

Brahmanbaria cricket

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Brahmanbaria

Udayan Cricket Club defeated Pragoti Cricket Club by 30 runs in the Sanjida Cricket Cup at Sahjadapur Junior School playground yesterday.

Udayan Cricket Club batted first after winning the toss and made 160.

In reply, Pragoti Cricket Club scored 130 in stipulated 50 overs.

Blistering Agassi

REUTERS, Melbourne

Andre Agassi pummeled Wimbledon champion Roger Federer 6-2, 6-4 on Thursday, installing himself as the pre-tournament favourite of the fans and pundits to retain his Australian Open crown.

While Federer is the favourite of the bookmakers for the first Grand Slam of the season which begins on Monday, Agassi's overwhelming victory left few who witnessed the one-sided Koochong International match in much doubt who was in the better form.

"Today we had a little less wind, it was pretty calm," Agassi told reporters after creating his own cyclone on centre court.

"I felt like I did a lot of things well today...I can take a lot from that. You know, you have to take your chances against Roger because he has such a feel for the game and has such great weapons.

"You can't hope for better preparation than this; to play the world's best players coming into the first Grand Slam of the year."

It took the American only 22 minutes to snatch the opening set under a bright Melbourne sun as world number two Federer struggled to contain the 33-year-old's pace.

Anand shares lead

PTI, Wijk Aan Zee

World rapid champion Viswanathan Anand of India remained in the joint lead after a none-too-interesting draw with Dortmund champion Grand Master Viktor Bologan of Moldova in the fourth round of Corus chess tournament here Wednesday.

Grand Master Michael Adams of England and top seeded Vladimir Kramnik of Russia joined the three overnight leaders, Anand, Peter Svidler of Russia and Peter Leko of Hungary in the lead on three points apiece after the conclusion of the fourth round here.

Despite having the advantage of white, Anand could not make sure of an advantage against Bologan, the Dortmund winner. The game was fought on even keel for the major part and in fact the Russian had little trouble in getting a level position. After a mere 26 moves, the draw was agreed to.

Finally the heat took its toll and there were as many as five decisive games out of a possible seven in this round. Getting the maximum benefit was Kramnik who got the better of compatriot national champ Peter Svidler to join leaders. After a disastrous first round loss to Akopian, this was Kramnik's second win on the trot.

RESULTS ROUND 4: Michael Adams (2.5, Eng) beat Zhang Zhong (1.5, Chn); Evgeny Bareev (2, Rus) beat Alexei Shirov (1.5, Esp); Vladimir Kramnik (2.5, Rus) beat Peter Svidler (1.5, Rus); Viswanathan Anand (2.5) drew Victor Bologan (2); Jan Timman (1, Ned) lost to Loek Van Wely (2, Ned); Veselin Topalov (2.5) beat Vladimir Akopian (1.5, Arm); Ivan Sokolov (2, Ned) drew Peter Leko (2.5, Hun).

No.1s made top seeds

Australian Open

REUTERS, Melbourne

World number one Andy Roddick took his place on Thursday at the top of the draw for next week's Australian Open and his female counterpart Justine Henin-Hardenne was named top seed in the women's field.

Roddick, a semifinalist at Melbourne Park last year, had a sparkling 2003, becoming the youngest American, at 21 years and two months, in the history of the ATP rankings to finish the year as world number one, and winning his first grand slam at the U.S. Open.

Defending champion Andre Agassi was named fourth seed. He is aiming to win a fifth title in Melbourne, having won in 1995, 2000, 2001 and 2003.

At 33 years and eight months, Agassi is the oldest direct entry in the men's draw and still the man to beat.

Seeded second is Wimbledon and Tennis Masters Cup champion Roger Federer, followed by French Open champion Juan Carlos Ferrero, a quarterfinalist here last year.

Two Australians made the seeds, Mark Philippoussis at 10 and number 15 Lleyton Hewitt. Neither has been past the fourth round at Melbourne Park.

Philippoussis was a Wimbledon finalist last year and Hewitt will be desperate to add his home grand slam to the U.S. Open and Wimbledon titles already under his belt.

In the women's draw, French and U.S. Open champion Henin-Hardenne will top the Melbourne seedings for the first time. Her Belgian compatriot, Kim Clijsters, is seeded second.

Clijsters finished runner-up to Henin-Hardenne in both Paris and New York last year and her chances of going one better have not been helped by a foot injury which forced her out of warm-ups in Perth and Sydney.

