

Abahani abase Ajax

SPORTS REPORTER

Abahani Krira Chakra registered their eleventh win in the Green Delta Premier Division Hockey League with a 5-1 victory over Ajax Sporting Club at the Maulana Bhasani Stadium yesterday.

The winners led the first half 1-0. Winger Ramijuddin and forward Ashraf Islam scored two goals each while Mirajul added the other goals. On the other hand, Biaka Lusai reduced the margin for Ajax.

With yesterday's win, Abahani raised their tally to 33 points from 13 matches.

In the other match of the day, Bangladesh Sporting Club posted a hard-fought 4-3 win over Dhaka Railway.

The match was locked 2-2 in the first session.

Indian recruit Christopher struck twice while Kishore and Jamil scored once each for the winners. On the other hand, Sudhir, Salam and Wahidul scored one apiece for Railway.

Mike to evaluate Morocco venue

PRESS RELEASE, London

The Cricket Federation of Morocco yesterday announced that ICC match referee Mike Procter would visit the country to inspect the facilities at the newly established cricket stadium in Tangier later this month.

The inspection, which is to take place on the 15th and 16th of this month, is to assess Tangier as an officially approved ICC venue, after which the venue can host events featuring Test playing countries.

The new state-of-the-art stadium is scheduled to host its first triangular one-day series between South Africa, Pakistan and Sri Lanka from August 12 to 21.

Moha Boujil, secretary of the Moroccan federation, said, "The Stadium at Tangier offers modern cricketing facilities that we believe are consistent with international standards."

"The square, outfield and playing area have all been developed to meet ICC standard playing conditions. We are extremely confident that ICC will be impressed with the new facilities offered at the Tangier Cricket Stadium for staging international matches."

Denness inquiry after 3 months

REUTERS, London

The International Cricket Council's (ICC's) inquiry into disciplinary procedures followed by ICC match referee Mike Denness in a Test match in South Africa last year has been put back by at least three months, the ICC has said.

Former England captain Denness is shortly to undergo surgery and his presence was required at a meeting of the ICC's disputes resolution committee scheduled for June 6 and 7, the ICC said in a statement.

"Michael Beloff QC considered his attendance to be crucial for the committee to be able to reach firm and fair conclusions," Friday's statement read.

"That meeting has now been deferred for at least three months, following confirmation that Mike Denness is to undergo surgery in the near future and will not be in a position to attend the inquiry."

The ICC inquiry has been set up to examine the action taken by Denness against six Indians, including Sachin Tendulkar for ball tampering, during the second Test against South Africa in Port Elizabeth last November.

Ask Uncle Vieira

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get a grip on proceedings while Senegal shone.

Vieira had already himself admitted long before the game that it would be a curious sensation playing against the country of his birth.

"He said so himself. His heart is with Senegal and his feet are with France," said Preira, briefly turning to anyone who would listen before engrossing himself once more in the action.

When Pape Bouba Diop opened the score on the half hour for what would prove to be the only goal, Preira leapt to his feet and shouted gleefully: "That's what I predicted! I said that Senegal was going to win 1-0 and I hope it stays like that."

His wish was granted as the Lions of Taranga held out for a famous win greeted with choruses of "well done the Lions!"

Preira has not seen Vieira since the latter moved to France aged just eight to adopt the blue of France rather than the red, green and yellow - but he hoped that "he'll make a quick visit to the homeland this year."

What to watch

- ESPN**
 - Cricket Programming
 - Super Selector
 - Repeat at 11:00 pm
 - West Indies vs India**
 - Fifth ODI
 - Live at 7:35 pm
- STAR Sports**
 - World Cup Today
 - Repeat at 10:00 am
 - England vs Sri Lanka**
 - Second Test, Day Four
 - Live at 6:28 pm

Minhaz called up SL-bound primary squad named

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

Former national captain Minhazul Abedin earned a recall after a gap of three years when the national selectors announced a preliminary list of thirty-six cricketers for next month's tour of Sri Lanka.

Minhaz, the experienced middle-order batsman, announced his retirement from international cricket after Bangladesh's successful World Cup campaign in 1999.

