

## Madan keeps faith with the same squad

KIMBERLEY, South Africa, Jan 9: India will stick with their current squad for the third Test against South Africa in Johannesburg next week and not call in replacements for their two ill frontline bowlers, reports AFP.

Coach Madan Lal said here Wednesday: "Any move in that direction would have to come from the selectors and I don't see it happening."

Lal said he hoped pace bowlers Jayavajal Srinath, suffering from a hairline fracture to the left middle finger, and Venkatesh Prasad, ill with a stomach ailment, would be fit for the January 16-20 Test at Wanderers.

India have already lost the series, trailing 2-0 after Tests at Durban and Cape Town.

Both bowlers will be absent from India's next two games, a day-night here today against Griqualand West and a three-day fixture against Free State in Bloemfontein starting Tuesday.

Wicketkeeper Nayan Mongia and leg-spinner Anil Kumble will also be on the bench for the match against Griquas.

Team manager Sunil Dev said, however, that paceman Salil Ankola could be called in when the squad for a triangular one-day series between India, Zimbabwe and South Africa is announced on January 14.

The series kicks off January 25 at Bloemfontein and is scheduled to end February 12 in Durban.

## Rene on road to return

BOGOTA, Jan 9: Eccentric Colombian goalkeeper Rene Higuita took part in a training session on Wednesday with his former club Atletico Nacional, but it was not clear whether he would resume his career, reports Reuter.

Higuita, 30, turned up at the club in Medellin, Colombia's second city, just over two weeks after his home in a northwestern suburb of the city was bombed by unidentified attackers.

Police said the intruders forced their way past a maid and detonated dynamite, which damaged windows, doors and furniture but caused no injuries.

Coach Juan Jose Pelez refused to confirm that Higuita, who quit in November for "personal reasons," was making a comeback. "He wants to return but he has his own struggle," said Pelez without elaborating.

"Rene's arrival always generates happiness. The players and the coaching staff welcomed him with open arms."

The club's goal-keeping coach said Higuita was thinking of returning, it would be several weeks before he could begin playing. "He's overweight. He has to get in shape and it will be a question of weeks," said Pedro Antonio Zape.

Higuita is best known for his unorthodox approach to the art of goalkeeping, symbolized by the remarkable "scorpion" save he made for Colombia in a friendly against England at Wembley.

Instead of simply catching the ball, Higuita threw himself forward and kicked it away with his heels.

## China ruling the pool

BEIJING, Jan 9: China's women swimmers continued to dominate the World Cup shortcourse series by capturing five gold medals in the second leg in Beijing on Wednesday, reports Reuter.

The Chinese squad was led by 17-year-old Chen Yan, who powered her way to gold in the 200 metres individual medley and the 200 metres backstroke.

Teammate Shan Ying took the title in the 50 metre freestyle, Han Xie won the 100 metres breaststroke and Liu Limian triumphed with a time of 59.07 seconds in the 100 metres butterfly, still shy of her world record 58.68.

The Chinese assault was partly countered by Olympic gold medalist Claudia Poll of Costa Rica, who won the 200 metres freestyle, and by Russia's Nina Zhyvanevskaya, who clinched a narrow .04 second win in the 50 metres backstroke.

Poll's one minute 57.02 seconds timing was well short of her world record 1:55.42.

Taiwan's Lin Chi-Chan kept Poll from repeating her twin gold feat from the World Cup's first leg in Hong Kong by edging the Costa Rican in the 800 metres freestyle.

China's gold medalist at the Atlanta Olympics and world record-holder Le Jingyi did not appear in Wednesday's event.

The Chinese squad is seeking to re-establish its world dominance after seven swimmers were banned in an embarrassing doping scandal after the 1994 Asian Games.

China's Lu Bin, swimming in her first international event since she was suspended in the Asian Games scandal, put in a disappointing performance, failing to make the top three in both the 50 metres and 200 metres backstroke.

The Chinese men's team also put in a strong showing with three golds while the Netherlands' one-man squad represented by Marcel Wouda landed two titles.

Zeng Qiliang came out on top in the 50 metres breaststroke, Xiong Guoming came from behind to touch first in the 400 metres freestyle, and Zhang Qiang won the 50 metres butterfly.

## Brothers, Wari win Day belongs to batsmen

### BRIEF SCORES

**BROTHERS UNION:** 261 for two in 50 overs (Jahangir Alam 112 n.o., Aamir Hanif 100 n.o., Bidyut 21).

**ALMATIA CLUB:** 249 for five in 50 overs (Nurul Abedin Nobel 109, Nomanullah 63; Enamul Haq Moni 2/51).

**WARI CLUB:** 249 for seven in 50 overs (Tariq Mehboob 67, Mehrab Hossain Opi 50, Tuhin 33, Mona 32; Khairuzzaman Babu 2/27, Nafiz Newaz 2/43).

