

Premier kabadi

UNB, Dhaka

Bangladesh Rifles reached the semi-final of the Premier Division Kabadi League beating Dilkusha 80-31 with six lonas here yesterday.

The winners led the first half 48-12.

Kuerten Brazil's best

AFP, Brasilia

Tennis star Gustavo Kuerten was Sunday voted Brazilian sports personality of the year in a poll carried by O Estado de Sao Paulo daily and based on polling of 249 newspapers nationwide.

Veteran World Cup winner Romario was voted best footballer while gymnast Daniele Hypolito, just 17, and a silver medal winner at the world championships in Belgium, carried off the title of Brazilian female athlete of 2001.

Kuerten won the French Open for the third time while evergreen Romario is still, at 34, a threat having finished top scorer in the Brazilian league with 21 goals for Vasco da Gama.

PCB leaves

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Lloyd, a former West Indies captain, is expected in Rawalpindi this week.

The first Test is scheduled for Rawalpindi from February 2, the second in Peshawar from February 11 and the third for Faisalabad from February 19.

Hussain may go

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ahead.

"This is a big 15 months coming up, ending with an Ashes tour of Australia and the World Cup.

"I intend doing everything this year, totally full-on, and then handing over to someone else," he said.

Hussain has been a strong captain for England after the side had endured a lean spell in the last decade.

The country won four successive series under his command and have become a far more committed, passionate and mentally stronger outfit since he took over as captain in 1999.

SA turn

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"It's not the end of the world. We've just got to pick up the pieces and get stuck in," he said.

The Australians are also keeping their cards close to their chest, coach John Buchanan telling reporters the decision on whether to include leg spinner Stuart MacGill would have to wait.

MacGill has not played Test cricket for a year but was added to the squad for Sydney, prompting speculation he may bowl in tandem with Shane Warne.

"(The SCG wicket) has shown that it has provided help for the seamers this year, as well as for the spin, so probably by the afternoon of New Year's Day we'll be a bit closer to the final 12," Buchanan said.

MacGill said he was hopeful of playing because of his past record in Sydney but said he wasn't taking anything for granted.

The New South Wales wrist spinner took 12 for 104 against England at the SCG in January 1999 and seven for 44 against the West Indies in Sydney a year ago but hasn't played a Test since.

He was called into the squad for the first Test against South Africa in Adelaide only to be relegated to 12th man, then dropped for the second Test in Melbourne.

"It's not a foregone conclusion, but past form suggests I'd be a likely chance to play," MacGill said.

"At the SCG I've got a tremendous home advantage -- this is where I've taken most of my wickets and anyone doing their research would have noticed that."

Goodbye 2001, hello 2002

FROM PAGE 13

better fills that category than Zafer Imam and Sheikh Nizamuddin who together greatly influenced the Bangladesh Cricket Board elections in February.

But thankfully the media uncovered the scheme and following outcry an inquiry pointed the finger at Imam, the Bangladesh Olympic Association secretary general and Nizam, a Board director from Satkira.

The down side of the story is that the former Board of Saber Hossain Chowdhury took no strong action against the pair.

NOT A SPLASH

Among other minor sports swimming grabbed the headlines.

It was not because it made a splash in the past 12 months. Rather for a sad swimmer who thought he had made a name for himself in Pakistan only to learn days later that his feat was deemed not worth the paper the timing of which it was written because tragically it was not measured electronically.

DEFINING MOMENT

The end of Saber reign as cricket supreme was arguably the story of the 2001. The youngest ever Board president, Saber who changed the sport's landscape was removed in late August from office along with several other politician-cum-sports administrators as part of the caretaker government's effort to ensure a free and fair general elections in October.

Cricket will badly miss the eloquent-speaking Saber.

TRANSITION

Among well-known figures to have left the world of sport included eminent journalists Tawfiq Aziz Khan (Executive Editor of The Daily Star) and Roulful Hassan.

Tawfiq Aziz Khan, a well-known television and radio commentator, lost his battle with lung cancer in February 11. During the 64-year-old's distinguished career

he was the first Bangladeshi to cover all four tennis Grand Slams.

Roulful, who was the former Sports Editor of The Bangladesh Observer and Special Correspondent, died after suffering a stroke in November. His career spanned nearly a quarter of a century.

Their contribution to field of

sport will be forever recalled.

Just like in life there is no final word or chapter that can perfectly sum up a course of an event or happening. The best thing we can do as the curtain falls is perhaps make a renewed pledge to reach a certain goal in the days and months ahead. Farewell 2001! Welcome 2002!



