Big win for Maple Leaf

SPORTS REPORTER

Mehzarin shot 41 points to lead Maple Leaf single-handedly to an impressive 50-8 win over Bangladesh International School in the girls' competition of the Aktel School Basketball tournament at the Dhanmondi Basketball Gymnasium yesterday.

In boys' matches, BKSP trounced South Breeze 89-10 for their second successive win while St Nicholas School beat Scholastica 65-35.

Did U Know?

Pete Sampras is youngest male player to ever win the US Open at 19 years, 28 days.

Brian Lara
(West Indies cricket captain)

"The decline of West Indies cricket started under Sir Vivian Richards. They weren't winning 5-0 under him in the 90s."

PHOTO: AP

New Zealand cricket captain Stephen Fleming (L) and his United States opposite number Richard Staple shake hands after inspecting The Oval ground in London yesterday.

Taibu doubtful starter

ICC CHAMPIONS TROPHY ENGLAND 2004

AFP, *London*

Zimbabwe are sweating on the fitness of captain and wicketkeeper Tatenda Taibu ahead of their ICC Champions Trophy opener against England at Edgbaston on Friday.

Taibu went for a scan on his right hamstring Wednesday while his teammates were involved in a warm-up match against the United States.

Doctors subsequently confirmed the 21-year-old had sustained a minor tear that will see him face a late fitness test on Friday morning.

Following the scan Taibu returned to the ground at Imber Court and, speaking to AFP, said: "I was told the injury was between grade one and grade two which is not bad, but I do have to have a late fitness test on Friday.

"I'm hopeful I will be fit and it shouldn't be a problem, but it is an important area for me as the wicketkeeper because I'm moving up and down constantly."

And Taibu was certain that his little-regarded side were capable of making life tricky for England and fellow Pool D opponents Sri Lanka.

"There is no doubt we have enough firepower to cause an upset because we've got some real talent and if it all clicks we can rock a few teams.

"The guys try to learn all the time and they back me up completely so it is great to have a squad like that. I know we are underdogs, but I play every game to win and so do the rest of the boys and by doing that we can only get better."

Taibu, arguably Zimbabwe cricket's most successful black player, was thrust into the captaincy back in April after a race row led to the axeing of former skipper Heath Streak, an incident which led the International Cricket Council (ICC) to launch an ongoing investigation into the fast bowler's claims of racism.

Streak, now at newly-crowned English county champions Warwickshire, was sacked by the Zimbabwe Cricket Union (ZCU) after he accused them of making some team selections based on race rather than merit.

After trying and failing to get Streak reinstated, some of his fellow players went on strike in protest.

That led the ZCU to sack a total of 15 senior players, all white, and sparked a chain of events that saw Zimbabwe suspended from Test cricket.

But, under an ICC plan, Zimbabwe are due to return to Test cricket in January with a series against fellow minnows Bangladesh

Before then they have a five-match home one-day series against England in November.

However, the details of the series still has to be confirmed with an England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) spokesman telling AFP Wednesday that it was their "intention" to play five matches but adding that no final decision had yet been taken.

Zimbabwe coach Phil Simmons, the former West Indies batsman, insisted the side were just focusing on on-field issues rather than the wider economic and social problems confronting the troubled state.

'Mini World Cup' time

FROM PAGE 13

was life after Murali by completing a 5-0 one-day whitewash at home to South Africa last month although how their side will adjust to the prospect of 0915GMT starts and a swinging ball remains to be seen.

India, saw a run of poor results end with a morale-boosting 23-run win against England at Lord's on Sunday where left-arm quick Irfan Pathan, voted Emerging Player of the Year at Tuesday's ICC Awards, took two for 32.

But India captain Sourav Ganguly warned afterwards. "We are a better batting unit than this and we all need to fire if we hope to do well in the Champions Trophy."

Hosts England could prove the dark horses event. Despite Sunday's reverse they won the three-game series against India 2-1 to end a disappointing run of one-day results.

And in Andrew Flintoff, the One-Day International Player of the Year, they have a 'three-dimensional' cricketer in the form of his life.

As for the rest, Pakistan and West Indies remain capable of brilliance and blundering in equal measure while just being competitive will represent significant progress for minnows Bangladesh and Zimbabwe.

