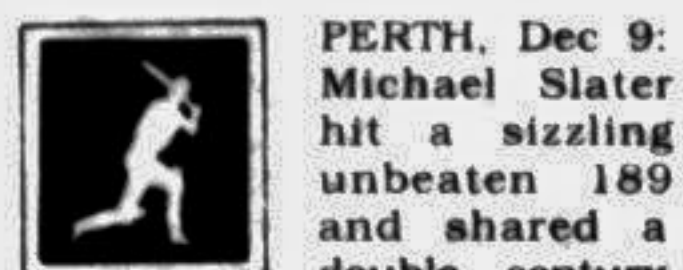


Lankans accused of ball-doctoring

Slater slaughters SL



PERTH, Dec 9: Michael Slater hit a sizzling unbeaten 189 and shared a double century opening partnership with Mark Taylor as Australia assumed command on Saturday, the second day of the one-off Test against Sri Lanka at the WACA Ground, reports agencies.

Australia was 358 for two at stumps after the loss of Taylor (96) and David Boon (13) and was 107 in front in reply to Sri Lanka's disappointing 251 made on the first day.

The Sri Lankans' misery was heightened when match referee Graham Dowling of New Zealand found them guilty of tampering with the ball and threatened sanctions against them.

Slater...



SLATER... 189 n.o

Lankan attack to the sword during an exhilarating display of high-class batting and was 11 runs shy of his maiden first-class double century at the close of play.

Slater's second successive century in Perth, following his 124 against England earlier this year, couldn't have been better timed.

The 25-year-old put behind him the disappointing series against Pakistan — when he scored 139 runs at an average of 27.80 — with his seventh century in 31 Tests.

He sent the Sri Lankans on a day-long leather hunt on a WACA pitch that clearly favoured the batsmen.

Slater lofted the ball over the boundary ropes five times and hit 13 fours in a blistering innings that has already lasted just over six hours with 265 balls faced.

Coming to the wicket at start of play, Slater added 228 for the first wicket with his captain Mark Taylor.

Scoring at more than four runs an over, it was a highly entertaining display that reflected badly on Sri Lanka's first innings performance in which several batsmen lost their wickets to rash shots.

Slater, whose previous highest score was 176 in the first Test against England in Brisbane last year, celebrated reaching three figures with his customary gesture of kissing the Australian emblem on his helmet.

His only blemish came with his score on 159 when off-spinner Muttiah Muralidharan, the best of the Sri Lankan bowlers, dropped a smart chest-high catch off his own bowling.

New South Wales teammates Taylor and Slater compiled their 10th century and second-highest Test partnership with consummate ease before Taylor fell for 96 after tea.

Taylor, the more subdued of the pair, hit 13 fours in an innings lasting 224 minutes and 173 deliveries before being trapped leg before wicket by part-time off-spinner Aravinda de Silva.

The dismissal meant the opening pair fell 32 runs short of their best stand of 260 against England at Lord's in 1993.

Number three batsman David Boon fell soon after for 13, caught off bat and pad close to the wicket by Chandika Hathurusinghe to give Muralidharan his only dismissal.

Boon, whose place in the side was in doubt before the Test after a succession of failures in Australia's recent series win over Pakistan, looked unhappy at the decision and threw his chewing gum to the ground in anger as he walked to the pavilion.

A tiring Slater and Waugh, who was dropped before he had scored, have so far figured in a 92-run stand for the third wicket, scoring at a rate of over a run-a-ball.

Waugh has so far batted for 88 minutes and has faced 74 balls, hitting two boundaries.

Meanwhile, the International Cricket Council match referee, Dowling, was notified of the alleged tampering by umpires Peter Parker of Australia and Pakistan's Khizer Hayat, who examined the seam of the ball three times and showed it to Ranatunga.

But the ball was not replaced. Dowling warned Sri Lankan skipper Arjuna Ranatunga and his players of possible further action.

In a statement issued after the day's play, Dowling said, "During one of his regular examinations of the ball, umpire Khizer Hayat was concerned to note that it appeared to have been interfered with. He showed the ball to umpire Peter Parker, who agreed."

"The Sri Lankan captain Arjuna Ranatunga was notified of the condition of the ball



TAYLOR... 96

had clearly been altered by a member or members of his team during the course of the 17th over.

Furthermore, the umpires advised they would take appropriate action if there was any further attempt to tamper with the ball.

"The International Cricket Council does not condone such practices, and I have made this abundantly clear to the Sri Lankan team management, with whom I have met since close of play," the statement further read.