MASHRAFEE-BIN-MORTUZA ... the fastest Bangladeshi gun

Langer left out for ODIs

Cricket

REUTERS, Sydney

In-form opener Justin Langer has been left out of the Australian squad for the triangular limited-overs series against South Africa and New Zealand in January and February.

Despite scoring a mountain of runs in the past few months, Langer failed to make either the 14-man squad or the 12-man Australia "A" team, announced on Monday.

Langer, who has scored centuries in four of his last six Tests for Australia, was the only member of the current Australian Test squad to miss out on a place in the one-day team.

With Adam Gilchrist and Mark Waugh now established as Australia's one-day openers, the selectors opted to leave out Langer and bring in one-day specialists Michael Bevan, Ian Harvey and Andrew Symonds.

Australian Test fast bowler Jason Gillespie was also left out of the main squad after injury forced him to miss last weekend's series clinching victory over South Africa

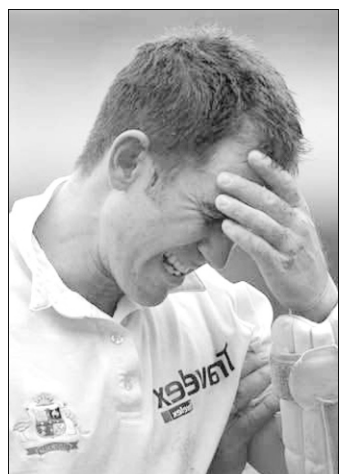
Brisbane on January 8 and against South Africa in Adelaide on January 10.

The triangular international series begins on January 11 when Australia hosts New Zealand at the Melbourne Cricket Ground. The three teams will play each other four times in a 12-match round-robin phase before the top two sides meet in a best-of-three finals series.

The Kiwis are expected to confirm their squad by the end of the week while the South Africans have already announced pace bowler Charl Langeveldt, batsman Jonty Rhodes and all-rounder Justin Kemp will replace three, as yet, unnamed players in the squad already in Australia.

It is also likely that left-arm spinner Nicky Boje, who missed the first two Tests against Australia through injury, will supplement the tour party, although this is yet to be confirmed.

AUSTRALIA: Steve Waugh (captain), Adam Gilchrist, Michael



JUSTIN LANGER

but was included in the A team pending a fitness Test. Australia A will play warm-up matches against New Zealand in

Hopman Cup Spain abase Argentina

Tennis

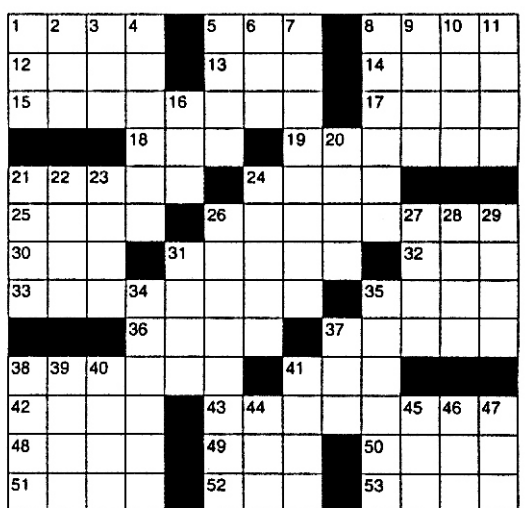
AFP, Perth

Third-seeded Spain defeated unseeded Argentina 3-0 in a first round Hopman Cup tennis clash at Burswood Dome here Sunday night.

Nineteen-year-old Tommy Robredo clinched victory for Spain -- winners of the Cup 12 years ago -- when he overcame Mariano Zabaleta in three sets in a men's singles match.

Robredo won 4-6, 6-2, 6-3 in 113 minutes on the opening day of the million dollar (500,000 US) mixed teams' event.

Spanish veteran Aranzaba



CRYPTOQUIP

K E W Q R A F P E W T M H Z I
N P R T P N U T F F A V Q U E W T
Z E V Z I N , M F W N N E W U W P

M F K Q V Q P E W A F H P E ?
Yesterday's Cryptoquip: THAT WOMAN ALWAYS HAS BOYFRIENDS NAMED WILLIAM. SHE'S DEFINITELY A BILL COLLECTOR.

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.

Windies lack pace!

REUTERS, Port of Spain

West Indies must go back to square one in an attempt to discover fresh pace bowling talent, according to coach Roger Harper.

