

Afridi the Pak freak in Africa!

NAIROBI, Oct 5: Four days ago, he was little known even in his homeland, but now Pakistan's hopes of clinching the Centenary four-nation one-day cricket tournament rests heavily on his young shoulders, reports AP.

That's 18-year-old Shahid Afridi. On Friday, he entered the record books by scoring the fastest one-day international century off just 37 balls in their last match against world champions Sri Lanka at the Nairobi Gymkhana.

Afridi was only called up to the 'squad as a replacement for the injured Mushtaq Ahmed, a leg spinner not related to Pakistani coach Mushtaq Mohammad.

The teenager was on tour in the West Indies with the under-19 side when the selectors picked him for the tournament. Afridi, who broke the record previously held by Sri Lanka's Sanath Jayasuriya at 48 balls, plays for Karachi Whites.

Afridi has featured in the prestigious Qaid-i-Azam tournament and his greatest achievement before Friday was his seven-wicket haul during the final of the national under-17 championship last year.

Afridi's record-breaking century that steered his side to the final of the Nairobi tournament included 11 huge sixes and six boundaries.

His second-wicket partnership of 126 with stand-in captain Saeed Anwar cushioned the 1992 world champions 82-run win to book Pakistan a ticket in the Sunday final against South Africa.

South Africa scored a 62-run win over Pakistan in the second match of the week-long tournament and Saeed Anwar's men will be seeking to avenge that tomorrow.

N'ganj soccer

From Our Correspondent

NARAYANGANJ, Oct 5: Shuktara Kirra Chakra blanketed Sonakanda White Club 3-0 in a Hangin Shipping First Division football league encounter at the Osmari Stadium here today.

Tito, Kabir and Haidar scored one goal each for the winners.

Earlier on Friday, Eastern Football Club earned a walkover against BSEC dockyard who failed to turn up for the match in time.

In tomorrow's match, Prakash Club will take on Netaiganj Kirra Chakra at the same venue.

Giants make hay on first day

Sports Reporter



The inter-club cricketers' transfer for the year 1996-97 got off to a boisterous start when 79 players got involved in the first day's brouhaha of the three-day transfer at the crowded Bangladesh Cricket Control Board (BCCB) office last evening.

With all the leading clubs in the two-tier Senior Division leagues making their fruitful appearance one after another, the BCCB office wore a festive look on a hectic first day.

Most of the clubs, including defending champions Mohammedans, runners-up Brothers Union, Abahani Krira Chakra and Bangladesh Biman made most of the inaugural day by roping a host of players. But, it was rather a predictable start without a single sensational signing.

Bangladesh Biman, who finished fourth behind Abahani last year, was the first to visit the BCCB office with three new recruits. They were seamer Mizanur Rahman Babu, the highest wicket-taker for GMCC in last year's league, hard-hitting Wari opener Hasanzaman and Jasimuddin, the upcoming Eskaton wicketkeeper. Besides, the national airline outfit also retained the services of their three pool players —

opener Athar Ali Khan, left-arm spinner Mohammad Rafique, and Habibul Bashar Sumon for one more year.

On the other hand, skipper Ziaur Rashid Rupun, who is certain to lead the team, must have been a happy man by the way the Biman officials tackled promising right-arm seamer Nazimuddin Manna, who in a welcome relief, stayed back to serve Biman for another season.

However, it was Brothers Union, who had happy hunting at the cost of Kalabagan Krira Chakra when the Gopibagh outfit apparently confirmed the services of former national skipper Faruque Ahmed and national left-arm spinner Enamul Huq Moni to bolster their batting line-up. Faruque, who had earlier inspired Brothers to lift the league title in 1991, is expected to join his former club as captain of the team.

Defending champions Mohammedans, who are set to retain the services of their skipper Aminul Islam Bulbul and experienced Minhazul Abedin Nannu, made a brief but significant visit to the BCCB office at around 7 pm with four new recruits. They were off-spinner Sanwar Hossain of Brothers Union, young opener Sajjad Ahmed Shipon, who after a dis-

appointing season with the Gopibagh-based outfit, returned to his former club, young Parvez Ahmed of Eskaton and Gulshan Youth's right-arm seamer Al-Amin.

