

Murali in England

AFP, London

Off-spinner Muttiah Muralitharan has joined the Sri Lanka team in England, a statement issued by the tourists confirmed Sunday.

Muralitharan, 30, had been having treatment in Australia after suffering a dislocation and torn ligaments in his left shoulder during the Sharjah Cup final against Pakistan last month.

"The Sri Lankan team management confirmed that Muttiah Muralitharan had arrived in England yesterday (Saturday)," the statement said.

Tour manager Chandra Schaffter added: "He is in good spirits and looks forward to playing as soon as possible."

"He was wearing a sling and it was removed. His fitness will be assessed again in four days time."

Sri Lanka are currently in a strong position in the first Test having made England follow-on.

Earlier this week Schaffter suggested that there was no chance of Muralitharan being fit for the Second Test of the three match series at Edgbaston on May 30.

And he added that he would not be surprised if the bowler missed the Third Test at Old Trafford on June 13.

After the Test series Sri Lanka are involved in a triangular one-day tournament also featuring England and India, where Muralitharan could still take part.

Muralitharan is one of the most effective bowlers currently in world cricket.

In 73 Tests he has taken 412 wickets at an average of 23.38. He has taken five wickets in an innings 33 times and 10-wicket hauls in a match ten times.

Ranatunga calls 'em amateurs

AFP, London

Former Sri Lanka captain Arjuna Ranatunga has accused England of bowling like 'amateurs' in the First Test here at Lord's.

Nasser Hussain's men start Sunday's play 53 without loss in their second innings still 227 runs short of making Sri Lanka bat again after the tourists piled up 555 for eighth in their first innings.

And Ranatunga said England's bowlers had helped the Sri Lankan batsmen on their way.

"What Nasser Hussain could not have expected was that his team would bowl like such amateurs, with so many down the leg-side," Ranatunga wrote in the Observer newspaper here Sunday.

"They were bowlers' mistakes but to bowl repeatedly so short to Sri Lanka's batsmen was a tactical mistake," Ranatunga added.

"If conditions don't favour torment, better the batsman should be teased and tempted than allowed to watch deliveries sail harmlessly by..."

"They (England) have to be more imaginative than waiting for us to self-destruct. Nuwan Zoysa's two huge hooked sixes (off Matthew Hogard) showed how even our tail-enders had no problem with the short stuff."

"For all their experience, England have showed Sri Lanka how not to bowl on this wicket," Ranatunga insisted.

Pabna cricket

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

PYC (Green) defeated Shikhharti Cricket Club by 29 runs in the Pepsi First Division Cricket League at the Pabna Stadium yesterday.

Winning the toss, PYC decided to bat first and scored 163 runs for nine wickets in 46.2 overs.

In reply, Shikhharti managed 134 runs all out in 41.2 overs.

Hinds grinds India down



AFP, Kingston

Opener Wavell Hinds smashed an attractive 113 as India's decision to put the West Indies in to bat back-fired in the fifth and final Test here on Saturday.

The 25-year-old Jamaican cracked two sixes and 14 fours in his second Test hundred to help his team post an impressive 287-4 at stumps on the opening day at the Sabina Park.

Skipper Carl Hooper was unbeaten on 14 and Shivnarine Chanderpaul on four. They already have two double-century stands to their credit in the series.

The West Indies lost three wickets for 18 runs in the closing session, but not before Hinds had put his team in a sound position.

Off-spinner Harbhajan Singh dismissed Hinds and Ramnaresh Sarwan (65), while left-arm fast bowler Ashish Nehra removed Brian Lara (9) for the third time in four innings to reduce the hosts from 246-1 to 264-4.

India came across a chance to improve their position, but Shiv Das dropped a prolific Hooper on 10 in the covers off Nehra.

Sarwan again played an exciting cameo before falling immediately after completing his fourth half-century against the tourists. He has so far hit 13 fifties in his 22 Tests, but is still without a century.

Lara struggled during his brief stay at the crease before edging the fast bowler to wicket-keeper Ajay Ratna, who dived to his left to bring off a low catch.

The late reversals, however, failed to severely affect the West Indies as India needed wickets in the first session to gain an upper hand, but were thwarted by Hinds.

Hinds put on 111 for the opening wicket with Chris Gayle (68) and 135 for the second with Sarwan to make India skipper Sourav Ganguly rue his decision to field after winning the toss for the first time in five matches.

His stand with Gayle was the West Indies' best for the opening wicket in the ongoing series, shattering Ganguly's hopes of capturing early wickets on a lively track.

Hinds became off-spinner Harbhajan Singh's 100th Test victim as he was caught by Wasim Jaffer at long-off in the last session while going for his third six.

The left-hander, dropped for the first three Tests, regained his place with an entertaining 175 in a three-

day game against the tourists at St Lucia last month.

