



Action from yesterday's women's football tournament encounter between Khulna and Narayanganj at the Bir Shreshtha Mostafa Kamal Stadium in Kamalapur.

Challenge Cup hockey Bangladesh meet India today

SPORTS REPORTER It will be a dress-rehearsal for final when hosts Bangladesh will meet India in the last group match of the Under-21 Challenge Cup hockey tournament today at the Maulana Bhasani National Hockey Stadium at 3:30pm.

India booked final berth with comfortable wins over Myanmar, Afghanistan and Oman while Bangladesh had struggled in their last match against Oman to score 2-0 victory.

Earlier Oman and Myanmar meet in the other match at BKSP at 9am. The final will be take place at the same venue tomorrow.

Zvonareva crashes out

Russian Vera Zvonareva became the second seed to crash out of the 650,000-dollar WTA event here Tuesday falling to a straight sets 6-3, 7-5 first round defeat against compatriot Elena Likhovtseva.

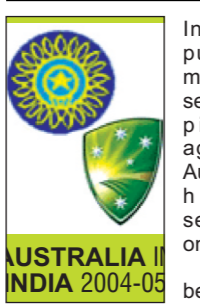
Japanese eighth seed Ai Sugiyama exited the tournament on Monday and Zvonareva, seeded six here, suffered the same fate with 13 double faults contributing to her downfall against Likhovtseva.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

Crossword puzzle grid with clues for Across and Down words.

Laxman wants to do it again

REUTERS, Bangalore



India's Vangipurappu Laxman says he is seeking to play a pivotal role again against Australia in their home Test series starting on Wednesday.

"It is going to be a challenging series," Laxman told Reuters on Tuesday. "I'm looking forward to making a major contribution."

The wristy batsman has emerged as a key player during the last two series between the sides and his contribution will have added importance for the hosts in the four-Test series following injury to Sachin Tendulkar.

bowlers to help India force a 1-1 away draw in 2003-04, hitting two hundreds while making 494 runs at an average of 82.33 in four Tests.

Asked whether he saw himself playing a lead role in Tendulkar's absence due to an elbow injury, he said: "Yes. I play every match according to the situation."

Australia's stand-in captain Adam Gilchrist acknowledged Laxman's threat when asked about Tendulkar's absence.

"It is not a disappointment," he said with a smile, but then added: "The game's better with him."

Waugh's tips

REUTERS, Melbourne

Former Australia captain Steve Waugh says India skipper Sourav Ganguly is suspect against the short ball.

Waugh made his comment in a dossier analysing the strengths and weaknesses of India's batsmen ahead of the four-Test series against Australia which starts in Bangalore on Wednesday.

The 39-year-old published his list of "the batsmen we must stop" in a column in Melbourne newspaper the Herald Sun on Tuesday.

Waugh said Ganguly was India's best player of spin but not so fond of the quick stuff. "(He) gets caught up with the short ball at his body and is unsure when to play the hook shot," said the former Australia captain.

Ganguly would be under enormous pressure if he lost the first Test, Waugh added.

Waugh also said that ego could affect the concentration of strokeplayer Virender Sehwag and Akash Chopra was uncertain against the short ball.

Rahul Dravid has the greatest mental strength in world cricket, Waugh said, before adding: "(He is) due for a mediocre series to prove he's human".

Waugh said Sachin Tendulkar, who is battling an elbow injury, could lose his edge if he engaged in on-field banter while Vangipurappu Laxman was not in top form, had poor footwork and played away from his body outside the off-stump.

Yuvraj Singh could struggle with nerves despite a confident swagger, added Test cricketer's most capped player.

Waugh retired in January after a 1-1 draw in the four-Test series at home against India, who retained the Border-Gavaskar Trophy after they had won 2-1 on their own soil in 2001.

Throughout Waugh's celebrated 168-Test career, a Test series victory in India eluded him. Australia have not won a series there since Bill Lawry's team triumphed 3-1 in 1969.

Australia assistant coach Tim Neilsen said on Tuesday the team would use Waugh's dossier in their planning for the first Test.

