

BD lose first kabaddi Test

SPORTS REPORTER
The Bangladesh kabaddi team lost their first match in the six-match Test series against India when they conceded a 28-44 defeat to the world champions in the Indian city of Ahmedabad yesterday.

The touring side will play their second match against their mighty neighbours in Ajmer tomorrow, according to a message received by the Bangladesh Kabaddi Federation. Bangladesh finished third in the just-concluded first ever World Cup Kabaddi Championship in Mumbai where India lifted the title and Iran became runners-up.

Scotland lift ICC Cup

AFP, Sharjah
Scotland won the inaugural International Cricket Council Intercontinental Cup, beating Canada by an innings and 84 runs in the final on Monday.

Canada's second innings collapse to 93 all out enabled Scotland to secure victory with more than a day to spare in a tournament designed to give the dozen countries immediately beneath the 10-nation Test elite experience of playing in first-class, as opposed to one-day conditions.

It was a timely boost for Scottish sports fans who last week saw their football and rugby union teams both suffer defeats against Sweden and Australia respectively.

Scotland total of 287 for eight declared where Gavin Hamilton, who plays for English county Durham, scored 115, left Canada with a first innings deficit of 177.

The North Americans then slumped to 24 for eight, with one man retired hurt, before a last-wicket stand of 69 took them to within 17 runs of their first innings score of 110.

Murali eyes

FROM PAGE 13
Bangladesh, England, West Indies, Kenya and Zimbabwe are exceeding the current tolerance levels, some of them by several degrees.

This reality will leave Muralitharan with a difficult decision as to whether to use his doosra - which was technically not banned by the ICC but voluntarily discarded by Muralitharan himself - should he be able to return before the throwing law is modified.

Unesco award

FROM PAGE 13
country. I kept it a secret after hearing the news from our ambassador in Paris Sunday night. I only informed Prime Minister of the great news before coming to the briefing," said an elated Rahman, who is also the chairman of the NSC.

"We will honour him nationally. We proposed his name at the council and he won the award beating a number of nominees from different countries. The decision was unanimous," added the sports minister.

The founder of Mohammadpur Physical Education College in Dhaka, Alam broke the then Pakistan pole vault record in 1951.

Sports Secretary Syed Sajjadul Ahmed, Bangladesh Football Federation president SA Sultan, Bangladesh Cricket Board president Ali Asghar were also present on the occasion.

Chappell wants

FROM PAGE 13
have to give yourself a chance by playing your natural game."

Chappell, 56, scored 7,110 runs in 87 Tests at an average of 53.86 including a career best 247 not out against New Zealand at the Basin Reserve in 1974.

Buchanan denies walk rift



REUTERS/INTERNET, Melbourne

Wicketkeeper Adam Gilchrist's belief that batsmen should walk when they know they are out has not created a rift between New Zealand and their hosts, Australia coach John Buchanan said on Tuesday.

"We're playing Test cricket out there," Buchanan told reporters on Tuesday before Friday's second and final Test in Adelaide.

"There is a lot of emotion that goes into those games from both sides and I think that's important to actually see. So in terms of bad blood, I wouldn't suggest there is any."

Gilchrist and New Zealand batsman Craig McMillan were involved in a heated exchange during the first Test in Brisbane on Sunday, which Australia won by an innings and 156 runs.

Vice-captain Gilchrist claimed a catch off McMillan but the all-rounder stood his ground and was given not out. The pair briefly argued before the umpires intervened.

New Zealand coach John Bracewell echoed Sunday's comments by Australia captain Ricky Ponting, telling reporters to move on to more important topics.

"Some people walk and some people don't so it's a non-issue," Bracewell said.

"In fact I think it's just a line filler to be honest."

Gilchrist has been an advocate of batsmen walking and has been true to his word, returning to the pavilion on a number of occasions even when the umpire has given him the benefit of the doubt.

He has many admirers but few active supporters with the majority of batsmen preferring to leave the decision to the umpire. Some critics say Gilchrist is inadvertently putting pressure on opposing batsmen.

Before his altercation with McMillan, Gilchrist successfully claimed a catch off Brendon McCullum although replays showed the ball had deviated off the pitch and clearly missed the bat.

The Sydney Morning Herald newspaper on Tuesday quoted West Indian umpire Steve Bucknor as saying he should have given McMillan out, and asking for more technology to assist umpires.

"We should be using a little more use of technology as umpires in making whatever decisions," Bucknor said.