MEN

- 1 Andy Roddick (USA)
2 Roger Federer (SUI)
3 Juan Carlos Ferrero (ESP)
4 Andre Agassi (USA)
5 Guillermo Coria (ARG)
6 Rainer Schuettler (GER)
7 Carlos Moya (ESP)
8 David Nalbandian (ARG)
9 Sebastian Grosjean (FRA)
10 Mark Philippoussis (AUS)
11 Tim Henman (GBR)
12 Nicolas Pietrangeli (CHI)
13 Paradorn Srichaphan (THA)
14 Jiri Novak (CZE)
15 Lleyton Hewitt (AUS)
16 Sjeng Schalken (NED)
17 Martin Verkerk (NED)
18 Younes El Aynaoui (MAR)
19 Gustavo Kuerten (BRA)
20 Tommy Robredo (ESP)
21 Mardy Fish (USA)
22 Agustin Calleri (ARG)
23 Felix Mantilla (ESP)
24 Max Mirnyi (BLR)
25 Jonas Bjorkman (SWE)
26 Albert Costa (ESP)
27 Taylor Dent (USA)

- 28 Feliciano Lopez (ESP)
29 Vincent Spadea (USA)
30 Arnaud Clement (FRA)
31 Wayne Ferreira (RSA)
32 Robby Ginepri (USA)
WOMEN
1 Justine Henin-Hardenne (BEL)
2 Kim Clijsters (BEL)
3 Venus Williams (USA)
4 Amelie Mauresmo (FRA)
5 Lindsay Davenport (USA)
6 Anastasia Myskina (RUS)
7 Elena Dementieva (RUS)
8 Ai Sugiyama (JPN)
9 Chanda Rubin (USA)
10 Nadia Petrova (RUS)
11 Vera Zvonareva (RUS)
12 Paola Suarez (ARG)
13 Conchita Martinez (ESP)
14 Anna Smashnova-Pistoletti (ISR)
15 Daniela Hantuchova (SVK)
16 Magui Serna (ESP)
17 Meghann Shaughnessy (USA)
18 Francesca Schiavone (ITA)
19 Eleni Daniilidou (GRE)
20 Silvia Farina Elia (ITA)
21 Elena Bovina (RUS)
22 Patty Schnyder (SUI)

Black Thursday

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let his views be known by entering the ground and jostling with the referee.

"Look, even the officials are also getting inside the field. This is crazy," exclaimed another AFC official. While all this was taking place, Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF)'s general secretary Anwarul Haque Helal and BFF vice-president Sirajul Islam Bachchu were stunned into silence seeing any hope of projecting a positive picture of local football perishing before their very eyes. The frustrated delegates left the stadium after waiting about 20 minutes for play to start.

The most outrageous and unprecedented event then unfolded when a camera crew of satellite channel ntv entered the arena and positioned themselves just outside the touchline. They ran a replay of the equalising goal on their camera for a group of excited Mohammedan officials who then made the audacious and silly demand to the referee to cancel the goal based on that video footage.

To his credit, the referee held

his ground. After 47 minutes had passed on the clock since the match was stopped, Ghosh blew the final whistle with Mohammedan uninterested in playing the remaining minutes.

As the match officials were being escorted off the ground under heavy police cover, an elegantly attired Mohammedan executive committee member Mahbub completely insulted his dress sense by trying to jump on the security cordon to attack the referee and linesmen. It took the joint effort of a couple of policemen to restrain him as the visibly rattled Ghosh and his assistants took refuge in the darkness of the dressing room.

At the end of the unnecessary fiasco, the common consensus among mediemen and fans present at stadium was that it was time for the Dhaka Mohanagari League Committee, who are the organisers of the championship, to come out with exemplary disciplining measures against the perpetrators responsible for disgracing the country's football in front of foreign guests, in this case the Mohammedan players and officials.



Winners of the 14th AB Bank Cup Golf Tournament, which was held on January 9 at the Bhatary Golf and Country Club in Chittagong, pose with their trophies. Maj Gen Moeen U Ahmed, GOC, distributed prizes as the chief guest.

No Lee-way for Zim

Cricket

AFP, Hobart

Paceman Brett Lee is back in the Australian team for Friday's one-dayer with Zimbabwe after being rested from the opening two games of the triangular cricket series.

While Lee was cooling his heels his replacement Brad Williams claimed man-of-the-match honours in the 99-run win over Zimbabwe in Sydney with a devastating burst of 4-7.

Captain Ricky Ponting on Thursday challenged the explosive Lee to recapture his form from the World Cup, where he bowled fast and took 22 wickets at 17.90.

Leg-spinner Brad Hogg will play his first match of the series, with Jason Gillespie and Ian Harvey rested.

