Office hockey

UNB, *Dhaka*

Bangladesh Air Force take on Bangladesh Navy in the opening match of the Fourth Office Hockey League, which begins at the Maulana Bhasani National Stadium on Sunday.

The match between the two service teams kicks off at 2.30 pm.

Six teams are taking part in League they are: Bangladesh Army (Red), Bangladesh Army (Green), Blue Berry Travels and Tours, BKSP, Bangladesh Air Force and Bangladesh Navy.

Top two finishers will meet in the December 8 final.

Bradmans vexed at news reports

AFP, *Sydney*

Donald Bradman's family say they are saddened and distressed at newspaper articles about the personal and business past of Australia's greatest cricketer.

His son John Bradman said it was unfair The Australian newspaper had waited until after his father's death to publish the allegations, when Bradman was unable to defend himself.

An article in The Australian last week quoted Bradman's nephew Paul Bradman alleging the cricket great had cut himself off from his parents, siblings and their children.

The following day the paper alleged Bradman had been complicit in fraudulent dealings at the Adelaide stockbrokers which employed him from 1935 until it was bankrupted by financial scandal in 1945.

In a statement Thursday, the Bradman family and the Bradman Foundation said they were disappointed the newspaper chose to wait some eight months after the cricket legend's death to publish the material.

This had deprived him of a right of reply to material that would "clearly have been defamatory of him and his family", it said.

"The publication of these articles has caused a considerable amount of distress and sadness amongst members of the family and the foundation," it said.

John Bradman added: "My dad was a decent person and scrupulously honest ... it is unfair this material has been published when my dad is not able to defend himself."

The statement said the Bradman family and foundation would not respond to "each and every allegation of wrongdoing or unfairness" made in the articles or in the future.

However they would act together to protect Bradman's reputation from "unscrupulous abuse or exploitation".

Bradman died last February at his Adelaide home, aged 92.

His wife, Jessie Bradman, passed away in 1997.

Ws pull

FROM PAGE 13

drew howls of outrage in India, with one newspaper calling for the ongoing tour of South Africa to be cancelled, and cricket authorities demanding Denness to stand down from the third Test.

But Akram said India would have to accept the decision.

"Pakistan had to bear the brunt when Younis was suspended last year, and Inzamam-ul Haq was suspended for showing dissent," said Akram.

"The match referee must not punish on TV footage but again its up to the ICC to decide about the powers.

"ICC has given all powers to umpires and match referees and one has to abide by that."

"The decision cannot be taken back because it could create a chaos."

Australian captain Steve Waugh applauded Denness' decision saying it showed the ICC was no longer prepared to tolerate on-field misbehaviour.

Langer leads run feast

Cricket

AFP, *Hobart*

Justin Langer made New Zealand pay dearly for a duffed catch to register his third successive Test century as Australia ransacked the bowling on the opening day of the second cricket Test at the Bellerive Oval here Thursday.

Langer, who survived a strident lbw appeal in the first over of the opening Brisbane Test before going on to score a century, profited from a spilt catch off his sixth ball Thursday to compile 123, his 10th Test hundred.

Langer was put down by Matthew Bell in the gully off Daryl Tuffey's first ball of the Test when on one.

"You always have a bit of luck batting in the top order, but if he (Bell) had taken that catch it would have been sensational because I absolutely smoked it," said Langer.

Australia suffered another mid-afternoon flutter of wickets, similar to the first day in Brisbane, but by stumps had scorched along to 411-6 at a blistering scoring rate of 4.5 runs per over.

Tasmanian Ricky Ponting was delighting his home state supporters to be on the verge of his ninth Test century on 92 not out with Shane Warne on 31.

But the first day's play belonged to the breezy batting of Langer, who posted his third consecutive Test hundred after his 102 against England in the fifth Ashes Test at The Oval in August and 104 in Brisbane.

At one stage Langer was on target to join a select group of players to score a century before lunch on the first day, being 59 after the first hour before his scoring rate moderated in the hour to lunch.