"Sometimes...it is hard to hear nicks. Stump microphones could maybe assist us more."

Bucknor said his subsequent mid-pitch conversation with Gilchrist did not touch on the philosophical ramifications of walking.

But, speaking in general terms, the 95-Test umpire said some less scrupulous umpires served only to complicate matters for umpires -- and those batsmen who walked out

of conscience. "With walkers, I think umpires should make their decision when they see it," Bucknor said. "If a fella is a walker and his conscience is saying to him that he is going to play fair, down the middle all the way, that's up to him. It puts pressure on the umpires, yes."

"Sometimes a batsman will only walk because he has already passed 100... knowing that he wouldn't walk when he was on zero. I have heard batsmen say, 'You owe me one' to umpires because they walked on a big score when the umpire was not going to rule them out. If he knows that he is out and he goes, that's good for the game. But the umpire should not depend on someone who is a walker. Otherwise, that same walker may embarrass the umpire."

Bucknor said he had not confronted Gilchrist over the issue of walking.

"I merely said, 'OK, I don't think the game needs a confrontation between batsman and keeper. Could you desist?' That was all," Bucknor said.

"As far as the catch being taken, I made a mistake but that could not have been taken back. We need to get along with the game... so it won't leave a nasty taste in the mouths of anybody with two people in conflict allowed to go on."

Pakistan captain Inzamamul Haq said he would not be joining the select list of international walkers during his side's forthcoming three-Test series against Australia.

"It depends on each individual, but I would always wait for the umpire's decision. It is in the good spirit of sportsmanship if you walk when you are confirmed to be out, but I prefer to wait for the umpire's decision first."

disappointed him. "You can't expect to fight for the championship with so much inexperience. Only Naimur Rahman is there who knows how to handle the pressure," said Jalal who has taken over the team this season.

Akram's Old DOHS are bubbling with confidence and might set the championship alight in their maiden appearance.

They have the firebrand Shahadat Hossain Rajib, the country's fastest bowler, Bangladesh quick Nazmul Hossain and Hasibul Hossain in the pace department. Veteran Enamul Haque, his namesake and Bangladesh man Enamul (Jr), off-spinner Sabir Khan have the slow bowling well covered.

Akram is the big icon in batting and can expect solid support from Hannan Sarker, Faisal Hossain and Al-Shahriar.

Bangladesh Biman, who had finished ninth last season, are eager to impress with captain Sapwar Hossain, a reborn Sajjad Ahmed, Sajjad Qadir, Rashedul Haque Sunon and ofcourse Mohammad Ashraf.

Brothers Union is captained by a consistent scorer in the domestic circle Halim Shah. Jahangir Alam, Fahim Muntasir, Tapash Baisya, Javed Omar Bellim and Afrab Ahmed are the men to watch out for in this spirited side. Rumours are ripe that Brothers are close to confirming the services of former West Indies superstar Carl Hooper and that could prove to be a sensational coup.

"I won't go as far as to say that they will push for national selection but I firmly believe they will make an impression," said the all-rounder who can also count on the strong batting line-up of Mehrab Hossain Opea, last league's top runscore Moniruzzaman Moni, Rajin Saleh and Tushar Inman.

In bowling, City has the ever-dependable left-arm spinner Saifullah Jem, a prolific wicket-taker.

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disappointed him. "You can't expect to fight for the championship with so much inexperience. Only Naimur Rahman is there who knows how to handle the pressure," said Jalal who has taken over the team this season.

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JOHN BUCHANAN

Central contracts for Pak cricketers

AFP, Karachi

Pakistan is set to introduce a contract system for cricket players with maximum yearly salaries of around 42,000 dollars, Pakistan Cricket Board said Tuesday.

"It is finally confirmed that top players will sign central contracts before leaving for Australia on Saturday," PCB spokesman Abbas Zaidi said.

Board sources said some 20 top players, divided into three categories of A, B and C, would sign the contract. Pakistan was the only Test-playing country not to have central contracts with its players.

Zaidi denied media reports that express pacer Shoaib Akhtar, explosive all-rounder Shahid Afridi and Abdul Razzaq had showed dissent over the grading system.

The PCB had drawn up the contracts after studying model contracts from Australia, India and South Africa, he said.

"The contracts have been formulated with the consent of the players and everyone will happily sign it," said Zaidi, refusing to reveal further details.

Local media reports suggested only captain Inzamamul Haq and vice captain Yousuf Youhana had been put in the A category on the basis of playing more than 50 Tests.

