

Singapore students take Beckham course

SINGAPORE, Mar 31: Singapore university students and other Asians have rushed to sign up for a British university's classes on football star David Beckham and his effect on modern culture, the Straits Times said Friday.

The classes to be launched in September as part of various degree courses at Staffordshire University will examine why Beckham is a sporting icon in Britain and overseas, and his influence on the youth of today, the report said.

"We have over 30 students from Singapore and many more from countries like China, Malaysia, Japan and Hong Kong. They have shown great interest in our classes which will focus on David Beckham," university spokesman Martin Farrow told the paper, adding that the classes were nearly full.

Culture, media and sport professor Ellis Cashmere, who will conduct the classes said Beckham "warrants legitimate academic debate as he is a cultural enigma."

Philippoussis may miss Davis Cup tie

SYDNEY, Mar 31: Mark Philippoussis is in doubt for Australia's Davis Cup tie against German next week because of a leg injury, reports Reuters.

The 1998 US Open finalist flew into Australia today to receive treatment on his injured left calf muscle.

Australia's non-playing Davis Cup captain John Newcombe said Philippoussis will need further treatment and a final decision on whether he will play against Germany will be made next week.

"We've just got to wait and see how it responds to treatment this weekend and we'll go from there," Newcombe said.

Wayne Arthurs has been placed on standby in case Philippoussis is forced to withdraw.

Australia face Germany in Adelaide from April 7-9 with the winner advancing to the World Group semifinals against either Brazil or Slovakia.

Glasgow won't host Tyson bout

GLASGOW, Mar 31: Glasgow has been ruled out as a possible venue for a Mike Tyson fight this summer, reports AP.

British promoter Frank Warren visited Ibrox, home of Glasgow Rangers soccer club, to check out the facilities at the 50,000-seat stadium.

But the sides failed to agree on a date for the proposed fight, scheduled for sometime in July. Rangers secretary Campbell Ogilvie said the club's soccer commitments meant the plans had to be scrapped.

Promoters looked around the stadium last week but the date they came up with was a non-starter for us," he said Thursday. "They have been back on today with other dates but they did not work out either."

For us the Scottish Premier League starts on July 29 and there could be a European tie before that and even a friendly at the ground before that, so the window is a very small one. We did not get to discussing the nitty-gritty of staging the fight because the issue of the date was always a problem and in the end we could not resolve it."

On January 29, Tyson knocked out Britain's Julius Francis at the MGR Arena in Manchester. Tyson returns to Europe next month to fight Lou Savasse in Milan on May 20.

Russian boxer killed in USA

NEW YORK, Mar 29: A former member of the Soviet national boxing team who came to the United States and boxed professionally was kidnapped and murdered by two Russian mobsters before he was buried behind a New Jersey home, US federal prosecutors announced Tuesday, reports AP.

The disclosure came as US Attorney Mary Jo White unveiled an indictment returned late Monday against Alexander Novos and Natan Gozman.

Both are charged with racketeering for the kidnapping and murder of Sergei Kobozev, 31, who immigrated in 1991 and lived in Brooklyn.

The indictment said they kidnapped and murdered Kobozev to boost their positions in a branch of Russian organized crime known as "Tatarin's Brigade" or the "Bratva," meaning the "brotherhood" or "good fellows."

According to the indictment, Kobozev was shot during a confrontation with Novos and Gozman and others in an automobile repair shop near his home in the Sheepshead Bay section of Brooklyn on Nov 8, 1995.

The pair took Kobozev, still alive, from New York to New Jersey before a co-conspirator broke his neck, prosecutors alleged. The defendants and others then allegedly buried him in the yard of a high-ranking member of Russian organized crime.

Kobozev had been a captain in the Russian army and was a chemical engineer in St Petersburg before he made his name as a cruiserweight on the Soviet national boxing team and later with 16 knockouts in a professional career.

Foes face fitness battles



KINGSTON, Mar 31: West Indies and Zimbabwe are pre-occupied with a few fitness worries prior to the opening matches in the Caribbean's first triangular limited-overs series to be contested at Sabina Park on Saturday and Sunday here, reports AFP.



West Indies left-hand batsman Shivnarine Chanderpaul and fast bowler Reon King, along with Zimbabwe vice-captain Heath Streak are all under observation by their team officials for one complaint or another.

"The medical condition with Chanderpaul has not yet been determined, but he complained of fatigue after play on Monday," Ricky Skerritt, the West Indies manager, said.

