

Div I badminton

UNB, Dhaka

Tejkuipara Kira Sangha defeated Mohammedan Sporting Club 4-1 in the women's team event of the Basundhara First Division Badminton League at the NSC wooden floor gymnasium yesterday.

In the men's team event, GramenPhone beat Jagarani Jubo Sangha 5-1, Mohammedan defeated Victoria 5-0, Bangladesh Birman also blanked Sputnik International 5-0, Surjatarun Club beat Shahbagh Badminton Club 4-1, Kathalagan Badminton Club outplayed Settlers Club 5-0 and Tejkuipara KS beat Abban Badminton Club 4-1.

Upul cleared to tour NZ

REUTERS, Colombo

Sri Lanka leg-spinner Upul Chandana has been given the all-clear to tour New Zealand after medical tests in Singapore.

Chandana had complained of breathing difficulties during Sri Lanka's tour of Pakistan in October.

"Sri Lanka Cricket is pleased to inform that Upul Chandana has been cleared by doctors," Sri Lanka Cricket said in a brief statement on Monday.

There had been fears that Chandana may miss Sri Lanka's tour of New Zealand, which starts on December 21, leaving Rangana Herath as the only specialist spinner in the training pool.

Sri Lanka's selectors will pick the touring squad shortly after the return of Marvan Atapattu from a holiday in Australia.

Mahesh Todd's new partner

AFP, Sydney

Australian Todd Woodbridge said Monday his new doubles partner Indian Mahesh Bhupathi was capable of helping him win his 10th Wimbledon doubles tennis crown next year.

Bhupathi, a winner of four Grand Slam titles and 36 doubles titles overall, also recently ended his doubles partnership with Max Mirnyi of Belarus.

Woodbridge, 33, the winner of 16 Grand Slam doubles titles and 82 overall, said he was stunned and disappointed to be dumped by Swede Jonas Bjorkman after collecting five Grand Slam titles during their four-year association.

Grass not on

FROM PAGE 13 touring sides if we develop the habit of playing on them," said Faruque before questioning the wisdom of those who have criticised the approach.

"I don't understand what is wrong with having sporting wickets. If I am not wrong, our batting record on dead tracks in the past leagues have not been very encouraging."

Tigers captain Habibul Bashar was all for firm wickets but was rather annoyed that some players spent too much time thinking about how pitches are going to behave.

"It is true we have a better record on hard and bouncy wickets but I think sometimes we concentrate too much on this particular aspect. If you look at our dismissals in recent matches, you can hardly blame the condition of pitches for them," said the country's top batsman.

"I have asked the players not to think too much about pitches and rather to analyse how they can come out of their form slump."

Bashar, who has started batting in the nets after recovering from a toe injury, informed that he expects to play his first Premier Division game for Mohammedan against Indira Road KC on December 2.

"I am now fully match-fit," said Bashar while talking after the Tigers' preliminary squad's net session at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.



PHOTO: STAR

Mohammad Shamim (R) of Narayanganj City Chess Club makes a move against Biman Grand Master Ziaur Rahman during their fifth round engagement of the Dutch-Bangla First Division Chess League at the federation hall room yesterday.

Challenge drives Oram

AFP, Adelaide

New Zealand all-rounder Jacob Oram said Monday playing in the lopsided series against Australia "leaves for dead" thrashing Bangladesh twice in Tests last month.

Oram is one of the Kiwis' big hopes of salvaging a draw out of a looming heavy defeat in the second Adelaide Test against the world-beating Australians.

Weather looks to be New Zealand's best hope with the tourists fighting to survive at 149 for five chasing a record 464 to win on Tuesday's final day.

Oram, a brilliant century-maker in New Zealand's innings and 156-run hammering in the first Brisbane Test, goes into the final day unbeaten on 40 with wicketkeeper Brendon McCullum on 34.

"We just have to see what we can do because we're up against history here, this is a huge chase and especially going into the last day it's a huge ask," Oram said Monday.

