

Taylor's men reach India

BOMBAY, Feb 22: The Australian cricket team arrived here late Saturday for their second Test tour of India in 12 years with captain Mark Taylor vowing to put up a sterling performance in the three-Test series, reports AFP.

Taylor, 33, told reporters it was a "big challenge" to beat India who have not lost a match on home turf in the past decade. Taylor said he was planning a large part of his hopes on champion leg-spinner Shane Warne despite trouble with his bowling shoulder.

"He is an outstanding performer and I am sure the Indian public would love to see him bowl. We missed his experience 18 months ago when we played the one-off Test in Delhi," Taylor said.

Warne, 28, taker of 303 Test wickets, the most by an Australian spinner, missed this month's four limited-over internationals in New Zealand to have treatment on the right shoulder following another gruelling domestic season against New Zealand and South Africa.

Australia have not won a Test in India since Bill Lawry's side triumphed 3-1 in the 1969-70 series.

They have only played one Test in India in the last 12 years — losing the one-off match at Delhi by seven wickets in October 1995.

Australia will be without spearheads Glenn McGrath and Jason Gillespie, leaving experienced seamer Paul Reiffel to head an inexperienced pace attack.

Taylor denied McGrath's absence would mean defeat. "We would love to have had his experience here but unfortunately it is not so, but we are used to missing some key players and still winning in recent years."

The tourists open their tour with a three-day match against Ranji Trophy champions Mumbai from February 24-26 before going to Vishakapathan to take on the Board President's XI in a three-day match from March 1-3.

The first Test is scheduled at Chennai from March 6.

Emma soars to new heights

AUCKLAND, Feb 22: Australian Emma George on Saturday set a new world record in the women's pole vault by clearing 4.57 metres, beating her own previous mark of 4.55 metres, reports AFP.

The 23-year-old was taking part in the Robin Tait Classic in tough conditions, only just managing to squeeze in her final jump before it started to rain on the second day of competition.

George last year broke the record of 4.01 metres set by New Zealand athlete Melina Hamilton.

On Saturday she passed at 4.20 metres, cleared on her second attempt at both the 4.30 and 4.45 metres and then made her first and only attempt at 4.57. Having soared over the bar she decided the conditions were too bad to continue.

Lamba battles for life

Sports Reporter

Former Indian Test player Raman Lamba (35), who was struck by the ball while fielding close for

Abahani against Mohammedans last Friday, went into coma later in a city hospital. His condition last night was stated to be critical by doctors at the PG hospital.

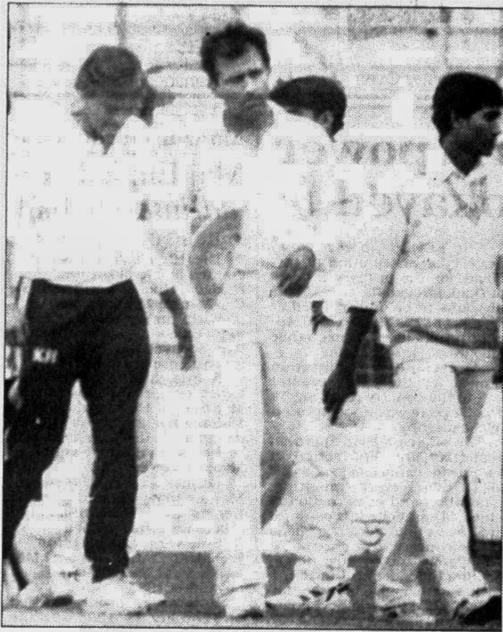
His Irish wife and sister are at his bedside as he fights for his life.

BCB president Saber Hossain Chowdhury, club officials, players and a host of fans have been gathering at the hospital to get up to the minute information about the beloved cricketer.

Lamba, an elegant right-handed batsman, has been a regular in Dhaka cricket for the last six years, having also captained GMCC.

Last Friday Lamba was fielding at forward short-leg without a helmet when a full-blooded pull from Mohammedans middle-order batsman Mehrab Hossain struck him on the forehead. The severity of his injury was not apparent at the time because he could walk to the pavilion when he had opted to leave the field immediately.

Lamba, who has been a prolific scorer in Indian domestic cricket this season, was playing his first match for Abahani in the current league when the cruel blow came.