He continued to relish the Indian attack, slamming an impressive 65 in his comeback Test at Antigua before exposing the tourists' bowling limitations on his home ground.

The West Indies were indebted to their left-handed openers for



PHOTO: AFP

Security people push back fans who ran onto the field after West Indies' Wavell Hinds had scored a century on the opening day of the fifth and final Test against India in Kingston on May 18.

getting off to a flying start as both Gayle and Hinds dominated the Indian bowling with a wide range of attacking shots.

Gayle struck 13 fours in his sixth Test half-century before being caught steering left-arm fast bowler Zaheer Khan by Jaffer at gully in the afternoon. He also completed 1,000 runs in his 21st Test.

The tourists had to wait for more than a session for their first success before Zaheer dismissed Gayle, suffering from cramps after completing his half-century.

The five-match series is presently tied at 1-1, with India winning the second Test and the West Indies the third.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard at stumps on the opening day of the fifth and final Test between India and the West Indies at the Sabina Park here on Saturday:

WEST INDIES: First innings
Gayle c Jaffer b Zaheer 68
Hinds c Jaffer b Harbhajan 113

Nigeria coach predicts upset

AFP, Lagos

Nigeria coach Adegboye Onigbinde has predicted his team will create an upset at the World Cup despite being drawn in the 'Group of Death' with Argentina, England and Sweden.

"My players will rise to the occasion. It's good that we peaked at the right time and I believe the world will see the wonder of Nigeria in Japan," Onigbinde told a local radio station here Sunday.

"We're now playing as a team, not individual players exhibiting their talent as they used to say in the past."

"I'm happy to say we were able to discover some great players toward the end of our build-up. And now we do have the right spirit for the World Cup," he added.

"I believe we have a fair a chance as the other teams in our so-called 'Group of Death'."

The 64-year-old former school-teacher was appointed for a second time as the country's coach in February after Shaibu Amodu failed to lead the team to the final of the African Nations Cup.

The 'Super Eagles' have been unbeaten under Onigbinde - they have won four matches and drawn one.

Taribo West, who has been without a club since he parted ways with Bundesliga outfit Kaiserslautern in April, said Nigeria will do well at the tournament, which begins May 31.

England team's drinking spree

AFP, London

The England World Cup football party ran up a bar bill of almost 37,000 pounds (59,000 euros, 54,000 dollars) in just three days at their luxury hotel in Dubai before jetting off to Korea, the Sunday Mirror reported.

The paper said that the 121-strong party, which included 23 players, their families, manager Sven Goran Eriksson and team officials, had consumed so many drinks that the English Football Association (FA) agreed to put its credit card behind the bar to reassure worried staff.

It quoted a hotel source as saying: "The bill for the accommodation and food was over 100,000 pounds but that was expected."

"But it was a huge shock when the bill for the drinks was checked."

But English Football Association spokesman Paul Newman denied the report.

"It's completely fictitious," Newman told BBC radio. "I think everybody just laughs these things off and carries on."

The England squad arrived at the sub-tropical South Korean island of Jeju in the early hours of Sunday and were soon in training to prepare for a friendly match on Tuesday against South Korea, the World Cup co-hosts.

What to watch

FROM PAGE 13

Live at 4:00 pm
Dhaka Abahani vs Chittagong Abahani
Live at 6:00 pm
ESPN

Western Union World Football
Repeat at 9:00 am
England vs Sri Lanka
First Test, Day Five
Live at 3:58 pm
Cricket Programming
Super Selector
Repeat at 11:00 pm
Sportscentre Hindi
Sport News
Live at 11:30 pm
STAR Sports
Soccer World Cup Heroes
Platini
Repeat at 2:30 pm
Sportsline Tonight
Sport News
Live at 10:00 pm
West Indies vs India
Fourth Test, Day Three
Live at 9:00 pm



PHOTO: STAR

Players and officials of the Sadharan Bima team who became unbeaten champions in the First Division Hockey League yesterday. They defeated Azad Sporting 1-0 in the last match yesterday at the Maulana Bhasani Stadium.

Mark's mind made-up



REUTERS, Sydney

Mark Waugh has joined the growing band of senior Australian cricketers refusing to tour Pakistan because of security fears, raising more doubts over whether the tour will proceed.

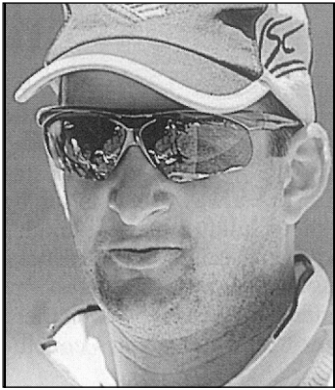
Waugh said he expected the tour would be called off but if it wasn't he would follow the lead of other senior players including Steve Waugh, Shane Warne, Glenn McGrath and Adam Gilchrist by refusing to go.

