

Rajshahi cricket

From Our Correspondent

RAJSHAHI, Apr 10: Juba Cricket School 'B' and Juba Cricket School 'A' won their respective matches in the Hasan Imam-All Imam Pintu Memorial Cricket tournament played at Rajshahi Govt College playground today.

In the first match of the day, Juba Cricket School 'B' defeated Friends Sporting Club by two wickets.

The losers won the toss and batted first to score 141 for eight wickets in the stipulated 25 overs.

Zaki made the highest 34 followed by 22 from Rahim. Sadagar captured three wickets for 15 runs.

In reply, the winners collected 145 runs for eight in the stipulated 25 overs.

Lord made the highest 40 runs followed by 22 from Rajib. Rahim bagged three wickets for 17. Biddjut and Manirul captured two wickets each.

In the second match of the day at the same venue, Juba Cricket School 'A' defeated Memory Club by 101 runs.

Winning the toss, the winners made 192 for four wickets in the stipulated 25 overs. Golan scored the highest 58 followed by 27 each from Happy and Ilias. Mithu bagged two wickets for 12.

In reply, Memory were all out for 91 in 24.1 overs.

Mithu made the highest 14. Golan captured four wickets for 12 and Faisal three for five.

Aussies won't comment

DURBAN, South Africa, April 10: World Cup champions Australia arrived in South Africa Sunday and immediately made it clear they would not get involved in the match-fixing controversy surrounding South African captain Hansie Cronje, reports AFP.

"There has been intense media interest regarding the issue of match-fixing but it would be improper for any member of the Australian management or the players to comment," said manager Steve Bernard at a press conference in Durban Sunday.

Australia will play three limited overs internationals against South Africa starting in Durban Wednesday.

But Australian captain Steve Waugh paid a glowing tribute to Cronje as a player and captain.

"I really enjoy playing against him. He certainly seems to bring the best out of my cricket. We've had some good battles and I reckon were about 50-50. We've got good respect for each other and were good friends."

In an indirect reference to the match-fixing controversy, Waugh said: "I always enjoy playing against someone who gives 100 per cent and he's always there trying."

Australia have had a phenomenal run of success since winning the World Cup after two titanic battles against South Africa, winning a round robin game with two balls to spare then pulling off a dramatic tie in the semifinal which enabled them to reach the final on net run rate.

Waugh said although Australia had played outstanding cricket during the past season, winning ten consecutive Tests and setting a world record with 13 successive one-day wins, he expected the three-match challenge series in South Africa to provide exciting cricket.

"South Africa are the ultimate test for us," said Waugh. "They've had a great record over the past three or four years and they probably reckon they're number one. We also reckon we're number one and this could sort it out once and for all."

Newcombe's prognosis

ADELAIDE, Australia, Apr 10: Davis Cup captain John Newcombe believes any one of three Australian tennis players could win Wimbledon this year, reports AFP.

Newcombe tipped Pat Rafter, Mark Philippoussis and Lleyton Hewitt as contenders for the grass court title.

But he was quick to point out Americans Pete Sampras and Andre Agassi were clear favourites for the crown.

"I think Rafter, Philippoussis and Hewitt have all got a shot at it," Newcombe said Monday after Australia's 3-2 victory over Germany in the Davis Cup last weekend set up a semi-final with Brazil in Brisbane in July.

"I wouldn't put either one of them as a favourite because Sampras and Agassi would be the two favourites," he added.

Marauding

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Chasing Wari's 148 in 35 overs, Government Laboratory High School reached 150 for three in 23.5 overs.

Our Rajshahi Correspondent adds: Rajshahi Collegiate School moved into the final of Rajshahi regional leg played at Rajshahi District Stadium yesterday.

Rajshahi Collegiate defeated Rajshahi University School by 51 runs.

Winning the toss, the winners made 185 for seven wickets in the stipulated 25 overs. Tomal made the highest 51 followed by 48 from Delwar and 31 from Rithu.

In reply, the losers were all out for 134 in 23.4 overs. Pias made the highest 22 followed by 19 from Delu.

