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Indians, Abahani rule team events

Table tennis

SPORTS REPORTER

India's Salt Lake TT Academy lifted the men's team crown in the Beximco-Abul Hashem Smriti Table

Tennis Championships by winning an all-foreign final against Nepal in straight sets at the Woodenfloor Gymnasium yesterday.

The Indian team, made up mostly with Kolkata-based players, entered the final by thrashing Pakistan Wapda 3-0 in the second

semifinal. They were however stretched in the first set by Nepal who had won the SAF Games bronze medal.

Salt Lake TT Academy's Amit began well when he took the first two games 11-6, 11-5 but Nepal's R Kapali fought back to win the next two games 11-4, 11-9. Amit, however, relieved his teammates when he outplayed his Nepalese rival 11-5 in the decider.

There were no more hiccup for the Indians. Anirban came from behind to beat Nepal's S Powdel 8-11, 11-8, 11-9, 11-3 while Prithviraj wrapped up the show blanking R Sakra 11-6, 11-6 and 11-9.

Earlier, Nepal dashed local hopes when they handed Bangladesh Biman a 3-0 defeat in the first semifinal.

Biman, who had the country's top players like Mosaddekul Haque Rochi, Mahbub Billah and Hamlet, had ignited hopes by beating Pakistan 3-2 in a thrilling group match on Sunday.

The Indians are also favourites in today's men's singles final.

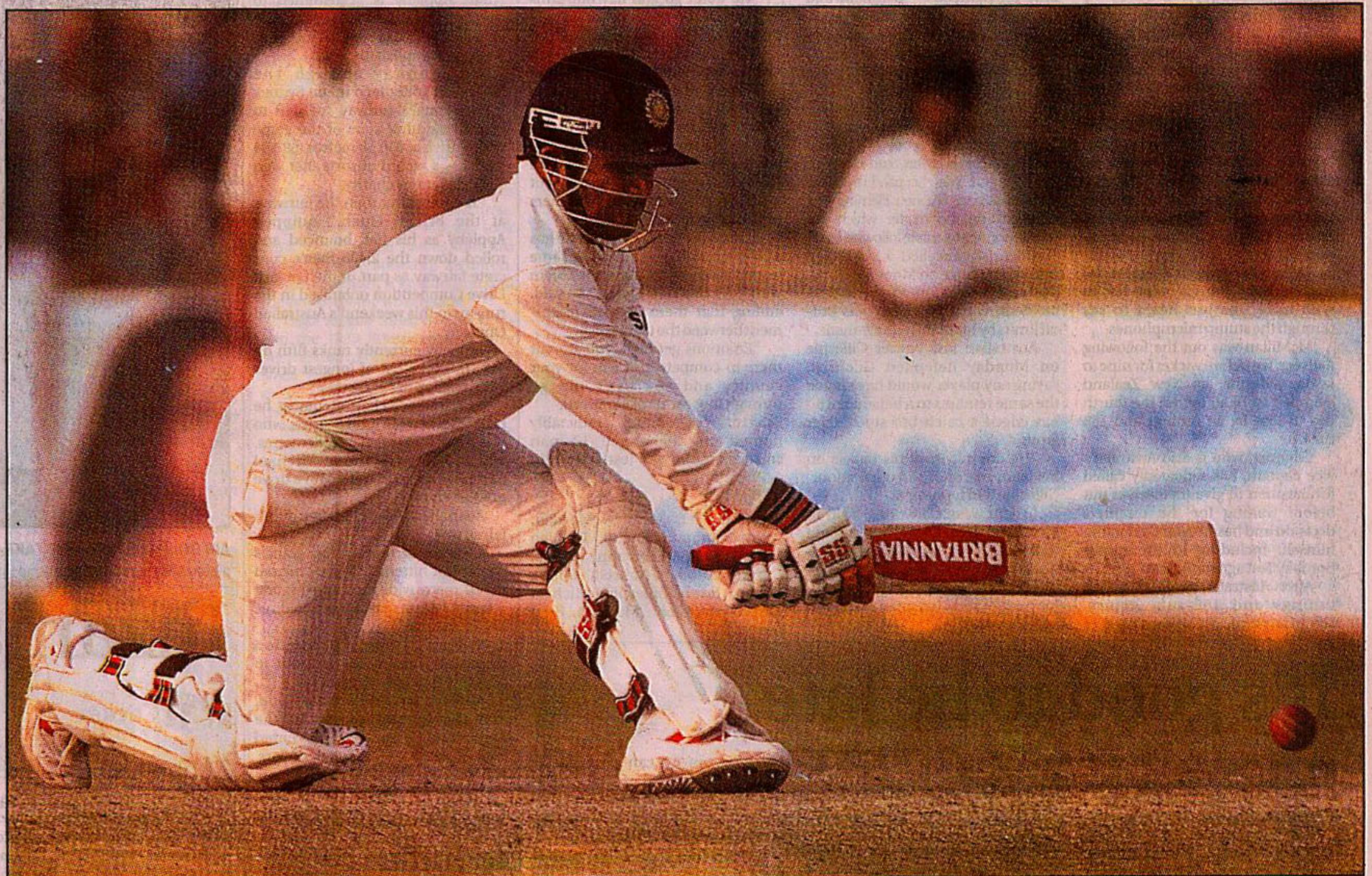
Meanwhile, Abahani won the women's team title by outplaying crushing Bangladesh Biman 3-0 in yesterday's final.