But there are signs that Pakistan, under new coach Bob Woolmer, are developing a harder edge.

They pushed Australia close for the second time in as many weeks during a 10-run defeat at Lord's on Saturday and their sell-out game against India on September 19 at Edgbaston promises to be the match of the tournament.

POOLS AND FIXTURES

Pool A: Australia, New Zealand, United States
Pool B: Bangladesh, South Africa, West Indies
Pool C: India, Kenya, Pakistan
Pool D: England, Sri Lanka, Zimbabwe

Date	Match	Venue
Sept 10:	England v Zimbabwe	Edgbaston
	New Zealand v United States	The Oval
Sept 11:	India v Kenya	Rose Bowl
Sept 12:	South Africa v Bangladesh	Edgbaston
Sept 13:	Australia v United States	Rose Bowl
Sept 14:	Pakistan v Kenya	Edgbaston
	Sri Lanka v Zimbabwe	The Oval
Sept 15:	West Indies v Bangladesh	Rose Bowl
Sept 16:	Australia v New Zealand	The Oval
Sept 17:	Sri Lanka v England	Rose Bowl
Sept 18:	South Africa v West Indies	The Oval
Sept 19:	India v Pakistan	Edgbaston
SEMIFINALS		
Sept 21:	Winner A v Winner D	Edgbaston
Sept 22:	Winner B v Winner C	Rose Bowl
FINAL		
Sept 25:	The Oval	

Note: All ties have reserve days so if a match cannot be completed on the first day it will be carried over into the second day. Duckworth-Lewis will only come into effect if a recalculation is required on the second day.

911 still fresh in Staple's mind

AFP, *London*

Defeats in cricket matches are sometimes labelled a "tragedy" for the losing team; really heavy reverses may even find themselves called a "massacre".

But Richard Staple, the captain of a United States team who are widely predicted to go down to a series of one-sided losses in the forthcoming ICC Champions Trophy tournament in England, knows better than most the ultimate unimportance of any cricket match.

Three years ago he was in his New York office, only one block away from the World Trade Centre, when the first plane struck in the September 11 attacks that shocked the world.

And as he made his way towards the Twin Towers he witnessed the second plane collide in an incident that saw his friend Nizam Hafiz, the former United States cricketer, among those killed.

"I was there when it happened and I spoke to one of my friends just before who was one of the USA team and who died there," Staple told AFP here Wednesday at the Metropolitan Police sports ground where his team were playing a warm-up match against Zimbabwe.

"It was a sad moment for me. I worked about a block away and I saw the second plane hit the building," Staple, 34, a phone technician at the time of the attack but now a real estate agent, added.

"It was announced in our office when the first plane hit and I was actually walking towards it when the second plane hit.

"It certainly puts cricket into context. I was asked how would facing (Australia fast bowler) Brett Lee compare to a situation like that and there is no comparison. That was a question of life and death."

The US, who came through a qualifying tournament, begin their Champions Trophy campaign against New Zealand a day before the third anniversary of the attack, at The Oval.

Fischer wins partial reprieve

AFP, *Tokyo*

Former world chess champion Bobby Fischer on Wednesday won an injunction to suspend his deportation from Japan until the court rules on his demand to cancel the deportation order, his supporters said.

"It could take as long as a year for the court to hear that case," said John Bosnitch, who heads a volunteer group formed to free Fischer, detained at Japanese immigration at Narita, east of Tokyo, since July.

The justice ministry last month rejected Fischer's request for political asylum and said he would be deported, prompting his lawyer Masako Suzuki to file for an injunction against deportation.

Fischer has been wanted by Washington since 1992 for earning more than three million dollars in a chess match staged in the former Yugoslavia in defiance of an international embargo. He faces up to 10 years in prison if convicted.

He was detained by Japanese immigration authorities on July 13 trying to board a flight for the Philippines using an invalid passport. His passport has been revoked by the United States.

Bosnitch said Wednesday Fischer also filed his demand for a US official hearing to overturn the US State Department's decision to revoke his passport.

