

Russell, Biman on right track

SPORTS REPORTER

Defending champions Sheikh Russell and title-contenders Bangladesh Biman won their respective matches in the AB Bank Senior Division Table Tennis League at the Wooden Floor Gymnasium yesterday.

Mostafa, Mahbub and Kachi won emphatically against Mahbub, Mridul and Shanto of Engineers Club while Manosh, Edison and Pappu of Biman also had a good outing against Ajax Sporting Club as both teams won 3-0.

Only Manosh was pushed in his match against Goutam as he won 11-2, 9-11, 8-11, 11-8 and 11-3.

In the other match, Mariners Youngs Club beat Mohammadpur Boys 3-1.

Lawson in Pak list

AFP, Sydney

Former Australian fast bowler Geoff Lawson will fly to Pakistan for talks on coaching the troubled national team following the death of Bob Woolmer, a report said here Saturday.

Lawson is among three on Pakistan's shortlist for the job, along with compatriots Dav Whatmore and former fast bowler Richard Done, the newspaper reported.

Former New South Wales and New Zealand coach Steve Rixon has told AFP that the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) contacted him about the role but he had already made other plans.

Lawson said he also had been contacted, at short notice, about the job and was trying to obtain a visa from the Pakistan High Commission in Canberra. He was hoping to fly out this weekend "once the paper work has been done".

WAG wedding

FROM PAGE 20

Chelsea owner Roman Abramovich, with new girlfriend Daria Zhukova in tow, was also there, according to The Sun, as was England boss Steve McLaren and a host of other high-earning English Premiership stars.

One visitor who saw Terry's marquee being prepared during a visit to the palace Thursday, was unimpressed, according to Britain's domestic Press Association news agency.

"There were pink Cadillac seats, purple carpets -- it all looked very tacky to me," he was quoted as saying.

One star who is not scheduled to attend, according to reports, is Real Madrid and England midfielder David Beckham. He is on club duty but The Sun said he will deliver a live video message to Neville from Spain.



PHOTO: AFP

Meseret Defar of Ethiopia is ecstatic as she celebrates her new world record in the women's 5000m event at the Golden League in Oslo on Friday.

Powell, Isinbayeva shine

Defar breaks 5000m record

Athletics

AFP, Oslo

Jamaican 100m world record holder Asafa Powell and Russian world and Olympic pole vault champion Yelena Isinbayeva underlined their star credentials here Friday with crushing wins in their respective events.

Ethiopian Meseret Defar kept up the Bislett stadium's reputation as one where records will continue to be broken by setting the 53rd, smashing her previous world record mark in the women's 5000m by eight seconds.

Defar, the 23-year-old Olympic champion, timed 14min 16.63sec after some great pace-making by Russian Olga Konyagina and a host of other high-earning English Premiership stars.

"Everything was perfect today," said Defar. "I knew I could break the record after 2km. The pacemaker was great and it was no problem to continue with the pace alone."

With a tailwind of 0.9m/s, Powell enjoyed a great start and raced home in 9.94sec, his 27th sub-10sec timing recorded over the blue ribbon event, and just one-hundredth off the world lead set last week by American Walter Dix.

"9.94sec was a good time for me today," the 24-year-old Jamaican said. "I ran 9.96sec here last year so

I'm at the same spot. Things are looking good for me."

Powell, who missed the 2005 worlds through injury, confirmed that his sights were set firmly on the August 25-September 2 World Athletics Championships in Osaka, Japan.

"The world championships are the most important thing this year. I want to go to the final and win a gold medal there," he said.

The Jamaican dominated a strong field that included double European sprint champion and Olympic silver medallist Francis Obikwelu, Trinidad's 2003 world silver medallist Darrel Brown and African record holder Olusoji Fasuba.

Obikwelu came second in 10.06sec with Fasuba promoted to third after Briton Marlon Devonish was disqualified.

Devonish, the Athens Olympics 4x100m relay gold medallist, was a last-minute inclusion after earlier clocking 10.20sec in the "B" race.

But he was disqualified from the main event for having run twice in the same day.

Isinbayeva, who has previously bemoaned the dearth of quality opposition in her event, entered the pole vault at 4.60m with only Poland's Monica Pyrek left in the competition.