The right-hander however changed his mind after Bangladesh were granted Test status in June 2000.

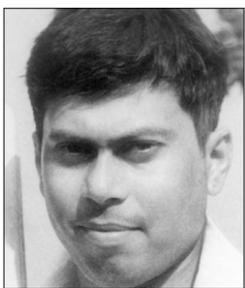
The selectors initially ignored his plea but after his performance in this season's National League where he scored more than thousand first-class runs, the Mainul Haq led three-member selection committee had no choice but to take the 37-year-old all-rounder back in the fold.

Also earning call-ups were former national captain Naimur Rahman, middle-order Akram Khan and left-arm spinner Mohammad Rafique.

There are plenty of newcomers in the primary squad who staked their claims after their brilliant performances either in the national or just concluded Premier League.

They are openers Ehsanul Haque, Hannan Sarkar, Rafiqul Islam, Muniruzzaman, middle-order batsmen Mazharul Haque, Faisal Hossain, Hasanuzzaman, wicketkeeper Sajjad Kadir, all-rounder Alok Kapali and pacers Talha Zubayer, Alamgir Kabir and Anwar Hossain.

Leg-spinner Mosaddek Hossain, who was a Bangladesh prospect in



MINHAZUL ABEDIN

1998 but went into the wilderness, also made it into the 36-man list.

Interestingly, this is the first time that medium-pace Hasibul Hossain was not even considered. Fast bowler Mashrafe-bin-Mortuza misses out due to injuries.

The probable squad includes 14

batsmen, seven pacemen, three wicketkeepers, two spinners and five all-rounders

The selected cricketers have been asked to report to coach Mohsin Kamal on June 3 at 4 pm. They will then head to BKSP on the same day to begin their month-long camp.

The selectors are expected to name a 15-member Bangladesh squad for the month-long Sri Lankan tour after two weeks.

Bangladesh will play two Tests and three one-day internationals against islanders. All the matches would be held in Colombo.

PROBABLES

Khaled Mashud, Habibul Bashar, Naimur Rahman, Aminul Islam, Akram Khan, Minhazul Abedin, Javed Omar Belim, Al-Shahriar, Mehrab Hossain, Ehsanul Haque, Hannan Sarkar, Rafiqul Islam, Mohammad Ashraf, Tushar Imran, Sanwar Hossain, Mazharul Haq, Muniruzzaman, Hasanuzzaman, Anwar Hossain, Mushfiqur Rahman, Sazzad Kadir, Khaled Mahmud, Alok Kapali, Faisal Hossain, Fahim Muntasir, Mohammad Rafique, Sabbir Khan, Mosaddek Hossain, Enamul Hoque, Monjurul Islam, Mohammad Sharif, Tareq Aziz Khan, Alamgir Kabir, Anwar Hossain, Taposh Kumar Baishya and Talha Zubayer.

Ian's homage to Hansie

REUTERS, London

The news of Hansie Cronje's death in a plane crash has saddened opponents and colleagues of the former South African captain.

England all-rounder Ian Botham, who played against Cronje in the 1992 World Cup, suggested people should remember him for positive reasons as well as the match-fixing scandal which brought him a life ban from professional cricket.

"It's a sad time. Sadly people will forget all the good things he did and remember him for all the wrong reasons," said Botham, speaking on Sky Sports television.

James Whittaker, who was captain of Leicestershire during Cronje's season in English county cricket in 1995, echoed the sentiments.

"He was a great example to other professionals at Leicestershire, he committed himself to the club both off the field and with his input on the field," Whittaker said on the same television channel.

"I hope he will be remembered for his inventiveness on the pitch and his cricket ability."

Cronje, who was 32, died on a plane that crashed in bad weather in South Africa's Western Cape province.

Cronje, only a villain?

Cricket

REUTERS, Johannesburg

Hansie Cronje, the former South African captain who has died in a plane crash, will be remembered chiefly for his involvement in match-fixing which seriously undermined cricket's credibility.

His achievements on the field as one of the leading players of his

Sadly for all South Africans and cricket lovers everywhere, Cronje could and did.