"The first hour was a bit surreal to me, I didn't deliberately go out there thinking I was going to be super-aggressive, but they probably gave me a few loose balls than they should have in the first hour of the Test match," said Langer.

"Four hundred and 11 runs in a day in Test cricket is a magnificent effort and we're in a great position.

"Life's pretty good, innit? Three Test centuries in a row or three ducks in a row, life's still pretty good, it's nice to get some runs though."

Langer, who celebrated his 31st birthday on Wednesday, cracked 20 fours in his 153-ball innings before he was caught by Daniel Vettori off Chris Cairns just after the third hour of play.

David Boon was the last Australian batsman to string together three consecutive Test centuries, against England in 1993.

Langer also shared in his third straight century opening partnership with Matthew Hayden, putting on 223 for the first wicket after their 158 at The Oval and 224 in Brisbane.

JUSTIN LANGER...123

Hayden and Langer's sequence of Test opening stands is the most by an Australian first-wicket pair, surpassing Jack Fingleton and Bill Brown's 233, 99 and 162 consecutive partnerships in South Africa in 1935-36.

"We have really enjoyed the first three partnerships together, we're really good mates and walking out together I feel very relaxed batting with Matty Hayden, I seem to gain some strength from him," said Langer, who was recalled for Michael Slater for the last Test of this year's Ashes series.

New Zealand's bowlers, already weakened by the loss of injured pacemen Dion Nash (abdomen) and Shayne O'Connor (knee), laboured to inhibit the blistering Australian tempo. Australia's 400 came off 87 overs nearing stumps.

But once Langer was removed the gritty Kiwis peeled away some wickets, like they did at the Gabba where Australia collapsed from 224 for one to 263 for six.

Hayden holed out to Shane Bond near the boundary off spinner Vettori for 91, which included one six and 11 fours in 212 minutes.

Mark Waugh again looked unconvincing after his duck in Brisbane and was bowled by a Vettori arm-ball for 12 shortly before tea.

Brother Steve looked unlucky to be given out lbw when rapped high on the pad, but nevertheless Bond celebrated his first Test wicket to dismiss the Australian captain for a duck.

Damien Martyn lasted just one ball before he was struck on the boot by Vettori and was given out lbw by West Indian umpire Steve Bucknor leaving Australia at 267 for five -- four wickets falling for 44.

Adam Gilchrist, who broke New Zealand hearts with a belligerent 118 in a first innings rearguard in Brisbane, looked to be in similar vein before he was deceived by the flight of Vettori and was bowled for 39 in 59 minutes with seven fours and a six.

Ponting, whose last three innings in Hobart Tests were 0, 0, 4, finally produced the innings his fans had longed for -- an unbeaten 92 off 121 balls with 14 fours.

Amid the flurry of runs around picturesque Bellerive, Vettori finished the day with 4-99 off 26 overs.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard at stumps on the first day of the second Test between Australia and New Zealand at the Bellerive Oval in Hobart Thursday:

AUSTRALIA: First innings

Langer c Vettori b Cairns	123
Hayden c Bond b Vettori	91
Ponting not out	92
M Waugh b Vettori	12
S Waugh lbw b Bond	0
Martyn lbw b Vettori	0
Gilchrist b Vettori	39
Warne not out	31
Extras: (b-3, lb-3, w-2, nb-15)	23
Total: (For 6 wkts in 90 overs)	411

Fall of wickets: 1-223, 2-238, 3-253, 4-266, 5-267, 6-336

To bat: Brett Lee, Jason Gillespie, Glenn McGrath

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Cairns	24	3	102	1
Tuffey	11	0	58	0
Bond	21	0	95	1
Vettori	26	4	99	4
McMillan	8	0	51	0

NEW ZEALAND: Stephen Fleming, Mark Richardson, Matthew Bell, Mathew Sinclair, Nathan Astle, Craig McMillan, Chris Cairns, Adam Parore, Daniel Vettori, Daryl Tuffey, Shane Bond.

