would be worth three times as much as items signed before the fighter went to jail.

Prison officials will destroy name patches from Tyson's inmate clothing, along with the paper documents.

"I'd love to have those. His signature is not considered much in the market place. maybe dlrs 100," Nowlin said. "But, anything associated with his incarceration would bring double or triple the price."

Slavens said one the labels with Tyson's name are removed from the clothing, the pants and shirts will be sent to the laundry and washed for the next inmate of a similar size. Tyson's prison number.

922335, will be assigned to another prisoner, Slavens said. The only thing that will be preserved is Tyson's prison file, which will be placed in

the facility's archives. During the first weeks of his incarceration, Tyson got in trouble for signing autographs for inmates and prison staff.

He was reprimanded because he was giving away something of value in exchange for commissary items he was not eligible to receive during his first days at the prison near plainfield.

Jones to defend IBF crown

NEW YORK, Mar 23: Roy Jones Jr's on-again, off-again defence fight of his IBF super middleweight against Vinny. Pazienza is on again, according to Pazienza's manager, reports

"There's been a change in the last 24 hours," Bill Cayton said today. "The fight is on for June 24 in Atlantic City."

A day earlier, Cayton said the Jones-Pazienza fight was off because Jones wanted to light WBC super middleweight champion Nigel Benn of

We're bitterly, bitterly disappointed," Cayton told the Providence Jornal Bulletion on Tuesday.

Today, Cayton said Pazienza will get that chance after all. and at least dirs 1 million for the fight.

Cayton said a Jones-Pazienza fight had been set, if Jones successfully defended against Antoine Byrd last week in Pensacola, Florida, which he

A sportsman turns politician NEW DELHI. Mar 23. said George Mathew, a sociolo-

(Reuter): Aslam Sher Khan was a defender in the Indian hockey squad that won the World Cup in 1975. Now he is playing the role of a striker in politics. Khan, who represented in-

dia twice at the Olympics, is a Member of Parliament and carving out a reputation himself as a ruling Congress Party dissident. He has plenty of company in India, which is echotng a

global trend of sports person-

alities thriving in politics. The former hockey star is a key strategist for Arjun Singh. who quit the cabinet to challenge Prime Minister PV Narasimha Rao's leadership and was expelled from

Congress. Strategy, anticipation and action are part of politics and sports," Khan told Reuters. "Only, in sports you have umpires and you play to fixed rules on foul play. Not in poli-Chetan Chauhan, who

played Test cricket for India in the seventies, is a backbencher for the opposition right-wing Hindu Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). He is ideologically opposed to Khan, but speaks a similar language. "A sportsman has convic-

tion. He feels strongly about things and expresses it." Chauhan said

Erapalli Prasanna. Mohinsports as the biggest thing."

der Amarnath and Kirti Azad. all former Indian cricket stars, are in the BJP, which has wooed celebrities in search of a clean image. Azad is a statelevel deputy in Delhi. Former Test captain

Mansur Ali Khan "Tiger" Pataudi, who comes from a former royal family. lost on a Congress Party ticket in the 1991 general election. In neighbouring Pakistan,

cricketing great Imran Khan is gracing posters that describe him as a future prime minister, even though he says he is not entering politics. His obsession with building

a cancer hospital in his mother's memory has given him an aura of idealism to add to his sporting tame. They have joined people

like former West Indies fast bowler Wesley Hall, who has been a senior politician in Barbados, athlete Sebastian Coe, a British MP and of course the great Pele, who is Brazil's Minister of Sport. India's Khan says his entry

into politics was not really planned but stemmed from helping people. "Poor citizens came to me to help seek appointments with influential people because an Olympian is not refused one.

Media exposure could be a key factor in sports stars rising to political heights. 'The media is projecting

Think-Tank, the institute of social sciences. "And people go for celebrities." "The advantage of being popular is there. You need not be introduced," said Chauhan.

gist with an independent Delhi

India has several movie star politicians, two of them now chief ministers of huge South Indian states. Khan said most of his con-

stituents were tribes people ignorant of his sporting days. "But in the cities, there is a clean image that goes with the sportsman. That helps." Chauhan said the encour-

agement to sportsmen may have something to do with the distillusionment and corruption in Indian society. "May be professional politicians have not delivered the goods and people are tooking for a change." Spectator sport and poli-

tics both involve establishing a rapport with huge masses of people". Khan said. "To make thousands wave to your game needs an instinct. In politics, too, there is a madness. And a fan following that lasts." The main leadership for

politics must still come from serious-minded people like lawyers and trade union leaders; Mathew said, and called the rise of movie stars and sportsmen in politics a passing fancy in a developing country.

"When society develops, this is a stage," he said.