Pakistan's perfect riposte

ST. JOHNS, Apr 10: Pakistan cricketers gave the West Indies Select XI a taste of their own medicine to post a 14-run win in the second of two limited-overs practice matches at the Antigua Recreation Ground here on Sunday, reports AFP.

Having suffered a dramatic batting collapse in the first match on Saturday, Pakistan returned the favour to the West Indians and dismissed them for 169 in 40.3 overs, who were replying to a modest total of 183 for nine in 50 overs.

The Select XI lost three quick wickets for as many runs as they declined rapidly from 135 for four to 137 for seven within two overs after Ramnaresh Sarwan, who top-scored with 47, and Runako Morton appeared to have batted their team into a winning position in a stand of 70 for the fifth wicket.

They had taken the score from a shaky 65 for four to 135, but when Morton was adjudged lbw for 29 off Mohammad Akram, who finished with four for 28 off nine overs, with the first ball of his second spell, the innings took a nose-dive.

Choosing to bat earlier, Pakistan were pegged back by the Select XI's pace and spin attack led by fast bowler Nixon McLean, who triggered Saturday's collapse with five for 26.

He captured two for 40 and medium-paced bowler Willden Cornwall two for 47 as Mohammad Wasim with 50 off 98 balls led Pakistan's batting which was boosted by a stand of 53 with Yousef Youhana. Shoaib Malik also hit an unbeaten 22 off 21 balls to give the total some substance.

Pakistan had one casualty in the match. Second-string keeper Atiq-Uz-Zaman when he strained ligaments in his hip after landing when taking a catch to dismiss Select XI opening batsman Willden Cornwall.

Atiq was taken off the field in a car and driven to hospital by an ambulance after receiving treatment on and off the field.

Scoreboard in the second limited overs cricket match between a West Indies Select XI and Pakistan here at the Antigua Recreation Ground on Sunday:

Table with columns: Pakistan, Imran Nazir run out 9, Wasti c Powell b Dillon 6, Qureshi c Murray b McLean 10, Younis Khan run out 12, M Wasim c Sarwan b Cornwall 50, Youhana c Griffith b McLean 29, Atiq-Uz-Zaman c Griffith b Cornwall 16, S Malik not out 22, Arshad Khan b Cuffy 11, Fazil run out (Sarwan) 0, M Akram not out 0, Extras: (b-1, lb-8, w-6, nb-3) 18, Total: (For 9 wks in 50 overs) 183

WEST INDIES SELECT XI: Cornwall c Atiq-Uz-Zaman b Mohammed Akram 22, Griffith c Youhana b Mohammed Akram 6, Joseph lbw 1, Powell c Wasti b Arshad Khan 13, Sarwan c Younis Khan b Imran Nazir 47, Morton lbw 25, Murray c Imran Nazir b Shoaib Malik 0, Perry st Mohammad Wasim b Shoaib Malik 0, McLean c Imran Nazir b Shoaib Malik 7, Dillon b Younis Khan 4, Cuffy not out 4, Extras: (b-4, lb-4, w-14, nb-16) 38, Total: (All out in 40.3 overs) 169

Fall of Wickets: 1-21; 2-34; 3-39; 4-65; 5-135; 6-136; 7-137; 8-150; 9-154.

Result: Pakistan beat West Indies Select XI by 14 runs. Toss: Pakistan. Umpires: C Mack, J Stevens

Delhi rejects SA claim

NEW DELHI, April 10: India on Sunday denied South African authorities were kept in the dark about match-fixing allegations against their cricketers before New Delhi police made the charges public, reports AFP.

"It is not correct. We have kept them informed," Foreign Secretary Lalit Mansingh told reporters.

Mansingh, however, declined to say why India had rejected the South African government's request for a copy of the tapes to prove the allegations about the diplomatic row surrounding them.

Manohar Joshi, federal minister for Heavy Industries and vice president of the Board of Control for Cricket in India, defended the action of New Delhi police in bugging players' cell telephones and rooms during their tour of India.