For weeks there seemed to be no other story on the front pages of South Africa's newspapers, and a judicial commission was appointed to get to the bottom of the matter.

Chaired by Edwin King, a retired judge, it became the most thorough investigation to date into cricket corruption.

During 10 days of hearings in

repeatedly brushed off his conduct as "a mistake", hardening many South Africans' hearts toward him.

Cronje had been offered indemnity from prosecution on condition that he told the King Commission the whole truth.

But prosecuting officials said that King was unable to decide whether Cronje had been completely honest so the offer of indemnity did not apply.

Cronje launched a legal battle in a bid to get the life ban overturned in October last year, saying he wanted to serve cricket at grassroots level, but the ban remained in place.

Wessel Johannes Cronje was born on September 25, 1969 in Bloemfontein and made his first-class debut for Orange Free State against Transvaal in Johannesburg in 1987.

In 1992 he played his first one-day international, against Australia in Sydney during the World Cup, and made his Test debut, against West Indies in Bridgetown.

Cronje was appointed South Africa captain in 1994, taking over from Kepler Wessels for a home series against New Zealand. He lost the first Test but then led his country to five successive Test victories, a South African record.

In 1995, Cronje played for English county side Leicestershire, scoring 1,301 runs at 52.04 in 15 county championship matches.

The following year he led South Africa to a 1-0 home victory against England in their first five-Test rubber since the nation returned to world cricket after apartheid.

His dream of winning the World Cup for South Africa in 1999 was shattered when they were knocked out of the tournament in England when they lost a thrilling semifinal to Australia.

In all he played 68 Tests, scoring 3,714 runs at an average of 36.41 and taking 43 wickets. He also took 114 wickets in his 188 one-day internationals, and scored 5,565 runs at an average of 38.64.



HANSIE CRONJE

generation were effectively wiped away by the scandal and surrounding furore.

Cronje at first denied his involvement when charges were levelled at him by Indian police in April 2000 but two days later, on what South African cricket writers dubbed "Black Tuesday", Cronje confessed to having been "not entirely honest".

Disbelief was widespread. Could it be that this upstanding son of the Free State, the citadel of Afrikanerdom, was corrupt?

Could he have fooled his family, his teammates, the public and the media into believing he had given of his best for South Africa in good faith when he was a puppet for shady bookmakers and overly enterprising punters?

Cape Town in June 2000, Cronje confessed to taking approximately 100,000 dollars in dirty money and to offering bribes of 15,000 dollars each to two teammates, Herschelle Gibbs and Henry Williams, to underperform in a one-day international against India in Nagpur.

Contribution from Gibbs and Williams was palpable but Cronje failed to convince the public who had once paid money to watch him play that he was genuinely sorry for what he had done.

He famously told the commission: "I tried to live a Christian life and walk the way the Lord wanted me to walk... I allowed Satan and the world to dictate terms to me."

Cronje was banned for life but in subsequent media interviews, for which he was paid handsomely, he



PHOTO: AFP

A Marcus Trescothick cover drive forces Mahela Jayawardene to take evasive action during the second day's play of the second Test between England and Sri Lanka at Edgbaston on May 31.

Murali business as usual

Cricket

REUTERS, Birmingham

Sri Lanka left-arm seamer Nuwan Zoysa has captured three for seven in 12 balls as England's first innings fell away abruptly on the third day of the second Test at Edgbaston.

Zoysa helped to reduce England from 426 for five to 454 for nine at one stage but with Graham Thorpe unbeaten on 79 they went to lunch at 481 for nine, which still left them with a commanding lead of 319.

Sri Lanka were all out for 162 in their first innings on the opening day. Muttiah Muralitharan took the other wicket to fall before the interval, giving the off-spinner his 34th haul of five wickets in an innings in his 74th Test.

When play began under cloudless skies which provided the best weather of the first three days, Andrew Flintoff's instinctively attacking approach kept the score moving from the overnight 401 for five in an otherwise quiet opening phase against Muralitharan and Chaminda Vaas.