Neither Dowling nor the umpires were available after the brief four-paragraph statement and Ranatunga declined to comment.

Windies wobble once more

NEWCASTLE, Australia, Dec 9: West Indies acting captain Courtney Walsh strained an ankle as the tourists tumbled towards a likely defeat against New South Wales today, reports Reuter.

Walsh, who took charge in the absence of injured captain Richie Richardson, landed awkwardly on his left leg while bowling during the morning session.

His injury added to a miserable day for the West Indies, who were dismissed for 159 in their second innings only minutes before close of play.

The home side will be chasing a mere 90 runs for victory when they begin their second innings on the fourth and final day on Sunday.

West Indies physiotherapist Dennis Waight said a decision on whether Walsh would bowl again in the match would be made before start of play.

Walsh was the pick of the bowlers before limping off, taking four for 61 as New South Wales scored 308 in reply to West Indies' first innings 238.

Walsh, batting with a runner, lasted only five balls near the end of a lacklustre display by his team.

New South Wales and former Australia Test off-spinner Greg Matthews, playing a record 116th match for his state, claimed five for 43 from 23 overs.

Wrist-spinner David Freedman took two second-innings wickets to complete a 10-wicket haul for the match.

New South Wales began the day on 266 for five, bolstered by a maiden first-class century for Richard Chee Quee, but lost their last five wickets for just 42 runs.

Eyles' easy sail

BOMBAY, Dec 9: Top seed Rodney Eyles of Australia reached the Mahindra Challenge squash quarter-finals on Friday with a brisk second round victory over Britain's Mark Chaloner, reports Reuter.

Eyles, defending champion and world number two, won 15-11, 15-12, 15-12 in just 42 minutes.

His opponent will be Britain's Mark Cairns who waged a grim battle with Egypt's Amir Wagih.

After losing 15-6, 15-9, 12-15, 9-15 and 15-12, Wagih banged his racket on the floor as he stormed off court.

Kafelnikov in semis

MUNICH, Dec 9: Yevgeny Kafelnikov earned a semifinal clash against Goran Ivanisevic in the six-million-dollar Grand Slam Cup here on Friday after defeating Dutchman Jacco Eltingh in the quarter-finals, reports AFP.

Russia's Kafelnikov won 3-6, 6-3, 6-2 in an hour and 27 minutes to set up his last four meeting with Croatia's world number 10.

Eltingh had 262,500 dollars as compensation and Kafelnikov is already guaranteed 431,250 dollars.

Ivanisevic, who received a walkover into the semifinals after American Pete Sampras pulled out with inflamed hamstring muscles, leads Kafelnikov 4-2 in career meetings.

The other semifinal pits home favourite Boris Becker against world number 18 Todd Martin of the United States.



Thai women attired in traditional costumes from different tribes are paraded during the opening ceremony of the 18th Southeast Asian Games at the Chiang Mai stadium in Thailand yesterday. — AFP/UNB photo

SEA Games underway

Cambodia back in light

CHIANG MAI, Thailand, Dec 9: Athletes of ten nations — ranging from war-impooverished Cambodia to high-tech Singapore — prepared to march at dusk into a stadium Saturday to begin the largest regional sporting event in Southeast Asian history, reports AP.

The nearly two hour-long ceremony opening the 18th Southeast Asian Games started with traditional Thai music and a plea for regional peace, the latter symbolized by the release of 1,995 doves.

The nine-day event will see 3,266 athletes competing for 334 gold medals in 28 sports. The 640-strong Thai team, the largest at the Games, is expected to go head-to-head with Indonesia in the battle for regional supremacy.

Thailand's Crown Prince Vajiralongkorn was to open the Games during a ceremony involving 13,580 performers.

Also to take place within the 20,000-seat main stadium were the lighting of the Games' flame and raising of the flag.

The SEA Games flag was carried by runners over 9,270 kilometers through every province in Thailand.

The run took 60 days.

In an area not long ago noted more for conflict than sports competition, the Chiang Mai Games are a striking symbol of Southeast Asia's newfound peace and growing prosperity.

The games overlap with a meeting in Bangkok, 580 kilometres to the south, of leaders of the seven-member Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

Cambodia, absent for long stretches during the 36 years of the event, is making a comeback here. Laos, Vietnam and Burma — where sport is still a luxury — are nonetheless sending larger than ever contingents.

Other participating countries are the small sultanates of Brunei, Malaysia and the Philippines.

Preliminary competition has already begun in basketball, rugby, tennis, volleyball and the regional speciality of sepak takraw.