"We haven't in the two partnerships I've been in talked about the end result or the bigger picture in chasing down 464... it's purely about the next run, the next ball, the next over and all we can do is get through the small targets and see where we are."

Oram believes it's not the case of New Zealand batting poorly in the series, but that Australia's bowlers -- Glenn McGrath, Shane Warne, Jason Gillespie and Michael Kasprovic -- are just that good.

"I don't know if you can say we're batting poorly or they're bowling extremely well because I look at the way they're bowling at the top of our innings and they just seem to be getting out of the pitch something we can't," he said.

"Obviously, they are a class act with the bowling attack they have and they've got a 'million' wickets between them, but they just seem to be on top of us at the moment."

"They're bowling in very good channels and making us play and by that I mean defensively and they're not giving us anything to attack and they're getting a few edges, which is something we're not."

"So, I think more than our batting they're just bowling really well and they're on top of their games and they're champion bowlers."

Oram, who scored a majestic unbeaten 126 in New Zealand's first innings in Brisbane with 12 fours and three sixes, said the going may be tough, but he is relishing the challenge.

"I can't comment for the other 14 guys in the squad, but for me coming over here was always going to be very tough and I was under no illusions as to how tough it was going to be," he said.

"Obviously, the results aren't what I expected or hoped for but the type of cricket and how hard it is, is exactly how hard I thought it was going to be and that's why I'm enjoying it the most."

"I spent three weeks in Bangladesh prior to this and this leaves it for dead... we're losing and in Bangladesh we were winning inside four days... so I'm just loving being here."

"It's tough, it's bloody hard, but it's not hard to get up, if it is it would almost be like 'hang your boots up' and 'you're not made for it.'"

Khalil aims to do a Pathan

AFP, Karachi

Pakistan's uncapped pacer Mohammad Khalil hopes for a surprise maiden tour of Australia to equal that of Indian rising star Irfan Pathan who emerged as his country's key bowler last year.

"If Pathan can succeed on his first tour why can't I," Khalil told AFP before the Pakistan team's departure late Sunday.

"I also have the example of Pakistani great Wasim Akram who surprised the world by taking 10 wickets in only his second Test on his first tour in New Zealand 20 years ago," Khalil said.

The 20-year-old Pathan made his Test debut in Australia last year where India squared a four-match Test series 1-1.

The 22-year-old pacer Khalil is one of the two uncapped players in Pakistan's 17-man team for three Tests in Australia and a tri-nation one-day tournament, also involving the West Indies.

The first Test starts in Perth from December 16.

Hailing from Lahore, Khalil like Pathan also bowls left arm.

Right-arm pacer Mohammad Asif, 21, is another newcomer in Pakistan. Both earned places in the national

team with prolific wicket taking in domestic matches.

"Both are exciting, Asif looks a real good prospect and he swings the ball. Khalil is very accurate," Pakistan's



MOHAMMAD KHALIL

English coach Bob Woolmer said.

Pakistan are also seeking former captain Wasim Akram's guidance for Khalil to help him get the inswing like Pathan, said Woolmer.

But Akram said he won't be available in Australia.

"I have seen him (Khalil) bowl in a match and he is good but since I have politely turned down an offer to do commentary in Australia I won't be there," he told AFP.

Akram had passed useful tips to Pathan during India's last tour.

"My advice to all newcomers and experienced bowlers in Pakistan team is to bowl accurate because there is very little margin of errors against world class Australian batsmen," he added.

Pakistan open the tour with a warm-up one-day match followed by a four-day side game -- both in Perth before the start of the Test series.

ACSU to probe

FROM PAGE 13 and feared being implicated in wrongdoing arising from the interviews.

But Obingo said the players had been assured that no action will be taken against them.

Div I chess

Friends Chess Power beat Dhaka University Chess Team 2.5-1.5, Star Vision Chess Team beat Rajshahi Daba Unnayan Sangastha and Bangladesh Mukti Uttaradikar Sangsad beat Sonali Bank 2.5-1.5.

