

CJKS Cricket League starts

April 4

CU CORRESPONDENT

The Chittagong Jila Krira Sangstha (CJKS) Senior Division Cricket League begins on April 4.

On the opening day sixty First Division and Premier League matches will be played at three different venues of the port city -- the MA Aziz Stadium, Chittagong Divisional Stadium and Chittagong Medical College ground.

A total of 12 teams will take part in the Premier League. They are: Rising Star Club, City Corporation Ekadash, City Corporation Junior, Shatadal Club Senior, Shatadal Club Junior, Abahani, Mohammedan, Friends Club, Shatabdi Goshthi, Shahjahan Sangha, Bandar Kartirpakha and Brothers Union.

All Premier League teams will be allowed to recruit two foreign players. The CJKS has asked the teams to submit their players' lists before March 22.

M'singh cricket

OUR CORRESPONDENT, M'singh

County Club posted a six-wicket victory over Mukul Fouz (Red) in the Navana Premier Division Cricket League at Mymensingh yesterday.

Batting first Mukul Fouz were all out for 118 in 44 overs. In reply, County scored 122 runs for four in 25.3 overs.

SCORES IN BRIEF

MUKUL FOUZ: 118/10 in 44 overs (Atik 23, Asim 21; Bulbul 2/24 Saiful 4/20).

COUNTY CLUB: 122/4 in 25.3 overs (Uttam 38, Suman 21, Shaheen 16, Asim; 2/16, Rana 2/14).

Result: County Club won by six wickets.

Nat'l Bank v'ball

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Rifles continued their winning spree in the National Bank Premier Division volleyball league when they handed Sonali Bank a straight sets (3-0) defeat at the outer stadium volleyball court yesterday.

Rifles increased their tally to 21 points from seven matches while the bankers have nine points from eight matches.

In another match, Power Development Board (PDB) defeated Wari Club 3-1. PDB registered their fourth victory in seven matches to secure 16 points while Wari suffered their fifth defeat in eight matches and bagged nine points.

NZ's pitch

FROM PAGE 13

"We trained on it and it looked pretty good. With the portable pitch technology we thought there was a possibility but NZC decided there wasn't," Crocker said.

"It had much firmer compaction, they're using a scoria base which helped the pace and bounce."

The current drop-in pitch will have early moisture for the pacemen but was predicted to be slow, low, and not conducive to attacking cricket. Groundsman Mark Perham said the pitch had been well-prepared and "should be a good wicket".

TEAMS

SOUTH AFRICA (from): Graeme Smith, Herschelle Gibbs, Jacques Kallis, Jacques Rudolph, Ashwell Prince, Mark Boucher, Shaun Pollock, Lance Klusener, Robin Peterson, Albie Morkel, Makhaya Ntini.

NEW ZEALAND (from): Michael Pappas, Stephen Fleming, Hamish Marshall, Scott Styris, Chris Cairns, Jacob Oram, Chris Harris, Brendon McCullum, Daniel Vettori, Michael Mason, Daryl Tufty.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

Crossword puzzle grid with clues for Across and Down. Includes 'Solution time: 27 mins' and 'Yesterday's Cryptiquip' section.

Kirsten to call it a day

Cricket

AFP, Auckland

Gary Kirsten, South Africa's highest ever Test run-scorer, has announced his retirement from international cricket at the end of the current tour of New Zealand.

Kirsten, who will play his 100th Test this week after scoring his 21st century in the first Test against New Zealand, said it was "a sad and emotional moment".

"I have been extremely fortunate to have the privilege of playing for my country for so long. It has always been a massive honour to play for South Africa and I have enjoyed every moment of my career," he said in a statement on the United Cricket Board (UCB) of South Africa website (cricket.co.za).

He added: "I was lucky enough to play with and against some wonderful cricketers, and I take many great memories with me."

Kirsten, 36, will formally retire after the third and final Test of the New Zealand tour which is due to end on March 30. He has not made a decision on whether to quit domestic first-class cricket.

He had been expected to retire after last year's tour of England but he was persuaded by South African officials to play on.

"My wife Deborah and I had made a decision that when our first



GARY KIRSTEN

child arrived I would retire, but with Joshua now nearly four months old it has overlapped a little," he explained.

Of the current batsmen, only India's Sachin Tendulkar and West Indian Brian Lara have scored

more runs.

Since making his debut in the 1993-94 Australia tour, Kirsten has scored 7,210 Test runs at an average of 45.92 and was the first man to score a Test century against all nine Test playing nations.