"A decision will be made on him either later (on Thursday) or tomorrow (Friday), but he is not attending the teams training, is definitely not 100 per cent fit and is very doubtful for the weekend."

Chanderpaul is to see an internal medicine specialist on Thursday and until his status is certain, fellow left-hander Adrian Griffith, who had been omitted from the limited-overs squad, has been asked to remain in Jamaica.

Skerritt was almost certain King would play in the back-to-back matches. "Reon has been essentially declared fit and is training with the team right now," he asserted.

Andy Flower, the Zimbabwe captain, expressed similar con-

cern about Streak, whose only contribution in the second Test was a brief knock of two in the first innings before he pulled out with back spasms.

"He has had a long rest and his spasms have eased," Flower remarked. "There is a very strong possibility that he will be ready for Saturday." Though the 2-0 series result for West Indies suggests they completely outplayed Zimbabwe, this was far from the truth.

It was very competitive and experience was the only thing standing between the two sides. Both Flower and West Indies captain Jimmy Adams are expecting two keenly-contested matches over the weekend to open the series which also involves the unpredictable Pakistanis.

Zimbabwe, who have never beaten West Indies in an international match, will be hoping to rebound from the Test series defeat in the form of the game which they have gained some measure of success.

"Last time I looked at our statistics, we had won about 26 per cent of our matches which is not a great record," noted Flower.

"As a young cricket nation, I think it's a good and we have had some really good wins in the past. We have never won a limited-overs competition against the major nations and we will obviously love to do that at some stage."

Zimbabwe reached the Super Sixes stage of last year's World Cup in England and only once have they reached the final of an international limited-overs competition involving the major nations.

"We have set ourselves the goal of reaching the final of this competition and hopefully go on to win it," Flower said. "It will be very important for our country and our cricket if we do it."

Gary Brent, Guy Whittall and Dirk Viljoen have replaced Bryan Strang, Mpuemelelo Mbangwa and Trevor Gripper in Zimbabwe's 16-member limited-overs squad.

Whittall and Viljoen practised at Sabina Park on Thursday, but Whittall, who was only passed fit a few days ago after recovering from a knee operation, will fly into Kingston late on Thursday.

On the basis of their Test series win, along with their proud record against Zimbabwe and at home, West Indies will start favourites in the series. Adams will not be expecting complacency from his side though.

"We have a triangular series with three international teams desperate for wins and that is a

recipe for some very good, exciting cricket, so there will be no easing up on our part," he commented.

Adams wants to see his side become more consistent in the limited-overs game after a few lukewarm performances in recent times.

"We can put it all under the same umbrella as we did with the longer version of the game. We need to become more consistent in this form of the game because there is too much at stake as we found out in the World Cup last year. So we need to step up and improve in a lot of areas."



ANDY FLOWER

West Indies made four additions to their squad to boost the number to 16. They omitted Courtney Walsh, the leading bowler in Tests, from the squad chosen for the Test series, and have recalled Philo Wallace, Laurie Williams, Mervyn Dillon and Nixon McLean.

Good conditions are expected to greet the two teams and tickets for both matches this weekend are almost sold out.

TEAMS

WEST INDIES (from): Jimmy Adams (captain), Sherwin Campbell (vice-captain), Philo Wallace, Adrian Griffith, Chris Gayle, Shivnarine Chanderpaul, Wavel Hinds, Ricardo Powell, Ridley Jacobs, Curly Ambrose, Laurie Williams, Nehemiah Perry, Franklin Rose, Nixon McLean, Mervyn Dillon, Reon King. ZIMBABWE (from): Andy Flower (captain), Heath Streak (vice-captain), Alistair Campbell, Murray Goodwin, Dirk Viljoen, Henry Olunga, Neil Johnson, Grant Flower, Stuart Carlisle, Mluleki Nkala, Brian Murphy, Andy Blythe, Craig Wishart, Guy Whittall, Gary Brent, Latenda Taibu.

Millennium Masters cricket

CHITTAGONG, Mar 31: Continental Group beat Chittagong Club by five wickets in the opening match of the Millennium Masters Cricket Tournament at the Dampara Police Line ground here today, reports BSS.

Chittagong Club batted first and scored 184 for eight in the stipulated 30 overs. Dr Alok and Sultan Abedin scored 50 and 43 respectively. Selim, Aslam and Solaiman claimed two wickets each for Continental.

In reply, Continental reached their target for the loss of five wickets in 26.1 overs. Shahid hit an unbeaten 73 while Selim made 64.

Shahid was adjudged man of the match. Six teams with over-35-year-old are participating in the tournament sponsored by the Continental Group.