JFA Cup football

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Twice while Sumon and Raihan scored one each for the winners. Ismail made the consolation goal for the losers.

At the Rajbari Stadium, double strikes from Rajib and Sumon helped Narayanganj to reach the second round with a 4-1 victory over Gopalganj.

In other matches, Sirajganj blanked Kurigram 4-0 at the Sirajganj Stadium, Meherpur beat Chuadanga 4-3 in tiebreaker at the Meherpur Stadium, Dhaka defeated Kishoreganj 2-0 at the Jamalpur Stadium, Narasingdi beat Comilla 3-1 at the Laxmipur Stadium, Khulna earned hard fought 2-1 victory over Bagerhat at the Borguna Stadium and Chittagong beat Noakhali 6-3 in tiebreaker at the Feni Stadium to book seats into the second round.

Fundamentalists

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year after Islamic radicals threatened of dire consequences. Last month, authorities had to defer a wrestling competition for women following threats from another group of fanatics.

Thankfully, the second day's matches of the tournament were held without any untoward incident at the Bir Shreshtha Mostafa Kamal Stadium in Kamalapur.

Bangladesh Ansar crushed Chittagong Division 12-0 while Khulna scored a comprehensive 7-0 victory over Narayanganj.

India turn

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Australia are aiming to win their first Test series on Indian soil since 1969. India won the last two series played here in 1998 and 2001 by identical 2-1 margins.

Pool catches fire

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winning the 200m individual medley gold. She clocked 2:49.96sec in her favourite event, bettering the previous national record by 1.35 seconds.

Laboni Akhter Jui of Bangladesh Ansar secured silver clocking 2:54.94sec and her teammate Lavli Khatun finished third at 2:55.89sec.

Another ace BJMC swimmer Sabura Khatun, back in the national circuit after a troubled last year, struck a new national record in the 400m freestyle. She clocked 5:25.57sec. The previous best was 5:35.34sec. Mamtaj Shirin of Ansars won the silver with a timing of 5:34.56sec while Merina Akhter of BJMC took the bronze.

Ansars however denied BJMC a clean sweep when Jui won the 200m butterfly gold with a timing of 3:06.07sec. Bithi Khatun of BKSP finished second.

Earlier Bangladesh Swimming Federation president and Chief of Naval Staff Shah Iqbal Mujtaba declared the four-day meet open where 600 swimmers from 45 teams are taking part for 50 gold medals.



Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger poses with fight attendants from Emirates Airlines in front of Arsenal's new stadium in London on October 5. Arsenal's new 60,000-seater ground at Ashburton Grove, which is scheduled to open for the 2006-07 season, will be known as the Emirates Stadium for the next 15 years after they agreed a 100 million pound deal with Emirates Airlines. The Gunners have been at their Highbury ground, which now has a capacity of only 38,500, since 1913.

From Highbury to Emirates

Football

AFP, London

Arsenal's new 60,000-seater ground at Ashburton Grove which is scheduled to open for the 2006-07 season will be known as the Emirates Stadium for the next 15 years after they agreed a 100 million pound deal with Emirates Airlines.

The company will also be the Gunners' shirt sponsor for eight years starting in the 2006-07 Premiership season when the English champions start life at their new 400 million pound ground.

The Gunners have been at their

Highbury ground, which now has a capacity of only 38,500, since 1913.

The agreement was signed Tuesday at Highbury by Arsenal chairman Peter Hill-Wood and Maurice Flanagan, Emirates vice-chairman and group president.

Keith Edelman, managing director of Arsenal, said: "The sheer size and scale of this deal is an amazing opportunity for Arsenal. We are delighted to have Emirates as our partner and sponsor."

Emirates are currently shirt sponsors of Arsenal's London rivals Chelsea, but that deal expires at the end of the current season.

Emirates Airlines chairman

Sheikh Ahmed bin Saeed Al-Maktoum hopes the tie-up will boost the popularity of the sport in the United Arab Emirates still further.

"This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to sponsor such a major new stadium and club, and represents a win-win partnership for both Emirates and Arsenal," Sheikh Ahmed said.