With Daryll Cullinan, he shares the record for the highest Test score by a South African -- a mammoth 14.5-hour 275 against England. He also played 185 one-day internationals, scoring 6,798 runs at an average of 40.95.

A left-hander, Kirsten will be remembered more for his dogged determination and concentration rather than his flair.

United Cricket Board of South African chief executive Gerald Majola paid tribute to Kirsten, saying the whole country would remember the dignified way he represented the country over the past decade.

"We all respect Gary Kirsten's decision to retire after an extraordinary playing career during which he set many milestones," Majola.

"His records might well be broken, but they are there so that history can record for posterity his outstanding achievements at all levels of the game."

Kandy goes topsy-turvy

FROM PAGE 13

bowled Australian tail-ender Michael Kasprovic for his 300th victim in front of his cheering home fans.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard at stumps on the opening day of the second Test between Australia and Sri Lanka at the Asgiriya Stadium on Tuesday.

AUSTRALIA: First innings

Table with 2 columns: Player Name, Score. Includes Vaas, Zoya, M'tharan, etc.

Bowler

Table with 4 columns: Bowler, O, M, R, W. Includes Gillespie, Kasprovic, etc.

Table with 5 columns: Player Name, Runs, Balls, Fours, Sixes. Includes Vaas, Zoya, M'tharan.

SRI LANKA: First innings

Table with 2 columns: Player Name, Score. Includes Atapattu, Jayasuriya, etc.

Mini handball

SPORTS REPORTER

The Sunny Dale second mini handball tournament begins today at the Dhanomdi Women's Sports Complex.

Ten teams, split into two groups, will take part in the meet.

The top two finishers from each group will play in the semifinals on March 20. The final is billed for March 22.

GROUPS

Table with 2 columns: Group Name, Participants. Includes Group A and Group B.

Magura soccer

OUR CORRESPONDENT

Zia Smriti Sangsad moved into the final of the Econo First Division Football League defeating Sunrise Sporting Club 4-1 at the Magura Stadium on Tuesday.

The first-half ended 2-0.

Lazuk scored two while Rupak and Yunus netted one each for the winners. Khairul reduced the margin for the losers.

Shafiq Smriti Sangsad take on Sreerampur Friends Club in the second semifinal at the same venue today.

Tigers arrive

FROM PAGE 13

They won only their fourth one-day international when they pulled-off an exciting eight-run victory in the third game in the Zimbabwe capital.

Under a new captain Habibul Bashir the team left on January 28 for their second trip to southern Africa since 2001.

They also spent a few weeks in a conditioning camp in neighbouring Namibia where they played three limited-overs and a three-day practice match against the hosts.

India lose Nehra

FROM PAGE 13

Nehra will sit out of the third one-day in Peshawar on Friday and the last two in Lahore on March 21 and 24.

India are already without three injured frontline bowlers, seamer Ajit Agarkar and spinners Anil Kumble and Harbhajan Singh, on their first full tour of Pakistan since 1989.

The squad for the three-Test series, which begins on March 28, is expected to be picked next week.

BD A-Zim A 4-dayer from today

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh A will take on their Zimbabwean counterparts in the first four-day match beginning today at the Rajshahi Stadium.

Middle-order batsman Tushar Imran will lead the second string home team while Alester Maregwe, who has only played once in a one-day international, is leading a strong Zimbabwean side.

The tourists got off to a confident start with a massive 223-run victory over Bangladesh Under-23 at the Fatullah Stadium.

Both teams will play another four-day match starting March 23 at newly built Shaheed Chandu Stadium in Bogra before concentrating on the five-match limited-overs series.

Parsvnath chess

SPORTS REPORTER

Fide Master Khandakar Aminul Islam earned 6.5 points after the ninth round of the second Parsvnath International Rating Chess Tournament in New Delhi on Monday.

IM Abdullah-Al-Rakib, Debaraj Chatterjee and Mohammad Javed have six points each.

FM Abu Sufian Shakil and Mehdi Hasan Parag are on 5.5 points.

Five players -- IM Enamul Hossain Rajib, IWM Rani Hamid, Monjur Alam, Arman Monir and Rashed Dinayet have collected.

NINTH ROUND RESULTS

Khandakar Amin drew with Venkatesh, Rakib drew with Joshi, Javed drew with Saptarshi, Shakil drew with Parimarjan, Debaraj beat Swati and Rajib lost to Imocha.