Fischer has completed a written appeal of that decision be filed with US Secretary of State Colin Powell and the US embassy in Tokyo, Bosnitch said, adding a US appeal hearing must be held within 60 days.

A farce and joke: Arjuna

Cricket

AFP, *Colombo*

The omission of the world's highest Test wicket-taker Muttiah Muralitharan from the ICC Awards made it a "farce and a joke," Sri Lanka's former World Cup-winning skipper Arjuna Ranatunga said Thursday.

Sri Lanka's star spinner Muralitharan was not given a place in the Test Team of the Year announced at the inaugural awards of the International Cricket Council, but the man who is trailing him, Australia's Shane Warne, was included.

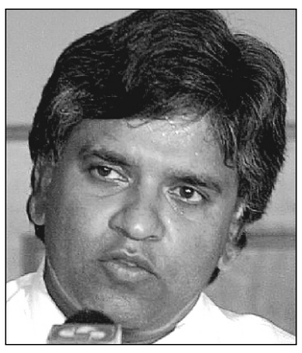
"You expected better from a respected panel of judges," Ranatunga told this news agency. "They said they looked at the performance of players in the past year, but that does not appear to be the case."

"This is a farce. It is a joke to leave out Murali and give an award to Shane Warne. People will have doubts about (the credibility of) the ICC. The performance of Murali in the past year was far ahead of Warne."

Ranatunga, who led Sri Lanka to World Cup victory in 1996 and is now deputy minister of tourism, said he believed the ICC selections had been "very biased".

The only Sri Lankan to make it to the ICC Test Team and the One-Day squad was paceman Chaminda Vaas.

Muralitharan said he believed he was left out of the ICC Test Team of



ARJUNA RANATUNGA

the Year because of his controversial bowling action.

Affectionately known as Murali, he took 68 wickets in eight matches during the course of the voting period at an average of 17.47, but failed to make the team with the spinner's spot going to Warne.

Warne only played half the year after finishing his 12-month ban imposed for failing a drugs test on the eve of the last World Cup.

"A few people are not that keen on me because they think I am not bowling properly," said Muralitharan who holds the world record for Test victims with 532 wickets, five ahead of second-placed Warne.

"That's the only reason it can be, but it's disappointing for me."

"It happens sometimes that people are not favourable towards me but they do not have to judge that -- they have to judge how I have performed during the course of the year," the Sri Lankan told the BBC.

"I am surprised that someone who didn't play for six months did get into the side.

"If you take Warne's total career he should be there, but if it's about one year's performance he should not because he did not play for six months of that time.

"I don't need more awards -- I already have the world record but I was disappointed."

Defending the decision, the selection panel chairman Richie Benaud said: "Warne came back and made an immediate impact with 36 wickets in just five games and deserved his place as the first spinner.

"Leading wicket-taker Muralitharan was unlucky."

Aussies alter strategy

Cricket

AFP, *Sydney*

Australian selectors on Thursday named a new lineup of spin bowlers and four uncapped youngsters for a four-Test tour of India, hoping variety will help break a 35-year drought in the sub-continent giant.

Leg-spinner Stuart MacGill was the biggest casualty left off the 16-man squad in favour of all-rounder Cameron White, a 21-year-old who was named to the team that played in Zimbabwe earlier this year after MacGill boycotted the tour.

Nathan Hauritz, a finger spinner, was also named to help back up Shane Warne for the spin attack during the tour which begins October 6 in Bangalore.

In addition to White and Hauritz, batsman Michael Clarke and all-rounder Shane Watson will be making their Test debut during the series.

Also added to the squad which beat Sri Lanka in a three-Test series earlier this year is pace bowler Brett Lee, who came back from a nagging angle injury to join the one-day squad in the ICC Champions Trophy series.

"This is a well-rounded squad that gives us enormous flexibility," said chief selector Trevor Hohns.

Hohns said White's batting had nudged him ahead of MacGill for the team.

"We've selected three very different types of spinners in Shane Warne, Cameron White and Nathan Hauritz," he said.

"We were very keen to include two all-rounders in the squad and Cameron's ability with the bat worked strongly in his favour, and as such, was the preferred second-choice leg-spinner ahead of Stuart MacGill," he said.

