

Pakistan hold India

Hockey

AFP, Chandigarh

Pakistan held a spirited Indian side to a 1-1 draw in the sixth match of an eight-Test field hockey series here on Wednesday.

Ghazanfar Ali scored for Pakistan and Ignace Tirkey for India, as the visiting side fought hard to turn their 3-1 lead in the series to an unbeatable margin.

India dominated the game but failed to convert their chances, which included five wasted penalty corners, while Pakistan's attack-line failed to sparkle and was able to earn just two.

India, playing in the series without top stars like Dhanraj Pillay,

Gagan Ajit Singh and Prabhjot Singh, did a creditable job as captain Dilip Tirkey too could not take the field due to an injury.

Tirkey, considered the backbone of the Indian defence, was hit in the face while trying to defend a penalty-corner during the last match in New Delhi.

"I thought the Indians played very well today. In fact we were lucky to get away with a draw," said Pakistan skipper Waseem Ahmed. "We can expect the remaining matches to be tough as well."

India started out well but conceded a goal against the run of play.

Ghazanfar Ali scored with an indirect variation of a penalty corner in the 22nd minute, which was awarded when Vivek Gupta brought down Pakistani striker Rehan Butt.

India reduced the margin ten minutes later as Ignace Tirkey deflected in a free-hit from the left flank.

But India could not press on and only had the satisfaction of preventing Pakistan ace penalty-corner specialist Sohail Abbas from getting past Dutch legend Paul Litjens in the list of all-time goal scorers.

Abbas drew level with Litjens in the last match as he scored two goals to reach the world record of 267. He had started the series at 261.

But Abbas is almost certain to get more chances in the remaining two matches of the series to be held in Amritsar (October 8) and Hyderabad (October 10).

The first leg of four matches of the series was held in Pakistan.

Anil attains 400-mark

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unconventional style. But critics branded him a "bad-wicket bowler" capable of succeeding only on low, slow and uneven home tracks.

They cite the disparity between Kumble's home record (235 wickets in 41 Tests before this match) and away (162/43) to prove the point.

But Kumble is made of stern stuff, never allowing criticism to affect his performance and monk-like dedication.

The critics were forced to eat their words when Kumble nearly won a four-Test series in Australia last season in the absence of injured off-spinner Harbhajan Singh, finishing with 24 wickets in three matches.

The series ended in a 1-1 stalemate but Kumble proved that he could be a match-winner away from home too.

If further proof were needed, it came immediately after the Australia series.

India missed Harbhajan on their historic trip to Pakistan in March-April, but were again served by Kumble who grabbed six wickets in the opening Test at Multan to craft his team's maiden success in that

country. Kumble finished with 15 wickets in three matches as India won their first Test series in Pakistan.

The leg-spinner is not a huge turner of the ball like Australian Shane Warne or Pakistani Mushtaq Ahmed. He relies more on his speed through the air, uncanny accuracy and clever variations.

He is sometimes virtually unplayable on home pitches.

His best performance came at Delhi in 1999 when he became the second bowler after Englishman Jim Laker to grab 10 wickets in a Test innings.

Before the series in Australia and Pakistan, Kumble had suffered a frustrating patch, especially in away Test matches where he was axed on a few occasions to accommodate Harbhajan in the team's one-spinner theory.

Just when it appeared that Kumble had played his last Test, he came back with a vengeance to silence the critics. And his spin saga is not over yet, as the last two Test innings have shown.

It is possible that King is still in the board's thoughts, but it will not make the same mistake again and refused to make any comment.

JFA Cup

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on their home ground. Sumon scored twice and Ayub netted the other for the winners while Asad scored the consolation goal for the losers.

Laxmipuri however struggled to beat Moulvibazar 3-2 in front of a boisterous home crowd with Saifur finding the target twice. Mizanur slammed in the winner after Rupam and Kamal made it 2-2 for Moulvibazar.

Satkhira were beaten 6-5 in tiebreaker at Barguna while Feni defeated Cox's Bazar 4-2 at their own backyard.

In other matches, Rajshahi edged past Naogaon 5-4 in tie-breaker at the Natore Stadium while at Sirajganj, Farhad's early goal

confirmed Nilphamari's second rung berth at the expense of Dinajpur.

Jahangir and Shahidul struck one each as Jessoro Educational Board blanked Kushtia 2-0 at the Meherpur Stadium to advance to the second round.

National swimming

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abura Khutun made the day's second new national record to give BJMC a gold medal in the 50m backstroke. Sabura set the new mark with a timing of 00:36.52sec to surpass the previous best of 00:36.91sec.

In the 100m breaststroke, Mafuza Akther of BKSP set another new record to win the gold when she finished at 01:21.31sec to break the previous mark of 01:24.38sec.

The 35-year-old Inzamam was appointed captain in January for a whole year, breaking with the country's traditional policy of naming skippers on a series by series basis.

After Pakistan's ICC Champions Trophy semifinal defeat by West Indies last month, however, his position was under threat, according to media reports.

"I think he has done a fine job and he has shown good judgement as a leader. The other players look up to him which is very important and the team is improving," Shaharyar said.

Result: Pakistan won by eight wickets

Man-of-the-match: Shaib Malik.

Toss: Sri Lanka.

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

Next match: S Lanka v Zim, Oct 9.

Inzamam to stay put

REUTERS, Karachi

Inzamamul Haq is likely to remain as Pakistan captain beyond their tour of Australia, Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) chairman Shaharyar Khan said on Wednesday.

"I don't see any prospect of Inzamam being changed as captain when we sit down to review his captaincy after the Australian tour," Shaharyar told Reuters.

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In the 100m butterfly (men's), Navy's other reputed swimmer Jewel Ahmed clinched the gold with a timing of 00:58.00sec.

Anars secured the day's last gold when Jui, Laboni, Lavi, Khatun and Mamta Shirin won the women's 4x200m freestyle relay with a timing of 10:51.26sec.

In the 50m freestyle (women's), Dolly Akhter of BJMC bagged the gold with a new national record as she achieved 00:31.14sec to erase the previous best of 00:31.69sec.

Laboni Akhter Jui of Bangladesh Ansar broke the last record of the day when she won the 100m butterfly clocking 1:14.66sec. The previous best was 1:18.95sec.

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