

Nat'l youth cricket Sylhet, BKSP reach final

Sylhet and BKSP moved into the final of the 19th national youth cricket championship with impressive wins against their respective rivals at different venues yesterday, reports UNB.

The three-day final will begin on Thursday at the Sathkira Stadium.

Sylhet defeated Khulna by 44 runs at the Kushtia Stadium. Chasing Sylhet's 252, Khulna were all out for 204 in 65 overs after resuming with overnight score of 24 for one wicket.

Shafiqul scored 52 while Farid and Selim made 48 and 24 respectively. Alokmoni of Sylhet, who earlier excelled with bat scoring 56, was the most successful bowler picking up three wickets for 40.

At the Sathkira Stadium, BKSP beat hosts Sathkira by 59 runs.

Sathkira, resuming with overnight score of 58 for one, were all out for 182 in 66.4 overs in reply to BKSP's 241.

Sharif scored highest 46 while Ajoy and Farhad made 37 and 33 respectively.

Santosh picked up four wickets for 33 while Manik claimed three for 43 runs.

Div I cricket

Dhaka Wanderers Club and City Club won their respective matches in the Metropolitan Division super league cricket at different city venues yesterday, reports UNB.

A hurricane unbeaten 114 by Palu helped Dhaka Wanderers earn the massive nine-wicket victory over Eskaton Sabuj Sangha at the Bangabandhu National Stadium.

Opener Palu's 83-ball knock contained 17 boundaries and two sixes. Earlier, Eskaton made 149 for eight in 50 overs with Farid hitting an unbeaten 43. Ripon claimed three wickets for 23 runs.

In reply, Dhaka Wanderers reached the target in 26.3 overs losing only one wicket.

At the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium, City Club defeated Jabbari KC by four wickets.

Jatrabari KC scored 189 for nine in the stipulated 50 overs with one down Jasmuddin making 53 runs. Taposh captured three wickets for 23 runs.

In reply, City Club reached 190 for six in 42.2 overs with opener Tutul scoring 70 runs. Khokon took three wickets for 22 runs.

Frazier, Po advance

TOKYO, Apr 12: Second seed Amy Frazier blitzed Haruka Inoue of Japan 6-0, 6-3 on a windy day with intermittent rain in the opening round of the Japan Open Monday, reports AP.

The match was played on an outside court following three hours of delay, while a few matches in the main Ariake Colosseum were played with the roof closed.

"It was difficult out there because of the wind," said Frazier, of St Louis, Missouri. "And she was a lot more consistent in the second set."

The 1995 Japan Open women's champion, currently ranked 35th in the world, and defending champion and top seed Ai Sugiyama, who is No 27, are highest-ranked here in this year's tournament.

Sugiyama and third-seeded American Corina Morariu were idle on the opening day.

In a match in the stadium, fourth-seeded American Kimberly Po beat Miho Saeki of Japan 7-5, 6-2.

The most closely contested first set, Saeki, ranked 88th in the world, was at 5-4 and leading 40-15 on her serve when she made a few errors while Po began pounding some impressive shots down the line.

"In the second set, it actually wasn't so easy as it looked," said Po, the world's No 58 player. "But I could tell she wasn't very happy losing the first set, and never would I, if I was at 5-4 and 40-15."

"I kind of had momentum going into the second set and she was a little down. So, all I tried to do was just keep the pressure on her."

Po, who resides at Rolling Hills, California, said she wasn't serving with full strength throughout the match. "I had shoulder surgery, in November 1997, and the ball here is a little bit heavier than I'm used to. So I have trouble playing her, if I'm trying to serve very hard."

"Also, she has really good returns. So a lot of times the harder I serve the better she's going to return it, and it's actually better if I give her a slower serve or a spinned serve. So I didn't even try to hit like a big server against her," Po added.

Other winners included Taiwan's Janet Lee, who beat American Samantha Reeves 6-2, 6-2. Japan's Yuka Yoshida who ousted Seda Noorlander of the Netherlands 6-4, 6-6 (7-5).

In men's action, 10th seeded Daniel Vacek of the Czech Republic breezed past American Geoff Grant 6-1, 6-1.

"It was my best match so far this year," said Vacek, who has had three straight first-round exits in the Newsweek Championships, the Lipton Championships and the Salem Open.