"When there is an offence, the police have every right to tap the phones," Joshi was quoted by the United News of India.

India as saying in the eastern city of Calcutta. "There must be some offence, and that is why Delhi police had tapped the telephones of South African cricketers," New Delhi police on Friday said charges of a criminal conspiracy had been registered against South African skipper Hansie Cronje and his teammates Herschelle Gibbs, Nicky Boje and Pieter Strydom for alleged match-fixing during last month's one-day series here.

Similar charges have been filed against two Indians - New Delhi businessman Rajesh Kalra and Sanjiv Chawla, a London-based expatriate.

Deputy Foreign Minister Aziz Pahad told the Johannesburg Sunday Times that South Africa's High Commissioner to India had listened to excerpts from the tapes and was convinced the accents were not South African.

But Deputy Commissioner of New Delhi Police, Pradeep Srivastava, said his department had not released the audio tapes to anyone.

"We have only released the transcript of the taped conversation and not the tapes, which have been sealed," said. "Television channels had simulated the conversation on the basis of the transcript provided to them," he said.

The police charges relate to the five one-day international series South Africa played here between March 9 and 19. India won the series 3-2 after a string of test losses.

Police said they had recordings of a telephone conversation between Cronje and bookie Sanjiv Chawla that backed up their allegations.

"A first information report naming the South African skipper and some other players has been lodged with a police station and this is a very serious matter," Joshi told reporters.

"Delhi police know that they will have to face the consequences if they failed to prove the charges."

He added: "It is unfortunate. But if you commit a crime you must suffer."

Brazil, Spain in semis

RIO DE JANEIRO, Apr 10: Brazil won the battle for a semifinal berth in the Davis Cup World Group here Sunday when Fernando Meligeni overcame Slovak opponent Karol Kucera in four sets, reports AFP.

The 28-year-old Brazilian took over three hours to win the tightly fought battle 5-7, 7-6, 6-2, 6-4 and secure their country's second ever semifinal berth on front of an enthusiastic home crowd.

Brazil will now play defending champions Australia in the semifinals in Adelaide in July.

Earlier Dominik Hrbaty had kept Slovakia's Davis Cup hopes alive when he beat Brazilian number one Gustavo Kuerten in three sets to level quarterfinal tie at 2-2.

The 22-year-old Hrbaty played some of the best tennis of his career to defeat his 23-year-old Brazilian adversary 7-5, 6-4, 7-6 in 2hr 50 min.

Kuerten, who had the backing of the noisy and partisan home crowd, had little answer to Hrbaty who was better prepared and dominated with aggressive play, full of well placed shots.

"I came here to win," said Hrbaty. "I love playing in front of a crowd, proving I am the best."

In addition Hrbaty took better advantage of his first service, with less errors than the adversary, who had difficulty placing his first serve.

Brazil had clawed back a crucial 2-1 lead on Saturday when Kuerten and Jaime Oncus defeated Kucera and Hrbaty 6-3, 2-6, 6-2, 6-3 in their doubles clash.

Kuerten defeated Kucera 2-6, 6-3, 4-6, 7-5, 6-1 in Friday's opening singles games, after Hrbaty had earlier given Slovakia the lead when he won his match 6-1, 7-5, 6-2 against Meligeni.

At Malaga in Spain, Albert Costa easily brushed aside world number two Yevgeny Kafelnikov with a straight sets hammering putting the hosts through to the World Group semifinals.

The Spaniard allowed the Russian just three games in the one sided encounter winning 6-0, 6-3, 6-0 to give Spain an unbeatable 3-1 lead and put them into the next round against the USA in July.

The former French Open champion Kafelnikov never got into his stride on the clay courts of Malaga and had also lost his opening singles against 20-year-old Spanish rookie Juan Carlos Ferrero 6-2, 6-2, 6-2 on Friday.

Sunday's match was made even more difficult for the Russian as the claycourts of southern Spain were even slower following persistent overnight rain which delayed the encounter for five hours.