Hohns said selectors had added one more player than normal due to the desire to have flexibility for the spin-friendly conditions expected in India.

A decision would be made after the second Test in Madras whether to send one or two players back to domestic cricket in Australia if their selection in the remaining Tests was unlikely.

"We've chosen one more player than usual but we wanted to select a squad that allows us to cover every possible condition that may be presented," he said.

"One of Australian cricket's greatest challenges remains winning a Test series in India and were confident that this squad will give us every opportunity to do so."

Hohns said Watson's inclusion, at the expense of Andrew Symonds, as a genuine all-rounder would give the team extra options in playing three or four seamers when assessing the tricky conditions.

"Shane has proven his full fitness since coming back from injury and could be particularly valuable as a medium-pace bowling all-rounder if conditions were more suited to playing just the two specialist fast bowlers," he said.

"He had a terrific domestic season as a specialist batsman, but has also done a lot of work on his bowling action since recovering from injury and is an exciting all-round talent.

"Likewise, Michael Clarke has been knocking on the door for around 18 months now and is suited to Indian conditions given his abilities against quality spin-bowling."

"While not a huge turner of the ball, he generates significant bounce off the pitch and is very quick through the air, and it's a style of bowling which has proved extremely effective on Indian wickets.

"In Nathan's case, we thought it sensible to include a finger spinner given the conditions and our history of including a finger spinner in the squad on our last two Indian tours."

SQUAD

Ricky Ponting (captain), Adam Gilchrist (vice-captain), Justin Langer, Matthew Hayden, Damien Martyn, Darren Lehmann, Simon Katich, Michael Clarke, Shane Watson, Cameron White, Shane Warne, Nathan Hauritz, Brett Lee, Jason Gillespie, Michael Kasprowicz, Glenn McGrath.

Nothing compares to this

FROM PAGE 13

1997) but apart from that, leading Brothers to this double is my biggest career achievement," said Naimuddin.

So is the luxury of possessing a squad that can be interpreted as a virtual who's who of local football, the recipe for his success? Naimuddin does not feel that way at all.

"What you saw today was a united Brothers Union. We lost our number one goalie (Biplab Bhattacharya) after only two minutes but this team doesn't miss anyone. The players who are on the field at any given moment are my best eleven. This is our strength," said Naimuddin.

"We kept fighting all the way. We missed chances but in the end it was sheer grace of God that we won although it would've been better to win in normal time," he added.

Brothers captain Alfaz Ahmed, no stranger to laurels, said it was the best final for him. The ace forward completed a unique hattrick of NFL titles having won it with Muktijoddha last season and Mohammedan in 2002.

"I have won trophies before but this one is most satisfying because I was the captain. I attribute our victory to team work and confidence in our abilities.

'We were the best team and we wanted to prove that we did not need foreign recruits for success," said Alfaz.

Arman Miah, the mercurial playmaker was particularly delighted on receiving the man of the tournament award which incidentally was the second time he has been recognised at the competition's best player.

"I was man of the tournament in the second edition of the NFL in 2002 when I was with Abahani. But there was always a sense of dissatisfaction inside me as we were only the runners-up that time. Now I no longer have any regrets," said Arman.

The battling Muktijoddha team, which had adopted a workmanlike approach compromising flair for substance throughout the competition, was understandably disappointed with the result. But captain Matiur Rahman Munna was critical of the refereeing in the final.

"The referee upheld their every call. The red card against Saiful could have been avoided too. Besides, some of our attacking play was abruptly interrupted with unnecessary whistling," claimed the Bangladesh international midfielder.

Battle nicely poised

FROM PAGE 13

though as world number one Federer, looking to become the first man to win three Grand Slam titles in the same year since Swede Mats Wilander in 1988, took the opening set.

But as the stadium filled up, so Agassi, the darling of the New York crowd, lifted his game.

The 34-year-old, champion in 1994 and 1999, began to target the Federer backhand and it paid dividends when the American broke for a 2-0 lead in the second set.

Under constant pressure from the depth of Agassi's groundstrokes, Federer began to make mistakes as he dropped the set.

Roared on by the crowd, Agassi had a chance in the second game of the third set but Federer saved a break point with an ace and though the veteran American continued to play the better tennis, he was unable to press home his advantage.