"I was a semifinalist here last year. So I hope I can do a better job this time," said the world's No 53 player.

Vacek and David Prinosil, seeded 16th, were the only men's seeds in action on opening day. Prinosil beat Martin Damm of the Czech Republic 6-1, 6-3.

Earlier Monday, Becker lost to Agassi in the rain-delayed Salem Open final in Hong Kong.

India see England off



SHARJAH, Apr 12 (Reuters/AP): England's Arabian adventure came to a premature end when they were again sent packing by India, losing their Champions' Cup match by nine runs on Sunday.

England, suffering their third consecutive defeat, are now out of the tournament, making today's match against Pakistan of academic interest. Chasing India's 239 for six, England needed 10 runs off the last seven balls with one wicket left.

But Angus Fraser ran himself out after a mix-up with Darren Gough to hand India their second successive win against the English.

England were off to a poor start, losing four wickets for 65 runs by the 17th over. Nick Knight, however, wrested back the initiative with a scintillating knock of 84 off 93 balls with six fours and four sixes.

With Graham Thorpe he prospered in a fifth-wicket stand of 59 runs off 70 balls. The rest of the top order failed but needing 60 off 60 balls with Thorpe and the experienced Neil Fairbrother together England had a glimmer of hope.

But Fairbrother was out for 16, bowled by man-of-the-match Venkatesh Prasad, easily the pick of the Indian bowlers, and when Thorpe was out, stumped by Nayan Mongia, the pressure was on the late tail.

Gough brought the equation to within reach by smashing a six off Javagal Srinath, but a run-out next ball spell the end. Earlier Ajay Jadeja hit an unbeaten 74 runs off 67 balls with seven crisp boundaries and Robin Singh (18 from 25 balls) and Mongia (11 off 10 balls) ideal partners in raising the scoring rate in the last 14 overs, which produced 90 runs.

Right hander Rahul Dravid hit 63 off 92 balls to steady the Indian innings after the dismissal of opening batsmen Saurav Ganguly and Sadogopan Ramesh with the score at 16.

Fraser, shortening his run up by about five paces, bowled one of his best one-day spells with three maidens in first eight overs, putting pressure on the Indians, forced to leave out their injured skipper Mohammad Azharuddin.

Fraser's first spell of eight overs cost him only 15 runs for one wicket with his 10 overs conceding 24. Gough finished with two for

49 from 10 overs. Jadeja, the stand in Indian captain, however, troubled Gough, spoiling his first spell figures of 24 runs for one wicket with two maidens. India's gamble of promoting Srinath as a pinch hitter, paid off with the all-rounder hitting 28 off 29 balls. Srinath added 59 runs for



PRASAD... m-o-m

the fourth wicket in 10 overs with David.

Dravid was run out by a direct throw from Fairbrother with the score at 149 with the English fielder also making a remarkable one-handed catch to send back Robin Singh for 18 off Gough.

England captain Alec Stewart said: "We played a good game, but still lost. We were at times level with the asking rate, but then you know it's cricket. We even shuffled the batting order which, in the end, made no difference."

Selectors chairman David Graveney said: "We were not up to the task in this tournament but I am still confident we will perform well in the World Cup."

Paceman Prasad, who triggered the England slump picked up three for 35, including two wickets in his last two overs.

Prasad, who bowled at a crucial stage, was awarded the man of the match prize. Leg-spinner Anil Kumble was the other key bowler, snapping up two for 28.

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INDIA table with columns O, M, R, W for various players like Ramesh, Ganguly, David, Kambl, Srinath, Jadeja, R Singh, Mongia, Extras, Total.

ENGLAND table with columns O, M, R, W for various players like Knight, Stewart, Wells, Ealham, Hick, Thorpe, Flintoff, Gough, Fraser, Extras, Total.

Result: India won by nine runs. Man-of-the-match: Venkatesh Prasad.

Navy soccer CHITTAGONG, Apr 12: The annual football championship of Bangladesh Navy began at BNS Issa Khan playground here Sunday, reports UNB.

In the inaugural match, BN Dockyard drew 1-1 with the Petrol Craft Squadron.

