

Div II basketball

UNB, Dhaka

Europa Youth defeated Panthers Green 103-70 in the Second Division Basketball League at the Dhaka National Basketball Gymnasium yesterday.

Emran caged 21, Manik 19 and Arfan 15 for the winners. Chandan scored 12, Murshed 12 and Saikat eight for the losers

Dwain fastest

FROM PAGE 13

The English teenager was never in trouble as Thompson, rarely seen this season, had little in the locker to put pressure on him.

One of the few athletes tipped to upset the English dream of a 1-2 Kim Collins of St Kitts and Nevis struggled to impress as the man sixth in the last Olympics came in third in his heat behind Asafa Powell of Jamaica.

England's so-called Bath Bullet Jason Gardener also made it through to the second round, the injury-plagued two-time European indoor 60m champion finishing second behind Ghana's Abdul Aziz Zakari.

Formerly war-ravaged Sierra Leone had a good morning as Eric Thomas, who saluted the crowd by imitating a machine gunner, finished third in Zakari's heat.

Compatriot Djibril Bangura, 17, who lost both his parents in the war, also made the second round finishing fourth in the heat that Fredericks was down to compete in.

Muralitharan

FROM PAGE 13

In the state-run Daily News as saying there was still a chance for the bowler to be included in the team.

"Murali should be given every opportunity to better the world record for the most number of Test wickets," he said.

Sri Lankan cricket board spokesman Niresesh Eliatambi, however, told AFP the board had not been informed of Fernando's interest in picking the star spinner.

Sri Lankan selectors are formally required to send their team selections to the sports ministry for approval, which is normally a formality.

Muralitharan equalled New Zealand fast bowler Richard Hadlee's world mark of 36 five-wicket hauls in his team's record victory in the first Test against Bangladesh on Tuesday.

The hosts crushed the tourists by an innings and 196 runs for their biggest win in 126 Tests.

Muralitharan, the fifth-highest wicket-taker in the world with 430, took 10 Tests fewer than Hadlee to bag 36 hauls of five or more wickets in an innings.

He finished with 10-98 for his 11th haul of 10 or more wickets in a Test, improving upon his own world record.

He is now behind West Indian Courtney Walsh (519), Australian Shane Warne (450), Indian Kapil Dev (434) and Hadlee (431) on the all-time Test wicket-takers' list.

Eng tail lashes

FROM PAGE 13

Flintoff c Ratna b Agarkar 59 White st Ratna b Kumble 53 Giles b Nehra 19 Jones c Dravid b Kumble 44 Hoggard not out 10 Extras: (b-11, lb-11, w-2, nb-7) 31 Total: (All out in 142.2 overs) 487

Fall of wickets: 1-0, 2-71, 3-78, 4-223, 5-263, 6-356, 7-357, 8-390, 9-452

Table with columns: Bowler, O, M, R, W. Rows include Nehra, Zaheer, Agarkar, Kumble, Ganguly, Sehwaag.

INDIA: Virender Sehwaag, Wasim Jaffer, Rahul Dravid, Sachin Tendulkar, Sourav Ganguly, Venkatesh Laxman, Ajay Ratna, Ajit Agarkar, Anil Kumble, Ashish Nehra, Zaheer Khan.

Umpires: Rudi Koertzen (South Africa) and Russell Tiffin (Zimbabwe).

Queen opens Games



REUTERS, Manchester

Manchester kicked off the 17th Commonwealth Games with an opening ceremony featuring a mix of pomp, pop and dancing that turned the stadium into a huge nightclub.

Queen Elizabeth, the Head of the Commonwealth celebrating her Golden Jubilee year, opened the Games to thunderous applause from the 40,000-strong crowd and around 4,000 athletes from 72 Commonwealth nations and territories.

"All of us participating in this ceremony tonight, whether athletes or spectators, or those watching on television around the world, can share in the ideals of this unique association of nations," the Queen said on Thursday.

"We can all draw inspiration from what the Commonwealth stands for, our diversity as a source of strength, our tradition of tolerance...our focus on young people, for they are our future."

The Queen's speech was contained in a baton lowered into the stadium by an acrobat dangling from a balloon before being passed on to a series of Commonwealth sports figures including heptathlete Denise Lewis and Olympic rower Steve Redgrave.

But the most poignant moment came when England's soccer captain David Beckham passed it to terminally-ill Manchester girl Kirsty Howard who presented the baton to the Queen.

The baton has travelled through 23 countries of the group of largely former British colonies over the past four months before arriving in Manchester on Wednesday.

