

Odumbe riding higher

KUALA LUMPUR, Mar 31: Top seeds Kenya were confident going into the finals of the ICC Trophy tournament here, with captain Maurice Odumbe saying today they were determined to win the trophy which just eluded them last time, reports AFP.

"We want to win this tournament and we are all raring to go. A lot of eyes are on us expecting us to win and we don't want to disappoint anyone," said Odumbe.

The Kenyans have looked a class act so far being unbeaten after five games in the qualifying round, while the United Arab Emirates who beat them in the 1994 final in Kenya failed to make the second round this time.

Odumbe, well known for his heroic against the West Indies at the last World Cup when his gentle off-spin bagged him three wickets and earned him the man-of-the-match award when Kenya scored a shock 80-run win, said there was a determined feel in his team.

"We are playing well because everyone wants to win, the way we are playing. I don't see why we cannot win this tournament," he said.

In their final pool match Kenya crushed the United States by a humiliating 211 runs. After posting 243 runs, Kenya dismissed the United States for a mere 32 runs — the second lowest total in the history of this competition.

It was a very impressive win and one which should bode well for Kenya in the future. It seems as if the guys are peaking at the right time," said Harilal Shah, a senior official with the Kenyan Cricket Association and a member of the ICC associate members executive committee.

Flamengo miss out

RIO DE JANEIRO, Mar 31: Flamengo, Brazil's best supported club, missed out on the final of the first stage of the Rio de Janeiro championship when they lost 1-0 on Wednesday to Botafogo, who controversially benefited their reserve team, reports Reuter.

Botafogo, who had won all ten previous games, had already made sure of their place in next Sunday's final, which will now be against Vasco da Gama, and decided to rest their best players.

Flamengo had needed only a point from the match to edge out Vasco, who had bitterly criticised Botafogo's attitude with coach Antonio Lopes describing it as immoral.

But Flamengo, with striker Romario totally subdued, never got going and were stunned by a 25th minute goal from midfielder Renato, who was then sent off in the second half for a bad tackle.

Alejandro Mancuso, Flamengo's Argentine midfielder, was also shown the red card before halftime for punching an opponent.

Afterwards, Botafogo president Jose Luis Romal hit out at the confusion of the tournament format.

The only thing I regret is to have got Vasco into the final. The real disgrace is that we are eight points ahead of them but still have to fight for the title."

The rules of the competition have bemused players and fans alike.