Tumpa beat Jayati of Biman 11-6, 5-11, 11-8 and 11-8 before Goma made it 2-0 for the Sky Blues defeating Rumi 11-8, 12-10, 4-11, 11-2.

Tumpa and Soma then paired to win the doubles match against Biman's



Abahani's Tumpa (L) and Soma smile after winning the women's team title in the Beximco-Abul Hashem Smriti Table Tennis Championship at the Woodenfloor Gymnasium yesterday.



IT'S TIME TO TOY WITH HIM: Indian opener Virender Sehwag plays a reverse sweep off South African left-arm spinner Robin Peterson during the Kanpur Test yesterday.



Did U Know?

The duck which appears on TV when a batsman gets out without scoring a run is named 'DADDLES' and was first shown by Channel 9 of Australia.



TEN Sports

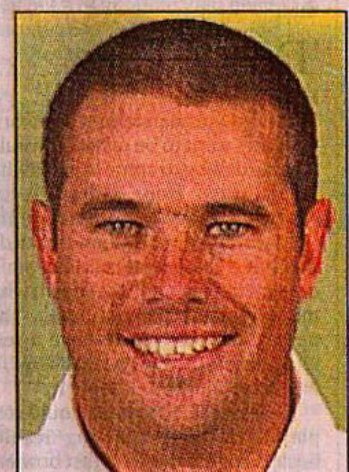
India vs South Africa
First Test, Day Four
Live at 9:50 am

ESPN

Football Focus
Live at 6:30 pm
Sportscentre
Live at 8:30 pm
UEFA Champions League
Monaco vs Liverpool
Live at 1:30 am (Wednesday)

STAR Sports

Sportline
Live at 8:00 pm
UEFA Champions League
Real Madrid vs Bayer Leverkusen
Live at 1:30 am (Wednesday)



Andrew Hall
(South Africa all-rounder)

"Batting with de Bruyn was a pleasure because we have played a lot of cricket together since our school days. Having him in the middle with me was very, very special as he is a tough guy." On debutant all-rounder Zander de Bruyn.

'Dizzy' likes to rotate



AFP, Brisbane

Australia's plans to rotate their star bowlers to save them from Test burn-out ahead of next year's Ashes series in England has the backing of paceman Jason Gillespie.

World cricket's leading team is down to play nine Tests in 13 weeks and chairman of selectors Trevor Hohns said his panel was considering the rotation issue.

Hohns said Monday that a resting policy would only occur when frontline pacemen were felt to be overworked or unwell.

"It may be something we might consider, particularly if someone is tired or a little bit under par given what lies ahead," Hohns said the day after Australia's thumping innings victory over New Zealand in the first Test at the Gabba here.

"It will never be done for no reason, either. We're not about to rip anyone out of a Test match for the sake of it."

Gillespie, Australia's seventh highest wicket-taker with 229 Test wickets, said he supported rotating

Australia's fast bowlers in the lead-up to next year's Ashes tour of England.

Gillespie, who also posted his highest Test score of 54 not out against the Kiwis last weekend, said he wouldn't have a problem with sitting out a Test match if it was in the best interests of the team and himself.

After this week's second Adelaide Test against New Zealand, Australia has three home Tests against Pakistan, a one-day tri-series here and then another three Tests in New Zealand before flying to England next June for the Ashes.

Australia have two of Test cricket's all-time bowling greats with leg-spinner Shane Warne, the leading wicket-taker with 549, and paceman Glenn McGrath, fourth all-time with 457 Test wickets.

