

28 called for U-17 trials

SPORTS REPORTER

The development committee of the Bangladesh Cricket Board has selected 28 players for its second tier under-17 age-group selection trials.

The players have been asked to report at the Bangabandhu National Stadium on August 13 at 4 pm.

The selected players are: Jkuan Ahmed Chowdhury, Robin Chowdhury, JA Sumon, Mehedi Hasan, Abul Hasan Nahid, Tajin (Syhlet Division); Rabiul Islam, Ohidur Rahman, Mossadiq Iftikhar, Farhad Hossain, Rabiul Ahsan, Azir (Khulna Division), Tamiz Uddin, Golam Mustafa, Sajadur Rahman, Rana Gomosta, Rana Hossain, Ariful Islam, Omer Faruque, Mohammad Rana, Noor-e-Alam Siddiqi, Nazmul Ahmed Apu (Dhaka Division), Rousuddin, Ishak Sajal, Sharifullah, Avishek, Tamal Kishore and Nazmul Ahmed (Dhaka Metro Blues).

PCB includes Saeed for BD

CRICINFO, Lahore

Pakistan cricket selectors have on Thursday called up middle-order batsman Saeed bin Nasir for the Bangladesh series training camp that will be held at the Gaddafi Stadium between August 9 and 16.

A spokesman of the Pakistan Cricket Board's selection committee, in a statement, said: "He was always under consideration but since we restricted ourselves to just 20 players for the camp, he narrowly missed out the original list.

"But we are glad that he will now be up with the best of the best and hopefully show his potential further."

In another development, wicketkeeper Kamran Akmal will be unable to join the training camp as his club boss in England has left for vacations and at the same time has locked Kamran's passport in his locker.

Kamran, in a message to the selectors, has conveyed that he will not be able to get his travel documents until August 16.

Smith gets A+

NEWS24, Johannesburg

South African captain Graeme Smith has been promoted to the A Plus Category of nationally contracted players, Ian Smith, commercial director of Cricket South Africa Ltd, said on Tuesday.

"Graeme has shown with his performances, as well as his leadership of the team since his appointment as captain, that he deserves the promotion," said Smith.

Smith, 22, joins Mark Boucher, Herschelle Gibbs, Makhaya Ntini and Shaun Pollock in the Category. He was previously an A Category player and his promotion is effective from August 1, 2003.

Giddins quits

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It was at the first of his counties Sussex that he first made the headlines, but for all the wrong reasons, as he tested positive for cocaine which led to a ban and his spell as a Christmas tree salesman.

Warwickshire, however, took him up once the ban had been lifted and then he moved on to Surrey, but left them prior to this season when they said they could only promise him one day matches owing to his injury problems.

Hampshire manager Paul Terry said he fully respected the decision. "Over his career his record speaks for itself and places him among the best of the last decade but sadly we saw only glimpses of his quality," Terry added.

Giddins, who took 478 first-class wickets, joins Pakistani great Wasim Akram in leaving the county this season though Akram was replaced by Sri Lankan left-armed Chaminda Vaas last week.



Los Angeles Lakers basketball star Kobe Bryant (R) and his attorney Pamela Mackey arrive at the Eagle County Courthouse in Colorado on August 6.

Bryant appears in court



AFP, Eagle (Colorado)

Sombre-looking NBA superstar Kobe Bryant on Wednesday held court at his first media-frenzied appearance before a judge on charges that he raped a 19-year-old woman at a luxury resort.

Bryant, 24, dressed in a pale cream-coloured summer suit and white shirt, turned up at court in this secluded Rocky Mountain hamlet without his wife Vanessa, who has vowed to stand by her husband through the ordeal.

After being whisked into town by private jet for a hearing lasting less than 10 minutes, the Los Angeles Lakers guard uttered only two words to indicate he had understood legal documents.

But the hoopla set off by his appearance had been building all day, with a makeshift media city here swelling, as fans wearing Lakers jerseys screamed for their hero and tourists flocked into the town of 3,500 for the show.

"This is a very fast event for so much attention," Judge Frederick Gannett said as more than 30 television stations camped outside the courtroom beamed the proceedings live around the world.