In the other matches, BNS Issa Khan outplayed BNS Haji Mohsin 5-0 while BNS Shaheed Moazzem shared points with BNS Titumeer as the match ended 1-1. Frigate Squadron beat Khulna Squadron 6-0.

Earlier, Assistant chief of the Naval Staff Commodore M Shahabuddin inaugurated the five-day meet as chief guest.

Costa claims Estoril Open

OIERAS, Portugal, Apr 12: Fourth-seeded Albert Costa of Spain rallied after losing the second set Sunday to beat No. 2 Todd Martin of the United States and win the Estoril Open, reports AP.

In the women's final, Slovenia's Katarina Srebotnik made a brilliant debut on the WTA Tour, crushing Rita Kuti Kis in just over an hour with a 6-3, 6-1 win.

The 23-year-old Spaniard finally broke loose in the middle of the third set to win 7-6 (7-4), 7-6 (7-4), 2-6, 6-3 and take the 84,000 dollars title, as well as 190 tournament points.

"It was a very difficult match for me," said Costa, who made it to the final here in 1995 but lost to Australia's Thomas Muster.

Costa was the defending champion last year, when the American snatched the title.

Srebotnik earned her opponent's respect in the women's final.

Chasing the home side's modest 269 all out, the Australians subsided to 165 all out in 41.5 overs.

Man of the match Bryan, 28, was something of a surprise selection in the West Indies' initial World Cup squad last month.

But he tore through the Australians much-vaunted middle order to finish with record figures by a West Indian on a one-day debut.

The Australians collapsed in the face of accurate seam bowling from Bryan and Mervyn Dillon and some dazzling West Indian fielding which bore no resemblance to the dispirited display which had led to the 6-1 loss in their previous one-day series against South Africa.

Bryan induced Steve Waugh to drug an expansive off drive back onto his stumps. The Australian captain made just 10 from 32 balls.

And when captain Brian Lara sent the crowd into raptures one ball later with his brilliant run-out of Darren Lehmann, it became obvious this was once again the West Indies day.

Lara's pick-up and direct hit of the bowler's end stumps stopped short Lehmann's busy innings at 24 off 43 balls with three fours.

Bryan returned in his last over to pick up two more wickets and ruin the Australian run chase.

Bryan removed the dangerous No. 6 Michael Bevan for one to a wicket-keeper's catch and, three balls later, accounted for



HOT SHOT HENDY: Debutant West Indies paceman Henry Bryan (C) who ripped through the Australian batting, celebrates on of his four scalps during the first of the seven-match one-day series at St Vincent on April 11.

Bryan's brilliant debut

KINGSTOWN, St Vincent, Apr 12 (Reuters/AP): A record 4-24 debut by West Indian pace bowler Henry Bryan continued the stunning reversal of his team's fortunes and lifted them to a convincing 44-run win over Australia in the first match of the one-day international series Sunday.

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Shane Lee. Lee padded up to a big inswinger and looked back in disbelief as his off stump was hit. Bryan had earlier ended Mark Waugh's stay, bringing one back into the batsman to bowl him for 28 off 41 balls that included three fours. Brendon Julian gave the tourists hope in a career-best 35 off 42 balls. But as the scoring rate mounted, he was bowled by off-spinner Nehemiah Perry trying to hit out.

Keith Arthurton, who took one for 33 from nine tidy overs of left-arm spin, formalized the result with another brilliant run out. The athletic 34-year-old swooped from short fine leg and hit the stumps at the bowler's end with last man Damien Fleming inches short of his crease.

Fast bowler Dillon took two wickets for 45 from 10 overs. Earlier, Campbell's 62 off 105 balls set the foundation of a solid West Indies total on a helpful pitch.

But the home team faltered in the middle order after Campbell and left-hander Jimmy Adams added 76 for the third wicket.

The run out of Adams for 30 sparked a collapse in which the West Indies lost five wickets for 18 runs from 52 balls.

Leg-spinner Shane Warne was the best of the Australian bowlers, taking two for 30 off 10 overs.

Fast bowler Fleming captured three for 41 from 9.1 overs, while medium pacer Lee grabbed two for 44 off 10 overs, including the prize wicket of Lara.

The Australian bowlers conceded 20 wides and six no balls and their poor over rate resulted in them being penalized three overs. It meant their batsmen received only 47 overs to reach their target.