Australia still rests players in one-day cricket despite dumping an official "rotation policy" following below-par results three summers ago.

Gillespie said he could see the merit in the plan given the amount of travel and back-to-back Tests played in modern cricket.

"I wouldn't have a problem at all," he told reporters.

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India kabaddi kings

SPORTS REPORTER

India lifted the first World Cup Kabaddi Championship title when the hosts put an end to Iran's fairytale run in the competition with a 55-27 victory in yesterday's final in Mumbai.

India, who dashed Bangladesh's hopes winning the clash of the two pre-tournament favourites 39-19 in the semifinal on Sunday, led the first half of the final 27-12 before 3,000 home fans at the Bharatiya Krida Mandir, Wadala.

Surprise package of the tournament Iran reached the final ousting Canada 54-28.

Bangladesh, who eyed a berth in the final, earlier defeated Japan 33-24 in the quarterfinals and collected 50,000 rupees as prize money as the losing finalists. However, they were forced to line-up against mighty India in the last four due to their shock 54-39 defeat to eventual finalists Iran in the last group match on Saturday.

Bangladesh beat Germany 96-19 and Nepal 65-24 in their other group matches.

Bangladesh will now play five test matches against India in different cities.

India pocketed two lakh rupees while Iran collected 1.25 lakh as prize money. Indian captain Sanjeeva Kumar was adjudged man-of-the-tournament.

India reply in style



AFP, Kanpur

Indian openers Virender Sehwag and Gautam Gambhir played the perfect reply after South Africa posted their highest total on Indian soil in the first Test here on Monday.

The Delhi pair were closing on centuries at 85 apiece as India reached 185 without loss at stumps on the third day after South Africa declared at 510-9 on a placid Green Park Stadium pitch.

Big-hitting Sehwag was overshadowed by his left-handed partner Gambhir as the visiting side were knocked all over the field, largely because of their indiscipline bowling.

Gambhir, featuring in only his second Test, played very well off the legs to strike 11 fours and a six off left-arm spinner Robin Peterson during a spirited 114-ball knock.

Sehwag, always ready to give the spinners a charge, was a bit sloppy towards the middle of his innings but still struck 15 fours off 151 balls to make the most of a chance he got on 29.

He survived when debutant wicketkeeper Thami Tsolekile failed to read the line of a delivery from Peterson with Sehwag going down

the wicket to a delivery pitched around the leg stump.

"The way the Indian openers batted was fantastic," said South African coach Ray Jennings.

"They showed how easy it was to bat on this pitch which has nothing in it for the bowlers."

"They also proved that our decision not to declare early this morning was right as they have again pushed us on the back foot," said Jennings, who took over from Eric Simons before this tour.

The pair played positively against both pace and spin and scored a good 105 runs in 20 overs after tea before the umpires decided to call off play due to bad light, even though the floodlights had been pressed into use.

The game had to be re-scheduled after the first session this morning was wiped off because of heavy fog and umpires Daryl Harper and Simon Taufel decided to have two sessions of two-and-a-half hours each.

South Africa, overnight 459-7, decided not to declare their innings and went on to register their biggest score here by getting past the previous highest of 479 in Bangalore four years ago.

Shaun Pollock remained not out on 44 after losing overnight partner Tsolekile for nine. He was leg-spinner Anil Kumble's sixth victim of the innings.

"It was not a very good pitch to bowl on since the ball did not even carry to the close-in fielders from the bat," said Kumble, known not to turn the ball much.

"Our job is to get wickets and sometimes you don't get them because you turn the ball but get them because you don't," said Kumble, who took his tally of Test wickets to 430 to close in on Kapil Dev's Indian record of 434.

South Africa's declaration came at the fall of Peterson's wicket, who made 34 off 24 balls before being bowled by off-spinner Harbhajan Singh.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard at close on the third day of the first Test between India and South Africa at the Green Park Stadium on Monday:

SOUTH AFRICA: First innings (overnight 459-7)

Smith b Kumble	37
Hall b Kumble	163
Van Jaarsveld lbw b Kumble	2
Kallis lbw b Kumble	37
Rudolph b Kumble	0
Dippenaar c Karthik b Ganguly	48
De Bruyn c Dravid b Harbhajan	83
Pollock not out	44
Tsolekile lbw b Kumble	9
Peterson b Harbhajan	34
Extras: (b-9, lb-22, w-1, nb-16, pen-5)	53
Total: (For nine wickets in 190.4 overs)	510

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Blatter tells to walk against racism

INTERNET SOURCE

Arsenal have been given the go-ahead to walk off the pitch if any of their black stars suffer racial abuse in Holland this week.

