

Decision on Kapil soon

PATNA, Sept 4: A day after the cricket board dropped Mohammad Azharuddin, Nikhil Chopra and Ajay Jadeja from probables for next month's ICC knockout competition, Minister of State for Sports Shah Nawaz Hussain yesterday suggested BCCI would take a decision soon about national coach Kapil Dev, reports PTI.

Welcoming the BCCI decision to exclude the three cricketers who are facing investigations on charges of match-fixing, he suggested the board would soon take a decision on others including Kapil Dev.

Afridi takes it sportingly

KARACHI, Sept 4: Popular cricket all-rounder Shahid Afridi said Monday punishment for "misconduct" would have a positive effect on his career and make him more responsible, reports AFP.

"I am satisfied that I didn't commit any mistake but I accept this punishment. It will have a positive effect on my career," Afridi told this news agency.

Afridi and two other players — Hasan Raza and Atiquzzaman — were fined 50,000 rupees (900 dollars) and suspended for one tournament after women were found in their hotel room during a recent training camp.

The board has accepted that there was no evidence of the incident and I maintain that nobody came in my room but punishments are for our betterment, to make us more responsible," he said.

Pakistan Cricket Board held an inquiry into the affair and its Chairman General Taqir Zia decided to penalise the trio over the August 15 incident, board Director Yawar Saeed said.

The inquiry team manager Brigadier Mohammad Nasir found the incident was grossly exaggerated as there was no evidence except that some female fans barged into the players' room," he said.

England break

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helmet as he slid in.

The luckless batsman needed prolonged on-field attention before third umpire Barrie Leadbatter gave him out for 27 made off 31 balls including four fours.

West Indies were 140 for five and two runs later they lost their sixth wicket when Ridley Jacobs on one was surprised by a Caddick delivery that bounced sharply and was caught by Graeme Hick at second slip to the delight of a capacity 18,500 crowd.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard at close on the fifth day of the fifth and final Test between England and the West Indies at The Oval on Monday:

ENGLAND: First innings 281 (M Atherton 83, M Trescothick 78; C Walsh 3-68, N McLean 3-80)

WEST INDIES: Second innings (overnight 33-0) Campbell c Hick b Gough 28 Griffith c Stewart b Caddick 20 Lara lbw b Gough 47 Hinds lbw b Caddick 7 Adams c White b Caddick 15 Sarwan run out 27 Jacobs c Hick b Caddick 1 Nagamootoo lbw b Gough 13 McLean not out 23 Ambrose c Atherton b Cork 28 Walsh lbw b Cork 0 Extras: (lb-3; w-1; nb-2) 6 Total: (All out in 70 overs) 215 Fall of wickets: 1-50, 2-50, 3-58, 4-94, 5-140, 6-142, 7-150, 8-167, 9-215

Bowler O M R W Gough 20 3 64 3 Caddick 21 7 54 4 White 11 2 32 0 Cork 15 1 50 2 Vaughan 3 1 12 0

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Campbell c Hick b Gough 28

Griffith c Stewart b Caddick 20

Lara lbw b Gough 47

Hinds lbw b Caddick 7

Adams c White b Caddick 15

Sarwan run out 27

Jacobs c Hick b Caddick 1

Nagamootoo lbw b Gough 13

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Never again

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years, although this has been veiled behind the West Indies' heroic run of form.

And finally there is that intangible factor, the fight in the old dog, that mere statisticians will not presume to analyse. Rather leave that to the captain and close friends who have always appreciated the guts of Ambrose and Walsh.

Anyone who saw Amby and Cuddy walk off The Oval to the cheers of the crowd will have known that they did their best because that is what they always did. Thanks for the memories fellas.

Romario's roaring return



UNDATED, Sept 4: (Reuters/AP): Veteran ace Romario made a scintillating comeback for Brazil in a whitewash at Bolivia while there was a thumping win for Uruguay and a tricky victory for table-toppers Argentina in Sunday's CONMEBOL Zone qualifiers for the 2002 World Cup.

BRAZIL - 5, BOLIVIA - 0

RIO DE JANEIRO: Living up to the hopes pinned on him by fans, Romario scored three goals in his comeback to international play as Brazil thrashed Bolivia 5-0.

