

NB v'ball

UNB, Dhaka

Titans Club maintained their all win record in the National Bank Premier Division Volleyball League outplaying Dikusha SC 3-0 at the volleyball court yesterday.

Titans secured full 21 points from seven matches while Dikusha suffered third defeat in five encounters.

Earlier, Bangladesh Rifles defeated Azad SC 3-0 Friday night. In the First Division, league, Fire Service beat Chand Textile while East End Club beat East End Boys 3-1.

Sunday's Premier Division matches: Bangladesh Rifles vs WDB, Bangladesh Bank vs Brothers Union.

First Division matches: Fire Service vs Jibon Bima KS, East End Boys vs Dhaka Sabuj.

Saurav becomes media-wise

PTI, Kolkata

Indian cricket captain Saurav Ganguly has advocated the need for appointing a media manager for the team, saying it will ease the pressure on the captain and the players considerably.

"Most of the teams have a media manager these days which makes the job much easier for the team. Only the teams in the sub-continent don't have one. I think it is very necessary," Ganguly said in an interview to Doordarshan.

Ganguly said the captain has to answer a lot of questions during a series and often the media misreports the statements, which gives a totally different meaning.

"When statements are distorted, people who read the reports have a different idea of the situation. If we have a media manager it will ease the pressure on the captain, coach and the manager," he said.

The India captain, who appeared for the first time in a joint interview with wife Dona, spoke on a wide range of subjects covering some of the controversies during the recent series against Australia and his family life.

Ganguly said the series of controversial articles and misreportings in recent times had prompted him to be more reticent and choosy while handling the media in the country.

"After some time, you come to know who is doing the right thing and who is not doing. You have to judge for yourself," he said.

Pak spinners

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Fall of wickets: 1-0, 2-71, 3-88, 4-118, 5-134, 6-141, 7-161, 8-163, 9-171

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Akram	6	4	5	1
Akhtar	6	2	20	0
Razaq	7	1	37	1
Waqar	3	1	10	0
Saqain	18.3	7	37	4
Mushtaq	15	3	41	4

Result: Pakistan won by an innings and 26 runs.

Rivals

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India, after their 1989 Test tour, have cancelled four visits to Pakistan, the latest earlier this year because of restrictions by the government which has refused to give permission to the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) for bilateral matches.

"The government has clearly said for a multilateral tournament it has no objection at all," BCCI president AC Muthiah told Reuters from Lahore.

Sporting relations between India and Pakistan remain strained because of political tension over the disputed Himalayan region of Kashmir.

India also skipped April's one-day triangular tournament in Sharjah, a move that angered Pakistan's cricket authorities who had said they would boycott the Indian team in future. Both decisions were made on the orders of the Indian government.

Since then, cricketing relations have soured.

Zia said all four countries had committed themselves to signing a binding agreement to honouring the agreed schedule of matches.

Although the improvement in the political relationship undoubtedly contributed to the resumption of cricketing ties, officials had always been quietly confident that the two countries would find a way of playing each other again.

Crickets is by far the most popular sport in both countries and they can ill afford to do without each other.

The Indian government recently indicated that it would not prevent the cricket team from playing Pakistan in multilateral tournaments — a concession it had little option to make to ensure India could play in the 2003 World Cup.

While cricketing relations have been strained, India and Pakistan have maintained ties in other sports, notably field hockey and squash.

Alec, Alex in charge

Cricket

REUTERS, London

Alec Stewart celebrated his appointment as England captain for next month's one-day series with Australia and Pakistan by putting Surrey in command against Essex in the English County Championship on Friday.

Stewart and Alex Tudor put on 187 for the seventh wicket as county champions Surrey hit 393 for six on the first day of the four-day match at The Oval.

At stumps Stewart was 96 not out and Tudor 97 not out.

Yorkshire's Michael Vaughan responded to his inclusion in England's one-day squad with a century against Northamptonshire at Headingley.

The right-hander's 133 in Yorkshire's 300 for five included a six and 18 fours.

Matthew Walker was another centurion, scoring 112 for Kent against Glamorgan at Swansea.