The teams are - Continental Group, Chittagong Club, Shahid Shajahan Sangha, Rising Star, Friends Club and Ispahani Sports Club.

Kournikova let off

MIAMI, Mar 31: Tennis star Anna Kournikova and her mother won't be charged for their part in a dispute on a recent airline flight, the US Federal Bureau of Investigation said Thursday, reports AP.

The incident occurred March 19 while Kournikova and her mother were on an American Airlines flight to Miami. The crew told police that Kournikova refused to put her miniature Doberman pinscher in its carrying case, as Federal Aviation Administration rules require, and the pilot had to intervene.

"Police sent a report of the incident to the FBI, which determined that no further investigation was necessary, an FBI spokesman said.

"His words stood out more than anything else for me and I just want to wish him the best."

Walsh did not expect to see so many people coming out onto the streets to congratulate him.

"To be quite honest, my achievement did not really sink in on Monday," he remarked.

"It only began to sink in (on Tuesday) after the victory for the team and I want to thank all

of the fans who have come out to support me.

"What is fitting about me achieving the record is the number 11 batsman who got out is a dread" as well.

"It is only fitting that Henry Olunga became the 435th, but what made me speechless was the support I was given at Sabina Park from Friday until Monday was second to none."

"I do not think (West Indies captain) Jimmy Adams had any other choice, but to give me the ball to bowl at the time he did because of the way the crowd was calling for me. I thank God and I thank my mum!"

Even from the lips of small children and infants were praises being offered to Walsh for reaching the milestone on Monday evening in the second Test against Zimbabwe.

He revealed the comments of a nine-year-old boy on the route, who told him he wanted to be a great cricketer like him, was the most touching part of the event.

"It was heart-warming to hear the youngster say something like that to me," Walsh said.

"His words stood out more than anything else for me and I just want to wish him the best."

Walsh did not expect to see so many people coming out onto the streets to congratulate him.

"To be quite honest, my achievement did not really sink in on Monday," he remarked.

"It only began to sink in (on Tuesday) after the victory for the team and I want to thank all

of the fans who have come out to support me.

"What is fitting about me achieving the record is the number 11 batsman who got out is a dread" as well.

"It is only fitting that Henry Olunga became the 435th, but what made me speechless was the support I was given at Sabina Park from Friday until Monday was second to none."

"I do not think (West Indies captain) Jimmy Adams had any other choice, but to give me the ball to bowl at the time he did because of the way the crowd was calling for me. I thank God and I thank my mum!"

Even from the lips of small children and infants were praises being offered to Walsh for reaching the milestone on Monday evening in the second Test against Zimbabwe.

He revealed the comments of a nine-year-old boy on the route, who told him he wanted to be a great cricketer like him, was the most touching part of the event.

"It was heart-warming to hear the youngster say something like that to me," Walsh said.

"His words stood out more than anything else for me and I just want to wish him the best."

Kingston hails the king



KINGSTON, Mar 30 (AFP): Scores of excited Jamaicans lined the streets to honour West Indies' new wicket king as

Courtney Walsh rode through Kingston in a motorcade here on Wednesday.

The crowds that braved the midday heat to follow the motorcade all the way from Sabina Park, where he claimed his 435th wicket, to his alma mater Excelsior High, where the ground there is named in his honour, to his Melbourne Club shouted his name: "Courtney! Courtney! Courtney!"

Flags, T-shirts, caps and posters, all with Walsh's image emblazoned across them, were the order of the day in this show of emotion for a man who was described time and again as humble, hardworking, dedicated and committed.

Even from the lips of small children and infants were praises being offered to Walsh for reaching the milestone on Monday evening in the second Test against Zimbabwe.

He revealed the comments of a nine-year-old boy on the route, who told him he wanted to be a great cricketer like him, was the most touching part of the event.

"It was heart-warming to hear the youngster say something like that to me," Walsh said.

"His words stood out more than anything else for me and I just want to wish him the best."

Walsh did not expect to see so many people coming out onto the streets to congratulate him.

"To be quite honest, my achievement did not really sink in on Monday," he remarked.

"It only began to sink in (on Tuesday) after the victory for the team and I want to thank all

of the fans who have come out to support me.

"What is fitting about me achieving the record is the number 11 batsman who got out is a dread" as well.

"It is only fitting that Henry Olunga became the 435th, but what made me speechless was the support I was given at Sabina Park from Friday until Monday was second to none."

"I do not think (West Indies captain) Jimmy Adams had any other choice, but to give me the ball to bowl at the time he did because of the way the crowd was calling for me. I thank God and I thank my mum!"