Ponting said Lee, whose two Tests against India brought him eight wickets at 59.5 and a spate of no-balls, was refreshed and ready to push for a place in Australia's best one-day side despite wayward form since returning from injury.

"If he's bowling as well as he can I think he'd be in most sides' first XI," Ponting said.

"He bowled beautifully in the World Cup and I'm hoping he can get back to that sort of form over the next few weeks."

With Zimbabwe's top order out of form after two heavy losses, Lee will be trying to emulate Williams' spell of 5-22 in Sydney.

"As we saw the other night in Sydney with Williams...he got the ball up there and it swung," Ponting said.

Bowling fast risky

Cricket

REUTERS, Melbourne

Fast bowlers significantly increase their risk of injury when they bowl more than 20-30 overs a week, according to Cricket Australia (CA)'s inaugural Cricket Injury Report.

The study, which looked at Australia Test, one-day international and interstate matches from September 1998 to June 2003, said on average one in six elite Australia fast bowlers would be out through injury at any given time.

The report found although the overall percentage of players unavailable because of injuries was 8.7 per cent, the figure was 16.1 per cent for pace bowlers.

"The research determined that strike bowlers significantly increased their risk of injury when their weekly bowling tally strays above 20 to 30 overs per week," CA said in a statement on Thursday.

"Should a bowler bowl above this threshold, they are well advised to adjust their training schedule accordingly so the stresses and strains of fast bowling are allowed to recover."

Australia's leading fast bowler Glenn McGrath missed the recent drawn four-Test series against India with an ankle injury.

Brett Lee (ankle) missed the first two Tests while Jason Gillespie (groin) and left-arm Nathan Bracken (hip) were injured during the series.

"Cricket Australia is always

Young yet senior

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Tendulkar has already scored 68 international hundreds and many believe he will end up with an unprecedented century of centuries.

"It is taken for granted that Sachin will surpass all batting records except perhaps Don Bradman's average of 99.94," said Waugh before his retirement.

Tendulkar is the fourth-highest run-getter in Tests behind two Australians Allan Border (11,174) and Steve Waugh (10,927), and Indian Sunil Gavaskar (10,122).

His 32 Test hundreds are at par with Waugh and two behind Gavaskar's record tally of 34.

"Records will come when one plays for such a long time," Tendulkar once said modestly. "But

"Otherwise he hit the wicket and got a little bit out of the wicket, so I'm pretty sure you'll see Brett bowl the same way."

Ponting said Australia could not afford a repeat of last year, when Lee, Gillespie and Glenn McGrath were all sidelined through injury.

"There's something there that we need to address, whether it be that we're just a bit more conscious on the way we use those fast bowlers through those back-to-back Test matches," he said.

Ponting said Australia could also re-think enforcing the follow-on in future Tests, as it subjected bowlers to a far heavier workload.

Zimbabwe are likely to move captain Heath Streak up the batting order, where his good form could be maximised instead of him having to save the innings.

But vice-captain Tatenda Taibu, who admitted the side was down on confidence, said it was up to the batsmen to produce.

"I think every batsman goes into his shell if you're not getting runs but it's really up to them to sort themselves out," he said.

TEAMS

AUSTRALIA: Ricky Ponting (captain), Adam Gilchrist, Matthew Hayden, Damien Martyn, Andrew Symonds, Michael Clarke, Michael Bevan, Brad Hogg, Andy Bichel, Brett Lee, Brad Williams, Ian Harvey (likely 12th man).

ZIMBABWE (from): Heath Streak (captain), Andy Blygnaut, Stuart Carlisle, Dion Ebrahim, Sean Ervine, Grant Flower, Travis Friend, Douglas Hondo, Blessing Mahwire, Stuart Matsikenyeri, Ray Price, Vusumuzi Sibinda, Tatenda Taibu, Mark Vermeulen.

Let bidding begin

Race for 2012 Games

OLYMPICS

REUTERS, London

Nine cities, including London, have until Thursday midnight to present details of their bids for the 2012 Games to the International Olympic Committee (IOC).

Three former European summer Olympic hosts -- Paris, who staged the Games in 1900 and 1924, London, the hosts in 1908 and 1948, and Moscow, venue for the 1980 Olympics -- are among the nine.

The other six candidates are Rio de Janeiro, Madrid, New York, Istanbul, Leipzig and Havana.

Paris and London are the bookmakers' favourites at around 7-4 to

win the bidding when the IOC makes its choice in Singapore in July next year.

Both cities will also give their answers on Friday to 25 questions from the IOC in presentations from the first floor of the Eiffel Tower and the Royal Opera House respectively.