The second match in the series is in Grenada on Wednesday.

SCOREBOARD

WEST INDIES table with columns O, M, R, W for players like Campbell, Handrepaal, Reiffel, B Fleming, Adams, Williams, Reiffel, Arthurton, St Gilchrist, B Warner, Simmons, M Waugh, B Fleming, Bryan, B Warner, Perry, P Fongtj, B Julian, Dillon, Nout, Walsh, B Fleming, Extras, Total.

AUSTRALIA

AUSTRALIA table with columns O, M, R, W for players like M Waugh, B Bryan, Gilchrist, C Adams, B Dillon, Ponting, C Williams, B Dillon, Lehmann, run out, S Waugh, B Bryan, Bevan, C Adams, B Bryan, Lee, B Bryan, Julien, B Perry, Warner, B Arthurton, Reiffel, not out, Fleming, run out, Extras, Total.

West Indies won by 44 runs and lead the seven-match series 1-0.

Man-of-the-match: Henry Bryan.



Russian Anatoly Karpov (L) and Swiss Viktor Korchnoi concentrate during their match in Sevilla on April 11.

Seles ends lean spell

AMELIA ISLAND, Florida, Apr 12: Monica Seles came to Amelia Island for the tuneup she dearly needed. She ended up with a title she didn't expect, reports AP. Seles, the No 2 seed, won her first tournament in seven months Sunday, closing out a dominating run at the Bauscah and Lomb Championships with a 6-2, 6-3 victory over unseeded Ruxandra Dragomir of Romania.

The five games were the most Seles lost in any of her five matches, in which she dropped only a total of 14 games and never was in jeopardy of losing a set. Only Chris Evert has a better run at this tournament, in 1981, when she dropped 12 games.

It was a better-than-expected needed. She ended up with a title she didn't expect, reports AP.

"I ran a little more," she said. "I did that last week too and I lost. Tennis-wise, I haven't hit that much this week. I think it was a good thing for me to take a break from tennis. The last four or five weeks, there had just been so much tennis."

She got her share against Dragomir, who kept her on the court for 1 hour, 17 minutes, on a windy day for the slow, green clay of Amelia Island Plantation.

Dragomir squandered game points in six games she went on to lose. She forced Seles to duce in nine of the 17 games. Over the course of the match, however, she learned that staying on the court with Seles and beating her are very different.

"It hurt because I had some chances," she said. "There were some (4) break points I couldn't win. I lost my serve a few times. She was very good today. Just too good."

Dragomir used an assortment of drop shots, most of which Seles reached without trouble, if they got over the net at all. Dragomir's efforts to run Seles from side to side worked sporadically, but Seles combined her trademark power with the accuracy she seemed to have lost in recent weeks to overcome the challenge.

Despite the loss, Dragomir won 35,000 dollars and moved from 38th to 33rd in the world rankings. She failed in her first attempt to win in the United States, but said she still considered the tournament a success.

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Agassi warms up for Japan

HONG KONG, Apr 12: World No 12 Andre Agassi defeated Boris Becker on Monday in the rain-delayed final of the 350,000 dollars Salem Hong Kong Open but Agassi ended up unsure whether a strained shoulder would keep him out of the richer Japan Open, reports AP.

"If I'm not feeling okay, I'm prepared to miss the tournament," said Agassi, who defeated Becker 6-7 (4-7), 6-4, 6-4 in the championship he had been leading when it was postponed by rain on Sunday.

Both Agassi, from the United States, and Becker, from Germany, are scheduled to play in the 725,000 dollars Japan Open that began Monday in Tokyo.

Agassi's win Monday was his first ATP Tour victory of the year and his first title in Asia.

When rain forced a suspension Sunday night, Agassi was a service break up and leading 2-0 in the decisive third set. He needed just 36 minutes to complete his victory on Monday.

"I really pleased. We both played really well today. The thing about Boris is that you can't let your guard down at any time," said Agassi, seeded third and who entered the tournament on a wild card.

Agassi, who along with actress wife Brooke Shields recently filed for divorce, hardly seemed distracted as he defeated Becker.

"He beat me today. I didn't lose the match. I gave everything I had," Becker said.