Agassi had not faced a single break point in the third set until a double fault at 30-30 in the 11th game handed Federer his opening.

A netted backhand from Agassi then gave the Swiss the break and a strong service game helped him take the set.

The two players were level at deuce on the Agassi serve in the opening game of the fourth set when the rain returned.

Henman, looking to become only the second British man to reach the last four at Flushing Meadows in the Open Era, blitzed through the first set and saved a set point at 4-5 in the second before doubling his lead.

The fifth seed, who reached the semi-finals at the French Open and the quarter-finals at Wimbledon earlier this year, broke for 2-1 in the third but Hrbaty levelled at 4-4 and held serve for 5-4 before they were forced off court.

The few fans who ventured on to the Louis Armstrong Court witnessed a demolition job from fifth seed Davenport as she dismissed unseeded Japanese Shinobu Asagoe 6-1, 6-1 in 45 minutes.

"I just really wanted to play," Davenport told reporters.

"I didn't want to have to come back here tomorrow and possibly go through the same thing. So I was very excited when we walked on the court and it looked like we were going to have some dry time.

"At about 6-1, 5-1, I thought, 'if it rains now, I'm going to die'. Then I started to hurry it up a bit."

Despatched to Court 11 where only a smattering of spectators greeted them, ninth seed Kuznetsova trailed 2-0 against fellow Russian Nadia Petrova, the 14th seed who beat defending champion Justine Henin-Hardenne in round four.

But Kuznetsova hit back to seize the first-set tiebreak and an early break in the second helped her clinch her first grand slam semi-final appearance with a 7-6 6-3 triumph.

"This has been a strange year for me, it's been good but could have been so much better," Kuznetsova said after joining another Russian, Elena Dementieva, in the last four.

"At the French Open I had a match point against (Anastasia) Myskina and didn't take it and she went on to win a Grand Slam.

"Then I had a big disappointment at Wimbledon where I lost in the first round, so this makes up for that."

Double complete

FROM PAGE 13

senior member of the squad, came close a couple of minutes later but his dipping left-footer from 25 yards rattled the crossbar after beating Aminul in the flight.

Aminul came to the rescue of his side twice in the last ten minutes of the first half when the national number one custodian denied Topu and Alfaz on a one on one situation.

Muktijoddha survived when an Orange tide swelled their goal after the break and Hassan Al Mamun deflected an Alfaz centre before it could reach an unguarded Topu near the goalmouth in the 54th minute. Four minutes later, Titu set up Topu but the young striker's split-second delay allowed Aminul to narrow the angle and block the shot from point-blank range.

Both sides had their chances to score a 'silver goal' in the first half of extra time but Ritu placed an angled drive wide of the far post while Saiful, just a minute before receiving the marching orders, saw his powerful drive saved by Mohammed Ali in his second effort.

Alfaz had a glorious opportunity to separate the two sides on the stroke of the final whistle but he placed his right-footer wide of Aminul's stretching hand and inches from the far post.

President Prof. Dr. Iajuddin Ahmed witnessed the final and distributed prizes.

Apart from the championship trophy -- which was flown to the ground by helicopter -- Brothers, who are making their maiden appearance in the National League, pocketed a handsome purse of Tk 5 lakh.

Muktijoddha won Tk 3 lakh as runners-up, third-placed Abahani became richer by Tk 2 lakh apart from the fair-play trophy and Mohammedan, the other losing semifinalist, collected Tk 1 lakh.

Arman, who scored the equaliser against Abahani in Brothers 2-1 semifinal victory, received both the man-of-the-final and man-of-the-tournament awards.

Muktijoddha's Moni and Sheikh Russel Krira Chakra's Moroccan striker Touati Youness shared the top scorer's award with seven goals each.

Red card: Saiful (Muktijoddha)

Yellow cards: Iqbal (Brothers) and Hassan Al Mamun, Kanchan (Muktijoddha).

TEAMS

BROTHERS UNION: Biplab (Mohammed Ali, 2nd minute), Sujan, Nazrul, Rajani, Titu, Parvez, Iqbal, Arman, Abul (Rikto, 66th), Alfaz and Topu (79th).