Ashley Cole and his Arsenal team-mates play PSV Eindhoven in the Champions League on Wednesday the scene of racist chants against them two years ago and exactly seven days after Spain's night of shame against England.

But FIFA president Sepp Blatter Sunday backed the Gunners to walk off the pitch if they suffer racist taunts.

Blatter, the most powerful man in football, said: "We are going to give out an instruction in this matter because we have to maintain discipline and respect, on and off the field of play."

"If such incidents happen during the match, and in such a manner as we witnessed the other day in the Bernabeu Stadium, then walking off could be a possibility."

Blatter claims he would have backed England if they walked off in Spain.

He added: "I would have understood such a movement. I would have backed them walking off."

"In such a circumstance that

SEE PAGE 14 COL 8

Master Roger

AFP, Houston

World number one Roger Federer set an Open-era record by winning his 13th final in a row, defeating Lleyton Hewitt 6-3, 6-2 here to capture his second consecutive ATP Masters Cup crown.

Federer lifted nine aces and waited through a 78-minute rain delay to capture his 11th title in an amazing season that included his first US and Australian Open titles and his second consecutive Wimbledon crown.

"It's just an unbelievable end to a fantastic season for me," Federer said. "This has been kind of a fairytale ending for me to again leave for vacation with great feelings and great memories."

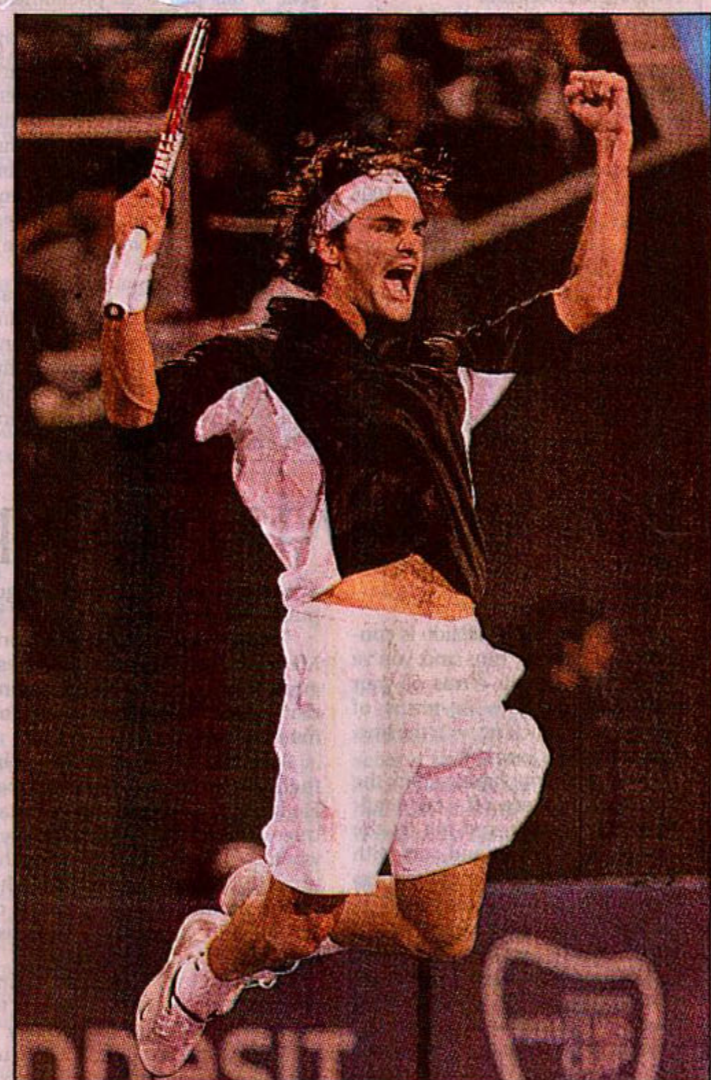
Federer's win streak in championship matches broke the mark he shared with John McEnroe and Bjorn Borg for consecutive finals triumphs. The record run began last year at Vienna.

The 23-year-old Swiss star won 1.52 million dollars and his 17th match victory in a row since a second-round exit at the Athens Olympics.

Federer finished the year 74-6, equal with American Andy Roddick for most match wins this year. There has not been a better winning percentage for a year-end world number one since John McEnroe went 82-3 in 1984.