But Agassi, who strained his right shoulder on Saturday, pulled out of the doubles he was set to play with David Wheaton of the United States, James Grenhalgh of New Zealand and Grant Silcock of South Africa won by default.

It was the first time Agassi and Becker had met in four years since their four-set struggle in the semifinals of the 1995 US Open when Agassi won 3-1.

Three-time Wimbledon champion Becker, who said he will retire from professional tennis later this year, had been gunning for his 50th career title.

But Agassi proved too strong for him, relying on his trademark return of service to lay the foundation for his 40th career title which also includes a Wimbledon, US Open and Australian Open wins.

Agassi broke Becker in the fifth game and then held his subsequent serve to take a 5-1 lead.

Becker refused to give up. He held his serve in the seventh game and broke Agassi, serving for the match, at 0-40 in the eighth to trail 5-3 and conjure up the possibility of a sensational comeback.

Becker saved two championship points in the ninth before holding his service by relying on his 10th and 11th aces of the morning.

With his long-time rival showing signs of a comeback, Agassi dug deep in the 10th game. He sped to a 40-30 lead but Becker hung on taking the game to duce. The 32-year-old German saved one more championship point, but Agassi converted his fourth match point to win the title.

Counties plan sans big guns

LONDON, Apr 12 (Reuters/Internet): English county cricket will complete this season for a place in the top division of next year's new county championship without the help of their international players for the majority of the season. The last edition of the present championship starts on Tuesday in the shadow of the World Cup to be staged in England from mid-May.

England's leading players, in Sharjah for a triangular one-day tournament, will miss the opening matches of the championship and several others during the Cup and the four-Test series against New Zealand which follows.

This season, however, the first aim of each of the 18 clubs will be to finish in the upper half of the table in order to secure a place in the new top division.

For more than 100 years, the championship has been played as a single league, but from the year 2000, it will be split into two, with promotion and relegation operating.

The reform, proposed two years ago, was initially rejected, but then accepted last December despite fears that some smaller clubs could become permanently stuck in the lower division or even go bankrupt.

The England and Wales Cricket Board believe that standards will eventually be raised at all levels by having two more competitive divisions.

A preview of the new system will be seen in the one-day National League, which has replaced the Sunday League, Surrey and Middlesex, traditionally two of the biggest clubs in the country, will be in the lower division after poor performances in the 40-over competition last year.

As part of the plan to attract a younger audience to the sport, National League teams will all have nicknames, among them Lancashire Lightning and Gloucestershire Gladiators, and 20 of the matches will be day/night games under floodlights.

One other limited-overs competition, the 50 overs Benson and Hedges Cup, has been abolished after 26 years and replaced by an eight-team Super Cup. But the principal knockout cup, the NatWest Trophy, remains, expanded from 32 teams to 42 and now including Denmark as well as the Netherlands, Ireland, Scotland and Wales.

The ECB are calling it "a new era", but critics have pointed out that the World Cup will generate much smaller profits than anticipated, while a financial wrangle is going on between the Board and the six clubs who stage Test matches.

Two of those grounds, Headingley in Leeds and Trent Bridge in Nottingham, are particularly aggrieved at missing out on a test in 1999, the year that marks the centenary of Tests at both venues.

Securing the one overseas player allowed for each club has

BB sports

The 14th Bangladesh Bank inter-office sports competition began at Khulna Stadium yesterday, reports UNB.

Bangladesh Bank's Khulna office general manager, Mahfuzur Rashid, inaugurated the five-day meet that kicked off with a volleyball competition.

Khulna University Pro Vice-Chancellor Dr SM Nazrul Islam will inaugurate the final competition at 8:30 am on Friday while the central bank's executive director Ziaul Hasan Siddique will distribute prizes in the afternoon.

More than 500 athletes from Dhaka, Chittagong, Rajshahi, Bogra, Sylhet, Barisal and Rangpur are taking part.



Andre Agassi (L) and Boris Becker pose with their trophies after the final of the Hong Kong Open yesterday. Agassi won the rain-affected final 6-7, 6-4, 6-4.

Gold Flake Black's

MADRAS, Apr 12: Byron Black of Zimbabwe won his second ATP Tour singles title when he beat Rainer Schuttler of Germany 6-4, 1-6, 6-3 in a sweltering Gold Flake Open final on Sunday, reports Reuters.