

Notts in Zahid dilemma

LONDON, May 28: Nottinghamshire's recent overseas signing, Pakistan pace bowler Mohammad Zahid, is on the verge of being sent home without bowling a ball in anger in county cricket, reports Reuter.

If the result of a final scan on Thursday on the test player's persistent back injury confirms Notts cricket manager Alan Orrrod's worst fears, the county may have to cut their losses.

Zahid has already undergone three scans to try to pin-point the extent of his problem since his arrival at the start of the month. He also received a course of injections when soft tissue damage was discovered two weeks ago.

However, the injury, has refused to clear up and the club have to decide whether to persevere with Zahid, 20, or attempt to sign a replacement after considering medical advice.

Orrrod said, "I've tried to keep him positive during these frustrating weeks but we need to sort things out sooner rather than later."

Nat'l Bank v'ball

East End Club and Dilkusha SC won their matches in the National Bank Metropolitan First Division Volleyball League at the court next to Dhaka Stadium yesterday, reports UNB.

East End Club defeated East End Boys by 15-5, 15-6, 15-2 points in the day's first match while Dilkusha SC beat Nabajagaran Sangha in straight sets.

In the Second Division league, Victoria SC beat Partners Club by 15-5, 6-15, 15-12, 17-15 points.

Surjo Tarun Boys beat Russel Smriti

Sports Reporter

Surjo Tarun Boys Club recorded a 4-3 victory over Russel Smriti Sangsad in a Russel Ahmed Khokon Smriti Silver Cup football tournament match at the Arambagh around yesterday.

Surjo Tarun's Dhanu struck twice while Sudhir and Apel scored one each. On the other hand Jalil, Raouf and Nazim scored one apiece for the losers.

In today's match, Chattrasena Boys Club will take on Madartek Kishore Sangha at 4:30 pm.

John breaks the jinx

GLASGOW, May 28: John Hartson scored his first goal for Wales to give them a 1-0 win over Scotland in the international friendly on Tuesday — it was Wales' first win in six international matches, reports AFP.

The 22-year-old Hartson, whose goal played a major part in maintaining West Ham's Premiership status last season, struck his first goal in nine international appearances in the first minute of the second-half with a spectacular half volley.

The two sides, who experimented with several new faces ahead of World Cup matches this summer, had not played each other since the World Cup qualifier in 1985 which was marred by the death of Scottish manager Jock Stein at the end of the match after he had seen his side clinch their place in the 1986 finals.

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Scene from a game in The Daily Star bridge championship at the Bangladesh Bank club premises yesterday. — Star photo

Boom time for blooming kid

LONDON, May 28: Adam Holloake's remarkable season continued on Tuesday when he led Surrey to the semifinals of the Benson and Hedges Cup as they brushed aside Essex by six wickets at Chelmsford, reports AFP.

Surrey skipper Holloake, named England's man-of-the-series in the Texaco Trophy one-day series whitewash against Australia, took two wickets, held a catch and claimed a run out to wrap up the Essex innings for 214.

He could then relax as fellow England star Graham Thorpe scored 73 to guide his county to 215 for four with over seven overs remaining.

Holloake praised his side for an improved performance. "That's the best we've played this season. We've been very ordinary in some of the Benson and Hedges games, sometimes not even that," he said.

Surrey are joined in the semifinals by last year's beaten finalists Northamptonshire, who were lifted to a seven-wicket win over Yorkshire at Headingley by David Capel's five wickets and half-century.

Matthew Walker's century steered Kent to a four-wicket verdict with just three balls to spare against Warwickshire in a high-scoring contest at Canterbury, while county champions Leicestershire booked their place with a 20-run victory over Somerset at Grace Road.

Former England star Capel produced a stunning all-round performance during a display to ease Northamptonshire through with four overs to spare as they reached 254 for three in response to Yorkshire's 253 for nine.

Capel, who played his last Test eight years ago, claimed career-best bowling figures in the competition of five for 51 wickets.

Warwickshire were hampered by an injury to South African pace ace Allan Donald, who went off with a side strain after bowling only two overs, as Kent also needed a determined 26-ball 39 not out by Graham Dowdrey to clinch the match.