Romario's hat-trick confirmed fans expectations that Romario's offensive power would put an end to Brazil's mediocre play that had disappointed fans and led to a humiliating 3-0 loss to Chile last month.

"I was called to the team to score goals," 34-year-old Romario said after the match. "It was great to be here for the great

goal area. Romario didn't waste the opportunity and lofted the ball over Soria, who had come out to stop the play, and into the goal.

Brazil's fourth and Romario's third came two minutes later in the 35th minute of the second half on another movement from Vampeta. This time, Vampeta crossed to Rivaldo who was hovering near the goal. Rivaldo let the ball pass to Romario who's touch rolled into the goal.

In the 43rd minute, Marques received a pass from Juninho and got off a shot after charging into the area from the left. The ball bounced off Bolivian defender Sandy and into the net for Brazil's fifth.

Fans who packed Rio's legendary Maracana stadium despite the pouring rain cheered Romario wildly at the end of the game.

Hernan Crespo continued to stake his claim to be an able replacement for the injured Gabriel Batistuta, striking a powerful right-footed goal on 27

embargo. Luxemburgo spent the month of August facing a storm of criticism for Brazil's loss against Chile and denying accusations that he evaded taxes and profited from an illegal scheme buying and selling soccer players.

ARGENTINA - 2, PERU - 1

LIMA: Argentina's march to the World Cup finals continued with a resolute victory over Peru in Lima.

The South American group leaders overcame their recent defeat against Brazil, and held out against Peru's last-gasp efforts to grab an equaliser.

This was not a brilliant performance, but Argentina always possessed the quality that would make the difference between the two sides.

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embargo. Argentina held on to their four-point lead in the South American qualifying group.

URUGUAY - 4, ECUADOR - 0

MONTEVIDEO: Dario Silva was the inspiration as Uruguay thrashed Ecuador 4-0.

The first goal came after Olivera was tripped overlapping down Ecuador's right flank. Magallanes' 15th minute free kick sailed into the top corner, giving goalkeeper Joaquin Francisco Cevallos no chance.

Silva notched an opportunist goal on 37 minutes, outleaping Cevallos and the rest of the Ecuador defence to connect with Olivera's free kick.

Uruguay stepped up the pace in the second half and Silva continued to cause problems.

Olivera put the game beyond reach with a superbly taken goal on 55 minutes. Magallanes dropped the ball behind the Ecuador defence, and the midfielder lobbed the ball over the stranded Cevallos.

Gabriel Cedres completed the demolition on 87 minutes, latching on to a clever turn by substitute Sebastian Abreu.

Romesh returns to Lanka squad

COLOMBO, Sept 4 (Internet report): Wicketkeeper Romesh Kaluwitharana and fast bowler Pramodanga Wickremasinghe have been recalled to the Sri Lanka squad for October's ICC Knock-out tournament in Nairobi.

Kaluwitharana was dropped during the Singer triangular one-day series, making way for an outstanding debut by Kumar Sangakkara in the Test series against South African which followed.

Meanwhile, Avishka Gunawardena established his credentials as opening partner to captain Sanath Jayasuriya.