Through attorney Pamela Mackey, Bryant -- one of the biggest and wealthiest US sports stars -- waived his right to hear the single charge of felony sexual assault read to him in court and was not asked to plead. The alleged victim was not present at the hearing.

A pre-trial hearing in the case,

which he was freed on 25,000 dollars bail.

He is a role model for black youths, making race -- along with fame, money, sex and infidelity -- tantalising ingredients that are likely to keep the case in the headlines for months to come.

Bryant has strongly denied charges that he sexually assaulted the woman on June 30 in Edwards, Colorado, where he was staying while undergoing knee surgery in nearby Vail, but has admitted cheating on his wife with the woman.

If convicted at trial, the good-looking hero who until now has been more used to basketball courts than law court could face between four years to life in jail or probation of up to 20 years.

Experts said any medical evidence in the case would be key to deciding whether the sex between Bryant and the woman was consensual, as he claims. Bryant is likely to give evidence in his own defence, they added.

But the case has already hit his business prospects, with chocolate spread maker Nutella announcing that its labels showing Bryant with the message "Try Kobe's Favorite" will be scrapped, partly because of the rape allegations.

His once pristine reputation made him a top pitchman and won him multi-year contracts worth between 11 to 15 million dollars a year with hamburger giant McDonald's, the Coca-Cola company and game firm Nintendo.

In June, he signed a five-year, 45-million-dollar deal with Nike. All that is now at risk, sports marketing experts have warned.

Shane no sure choice



AFP, Melbourne

Disgraced Australian leg-spinner Shane Warne will not be an automatic selection in the Victorian cricket team after serving his 12-month drugs ban, state coach David Hookes said on Wednesday.

Warne's ban for testing positive to banned diuretics expires on February 10, making him eligible to play for Victoria the following weekend.

Victoria play a one-day match against Tasmania on February 14 and a Sheffield Shield match against Tasmania starting two days later.

Further complicating where and when the champion leg-spinner makes his return is Australia's tour

of Sri Lanka in mid-February and the fact Warne's club team St. Kilda is likely to be playing on February 14.

There is also a potential third final of the triangular one-day international series against India and Zimbabwe set down for February 10.

Hookes said Victoria would not automatically recall Warne for the matches against Tasmania and would want to ensure he was match-hardened after such a long inactive spell.

"I would hope that Warne feels comfortable enough with the workload that he's done that he would be ready to play a first-class game of cricket, which is a big step," Hookes said.

"No matter how great you are, it's a big step to have not played a first-class game of cricket for 12 months and step in as distinct from playing a game for St. Kilda.

Chaos at Protea team's hotel

BEELD ONLINE, Shenley

An alleged terrorist attack caused chaos on Wednesday at the hotel where the South African cricket players are staying in London.

What was supposed to be a relaxing morning for the team, before playing in a charity game against a Master's Eleven, turned out to be chaotic with the team holed up in their hotel.

The shopping centre opposite the Buckinghamshire Hotel was evacuated in a rush on Wednesday morning after suspicious white powder, thought to be anthrax, was found in the complex.

"The entire area was cordoned off and there were police and sirens all over. Within minutes, the fire brigade was on the scene and people were running in every direction," Omar Henry, convenor of the national panel of selectors, said.

"I locked myself in my room and did not want to move around in the hotel," he added.

The players were told to stay in their rooms and could not leave on time for their scheduled match.

WADA calls

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cricket was all about ethics, cricket was so honest it produced the line 'that is not cricket' but now we have this situation where it is cricket."

Howman said he was perplexed the other players were supportive of an athlete who had tested positive to drugs.

Australian Sports minister Rod Kemp is on the board of WADA and has been instrumental in getting the fledgling world authority operational in the past two years.

Howman said WADA president Dick Pound was writing to Kemp asking him to apply Australia's anti-doping rules.

WADA cannot act on its own because it has no jurisdiction over the International Cricket Council (ICC).

The ICC, while having dialogue with WADA, has so far remained uncommitted to the concept of uniform penalties and a uniform anti-doping code.