While Akhtar, Afridi, Younis, Shoaib Malik, Razzaq and Yasir Hameed were placed in the B category as they have played less than 50 Tests and the rest in the C category.

Sources said Akhtar refused to be placed in the B category and raised the issue with PCB chairman Shaharyar Khan and finally convinced him to get him into the top category.

Players in the A category are expected to get a monthly salary of around 3,500 dollars, those in the second category around 2,100 dollars and 1,200 dollars for those in the C category.

In addition to their salaries, the cricketers will also get their match fees and product endorsements.

Pakistan play three Tests in Australia starting with the first in Perth from December 16 and later feature in a tri-series, also involving the West Indies.

Biman face big

FROM PAGE 13
The League will expect to draw in few more foreigners with Sonali Bank, Farshganj and Narayanjanj City Club already planning to bring Indian chess players.

Bangladesh Chess Federation general secretary Syed Sajjadul Ahmed told at a press briefing yesterday that sponsors Dutch-Bangla Bank will provide Tk2 lakh.

"We are looking forward to introduce the Premier League from next season and if all the teams agree, the top ten teams of this year will play in the premiership. Otherwise, two bottom teams will be relegated," Sajjadul said.

Mohammed Abidul Haque, Senior Executive vice-president of Dutch-Bangla Bank, was also present.

The league is expected to conclude on December 9.

The participating teams are: Biman, Leonine, Ansar, Sonali Bank, Destiny 2000, Titas, Farshganj SC, Kamalpur SKKS, Dhaka University, Pradeep Sangha, Narayanjanj City Club, Rajshahi Daba Unnayan Sangstha, Anushilon, Star Vision, Muktiyodha and Friends Chess Power.

Blazing Sehwaq

FROM PAGE 13
Gambhir struck 11 fours and a six off 151 deliveries.

Ganguly hit seven boundaries during his half-century and added 96 runs for the fourth wicket with Dravid, who hit five fours in a cautious knock of 169 balls.

Ganguly was caught at long-leg by Peterson off medium-pace Zander de Bruyn when he went for a big hook shot.

India's highest first-wicket stand was 413 by Pankaj Roy and Vinoo Mankad against New Zealand in Madras in 1955-56.

SCOREBOARD

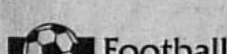
Scoreboard at close on the fourth day of the first Test between India and South Africa at the Green Park Stadium on Tuesday:

SOUTH AFRICA: First innings 510 (Hall 163, De Bruyn 83, Dippenaar 48, Pollock 44 not out, Kallis 37, Peterson 34; Kumble 6-131)

INDIA: First innings (overnight 185-0) Sehwaq lbw b Hall 164 Gambhir c Toolek b Pollock 96 Dravid not out 52 Tendulkar b Hall 53 Ganguly c Peterson b de Bruyn 57 Laxman not out 4 Extras: (b-9, lb-9, nb-7) 25 Total: (For four wickets in 114 overs) 401 Fall of wickets: 1-218, 2-294, 3-298, 4-394.

Bowler O M R W Pollock 31 10 82 1 Ntini 30 0 111 0 Peterson 18 2 82 0 Hall 24 7 79 2 De Bruyn 11 3 29 1 Toss: South Africa Umpires: Darryl Harper (AUS) and Simon Taufel (AUS) TV umpire: A.V. Jayaprakash (IND) Match referee: Jeff Crowe (NZL)

Robinho's Real weakness



INTERNET SOURCE

Chelsea target Robinho, who many consider to be the "new Pele", has been linked with a host of top European clubs but now seems to have his heart set on joining the ever-growing band of Galacticos at the Santiago Bernabeu.

However the Santos forward has been out of action for two weeks following his mother's kidnapping and no deal is likely to be concluded until she is safely returned.

"I hope all of this is over as quickly as possible, that my mother comes back home and that I can go back to playing football as soon as possible," he told Diario AS.

When the situation is resolved, it now looks increasingly likely that the 20-year-old playmaker will complete his move to Spain - with the Spanish capital his likely destination.

"Real Madrid are the best club in the world," he said. "Any footballer dreams about playing there and I am no different to any of them."

"I would like to play in Spain and I hope that can happen one day."

"It would be great to play for Real Madrid and I was very happy when I found out they were interested in me."