Harper, speaking in the wake of the team's 3-0 Test series defeat in Sri Lanka, said: "The first thing that we must do is to start a very serious campaign for bowlers.

"We have to find players with the right build and athleticism, then harness those into the rudiments of fast bowling."

West Indies have been in gradual decline since their domination of the sport -- mainly through their pace bowlers -- in the 1970s and early 1980s.

The last in the line, however, Curtly Ambrose and Courtney Walsh, have retired in the last 16 months. Walsh, the holder of the world record for test wickets with 519, played his last test against South Africa in April 2001.

Harper, looking back at the Sri Lankan test tour which ended in December, told reporters: "We did not bowl well at all in the tests, and allowed Sri Lanka to take control with their batting."

"That, however, is not the only worry about the team. We have to look at each area of our cricket and work at the entire development of West Indies cricket."

West Indies' pace bowling options in Sri Lanka were not helped by spearhead Reon King being ruled out of the tour without playing a test with a hernia problem while Mervyn Dillon -- the most successful quick of the party with nine wickets at 42.11 -- was sent home later in the tour.

He had refused to train because he was worried over player safety during the Sri Lankan elections.

Team manager Ricky Skerritt echoed Harper's concerns about the team's bowling resources.

"There is no stability at all in our team. For whatever reasons, we have used 17 or 18 bowlers in the last 18 months, so no players have been able to constantly keep their place, hence no gradual improvement."

BAF athletics

Base Zahurul retain title

PRESS RELEASE, Dhaka

The reigning champions BAF Base Zahurul Haque retained the title of the annual inter-base Athletic Championship of the Bangladesh Air Force which concluded at the BAF Base Zahurul Haque on Sunday.

They collected 10 gold, 08 silver and 08 bronze medals.

BAF Base Bashar became runners-up with 7 gold, 6 silver and 6 bronze medals.

Sepoy Jabbar of BAF Base Bashar was adjudged the best athlete-of-the-year. He collected four golds alone.

Chief of the Air Staff Air Vice-Marshal M Rafiqul Islam was present as chief guest and gave away the prizes among the winners.

Pabna soccer

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

Agrani (Red) defeated Jagarani Sangha 6-1 in the Radhuni Second Division Football League at the local stadium yesterday.

Farid scored hattrick. Munna, Jashim and Don netted one each for the winners while Rakib pulled back one for the losers.

Friendly b'ball

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Red defeated Bangladesh Green by 64-47 points in an exhibition basketball match arranged on Monday as part of the 30th anniversary of the country's independence.

The game, played at the Dhanmondi Gymnasium, featured a host of present and former national cagers.

Both the present and past Bangladesh Basketball Federation (BBF) presidents Maj Gen ZA Khan (retired) and Professor Rashiduddin Ahmed witnessed the match and gave away prizes among the participants.

BBF vice-president Selim Chowdhury, general secretary Imtiaz Khan and other high officials of the federation were present on the occasion.

Seles, Gambill lift USA

Tennis

AFP, Perth

Former world No 1 Monica Seles and Jan-Michael Gambill gave the top-seeded United States a decisive victory over unseeded France in a Hopman Cup tennis clash at Burswood Dome here Monday.

The pair, runners-up in the million dollar (500,000 US) mixed

72nd.

Seles had to fight hard to get home in straight sets, winning 6-3, 6-4 in 62 minutes.

Then the 24-year-old Gambill (ranked 21st) wore down a determined Arnaud Clement, 24, (18th) to win 6-4, 6-4 in 91 minutes.

In the doubles, Seles and Gambill coasted home 6-1, 6-4.

The Americans are aiming to go one better than last year when they were beaten by Swiss pair Martina Hingis and Roger Federer in the

shape. "That is one of the reasons I am here. I will be in shape by the end of the tournament.

"I just aim to keep improving in the new year, and if I do, I think I have a chance to beat anyone when I am playing well."

Gambill was pressed hard by Clement before taking the first set in 47 minutes.

But the American gained the ascendancy in the second set, breaking in the third and fifth games.

"There were too many breaks of service against me. But it was my first match of the season, and it was not easy," Clement said.

Seles said she had expected her clash with Razzano to be tough.

"She was a top junior player in the world, so it was no surprise that she fought so well," she said.

Seles said she still had the hunger to strive to regain her position at the top of her sport.

"This is why you play," she said. "But I want to try not to peak too early this season.

"I had not played any matches for three months, and it's always a bit nerve-racking when you return, but once I got into it today, I felt good."

Razzano said she had not been nervous in her clash with Seles.