The colourful ceremony, which was also attended by Prime Minister Tony Blair, masked a massive anti-terror operation, shadowed by memories not only of September 11 but of a massive Irish Republican Army (IRA) bomb which devastated the city in 1996.

Everyone attending the ceremony passed through strict airport-style security while armed police mingled with the crowd and police helicopters flew overhead.

But police were eager not to spoil the party atmosphere and thoughts of terrorism were far from the minds of the crowd.

Redgrave got the bat started by striking a huge drum in the middle of the stadium.

Britain, considering an Olympic bid for 2012, is keen to improve its battered image as a host of major sports events after it was forced to pull out of the hosting of the 2005 world athletics championships because of stadium problems.

As well as the pop music, the opening ceremony, a key part of any Olympics or multi-sports event, contained parts of British life that are famous around the world including marching Grenadier Guards and London black cabs.



PHOTO: INTERNET

England soccer team captain David Beckham and six-year-old Kirsty Howard hand over the Commonwealth Games torch to Britain's Queen Elizabeth II during the opening ceremony of the Games in Manchester on July 25. Howard is suffering from a rare medical condition, having been born with her heart back to front.

Cathy Freeman.

Part of New Zealand's team surprised the crowd by breaking ranks to perform a Maori haka -- a war challenge -- in front of the Queen as they walked by.

The party mood continued throughout the two-hour ceremony with live performances from chart-toppers S Club and singer Russell Watson, as well as a spectacular dance, light and fireworks show.

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The event runs until August 4.

Orient Bread h' ball from tomorrow

SPORTS REPORTER

Victoria Sporting Club meet Jamalpur Zila Handball Parishad in the opening match of the Orient Bread Cup Handball Tournament that begins at the handball court next to the Bangabandhu National Stadium tomorrow.

Eight teams split into two groups are taking part in the meet. The top four teams will qualify for the semi-finals on August 2.

Bangladesh Handball Federation general secretary Asaduzzaman Kohinor made the announcement during a press conference at federation's office on Friday.

He said that sponsors Orient Bread would be paying Taka 50,000 of the allocated budget of Taka 75,000.

The final will be played on August 3.

GROUPS

Group A: Bangladesh Rifles, Menjis Kirra Chakra, Dhaka Wanderers Club and Arambagh Kirra Sangha.

Group B: Bangladesh Police, Narinda Pragati Boys' Club, Victoria Sporting Club and Jamalpur Zila Handball Parishad.

Arjuna seeks out-of-court settlement

AFP, Colombo

Sri Lankan cricket legend Arjuna Ranatunga has pleaded for an out-of-court settlement after being accused of assaulting schoolboys, court officials said Thursday.

Ranatunga, his brother Prasanna and three others were charged on 36 counts of assaulting teenage cricket players and illegally detaining them in connection with an incident in March last year.

Seven students aged 16-18 tried to retrieve a cricket ball that fell into the Ranatunga family home, which is next to the Asoka College in Colombo.

Ranatunga's lawyers pleaded for an out-of-court settlement when the case resumed on Wednesday.

The court ordered Ranatunga's lawyers to work out a suitable compensation payment and report back on September 27.

Lawyers for the victims told the court that one of the victims, 17-year-old Hirimuthuge Dilshan Danushka, has been receiving psychiatric treatment as a result of the mental trauma caused by the assault.

Ranatunga, 39, is a Member of Parliament of the main opposition party and could have lost his seat if convicted. His father is also an opposition legislator.

Ranatunga had been on bail of 55,000 rupees (597 dollars) since March 2001.

The former captain of the national cricket team is a hero in his country after leading Sri Lanka to victory in the 1996 World Cup. He retired from cricket in August 2000 after being dropped from the one-day squad.

Foster, injury

FROM PAGE 13

Zealand, Foster, 22, was granted a central contract by the selectors in a clear indication that he was their first choice. He made his Test debut on the India tour.

However, his injury problems have seen veteran Alec Stewart recalled for all this summer's Tests so far after the Surrey stalwart opted out of England's winter campaign.

Stewart, 39, is currently playing in an England record 119th Test at Lord's in the opening match of the four Test series against India.

Foster's latest setback means Stewart is set to retain his place for the next two Tests at the very least.

Meanwhile, Foster is worried that his latest injury setback could prevent him being part of this winter's Ashes tour.

Foster was a clear favourite to understudy Alec Stewart on the tour to Australia.

Now, however, he may struggle to regain fitness before the end of the county season.