Robinho admitted he was delighted when he first heard of Madrid's interest, and is looking forward to linking up with some of his Brazilian team-mates in La Liga. "I was very happy indeed," he

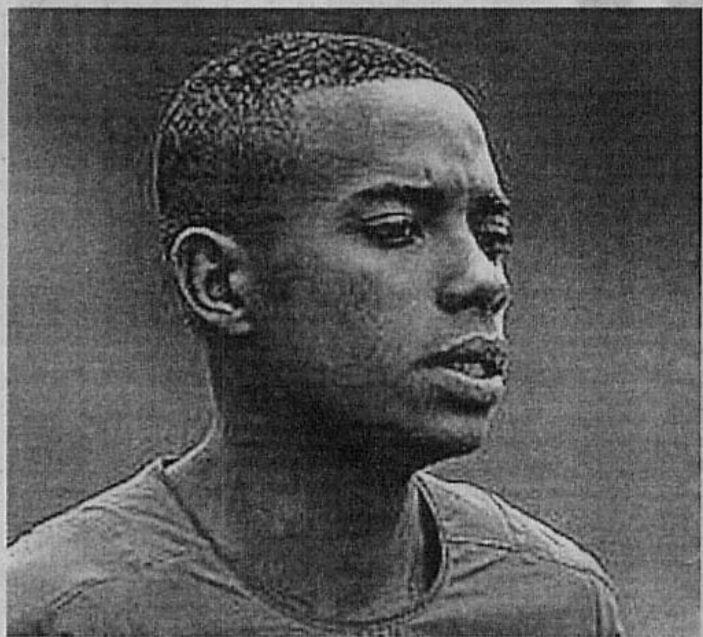
added. "It is down to the good work I have been doing on the pitch."

"They have some fantastic players and some friends of mine, such as Roberto Carlos and Ronaldo, are there."

"Ronaldo is my favourite player and I wished him luck before the Barcelona game."

"The best players are there and they are among the best in the world both off and on the pitch."

However, the player admitted he is unaware how negotiations are progressing, and insists he will concentrate on the job at hand with current employers Santos until a transfer is finalised.



ROBINHO

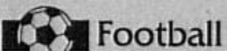
Madrid crashed to a 3-0 defeat in the Nou Camp on Saturday night, but the result has done nothing to alter Robinho's decision.

"Any player would dream about wearing a Madrid shirt," he said.

"I don't have a lot of information about that," he said. "My agent Wagner Ribeiro and my father are looking after that."

"I would rather remain calm and think about football."

Adriano refutes reports



INTERNET SOURCE

Adriano has hit back at reports suggesting that he is unhappy with life at Internazionale.

The Corriere dello Sport newspaper on Tuesday reported that the Brazilian was finding things tough at the San Siro.

"I never lack the right environment to win. I feel isolated," the striker was quoted as saying.

However, the player has rubbished the story and insists he is more than content to remain with the Italian giants.

"I never left that statement," he stated. "I've only spoken to the O'Globo newspaper recently and I told them that I am happy at Inter."

Rumours of a possible split gathered pace today after the forward failed to return from international duty.

But boss Roberto Mancini insists he has allowed Adriano to remain in his homeland for an extra 24 hours. "Adriano had a few things to sort out in Rio and we decided to delay his return," maintained the tactician.

Peru winger Solano, who made his name in English football at Newcastle, struck in the 57th minute and his effort was enough to condemn Spurs to a third straight league defeat under new coach Martin Jol.

It was their sixth Premiership loss in succession, the north London club now just two points above the relegation zone.

Kanoute created an early chance for the visitors at Villa Park when he forced defender Olof Mellberg to bring him down on the edge of the box.

But from the resulting free-kick referee Chris Foy got in the way after Michael Carrick tapped the ball for Jermain Defoe.

Villa scored when Gavin McCann flicked on Thomas Hitzlsperger's right-wing corner and Solano, first showing superb close control, fired home past a helpless Robinson from close range.

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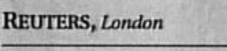
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What's next for Federer?



REUTERS, London

When Pete Sampras confirmed his retirement at the 2003 US Open, the phrase "we may never see his like again" was heard around the tennis world.

Fifteen months on, Roger Federer is lord and master of the men's game and the Sampras era is but a distant memory.

Federer's victory in Sunday's Masters Cup final was, as the Swiss said himself, "an unbelievable end to a fantastic season" and statistically Sampras has been left in the shade.

The 23-year-old from Oberwil won three of 2004's four Grand Slams, a feat last achieved by Sweden's Mats Wilander in 1988.