**VICTORIA SC:** 217 for eight in 50 overs (Sajid Hassan 39, Sumit 35, Rahul 35, Aslam 30; Saifuddin Babu 2/38, Amrit Wasim 2/49).

Willow ruled over cherry in both the Premier cricket league matches as title-aspirants Brothers Union and giants-slayers Wari Club won their respective matches at different city venues yesterday.

At the BKSP ground in Savar, three centuries were scored in 100 overs where Brothers Union prevailed over an spirited Almatia by 12-runs.

In a high-scoring affair, former Pakistani international Aamir Hanif celebrated his first appearance of this year's domestic season with a scintillating unbeaten 100 while opener Jahangir Alam kept up his recently found touch of flare with a swashbuckling 112 n.o. as Brothers Union, sent into bat by the Almatia skipper Ziauddin Shovon, raced on to amass a mammoth total of 261 for two in the stipulated 50

### Sports Reporter

On the other hand, Almatia opener Nurul Abedin Nobel responded fittingly with a dazzling 109 followed by an enterprising 63 from Pakistani middle-order bat Nomanullah. But that was not enough for the lowly-rated new-town outfit to pull off an intriguing finish as they ended up 13 runs short of the awe-inspiring opponent today.

It was Brothers' sixth win from seven first phase engagements of the 12-team elite group. Besides, the hard-fought win had also ensured the runners-up a passage in the six-team super league.

However, in the day's match Brothers skipper Faruque Ahmed, after calling the coin wrong, did not expect for something better from Jahangir and Aamir Hanif, who after a jumpy start propelled their side to a huge total putting on 206 runs for the undefeated third wicket.

Jahangir, who after a disappointing last season joined Brothers this year, hammered eight fours in his authoritative 161-ball undefeated knock. While Aamir Hanif, the more aggressive campaigner of the two, raced to the magical three-figure mark playing only 90 balls.

It was certainly a dream start for the Pakistani right-hander, who arrived in the capital few days back.

Aamir Hanif, who had earlier inspired Brothers Union to finish behind champions Mohammmed Sporting Club last year, clouted nine firmly

hits across the rope and a quartet of overboundaries in his rapid-fire knock.

National opener Shahriar Hossain Bidyut, who is going through a lean patch, with a paltry 21 was the other notable score for the winners.

In reply, Almatia, for whom it was their fifth defeat from nine outings, were off to a flying start with opener Nobel hammering a blazing 109. The balding former national opener in his 141-ball stay at the crease smote ten fours and a massive sixer before being dismissed by national left-arm spinner Enamul Haq Moni, who with two for 51 returned most successful among the Brothers bowlers.

While Nomanullah, who shared 148 runs for the third wicket with Nobel, scored 63.

Meanwhile, in the other match of the day at the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium, Wari Club recorded an impressive 32-run win over Victoria SC.

Batting first, Wari rattled up a fairly safe total of 249 for seven in their share of 50 overs with Pakistani Tariq Mehboob and Mehrab Hossain Opi contributing half-centuries.

Tariq scored a polished 67 while Opi chipped in with 50 off only 54 balls.

On the other hand, Victoria, in their chase of an uphill task of scoring five runs per over, could muster 217 before being exhausted their quota of 50 overs. Skipper Sajid Hassan top-scored with a gritty 39 while Sumit and Rahul contributed 35 runs apiece.

## Taylor dates with destiny

**HOBART, Australia:** Jan 9: Australian stalwarts Ian Healy and Steve Waugh on Wednesday defended embattled skipper Mark Taylor as pressure builds over a run of low scores, reports AFP.

Taylor has made 117 runs at 19.5 in six one-day internationals this season, 139 at 23.17 in three Tests and has one half-century in his past 22 first-class innings.

He admitted after Tuesday's 20-run loss to Pakistan here that he considered avoiding the rest of the World Series tournament to play a Sheffield Shield game in a bid to re-discover his form before the fourth Test against West Indies starts in Adelaide on January 25.

A draw in Adelaide or Perth the following week would be enough to retain the Frank Worrell Trophy won under Taylor in the Caribbean in

1995. Coinciding with Taylor's run drought, Australia have lost their past four one-day internationals and won just two of the last 12.

Vice-captain Healy and Taylor's New South Wales teammate Waugh are two of cricket's most resilient players and with Taylor form the Australian team's on-field executive.

If Taylor is sacked or stood down, either could become Test captain.

"I'm pretty sure he has done the right thing. It's not up to him to do that (drop himself). I wouldn't recommend anyone do that," said Healy, who led Australia during a one-day tournament in Sri Lanka last August, while Taylor was recovering from back surgery.

"Everyone's very conscious of it and you do as much as you can for that person, but ultimately it's an individual game.

"No matter how nice, helpful and positive others are around you, you've got to go and do it."

"That is the loneliness of a form slump in a cricket team."

Waugh said: "Obviously you don't want to see one of your mates be the recipient of a lot of press that says he might be on his way out."