The Lancashire all-rounder twice struck Vaas through the off side for four, and later a back-foot force to the cover boundary brought up the 50 partnership with Thorpe from 90 balls.

Flintoff had not taken much of Muralitharan up to this point and when he did face the off-spinner his strokeplay was less certain.

It was Muralitharan who made the first breakthrough when Flintoff pushed defensively forward and was given out caught at short leg by Hashan Tillekeratne, though there was a suggestion the ball came directly off his pad.

Flintoff's dismissal was the first of four wickets to fall for 28 as Zoysa, having replaced his fellow left-arm seamer Vaas, made short work of Alex Tudor, Ashley Giles and Andy Caddick.

Thorpe, meanwhile, went to a patient half-century from 128 balls, and reached a more significant landmark on 51 by completing 5,000 Test runs.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard at lunch on the third day of the second Test between England and Sri Lanka at Edgbaston on

Saturday:

SRI LANKA: First innings 162 (M Jayawardene 47; A Caddick 3-47)

ENGLAND: First innings (over-night 401-5)

Trescothick c T'ratne b Vaas	161
Vaughan c J'suriya b M'tharan	46
Butcher b M'tharan	94
Hussain b M'tharan	22
Thorpe not out	79
Stewart c T'ratne b M'tharan	7
Flintoff c T'ratne b M'tharan	29
Tudor c T'ratne b Zoysa	3
Giles c Sangakkara b Zoysa	0
Caddick c Sangakkara b Zoysa	3
Hoggard not out	4
Extras: (lb-14, w-6, nb-13)	33
Total: (For 9 wickets in 143 overs)	481
Fall of wickets: 1-92, 2-294, 3-338, 4-341, 5-368, 6-426, 7-436, 8-444, 9-454	

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Vaas	37	3	130	1
Zoysa	19	3	82	3
M'tharan	60	12	133	5
Fernando	16	2	69	0
J'suriya	6	2	27	0
De Silva	5	0	26	0

Umpires: Daryl Harper (Australia) and Sri Venkatraghavan (India).

Argentine warning

REUTERS, Paris

Carlos Moya became the third former champion to exit the French Open and then warned against the up-and-coming generation of Argentine clay-court specialists.

The Spaniard, winner at Roland Garros in 1998, lost to Guillermo Canas 4-6, 7-6, 6-7, 6-1, 6-2 in the third round and said he had felt like he was playing against a rock.

"I never had this feeling before. I was hitting as hard as I could. The ball was coming back every time. It was unbelievable.

"Not even playing (Austrian Thomas) Muster did I have this feeling," Moya said.

Another former champion, Yevgeny Kafelnikov, also lost to an Argentine, Mariano Zabaleta. Michael Chang, the winner in 1989, lost in the first round to Frenchman Sebastien de Chaunac.

Five Argentines are left in the men's draw and Moya said the country might at last have found successors to Guillermo Vilas and Jose-Luis Clerc, who put Argentina on the tennis map in the late 70s.

"For sure, they have a big tradition in tennis, Vilas, Clerc, all these players. It helps a lot to have someone who you can look at, you know.

"Maybe that's the reason why they are playing since they are kids. The situation now is not very good in Argentina and maybe they get even hungrier to practise harder and to win money," he said.

Along with Canas and Zabaleta, Gaston Gaudio, Guillermo Coria and David Nalbandian remain in the tournament.

"I still think there are more Spaniards than Argentines in the game. But they keep coming.

"In the junior tournaments, they used to win. Like Coria, Nalbandian. If they are good in juniors, there's no reason why they can't be good as professionals."

Singling out the player who beat him, Moya was full of praise.

"The feeling I had was like playing against a rock, you know, all the balls are coming back.

"I think I never hit the ball harder than I did today. But it was not enough," he said.

Canas's next opponent is world number one Lleyton Hewitt. But the tournament's top seed has a hard task ahead, said Moya, who has beaten the Australian twice on clay this season.

"If Canas plays like that, they'll be playing for five hours or maybe even six," he said.

Srinath's had enough of Tests

Cricket

REUTERS, Bangalore

India fast bowler Javagal Srinath has announced his retirement from Test cricket but said he would be available for one-day matches.