Abahani's Indian Test batsman Raman Lamba (C) seen leaving the field after being hit by a ball on the side of his forehead during the Janakanta Premier league match against Mohammedans at the Dhaka Stadium on Feb 20.

— Star file photo

Cronje back in business

BLOEMFONTEIN, South Africa, Feb 22: South African captain Hansie Cronje returned to action after a 16-day lay-off to post an impressive 67 not out against Pakistan at Springbok Park on Saturday, reports AFP.

Cronje, who missed the rain-affected opening Test between South Africa and Pakistan last weekend due to a knee ligament operation, batted for 163 minutes Saturday to turn Free State's first innings around from 98 for five to 200 for five when rain intervened.

"It couldn't have gone better," Cronje said at the end of the first day of the three-day fixture.

"I wanted to try to bat for a lengthy period and get runs at a reasonable rate and that's how it worked out."

Cronje said he had experienced no problems in running between the wickets with his sixth-wicket partner Morne Vanwyk, who contributed a healthy 44 to their 102-run partnership.

Free State — South Africa's top provincial side — had looked rather ordinary before Cronje came.

With a fired-up Azhar Mahmood claiming two for 10 in his opening seven-over spell and

Shoaib Akhtar dismissing Boeta Dippenaar and Kosie Venter with successive deliveries, the homeside were in serious trouble.

The Pakistan attack was however bereft of its two main strike bowlers, Waqar Younis and Muhammad Akram.

Pakistani captain Aamir Sohail was full of praise for his determined young second stringers. "I thought Azhar and Shoaib both bowled very well," he said.

With his new opening pairing of Fazl-Akbar and Shoaib not making much of an impression, Sohail was to quick to switch his attack to Mahmood and leg-spinner Mushtaq.

The move paid instant dividends. With the help of some late away movement off the wicket, Mahmood had Chris Craven picked up at third slip by Wasim and skipper Gerhardus Liebenberg caught behind for 22.

Liebenberg, who struggled for 87 minutes over his runs, was followed back to the pavilion by Louis Wilkinson just 16 runs later — three down for 56.

Joined by Cronje however, promising 20-year-old Boeta Dippenaar was able to hold fort through to lunch and was just five short of his half-century when he was trapped leg before by Shoaib.

At the wicket for 99 minutes, Dippenaar faced 75 balls and hit five fours.

Thanks to Vanwyk and

Cronje, however, they were in much better shape when rain rendered the field unplayable and reduced the opening day of the three-day fixture by 24 overs.



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TODAY'S MATCHES

- Premier Division Football Relegation League: Rahmatganj MFS vs Victoria SC (Mirpur Stadium, 5 pm)
First Division Football Super League: Mirpur Chalanika vs Dhaka Wanderers (Army Stadium, 3 pm)
First Division Football Relegation League: Dhanmondi Club vs Police AC (Mirpur Stadium, 3 pm).

ITF junior tennis Vijoy, Sheetal emerge champs

From Our Correspondent

RAJSHAHI, Feb 22: Indians Vijoy Khanna and Sheetal Gautam lifted the boys' and girls' trophies of the ITF International Championship here today.

Vijoy defeated Chang Win Lung of Taipei 6-4, 6-3 and Sheetal downed Czech Dominika Zuzarova 6-3, 2-6, 6-3.

Later State Minister for Youth and Sports Obaidul Quader gave away prizes as the chief guest.

A total of forty-nine players from eight Asian and European countries participated in the week-long event.

Bangladesh int'l jr tennis begins today

The 12th Bangladesh International Junior tennis championship, an ITF approved meet, begins at the Ramna Tennis Complex, reports UNB.

Bangladesh Tennis Federation (BTF) president Syed Alamgir Farooq Chowdhury will inaugurate the seven-day tourney, organised by the Bangladesh Tennis Federation and jointly sponsored by Rupali Insurance Company and IFIC Bank.

Sixty players from 11 countries, including Bangladesh, are expected to participate in the under-18 tennis competition.

The 10 participating foreign countries are: Romania, Czech Republic, Uzbekistan, Kyrgistan, Chinese Taipei, India, Japan, Thailand, Slovakia and United States.