The 26-year-old Russian committed numerous errors and never worried the 24-year-old Spaniard, who rushed to win the first set in just 26 minutes and finishing off the Russian number one in just over an hour.

Costa had been drafted in to face Kafelnikov in place of Spanish number one Alex Corretja, who had lost his previous five encounters against the Russian, as he was suffering from a slightly injured shoulder.

Corretja, who had started off Spain's successful weekend with a 6-4, 6-3, 5-7, 6-1 victory over Marat Safin on Friday, lost Saturday's doubles with Juan Balcells against Kafelnikov and Safin 7-6, 2-6, 7-6, 6-4.

Iran blank Bahrain

TEHRAN, Apr 10: Three-time Asian Cup champions Iran overcame Bahrain 3-0 Sunday with spectacular second-half goals in the second leg of Asian Cup Group 2 qualifiers, reports AP.

In another Group 2 match, Syria beat Maldives 2-1, a respectable result for the weak Indian Ocean Island team thanks to spectacular saves from their goalkeeper, Omran Mohammad.

Despite dominating the first half, Iran's failure to produce any goals disappointed about 40,000 fans who turned up at Tehran's Azadi Stadium braving a heavy downpour.

Iran's first goal came in the 61st minute with Hamburg midfielder Mahdi Mahdavi crossing a ball from right and Mahmoud Fekri's header finding the net.

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After missing several chances, All Dael, who was named Asian Player of the Year on Thursday, closed the scoring with a long header in the 81st minute.

An ecstatic Fernando Meligeni of Brazil responds to the crowd's applause after his country secured a semifinal spot in the Davis Cup World Group by defeating Slovakia in Rio de Janeiro on April 9.

—AFP photo

Wishart misses ton narrowly

ST. GEORGE'S, Apr 10: Craig Wishart fell six short of a century to lead a strong Zimbabwean reply against a West Indian Invitation XI on the second day of three in their first-class cricket-match at the Queen's Park Stadium on Sunday, reports AFP.

Wishart, whose appearances have been limited on the Zimbabweans' first tour of the Caribbean, helped the African side to 170 for four at the close, responding to the Invitation XI's first innings total of 257.

Opening the batting, Wishart batted positively before he was bowled by Dinanath Ramnarine, playing around a leg break he attempted to drive.

He faced 154 balls in his 209-minute innings in which he hit 12 fours and shared 73 for the third wicket with left-hander Alistair Campbell, who was run out for 13.

Fast-medium bowler Kerry Jeremy had taken the first two wickets of the innings. Grant Flower caught behind for 11 and Start Carlisle caught at cover for 15 before the stand between Wishart and Campbell.

Earlier, the Invitation XI were dismissed just before lunch after resuming from their overnight position of 211 for six.

The lower-order rallied around teenager Narsingh Deonarine, who batted just over three hours and faced 147 balls for his 36.

Andy Bilgaut with four for 40 and Muleki Nkala with three for 35 returned the best figures for the Zimbabweans.

Scoreboard on the second day of the three-day first-class cricket match between a West Indies Invitation XI and Zimbabwe here at Queen's Park Stadium on Sunday:

WEST INDIES INVITATION XI: First innings (overnight 211 for six)

D Ganga b Nkala 24, Z Ali-Viljoen b Bilgaut 0, R Hinds lbw b Nkala 15, M Samuels c Tabu b Bilgaut 59, K Sample lbw b Brent 58, N Deonarine c Campbell b Nkala 36, W Phillip b Bilgaut 14, D Ramnarine lbw b Streak 2, P Collins b Bilgaut 1, M Black not out 19, K Jeremy c Bilgaut b Flower 9, Extras: (b-5, lb-7, w-1, nb-7) 27, Total: (all out) 257

Fall of wickets: 1-0; 2-35; 3-46; 4-142; 5-181; 6-209; 7-212; 8-225; 9-231.