Sehwag's aggression

FROM PAGE 13 Only India's Kapil Dev, England's Ian Botham, New Zealander Richard Hadlee and Imran Khan of Pakistan have achieved the feat.

Eight down, Justin Ontong (16 not out) and wicketkeeper Thami Tsolekile (15) hung on for almost an hour before off-spinner Harbhajan Singh grabbed the last two wickets in quick succession.

Sehwag made his intentions clear, starting the Indian reply by steering Pollock for a four behind point off the second ball.

The 26-year-old then drove Ntini for two fours but the South African bowlers clawed their way back with an accurate line.

The floodgates opened for Sehwag when he punished four wayward balls in an over from Ontong.

He drove the first through the covers, pulled the next over mid-wicket for a flat six, slogged the third over the on-side and finished with a cheeky reverse sweep to the third man fence.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard at close on the second day of the second and final Test between India and South Africa at the Eden Gardens in Kolkata on Monday:

SOUTH AFRICA: First innings (overnight 227-5)

Smith c Karthik b Pathan 0

National long-distance swimming

BSS, Chandpur

The Keya Cosmetics Eighth national long-distance swimming championship will be held on the Dakatia River here today.

The 15-kilometre men's event will start from Shahtali Madrasa Ghat of Chandpur and 10-kilometre women's competition will begin from Shaheb Bazar Ghat.

Both the events will start at 8 am and will end at Chowdhury Ferry Ghat in Chandpur.

State Minister for Youth and Sports Fazlur Rahman is expected to attend the closing ceremony as the chief guest.

Div III cricket qualifiers

SPORTS REPORTER

Nilachal handed a massive 118-run defeat on Azam Waker Cricket Clinic in the Third Division qualifying cricket at the Residential Model School ground yesterday.

At the same venue, Cricket Holm beat ACC Blue by 71 runs while Kalabagan CA (Colt) defeated Joybar Printers by 30 runs at the Gulshan Youth Club ground.

3 in FIFA world

FROM PAGE 13 goal ratio during five seasons in Italy has been outstanding, Ukraine missed out on Euro 2004.

The three candidates for women's player of the year are Mia Hamm of the United States, Birgit Prinz of Germany and Marta of Brazil.

Parag defeats

FROM PAGE 13 Harikrishna and Zhao Jun of China were jointly leading the table with 9.5 points each.

The 13th and final round games will be held today with Parag playing IM Poobesh Anand of India.

Woolmer hopes

FROM PAGE 13 They will then take on a Chairman's XI in a one-day fixture at Perth's Lilac Hill ground on December 7 before a four-day clash starting on December 9 against the full Western Australian team.

Of the 17-man touring squad, only captain Inzamamul Haq, Yousuf Youhana, Abdul Razzaq and pacerman Shoaib Akhtar have played a Test match in Australia.

The busy schedule is designed to have the visitors in peak form heading into the three-Test series and which also includes a triangular one-day competition against Australia and the West Indies.

"We're actually come a week earlier so we can get used to the conditions here," Woolmer said.

"It's not so much the pitches, it's more the light and the brightness and just getting used to Australia in general."

Pakistan has won just four of the 26 Test matches between the two countries in Australia. The other two tests on this tour will be played in Melbourne and Sydney.

SQUAD

Inzamamul Haq (captain), Imran Farhat, Salman Butt, Yasir Hameed, Asim Kamal, Younis Khan, Yousuf Youhana, Kamran Akmal, Shahid Afridi, Abdul Razzaq, Shoaib Malik, Shoaib Akhtar, Mohammad Sami, Rana Naved, Danish Kaneria, Mohammad Asif, Mohammad Khalil.

Russia clinch Fed Cup

Tennis

AFP, Moscow

Russia won the Fed Cup for the first time here on Sunday dethroning holders France 3-2 after Anastasia Myskina and Vera Zvonareva beat Emilie Loit and Marion Bartoli 7-6, 7-5.