Queensland ride on Love

PERTH, Feb 22: An enterprising knock by number three batsman Martin Love helped Queensland to a three-wicket victory over Western Australia in a semifinal of the Mercantile Mutual Cup one-day competition Saturday, reports AFP.

Love slammed 75 from 87 balls as Queensland, chasing a target of 283 for six, reached 284 for seven with 13 balls to spare.

In the final on March 1 Queensland will meet the winner of the other semifinal between New South Wales and South Australia, being played in Sydney today.

Love was well supported by opener Jimmy Maher, who scored 56 from 69 balls.

Queensland qualified for the final for the third successive year despite a spirited spell by veteran paceman Jo Angel, who captured 3-39 from 8.5 overs.

Skipper Tom Moody top-scored for Western Australia, he made an aggressive unbeaten 63 from 52 balls, with two searing sixes and five fours.

BRIEF SCORES

WESTERN AUSTRALIA: 283 for six (Tom Moody 63 not out, Justin Langer 51, Damien Martyn 30, Ryan Campbell 35).
QUEENSLAND: 284 for seven (Martin Love 75, Jimmy Maher 56, Brendan Creevey 32, Matthew Hayden 31, Jo Angel 3-39, Mark Atkinson 2-58).

Novotna in final

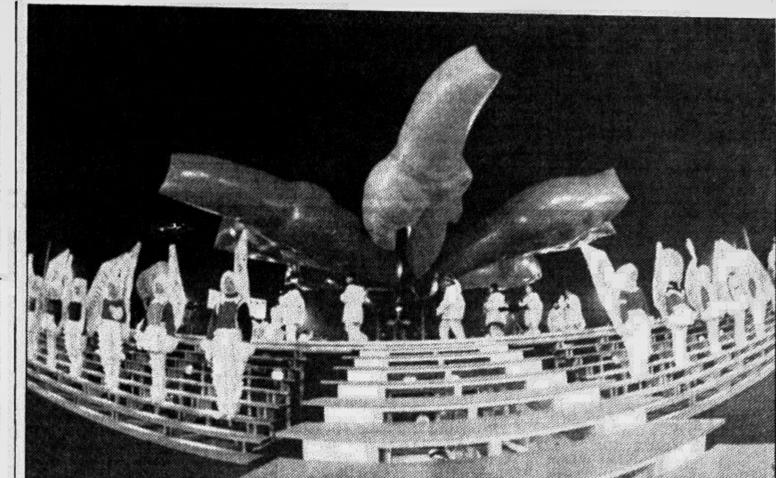
HANOVER, Feb 22: Top seed Jana Novotna of the Czech Republic will meet unseeded Patty Schnyder of Switzerland today in the 450,000 dollars Hanover Grand Prix final, reports Reuters.

Novotna, the world number three, beat 16-year-old Anna Koumnikova 6-3, 6-3, unfazed by Saturday's semifinal crowd which generally favoured the striking blonde.

But the Russian's game was too error-prone and the more experienced Novotna, 29, showed no mercy, winning in 71 minutes.

Schnyder, 19, also won 6-3, 6-3, overcoming Belgian Sabine Appelmans, who earlier in the week beat Steffi Graf on the German's comeback.

Schnyder has not lost a set in the tournament and once again played with concentration and confidence.



Rehearsals going on in full swing for the closing ceremony of the Nagano Winter Olympics at the Olympic Stadium on Feb 21.

Sun sets over Nagano

NAGANO, Feb 22 (AP): Starbursting fireworks, the orange flames of traditional bonfires and the glow of 50,000 hand-held lanterns illuminated a Japanese valley Sunday night, Nagano's thank-you to the world and its intense farewell to the final Winter Olympics of the 20th century.

But in the end — after two weeks of snow, rain, more snow, still more snow and finally even an earthquake — the intense native rituals gave way to outright exuberance. And then, Nagano danced.

"Sayonara! Sayonara!" shouted the master of ceremonies, comedian Kinichi Hagimoto, bedecked in a cartoonish white top hat. "Arigato Nagano!" he said, using the Japanese word for thank you — a word anyone who has spent a past 14 days here will never forget. Then he shed his topcoat and threw his hat rakishly into the winter air.