David Fulton (78) also played a major role as the visitors were dismissed for 252, a total that looked even more healthy at the close after Martin Saggers (four for 15) had reduced hosts Glamorgan to 42 for four.

South African-born all-rounder Kevin Pietersen was the pick of the batting in the Second Division with an unbeaten 131 as Nottinghamshire compiled 394 for eight against Middlesex at Lord's.

Warwickshire skipper Michael Powell, who hit his maiden first-class century in 1106 three years ago, enjoyed a happy return to ground with a score of 93 against Sussex.

Warwickshire were 281 for three at the close, with Mark Wagh 78 not out and on course for his second hundred of the campaign.

Derbyshire's bowlers were also made to toil in the sunshine as visitors Hampshire clocked up 344 for six at the County Ground. Will Kendall hit 94 and Lawrence Prittipaul 84.

It was a similar tale for the

bowlers at Bristol where Worcestershire scored 298 for six against Gloucestershire.

Graeme Hick, omitted from England's one-day squad, was out for four but Phil Weston struck 84 and Australian all-rounder Andy Bichel an unbeaten 71.

BRIEF SCORES

English County cricket scores on Friday:



PHOTO: INTERNET

Surrey's Alex Tudor acknowledges the crowd as he leaves the field after remaining not out on 97 on the opening day of their English County Championship match against Essex on Friday.

Division One
At Swansea: Kent 252 (M Walker 112 not out, D Fulton 78; D Cosker 4-48, A Wharf 4-66) v Glamorgan 42-4 (M Saggers 4-15)
At The Oval: Surrey 393-6 (A Tudor 97 not out, A Stewart 96 not

out) v Gloucestershire
At Lord's: Nottinghamshire 409-8 (K Pietersen 135 not out, P Franks 85) v Middlesex
At Hove: Warwickshire 281-3 (M Powell 93, M Wagh 78 not out) v Sussex

Pakistan make three changes

REUTERS, Karachi

Pakistan selectors once again overlooked former captain Moin Khan in announcing three changes to their squad for the tri-nation NatWest one-day series in England, which starts on June 7.

Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) officials said on Friday that Shahid Afridi, controversial off-spinner Shoaib Malik and opener Imran Nazir would fly out on Thursday for the tournament, which also involves England and Australia.

The trio will replace spinner Mushtaq Ahmed and openers Imran Farhat and Mohammad Wasim. Paceman Mohammad Sami has already been ruled out of the tour because of a sore shin.

Shoaib Malik was reported for a suspect bowling action during the Sharjah Cup tournament in April by Zimbabwe's match referee Justice Ibrahim Ahmad.

Since Malik has not been reported before, he can continue playing.

Wicketkeeper Moin, 29, has scored 2,853 runs in 190 one-day international appearances and holds the record for highest number of dismissals behind the wicket (256).

SQUAD

Waqar Younis (captain), Inzamam-ul-Haq (vice-captain), Saeed Anwar, Salim Elahi, Shahid Afridi, Imran Nazir, Faisal Iqbal, Younis Khan, Yousuf Youhana, Rashid Latif (wicketkeeper), Wasim Akram, Shoaib Akhtar, Abdur Razaq, Azhar Mahmood, Saqlain Mushtaq, Shoaib Malik.

WorldTel boss to be quizzed again

REUTERS, New Delhi

Indian federal investigators will summon Mark Mascarenhas, chief of sports management company WorldTel, for more questioning over alleged offences related to a television broadcast rights contract, officials said on Friday.

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has said it is probing allegations of offences linked to the contract for the TV rights for the 1998 International Cricket Council (ICC) knock-out tournament held in Bangladesh.

"We completed Mr (Mark) Mascarenhas' preliminary examination last week. We will call him again for a detailed examination in the course of the investigation," CBI spokesman SM Khan told.

Karamat new Pak investigator

REUTERS, Karachi

Pakistan on Friday appointed Lahore High Court judge Karamat Bhandani to investigate allegations that the national team threw matches in the 1999 World Cup.

"The judge has been given a two-month time to complete his inquiry and submit a report to the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) for appropriate action, if required," PCB chairman Tausif Zia told this news agency from Lahore.