"If you want to get picked to go on tours, you have to be playing cricket. But you can't dwell on it or go back in time and I just hope I have used up all my bad luck in one season," he said.

"By the time I get back from this, I would be looking to play some second eleven cricket, but there will not be any at that time of the season."

Foster was identified by the selectors as one of the best young keepers in the country while still a teenager and sent on the England A tour to the West Indies early last year.

He made his senior debut during the one-day series in Zimbabwe last October and although he made a number of mistakes over the winter, he was awarded a central contract for the 2002 home season.

If Foster is not chosen for Australia, England could turn to another talented youngster like Mark Wallace or Matt Prior, or a more experienced keeper like Warren Hegg, who also toured India and New Zealand and has past experience in Australia.

Jonty Gloucestershire's Lancashire after Harbhajan



INTERNET, London

Gloucestershire have signed South African Jonty Rhodes for the 2003 season but face a battle to keep hold of Australian Ian Harvey.

Rhodes will be one of two overseas players at Gloucestershire next summer but whether he will be joined at the County Ground by Harvey remains unclear.

Gloucestershire have offered Harvey a new deal but a number of sides are interested in his signature. "We are currently negotiating with Ian Harvey," director of cricket John Bracewell told BBC.

"He and Jonty Rhodes are our first choices for next season but there are other counties interested in Harvey and financially we may not be able to compete."

Harvey was an integral part of Gloucestershire's run of success in one-day cricket that saw them lift four trophies in two seasons.

But the county have endured a troubled summer this year, despite heading the National League, with rumours of dressing room unrest hitting Mark Alleyne's side.

Rhodes, who has retired from Test cricket and will quit South Africa's one-day side after the World Cup next March, has been brought in to nurture young talent.

The 32-year-old is regarded as one of the world's best fielders and has the added advantage of being available for almost all of the season.

"We had been keeping an eye on a number of overseas players and we wanted someone who would be available for the majority of the season," Bracewell said.

"When South Africa toured here a couple of years ago and played against us I was tremendously impressed with the way he went about his cricket and the work ethic he showed."

"We have some tremendous young cricketers in our academy and we think Jonty will provide a wonderful role model for them."

Rhodes is keen to pass on the experience gleaned from 52 Test matches and more than 200 one-day internationals.

"When I embarked on my Test career for South Africa I never thought that I would end up going down this route," he said.

"And I look forward to playing with, and passing on some of what I have learned to fresh faces."

Meanwhile, Lancashire have confirmed they are interested in signing Indian off-spinner Harbhajan Singh for the 2003 season.

The club's chief executive, Jim Cumbes, told BBC that Lancashire have already asked whether Harbhajan will be available next summer.

Cumbes said: "He would certainly be in the frame depending on whether the manager decides he's going to go for a batter or a bowler." Counties will be allowed to have two overseas players in 2003.

And while Lancashire will retain the services of Australian middle-order batsman Stuart Law, they will undoubtedly seek a second foreign star.

Cumbes added: "I suppose people put two and two together because Muttiah Muralitharan's not coming and of course we have the opportunity to go for another spinner."

"Harbhajan's a fine cricketer, a wonderful spin bowler and he can handle a bat as well." "It's just a matter of the balance of the side. We are not the strongest of batting sides at the moment."

Harbhajan, nicknamed the "Turbanator", would delight local crowds, since Manchester is home to a large Indian population.

But any deal would be dependent on him receiving clearance from the Indian cricket Board, which is considering a central contract system for the first time.

In 25 Test matches Harbhajan has taken 107 wickets -- including 32 in three matches against Australia last year -- and scored 316 runs.

ACB wants more Test



INTERNET, Sydney

A confidential Australian Cricket Board (ACB) plan to cram seven Test matches into season 2003-04 and eight into later seasons is likely to meet strong resistance from players already concerned about a heavy workload.

The ACB is believed to have drafted plans to host as many as eight Test matches each summer beyond 2003-04 to capitalise on the success and popularity of its world champion team.

The board's plan came to light only days after a meeting of Test captains in London told the International Cricket Council that too much cricket was shortening players' careers.

It is believed the ACB's preferred program for the Australian summer of 2003-04 involves a three-Test series against Sri Lanka beginning in October, followed by four Tests against India.

Zimbabwe would then join Australia and India in the annual triangular one-day tournament.

An ACB spokesman last night said negotiations for 2003-04 had begun but were "a long way from a resolution".