It was a sweet day for Kent, who avenged the controversial quarter-final defeat in 1994 when Warwickshire went through on a bowl-off following a wash-out at Edgbaston due to inadequate covering.

Leicestershire overcame a disastrous start to reach the semifinals thanks to three wickets apiece by pace duo David Millns and Alan Mullally.

Somerset were left to chase what appeared, a modest 198 target on the same wicket on which Surrey's Alistair Brown hammered 157 on Sunday.

But Millns and Mullally ripped out the first five Somerset wickets for only 57 runs and they were eventually dismissed for 177 with 13 deliveries unused.

Leicestershire had earlier recovered from 14 for three thanks to a 102-run stand between skipper James Whitaker (51) and Ben Smith (61) which thwarted the efforts of Harvey Trump (four for 51) and Graham Rose, who grabbed the trip of early wickets.

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Daily Star Bridge Aces Alpha

keep lead

Sports Reporter

Favourites Aces Alpha Bridge Club maintained their winning streak in The Daily Star bridge championship after trouncing hosts Partizans White by 20 points to nil in their second round robin league engagement at the Bangladesh Bank Club yesterday.

With yesterday's victory, Aces, who earlier in their first match defeated Picwick Purple with the same margin, earned full 40 points and remained at the top of the table with a two-point lead over Tutul and partners who have 38 points to their account.

In yesterday's match, Tutul and co, who earlier won their first match against Partizans White 18-2, recorded a 20-0 victory over Bangladesh Bank Green.

Standings (after each team played two matches): 40 points — Aces Alpha; 38 points — Tutul & Partners; 20 points — Picwick Purple; 15 points — Bangladesh Bank Green; 5 points — Amateur Bridge Club and 2 points — Partizans White.

Meanwhile, the pair duplicate bridge, the second phase of The Daily Star bridge championship, will begin tomorrow at the same venue. Interested players may register their names by 9 am tomorrow.

Malaysian city replaces Ipoh

GENEVA, May 28: World soccer governing body FIFA has confirmed that the city of Kangar, in northern Malaysia, will replace Ipoh as one of the six venues for the World Youth Championship for the Coca-Cola Cup, according to a FIFA announcement in Zurich on Tuesday, reports Xinhua.

FIFA considers it necessary to change the venue because of difficulties with the quality of the pitch in Ipoh. Kangar will host the matches of Group E, including Hungary, Australia, Canada and defending champions Argentina, as well as a second round match on June 26.

FIFA also announces another change due to international television requirements that the second round match in Johor Bahru on June 26 will now kick off at 17.15 local time instead of 20.30.

Scots' hopes dashed

TOULON, France, May 28: Scotland's chances of making the Toulon under-21 tournament final were extinguished here on Tuesday as they were held to a 1-1 draw by the United States, reports AFP.

The United States took the lead through Josh Wolff in the sixth minute but the Scots, coached by former Aberdeen and Metz striker Eric Black, equalised 10 minutes later courtesy of St Mirren's Steven McGarry.

The Americans dominated the encounter and piled on the pressure in the second-half and the Scots goalkeeper Derek Scringour, McGarry's club teammate, was forced into making several excellent saves.

However, the Americans should have sealed victory five minutes from the end but Bayer Uerdingen striker Shawn Petrovski shot over from five yards with Scringour stranded.

Open squash results

Sports Reporter

Bangladesh Biman and Saturday Club of Calcutta moved into the last four of the Bangladesh Open squash tournament after winning their respective quarterfinal matches at the Dhaka Club squash complex on Tuesday.

In the first match, Biman ousted Gulshan Club 3-0 to set up a semifinal clash against Saturday Club who won the day's other engagement against number three team of Calcutta Racket Club 3-0.

The other two quarterfinals were scheduled at the same venue yesterday.

Swiss Miss gets going

PARIS, May 28: (Agencies): In her first match in seven weeks, top-ranked Martina Hingis stormed into the second round of the French Open Tuesday by beating Henrieta Nagyova 6-0, 6-2 in 51 minutes. Hingis fell off a horse April 21 and needed surgery in her left knee. Her last match was April 6.