"The judge has been asked to probe two matches in the World Cup and allegations against former Test umpire Javed Akhtar," Zia said.

Mistake?

REUTERS, Kingston

Former West Indies cricket team psychologist Joe Hoad's contract expired and he did not resign, team manager Ricky Skerritt said on Friday.

Hoad said on Thursday that he had resigned but Skerritt said he told Hoad four weeks ago that his services would not be required beyond his 11-week contract which ended last week.

England ponder

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squad and is now battling to be fit for the Ashes.

His Yorkshire teammate Matthew Hoggard, who, as one of the 12 centrally-contracted players, joined the squad at Lord's despite not being fully fit, will effectively take the all-rounder's place Robert Croft, who was also left out at Lord's, is certain to stay in the squad given Ashley Giles' fitness problems and both he and Hoggard may well play at Old Trafford.

Hoggard would have played at Lord's if he had been fit enough — he could replace Ryan Sidebottom in the XI.

Despite huge amounts of rain the Old Trafford surface is still expected to assist spin and so improve Croft's chances of playing, although England will be tempted to once again field seven batsmen.

Ramprakash left Middlesex for Surrey in the winter in the hope it would improve his England chances and the move has quickly paid off.

He had a torrid time last summer, when England tried him as an opener in four Tests.

He scored only 97 runs in seven innings at the top of the order, but has started the season well with the reigning county champions and a 43rd Test cap is set to be his reward.

Gustavo v Spanish invaders

Tennis

AFP, Paris

Reigning champion Gustavo Kuerten will find himself under siege from a horde of would-be 'assassins' over the coming fortnight as the Brazilian goes in search of a third French Open title.

The samba showman, affectionately dubbed 'Guga' on win-

day ended a Tour-leading 16-match winning streak — and showed Portas also knows a thing or two about playing on the surface.

Then there is Alex Corretja, who teamed up with Ferrero last December to secure their nation's first Davis Cup success, as well as Hamburg semi-finalist Albert Costa.

Chief among non-Latin chal-

MEN'S PREVIEW

lengers are 1999 titlist and ATP Champions Race leader Andre Agassi — despite an unconvincing clay season to date — as well as Russian youngster Marat Safin — if only he can keep under control the volcanic temperament which almost saw him shown the door at the World Tennis Cup this week.

US Open champion Safin, beaten by Kuerten in last year's Hamburg final, is often his own worst enemy on clay, which saps the patience of even the most seasoned player.

That impatience also spills over

ning his first crown here four years ago, has since basked in the title King of Clay and, fitness permitting, will start as the favourite to join French legend Rene Lacoste, Swede Mats Wilander and Czech Ivan Lendl with three titles.

But the event on the famous slow red clay on the western edge of the City of Light is universally recognised as the toughest Grand Slam to win and there is no shortage of pretenders to the men's throne.

The gangling Kuerten has lost just three times on clay in more than a year, lifting the Monaco Masters Series and reaching the Rome Masters Series final.

Hamburg brought an opening-round defeat to unheralded Max Mirnyi of Belarus but given recent nagging aches and pains Guga was perhaps only too pleased to take the opportunity to recharge his batteries ahead of the one that really matters.

"My confidence, my game, is working fine — I just need to see what is better for me to do to get there in best shape," he noted after the Mirnyi loss.

Lining up to topple the champion are several emerging Spanish stars, chief among them Juan Carlos Ferrero, who beat Kuerten to snatch his maiden Masters Series title in Rome but who is struggling with a groin strain following his run to the Hamburg Masters Series final.

Ferrero's defeat by unheralded compatriot Albert Portas last Sun-



GUSTAVO KUERTEN

day ended a Tour-leading 16-match winning streak — and showed Portas also knows a thing or two about playing on the surface.

Similarly, Magnus Norman of Sweden, last year's beaten finalist who saved 10 match points in the process, has also fallen into a deep trough this year.

While Agassi's form has been nothing to write about, the Las Vegas can certainly not be written off — though early exits in Rome and Hamburg did little to suggest that he can recapture the form of two years ago, when he joined a select band of five men to lift all four Slams.