The questions cover overall concept, political support, finance, accommodation, traffic, infrastructure and security.

Over the next two months the IOC's Evaluation Commission will visit the candidate cities to prepare a short list. Further evaluation visits will take place in a year's time with a final report in May next year.

The website gamesbid.com, which used a formula to correctly forecast Beijing would win the 2008 Games, places Paris ahead of Rio in its ratings with London a close

third. Paris staged the World Athletics Championships last August and the country successfully hosted the 1998 soccer World Cup. The bid has full government support while Europe is due to host the Games again after the 2000 Sydney Olympics and the 1996 Atlanta Games.

One early attraction for the Rio bid appears to be the time zone, which is favourable for U.S. TV viewers and the major network NBC. The Games have never been staged in South America.

London retains a sentimental attraction value but major concerns remain over the transport system.

Istanbul, a perennial bidder, is fourth on the gamesbid.com ratings ahead of New York.

Henin, Davenport soldier on

Tennis

REUTERS, Sydney

Belgian Justine Henin-Hardenne and Lindsay Davenport of the United States both survived injury scares to win their quarterfinal matches at the Sydney International on Thursday.

Henin-Hardenne sprained her ankle and needed treatment for blisters before beating American Chanda Rubin 6-3, 4-6, 6-4 while Davenport strained a shoulder muscle during her 6-3, 6-4 victory over Russia's Elena Dementieva.

Both Davenport and Henin-Hardenne said their injuries were not serious and they expected to line up against each other in Friday's semifinals.

"I don't think it's anything major... it's just my body's not used to playing this much tennis," Davenport told news conference.

"I've had this injury before and my body typically recovers well from muscle strains."

Henin-Hardenne, the world number one and clear favourite to win the Australian Open starting in Melbourne on Monday, took a time-out to receive treatment but said she was more concerned about the blisters on her feet than her ankle.

"I sprained my ankle a little bit but it looks good. It was sore during two games then it was coming down so I hope it's going to be alright," she said.

Amelie Mauresmo of France also booked her place in the last four with a 6-4, 7-6 win over Russia's Anastasia Myskina. She will play Francesca Schiavone on Friday after the Italian beat Anna Smashnova-Pistoletti of Israel 6-2, 6-2.

Underdog pairs

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the final beating Taipei's Huai En and Chien Yuan 4-6, 7-5, 6-0. The Roy and Dutta pair moved to the final defeating Great Britain's Eaton and Khatib 7-5, 6-3.

Meanwhile, the top-seeded Navdeep Singh lost in the boys' singles semifinal to Great Britain's Farish Khatib 6-2, 3-6, 6-2.

Taipei's Chang Huai En proceeded to the final beating his native Lee Hsin Han 6-2, 7-5.

India's Punam Reddy and Kartiki Bhat confirmed an all-India final after Reddy beat Uzbekistan's Elina with 6-4, 6-3 and Bhat sailed past India's Ashmitha 6-0, 6-2.

The finals of boys' and girls' singles will be held today.

Schools cricket

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Hossain, who has been running the show for the last five years, however admitted that it would have been better had the Board utilized the experience of scouts.

"It could have been a platform to find fifty to sixty budding cricketers and train them together after the competition was over," he said.

Besides, the knock out format has made it near to impossible to discover the cricketers of tomorrow.

Ashiqur named

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lost the captaincy his uncle and former national captain Akram Khan, who managed the youth team to a disappointing tri-nation tournament in Pakistan last year, was also not considered as manager.

Right-arm paceman Talha Jubair, surprisingly dropped from that tour, has been named as deputy of Ashiqur.

Bangladesh have been placed in Group C along with India, Scotland and New Zealand in the 16-nation cricket carnival involving all the ten Test-playing nations.

SQUAD

Ashiqur Rahman (captain), Talha Jubair (vice-captain), Naeem Islam, Nafees Iqbal, Aftab Ahmed, Nazim Uddin, Abul Bashar, Mahmud Ullah Riyad, Nadif Choudhury, Dhiman Gosh, Rubaiyat Huq, Nazmul Hossain, Kazi Sahadat Hossain and Enamul Haque.

Officials: Richard McInnes (coach), Justin Cordy (trainer), Shahidul Alam (asst. coach) and Md. Salauddin (computer analyst).



Belgian Justine Henin-Hardenne hits a forehand against Chanda Rubin of the United States at the Sydney International yesterday.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

Crossword puzzle grid with clues for Across and Down.

Cryptoquip puzzle grid and clues.