But the first finals are scheduled for Sunday, when 31 golds are to be awarded in track and field, billiards and snooker, cycling, equestrian, fencing, gymnastics, shooting, swimming and weightlifting.

This picturesque hill city

of 1.5 million people was bulging with visitors, most of them Thais expected to form loud cheering sections in the arenas.

During a men's volleyball match between Thailand and Malaysia Saturday, one rotund Thai soldier kept up an incessant yell of "Thailand, fight, fight!" as traditional drums and cymbals were banged. The Thais won 3-0.

Although it's the first time in the games' history that the event is being staged outside a capital city, the facilities appear excellent. Public investment has topped 1.5 billion baht (dhs 60 million).

Most of the events are being staged in a sports complex set at the base of the 1,678-metre Suthep Mountain, which looms over the city.

More than 4,000 policemen have been mobilized to provide security and try to cope with a far worse potential threat — traffic snarls.

Another danger is AIDS, in which is rife in northern Thailand. Special "love boxes" — each containing condoms and warnings about the deadly virus — are being distributed to athletes. Media kits also included condoms.

Peter Graf tries again

STUTTGART, Dec 9: Tennis star Steffi Graf's father, keen to get out of jail before Christmas, has made a second written statement to investigators probing a massive tax evasion case, his lawyer said on Friday, reports Reuter.

Peter Graf, jailed in August to prevent him fleeing or hiding evidence which may support accusations that the Graf family dodged millions of dollars in tax made a "comprehensive written statement" to prosecutors, his lawyer Steffen Ufer said.

A judge in Mannheim, where Graf is held, is due to consider a new request for his release within the next two weeks.

Neither Ufer nor chief prosecutor Peter Wechsung would discuss the contents of the statement, but Wechsung said it was Graf's first comprehensive statement, although not the first time he had set out his position to prosecutors.

Graf broke his silence over the affair with a first written statement last week, in which he said his multi-millionaire daughter had nothing to do with the tax allegations. Despite that statement she remained under investigation.

Danish govt veto 2004 Games' bid

COPENHAGEN, Dec 9: Denmark's government has rejected a request from the country's Olympic committee to bid for the 2004 Summer Games, saying the initiative came too late, reports Reuter.

"The government finds that the application was forwarded too late for the International Olympic Committee deadline, whereby bids shall be delivered to the committee by January 10, 1996," a government statement sent to Reuters overnight said.

"It is not possible within this time to prepare a sufficiently comprehensive evaluation of possible Danish candidacy," the statement added.

"The government cannot therefore grant the initiative group's request to defray costs of around 35 million Danish crowns (6.30 million dollar) for a bid or to guarantee the approximately 12 billion crowns (2.16 billion dollar) for the whole project," it said.

Several cities have expressed an interest in hosting the 2004 Games, including Rome, Cape Town, Seville, Buenos Aires, Rio de Janeiro, Istanbul and Lille.

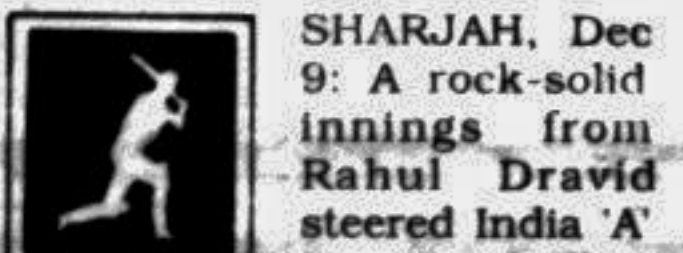
Rosi's plea rejected

ROME, Dec 9: An Italian civil tribunal on Wednesday rejected an appeal by World Boxing Organisation (WBO) champion Gianfranco Rosi to have a two-year ban for doping lifted, reports Reuter.

A spokesman for the Italian Boxing Federation told the tribunal, saying he felt he could not get a fair hearing by a sports body.

The Italian Boxing Federation (FPI) imposed the mandatory two-year ban in July after Rosi tested positive for drugs following his victory over American Vernophillips in a WBO super-welterweight title fight in his home city of Perugia on May 17.

Dravid inspires India A



SHARJAH, Dec 9: A rock-solid innings from Rahul Dravid steered India 'A' to a thrilling five-wicket victory over arch-rivals Pakistan 'A' with just one ball to spare in the four-nation Interface Cup cricket tournament here today, reports PTI.

Karnataka Ranji star Rahul Dravid, who was adjudged as the man-of-the match built the innings with a patient unbeaten 69 as India 'A' scored 219 for five in 49.5 overs to surpass the Pakistan 'A' score of 214 for six in stipulated 50 overs.