Umpires: Steve Bucknor (West Indies) and Steve Davis (Australia).

Collins hits before rain

Cricket

REUTERS, *Kandy*

Rain washed out play after lunch as West Indies hit back with the second new ball to reduce Sri Lanka to 273 for eight at the close on the second day of the second Test on Thursday.

The rain, which began during lunch, continued throughout the rest of the day and forced the umpires to abandon play at the Asgiriya International Stadium at 1545 local time (0945 GMT).

Until the second new ball arrived after 80 overs, Sri Lanka were making solid progress with the overnight pair of Hashan Tillakaratne and Thilan Samaraweera batting comfortably.

But the new ball changed all that as Tillakaratne (87) played onto a delivery from Pedro Collins attempting a pull.

The left-hander batted for 245 minutes and faced 174 balls hitting one six and nine fours. His dismissal ended a sixth-wicket partnership of 80 with Samaraweera.

Tillakaratne missed out on a world record by 53 minutes having batted a total of 975 minutes without being dismissed in his last four Test innings.

South African Jacques Kallis holds the record, batting for a total of 1028 minutes without being dismissed.

There was a brief interruption of five minutes when the umpires called for the covers as a slight drizzle started falling and, although the batsmen returned to the pavilion, the West Indies team remained on the field.

When play resumed after the short break, Sri Lanka lost the wickets of Samaraweera and Chaminda Vaas without adding to the score.

Samaraweera edged a superb delivery from a fully fit Merv Dillon to wicketkeeper Ridley Jacobs to be dismissed for 29 scored in 122 minutes.

Vaas also went edging Collins to Carl Hooper at second slip without scoring.

Sri Lanka, who had resumed at 193 for five, slipped to 249 for eight after losing three wickets for no runs in 28 balls with the second new ball.

Niroshan Bandaratillake and Nuwan Zoysa prevented any further inroads by West Indies' fast bowlers as they stuck out an undefeated 24-run ninth-wicket partnership.

With the second new ball, left-armer Collins had the remarkable figures of 5-4-5-2 while Dillon's contribution was one for 21 off seven overs.

Sri Lanka lead 1-0 in the three-Test series having won the first Test at Galle by 10 wickets.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard at stumps on the second day of the second cricket Test between Sri Lanka and the West Indies at the Asgiriya Stadium Thursday:

SRI LANKA: First innings (overnight 193-5)

Atapattu lbw b Dillon	0
Jayasuriya c Gayle b Collins	16
Sangakkara b Ramnarine	15
Jayawardene c and b Ramnarine	88
Arnold b Ramnarine	4
Tillakaratne b Collins	87
Samaraweera c Jacobs b Dillon	29
Vaas c Hooper b Collins	0
Bandaratilleke not out	9
Zoysa not out	15
Extras: (lb-6, nb-4)	10
Total: (For 8 wkts in 93 overs)	273

Fall of wickets: 1-1, 2-27, 3-49, 4-53, 5-169, 6-249, 7-249, 8-249

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Dillon	18.2	4	51	2
Collins	26	7	73	3
Stuart	0.1	0	2	0
Gayle	0.3	0	4	0
Hooper	21	6	44	0
Ramnarine	24	6	75	3
Samuels	3	0	18	0

(Note: Dillon, Stuart and Gayle took turns to bowl the fifth over)

Umpires: John Hampshire (England) and MG Silva (Sri Lanka).