Pyrek promptly crashed out at 4.70m while Isinbayeva had to settle for 4.85m.

In the tightly-contested high jump, Russian Yelena Slesarenko won with a season's best of 2.02m ahead of Croatia's Blanka Vlasic.

Elsewhere, Morocco's Adil Kaouch won the coveted Dream Mile in 3:51.14, a surprise winner over Commonwealth champion Augustine Choge of Kenya.

American Anwar Moore won the 110m hurdles in 13.26sec, edging compatriot David Payne by 0.1sec with Thomas Blaschek of Germany in third.

In the field, Phillips Idowu of Britain won the triple jump with a best of 17.35m, two centimetres ahead of Sweden's Olympic champion Christian Olson.

Terri Pitkamaki of Finland claimed top podium spot in the javelin with 88.78m.

It was a good night on the track for American women, with victories for Stephanie Durst, Sanya Richards and Michelle Perry.

Durst won the 100m in 11.22sec ahead of Jamaican Sheri-Anne Brooks and Cydonie Mothersill of Cayman Islands. Perry won the 100m hurdles in 12.70.

Richards, who shared the Golden League jackpot last season with Powell and compatriot Jeremy Wariner, was untroubled as she strolled to victory in the 400m in a season's best of 50.26sec and, injuries notwithstanding, looks a good bet to go the distance this season.

Enquiry

FROM PAGE 20

and two to Middlesbrough (Aiyegbeni Yakubu and Fabio Rochemback).

The player and club involved in the 17th transfer were not identified.

British Sports Minister Richard Caborn urged the FA and FIFA to crack down on agents who had not cooperated with the inquiry.

"While it's pleasing to hear that all clubs and officials have cooperated fully with the Stevens inquiry, I am deeply concerned that some agents haven't," Caborn said.

"It's now for the FA and FIFA to pursue these agents vigorously and they will have my support every step of the way. The role of agents in football will always be controversial and that's why they need proper regulation at national, European and international level."

The report was critical of Zahavi's failure to cooperate fully with the inquiry having initially failed to disclose his involvement in a number of transfers then refused to provide bank statements requested by investigators.

"There remain questions relating to his relationship with and payments to (British agent) Barry Silkman and Barry Silkman's failure to initially disclose his involvement in all the transactions in which he received fees," the report notes.

Tasty derby

FROM PAGE 17

have been robbed off a goal," Manik said.

Yellow cards: Joy, Ibrahim (Abahani) and Zahid (Mohammedan)

TEAMS

Abahani: Biplob, Siraji, Nazrul, Pradip, Wali, Ujjal, Pranotosh (Abul, 56th minute), Joy, Mikel (Zahid 68th), Ibrahim and Nchouwatt (Emile, 79th).

Mohammedan: James, Arif, Odafe, Biplob (Belal, 46th), Zahid, Kamal, Sharif, Divine, Paul, Farhad and Rony (Mithu, 58th).

FACTFILE

FROM PAGE 20

Last Test: England v Pakistan, Lord's, 1992

Last ODI: England v Pakistan, Old Trafford, 1992

OTHER AWARDS

One of Wisden's Five Cricketers of the Year, 1978

BBC Sports Personality of the Year, 1981

OBE (Officer of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire), 1992

TEST BATTING RECORD

M R HS Avg 100s 50s

102 5200 208 33.54 14 22

TEST BOWLING RECORD

M W BB Avg

102 383 13-106 28.40

ODI BATTING RECORD

M R HS Avg 100s 50s

116 2113 79 23.21 0 9

ODI BOWLING RECORD

M W BB Avg

116 145 4-31 28.54

1974: Makes first-class debut for Somerset.

1977: Takes five for 74 on Test debut, against Australia.

1978: In February, scores first Test hundred, against New Zealand in Christchurch.

1978: In June, scores 108 and takes eight for 34 in an innings of the same Test, against Pakistan, at Lord's.

1980: Becomes first player to score a century and take 10 wickets in the same Test with 114 and 13 for 106 against India in February's Golden Jubilee Test at Bombay (now Mumbai).

1980: Appointed England captain.

1981: Resigns England captaincy after eight draws and four defeats during 12 Tests in charge following a pair against Australia at Lord's.