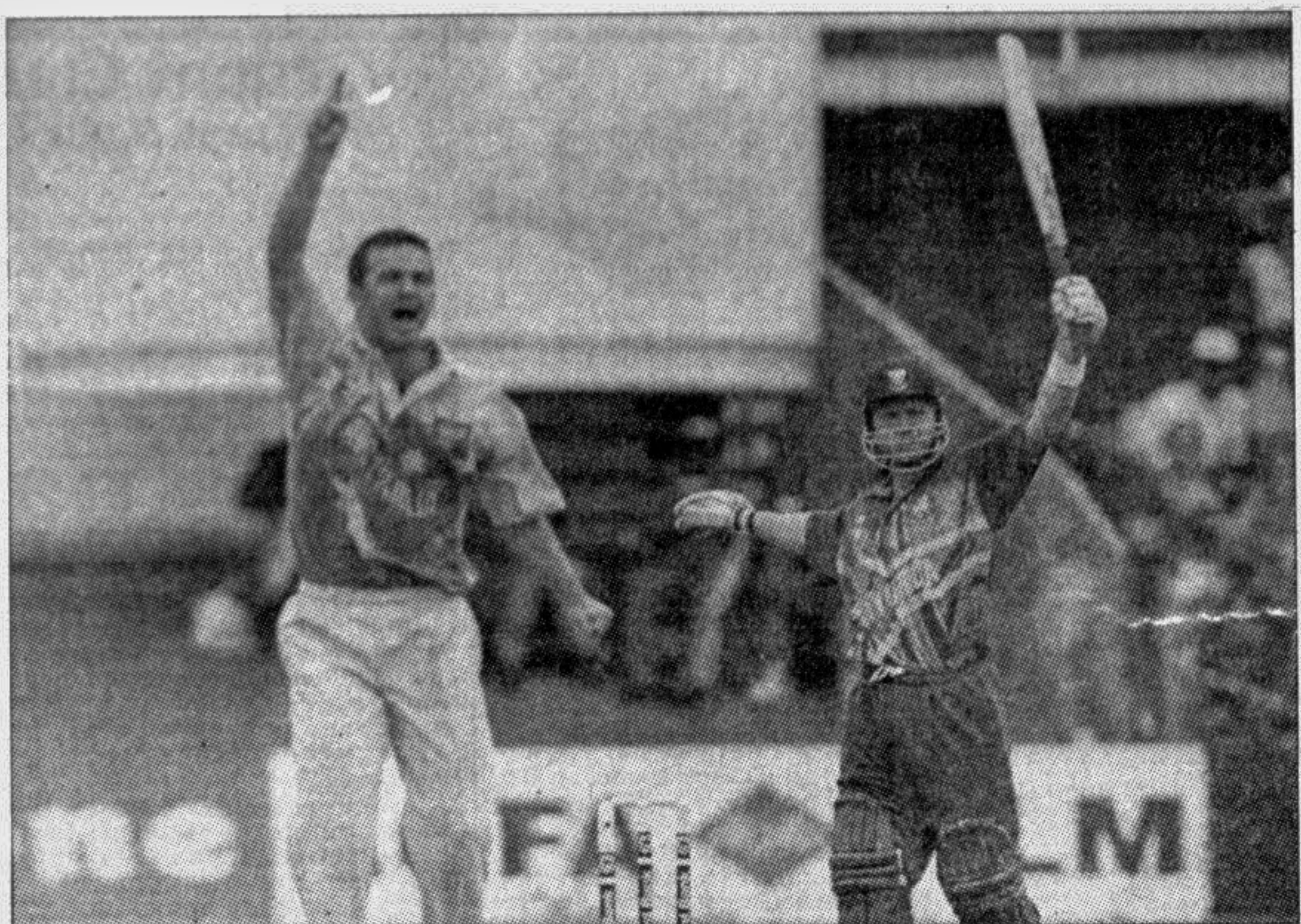
ATP rankings

MONACO, Mar 31: leading rankings issued by the ATP Tour today, reports Reuter.

- 1. Sampras (US) 5,666
2. Muster (Austria) 4,080
3. Chang (US) 3,554
4. Kafelnikov (Russia) 3,147
5. Ivanisevic (Croatia) 2,710
6. Kraficek (Netherlands) 2,598
7. Enqvist (Sweden) 2,312
8. Moya (Spain) 2,180
9. Rios (Chile) 2,168
10. Ferreira (South Africa) 1,940
11. Becker (Germany) 1,863
12. Costa (Spain) 1,857
13. Martin (US) 1,693
14. Mantilla (Spain) 1,681
15. Henman (Britain) 1,611
16. Edberg (Sweden) 1,510
17. Courier (US) 1,452
18. Rosset (Switzerland) 1,444
19. Bragatoguy (Spain) 1,443
20. Berasategui (Spain) 1,437

FIFA endorses the trial

ZURICH, Mar 31: FIFA said on Friday it had approved the use of video replays in a friendly match between France and Sweden in: April, reports Reuter.



Australian medium-pacer Adam Dale appeals for a leg before decision against South African Daryll Cullinan during the second one-day international at Port Elizabeth yesterday. Although the appeal was turned down, but moments later Dale bowled Cullinan for a duck.

It's all happening in Barbados

BRIDGETOWN, Barbados, Mar 31: India were poised to claim only their third win in their 31 Tests in the Caribbean after their seam bowlers routed the West Indies batsmen during the third day of the third Test on Sunday, reports Reuter.