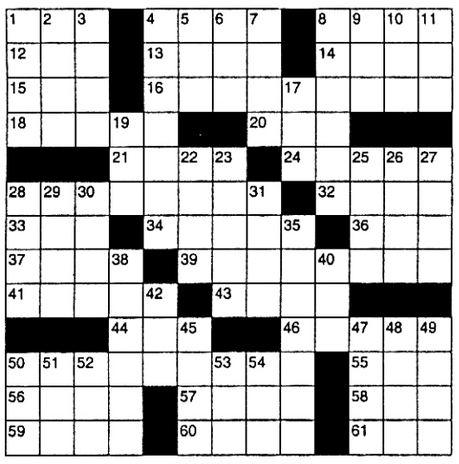
CROSSWORD *By Eugene Sheffer*

ACROSS
1 Urban transport
4 Put into words
8 Overacts
12 Acapulco gold
13 Model Macpherson
14 Tommie of baseball
15 "O Sole —"
16 30th birthday, e.g.
18 Disney movie
20 Bogey beater
21 Feed the kitty
24 Honeydew, e.g.
28 Running the show
32 Prima donna
33 "Hollywood Squares" win
34 Scalawag
36 Nuke
37 "Bow-wow!"
39 Suburban event
41 Bracelet setting
43 Got up
44 Einstein's birthplace
46 Floot-related
50 Free to travel
55 Whatever amount
56 Pennsylvania city
57 Lotion additive
58 He defeated Adlai
59 Use a blowtorch
60 Take care of
61 Vegas opener

DOWN
1 Barbershop prop
2 Bocelli rendition
3 Up time
4 Advanced class
5 Clay, today
6 Poorly
7 Profound
8 Loathing
9 In times past
10 Chaps
11 Witness
17 "Casablanca" pianist
19 "Humbug!"
22 Helen's home
23 Actress Samantha
25 Judy's daughter
26 Ellipse
27 Scruff
28 Davenport setting
29 Lunchtime for some
30 Chef
31 Continental coin
35 Noted name in golf
38 Having some grooves
40 Sailors' milieu
42 Right angle
45 Castle protector
47 Skiers' mecca
48 "Diana" singer
49 Caustic solutions
50 Not a lot
51 Tramcar contents
52 Lubricant
53 Flamenco cheer
54 One of the Trinity

Solution time: 25 mins.

P	U	P	S		G	O	L	F		A	S	S
A	S	A	P		A	R	E	A		W	O	W
C	A	R	I	B	B	E	A	N		E	R	A
			C	U	S	S		T	A	S	T	Y
C	R	E	E	D			B	A	R	T		
H	A	Y	S		P	I	A	S	T	R	E	S
A	C	E		G	U	L	L	Y		U	V	A
R	E	S	T	O	R	E	D		S	C	O	W
		T	I	E	R			H	I	K	E	S
P	O	R	E	S		A	T	O	P			
A	L	A		B	U	S	H	W	H	A	C	K
A	L	I		A	N	T	E		O	G	R	E
R	A	N		D	E	A	N		N	O	O	N



7-18

CRYPTOQUIP

G S D L Z L Y E Q V Y B F L D N K F E Q F B D V G V Y C D B F I C E I B Y K, Y B C S Z C K Z R R D N K F L - L F C Z C Y F L ?

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: TEACHER: "WILLIAM, PLEASE NAME TWO PRONOUNS." SPACED-OUT STUDENT: "WHO, ME?"

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: F equals O

The Cryptoquip 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.

Geiger calls it a day

AFP, *Philadelphia*

Piladelphia 76ers center Matt Geiger, whose availability and effectiveness have been severely limited by chronic knee problems, announced his retirement from the National Basketball Association on Wednesday.

Geiger's announcement came after he was waived by the 76ers. He was in the fourth year of a six-year, 48 million-dollar contract and had been on the injured list since November 9 with degenerative arthritis in both knees.

"Matt is no longer able to effectively play professional basketball because of his ongoing knee problems," 76ers team physician Jack McPhilemy said.

"I can see nothing else in the treatment armamentarium which we can offer to Matt which will come close to ensuring that he will be able to resume playing professional basketball in a normal, pain-free, swelling-free environment. Matt asked if there was anything more that could be done to help his condition, and my answer to him was no," McPhilemy added.