MUKTIJODDHA SANGSAD: Aminul, Hassan Al Mamun, Pradeep, Papel, Belal (Lajuk, 58th), Saiful, Munna, Ghansah, Kanchan Kabua and Moni.

Referee: Mansoor Azad.

Star WHIZZ KID COMPETITION 21

Tick the correct answers, post to The Daily Star

Competition closes at 8 pm Sept 10, 2004 and draw shortly afterwards

1. Who won the first gold medal in the Athens Olympics?
Galkina Devers Du

2. Who became Asia Cup cricket champs?
India Pakistan Sri Lanka

3. Who clinched the Cincinnati Masters tennis title?
Federer Henman Agassi

4. Who lifted the 25th nat'l hockey crown?
Usha MSC Bangladesh Army

Name .....

.....

Class. ..... Roll No. .....

School Address .....

.....

Phone: (If any) .....

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS
1 Frizzy coiffure
5 Rope fiber
9 With it
12 Gator's cousin
13 State with authority
14 Praiseful piece
15 Base-runner's goal
17 Mal de —
18 Exemplar of craziness
19 Night vision?
21 Rodeo rider's interjection
24 Official decree
25 "— Rhythm"
26 Ghostly
30 Muppet eagle
31 Damp
32 "Born in the —"
33 Gets set
35 Goblet part
36 Lee or Wayne
37 Betty Ford Center goings-on
38 Hospital sections
40 Palmist
42 Singer DiFranco
43 Family movie
48 Fawn's mom
49 MPs' quarry
50 Atmosphere
51 Em halves
52 Staying power
53 Rowboat woe

DOWN
1 Interlaken interjection
2 To and —
3 Computer goings-on acronym
4 Tawny wildcat
5 Head light
6 Author Hunter
7 Encountered
8 Foretell
9 Jarring fact
10 Notion
11 Hair salon request
16 Nanki- — ("Mikado" role)
20 Scoundrel
21 Stream of smoke
22 Culture medium
23 Omelet side dish
24 Boone portrayer Parker
26 Ilk
27 Sales pitch?
28 On the briny
29 Easter entree
31 Sheriff
34 Legume holder
35 Soap opera, e.g.
37 Gun the engine
38 Test the waters
39 Unsigned, In "Bartlett's"
40 Eye irritant
41 Congers
44 Buy now, pay later
45 Soon to arrive
46 Historic period
47 Erstwhile acorn

Solution time: 21 mins.

E	Y	R	E		F	A	R		B	E	A	M
R	O	A	D	S	I	D	E		A	X	L	E
G	U	Y	W	I	R	E	S		L	I	O	N
			I	C	E		E	D	I	T	E	D
S	P	U	N	K		P	L	A	N			
E	A	R	S		F	A	L	L	G	U	Y	
E	N	D		A	L	L	E	Y		R	U	N
	G	U	Y	N	O	I	R		U	G	L	Y
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O	L	E	O		C	A	B	L	E	G	U	Y
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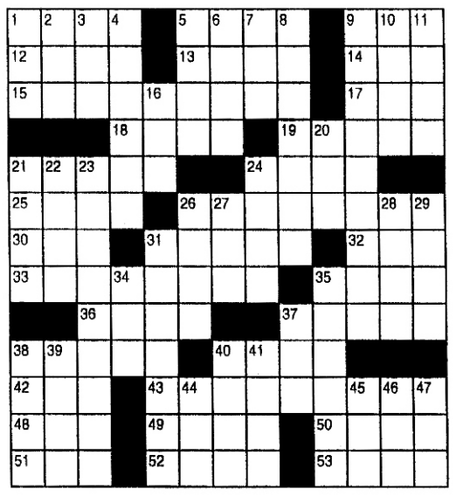
S	A	T	S		S	I	T		T	E	A	S



CRYPTOQUIP

PV IDJ WPWO'E AODY EFU SDTCEPDO DV C GFDRRUX, TDJSW IDJ CGA "ZJIUX ZU YFUXU?"

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: TO GET AMPLE NUTRITION, I'D SAY A TYPICAL GHOST MUST EAT THREE SCARE MEALS A DAY.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: W equals D

The Cryptoquip 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.