

Asian youth hockey
Malaysia qualify
for WC finals

KUALA LUMPUR, May 14: Malaysia, qualified Sunday for next year's youth World Cup finals when they beat Japan 2-1 in the third placing play-off match of the fourth Asian Cup youth hockey tournament, reports AP.

Malaysia led 1-0 at half-time. The other two teams to qualify were India and South Korea.

Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Taiwan, South Korea, Pakistan, Singapore, China, Iran, Japan and Uzbekistan were participating in the tournament, which began on May 3 and ended Sunday.

Rajshahi v'ball

From Our Correspondent

RAJSHAH, May 14: Nabarun Sangha and Bright Star Club won their respective matches of the Rajshahi First Division Hassan Imam Ali Imam Pintu Smriti volleyball league at the Rajshahi Stadium today.

In the first match, Nabarun defeated Brothers Union by 3-0 (25-10, 25-10 and 25-14) sets.

In other match of the day, Bright Star blanked Collony Club by 3-0 (25-15, 25-15 and 25-11) sets.

Amagan Club will meet Green Star Club and Jagarata Sangha will take on City Club tomorrow.

RU FOOTBALL

Mass Communication beat Mathematics Department 4-2 by a penalty shootout in the Rajshahi University inter-department football tournament at Rajshahi University Stadium today.

Both teams netted one each during the regulation period. Titu opened the account in 57th minute for Mass Communication while Raju draw level in the 61st minute for Mathematics.

Futoro-II ends

The Futoro-II course of the FIFA/Coca-Cola World Football Development Programme concluded yesterday at the Dhaka Sheraton Hotel, reports UNB.

State Minister for Jute AK Faizul Haq was the chief guest in the closing ceremony of the six-day programme and later distributed certificates among the participants.

Acting general secretary of Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) Badal Roy was also present on the occasion along with the FIFA instructors.

The BFF organised this training programme on four different subjects under the financial support of FIFA to improve the standard of the game.

Four FIFA experts — Dato Paul Mony Samuel (Administration), Lim Kim Chon (coaching), Gorge Joseph (refereeing) and Dr Ronnie NT Yeo (Sports Medicine) — conducted the courses.

Nat'l kabadi
in June

The national youth kabadi championship will be held at Rangpur in the first week of June.

Twelve teams, including defending champions Tangail land runners-up Dinajpur, will compete in the meet. Kabadi Federation general secretary Monir Hossain told UNB yesterday.

The teams, split into two groups, will initially compete on knock out basis.

They are: Tangail, Dinajpur, Rangpur, Rajshahi, Joypurhat, Dhaka, Mymensingh, Comilla, Sylhet, Pirojpur, Satkhira and Narail DSAs.

Magura cricket

From Our Correspondent

MAGURA, May 14: Challenge Club and Akai Smriti Sangsad won their respective matches of the Econo Cricket League at the Magura Stadium today.

Challenge defeated Surjo Tarun Club by 91 runs in the first match of the day.

Winning the toss, the winners batted first to collect 148 runs for eight wickets in the stipulated 25 overs. Titu made the highest 41.

Monia and Shihab captured three wickets each.

In reply, Surjo Tarun were all out for 57 in 14.3 overs. Shamim made the highest 21. Popul bagged four wickets.

In the other match of the day, Akai Smriti beat Sky heart by 24 runs. The winners batted first and collected 101 runs in 21.3 overs losing all wickets.

Arif made the highest 28. Salal claimed five wickets.

Saudi Arabia to host Gulf Cup in 2002

RIYADH, May 14: Saudi Arabia is to host the next Gulf Cup football tournament from January 16, 2002, more than a year after the event was originally scheduled, Saudi officials said Saturday, reports AFP.

The tournament was due to be contested this autumn but Gulf football federations asked for the delay because it would have coincided with the Asian Cup finals taking place in Lebanon in October.

Prince Sultan bin Fahd bin Abdul Aziz, who heads the Organisation for the Protection of Youth, or Saudi sports ministry, said the new date was chosen after "coordinating and consultation with chairmen of the competing federations."

Zimbabwe 315 all out

Nasser studies the tourists

LONDON, May 14: (AFP/Internet): Nasser Hussain took the opportunity to look at England's opponents when Zimbabwe's quick bowlers took on the Essex attack at Chelmsford on Saturday.

The England captain was sparing of stroke, but sure of concentration by spending 53 balls and 70 minutes over an undefeated 17 in Zimbabwe's last match before moving on to their maiden Test appearance at Lord's on Thursday.