The West Indies were bowled out for a meagre 140 in their second innings, their lowest score ever against India, to leave the tourists needing 120 to win in their second innings with two full days left.

At the close India, who earlier in the day were bowled out in their first innings for 319 in reply to West Indies' first innings 298, were two without loss. Navjot Sidhu was not out and Ve Laxman was still to get off the mark.

Abey Kuruvilla, a tall, gangling fast bowler in only his third Test, was India's hero with career-best figures of five for 68 off 21 overs.

Kuruvilla was given admirable support from Venkatesh Prasad, whose three for 39 off 18 overs gave him match figures of eight for 123, the best match haul by an Indian in six Tests at the Kensington Oval.

Dodda Ganesh chipped in runs and restricting India's first innings lead to 21 runs. India lost the wickets of Saurav Ganguly (22), Rahul Dravid (78) and Nayan Mongia (one) in the first session for the addition of only 41 runs as the West Indies bowlers dominated.

Dravid, who was bowled by fast bowler Ian Bishop, batted for six hours and 12 minutes, faced 243 balls and struck eight fours.

In the third over after lunch, former captain Mohammad Azharuddin, who struggled for two hours in scoring 17, was caught by wicketkeeper Courtney Browne off fast bowler Franklyn Rose.

In the next over, Curtly Ambrose bowled Kuruvilla for nought to leave India on 296 for eight. Rose wrapped up the innings to end with 4-77 as the home team appeared to be back in with a shout.

In fact the West Indies problems were just beginning. They quickly lost opener, Stuart Williams (0) and first innings century-maker Shivnarine Chanderpaul (3) in reaching on 31 for two at tea.

After the break, the wickets of Sherwin Campbell (18), Carl Hooper (4), Lara, Courtney Browne (1), Roland Holder (13) and Bishop (6) tumbled in quick succession as the West Indies collapsed to 95 for eight.

Prasad captured the key-wicket of Lara, who after facing 67 balls in 104 minutes, edged an outswinger to Azharuddin at second slip.

Fed Cup v'ball in doubt

CHENAI, Mar 31: The fate of the Federation Cup volleyball championship for men and women appears to be uncertain as the Volleyball Federation of India (VFI) has said the meet will be cancelled unless the venue is changed following a mishap causing injuries to spectators in Vatagara, VFI secretary general K Murugan said here last night, reports PTI.

Over 200 spectators were seriously injured when the temporary stadium collapsed.

S Africa 221 for eight

PORT ELIZABETH, South Africa, Mar 31: South Africa scored 221 for eight off their 50 overs in the second one-day international against Australia at St George's Park today, reports Reuter.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard of the second one-day international between South Africa and Australia at St George's Park Monday: SOUTH AFRICA: Bacher c Bevan b Dale 3, Koen c M Waugh b Dale 0, Kallis b Gillespie 82, Rhodes c Reiffel b Bevan 57, Cronje b Gillespie 31, Pollock c Dale b Warne 9, Klusener not out 27, Richardson run out 1, Symcox not out 1, Extras (b-1, lb-4, nb-3, w-3) 11. Total (for 8 wks) 221. Fall of wickets: 1-2; 2-4; 3-16; 4-120; 5-181; 6-183; 7-212; 8-215.

Bowling O M R W: Reiffel 9 0 33 0, Dale 7 3 18 0, Blewett 10 1 42 0, Gillespie 10 0 51 1, Warne 6 0 39 1, Bevan 8 0 33 1. (Incomplete)

Madugalle's Ashes series assignment

COLOMBO, Mar 31: The International Cricket Council has appointed former Sri Lankan captain Ranjan Madugalle as match referee for the forthcoming Ashes series between England and Australia, a newspaper said today.

The state-owned Daily News said Madugalle, who retired from the international scene nine years ago, will referee three of the six Test matches and the three one-day internationals to be played from May to early July when the Australians visit England.