"I today announce my retirement from Test cricket," the bowler told a news conference in his home town of Bangalore.

"Test cricket is over for me. I think it is the right time to call it quits from Test matches, but if the selectors feel I can contribute in one-dayers, I will be available," he said.

Srinath, 32, played in the five-game series in the Caribbean won 2-1 by West Indies last month and had been expected to lead the pace attack in the tour of England starting later this month.

But he said: "It has been in my mind for quite some time, six-seven months."

"I still have some cricket left in me and would like to focus on the World Cup (in South Africa next year)," Srinath said.

The bowler has been in and out

of the one-day squad in the last two years and was not selected for the current West Indies series but he remained confident of making it to the World Cup.

Srinath has taken 232 wickets at an average of 30.46 in 64 Test

appearances spanning more than a decade since making his debut in Australia in 1991-92.

He has been the fast-bowling spearhead since the retirement of Kapil Dev in 1994 but his decision comes after conceding 42.92 runs

apiece for his 13 wickets in the Caribbean series.

Srinath burst into the Test side as a 21-year-old tear-away and then made a fine comeback after surgery to repair a rotator cuff injury on his bowling shoulder in 1997 which had threatened to end his career.

Srinath had rung up chairman of selectors Chandu Borde on Friday to convey his decision, but refused a plea by Indian cricket chief Jagmohan Dalmiya to reconsider his move.

Srinath was expected to lead India's attack on the upcoming tour of England where they will play four Tests and a triangular one-day series also featuring Sri Lanka.

"I think Srinath had lost his enthusiasm for the game," former Test cricketer and commentator Ravi Shastri said.

"It's not for us to call the decision premature, because only Srinath knows if his physical fitness could take the rigours of Test matches.

"He would have been an automatic selection for Test matches, but he will have to work really hard to prove his fitness to make it to the one-day squad."

Some joy for the French

Tennis

AFP, Paris

French sport, shellshocked after the country's World Cup defeat to Senegal, rediscovered some pride at the French Open on Friday -- thanks to a man with a red bandanna and tinted sunglasses and a girl in a black dress.

Amelie Mauresmo, the 10th seed, defeated Eva Bes of Spain 6-1, 6-1 to reach the fourth round of the women's singles while Arnaud Clement mounted a thrilling fightback before eventually falling to last year's runner-up Alex Corretja of Spain.

At least they helped lift the gloom that had descended over Roland

Garros six hour earlier as players and spectators watched in disbelief as, on the other side of the world, Pape Bouba Diop's 30th minute goal gave Senegal a shock 1-0 win in the opening match of the World Cup against the world champions.

"I watched the first half while I was in the physio's room," said Mauresmo.

"Then I went home and saw the rest of it there. It was very disappointing but defeat is not the end for France -- we still have two more matches to go.

"It's great for the country to have attention split between the tennis and the World Cup. The good thing for me is that the football match was only for 90 minutes and then everyone's attention comes back to the tennis.

"It's a shame they lost, but my interest is in the tennis. I'm trying not to pay too much attention to it all."

Clement, ranked 72 in the world, couldn't match Mauresmo's win.

He was heading for a quick defeat at the hands of the 18th seed Corretja who took the first two sets 6-1, 6-2 and even served for the match at 5-4 in the third.

But the 25-year-old Clement, standing at just 5ft 8ins, showed a never-say-die spirit that put his multi-millionaire countrymen in Seoul to shame.

He took the third set 6-4, then the fourth 7-5 and even had four match points at 5-4 in the decider.

The third match point he threw away by hitting the simplest volley straight to the waiting forehead of the Spaniard who couldn't believe his good fortune.

However, Clement was to break back to 6-6, lose his serve again to go 6-7 down before Corretja put an end to the 4hr 13min centre court marathon on his second match point to take it 8-6.

"That volley haunted me and I just couldn't get it out of my head," said Clement who still received a standing ovation from a packed Philippe Chatrier Court crowd.

Earlier in the day, Nathalie Dechy, the 27th seed had