The win was the first for Russia in the female equivalent of the Davis Cup and crowns a thrilling year for Russian players in which Anastasia Myskina won the French Open, Svetlana Kuznetsova the US Open and Maria Sharapova - who did not play the Fed Cup - Wimbledon and the Masters.

Myskina was the heroine of the weekend, winning both her singles matches and tasting more glory in the doubles as a last-minute replacement for Elena Likhovtseva.

Afterwards she said it was better than winning the Roland Garros title.

The result Sunday came down to the wire, however, after France's Russian-born Tatiana Golovin beat Kuznetsova 6-4, 6-1 to level the tie at 2-2 and take it to the final doubles match.

Earlier the hosts had taken a 2-1 lead after Myskina, the world ranked number three, beat Nathalie Dechy 6-3, 6-4 and left the holders hopes of retaining their title in the balance.

The French were left devastated by their defeat.

In the first Fed Cup final to be decided by the doubles match for six years, France missed three set

points in the opening set, and Bartoli and Loit twice recovered from losing their serve in a nail-biting second set.

But the Russians held firm, and cheered on by a delirious crowd they finally got the decisive break in the 11th game, before Zvonareva served out for love.

Former Russian president Boris Yeltsin came down onto the court to

offer his congratulations, just as he had two years ago in Paris when Russia defeated France to claim their first Davis Cup title.

Captain Shamil Tarpishev was asked which was sweeter, this first Fed Cup title or that Davis Cup triumph in 2002.

Russia becomes the tenth different nation in the history of the competition to lift the Fed Cup trophy.



PHOTO: AFP

IT'S PARTY TIME: The Russian Fed Cup team celebrates after dethroning holders France in the final on November 28.

Set to tear 'em apart

Tennis

AFP, Paris

A bitter feud between Wimbledon champion Maria Sharapova and French Open winner Anastasia Myskina is threatening to sabotage Russia's defence of their Fed Cup crown in 2005 at a time when the country's tennis Tsarinas are on top of the world.

Myskina led Russia to their first ever Fed Cup title on Sunday to add to her Roland Garros crown.

Sharapova, who was also overlooked for the Olympic Games, wasn't selected but the blonde bombshell was still at the centre of an explosive row which is tearing the Russia team apart.

The fall-out had been simmering since Sharapova defeated Myskina in the semi-finals of the WTA Tour Championships in Los Angeles earlier this month when the Wimbledon champion was hit with a code violation for receiving coaching from father Yuri.

"He was yelling and screaming to her and I thought he just might jump right on the court at one point," complained Myskina.

Sharapova defended her father whom she famously raced to tearfully embrace high in the stands of the All England Club in July when she beat Serena Williams to clinch her Wimbledon title.

"I understand what he's going through," said the Russian teen. "If I was on the sidelines watching every match, I would be pretty emotional, too."

Despite Myskina's French Open

triumph and Svetlana Kuznetsova's US Open triumph in 2004, it is the leggy, pretty blonde figure of Sharapova who is grabbing front pages and column inches.

Her compatriots are being put in the shade and their frustrations are being compounded by Sharapova's love of the United States where she lives full time while the likes of Myskina, Kuznetsova and Elena Dementieva spend their time away from the tour in Russia.

Myskina made public her rage at the Fed Cup in Moscow (as Russia beat France 3-2) where she threatened to

Academy in Florida.

"I was raised in Russia, I feel like I am going back home, I am comfortable there because that is where I was born. But I don't think I would want to live there. Life is just so very different after being in the US for so long."

"I always talk with the other Russian players. Even when I beat Vera (Zvonareva) in the second round in the French Open, we were talking after the match," she said in Paris in June.

"Off court we are friends, but on the court it's a totally different story because we want to beat each other."

"We are not going out to hate one



MARIA SHARAPOVA



ANASTASIA MYSKINA

pull out of the team if Sharapova is selected next year.

The 17-year-old Sharapova insists she is on good terms with the Russian players although she can't hide her love of the United States.