"I did not play for seven weeks and it's always tough to come back", said the 16-year-old Hingis, who is unbeaten in six tournaments this year, including the Australian Open in January, her first Grand Slam title.

Hingis raced to a 5-0 lead in 14 minutes, then needed six minutes to close the first set, wasting two set points. Nagyova recovered slightly in the second to hold serve twice but Hingis was unstoppable.

Meanwhile, Fourth-seed Goran Ivanisevic, seen by many as a potential champion, lost his cool on a sweltering Roland Garros Centre-Court and crashed out.

The talented but erratic Croatian left-hander fired down 17 aces and 20 unreturnable first serves and held countless break points — but still beaten.

Former French Davis Cup player Olivier Delaitre ended British interest at the event by defeating Tim Henman.

While in the women's event, the eighth-seed Anke Huber was beaten 6-3, 4-6, 6-3 by Kimberly Po of the United States.

The bitterly disappointed Ivanisevic shook his head after his defeat and admitted he simply didn't know what had gone wrong.

"Physically I felt good out there — and even when I lost the third set I still thought I would win. But when you have 10,000 break points and you don't take them...well what can you do," he said.

"I will have to have a talk to myself about this. I knew Magnus was a good player and that it would be tough. But I never really expected to lose — even when I was two sets to one down," said Ivanisevic, a semi-finalist in Rome last week.

Ivanisevic admitted that Tuesday's loss would make it difficult for him to get motivated for next month's Wimbledon and stressed he had no intention of going over to England straight away.

"You can get crazy in England playing on grass every day. Anyway I'm playing doubles here and I shall not be leaving until after that," he said.

The 25-year-old Ivanisevic, whose preparation for Roland Garros this year was disrupted when he fractured his hand after accidentally slamming a door on it, had high hopes of improving on his fourth-round berth last year in this, his ninth campaign in the French capital.

Henman's loss came as a final humiliation for British tennis leaving their contingent of hopefuls as red-faced as the courts.

Greg Rusedski also crashed at the first hurdle on Monday while none of the other British entries survived the first-round of the qualifying event.

Former title-winner Jim Courier fought like a tiger but was sent packing when he lost a gruelling five-set marathon against Magnus Larsson of Sweden on the Suzanne Lenglen court, while moody seventh-seed Marcelo Rios of Chile was also taken the distance before beating Wayne Black of Zimbabwe.

Mark Philippoussis of Australia fired down 29 aces and 25 service winners — but showed that there is more to his tennis than just his serve by coming back superbly from two sets to one down to beat Swedish opponent Nicklas Kulti.

Carlos Moya, the ninth-seed Australian Open runner-up, completed a tough five-set victory over qualifier Alberto Martin, a fellow Spaniard, 6-3, 6-7, (7-3), 5-7, 6-3, 6-3. The match had been suspended because of darkness after four sets Monday.

Second-seed Michael Chang, a winner just in 1989, moved safely through to the second-round when he defeated Frenchman Rodolphe Gilbert in straight-sets. It was a reassuring win for the 25-year-old American after his first-round defeats in his last two tournaments against Brazil's Fernando Meligeni in Atlanta and Argentina's Herman Gumy in Rome.

Among the women Jana Novotna, the fourth seed and winner in Madrid last weekend had an impressive 6-3, 6-2 win over Cristian Torres Valero of Spain.

As Japan's 21-year-old number-one Ai Sugiyama fought back to reach the second-round by beating Germany's Elena Wagner 5-7, 6-4, 6-1.

Sugiyama, who won in Tokyo in April but who lost in the first-round in both Rome and Berlin before arriving in the French capital now plays twice champion Arantxa Sanchez-Vicario.

The Spaniard dropped only two games beating Karolina Jagieniak of France. Elsewhere the 12th seeded Mary Joe Fernandez of the United States continued her revival. She beat the oldest player in the draw — 33-year-old compatriot Lori McNeil — in straight-sets.

Brenda Schultz-McCarthy, seeded No. 14, defeated Lenka Kenkova 6-3, 7-5, and No. 15 Karina Habsudova beat Olga Barabanschikova 6-3, 6-3.

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