On the other hand, Mohammedans arch rivals Abahani Krira Chakra signed up five players on the inaugural day. Al Shahriar Rokan, the gaudy middle-order bat of Victoria Sporting Club, was one of the two most important signings for the Dhanmondi outfit along with Javed Omar Belim, the plucky right-handed GMCC opener. Besides, left-arm spinner Biplob Sharker Billu of Brothers and a balding Iqbal have also joined Abahani to mark their debut in one of the two most crowd-pulling outfits of the country.

But the most sensational signing of the day was Zakir Hossain, the young speedster of Agran Bank who finally signed for Abahani. It was learnt that Zakir had earlier received a cheque from the Agran officials but was missing till his appearance along with a host of Abahani officials at the BCCB office last night.

Among the other notable transfers Selim Shahed, who was left out by Mohammedans, joined Victoria while a portly Zakaria deserted GMCC to switch over to Kalabagan.



Abahani's off-spinner Sheikh Salahuddin (C) is "just" surrounded by the five new recruits of the Dhanmondi outfit on the first day of the Inter-Club cricketers' transfer at the BCCB office yesterday. They are (L-R) Zakir, Biplob Sarkar, Iqbal, Al-Shahriar Rokan and Zaved Omar Belim Golla. —Star photo

Enqvist, Boetsch in semis

LYON, France, Oct 5: Thomas Enqvist of Sweden and Frenchman Arnaud Boetsch face a Davis Cup final dress rehearsal when they meet in the semifinals of Lyon Grand Prix today, reports Reuters.

Chang, Stark reach final

SINGAPORE, Oct 5: Top seed Michael Chang defeated big-server Greg Rusedski of Britain 7-6 (7-5), 6-3 and Jonathan Stark overcame Sweden's Thomas Johansson 3-6, 6-2, 6-4 at the Singapore Open semifinals on Saturday, reports AP.

Chang and Stark, both of the United States, meet for the final on Sunday.

Staying on course for his 11th Asian title, Chang, ranked No 2 in the world, clawed his way through his match with Rusedski with brilliant passing and cross-court shots at crucial moments.

But Rusedski, ranked the fourth fastest server in the world, made Chang sweat for every point, serving 11 aces to his opponent's eight.

It was a "very tight match. A few points here and there made a tremendous difference. I was fortunate to be able to get out of the tiebreaker. Overall, a very close game," said Chang, 24.

"Michael is No 2, and it was proved today why. He plays the big points well," said Rusedski, who is ranked 84 on the ATP Tour.

"I got a bit tentative with my serve. I wasn't that aggressive with my second serve and you can't do that with Michael," said the Canadian-born Rusedski, who recently took up British citizenship.

Still, Rusedski's serves were in the region of 195 kilometers per hour (120 mph) and one came zooming down at 214 kph (132 mph), according to the unofficially recorded speed. Chang, five inches (16 cms) shorter than Rusedski's 6 feet 3 inches (1.9 meters), also served up one 200 kph (124 mph) scorch.

After winning the tiebreaker that could have gone either way, Chang broke Rusedski's serve in the fourth and sixth games to go up 5-1.

But Rusedski broke the American's serve in the seventh game, catching him twice off guard with power-packed backhand shots. But he was still down 2-5.

Rusedski held his serve the next game to go up 3-5.

The final game seemed a mere formality when Chang led 40-15. But Rusedski saved one match point when Chang netted a volley. Rusedski made it deuce by smashing down an overhead shot. Then came another long volley and Rusedski crept up to the net and lobbed the ball gently just over the net, advantage Rusedski. But not for long as Chang fought back to make it deuce and win another point.

With Chang on another break point, Rusedski returned a big serve by lobbing it high. Chang smashed it yards away from Rusedski's backhand to wrap up the match.