Even from the lips of small children and infants were praises being offered to Walsh for reaching the milestone on Monday evening in the second Test against Zimbabwe.

He revealed the comments of a nine-year-old boy on the route, who told him he wanted to be a great cricketer like him, was the most touching part of the event.

"It was heart-warming to hear the youngster say something like that to me," Walsh said.

"His words stood out more than anything else for me and I just want to wish him the best."

Walsh did not expect to see so many people coming out onto the streets to congratulate him.

"To be quite honest, my achievement did not really sink in on Monday," he remarked.

"It only began to sink in (on Tuesday) after the victory for the team and I want to thank all

of the fans who have come out to support me.

"What is fitting about me achieving the record is the number 11 batsman who got out is a dread" as well.

"It is only fitting that Henry Olunga became the 435th, but what made me speechless was the support I was given at Sabina Park from Friday until Monday was second to none."

"I do not think (West Indies captain) Jimmy Adams had any other choice, but to give me the ball to bowl at the time he did because of the way the crowd was calling for me. I thank God and I thank my mum!"

Even from the lips of small children and infants were praises being offered to Walsh for reaching the milestone on Monday evening in the second Test against Zimbabwe.

He revealed the comments of a nine-year-old boy on the route, who told him he wanted to be a great cricketer like him, was the most touching part of the event.

"It was heart-warming to hear the youngster say something like that to me," Walsh said.

"His words stood out more than anything else for me and I just want to wish him the best."

Walsh did not expect to see so many people coming out onto the streets to congratulate him.

"To be quite honest, my achievement did not really sink in on Monday," he remarked.

of the fans who have come out to support me.

"What is fitting about me achieving the record is the number 11 batsman who got out is a dread" as well.

"It is only fitting that Henry Olunga became the 435th, but what made me speechless was the support I was given at Sabina Park from Friday until Monday was second to none."

"I do not think (West Indies captain) Jimmy Adams had any other choice, but to give me the ball to bowl at the time he did because of the way the crowd was calling for me. I thank God and I thank my mum!"

Even from the lips of small children and infants were praises being offered to Walsh for reaching the milestone on Monday evening in the second Test against Zimbabwe.

He revealed the comments of a nine-year-old boy on the route, who told him he wanted to be a great cricketer like him, was the most touching part of the event.

"It was heart-warming to hear the youngster say something like that to me," Walsh said.

"His words stood out more than anything else for me and I just want to wish him the best."

Walsh did not expect to see so many people coming out onto the streets to congratulate him.

"To be quite honest, my achievement did not really sink in on Monday," he remarked.

"It only began to sink in (on Tuesday) after the victory for the team and I want to thank all

of the fans who have come out to support me.

"What is fitting about me achieving the record is the number 11 batsman who got out is a dread" as well.

"It is only fitting that Henry Olunga became the 435th, but what made me speechless was the support I was given at Sabina Park from Friday until Monday was second to none."

"I do not think (West Indies captain) Jimmy Adams had any other choice, but to give me the ball to bowl at the time he did because of the way the crowd was calling for me. I thank God and I thank my mum!"

Even from the lips of small children and infants were praises being offered to Walsh for reaching the milestone on Monday evening in the second Test against Zimbabwe.

He revealed the comments of a nine-year-old boy on the route, who told him he wanted to be a great cricketer like him, was the most touching part of the event.

"It was heart-warming to hear the youngster say something like that to me," Walsh said.

"His words stood out more than anything else for me and I just want to wish him the best."

Walsh did not expect to see so many people coming out onto the streets to congratulate him.

"To be quite honest, my achievement did not really sink in on Monday," he remarked.

"It only began to sink in (on Tuesday) after the victory for the team and I want to thank all

of the fans who have come out to support me.

"What is fitting about me achieving the record is the number 11 batsman who got out is a dread" as well.

"It is only fitting that Henry Olunga became the 435th, but what made me speechless was the support I was given at Sabina Park from Friday until Monday was second to none."

"I do not think (West Indies captain) Jimmy Adams had any other choice, but to give me the ball to bowl at the time he did because of the way the crowd was calling for me. I thank God and I thank my mum!"

Even from the lips of small children and infants were praises being offered to Walsh for reaching the milestone on Monday evening in the second Test against Zimbabwe.

He revealed the comments of a nine-year-old boy on the route, who told him he wanted to be a great cricketer like him, was the most touching part of the event.

"It was heart-warming to hear the youngster say something like that to me," Walsh said.