But, the Herald said the Australian government can persuade Cricket Australia to come on board through its funding via the Australian Sports Commission and any government assistance to host major events such as World Cup fixtures.

Pound said Cricket Australia was being disingenuous because it had the power within its rules to enforce the ban but was choosing to pursue a different point in its rulings that was softer.

Australian Cricketers' Association chief executive Tim May on Thursday hit back at the WADA saying it should stop criticising Warne's participation in a charity match.

"Howman's comments appear to have been made without working knowledge of Cricket Australia's Anti-Doping Policy or an understanding of the principles behind the recent arbitration," May said.

"The arbitration was not about Shane Warne, it was about whether or not CA (Cricket Australia) has the ability under its Anti-Doping Policy to extend a ban to testimonial and bona fide charity matches.

DBBL

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team and they requested the Asian Hockey Federation to help.

But it is likely that his appointment will not be possible before the Asia Cup to be held in September.

Clijsters lays claim



AFP, Los Angeles

Top seed Kim Clijsters, who is hoping to overtake Serena Williams this week as the world's top-ranked female player, cruised past Emilie Loit 6-1, 6-1 on Wednesday in her opening match of the \$350,000 dollar WTA tournament.

Clijsters, of Belgium, won easily by taking 11 of the final 12 games in front of about 400 fans at centre court.

Under sunny hot conditions, she hammered four aces and broke Loit's serve five times, including three times in the second set.

"I feel like I have been playing good tennis for the past few weeks," said Clijsters.

"I played consistent throughout this match."

Clijsters' overpowering win sets up a third round clash with Nadia Petrova or her Russian compatriot Maria Sharapova.

Clijsters has a 3-0 career record against France's Loit but this is the first time she has beaten her on hardcourts and the first time either has played at the new 150 million dollar multi-purpose sports complex in Carson, a suburb of Los Angeles.

"Every time you come to a new place you have to adjust to it," said Clijsters.

"You need to get in some practice matches before you start playing."

Loit said she just couldn't seem to get untricked against Clijsters.

"It wasn't a great match," said the unseeded Loit.

"In the first set I didn't have many opportunities and in the second I rushed it too much on some game points."

Clijsters is using this tournament as a warmup for the US Open which begins later this month.

"I look forward to it and I hope to do something special at the US Open," she said.

"I am going to slow down a bit in the next few tournaments and concentrate on singles."

Clijsters said on Wednesday that she has been the No. 1 ranking in the back of her mind. Her boyfriend, Lleyton Hewitt, was

recently knocked off his perch after being ranked top in the world for two straight years.

"I am thinking about it and when it comes, if it comes, I will enjoy it but I am not there yet," Clijsters said.

Under the WTA's complex scoring and ranking system, Clijsters needs a strong showing at the Los Angeles tournament.

US Open defending champion Williams had surgery on the quadriceps muscle near her left knee and will miss six to eight weeks.

Ukrainian teenager Viktoriya Kutuzova won her second straight match in as many days, defeating 15th seed Alexandra Stevenson 6-3, 3-3 after the American was forced to retire with an injury on Wednesday.

"I needed to try and move her around a lot," said the 14-year-old Kutuzova, who is making her WTA Tour debut.

"My game is improving and I think I will get better each day I play."

Kutuzova beat Russian Lina

Krasnoroutskaya in straight sets in the first round match on Tuesday and she admitted she has surprised everyone -- including herself -- with her success in Los Angeles.

"I came here just to play for the first time and learn and then I realised that 'hey, I can play with the professionals'."

Stevenson quit in the second set with a strained shoulder and is going to talk to her doctor before deciding when to play again.

Second seed Lindsay Davenport also advanced on Wednesday, cruising past Barbara Schett, of Austria, 6-3, 6-1.

Fifth seed Jelena Dokic continued to struggle this year, winning the first set before falling to unseeded Russian Svetlana Kuznetsova 4-6, 7-6, 6-3. Dokic was given a bye through the first round.

Other seeded players to advance Wednesday included South Africa's Amanda Coetzer, Meghann Shaughnessy of the US, and Francesca Schiavone of Italy.