This is the third time Rusedski has crashed out in semifinals this year. He reached that stage in Sydney Outdoor and at Nottingham. He has been defeated by Chang six of the seven

times they met.

In the second semifinal match, Stark, who has only one singles title under his belt, smashed 21 aces to Johansson's six.

After losing his serve twice in the first set, Stark promptly came back by breaking Johansson's serve in the first and third games. He held on to the lead and broke Johansson's service once in the third set.

Stark, whose best performance this year has been to reach the semifinal in New Delhi, has played Chang seven times in the past and won only once.

Graf forced to quit Leipzig

LEIPZIG, Oct 5: Citing a lingering knee injury, Steffi Graf pulled out of the Leipzig Open hours before her semifinal match Saturday, reports AP.

The world No 1 was to play defending champion and fellow German Anke Huber in the 450,000 dollars tournament.

But in a statement, the 27-year-old Graf said she was unable to play because of inflammation in her left knee, an injury that has been bothering her since Wimbledon in June and that forced her to withdraw from the Olympics in July.

"It's the first time that, in the middle of a tournament, I'm not able to play further because of an injury," Graf said. "This situation makes me very sad, especially for my many fans, but I have no other choice."

Graf said the knee began to hurt again during her quarter-final match Thursday against Judith Wiesner. Graf played one of her worst first sets in memory against the Austrian, but rallied to win the match.

Graf broke off practice early Friday because of the pain, which was even worse Saturday morning, her statement said. She left Leipzig before noon to have the knee examined by her private doctor in Heidelberg.

Graf has missed the Leipzig Open the past two years because



STEFFI GRAF of health problems. With Graf's pull-out, Huber advances to the final. She will play the winner of Saturday's duel between Iva Majoli and Helena Sukova. —Star photo



Not the Dhaka Stock Exchange, but the BCCB office last night during the first day of the 1996-97 inter-club cricketers transfer. —Star photo

D'mondi win big, BRTC by a hair

Sports Reporter

Dhanmondi Club and BRTC Sports Club won their respective Danish First Division football league matches held yesterday at the Mirpur Stadium.

In the first engagement, Dhanmondi Club recorded a 3-1 victory over Police Athletic Club.

Younus struck twice and Tulu scored the other goal for the winners while Rana reduced the margin for Police.

With yesterday's win, Dhanmondi raised their tally to 11 points from nine matches while Police had to remain satisfied with their previous earnings of seven points.

In the day's other match, BRTC beat Badda Jagarani Sangsad by a solitary goal. Alauddin scored the all-important match-winner in the 60th minute.

It was the ninth league encounter for both the teams which raised BRTC's tally to ten points while Badda remained on nine points.

Australia 122 for one

PATIALA, India, Oct 5: Michael Slater opened Australia's tour of India with a brisk unbeaten half-century on the first day of a three-day match against the Indian Board President's XI on Saturday, reports Reuters.

Australia reached the close at 122 for one in two hours of play after a wet pitch delayed the start.

Slater, who was dropped when on 29, posted his half-century in 86 deliveries and will resume on Sunday on 52.

He struck medium-pace David Johnson for a six over fine-leg and hit three boundaries.

His opening partner and skipper Mark Taylor, who opted to bat first after winning the toss, edged an outswinger from Ganesh to wicketkeeper Saba Karim after scoring 20.

Ricky Ponting struck six boundaries on his way to 45 not out.

The touring side would have lost their second wicket on 84 if Ganesh had not spilled an easy catch from Slater off leg-spinner Narendra Hirwani.

The match, Australia's first of a month-long tour, was delayed after a storm on Thursday blew away the covers, exposing the pitch to torrential rain.

The three-day match is the tourists' only tour fixture before a one-off Test in New Delhi starting on Thursday.

Seles skips Zurich indoors

SARASOTA, Florida, Oct 5: Monica Seles has withdrawn from the European Indoor championships in Zurich later this month after beginning a new rehabilitation programme in an effort to avoid surgery on her injured left shoulder, reports Reuters.