V-Day basketball

SPORTS REPORTER

A six-team Maple Leaf Victory Day basketball competition will be held on March 22 at the Dhanomdi Basketball gymnasium.

The participating teams are: Bangladesh Army, Bangladesh Navy, Bangladesh Rifles, Dhumketu Club, Josephites Club and BKSP.

Seeing Sachin

FROM PAGE 13

"It's been simply unbelievable," said captain Sourav Ganguly, who led his team to a five-run victory in the first one-day international in Karachi on Saturday.

"I don't think we've ever been treated so well, even in India. The whole experience has been very overwhelming. The hospitality we've received is astonishing."

Animosity between India and Pakistan has been intense since both gained independence from Britain in 1947 and the two countries have fought three wars.

But locals say they want to ensure politics is kept out of cricket.

"We've been denied watching the Indian cricket team for too long now," said Tahir Ahmed, a carpet-seller in Karachi.

"Someone should tell the leaders of our countries that people on both sides of the border have no issues with each other."

INDIA-PAKISTAN SCOREBOARD

Table with 5 columns: Bowler, O, M, R, W. Includes Balaji, Zaheer, Nehra, etc.

INDIA: Ganguly, Sehwag, Tendulkar, Dravid, Laxman, Yuvraj, Kaif, Powar, Zaheer, Balaji, Nehra.

umpires: Simon Taufel (Australia) and Asad Rauf (Pakistan).



Real Madrid's Portuguese superstar Luis Figo (L) jokes with teammate David Beckham during a training session in Madrid on March 17.

King's prize on offer

Football

REPORTERS, Madrid

Raul will lead the Real Madrid line without Ronaldo's backing against Real Zaragoza in the King's Cup final on Wednesday.

While Raul has shaken off an ankle problem, leading scorer Ronaldo is still recovering from a high strain and will miss the encounter at the Montjuic Olympic stadium in Barcelona.

"The Cup is the one title that has eluded Real since Florentino Perez took over as president four years ago. Indeed, they have not won the trophy since 1993, when they beat the same opponents.

"There is a special desire to win the Cup this time," David Beckham told a news conference on Monday.

Beckham was in the side that won the Spanish Supercup at the start of the season but this will be his first chance to win a major trophy since

joining Real.

Real, however, while leading the Primera Liga and in the Champions League quarter-finals, have yet to beat lowly Zaragoza this season.

The teams drew 1-1 at the Bernabeu at the weekend in a league game billed as the Cup dress rehearsal but the encounter was overshadowed by the Madrid train bombings.

"The events that surrounded the game meant that it wasn't an enjoyable game," said Beckham. "But I'm sure the Cup final will be very different."

Cesar took over in goal from first-choice keeper Iker Casillas in the other change in Real's starting lineup for Wednesday (kickoff 2000 GMT).

Cesar has played throughout the Cup competition and coach Carlos Queiroz is set to keep faith with his highly-rated reserve.

Zaragoza, their relegation worries beginning to ease after moving up to 15th in the 20-team league, are

quietly confident of springing a surprise.

"They haven't been able to beat us in either of the two league games we have played this season," says midfielder David Pirri. "We have to be optimistic about the final."

Traditionally Zaragoza have done well in the Cup, their last victory coming three years ago when they beat Celta Vigo 3-1 in Sevilla.

The team looks to have turned the corner since the appointment of Victor Munoz as coach in January and the mid-season recruitment of former Barcelona and Real Madrid striker Dani and former Atletico Madrid midfielder Jose Maria Movilla.

"We have more to win than Real, that's why we'll win," said Munoz.

Centre-back Gabriel Milito has been outstanding and the Argentine international will have a point to prove against a club that decided against signing him at the start of the season because of worries over an old knee injury.

Anelka for truce

Football

AFP, Paris

France's Euro 2000 winning striker Nicolas Anelka made a late bid to regain his place in the squad on Monday when he apologised to national coach Jacques Santini and his team-mates.

The apology comes 16 months after the 25-year-old former Arsenal, Real Madrid and Paris Saint Germain star refused to join up with the squad after being called up as a replacement for the injured Sidney Govou.