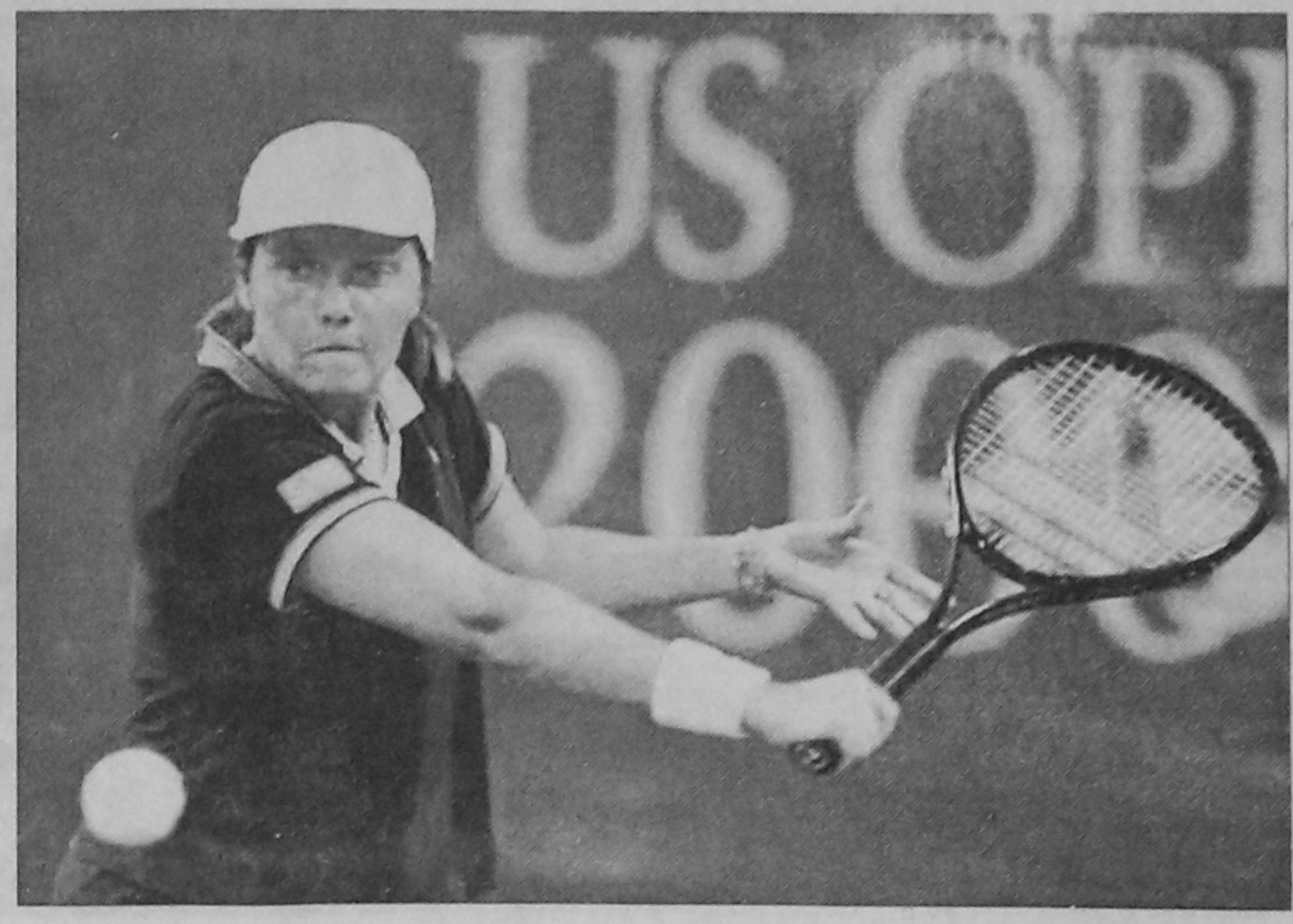
There is again no place for veteran Aravinda de Silva, dropped from the one-day squad following an unsuccessful experiment as opener during the Asia Cup at the end of May.

Wickremasinghe, who missed the August series due to a neck strain, replaces left-arm pace bowler Sajeeva de Silva in the 15 that defeated South Africa in the final of the Singer series.

Sri Lanka play West Indies in their opening match of the tournament. If they fail to reach the final, they will return home before taking off to Sharjah for the tri-national tournament with India and Zimbabwe later in the month. Further changes may be made to the squad following the Kenya tournament.

TEAM

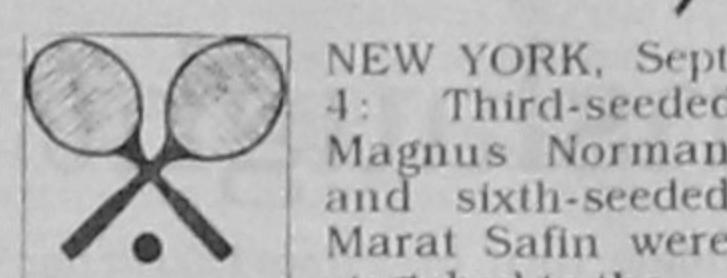
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Natalie Tauziat of France hits a backhand return against Spaniard Arantxa Sanchez-Vicario at the US Open on September 3.