Italians call up Martelli

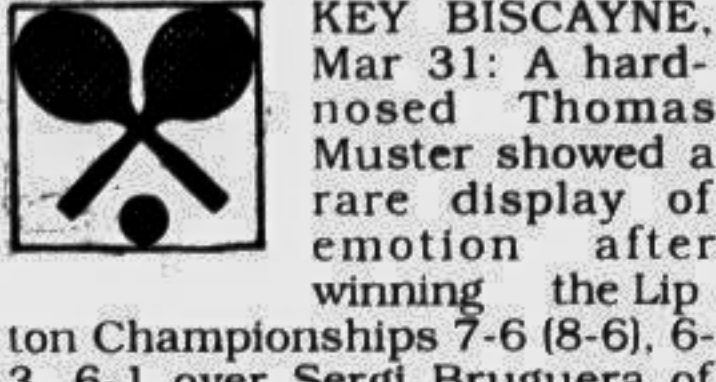
ROME, Mar 31: Italy made one change to their Davis Cup team on Monday ahead of next month's quarterfinal tie against Spain calling up debutante Marzio Martelli in place of Stefano Pescosolido, reports Reuter.

Italian number one Renzo Furlan, veteran Omar Camporese and Diego Nargiso were all retained from the team that beat Mexico in the first round last month.

Martelli, 25, is ranked 142nd in the world in the singles listings and 380th in the doubles.

Italy, which lost to France in the semifinals last year, are due to play the tie on home territory in Pesaro.

Muster offloads odd stuffs



KEY BISCAYNE, Mar 31: A hard-nosed Thomas Muster showed a rare display of emotion after winning the Lipton Championships 7-6 (8-6), 6-3, 6-1 over Sergi Bruguera of Spain, reports agencies.

After the one hour, 58-minute victory yesterday, the second-ranked Muster returned back to eight years ago, when he was forced to withdraw from the Lipton finals against Ivan Lendl.

Back in 1989, after defeating Yannick Noah of France in a Friday night semifinal, Muster was hit by a drunk driver while bending over the trunk of a car.

The ligaments in his left knee were torn and it was questionable whether he would return to the game. A tenacious competitor, the Austrian was back on the courts less than six months later and worked his way to No. 1 in the world in February 1996.

What happened eight years ago makes this a great day of justice for me, Muster said, his voice cracking.

Later Muster admitted this 44th career title, third on hardcourts, ranked with winning the 1995 French Open.

"I wasn't really crying," Muster said. "Maybe after the French Open, this is the most emotional moment in my career."

Muster says winning the Lipton was worth more than the 2.5 million he received in a lawsuit he filed related to the accident. He said that after legal fees and US taxes he ended up with about 700,000 from the suit.

"It's not about the money, it's just that I had the chance to do it again, and what was taken away probably eight years ago, happened today."

The court-side temperature read 106 degrees F (41 C) at the start of the match, so both players knew an early lead was vital. There were no break points in the first set, and after Bruguera squandered two set points in the tie-breaker, the match turned on a thrilling point at 6-6.

Muster chased down a shot in the corner and returned a lob. Bruguera hit an overhead down the middle, and Muster — his back literally against the wall — punched a weak overhead.

Bruguera slammed another overhead, and Muster leaped to punch back another desperate shot.

It floated over Bruguera's head, and when the ball landed on the sideline, he managed only a meek backhand into the net.

The crowd roared as Muster pumped his fists, and he closed out the set on the next point with a backhand winner.

"The first set was very tough," Bruguera said. "When I lost my big chances, I felt very tired and very down in my mind. I tried to come back, but I was feeling so tired."

"I think it was about just taking the pain today, who can take it longer," said Muster, who earned 360,000 dollars for the win. "I think it was good tennis. But you just can't play for hours on a hardcourt with that heat. It's just impossible."

Bruguera, the 1993 and 1994 French Open champion, has won 14 career titles but has not won a title since 1994. In February 1995 he sprained his left knee, and in December 1995, he tore two ligaments in his right ankle.

