

Nat'l soccer camp gets underway

SPORTS REPORTER

Central defender Rajani Kanta Barman and midfielder Mehdi Hassan Ujjal joined the camp yesterday for the national team's preparation for the 2007 Asian Cup qualification against Uzbekistan.

Bangladesh will host Uzbekistan on October 11 and the two footballers failed to report to coach Hasanuzzaman Babloo on Saturday.

The training of the 22-member squad began at the Brothers Union ground yesterday with Parvez Babu and Zahid Hossain Emily yet to join.

Zia, Rakib on top

SPORTS REPORTER

Grand Master (GM) Ziaur Rahman and International Master (IM) jointly lead after three rounds in the second University of Greenwich FIDE Rating Chess tournament at the chess federation hall room yesterday.

The two are at a maximum of three points in section A, with Zia defeating Debraj while Rakib beating Monir.

FIDE Master Taibur Rahman is in second place as he defeated Robin in his match.

In section B, eleven players -- Taher, Masud, Majed, Jewel, Siddiq, Moni, Shamim, Dinayet, Shamsul, Chapal and Sharif -- are on the same points, leading the table.

Inzy off

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The Pakistan captain faces a fine of 50 to 100 per cent of his match fee or a ban of one Test or two one-day internationals on ball-tampering charges, a level two offence under the ICC code of conduct.

The penalty for a second charge -- that of bringing the game into disrepute by protesting, a level 3 offence -- is a ban of two to four Tests or four to eight one-day internationals.

Aussies clinch

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Lara c Haddin b Bracken 5
Bravo c Ponting b Watson 8
Hinds b Watson 0
Smith c Ponting b Lee 30
Baugh c Haddin b Lee 3
Bradshaw c haddin b Lee 0
Taylor not out 0
Extras: (lb-8, w-2, nb-7) 19
Total: (All out in 34.2 overs) 113
Fall of wickets: 1-0, 2-16, 3-20, 4-32, 5-55, 6-56, 7-106, 8-112, 9-112
Bowler O M R W
Lee 8.2 1 24 4
McGrath 6 2 6 0
Bracken 7 1 15 3
Watson 6 0 30 2
Symonds 3 0 0 15
Clarke 4 0 13 0
Result: Australia won by 127 runs to clinch the DLF Cup.
Man-of-the-match: Brett Lee.
Man-of-the-series: Brett Lee.
Toss: Australia.
Umpires: Mark Benson and Asad Rauf.

Mourinho hails

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the best midfielders in the world. If he misses a penalty, or has a bad moment, he is still one of the best midfielders in the world.

"Terry felt something in his back in training. Paulo Ferreira is not a central defender but he was brilliant. There was no problem with him there."

Cruciate blow

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"We think he has torn the anterior cruciate ligament, but we will have to carry out further tests tomorrow," Real Madrid doctor Juan Carlos Hernandez told reporters.

Real host Dynamo Kiev in Champions League Group E on Tuesday having lost their opening match 2-0 away to Olympique Lyon.

Juve win again

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moved to minus seven points. "The risk is to think that it will always be this easy. We have to stay determined and mentally prepared right to the very end."

"I don't look at the league table and neither do the players."

The hosts took the lead in the 24th minute.

Diego Forlano's header into the box found Trezeguet unmarked and the France international cushioned the ball on his chest before prodding it past Giorgio Frezzolini.

Del Piero extended the home side's advantage three minutes before half-time, playing a neat one-two with Trezeguet before steering the ball home with his right foot.

Trezeguet scored his second goal in the 70th minute after good work from Marco Marchionni and Cristiano Zanetti, and Nedved compounded Modena's misery three minutes later with a header from Matteo Paro's crossed free-kick.