The situation was ideal for Hussain as he appeared in the middle with the prospect 24 overs of the third day remaining, the whole of Day Four to come, and no positive outcome to the match apparent with so much time lost to rain.

The first international business of the summer could therefore occupy Hussain's mind, and Essex would welcome a big first-class score from their club captain before spending the majority of the summer on England duty.

Hussain's two first-class innings had yielded scores of only four and 24, though some Sunday fifties in successive weeks have signified that his best touch is not far away.

He needed 33 deliveries over two scoring strokes — taking 14 to get off the mark — before punishing Henry Olonga for a brace of boundaries in successive balls, and later Hussain was obliged to keep out a couple of sharp yorkers from the dredded fast bowler.

Stuart Law (33) supplied the eye-catching shots while Hussain consolidated before being taken at backward point, then Ronnie Irani trashed Dirk

Viljoen for two sixes before bad light ended play five overs early with Essex 117 for three in reply to Zimbabwe's 315.

Earlier, Olonga surprisingly detained Essex with a career-best 45 to help sustain a Zimbabwean attack on the Essex attack at Chelmsford on Saturday.

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NASSER HUSSAIN

babw recovery.

After the tourists had dipped to 217 for eight, the operating Olonga provide some resistance to lift Zimbabwe to their solid total.

Olonga helped Guy Whittall add 72 for the ninth wicket and passed his previous highest score of 41 before falling lbw to David Thompson off his 129th ball.

Olonga played resolutely and provided a bonus for his side but Zimbabwe may well have felt that runs from the more regular batsmen Stuart Carlisle and Viljoen.

Carlisle and Viljoen would have been of greater benefit in the wider scheme of things, but they did not manage a single be-

Hick tunes up with a ton

LONDON (Reuters): England batsman Graeme Hick warmed up for the first Test against Zimbabwe at Lord's starting next Thursday with a match-winning century for Worcestershire against Middlesex.

Zimbabwe-born Hick's 115 not out was the 109th century of his first-class career and, scored in a total of 161 for three, was a major factor in his side's seven-wicket victory in a low-scoring second division match at Worcester.

Lancashire also won inside three days when they beat Durham by 141 runs in a first division game at Chester-le-Street.

Career-best figures of seven for 50 from uncapped medium pacer Mike Smethurst skittled Durham for 92 in their second division.

That meant Durham left-arm fast medium bowler Simon Brown's own career best of seven for 51, which plunged the visitors to 134 all out in their second division.

Second division Warwickshire and Northamptonshire both look on course for wins over Sussex and Nottinghamshire respectively, with one day remaining.

Douglas Brown, who piled up a career best 203, and Ashley Giles (127 not out) took their seventh wicket stand to 289 before Warwickshire declared at 548 for seven at Hove.

Sussex, with Australian Michael Bevan out for 36, have reached 220 for six in their second division and need another 104 to avoid an innings defeat.

A defiant innings from John Morris (88) was not enough to prevent Nottinghamshire following on at Northampton.

Dismissed for 333, the visitors were 44 for two in their second division at the close, still 208 runs adrift of the hosts' 585.

(Incomplete)



South African Amanda Coetzer plays a forehand return against compatriot Joanne Kruger during the German Open semifinal match yesterday.

— AFP photo

Hingis runs out of luck



BERLIN, May 14: Conchita Martínez defeated top seed and defending champion Martina Hingis 7-5, 6-4 to reach the final of the German Open on Saturday, and is now just one match away from regaining the title she won in 1998, reports AFP.

To do so she must first overcome 10th seed Amanda Coetzer, who beat fellow South African Joanne Kruger 6-2, 6-4.

Coetzer and Martínez have played 15 times, with Martínez winning 12. But Coetzer has won their last two meetings, both on hard court at the 1998 US Open and this year's Ericsson Open in Miami. Coetzer also beat her on clay at the 1997 French Open.

She had very tough matches with Conchita, but I'm very excited to be in the final. I think it's my first Tier 1 final. It's probably her favourite surface so I'm just going to look at it as a match completely on its own, said the South African.

Panatta said that he was told the player, who will drop to world number two in Monday's new world rankings behind Lindsay Davenport, underwent an X-ray and was advised by doctors to undergo physiotherapy.

Davenport was installed as top seed for the WTA Tour event ahead of Nathalie Tauziat of France.