Just like the opening ceremony, the end of the 1998 Olympics was a mosaic of East and West, traditional and modern wrapped up in a hometown festival: Lion dances, bonfires, harvest festival rituals, "Snowlets" mascots and a catchy Japanese pop rhythm — all against the backdrop of the breathtaking Japanese Alps, commemorated in a haunting composition, "Reverberations of the Myriad Peaks."

It all ended in time, after two weeks of often miserable weather that bedeviled organisers and beleaguered athletes, forcing cancellations, reschedulings and general bedevillment all around.

Beyond that, many athletic moments shined: Japan's golden glory: Speedskater Hirooyasu Shimizu, setting an Olympic record by skating 500 metres in 35.76 seconds — then besting himself a day later with a 35.59. And Masahiko Harada, coming back from a dismal jump to tie teammate Takanobu Okabe for the longest jump on skis in

Olympic history — 137 metres. Austria's Hermann Maier, careening through the air and the snow in a spectacular crash, then dragging his bruised body back to win two gold medals.

The Czechs, behind goaltender Dominik Hasek, stealing Canada's chance for Olympic gold in ice hockey by winning 2-1 in a thrilling post-overtime shootout in the semifinals, and then shutting out Russia 1-0 in the gold-medal game.

Tara Lipinski's irrepressible exuberance after becoming the youngest figure skater to win the gold medal. She sprinted to center ice to take her bows. She hugged. She yelled. She grinned — every inch the 15-year-old in every good way.

Curling, a sport of sweeping and stones, made its Olympic medal debut. And snowboarding: The sport of rebellious charmers had a bumpy first games when a Canadian snowboarder lost his gold after testing positive for marijuana, then got the medal back on appeal.

The list of those who didn't get a medal at all included some unexpected names: Alberto Tomba and Wayne Gretzky. And the US men's hockey finished last in many eyes when, after being eliminated from the tournament, some of its players trashed three Olympic Village rooms.

But the people came — 1,358,207 of them at competitions and victory ceremonies by Sunday afternoon. Local Olympic organisers expected the total at competitions alone to reach 1,270,000 when everything from Sunday is counted.

Nagano Mayor Tasuku Tsukada presented the Olympic flag to Deede Corradini, mayor of Salt Lake City, home of the next Winter Games in 2002. Later, the Utah vanguard — a stagecoach and riders on horseback — reconnoitered the arena with a once-around and gave the Japanese a taste of what the next Winter Olympics might hold.

Fireworks fuses zoomed like missiles to their targets, lighting up streamers and turning the sky into daytime at dusk. Colourful looped flags of myriad colours and designs swarmed the stadium, cloth needle eyes jutting into the air.

Then the ritual gave way to fun. The Japanese pop group Agharta performed "Ie Aie," or "Let's Make a Circle and Dance" — the theme song of the Snowlets mascots. The drums played. The lights came on.

And the Olympic flame extinguished and the flag passed on: they did something in Nagano they've been threatening to do for days: They relaxed.

FINAL MEDALS TABLE

Final Nagano Olympic medals table on Sunday:

Table with 4 columns: Country, G (Gold), S (Silver), B (Bronze). Includes entries for Germany, Norway, Russia, Canada, U States, Netherlands, Japan, Austria, South Korea, Italy, Finland, Switzerland, France, Czech Republic, Bulgaria, China, Sweden, Denmark, Ukraine, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Australia, Belgium, Great Britain, and a Total row.

Mayor Cup boxing

RAJSHAHI, Feb 22: A three-day long Mayor Cup invitation boxing competition will be held at the local collegiate playground from tomorrow, reports BSS.

About 125 boxers will participate in 18 events.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh. Executive Engineer, Directorate of Public Health Engineering. Dhaka Division, 12/D, Dilkusha Commercial Area. Notice regarding cleaning work quotations.

Advertisement for Novotna in final, featuring a photo of Jana Novotna and text about her tennis match.

Advertisement for Charkkela Institute, featuring text about a scholarship exam and contact information.

The Daily Star TV Guide. A large grid listing TV programs for Monday 23rd February across various channels like BTV, BBC, Channel V, STAR PLUS, STAR MOVIES, STAR SPORTS, ZEE INDIA TV, DD 7, SONY ET, ZEE TV, and TNT CARTOON.