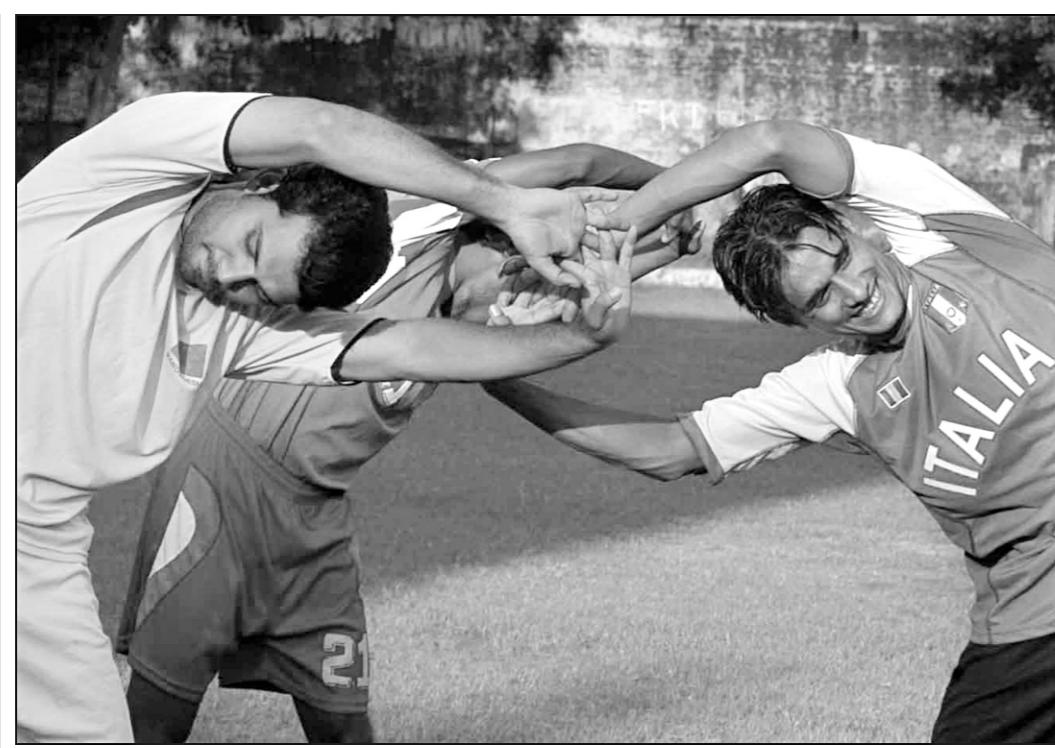


PHOTO: STAR
Bangladesh goal-keepers Aminul Haque (L) and Biplob Bhattacharya stretch during a practice session at the Brothers Union ground in the city yesterday.

Lancs snub irates Warne

Cricket

BBC ONLINE, undated

Shane Warne bowled a series of bouncers and was no-balled for throwing the ball from a standing start as Hampshire's match with Lancashire ended in farce.

The game petered out to a draw, with Lancashire determined not to relinquish their second place to Hampshire.

So they battled all day to finish on 339-6, Luke Sutton taking advantage to hit his second century for the team.

But Warne took exception to opposing captain Mark Chilton's refusal to declare despite holding a big lead.

In a ridiculous finish, wicketkeeper Nic Pothas bowled three overs and Jimmy Adams took a rare wicket of his own.

Warne defended his actions, saying: "Coming into the day and after losing a day through rain, we thought we were going to get a game."

"It got to the stage where they were 430 ahead with 60 overs left and still didn't declare -- it was ridiculous."

"I started throwing some lob-wickets to see if they wanted any more runs but that didn't work."

"From their point of view it would have been good for Jimmy Anderson to come out and bowl under pressure so they missed a trick and, to be honest, lost the spirit of the game -- it was pretty poor form."

"I was proud of our guys and the umpires congratulated us on our conduct."

"We did everything we could to get a game but I was disappointed for the crowd who had come to see what happened."

Chilton said he regretted his policy of not declaring.

"We definitely didn't want to lose the game so we were going to bat ourselves into a very strong position," said the Lancashire captain.

"After lunch there was a window of opportunity in which we could, and should have perhaps, declared."

"But after Hampshire started throwing the bowl 20 feet into the air we decided it would be inappropriate."

"I'm not proud of what happened but I feel sorry for all the spectators that made the journey and I hope this doesn't cloud what has been a great season for us."

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'Sword must be removed'

Cricket

CRICINFO, undated

As Herschelle Gibbs prepares to face Delhi Police's questioning in connection with match-fixing allegations, South Africa have sought early disposal of the case, saying a 'sword' should not hang over the cricketer's head indefinitely.

"It is a matter of Delhi Police and we as government would not want to interfere a great deal in the legitimate legal process," Francis Moloi, South African High Commissioner, told PTI regarding the questioning of Gibbs when he comes to India next month to play in the Champions Trophy. "However, we

would want processes like these to have some form of finality," he said, stressing on the need for an expeditious conclusion of the case.

"Frankly, we can't have this issue hanging like a sword for a long time. Speedy resolution of the issue will be most welcome so that we get on with the business of cricket which people of India love a great deal," Moloi added.

Delhi Police in 2000 claimed to have uncovered a match-fixing racket involving top players, including the then South Africa cricket captain, the late Hansie Cronje, as well as Nicky Boje and Gibbs.

Boje and Gibbs have so far not been questioned as they have avoided visiting India. Delhi Police

has maintained that their quizzing is essential in the case. On his part, Moloi said South Africa respect the legal processes in India and feels that "whatever is there must be laid on the table".

Gibbs, who will tour India with his lawyer, will not come with the team but will join his teammates a few days later. He is likely to leave for India from South Africa on October 11 and be questioned on October 12 and 14 by the Delhi Police, according to cricket officials in South Africa. He has previously opted out of two tours of India, in 2004 and 2005.

Inzamam sees Pak chances

Cricket

PTI, Karachi

tioning camps in Lahore and Jaipur. But the conditions in India suit us and we have a good allround outfit for one-day cricket," he said.

The Pakistan skipper Inzamam Haq on Sunday said his team had a very good chance of winning the Champions Trophy tournament starting in India next month as the sub-continent conditions would work to their advantage.