Meanwhile, American hopeful Venus Williams returns to defend her title.

It promises to be a tough return to the Foro Italico for Williams, who made her comeback to competitive tennis just a fortnight ago -- after a near six-month break -- when she tried in vain to defend her title in Hamburg.

Williams hadn't played since last November after suffering from tendinitis in both wrists. She bowed out at the quarterfinal stage to South African Amanda Coetzer in straight sets, reports AFP.

"It wasn't a lack of match play. It was a lack of good play," said the American.

That tournament was won by Hingis, defeating Spain's Arantxa Sanchez-Vicario 6-3, 6-3 in the final.

Conchita Martínez -- who beat Hingis in 1996 to win her fourth consecutive Rome title -- will also not be around.

Aside from Hingis, Martínez and Williams' younger sister Serena, the other major absentee will be Russian crowd-puller Anna Kournikova, who suffered an ankle injury at the same tournament in Berlin earlier in 1998.

Frenchwoman Nathalie Tauziat is meanwhile on a roll after reaching a career-high third place in the rankings, while compatriot and Rome crowd favourite Mary Pierce was a losing finalist last year in 1997.

Sandrine Testud, Julie Halar and Decugis and Amelie Mauresmo will also be flying the flag for France.

Aside from defending champion Williams, who also reached that 1998 final with Hingis, American hopes here this week will rest on Monica Seles, a winner here way back in 1990.

Kuerten, the 1997 French Open winner, broke to take a 5-4 lead before serving out for the set and then repeated the feat at the start of the second set as he

allowed Hingis to break back in the seventh game, regained the lead and served for the set at 5-3, but again let Hingis break back and then hold for 5-5.

Rather than be discouraged, however, third seed Martinez broke Hingis yet again to take the set.

In the second, Martinez failed to win a single point in her first two service games as Hingis came to the net far more often and turned the momentum in her favour.

Playing more aggressively than in the first set, Hingis seemed after holding to love to lead 4-2 that she had enough momentum to turn the match decisively her way.

Instead, she won just six more points in the match as Martinez staged a remarkable recovery.

"I played some great tennis today," said Martinez. "It's my best match in a long time. I was pushing her a lot and went for my shots, and I was very aggressive and moving her so she was running a lot.

In the second set she felt she had to do something different and went to the net. She was more aggressive and returning well and trying to come in, and maybe I relaxed as I was in the first against her since the 1996 Italian Open.

She played smartly, frequently changing the pace and catching Hingis by surprise with a heavily struck forehand. Such enterprise gave Martinez the upper hand throughout the first set, although she had difficulty maintaining her advantage.

She broke serve to lead 2-0,

enough," said Hingis. "I wanted to keep the points shorter because the first set was so tiring and I was not in condition after Friday's match to continue playing like that.

"I was really aggressive in the second set and came in the baseline rally. But Kruger offered more resistance in the second set and Coetzer had difficulty in closing out the match.

Although there was no suggestion that Kruger would be able to repeat the fightback she staged in the quarterfinals, when she held off four match points and recovered from 0-5 in the final set to beat Elena Dementieva, she saved three match points and, from trailing 2-5, held two break points at 5-5 before conceding.

Coetzer admitted it had been hard work, saying: "I didn't see any of her match yesterday and tried not to think of it, but I'm sure she was. I've been in that position before, and if you can make a comeback like that once you become fearless every time you get in that situation."

Obviously she was a little bit drained from that match yesterday. She played late. In the beginning I took a lot of time away from her and played quite well and she wasn't quite getting to it. In the end I think I gave her a little bit too much time and she could get to most of the balls."

Coetzer felt that he coped well with Kuerten until 4-4.

"Then I lost a little bit of my concentration," he said. "After, I had a couple of break points and I couldn't make them. And he served pretty well on that game."

"Afterwards, I double faulted twice and I completely lost my concentration and my focus. For five games, I was out of the game."

Norman, the third seed who hasn't lost a set all week, was in unstopable form -- serving to deadly effect, crunching out a series of powerful groundstrokes and making few mistakes.

Ninth-seeded Hewitt had paid the price of a gruelling week -- the 19-year-old's first tournament since taking a month out to beat a virus -- and showed only glimpses of the sparkle and accuracy of his earlier matches.

Kuerten-Norman showdown



ROME, May 14: Brazil's Gustavo Kuerten will defend his Masters Series title here against Sweden's Magnus Norman on Sunday after both men won their semifinal matches in straight sets, reports AFP