Russian Svetlana Kuznetsova hits a backhand to Jelena Dokic of Yugoslavia during their Los Angeles Open match on August 6.

Agassi leads them



AFP, Montreal

A trio of reigning Grand Slam champions advanced into the third round of the 2.45-million-dollar Tennis Masters Series Wednesday with the newest member of the elite group, Roger Federer, leading the way.

The Swiss third seed nullified the famed serve of Montreal-born Greg Rusedski in a 6-4, 6-3 decision in just over an hour after a series of rain delays.

So thorough was the defeat after a day of rain, that Rusedski, who now plays for England, only struck one ace, a rare occurrence for the man who shares the record for the fastest serve.

Federer, who has never performed well on hardcourt, still has some niggles to correct.

"I still didn't feel well on my serve," said the 21-year-old.

"I haven't got the rhythm yet. I'm missing a little bit. I have to improve concentration over whole match."

"This summer is going so well here. It would have been tough to lose here early and then go to Cincinnati and try to win some matches."

"I've got at least three matches

now, I'm sure I'll play better tomorrow."

French Open champion Juan Carlos Ferrero and Australian Open winner Andre Agassi completed the top trio of winners.

Agassi picked up his pace after a tentative start, ripping through a tie-breaker and onto a second round victory over Nikolay Davydenko 7-6,

8-6.

Ferrero stayed atop the season points race, earning his first career victory over Younes El Ayouni 6-3, 6-4.

Federer remains in close pursuit, forcing the Spaniard to keep win-

ning here in order to avoid being overtaken.

There was a shock to the system for fifth seed Lleyton Hewitt, but the former world number one Aussie shrugged off a loss to Belarus Belter Max Mirnyi 7-5, 6-7, 7-5.

Hewitt, who played the final at Los Angeles last weekend, has some unexpected early time off.

"There are not too many guys who play like Max Mirnyi," he said.

"There are only a couple of guys with a huge serve like him, I felt I returned pretty well."

"It's been awhile since I played a serve-and-volleyer. I still feel sharp. But for me, it's all about winning feelings and confidence. I'm timing the ball pretty well, but some little things can get better."

Other seeds advanced smoothly, including number six Andy Roddick, eighth seeded German Rainer Schuettler, Sebastian Grosjean, and Czech Jiri Novak.

The exception was Roland Garros finalist Martin Verkerk, the number 15, losing to Karol Kucera 7-6, 7-6.

Thailand's Paradorn Srichaphan, seeded 11th, finished up a 7-5, 6-4 win over Canadian Daniel Nestor in light rain in the early morning hours.

Glenn makes CA 'sorry'



AFP, Sydney

Cricket Australia were deluged with 15 days of complaints from the cricket public and there was a backlash from sponsors over fast bowler Glenn McGrath's verbal tirade in the West Indies, the sport's leading administrator said on Wednesday.

CA chief executive James Sutherland told a business lunch here that Cricket Australia was inundated with phone calls and emails following McGrath's veiling rant at Windies batsman Ramnaresh Sarwan on the Caribbean tour in May.

"I can assure you it created a stir in our office," Sutherland told the luncheon.

A contrite McGrath later apologised to Sarwan and publicly expressed regret at his behaviour but there are still significant ramifications for the sport in Australia.

"The damage that that caused Australian cricket and arguably our brand could never be measured but judging by the reaction we got from the media and the public there was no doubt there was a diminution as a job for a member of his family."

result of that unfortunate incident," said Sutherland.

"People were saying that the Australian team were poor role models and don't want (their) kids playing cricket and the captain needs to take control of the team."

Sutherland, who at the time demanded skipper Steve Waugh rein in his team's on-field behaviour, said sponsors had contacted him to say their brands were suffering because of the backlash.

Sutherland said Cricket Australia learned much from the incident.

While not condoning McGrath's actions, he also believed that the Australian team had in some ways been "a victim of its own success".

"When you are successful in this day and age people do like to pick out the bad things and look for things that aren't that great," he said.

convictions to act and report players when they cross that line," he said.

"The question of how much, and what extent of, sledging should be allowed could be difficult for umpires."