Emirates also sponsor match referees at Premiership and Football League level through an agreement with the Professional Game Match Officials Limited (PGMOL) which runs until 2007.

Lazio in group of death

UEFA CUP

AFP, Geneva

Top seeds Lazio of Italy drew last year's semi-finalists Villarreal, English Premiership side Middlesbrough and the experienced Partizan Belgrade in the UEFA Cup draw made here on Tuesday.

Greek minnows Egaleo were the other team drawn in Group E but they were not expected to be in the running for the three qualifying slots into the last 32.

It was new territory for Europe's second-tier club competition as for the first time they employed a group system instead of the straight home-and-away knockout format.

Eight groups of five were drawn with the sides playing four games each, two at home and two away based on a complex UEFA grading system.

The top three teams from each group go through to join the eight teams placing third in the existing Champions League groups as the competition returns to direct knockout.

Group A also looked like being a tough battle with Feyenoord of the Netherlands, Schalke 04 of Germany, FC Basel of Switzerland, Hearts of Scotland and Ferencvaros of Hungary being pooled together.

Former winners Newcastle are in with Sporting Lisbon, French outfit Sochaux, Panionios of Greece and

Dinamo Tbilisi in Group D while Scottish giants Rangers, who needed a penalty-shoot out to defeat Maritimo in the last round go up against Auxerre of France, AK Graz of Austria, Amica Wronki of

Poland and Alkmaar of the Netherlands in Group E.

The other group top seeds were Parma of Italy, FC Bruges of Belgium, Stuttgart of Germany and AEK Athens of Greece.

Table titled 'THE DRAW' showing group assignments for the UEFA Cup, including Group A through Group H with various teams listed.

Owen vows comeback

Football

AFP, London

Michael Owen has vowed to silence the critics calling for him to be axed by England after a troubled start to his career with Real Madrid.

The 24-year-old's place in his national side is under serious threat for the first time since he exploded on to the international stage with one of the greatest World Cup goals of all time against Argentina at France '98.

Owen's lack of matches since moving to Real -- where he is only the fourth choice striker -- and the emergence of Jermain Defoe as a rival for his position have increased the chances that he will be dropped for the upcoming World Cup qualifiers against Wales and Azerbaijan.

But Owen insisted he still believed he deserved to be Eriksson's line-up against Wales at Old Trafford on Saturday, provided he recovers sufficiently from a back strain in time.

"From things I have read, perhaps some people would prefer it if I was not available, but I am as certain as ever that I can do a good job for my country -

and my club," Owen said in a column for The Times newspaper.

Owen admitted to being upset by the lack of support he had received in England given his record of goalscoring for his country -- 27 goals in 63 games being combined with a tendency to strike when it matters most.

"I have a record of scoring in big games and big tournaments. I am not a kid. I am an experienced international."

The striker also dismissed suggestions that he owed his place in Eriksson's side to the fact that he, like David Beckham, is one of the coach's alleged favourites.

"He selects me for what I can do for the team and not for any other reason," Owen insisted. "I have probably spoken to him three times outside of England camps. No cosy meals, no cosy nights out."

Owen was due to miss England's first training session for the Wales match on Tuesday but he said he was hopeful of being back in training by the end of

the week.

Provided he can prove his fitness, Eriksson is widely expected to keep faith with Owen and drop Defoe, who scored a superb goal in his full debut against Poland last month, back to the bench.

Owen partnered Defoe in Poland but one of them has to make way following the return to action of Wayne Rooney, who is an automatic choice after his outstanding displays at Euro 2004.

Eriksson will also be making changes at the back and in midfield. Rio Ferdinand and Sol Campbell are expected to resume their 2002 World Cup partnership in the centre of defence following Ferdinand's return from his eight-month suspension for missing a doping test and Campbell's recovery from an Achilles injury.

In midfield, Eriksson has lost Steven Gerrard and Wayne Bridge to injury. David Beckham, Frank Lampard and Nicky Butt will occupy three of the midfield spots but the troublesome berth on the left looks up for grabs with Owen Hargreaves, Phil Neville and Joe Cole among the contenders.