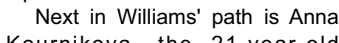
He could not confirm the involvement of Sri Lanka or India in plans for season 2003-04.

Only once has Australia hosted more than six Tests in a summer. In 1978-79, an Australian establishment desperate to combat World Series Cricket scheduled six Tests against England and two against Pakistan.

The elevation of India to a four-Test series would provide a financial bonanza for the ACB through the sale of television rights into the subcontinent.

The chief executive of the Australian Cricketers' Association, Tim May, would not comment about future scheduling, but said he was "concerned about the level of cricket being played at the moment".

Venus, Anna in qtrs



AFP, Stanford

Top seed Venus Williams defeated fellow American Meghann Shaughnessy 6-4, 6-1 here Thursday, avenging a loss here last year to reach the quarterfinals of a 565,000-dollar WTA hardcourt event.

Shaughnessy defeated Williams here last year, the only major setback for Venus on her way to the US Open women's title.

Next in Williams' path is Anna Kournikova, the 21-year-old Russian beauty who has never won a WTA title. Kournikova, who defeated Indonesian qualifier Wynne Prakusya 6-1, 6-4, is winless in seven matches against Williams.

"We haven't played each other in a while," Kournikova said. "I'm looking forward to it. You just have to create your shots and open up the court."

Williams is currently ranked second in the world, trailing only her sister Serena, who beat Venus in the Wimbledon and French Open finals.

Venus Williams has won three titles this year, none since Amelia Island in April, and captured the final here two years ago, beating Lindsay Davenport in the finals.

Friday's other match pits second seed Davenport against fifth seed Jelena Dokic of Yugoslavia.

Where is Abid swimming ?

AFP, Islamabad

Pakistan's only male swimmer at the Commonwealth Games has "disappeared" from the national team, leaving the country high and dry, an official said Friday.

"It is disgraceful that swimmer Abid Hussain has disappeared from the Pakistan camp and we will definitely take action if he doesn't return," said Pakistan Sports Board director Brigadier Sault Abbas.

"His parents have signed a bond of one million rupees (16,500 dollars) assuring he will return after the Games."

Abbas said the Board was contemplating legal action if the athlete did not return to the national squad.

Abbas received information from Pakistani officials in Britain that Hussain had disappeared from the camp on Wednesday. He was the only male swimmer from Pakistan and now the country will not be able to compete in men's swimming.

Pakistan's sports ministry had made it mandatory for all athletes and officials to sign an indemnity bond as an insurance against any defections.

It was forced to take the action after several embarrassing disappearances during foreign tours, apparently by athletes seeking a better life abroad.

A Pakistani football player, Nasir Iqbal, went underground during a tour of Britain last year. Four boxers and a hockey team goalkeeper defected in Australia and the United States at the last two Olympics in 2000 and 1996.

A 14-member football team disappeared in Japan in 1994.

Hockeyroos sink Scots

AFP, Manchester

Australia's new-look women's hockey team began the defence of their Commonwealth Games title with a 3-0 romp over lowly Scotland here on Friday.

The Hockeyroos, watched at the start by Queen Elizabeth, led 2-0 at half-time in the pool A match at the Belle Vue hockey centre.

The Queen, who was introduced to the two teams before play, stayed on to watch only the first eight minutes of play.

It was enough time for the Aussies to impress her as they forced four penalty corners in the first seven minutes and narrowly missed scoring twice before the Queen left.

The defending champions have just five survivors from the all-conquering team of the last decade which won two Olympic gold medals, two World Cups and the Commonwealth Games title in Malaysia.

Current captain Katrina Powell, who played in that champion team, showed she had fully recovered from a triceps injury when she put Australia ahead in the 28th minute by defecing in a pass from the right.

Brooke Morrison increased the margin four minutes later with her team's seventh and last penalty corner in the first half.

Crossing over, the gutsy Scottish girls kept their rivals at bay till five minutes before the final whistle when Julie Towers made it 3-0 with a hard drive past goalkeeper Tracey Robb.

Australia, Scotland, South Africa and Malaysia are drawn in Pool A of the eight-nation competition.

The other pool comprises hosts England, New Zealand, India and Canada.

Unwelcome Guest



AP, Manchester

Canadian triathlete Kelly Guest is to be sent home from the Commonwealth Games after failing a test for the banned steroid nandrolone.

At a tearful news conference on Day Two of the Games on Friday, he denied knowingly taking the substance but admitted taking "at least six food supplements."