"His words stood out more than anything else for me and I just want to wish him the best."

Walsh did not expect to see so many people coming out onto the streets to congratulate him.

"To be quite honest, my achievement did not really sink in on Monday," he remarked.

Sabina Park when he did. I am so happy for him."

Ordelmo Peters, a member of the West Indies B-Team along with Walsh to tour Zimbabwe 17 years ago, noted it was always the bowler's ambition to break the world record for most wickets.

"I can remember him telling me so from as far back as 1985, soon after he made the West Indies team," Peters disclosed.

"He's the kind of person that when he sets himself a goal, he goes all out to achieve it."

Tony Becca, the long-standing Senior Sports Editor at the Jamaica Gleaner newspaper and president of the Melbourne Club, has chronicled many of Walsh's finest moments in the game over the last 16 years.

He recalled the first time he saw the young Walsh bowling last.

"I remember him being a lanky leg-spin bowler. Suddenly, one evening, I saw him come in the nets and started to bowl fast and I was startled."

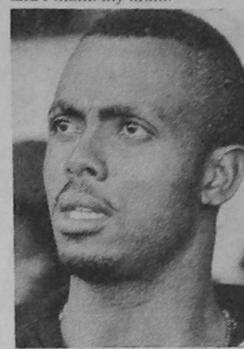
For many who attended the Test match, their memory of Walsh galloping in from the northern end to Olunga and Wavel Hinds taking the catch will live for a very, very long time.

Dub artiste Zam Jay's song, simply entitled Courtney, for which Walsh seems to have taken a liking and which belted out consistently throughout the memorable Test match will also stand out.

The dancehall reggae artist was also in the motorcade and several times his lyrics pumped from the music machine.

"Who's de big man inna cricket, Courtney! Who uh lick down man wicket, Courtney! Who gi we uha' we want for I would be back to see him to do it," she remarked.

"He did break it and I was at



COURTNEY WALSH

Jamaica-born actress, Sheryl Lee Ralph was also part of the motorcade for Walsh.

A close friend of the 37-year-old fast bowler, she was looking forward to seeing him break the record.

"Since last year I said on television in Jamaica, he would break the record and that I would be back to see him to do it," she remarked.

"He did break it and I was at

Hingis smashes Seles



KEY BISCAYNE, Florida, Mar 31 (AP): Martina Hingis had no mercy. The crowd had no compassion. Monica Seles had no chance.

Seles, playing on a sore ankle, endured the worst beating of her career Thursday, losing to the top-seeded Hingis 6-0, 6-0 in the semifinals of the Ericsson Open.

Seles ended the so-called double-bagel with double-faults on the final two points. The nine-time Grand Slam champion has long been a favorite, but the crowd boo as she left the court.

Hingis's opponent in the final Saturday will be second-seeded Lindsay Davenport, who reclaimed the No. 1 ranking by edging 12th-seeded Sandrine Testud 6-1, 6-7, 7-6. Davenport overcame a 2-0 deficit in the final set and improved to 35-1 since September.

Hingis has lost five matches in a row to Davenport, including two finals this year. Regardless of the outcome Saturday, Davenport will replace Hingis atop the rankings next week.

Seles' loss was her worst in 534 matches, and it raised the question of whether she still

has passion for the game.

"Today, after a match like this?" said Seles, 26. "It's tough."

Hingis, aware that Seles wasn't moving well, mixed her shots masterfully and committed only five unforced errors in the 39-minute rout.

"I didn't let her into the match," Hingis said. "I played very well, very smart. I'm pleased with having a win like this going into the final."

Second-seeded Pete Sampras advanced to the men's semifinals by beating No. 9 Nicolas Pietrangeli 6-4, 7-6. Sampras' next opponent will be No. 14 Lleyton Hewitt, who withstood 20 aces by unseeded Jan-Michael Gambill to win 6-4, 7-6.

Top-seeded Andre Agassi plays No. 6 Gustavo Kuerten in the other semifinal Friday.

Sampras faces a tough challenge against Hewitt, a 19-year-old Australian who is the hottest player on the ATP Tour at 25-2 this year.

"He's got a game that's going to be around for many, many years," Sampras said. "I'm not going to win O and O, like we saw today."

Seles, seeded seventh, lost for only the third time in 17 matches since she returned at

ter being sidelined five months with a stress fracture in her right foot. She easily won her first four matches in the tournament but said she was hobbled against Hingis by a previously undisclosed sore ankle.

Seles said she took chances on some shots because of her poor mobility.

"