Eng but Ramp sent spinning

AFP, *Hyderabad*

Mark Ramprakash spared England's blushes with an impressive 105 in the three-day tour match against an Indian Board President's team here on Thursday.

Ramprakash held the innings together with his 182-ball knock as the tourists recovered from 149-5 to reach 297-9 at stumps on the opening day at the Lal Bahadur Stadium here.

The middle-order batsman alone applied himself as his teammates faltered against India-reject spinners on a hot day. He struck nine fours and two sixes to neutralise the hosts' early advantage.

SCOREBOARD

First day's scoreboard in the three-day tour match between England and the Indian Board President's XI at the Lal Bahadur Stadium Thursday:

ENGLAND: First innings

Butcher c Surendra b Sarandeep	41
Vaughan c Mongia b Bangar	22
Hussain c Gavaskar b Kartik	46
Thorpe lbw b Kartik	13
Ramprakash b Kartik	105
White b Sarandeep	0
Foster c Martin b Sarandeep	9
Ball c Gavaskar b Sarandeep	28
Ormond lbw b Sarandeep	5
Dawson not out	9
Hoggard not out	0
Extras: (b-4, lb-1, w-1, nb-13)	19
Total: (For 9 wkts in 90 overs)	297

Fall of wickets: 1-51, 2-104, 3-122, 4-139, 5-149, 6-187, 7-239, 8-265, 9-292

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Surendra	13	4	37	0
Yohannan	9	2-	46	0
Bangar	15	3	29	1
Sarandeep	24	0	98	5
Kartik	28	7	77	3
Gavaskar	1	0	5	0

Top guns to play in Sydney Int'l

AFP, *Sydney*

Defending champion Martina Hingis, Lindsay Davenport and Australian and French Open winner Jennifer Capriati were Thursday confirmed as starters for the Sydney International in January.

Tournament Director Craig Watson said Russia's Anna Kournikova would also be playing in the January 6-12 tournament as would American Serena Williams, winner of the recent season-ending Sanex Championships in Munich.

The Sydney International has also attracted entries from the Wimbledon and French Open finalists, Belgium's Kim Clijsters and Justine Henin.

Ganguly

FROM PAGE 13

pick uncapped left-handed opening batsman Connor Williams, who has not played on tour because two non-Test matches were washed out. But the successful promotion of wicketkeeper Deep Dasgupta to open the batting in Port Elizabeth could rule this out.

The Indians showed character in fighting out a draw in Port Elizabeth against the backdrop of the controversy caused by Denness taking disciplinary action against six Indian players, including Sachin Tendulkar.

Dasgupta, one of the players fined for excessive appealing and intimidation of an umpire, made a solid 63 and helped steer India to safety during a 171-run second wicket stand with Rahul Dravid.

South Africa could field an unchanged team for the third successive Test, although in-form batsman Jacques Rudolph is in their 12-man squad. The match is at Rudolph's home ground and if he makes the final team it will be at the expense of Boeta Dippenaar.

South Africa's bowlers will be keen to show improved form at Centurion after relying heavily on skipper Shaun Pollock, who has taken 16 of the 33 Indian wickets in the series.

The South African selectors planned to meet Thursday to pick a team for a three-Test tour of Australia next month but convenor Rushdi Magiet said the side for Australia would only be announced immediately if it included all the players in action at Centurion.

Fast bowler Allan Donald, who has not played any international matches during the current season, practised with the South African team Wednesday and reported no after-effects following a stomach muscle injury. Although not included in the squad for Centurion he is expected to be picked for Australia.

TEAMS

INDIA (from): Sourav Ganguly (captain), Deep Dasgupta, Shiv Das, Rahul Dravid, Sachin Tendulkar, Venkatsai Laxman, Ajit Agarkar, Harbhajan Singh, Anil Kumble, Javagal Srinath, Ashish Nehra, Connor Williams, Venkatesh Prasad, Zaheer Khan, Sameer Dighe.