"It was a good experience to play here," she said. "But it was a bit difficult to play with men in the doubles."

Seles, slow into her stride, slipped to 2-3 in her opening set against Razzano, but recovered quickly, claiming the set after snatching four games in a row.

In the second set, Seles broke her opponent in the opening game and completed victory with relative ease despite Razzano's tenacious efforts.



PHOTO: AFP

Americans Monica Seles (L) and Jan-Michael Gambill celebrate their victory against Arnaud Clement and Virginie Razzano of France at the Hopman Cup in Perth on Monday.

teams' event last year, both won their singles encounters before wrapping up the mixed doubles to give the US a 3-0 clean sweep.

The 28-year-old Seles -- currently ranked eighth -- recovered from a shaky start to overpower Virginie Razzano, 18, who is ranked

final of the eight-nation contest.

Gambill said: "I got a little tentative at the end of the singles, but it was a great start to my year.

"Arnaud is a great scrapper and I am delighted to beat him, even though I am frankly a bit out of

Lanka, Murali on a roll

FROM PAGE 13

The tourists suffered a big blow when a prolific Andy Flower was trapped 'leg-before' by left-arm seamer Nuwan Zoysa for 10 just before lunch.

The 21-year-old Buddika did the early damage when he removed skipper Stuart Carlisle (32) and Gavin Rennie (four) in his two overs.

Zimbabwe, resuming at 64-2 after a rest day on Sunday, battled steadily for an hour before being rocked by Buddika, playing only his second Test.

Buddika got his first Test wicket when he had Carlisle caught by wicketkeeper Kumar Sangakkara.

Rennie did not last long, edging Buddika to Mahela Jayawardene in the slips after making just four.

SCOREBOARD

Complete scoreboard on the fourth day of the first cricket Test between Sri Lanka and Zimbabwe at the Sinhalese Sports Club ground in Colombo on Monday:

SRI LANKA: First innings 586-6 declared (K Sangakkara 128, T Samaraweera 123 not out, H Tillakaratne 96, S Jayasuriya 92; C Vaas 74 not out, H Streak 3-113)

ZIMBABWE: First innings 184 (A Flower 42, M Muralitharan 4-53, N Zoysa 2-24, C Vaas 2-63)

ZIMBABWE: Second innings Masakadza c Atapattu b M'tharan 28 Grippier c Sangakkara b M'tharan 10 Carlisle c Sangakkara b Buddika 32 Friend b M'tharan 44

Rennie c Jayawardene b Buddika 4 A Flower lbw b Zoysa 10 G Flower c Tillakaratne b M'tharan 18

Wishart c Tillakaratne b S'weera 27 Streak not out 36 Brent c Jayasuriya b Zoysa 7

Olonga c Sangakkara b Vaas 0 Extras: (b-4, lb-7, nb-9) 20

Total: (All out in 101.2 overs) 236

Fall of wickets: 1-40, 2-58, 3-93, 4-105, 5-127, 6-145, 7-165, 8-197, 9-235

Bowler O M R W Vaas 21.2 6 76 1 Zoysa 15 4 34 2 Buddika 15 3 48 2 M'tharan 36 17 35 4 Jayasuriya 7 3 22 0 S'weera 7 2 10 1

Result: Sri Lanka won by an innings and 166 runs.

Man-of-the-match: Muttiah Muralitharan. Umpires: Peter Manuel (Sri Lanka) and Riazuddin (Pakistan).

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS 36 Ties up the phone peninsula 37 Sweet-heart 5 Links stat 8 Appellation 12 "Sad to say..." 13 Big fuss 14 Director Kazan 15 Congratulatory slap 17 "Timberlane" 18 Scoundrel 19 Be aware of 21 Mullally of "Will & Grace" 24 Ancient portico 25 English school building 26 Urban apartment building 30 Type of block 31 Cobbler's supply 32 Heel 33 Cooper classic 35 Connection

DOWN 1 "Phooey!" 2 Foreman foe 3 Binge holder 4 Garbage holder 5 Poker holding 6 Pt. of speech 7 X-ray discoverer 8 Drink of the gods 9 Jai follower 10 Odds and ends (Abbr.) 11 Facility on opening night, maybe 12 Network addr. 13 Ready 14 Caged 15 Section 16 On in years 17 Jima preceder 18 Exist 19 Breakable alibi 20 Started



PHOTO: STAR

Players and officials of both Bangladesh Red and Green pose for photographers along with the guests after the end of a friendly basketball match at the Woodenfloor Gymnasium in Dhanmondi on Monday.