Bowler: O M R W, Streak 16 5 32 1, Bilgaut 25 7 46 4, Brent 17 7 31 1, Nkala 16 7 35 3, Flower 15 4 31 1, Whittall 8 2 16 0, Viljoen 18 5 50 0, Campbell 1 0 4 0

ZIMBABWE: First innings

G Flower c Phillip b Jeremy 11, C Wishart b Ramnarine 94, S Carlisle c Deonarine b Jeremy 15, A Campbell run out 13, D Viljoen not out 8, T Tabu not out 11, Extras: (lb-6, nb-12) 18, Total: (4 wks) 170

Fall of wickets: 1-38; 2-74; 3-147; 4-149.

Bowler: O M R W, Collins 14 3 44 0, Black 8 1 31 0, Jeremy 14 3 40 2, Ramnarine 20 8 30 1, Samuels 3 1 9 0, Hinds 4 0 10 0

Schools h'ball begins April 17

The 11th Bata schools (boys) handball tournament, organised by Bangladesh Handball Federation, will begin on April 17 at the handball ground, reports UNB.

Fourteen teams, including defending champions Rajarbagh Police Lines High School, splitting into four groups, will initially compete in the regular tourney on a league basis.

The participating teams are: Rajarbagh Police Lines High School, BAF Shaheen School and College (Tejgaon), St Jude's International School, Narinda Govt High School, Rahmatullah Model High School, Matuail Adarsha High School, Motijheel Model High School, Bhasantek High School, Shaheed Nabi High School, Bangladesh Ansar and VDP School, Sunny Dale School, Graduate High School, Kamalapur Sher-e-Bangla High School and West End School and College.

Fraser wants to stay at Lord's

LONDON, Apr 10: Middlesex's veteran English paceman Angus Fraser on Monday urged his club and the Marylebone Cricket Club (MCC) to put aside their differences and secure the county's long-term future at Lord's, reports AFP.

Middlesex officials have spent the winter arguing with the MCC, whose members are most famous for wearing the egg and tomato coloured club ties, over the terms of their lease at the home of cricket.

Middlesex will play county games with Worcestershire, Glamorgan and Sussex at Southgate this season and take on Nottinghamshire in the National Cricket League at Richmond.

Middlesex members have long complained that they are treated as second class citizens by the MCC and the county has investigated moving to new homes in the London suburbs of Southgate, Ealing or Uxbridge.

But Fraser, who is determined to force his way back into England's Test side this summer, believes Lord's should remain Middlesex's home ground.

He said: "This is the home of cricket. It's an utter privilege to play here and I would not want to go anywhere else."

"People say that we should move out because we only ever have 100 people in the ground for championship matches but that is not the point."

"We would love to let the kids in for free but the ground admission is outside the control of Middlesex. The MCC make the rules."

"This is a place steeped in history and people are inspired by the surroundings. If we moved out some county players would never get the chance to play here."

"It doesn't matter whether it's a cold rainy day in April or a packed house for a Test Match in August, my career has been made more special by the fact I have played so many games at Lord's."

"I wouldn't want to play anywhere else."

Andre, Pete do it for USA

LOS ANGELES, Apr 10: Pete Sampras atoned for his opening singles defeat Sunday, powering past Slava Dosedel 6-4, 6-4, 7-6 to complete the United States' 3-2 victory over Czech Republic in the Davis Cup quarterfinals, reports AFP.

Andre Agassi did his bit, too, defeating Jiri Novak 6-3, 6-3, 6-1 as the Americans dug themselves out of a hole.

"I could definitely see it in his eyes. When I told him I kind of hurt my leg, he didn't want any part of it."

Novak admitted, although he said it was more from chasing Agassi's shots than from the cumulative effect of playing three days in a row.

"He was playing really great tennis from the baseline, and that's a lot different from Pete. He was hitting the ball very close to the baseline, so I didn't get a chance to come in."

"I think I managed to just have a bit more on my rally shots, and I controlled the points a little bit more," Agassi said. "The third he really got a little lackadaisical there and allowed me to get up a quick break without really doing anything special."

"But that's a result of being a little discouraged and being worn down. I felt like that was the only weakness that he showed. It was good tennis."

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