If Agassi can be seen as meriting a place on the list of potential champions it would be a brave

observer to say the same of compatriot Pete Sampras.

Sampras, despite his all-time record 13 Grand Slam singles victories, has only managed one semi-final showing — and on that occasion Kafelnikov mauled him in straight sets.

Recent clay showings suggest the task now seems beyond Pistol Pete.

Hamburg should have been the launch pad — but he departed lamely in the opening round, beaten by Spaniard Alex Calatrava.

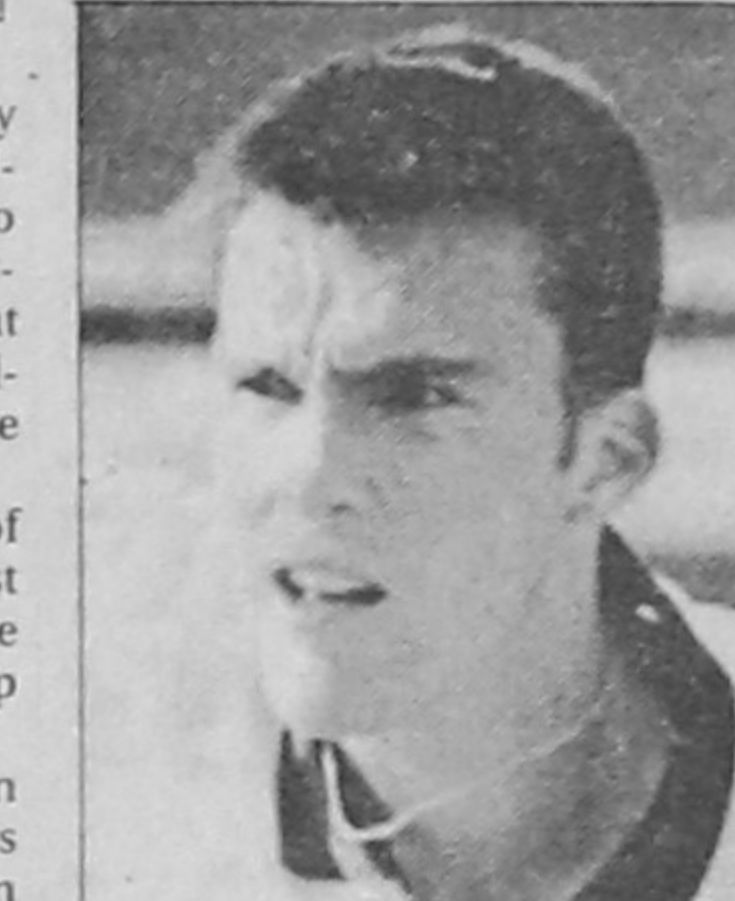
Australia, meanwhile, has not had a champion here since Rod Laver added the finishing touch to an Aussie-dominated decade by beating compatriot Ken Rosewall in 1969.

The 1960s saw a hugely-gifted generation from Down Under reach their zenith with seven titles — two each for Rod Laver and Roy Emerson and one for Fred Stolle, Tony Roche and Ken Rosewall.

Pat Rafter did his best four years ago with an exciting run to the semis — without even sacrificing his serve and volley nature to the cause but now a new talent hopes to keep Australian interest at boiling point come the trophy match come June 10.

Lleyton Hewitt was just 16 when he won his hometown tournament in Adelaide and Agassi soon remarked admiringly of the youngster that "he's the top young kid on the block... the man for the new millennium."

Hewitt showed his claycourt prowess by beating Kuerten in front of the latter's home crowd in the Davis Cup in April and then fought his way to the Hamburg semis, bowing to an inspired Portas but showing he has learned



ALBERT PORTAS

how to deal with the surface.

"I feel like I can go on court with any player and feel confident," insists the 20-year-old.

Kuerten, Ferrero, Agassi, Safin and company have all been forewarned.

Who plays whom

Tennis

AFP, Paris

Top seed Martina Hingis of Switzerland got the toughest match among the favourites for the French Open title in the draw here on Friday when she was pitted against Spain's Gala Leon Garcia.