"I wouldn't go. I think it's too dangerous, life is much more important than cricket," said Waugh, in a television interview broadcast in Australia on Sunday.

"Common sense and gut feeling says it's too dangerous a place to be. If you're in the wrong place at the

wrong time you don't know what might happen."

The Australians, named last week as the world's best sports team in 2001, are scheduled to visit Pakistan in September and October



MARK WAUGH

but the tour is in doubt following a suicide bombing in Karachi earlier this month killed 14 people and forced the New Zealand team to immediately abandon the remainder of their two-Test tour.

The Australian Cricket Board (ACB) said it was monitoring the situation before making a final decision but was already looking into the possibility of playing at a neutral venue.

Waugh said he expected the tour to Pakistan would be called off but said the players would support playing at a neutral venue.

"I don't think the tour will go ahead and I don't think it should go ahead but it's not up to me," Waugh said.

"It's up to the ACB and the Pakistan Cricket Board to work it out...but realistically it doesn't look like it will go ahead."

Federer prevails



AFP, Hamburg

Swiss 11th seed Roger Federer won the 2,828 million dollar Hamburg Masters Series on Sunday with a 6-1, 6-3, 6-4 victory over Russian sixth seed Marat Safin.

The 20-year-old Federer pocketed 372,000 dollars for his third career win, achieved in 2hr 3min as he landed his first Masters Series title while Safin takes home 196,000 dollars.

Federer joked that having lost in the opening round in Rome last week he wondered whether he should even show up in Hamburg.

"I played so badly last week I thought I wouldn't come. But today I played really well, luckily."

"It's not been a great tournament for me on my previous two visits as I lost in the first round. But this time I'd say it's a wonderful tournament. It's

been an incredible tournament for me this week," Federer laughed.

Safin swallowed his disappointment to praise his rival, who is now just one point behind him in the ATP Champions Race going into the French Open.

"Roger was the best player out there on court today," he readily acknowledged.

Safin, who fell to Gustavo Kuerten in the 2000 final here, had been chasing his third Masters Series title after winning Toronto and Paris two seasons ago.

By reaching the final at the Rothenbaum arena for the second time he had already assured himself, win or lose, of displacing Sweden's Thomas Johansson at the head of the Race when the new standings are published on Monday.

Australian Open champion Johansson had topped the form guide for three months but crashed in the second round here to Argentine Mariano Zabaleta.

But Federer, a 20-year-old from Basle, had beaten Safin, a 22-year-old from Moscow, in both of their previous meetings, both coming on clay - in Rome last year and also in this season's Davis Cup World Group first round.

And he completed his hat-trick of wins over his rival thanks to two superb sets to motor clear.

Although he couldn't keep that form up in the third Federer benefited from a dreadful performance overall by Safin, who cursed his way through the match and who picked up a code violation warning for some trademark racket abuse.

Safin, the 2000 US Open champion, had played brilliantly in dumping out top seed and world number one Lleyton Hewitt in the quarter-finals but this time he could not produce any of that form as he failed to take his 11th career title.

Federer was playing his second Masters Series final of the year, having lost to Andre Agassi in Miami.

Serena sinks Henin



AFP, Rome

Serena Williams of the United States won the 1.24-million-dollar WTA Masters Series tournament here Sunday, beating Justine Henin of Belgium 7-6, 6-4 in the final.

It was sweet revenge for the

fourth-seeded American who had lost the final of last week's Berlin Open to fifth-ranked Henin in a third-set tie-break but was the better player on the red clay at the Foro Italico as she clinched her 14th career title.

The early games went with serve with the first notable incident coming in game seven at deuce.

Williams, who already had a heavily strapped right thigh, pulled

up in pain as she turned after playing a backhand and although Henin missed an easy smash, giving the point to the American, Serena needed five minutes of on court treatment on her right ankle.

But when she resumed she seemed unaffected and the tightly-contested set continued as before with Williams forcing with her superior physique but Henin producing some outstanding defence and using heavy slice.

But at 5-4 Henin faltered, going down to 0-40 with Williams looking poised to claim the set.

However, the feisty 19-year-old saved all of them to level and the set duly went to a tie-break.

The American quickly took a 6-4 lead in the tie-break but the gutsy Henin, who herself had a heavily-banded left leg, saved both set points, the second with a brilliant backhand pass.

But the American, watched by mother Oracene and sister Venus who pulled out of this tournament at short notice Tuesday and will lose her world number one ranking to Jennifer Capriati on Monday, finally wrapped up the set in 69 minutes with her sixth set point and third in the tie-break.

The early stages of the second set were also fairly even but in game seven Henin appeared to wilt.

At 15-40 she saved two break points but could not defend a third as Williams edged into the lead.