The icing on the cake was provided by big-built Salfil Ankola. Ankola, who was dropped in the previous ball sent Haris Khan for a huge six over the long on boundary.

The Indian batsmen cast away their wickets with indiscreet shots after defying Pakistan 'A' off the hook in the morning. With pitch playing easy and the Pakistan attack lacking bite, the score of 214 seemed an attainable target until they began losing wickets at regular intervals.

Opener Gagan Khoda, who scored 41 in 73 balls, started off in style but threw his wicket as he slashed at Bilal Rana off the bowling of Sohaib Mohammed to take a comfortable catch.

Pravin Amre began nudging and pushing in his characteristic style as he swept Haris Khan for a six over midwicket. However, trying to repeat the same shot he was brilliantly caught at the ropes by Zahid Fazal for 24.

Subsequently, it was Dravid who held together the innings as he got able support from Saurav Ganguly. Both added 74 runs for the fifth wicket in 137 balls. Ganguly scored a quickfire 38 in 41 balls.

Earlier, Pakistan who were put into bat after Indian skipper Vikram Rathore won the toss were led out of trouble, first by Mansoor Rana and Aamir Hanif and then big-hitting of Azher Mehmood as they recovered from 150 for six in 43.4 overs to 214 for six.

star Paras Mhambrey, who was recently included in the Indian one-day squad against New Zealand, rocked the Pakistanis with two early dismissals.

He bowled opener Sohaib Mohammed through bat and pad and then enticed Pakistan 'A' skipper Rizwanul Zaman into giving wicket-keeper a low catch to his right. At this stage Pakistan were 13 for two.

Former Test star Zahid Fazal and Mansoor Rana opted to keep the strike. The run-rate was 1.8 runs per over as the Indian medium pacers gave little away. They added 23 runs in 69 balls for the third wicket before Zahid rushed out to hit Venkatapathy Raju and was cleverly stumped by Saba Karim.

Mansoor Rana, dropped twice, and Aamir Hanif were associated in 106-run partnership for their fourth wicket in 21.1 overs. After Rana's exit, Aamir stroked freely and hit two sixes and two boundaries in his 61 off 74 balls.

Azher Mehmood and Bilal Rana gave Pakistan a fighting total with a quickfire 64-run partnership in 38 balls. Azher hit four sixes and two boundaries in his 44 scored off 19 balls. Mhambrey, who had given only eight runs in seven overs conceded 22 in his last two overs as Azher Mehmood used the long handle liberally.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard of the limited overs cricket match between India 'A' and Pakistan 'A' in the Interface four-nation cup cricket tournament here today.

PAKISTAN 'A'

Rizwanul Zaman st Karim b Mhambrey	05
Sohaib Mohammed b Mhambrey	00
Zahid Fazal st Karim b Raju	19
Mansoor Rana run out	54
Aamir Hanif b Mhambrey	61
Iqbal Imam b S Ankola	01
Bilal Rana not out	22
Azher Mehmood not out	44
Extras: (1-lb, 7-w)	08
Total: (for six wickets 50	214

Fall of wickets: 1-1; 2-13, 3-36; 4-142; 5-146; 6-150.
Bowling: O M R W

Mhambrey	10	1	35	3
Ankola	10	1	49	1
Raju	10	2	35	1
Ganguly	10	1	49	0
Hirwani	10	0	45	0

INDIA 'A'

Vikram Rathore c Imam b Hanif	19			
Gagan Khoda c Mohammed b Rana	41			
A Mazumdar c H Khan b K Khan	11			
Rahul Dravid not out	69			
Pravin Amre c Zahid b H Khan	24			
S Ganguly c Mansoor Rana b H Khan	38			
Salfil Ankola (not out)	07			
Extras: (2-lb, 7-w, 1-nb)	10			
Total: (for five wickets 49.5	219			
Fall of wickets: 1-40; 2-65; 3-94; 4-137; 5-211.				
Bowling: O M R W				
Kabir Khan	7	1	22	1
Azher Mehmood	8	1	26	0
Aamir Hanif	8	1	0	2
Iqbal Imam	8	0	45	0
Bilal Rana	9	5	0	3
Haris Khan	8	5	0	5
Man-of-the-match: Rahul				
Dravid				



Rising Russian star Yevgeny Kafelnikov makes a forehand return against Dutchman Jacob Eltingh during their quarterfinal match in the six-million dollar Grand Slam Cup in Munich on Friday. Kafelnikov won 6-3, 3-6, 6-2. — AFP/UNB photo