"All the records I broke or equalled or whatever I did this year have just been fantastic," Federer said. "The last year and a half for me I've really started to go like a rocket. This is a great end."

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SWEET SWISS STORY: Roger Federer leaps into the air after winning the Tennis Masters Cup for the second year in Houston yesterday.

Parag wins at last

SPORTS REPORTER

Mehdi Hasan Parag returned to the winning track after two consecutive defeats in the 43rd World Junior Chess Championship when the Bangladesh national junior champion beat India's JSS Phankanth in the fourth round in the Indian city Cochin yesterday.

Parag's collection now stood at two points from four matches. He takes on Argentine International Master Pablo Lafuente in the fifth round today.

Grand Master Pentala Hari Krishna of India and Grand Master Tigran L Petrosian of Armenia are jointly leading the table with maximum four points.

DRU soccer semis today

SPORTS REPORTER

New Age ousted defending champions Dainik Jugantor from the Dhaka Reporters Unity (DRU) inter-house football tournament when they scored an upset 2-1 victory in the quarterfinals at the Handball Ground yesterday.

They will take on Ajker Kagaj in the first semifinal while ATN Bangla are pitted against Bhorer Kagaj in the other semifinal today.

In yesterday's other matches, Ajker Kagaj knocked out Naya Diganta 4-2. ATN Bangla brushed aside The Independent 4-0 while Bhorer Kagaj received a bye against The Daily Star.

Broken Kiwis pick up pieces



AFP, Brisbane

New Zealand coach John Bracewell believes his team can recover from one of their worst ever mailings against Australia in time for the second Test against the world champions.

The Black Caps suffered their second-heaviest defeat in 42 Tests against Australia when they crashed to an innings and 156-run defeat here Sunday.

Stephen Fleming's Kiwi team were on top for the first two days of the Gabba Test but a record 216-run sixth-wicket stand between man-of-the-match Michael Clarke (141) and Adam Gilchrist (126) followed by a 114-run last-wicket partnership between tail-enders Glenn McGrath (61) and Jason Gillespie (54) turned the match into a four-day canter for the Australians.

It now remains to be seen whether New Zealand can pick up the pieces in the space of a few days to be competitive with the Aussies in the second and last Test of the series, starting at the Adelaide Oval on Friday.

Australia dominate world cricket and have won 19 of their last 27 Tests over the last two years with just four defeats to India (twice), West Indies and England.

The Kiwis last beat Australia by five wickets in Auckland in March 1993.

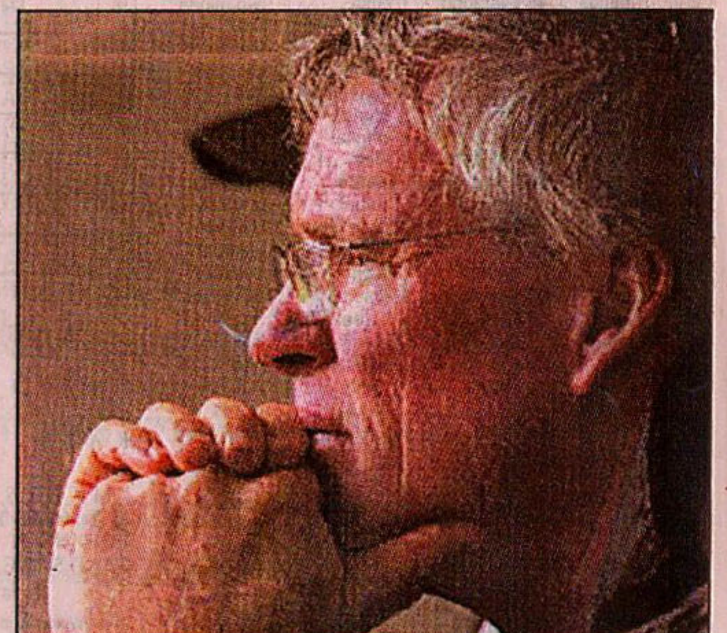
Former Test player Bracewell said New Zealand had only small windows of opportunity to seize on if they were to beat Australia, but had to trust their game plans and skills to challenge Ricky Ponting's men.

"When you are playing against class acts and a number of these guys are great cricketers, not just

good cricketers but they are establishing records of greatness, there are very small windows of opportunity," Bracewell said Monday.

"Mental toughness is always something you've got to have when you come here and you know you've got to be tough to play against the

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JOHN BRACEWELL