Serena, the 1999 US Open champion, immediately squandered the advantage as she conceded serve in the next very game but Henin again lost her serve to allow the American to serve for the match.

Williams took the second of her match points as Henin hit her service return long and savoured a victory that will stand her in good stead ahead of the French Open at Roland Garros which will start in Paris on May 27.



PHOTO: AFP

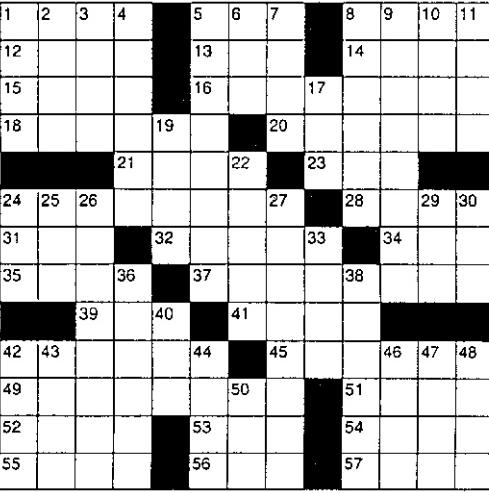
American Serena William waves to the crowd after she won her game against compatriot Jennifer Capriati in the semifinal of the Tennis Masters Series in Rome yesterday.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS
1 Low voice
5 Smack body
8 Secure
12 In the Black?
13 Big fuss
14 Support
15 Western state
16 Diamond call
18 African nation
20 Holly-wood handouts
21 Charlie Brown's expletive
23 "Ich bin — Berliner"
24 Water-fall
28 "Zounds!"
31 Eggs
32 Undress
34 Blunder
35 Body powder
37 Easter precursor
39 Pitching stat

DOWN
1 7-Down's creator
2 The Charles'
3 Close
4 Vest light
5 Angry stretch
6 Mrs. McKinley
7 Dorothy's dog
8 Coin of the realm
9 Set up
10 Quartet
11 Actor Omar
17 Mao
18 -lung
19 "Star"
22 Discard
24 Barracks bed
25 Ms. Gardner
26 Gifted
27 Cham-pionship con-tenders
29 Coach Parsogh-ian
30 Parched
33 Boy (Lat.)
36 Ware-house stack
38 Reared
40 Devoured
42 Wedge
43 Relaxa-tion
44 There-fore
46 Pop
47 Epochal
48 Big rig
50 Diving bird

Solution time: 21 mins.
RAIABAT RADIAL
RENEIGE AVENUE
AINKLEIS SARTRE
YIOHIO TWAS EAIR
WITH TAYR
GIALDUES DOTAL
ELTIZABETHODICE
MANOE EZRA REX
GOT EATS
EVE HORN POGO
GERIARD GALLIO
GATINIO EVADES
SUEDEIS RATES



CRYPTOQUIP

R O Z F P J R S P M P J R C

S G C R J A X R Y J S C G R X Y F S G W

S G E Y J P K O S M Z O Z C

C S X H K S R O H A G W E M A

Saturday's Cryptiquip: WHEN I ORDER DUCK, I REQUIRE THE WAITER TO START US OFF WITH CHEESE AND QUACKERS.

Today's Cryptiquip Clue: J equals R

The Cryptiquip 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.

CUP CORNER

FROM PAGE 13

Britons who are not on immigration blacklists are free to Thailand, the Bangkok Post quoted officials as saying, despite concern voiced in London Friday that England fans would try to travel to Japan via Bangkok.

"If all their documents are right, we have no reason not to let them in," deputy immigration police chief Ukrit Patchimsawat reportedly told the English-language daily.

He said Special Branch officers and police at the notoriously rowdy Pattaya beach resort south of Bangkok have found no evidence of irregular preparations by bar owners for the World Cup, which kicks off in under two weeks.

Police spokesman Pongsapat Pongcharoen said Thai authorities have also kept a close eye on British tourists who are visiting Thailand in the run-up to the world's biggest football tournament, but there was little suspicion of hooliganism as few large groups were seen traveling together.

"If British soccer hooligans are not on the blacklist, we can not ban them from entering the country or transiting to other countries," police spokesman Pongsapat Pongcharoen told reporters Saturday.

Britain's National Criminal Intelligence Service warned last Friday that England fans were trying to travel to Japan via Thailand.

Over 1,000 alleged English football hooligans have been banned from this year's World Cup, ten times the number who were barred from the European Championships two years ago, British police said in London.

The fans were told to surrender their passports and would not get them back until the end of the tournament in a bid to prevent them from travelling to Asia.

Profiles of another 200 potential troublemakers have been passed to Japanese authorities, British police said.

Some 8,000 English fans are expected to journey to Japan, where England will play their first-phase group matches.