A tragic way to die

AFP, Rio de Janeiro

Brazilian footballer Cleonicio dos Santos Silva died here on Monday after being shot in the head, said local police.

The 28-year-old midfielder, who played for Zurich in Switzerland, was gunned down on Sunday as he drove through one of the city's poorer neighbourhoods, said witnesses.

Santos Silva was shot three times, once in the head.

Redknapp in trouble

AFP, London

Tottenham midfielder Jamie Redknapp is facing a three-match ban after being charged with serious foul play by the Football Association (FA) on Monday following his horror tackle on Everton midfielder Tim Cahill.

Redknapp was cautioned by referee Graham Poll, who has subsequently reviewed the incident and submitted his report to the FA in the light of the incident which came in Spurs' 1-0 win at Goodison Park.

Redknapp, who has apologised to the Australian international, has 14 days to respond to the charge.

The FA could also come under pressure to apply the same criteria to Redknapp's Spurs' team-mate, the England striker Jermain Defoe, who committed just as bad a foul on David Weir in the same match on Saturday.

Both players were only booked for their fouls - Redknapp for the fifth time this season which brings an automatic one-match suspension.

That caution would usually be sufficient for the FA to deem that Poll had dealt with the issues, leaving further action unnecessary.

Edmilson out for six months

AFP, Barcelona

Barcelona's Brazilian international midfielder defender Edmilson underwent surgery Monday on a cruciate ligament in his right knee which has ruled him out of action for six months, club doctor Jordi Ardevol confirmed.

Edmilson picked up the injury four minutes into Sunday's 1-0 win against Numancia which pushed the Catalan side to the top of the Primera Liga.

He becomes the third Barcelona player to suffer such a knee injury after defenders Thiago Motta and Gabri, leading to an enquiry whether it is a coincidence or related to the new pitch laid at the Nou Camp.

World Cup-winning Edmilson joined Barcelona from French club Lyon for 12 million euros last July.

Lanka look

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Also back in the squad are express pacer Shoaib Akhtar and all-rounder Abdul Razzaq who were both rested during Pakistan's three-wicket win over Zimbabwe on Sunday.

Pakistan will persist with Younis Khan as wicketkeeper to include one extra batsman as regular keeper Moin Khan has still to recover from flu and fever.

"We know Sri Lanka is a tough side but after two good games against Zimbabwe we are well-tuned and hope the guys raise their level and give us the one more win to qualify for the final," said Inzamam.

Inzamam admitted Muralitharan's absence would help Pakistan.

"His absence would give us advantage but having said that we know Sri Lanka have recently beaten South Africa without Muralitharan," he said.

TEAMS

PAKISTAN (from): Inzamamul Haq (capt), Yasir Hameed, Salman Butt, Shahid Afridi, Bazid Khan, Younis Khan, Shoaib Malik, Yousuf Youhana, Misbahul Haq, Abdul Razzaq, Moin Khan, Shoaib Akhtar, Mohammad Sami, Rana Naveedul Hassan, Anar Iftikhar.

SRI LANKA (from): Marvan Atapattu (captain), Mahela Jayawardene, Sanath Jayasuriya, Kumar Sangakkara, Tillakaratne Dilshan, Saman Jayantha, Avishka Gunawardene, Chaminda Vaas, Upul Chandana, Farveez Maharoof, Nuwan Zoysa, Dilhara Fernando, Kusal Lokuarachchi, Thilina Kandamby, Rangana Herath.

Umpires: Mark Benson (England) and Asad Rauf (Pakistan).

Australia begin

FROM PAGE 13

Hansie Cronje's South Africa in 2000.

LIKELY TEAMS AUSTRALIA: Adam Gilchrist (captain), Matthew Hayden, Justin Langer, Simon Katich, Damien Martyn, Darren Lehmann, Michael Clarke, Shane Warne, Jason Gillespie, Michael Kasprowicz, Glenn McGrath.

INDIA: Sourav Ganguly (captain), Akash Chopra, Virender Sehwag, Rahul Dravid, Venkatesh Laxman, Yuvraj Singh, Parthiv Patel, Irfan Pathan, Zaheer Khan, Anil Kumble, Harbhajan Singh.