Seles began what is expected to be a month-long rehabilitation programme immediately after leading the United States to the Fed Cup title last weekend, her publicist announced in a release on Friday.

The co-world number one had put off stating the programme, which will keep her from competing, so that she could play the US Open and Fed Cup final.

The left-hander suffered a small tear in the lining of her left shoulder socket during the Australian Open in January.

Seles won the Australian Open, but the injury sidelined her several times during the year and often causes pain when she serves.

It was not immediately clear whether the programme would affect Seles' ability to play in the season-ending WTA championships in November or when she might undergo surgery if the results are not satisfactory.

TODAY'S MATCHES

Danish Premier Division football league
(Venue: Dhaka Stadium)
YMC Fakirerpool vs Brothers Union (6 pm)
Danish First Division football league
(Venue: Dhaka Stadium)
Victoria SC vs PWD SC (4 pm)

Bank buckle, Boys sparkle

Sports Reporter

Promotees Bangladesh Boys Club recorded their maiden Danish Premier Division football league victory when they defeated Agran Bank Sports Club by two goals to nil at the Dhaka Stadium last night.

In a dull engagement marred by incessant rain, midfielder Selim Reza and striker Asaduzzaman scored one goal each for the winners.

Bangladesh Boys, who earned only two points from their previous eight league matches before yesterday, led the first half 1-0 with Reza sending home the ball from a left side corner 44 minutes into the first half.

Boosted by the first-half lead, Boys kept the Bankers under tremendous pressure in a which raised BRTC's tally to ten points while Badda remained on nine points.

Asad, the former Mohammedan forward, headed

home the Tipu freekick from a goalmouth eleven past an advancing Bank goalkeeper Liton (2-0).

The victory did not have much bearing on the position of Boys in the ten-team league table as they remained at the bottom of the standings with five points on completion of their first leg of nine matches. On the other hand, the Bankers had to remain satisfied with their previous earnings of six points which lock them at second spot from the bottom along with East End Club, Farashganj remained in the third place jointly with Muktijoddha Sangsad having 14 points each.

TEAMS

BANGLADESH BOYS CLUB: Nurul Islam, Pappu, Deen Mohammad, Barar, Jahangir, Shuvro, Quamruzzaman, Selim Reza (Kutub), Asad, Prabhat (Nizam/Bayezid) and Tipu.

AGRANI BANK SC: Liton, Chuny, Kala, Pons, Shariful, Munia, Swapan (Anwar), Kabir, Jahangir, Tutul and Nayan.

Referee: Monirul Islam.

FIXED MATCH?

Earlier in the day's first

Premier league match. Arambagh Krira Sangha registered a solitary goal victory over high-flying Farashganj Sporting Club.

In a seemingly pre-arranged affair, Arambagh's inspirational midfielder Roxy scored the lone match-winner in the 64th minute.

With yesterday's win, Arambagh earned seven points from their first-leg nine matches and moved to the seventh spot ahead of Agran Bank, East End Club and Bangladesh Boys Club. On the other hand, Farashganj remained in the third place jointly with Muktijoddha Sangsad having 14 points each.

TEAMS

ARAMBAGH KS: Tony, Pradeep, Chotton, Sunny, Tushar, Yusuf, Minhaz Babu, Anwar, Shobh (Jamil), Roxy and Anu.

FARASHGANJ SC: Nowshad, Shariful, Kala, Nazrul, Manik, Shakhawir, Monir, Chanchal (Kowshik), Akhtar, Reaz (Munna) and Towhid.

Referee: Ramkrishna Ghosh.

Points Hoddle's priority

LONDON, Oct 5: England boss Glenn Hoddle said on Friday he will put winning ahead of entertaining when his side take on Poland in their World Cup qualifying match on Wednesday, reports Reuters.

"We could send a great exhibition team out," said the former England playmaker, who followed his principles by naming a squad packed with showmen for the Wembley clash.

"But at this level we would lose the game."