— AFP photo

Norman, Safin survive scares



NEW YORK, Sept 4: Third-seeded Magnus Norman and sixth-seeded Marat Safin were stretched to the

limits on a rainy Sunday at the US Open, with both players

needing to win fifth-set tiebreakers to survive, reports Reuters.

Norman, the highest remaining seed following the early upsets of top-seeded 1999 champion Andre Agassi and second-seeded French Open winner Gustavo Kuerten, recovered from the more dangerous situation.

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the 12th seed, needed to win a fourth-set tiebreaker that was also interrupted by the rain before dismissing Swiss Roger Federer 7-5, 7-6 (8-6), 1-6, 7-6 (8-6) to earn a fourth-round match against Safin.

American Jan-Michael Gambill also needed a fourth-set tiebreaker to advance past Thomas Johansson of Sweden 6-3, 3-6, 7-6 (7-5), 6-7 (7-1).

Earlier, 14th-seeded Nicolas Kiefer of Germany stayed dry by scooting into the fourth round with a straight-sets win over Sjeng Schalken of the Netherlands.

The 23-year-old Swede clawed his way back from two sets down and saved four match points before claiming a 3-6, 4-6, 7-6 (7-5), 6-4, 7-6 (11-9) victory over relentless serve-and-volleyer Max Mirnyi of Belarus.

"It's an unbelievable feeling," said Norman, who won on his third match point of the tiebreaker when he whipped a backhand crosscourt passing shot that Mirnyi dove for but could not return.

Safin won the first two sets but then had to fight for his Open life against Sebastian Grosjean of France, who battled the 20-year-old Russian villain before falling 6-4, 7-6 (7-3), 1-6, 3-6, 7-6 (7-5).

Australian qualifier Wayne Arthurs of Australia, who ousted Kuerten in the opening round, go five sets before vanquishing compatriot Richard Fernberg 7-6 (7-3), 1-6, 6-3, 3-6, 6-3.

Spain's Juan Carlos Ferrero,

"I feel more warmed up now, more in a groove and ready to compete," Williams said. "I'm feeling a lot more clear on my serve, it was a lot more effective and the pace on my second serve

was more effective. I can put it where I want."

Williams has not lost since the French Open, a title run that includes the All-England Club plus US Open hardcourt tuneups in Stanford, San Diego and New Haven.

The American next faces France's Nathalie Tauziat, the eighth seed who beat Spain's Arantxa Sanchez for the first time in 12 tries at 6-3, 6-2, 6-2 score. Tauziat had taken only one prior set from Sanchez.

Monica Seles scored a 6-3, 4-6, 4th-round victory over 16th-ranked Jennifer Capriati on Sunday to secure her sixth consecutive US Open quarterfinal berth and keep alive another noteworthy streak.

In 10 losses in 53 matches played this year, she has never fallen to a player ranked below her.

All of the fifth-ranked Seles' defeats have been to the four players ranked above her. She lost to Martina Hingis twice, Lindsay Davenport three times, Mary Pierce twice and Venus Williams twice.

Seles could face another test against a player ranked above her in the quarterfinals if world number one Martina Hingis prevails against 11th-ranked Sandrine Testud of France in a late Sunday night match.

The day ended the way it began, with play postponed for the night because of another cloud-burst with Todd Martin leading Cedric Pioline 7-6, 6-3, 2-0; Hingis leading Testud 6-2, 1-0; and Carlos Moya leading Alex Corretja 7-6, 2-1.

Hungary hold Italy



LONDON, Sept 4: Giovanni Trapattoni endured a frustrating start to his reign as Italy coach on Sunday, as his new charges were held to a draw by Hungary in their opening World Cup qualifying fixture, reports Reuters.

It was Trapattoni's first

match in control of the Azzurri since replacing Dino Zoff, the man who had guided Italy to the final of Euro 2000.

There were also mixed fortunes on Sunday for other nations who had illuminated Euro 2000.

ITALY-2, HUNGARY-2

Trapattoni was close to pulling off a major coup in his baptism with Italy in their first match since Euro 2000 at Budapest.

They were beaten by a golden goal in extra-time of the final against France in July and Trapattoni is under considerable pressure to maintain Italy's resurgence on the international stage.