Several sports stars including track athletes and soccer stars have tested positive for the drug, which builds muscles and strengthens bones and some have said they may have taken it accidentally through legal supplements.

The Canadian Centre for Ethics in Sport (CCEES) revealed at a Commonwealth Games press conference on Friday that 25-year-old Guest tested positive for nandrolone at the ITU Triathlon World Cup event July 14 in Edmonton.

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"Most of the things I'm taking are what anyone would take to be healthy - vitamin C and Vitamin E."

I had just gone for a run and when I got back to the Games Village Paul took me aside and told me I had tested positive."

Guest said referring to Canada's performance director Paul Regensburg.

"How did I feel? I don't think that's a question that needs to be answered."

Although Guest was flying home on Friday, Regensburg said that, because the 'A' sample was very low, there was a chance the 'B' sample could not match it and he could be reinstated.

"Given that the 'A' sample was incredibly low we will hope for the best on the B sample and we will reinstate Kelly in these Games if there is a change," he said.

Team Canada chief medical officer Ross Outerbridge said Guest could have become the victim of taking such a mixture of supplements.

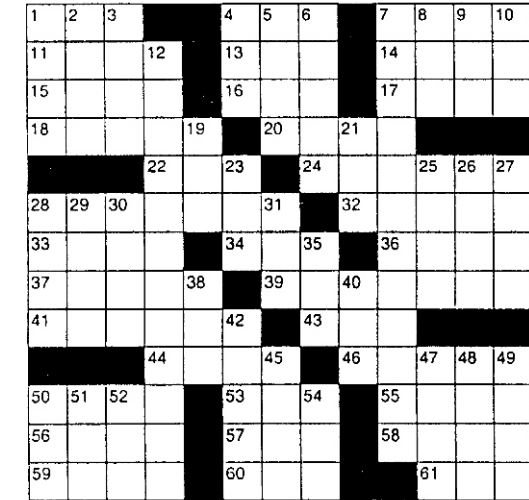
"It is impossible to know if it was a contaminant or a nutritional supplement that is the cause," he said. "If it is a nutritional supplement it is difficult to say which one because



KELLY GUEST

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

CROSSWORD clues and solutions. Includes categories like ACROSS, DOWN, and CRYPTOQUIP.



CRYPTOQUIP

RYKZALR KF YTLKR N TSA S ALX EFNATOMNX ZKAMR MNAX BGFREWA MGG WTFX I I AFRN UOKAR

Saturday's Cryptogram: THE FAITHFUL PASTOR OF THE SKUNK CHURCH OPENS EVERY SERVICE SAYING "LET US SPRAY."

Today's Cryptogram Clue: A equals E. The Cryptogram 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.

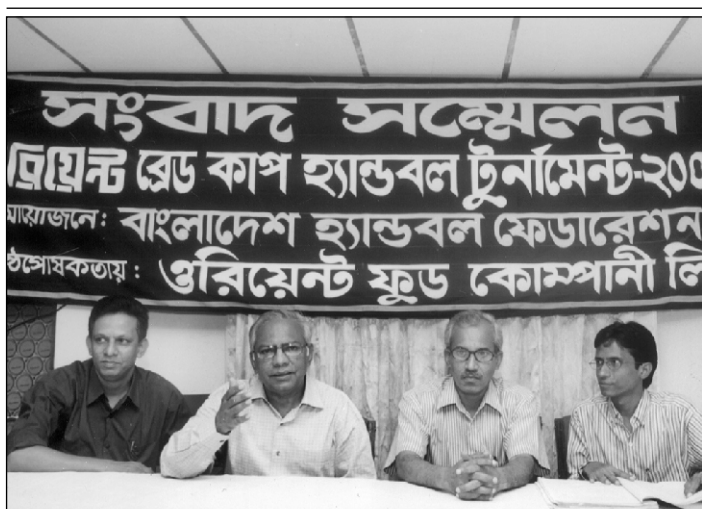
Fredericks pulls out

AFP, Manchester

Veteran Namibian sprinter Frankie Fredericks has pulled out of the Commonwealth Games 100 metres, it was announced here on Friday.

Fredericks won the silver medal in the event in Kuala Lumpur four years ago, but has decided in Manchester to concentrate instead on the 200 metres where he will start as favourite.

A regular medalist at top events for the last 12 years, Fredericks has been struggling to recover from an Achilles tendon injury



Bangladesh Handball Federation general secretary Asaduzzaman Kohinor (2nd from L) addresses a press conference yesterday organised in connection with the Orient Bread Cup Handball Tournament.