Paul Gascoigne, Steve McManaman, David Beckham, Matthew Le Tissier and Paul Merson — five of the most exciting players in Britain — are in Hoddle's squad, but Gascoigne is the only real certainty to start.

"When you play at club level you have a set of supporters to try to please and a principle of what you want to see," Hoddle told a news conference at training camp. "It's different to how you work in this set-up."

"To a certain degree this is all about getting it right on the night, not necessarily about keeping a set of supporters happy with how you play."

"At this level first and foremost you have to win. Some days it might not be as attractive as you would wish it in your heart but your mind tells you that's the right thing to do."

England go into the match boosted by their last-four showing in the European Championship, and Hoddle said he was optimistic about his side's World Cup chances.

"I have to pick a team that's right to win any given game and that might change for different types of reasons," he said. "You have to come up with what you feel will give the opposition problems and combat what they're good at."

Hosts but Tangail move to final

Sports Reporter

Gazipur, Jhenidah and Bandarban qualified for the final round of the Meril under-16 national football championship after winning their respective zonal qualifying round finals in the three different venues yesterday.

At the Tangail Stadium, Gazipur recorded a solitary goal victory over hosts Tangail.

Striker Pradeep Ghosh scored the all-important match-winner 25 minutes into the first-half. Dhaka Divisional Commissioner ASM Samsul Islam witnessed the

zonal qualifying round finals in the three different venues yesterday.

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AB Bank TT

Sports Reporter

Wari Club recorded their seventh successive win in the ongoing AB Bank Senior Division table tennis league at the wooden-floor gymnasium yesterday.

Wari trounced Armanitola Jubo Sangha 3-0 to maintain a solo lead in the ten-team elite league introduced for the first time in the country.

In the day's other matches, Brothers Union outplayed Swamibagh Boys 3-0. Armanitola Juniors blanked their Wari counterparts 3-0, while Ajax Sporting Club defeated Swamibagh TTS by the same margin.

In the First Division league, Combined Sporting Club, Bangladesh Bank, Biman Juniors, Dhaka Mariner Youngs Club and Angels Club won their respective matches yesterday.

Asprilla not leaving

BOGOTA, Colombia, Oct 5: Out-of-lavator Colombian striker Faustino Asprilla said on Friday he was happy in English soccer and definitely staying at Newcastle United — booting into touch talk of an imminent return to Italy, reports Reuters.

In Bogota to train with his national squad, Asprilla who has found himself on the Newcastle substitutes' bench of late, and coach Hernan Dario Gomez rejected talks that he was about to quit, blaming earlier suggestions to the contrary on a poor choice of words.

With world record 23.1 million dollars signing Alan Shearer and Les Ferdinand knocking in the goals for Newcastle, Asprilla, an 11.5 million dollars capture from Parma, has found himself being used more as a substitute often as a midfielder and not in his preferred striking role.

But the Colombian said on Friday: "I'm happy in England and I'm staying at Newcastle. (Talk of a move) are just rumours."

"I don't know why I'm on the bench, you'll have to ask (manager) Kevin Keegan. I know I work the same as the others. But I've always been well treated by the fans. Kevin and the

trainers" he added.

In comments just hours after his return to Colombia on Thursday, Asprilla had replied to reporters' questions that it would "not be a bad idea (to return to Italy), the main thing is

to play."

But at a news conference before the start of training on Friday, in the build up to Colombia's World Cup qualifier against Ecuador in Quito next Wednesday, Dairo Gomez played down the remarks.

"Faustino tells me he has good relations with his teammates and the team manager. Sometimes he doesn't really know how to express himself," he said.

Like any player that doesn't make the starting line-up he's a bit unhappy but he's confident in his ability and feels at the right moment he will be off the bench.

Asprilla said: "Newcastle United paid for Shearer not me. I don't know if he's worth what they paid. It's very difficult to say. They bought him to do a job and they have to pay what it costs."

But he added: "He's from Newcastle and he can put in the goals."

The Colombian press closely follows Asprilla's fortunes in England and has been bewildered by Keegan's decision to sideline him.

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