Inzamam, who had led Pakistan to a 4-2 victory in India last year, admitted though that finding a consistent opening pair and fielding were areas which were a cause of concern.

"We will be working hard on finding a consistent opening pair and on our fielding during the condi-

tions in Lahore and Jaipur. But the conditions in India suit us and we have a good allround outfit for one-day cricket," he said.

The Pakistan team will have a four-day conditioning camp in Lahore from October 1 before leaving for India. They will also undergo a week-long training camp in Jaipur before playing their first match on October 17.

He also said India, West Indies and Australia would enter the tournament confident after the tri-series in Malaysia. "But I think for our boys, after a two and half month's tour of England it was better to give them a break from cricket to allow them to recharge themselves."

"Malik will also be playing for Stalwart in the four-day champions match in India and will get some useful practice," Inzamam said referring to the contest between



PHOTO: AFP
Argentines David Nalbandian (L) and Jose Acasuso sing with the crowd at the end of their Davis Cup semifinal doubles' match against Australia in Parque Roca Stadium in Buenos Aires on Saturday.

Hanif can't take it anymore

Hockey

AFP, Karachi

For Hanif Khan, the mere mention of Pakistan's glorious field hockey past brings tears to his eyes and he is briefly unable to discuss the sport he still loves.

"Don't talk about hockey. I am so disappointed that I play tennis now," says the 49-year-old Hanif, a member of Pakistan's last Olympic gold-medal winning team of 1984.

"It's useless to talk about a sport where signs of improvement are like sighting a polar bear in a desert."

Yet Hanif still travels around 80 miles a day from his Olypmic home in the remote town of Hub to the southern city of Karachi to train and finance

some 40 up and coming hockey players, in the hope they will rise to represent Pakistan.

Hanif was part of Pakistan's golden years which saw them win three Olympic and four world titles.

But the last decade has seen a major slump, not only in Pakistan but throughout South Asia.

"Asia was the dominant force but politics, lack of planning and following European style have led to hockey's downfall, especially in Pakistan and India," said Hanif.

The region's continuous slide at the international level continued at the recently concluded World Cup at Moenchengladbach, Germany, where none of the Asian teams finished on the podium.

Germany clinched their second

successive world title while Olympic champions Australia finished second and European champions Spain secured the bronze medal.

South Korea finished as the best among the Asian nations in fourth position, while Pakistan were sixth, Japan ninth and once-great India slumped to eleventh.

For a nation with the most Olympic hockey titles -- winning gold eight times but not since 1980 -- players and fans say India's abysmal hockey run is little short of tragic.

"The Indian team's performance in the World Cup is bitter to swallow. Far from fighting to be the best in Asia, the team is now fourth among the continent's challengers, even behind newcomers Japan," wrote

Germany clinched their second

He said the authorities must stand up and take the blame.

"While this is a wake-up call for the whole fraternity, there should be somebody up there ready to take the blame for this pathetic fall," he wrote.

Despite calls to step down, India's hockey chief Kunwar Pal Singh Gill has remained adamant that the future is bright and has refused to relinquish his post.

Former Pakistani Olympian Mansoor Ahmed said the governments of sports-mad India and Pakistan need to step in and take combined action to stop the rot.

"Governments should appoint people who know hockey," said Ahmed.

"India has a hockey supremo who doesn't know the sport and as the famous adage goes: a victory has many fathers but a defeat is an orphan. Hockey has lost fans," said Ahmed.

"Both governments should give jobs to hockey players because youth will not take up a sport where they can't earn money. Instead they play cricket where they earn a livelihood," said Ahmed.

Cricket's huge popularity in South Asia has pushed hockey hard.

The streets of Mumbai, Kolkata, Karachi and Lahore are full of young people playing with crude makeshift bats and taped-up tennis balls, whereas hockey sticks are nowhere to be seen.

It was not the case once, but a number of factors have pushed hockey into a short corner, including, in Pakistan, the rock star-like fame in the 1980s of cricketers such as Imran Khan and Javed Miandad.

The lack of expensive astroturf pitches has also been a problem.

But not everyone blames cricket for the decline in hockey standards.

"It is a fact that cricket is more popular than hockey, but has cricket stopped hockey from flourishing?" questioned former Pakistan captain and coach Ishaquddin Siddiqui.

"Players and hockey authorities are to blame for the slide and if we don't take steps quickly, the game is in serious danger because South Asian hockey needs a lift for the betterment of international hockey," stated Siddiqui.

No Asian country has won a Olympic gold since Pakistan's 1984 triumph at Los Angeles. Pakistan's 1994 win at Sydney, Australia was the last time an Asian team won a world title.

Rahul blames bad batting

Cricket

AFP, Kuala Lumpur

Former Pakistan speedster Wasim Akram on Sunday alleged cricketers from England and Australia practised ball tampering before the tournament.

"No body knew for 15 long years what we were actually doing. They thought it was ball-tampering. But in fact it is reverse