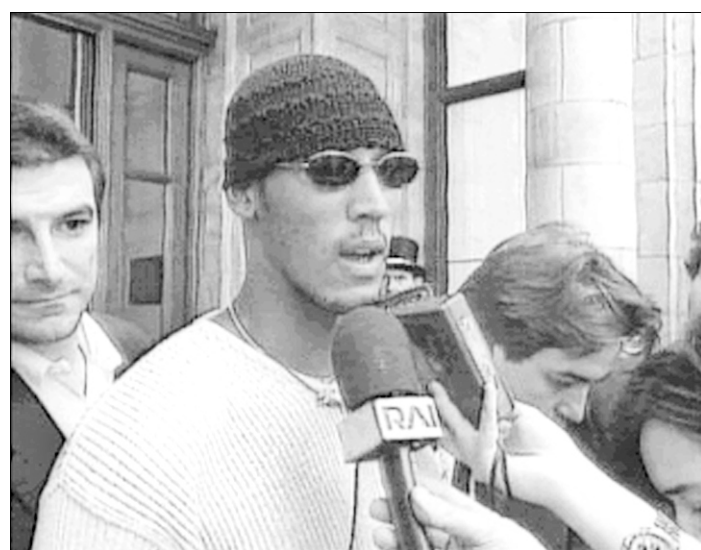
In an in-depth interview with French magazine Paris-Match a few months ago the enigmatic striker said: "If Santini gets down on his knees in front of me and says sorry then I'll think about it (returning to the France team)."

However on Monday the 28-times capped striker, who has scored six goals for France, said it was time to draw a line under the affair.

"Unfortunately the controversy that followed completely misinterpreted the way I felt at the time."

"These apologies will now allow me to relax inside my head and focus completely on football, without having to think about anything else," he added.

His apology may be enough for Santini, who has said he would not



NICOLAS ANELKA

with frankness, and truthfully.

"Those who know me acknowledge that despite the differences I had with the French team I have the greatest respect for them.

"Unfortunately the controversy that followed completely misinterpreted the way I felt at the time."

"These apologies will now allow me to relax inside my head and focus completely on football, without having to think about anything else," he added.

His apology may be enough for Santini, who has said he would not

consider selecting him until he did so.

Anelka has been a shining light for his Premiership side Manchester City this term scoring 19 times, though he has missed recent matches because of injury and suspension.

Anelka will learn if he has succeeded when Santini names his squad for the March 31 friendly with Holland on March 25 as he continues the build-up to the Euro 2004 championships which gets underway on June 12 in Portugal.

Ailton fancies Muller mark

Football

AFP, Berlin

Werder Bremen's prolific Brazilian marksman Ailton has set his sights on Gerd Muller's Bundesliga record of 40 goals.

Muller, 58, set the benchmark back in 1972 as he fired Bayern Munich to another championship and Ailton hopes to write himself into the history books.

"I would settle for 26 but if it carries on like this then why should it not be 40?" Ailton told the Bild daily.

Ailton, 30, has netted 22 goals in 24 outings this season to lead the German scoring charts and Bremen sporting director, Klaus Allofs, backed the Samba sensation to plunder the goals in the remaining 10 games.

"Toni can equal Muller's record," vowed Allofs. "Forty goals is not impossible but it is impor-

tant that Toni does not let his ego get out of control."

A World Cup winner with Germany in 1974, Muller has watched Ailton, who has shot

Bremen to a nine-point lead at the Bundesliga summit, closely this season.

"He is a striker out of the top draw," Muller said.



AILTON

It's Murali's turn

FROM PAGE 13

Tillakaratne dropped a regulation catch.

Hayden hit one six and seven fours in his 99-ball knock before being trapped leg-before by a straighter one from Muralitharan.

FACTBOX

REPORTERS, London

Factbox on Sri Lanka off-spinner Muralitharan: Born: April 17, 1972; Kandy, Sri Lanka. 1992 - Makes Test debut against Australia. 1993 - Plays in his first one-day international against India. 1995 - Called for throwing by Australian umpire Darrell Hair, prompting continuing debate about the legality of his throwing action. 1997 - Takes 100th Test wicket against New Zealand. 1998 - Takes 200th Test wicket against England. Called again for throwing during one-day international in Adelaide, prompting the Sri Lanka team to leave the field in protest. Subsequent tests show that Muralitharan bowls with a bent elbow due to a congenital deformity. 1999 - Named as one of Wisden's five cricketers of the year. First county cricket appearance for Lancashire. 2000 - Takes 300th Test wicket against South Africa. 2002 - Becomes the youngest and quickest player to reach 400 Test wickets, reaching the mark in Sri Lanka's third Test against Zimbabwe, only the 72nd Test of his career. 2003 - Joins county side Kent. 2004 - Becomes only the third man after Courtney Walsh and Shane Warne to take 500 Test wickets in Sri Lanka's second Test against Australia in Kandy.