Federer won 11 titles in all this year and is the first player in the Open era to win 13 singles finals in succession, moving ahead of Bjorn Borg and John McEnroe.

His domination is best demonstrated by one fact - he has not been beaten by another top 10 player this year and the psychological hold he now has over his opponents is reminiscent of Sampras at his peak.

Lleyton Hewitt, the losing finalist in Houston on Sunday, has met Federer six times this year and lost the lot, including a 6-0, 7-6, 6-0 thrashing in the US Open final.

The Australian counter-puncher is back to his best after a poor 2003 and is a born and bred fighter, but he has not got close to Federer all season.

"He's a hell of a player," is Hewitt's succinct opinion. And Hewitt said the key to Federer's dominance this season had been his serve.

"He just mixes his serve up so well," he said. "He doesn't have as big a serve as a Roddick or Safin but he's just got such good variety and he's able to work it around."

"And he's such an aggressive player that he's always going to get his opportunities on his opponent's service game."

Sampras' game was based on a great serve, fine volleying and flat, hard groundstrokes. On his day, and especially on the grasscourts of Wimbledon, he was an irresistible force.

Like Sampras, Federer can play from the baseline and take the game to his opponent at the net. The fluid Swiss is a court craftsman of great skill, using angles others can only dream of.

Perhaps the most impressive aspect of Federer's 2004 campaign is that he achieved it all without a full-time coach.

His decision last December to part with Peter Lundgren, just five months after winning his first Wimbledon title, was seen as foolhardy at the time.

Yet Federer, accompanied on tour by his girlfriend Mirka Vavrinc, has proved that behind the smiling, open exterior there is a single-minded man not afraid of risk.

His biggest test this year came at Wimbledon. A champion has to be very special to come back to the biggest tournament of them all and win it the following year.

Sampras did it, so did McEnroe, Borg and Boris Becker. Many doubted Federer had the right stuff after he burst into tears on Centre Court following his 2003 title.

He came back to the All England Club in 2004 and beat Andy Roddick in the final, losing just two sets in six rounds.

"I'm so proud I could handle all the pressure," he said at the time. "The sense of satisfaction is unbelievable."

But the 23-year-old Swiss warned that he is now as confident on clay as any surface.

"I lost my first 10 or 15 matches on clay on the pro tour but now I have won many great tournaments," he said.

Roland Garros tournaments. However, he has insisted that victory at Roland Garros is not his main goal for the coming season.

"My priority is to defend my Wimbledon crown and to maintain my number one ranking," he said.

If Federer can adapt his game to the red clay courts Sampras's all-time record of 14 Grand Slam titles could well be in danger.

Fan killer gets 13-year jail

AFP, Lisbon
A Lisbon court has sentenced a 31-year-old man who stabbed a young England fan to death in downtown Lisbon during the Euro 2004 football finals to a 13-year prison term, the Lusa news agency reported on Tuesday.

The court on Monday found Vadim Abramov, who moved to Portugal from the Ukraine three years ago, guilty of the crime of simple homicide, a court official told the agency.

He will be expelled from Portugal after he serves his sentence and will be prohibited from re-entering the country for a period of 10 years.

Abramov stabbed 28-year-old Stephen Smith in the heart on June 22 during an apparent botched robbery attempt which took place in the historic centre of Lisbon during early morning celebrations for England's 4-2 win over Croatia.

The win gave England a place in the quarter-finals of Euro 2004.

Smith, of Wolverhampton in central England, had been in Portugal since the start of the European Championship on June 12, staying in the southern Algarve resort region which many England fans used as a base during the finals.

His murder sparked concern in Portugal over rising unemployment among the tens of thousands of immigrants, many of them from the Ukraine, who have moved to the country in recent years.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

Crossword puzzle grid with clues for Across and Down. Includes a solution time of 25 mins and a cryptokuip section.

Cryptokuip puzzle grid with letters and numbers. Includes a solution time of 25 mins and a cryptokuip section.

Williams v Williams

AP, Kentucky

Serena Williams and Anna Kournikova defeated Venus Williams and Brenda Schultz-McCarthy 6-3 in the Lexus Tennis Challenge at Rupp Arena on Sunday.

Whereas Venus Williams beat Anna Kournikova 6-3, 6-2 in a singles match during the exhibition, which raised money for several charities. Kournikova dropped four straight games to lose the first set before taking a brief lead in the second.

In the second set, Kournikova handed over her racket to a fan, giving him a chance to return Williams' powerful serve. The fan swung and missed.

Kourn