SOUTH AFRICA: Shaun Pollock (captain), Gary Kirsten, Herschelle Gibbs, Jacques Kallis, Neil McKenzie, Boeta Dippenaar, Lance Klusener, Mark Boucher, Nicky Boje, Mornantau Hayward, Makhaya Ntini, Jacques Rudolph.

Umpires: Rudi Koertzen (South Africa) and George Sharp (England).

Boris Becker with his son Noah.

FILE PHOTO

Boris regrets

Tennis

INTERNET, *Berlin*

Three-times Wimbledon champion Boris Becker said he still loved his ex-wife and that he had now recovered from a two-year mid-life crisis triggered by his father's death.

In an interview in Stern magazine ahead of his 34th birthday on Thursday, Becker declined to comment on the current German investigation into his alleged tax evasion.

Becker said his personal life spun into crisis after his father, Karl Heinz, died in 1999.

"I was completely overwhelmed," Becker said. "I was a mess. I wasn't able to come to terms with the pain over the loss of my father. I couldn't see the sense of it all anymore."

A messy break-up from his wife, the news that he had fathered a child with a Russian model in 1999 while his wife was pregnant, a fling with a rap singer, a failed business and the tax evasion probe sullied his reputation.

"I've got back in touch with myself since the summer," Becker said. "I've done nothing more than try to regain control of my life...I don't ask if I've turned into a giant asshole or ask if the circumstances made me lose my nerves.

"My feet are back on the ground...I've learned a lot in the last year."

Last December Becker announced he and his wife Barbara were splitting up after seven years together. It emerged Becker was having a fling with singer Sabrina Setlur at about the same time his wife was filing for divorce in Florida.

"If it were up to me we wouldn't have divorced," Becker told Stern. "That was never my intention. I still love Barbara today.

"But I was so tied up with all sorts of problems ... We only planned to separate. It turned into a media spectacle and then a divorce -- which neither of us wanted."

Becker blamed lawyers and advisers for the divorce.

"We were no longer captains on the ship," he said. "Advisers and lawyers were running the boat. We were being towed along."

Becker said he visited his children and ex-wife in Florida several times each month, but stayed in a guest house.

Asked if he would remarry, Becker said: "We're happily divorced at the moment. But my motto is: never say never."

Becker said he had not yet met the illegitimate child he fathered with the model, Angela Ermakova.

"At first I cried about it," Becker said. "But now I can laugh about myself."

He said he wanted to visit the child but feared her mother would turn it into a media event.

"The time isn't yet right for that," he said.

Becker, who retired from the ATP tour two years ago, said he was hoping to use his name for a new business venture.

"We're all vain and feel flattered when we enter a room and everyone turns around," Becker said. "But no, I really don't need that...The name Boris Becker is known around the world. I want to take advantage of that."

He declined to comment about reports that prosecutors are to demand some 50 million marks in back taxes from him.

Authorities suspect Becker spent much of his time in Germany in the years 1985 to 1993 even though his official home was listed as Monaco.

"I'm sorry," he said. "That's an on-going procedure. Unfortunately I can't say anything about it."

Venus set for Gold Coast celebrations

AFP, *Gold Coast*

Two-time Wimbledon and US Open champion Venus Williams will celebrate the New Year on Australia's Gold Coast after being named Wednesday to head the Australian Women's Hardcourt tournament.

The event at Royal Pines Resort is played from December 30 to January 5 and is a perfect build-up to the Australian Open, the first Grand Slam tournament of the year, from January 14.

Wimbledon finalist Justine Henin of Belgium will defend her title while France's world No.11 Sandrine Testud and American No.12 Meghann Shaughnessy were also confirmed as starters in the 32-draw tournament.

"Venus only plays where she wants to play and she knows we run a first-class event here," tournament director Liz Smylie said.

"She needs a lead-up tournament to the Australian Open and she wants to do it here."

Williams' sister Serena will play the Sydney International tournament later in January as her warm-up for the Australian Open.