Once ranked No. 3 in the world, the 35th-ranked Bruguera's ranking fell to No. 81 at the end of 1996, but will move back into the top 20 after the Lipton.

Khulna cricket

KHULNA, Mar 31: Mohammedan Sporting Club defeated Abul Khasem Smriti Sangsad by 33 runs in the super league match of the Europa First Division cricket league played here today at the Khulna Stadium, reports BSS.

Mohammedans, put into bat, scored 153 for nine in the 30-over-a-side match. Abul Khasem Smriti were all out for 120 in reply.

Chinese soccer scene

BELING, Mar 31: League champions Dalian Wanda beat Sichuan Quanxin 3-1 in Chengdu in Sichuan province on Sunday to extend their unbeaten streak to 38 games after the fourth round of China's First Division soccer league, reports Reuter.

After a scoreless first half, Wang Tao opened the scoring for Dalian in the 53rd minute, only to see Sichuan tie the score at 1-1 one minute later through a header from Liu Bin, the Xinhua news agency said.

Dalian surged ahead again in the 77th minute when Wang converted a pass from Hao Haidong and sealed the victory in the last minute with a goal from Li Ming.

In other matches, a 10-man Guangzhou Apollo team rallied from behind to overcome Vanguard Huandao 2-1, Tianjin Samsung beat Qingdao Hairui 1-0, while Jilin Aodong forced a scoreless draw with Guangdong Hongyuan.

Beijing Guoan tied 1-1 with August First and Jinan Taishan drew 1-1 with Shanghai Shenhua.

Dalian surged ahead again in the 77th minute when Wang converted a pass from Hao Haidong and sealed the victory in the last minute with a goal from Li Ming.

Chinese soccer scene

BELING, Mar 31: League champions Dalian Wanda beat Sichuan Quanxin 3-1 in Chengdu in Sichuan province on Sunday to extend their unbeaten streak to 38 games after the fourth round of China's First Division soccer league, reports Reuter.

After a scoreless first half, Wang Tao opened the scoring for Dalian in the 53rd minute, only to see Sichuan tie the score at 1-1 one minute later through a header from Liu Bin, the Xinhua news agency said.

Dalian surged ahead again in the 77th minute when Wang converted a pass from Hao Haidong and sealed the victory in the last minute with a goal from Li Ming.

WEST INDIES: Second Innings

Campbell c Mongia b Ganesh 18, Williams b Prasad 0, Chanderpaul lbw b Kuruvilla 3, Lara c Azharuddin b Prasad 45, Hooper lbw b Ganesh 4, Holder c Mongia b Prasad 13, Browne c Mongia b Kuruvilla 1, Bishop lbw b Kuruvilla 6, Ambrose not out 18, Rose c Ganguly b Kuruvilla 4, Dillon b Kuruvilla 21, Extras: lb-5, nb-2 140. Total (all out) 140. Fall of wickets: 1-9; 2-31; 3-37; 4-65; 5-66; 6-87; 7-91; 8-95; 9-107.

INDIA: Second Innings

Laxman not out 0, Sidhu not out 2, Total: 42. Bowling: O M R W: Ambrose 1 1 0 0, Bishop 1 0 7 0.



Thomas Muster of Austria poses with the trophy after the Lipton Championships in Key Biscayne, Florida on Mar 30. Muster defeated Spaniard Sergi Bruguera 7-6, 6-3, 6-1 in the final.

The Daily Star Entertainment Guide. Tuesday 1st April. BBC: 6:00am BBC World News. STAR PLUS: 6:30 Nanaad. STAR SPORTS: 7:00am India Tour. STAR MOVIES: 7:30am Adventure. ZEE TV: 6:00 The News. PTV: 8:00am Tilawat Aur Tarjuma. EL TV: 7:00 Scandal. SONY ET: 8:30am Khoya Khoya Chand. DD 7: 10:30 Jamnamd 10:35 Classical Music. Wazif Islam, Joint Director BIRDEM Academy.