1981: In July, takes six for 95, scores 50 and 149 not out as England became only the second team in Test history to win a match after following on with 18 run-win against Australia at Headingly.

1981: In August takes five wickets for one run in 28 balls as England beat Australia by 29 runs to win fourth Test. Later that month scores 118 off just 102 balls as England win fifth Ashes Test at Old Trafford by 103 runs.

1985: Leaves Somerset in protest at county's sackings of West Indies duo Vivian Richards and Joel Garner. Joins Worcestershire.

1985: Undertakes first of several walks in aid of leukaemia charities, walking the length of Great Britain in a 900-mile trek from John O'Groats in Scotland to Land's End in England. In all goes on to raise more than 10 million pounds.

1986: Banned for 63 days by English cricket authorities after admitting cannabis use in an interview.

1992: Joins Durham, English cricket's newest first-class county. Awarded OBE for services to cricket and charity work. Makes his final Test and one-day international appearances.

1993: Retires from first-class cricket after Durham's match against the touring Australians. Takes up career as a cricket broadcaster with Sky Sports television.

2007: Receives knighthood for services to charity and to cricket. Becomes Sir Ian Botham.

Shoaib fit, and back

Cricket

AFP, Bhuban

Paceman Shoaib Akhtar regained full fitness to claim a place in Pakistan's 15-man squad for the upcoming tour of Scotland, selectors announced here on Saturday.

The 32-year-old missed the World Cup in the Caribbean due to a knee injury and was also left out of the squad for the three-match series against Sri Lanka in Abu Dhabi last month.

However, Akhtar bowled strongly at the team's tune-up camp for the tour of Scotland, where Pakistan play one-off limited over internationals against India on July 1 and against the hosts two days later.

The injury-prone fast bowler played briefly for Pakistan in their Test series against South Africa in January before breaking down once more. His last one-day international was against England in September.

Chief selector Salahuddin Ahmed said Akhtar's fitness is a good omen for Pakistan. "A fit Akhtar is an asset for Pakistan and

we have watched him bowl so he was included," said Ahmed.

In October Akhtar was banned for two years and fellow paceman Mohammad Asif for one year after testing positive for the steroid nandrolone, but the bans were later overturned on the grounds that they took the substance unknowingly.

Both missed the World Cup as Akhtar was battling a knee and hamstring injury, while Asif had an elbow injury.

Akhtar said he was delighted to be back in the squad.

"I am happy and look forward to play for Pakistan once more. I have been bowling with full throttle and intensity and hope to do well," said Akhtar, who has 169 Test and 208 one-day wickets.

Former vice-captain and leading batsman Younis Khan also returned to the team after missing the Sri Lanka series due to his commitment with English county Yorkshire.

Pakistan has a troubled World Cup where they were dumped out in the first round following defeats against the West Indies and minnows Ireland.

They also lost their coach Bob Woolmer who died in the team hotel after Pakistan's exit. Police

launched a murder inquiry, but now say he died of natural causes.

Their captain Inzamamul Haq later announced his retirement from one-day cricket while his potential replacement Younis refused to lead the side citing personal reasons.

It forced the authorities to choose young Shoaib Malik as the new captain.

Pakistan is still searching of a new coach and hope to shortlist contenders on Sunday before taking a final decision later this month.

A vice captain for the Scotland tour will also be named on Sunday, after Asif's appointment as Malik's deputy for the Sri Lanka series

raised eyebrows due to his involvement in the doping scandal.

SQUAD

Shoaib Malik (captain), Imran Nazir, Salman Butt, Younis Khan, Yasir Hameed, Mohammad Yousuf, Kamran Akmal, Fawad Alam, Shahid Afridi, Abdul Razzaq, Umar Gul, Shoaib Akhtar, Rao Iftikhar, Mohammad Asif, Mohammad Sami.

WI refuse to tour

FROM PAGE 17

country.

A statement issued by WIPA said that the West Indies board had been advised that it had reached the decision "following intensive discussions with various stakeholders and likely selectees who have unanimously expressed deep concern about players' safety and the continuing volatile situation existing in that country".

"While we at WIPA acknowledge the importance of the development of cricket, we are, nevertheless, firmly of the view that the safety of players in an unsettled environment is of paramount importance."