"He's not playing well but everybody goes through that. He has played at this level for 10 years so he knows what it's all about and he'll do everything in his power to get back."

"You're not guaranteed anything at this level but knowing his willpower and his determination I'm sure if there's one player who's going to come back to form it's him."

Australia must beat West Indies in Perth on Sunday, then down Pakistan on January 16 to have hopes of making the best-of-three finals.

**MEMLBOURNE, Jan 9:** Michael Chang defeated the power of Boris Becker, winning a three-set marathon Thursday that kept alive his chances of winning the Colonial Classic exhibition tennis for the third straight year, reports AP.

Chang saved three match points on his way to a 2-6, 6-4, 7-6 (7-5) semifinal victory at sun-drenched Kooyong that took him 2 hours 18 minutes.

Becker served for the match at 5-4 in the final set but the tenacious American staved off the match points, forced a tiebreaker and then rallied to Chang's competitiveness.

"It felt like a serious match," he said. "He was very serious — but that's his trademark. That's the way he plays."

The German, winner of five titles last year and 49 overall, made several inexplicable errors late in the match, missing a simple smash and a straightforward volley during the Saturday's final.

Chang will play the winner of Friday's second semifinal between world No. 1 Pete Sampras and French Open champion Yevgeny Kafelnikov of Russia in Saturday's final.

The World No. 2 was able to upset Becker with some determined running. He often appeared to be out of a point, only to keep the ball in play and force an error from the German.

"I'm a competitive person and it is in my nature to try hard in every match I play," Chang said. "The only time I'm not competitive is when I'm playing against my mom. Any competitive player doesn't like to lose."

The eight-man Colonial Classic is the final warm-up tournament before the Australian Open starts on Monday.

It is played on identical Rebound Ace courts to those used for the opening Grand Slam tournament of the year.

Boris was playing great tennis at the end of last year, so this is a great confidence-booster for me," he said.

Chang, aiming to break through for his first Grand Slam title since he won the French Open in 1989, has worked on improving his power and timing over the past few months.

"In the past when guys hit

**TODAY'S MATCHES**

**Bangabandhu Cup-Silver Jubilee of Independence Foot-ball Tournament:** (Final, Venue: Dhaka Stadium)

**PSM (Ujung Pandang) FC vs Malaysia Red (3 pm)**

**Premier Division Cricket**

**League:** Agrani Bank SC vs GMCC (BKSP)

**First Division Cricket**

**League:** Azad SC vs Bangladesh Boys Club (City Club)

**American Mary Joe Fernandez makes a backhand-return against Iva Majoli of Croatia during a quarterfinal match of the Sydney International yesterday. Mary Joe won 7-5, 6-4.**

— AFP/UNB photo

## Sport

### Pak-Windies tie today

#### Sports Reporter

Injury-hit Pakistan take on West Indies in a three-nation limited-overs World Series match in Perth today.

Both the sides have collected six points each from five matches. The other participant hosts Australia are on four points playing six matches so far.

**Ajax beat Uttara Sporting**

#### Sports Reporter

**AJAX SC:** 171 all out in 44.5 overs (Bhola 27\*, Babu 23. Morshed 22; Masud 2/26, Pujush 2/32)

**UTTARA SC:** 135 all out in 41 overs (Nadir 46, Topu 19; Ripon 3/17, Bhola 2/10)

**Result:** Ajax SC won by 36 runs.

Ajax Sporting Club defeated Uttara Sporting Club by 36 runs in a First Division cricket league engagement at the City Club ground yesterday.

Put in to bat, Ajax were all out for 171 in 44.5 overs with number ten batsman Bhola collecting highest 27 not out. Openers Babu (23) and one-down Morshed (22) were the other leading scorers for the Elephant Road outfit.

In reply, Uttara were bundled out for 135 in 41 overs. One-down Nadim scored 46 while middle-order Topu added 19 runs to the Uttara account.

Ripon (3/17) and Bhola (2/10) were the most successful bowlers for the winners.

Ajax Sporting Club defeated Uttara Sporting Club by 36 runs in a First Division cricket league engagement at the City Club ground yesterday.

**ICC team arrives in the capital**

#### Sports Reporter

**ZOBERA RAHMAN LINU**

meet on Wednesday, however, stamped their supremacy by winning another three events yesterday.

Sandip, who led the Nepalese from the front, won the men's singles title defeating Kochi, a long-standing stalwart, by three sets to one.

The stocky-built youngster from the Himalayan state, after losing the first game 14-21, fought back strongly to set

the issue by winning the next two 21-12, 21-13 against an ageing Kochi.

Sandip then ganged up with Rajender to notch the men's doubles title with a 21-14, 21-15 thrashing on local due of Mehboob and Hemlet.

While his compatriots on the distaff side, Sandhya and Gita claimed the women's doubles crown eliminating the local pair of Linu and Rinu by 21-16, 2