"I feel a lot safer in America than I would be going back to Russia," said the girl who left behind her impoverished upbringing in Sochi when she was nine to train at the Bolleter

another for some reason. We are still very young and we are going to be doing this for many years to come. So it's better to get to know each other now."

Back in Moscow, meanwhile, Myskina was basking in the spotlight after she and Zvonareva won the decisive doubles to clinch Russia's first Fed Cup title beating French pair Marion Bartoli and Emilie Loit 7-6, 7-5.

Weather may deny Aussies

FROM PAGE 13

to win a Test was 324 for five when they beat Pakistan by five wickets in Christchurch in 1993-94.

Australian coach John Buchanan defended the declaration, saying: "We believe it was the appropriate time to do it. It still left us with about 140 overs for the rest of match, it gave us the opportunity to bowl 50 overs today so when we come back tomorrow the bowlers are still in very good shape."

Ponting got quick reward for his second declaration of the match 13 minutes after lunch with four Kiwi wickets.

Opener Mathew Sinclair was out in the fourth over, leg before wicket to Jason Gillespie for two.

The Aussies were jubilant when

all-time leading Kiwi run-scorer Fleming was out five overs later, when a Glenn McGrath delivery glanced his thigh pad and clipped the top of the off-ball.

The Kiwis did well to contain the Australians to 78 runs in the morning session through their finger-spinners Daniel Vettori and Paul Wiseman, who picked up the wickets of Australian opening pair Langer and Matthew Hayden.

In the process, Langer became the 10th Australian batsman to score

6,000 runs.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard at stumps on the fourth day of the second and final Test between Australia and New Zealand at the Adelaide Oval on Monday:

AUSTRALIA: First innings 575 for 8 declared (Langer 215, Lehmann 81, Hayden 70, Vettori 5-152, Wiseman 3-140)

NEW ZEALAND: First innings 251 (Fleming 83, Astle 52; McGrath 4-66, Gillespie 3-37)

AUSTRALIA: Second innings (overnight 57-2)

Langer lbw b Wiseman 46
Hayden c McCullum b Vettori 54
Ponting not out 26
Martyn not out 6
Extras: (lb-6, nb-1) 7

Total: (For 2 wks decl in 56 overs) 139
Fall of wickets: 1-93, 2-119

Bowler O M R W
Martin 6 1 11 0
Oram 5 1 17 0
Franklin 5 0 18 0
Wiseman 22 3 52 1
Vettori 18 2 35 1

NEW ZEALAND: Second innings
Richardson c Langer b Kasprovic 16
Sinclair lbw b Gillespie 2
Fleming b McGrath 3
Styris c Clarke b Warne 8
Astle c Langer b Lehmann 38
Oram not out 40
McCullum not out 34
Extras: (b-1, lb-6, nb-1) 8

Total: (For 5 wks in 53 overs) 149
Fall of wickets: 1-11, 2-18, 3-34, 4-34, 5-97

Bowler O M R W
McGrath 7 2 14 1
Gillespie 11 3 27 1
Kasprovic 8 4 15 1
Warne 18 5 55 1
Lehmann 9 0 31 1

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

Crossword puzzle grid with clues for Across and Down. Clues include: 1. '60 Minutes' home, 4. Hansom, e.g., 7. Tend, 8. Gibbs or Maples, 10. Sound, 11. Colored ring, 13. Remark, 16. Pub, 17. Uses the USPS, 18. 'Star Wars' abbr., 19. Noun classification (Abbr.), 20. Managers, with 'out', 21. Ex-husband, 23. Extensive, 25. Rodents do it.

Cryptogram puzzle grid with numbers 1-32. The grid is partially filled with letters and numbers.

CRYPTOQUIP

U H A M N L L U L R Y L
T I D N M U L R T Y H D I W U L R
E D V F W D N E F U V D N M M F
W Y A D U Z N L Z N V F U I Y O O
Today's Cryptquip Clue: L equals N