On paper Hingis should win, but Garcia does have some fine performances behind her and is always a threat on clay.

The second-seeded Venus Williams of the United States, in the bottom half of the draw, goes up against Austria's Barbara Schett who reached the fourth round here last year before falling to Arantxa Sanchez-Vicario.

Williams normally would be too strong for the Austrian, but she has played little on the surface this year and there has to be some doubts over her ability to last the full two weeks.

The same goes for younger

sister Serena, who has not played in any of the traditional build-up tournaments to Paris and whose participation has been in doubt over yet another injury.

The younger Williams, who has never got past the fourth round at the French Open, has been seeded seventh and drawn against France's Sarah Pitkowski who will have strong home support behind her.

The French will also have eyes on their main hope Amelie Mauresmo, who has been in magnificent form in recent weeks and who has defeated Hingis in their last two encounters.

Mauresmo, who took this week off to recharge her batteries after losing the Rome Masters final to Yugoslav Jelena Dokic on Sunday, goes up against Lina Krasnoroutskaya of Russia in the first round with a projected quarter-final against Venus Williams.

Title-holder Mary Pierce of France has pulled out with an injury as has the sixth-seeded

Monica Seles of the United States, a three-times former winner.

Seles' withdrawal dented a 16th seeded place to American Meghann Shaughnessy.

Among the other favourites, Jennifer Capriati, who won the first Grand Slam event of the year in Australia, is drawn against France's Emilie Loit, while Rome Masters winner Dokic, seeded 15th, takes on Adriana Gersi of the Czech Republic.

BAF swimming

BSS, Dhaka

The annual inter-base swimming and Water Polo championship of the Bangladesh Air Force began at the Army Swimming Complex at Banani yesterday.

Over 100 swimmers are taking part in various swimming events and water polo matches. Three swimming events and two water polo matches were held on the opening day.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS	32 Sue	48 Born	9 California town
1 Wrigley product	Gratton's "D" is for	49 "And giving —, up the chimney —"	10 Easter entree
4 The Mac-	Donald	34 Rotisserie feature	11 Eats, zwi —
8 Saucy	35 Remark re Yorick	50 "Cheers" request	16 Finished
12 Coach	36 Chopin	51 Heavy weight	19 I cannot tell
13 "... baked in —"	37 Sue	DOWN	20 String 21 Garfield's
14 Admitting a draft	Gratton's "N" is for	1 Moo goo — pan	22 Big brass
15 Sue	Gratton's "I" is for	2 Coffee vessel	23 — a Kick Out of You"
17 Glittery fabric	40 On in years	3 Winnipeg's province	25 Dog bane
18 Currier's partner	41 St. Louis attraction	4 Looks toward	26 Sassy
19 Sue	Gratton's "J" is for	5 Mimics	27 Empty
20 Pigeon coops	46 Appointment	7 Encountered	28 Diminutive suffix
22 Mah-jongg piece	47 On the briny	8 Nijinsky's forte	30 Competent
24 Stench	25 Sue		33 Ran
25 Sue	Gratton's "F" is for		34 Goblet part
29 Skeletal piece	Gratton's "A" is for		36 Actress
30 Tiny Alice's playwright	31 Witicism		37 Zich, in Xochimilco
			38 Stopover en route to Casa-blanca
			39 Numerical prefix
			40 Zip —
			41 "Doo-Dah"
			42 Uppercut
			43 Exploit
			44 Ultra-modernist
			45 Decade

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CRYPTOQUIP

D H S T K H X O F
K T I O X O H H N F H
E B T S X O I K B D R O N G H
B O F R K G T E
Yesterday's Cryptquip: HAPPY HORSE
LOVERS REALLY HAVE TO BE STABLE PEOPLE.
Today's Cryptquip Clue: T equals U
The Cryptquip is a substitution cipher in which one letter stands for another. If you think that X equals O, it will equal O throughout the puzzle. Single letters, short words and words using an apostrophe give you clues to locating vowels. Solution is by trial and error.