"We need to clarify it and the umpires need to back it up and perhaps stop trying to be everyone's mate and actually take the hard line and nail players who cross the line."

Jones makes comeback

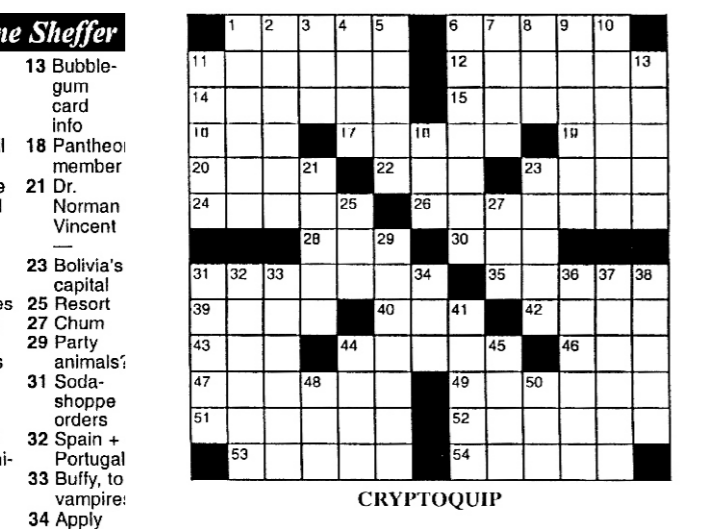
AFP, London

Fast bowler Simon Jones gave England a welcome boost on Wednesday when he played his first game since rupturing knee ligaments in the first Test against Australia in Brisbane nine months ago.

Jones turned out for Glamorgan's 2nd XI against Lancashire in the humble surroundings of Panteg in South Wales as he starts out on the long road back to the international team.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS 42 — out (sleep) 43 Actress Salonga 6 Pass a 44 Work 11 Don 45 Geneti- cist's abbr. 12 Lesser leagues 47 Audition 14 Duck a responsi- bility 51 "Burnt" Crayola color 15 Expense 16 Hall or farewell 17 Kelly's co-host 19 Shooter 20 Answer (Abbr.) 22 "Le Coq" 23 For fear that 24 Sen. Kefauver 26 Goes 28 Software prog. 30 Dunder- head 31 Lost, perhaps 35 Actor Lorenzo 39 Compet- ent 40 "Platoon" venue



CRYPTOQUIP

HRQW VNTYOB CGV AGQFS ECG YTWNR, L FVVTJQ BRQ OGQEQGGQI IQVVQGB LV JFGAYQ NFSQ Yesterday's Cryptiquip: IN ORDER TO THRIVE PEDDLING PILLOWS, WOULD A FELLOW HAVE TO USE THE SOFT SELL? Today's Cryptiquip Clue: V equals S

NSC Tower's

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Ministers, MPs, chiefs of three services, senior government officials and a large number of sports men and women as well as sports organisers were present at both functions.

The planned 20-storied NSC Tower would be built at the northern side of the Bangabandhu National Stadium at an estimated cost of Tk 40 crore.

The Tower will have basement for car parking, auditorium, media centre, sport museum, players' accommodation, NSC office, library, cyber cafe and multipurpose hall. The NSC will use the first 10 floors of the building while the remaining portion would be used commercially.

Officials of the Ministry of Youth and Sports indicated that the remaining 10 floors of the NSC Tower might be used for a three-star hotel. The estimated period for completion of the construction of NSC Tower is two

years, they said.

Later, the Prime Minister went from the NSC function to Kamalapur and opened the newly-built stadium on the west of Kamalapur Railway Station. She unveiled the plaque and a mural of Bishreshtha Shaheed Sipahi Mostafa at the entrance of the stadium and offered munajat.

From a well-decorated stage, she formally announced the stadium open. She also released colourful balloons and pigeons to mark the occasion.

Soon after the opening of the stadium, Habibur Rahman, father of Bishreshtha Mostafa called on the Prime Minister at her office and conveyed his thanks to her for naming the stadium after his martyred son.

She donated Taka one lakh to Rahman and directed the Ministry of Youth and Sports to arrange a job for a member of his family."