

Big win for BKSP

SPORTS REPORTER

Abu Sajjad John fired four goals to steer BKSP to a massive 9-0 win over Rajshahi Division in yesterday's 27th National Hockey Championship match at the Maulana Bhasani National Hockey Stadium.

Al Masum scored two goals for BKSP, who led the first half 4-0.

In other matches, Mymensingh drubbed Bangladesh Police 6-1, Bangladesh Air Force thrashed Patuakhali 6-0 and Dinajpur held Chittagong Division 2-2.

Family first for Tiger

AP, Grand Blanc

Tiger Woods will miss next week's Buick Open to be with his wife and newborn daughter.

On Monday, Woods' wife gave birth to the couple's first child.

Woods said May 21 he intended to play at Warwick Hills in Grand Blanc but the birth of his child was a priority. Woods' wife Elin was scheduled to give birth in July.

The Buick Open is earlier this year than in the past, starting Thursday and ending July 1 instead of in early August.

Woods has played at the tournament about 60 miles north of Detroit the past five years -- winning it in 2006 and 2002 -- and eight times in his career.

He has had a sponsorship agreement with Buick since 1999 and agreed to a new deal in 2004 believed to be worth more than \$40 million over five years. Buick has said the contract does not require Woods to play in specific PGA Tour events it sponsors.

He is scheduled to host a tournament in Washington, D.C., from July 5-8.

The British Open starts July 19, and the PGA Championship begins Aug. 9 at Southern Hills Country Club in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

Murali threat

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"The key is to bat well and stretch the Sri Lankans. No one wants to lose in three or four days."

Bangladesh's hopes of providing a good fight rest on Ashraful, whose 114 on debut against Sri Lanka in 2001, just past his 16th birthday, made him Test cricket's youngest centurion.

The exciting stromaker has gallantly stood up to the Sri Lankans in the past, scoring 475 runs in seven matches with two hundreds and a half-century at an average of 39.58.

Bangladesh, who made their maiden appearance in the second round of the limited-overs World Cup in the Caribbean earlier this year, are still finding their feet in traditional five-day Test cricket.

They have lost 40 of their 46 matches since being granted Test status in 2000, with five draws and a lone victory against a struggling Zimbabwe in 2005.

Sri Lanka, playing for the first time since coach Tom Moody quit in May to return home to Western Australia, are beset with problems of their own after being forced to look for a makeshift opening batting pair.

With veteran Sanath Jayasuriya rested and former captain Marvan Atapattu opting out for personal reasons, the hosts suffered a blow when Upul Tharanga broke a toe in his right foot when hit by a ball from Malinga during practice.

The selectors called up lanky Michael Vandort, who played the last of his seven Tests a year ago, to open the batting with debutant left-hander Malinda Wannapura.

"It is disappointing not to have a full-strength team but it gives a chance to the others to stand up and prove themselves," said captain Mahela Jayawardene.

"There is no question of taking Bangladesh lightly. They have done well in one-day cricket and look determined to improve their Test record," he said.

Bangladesh play three Tests and as many one-day internationals during the five-week tour.

Spain hails

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paper, gave the first page of their sports section to the story about Henry.

There was little hyperbole in the report, with the paper's headline reading: "Barca sign Henry for 24 million. The French striker, who until now has been at Arsenal, commits to the azulgrana club for four seasons."

Capello hails

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scandal, the latter handed to Inter by default.

"I watched Serie A closely this term. I was very close to Milan and Roma, unfortunately Juventus were not in the tournament. I was a little less supportive of Inter, obviously."

In fact, the Coach stood by the Triade of Luciano Moggi, Roberto Bettega and Antonio Giurado, who have all now left Juve in the wake of the trial verdict.



An action from yesterday's match of the 27th National Hockey Championship between Rajshahi and BKSP at the Maulana Bhasani National Stadium.

England eye Aussie scale

Cricket

INTERNET, undated

England are rebuilding their one-day team in Australia's image as they attempt to end their long wait for success and win one of the major tournaments in the next four years.

Not since the 1992 World Cup, when they were beaten by Pakistan in the final, have England been competitive in a major one-day international tournament and have endured miserable campaigns in the last four World Cups.

During the same period Australia have established themselves as the premier one-day team on the planet, winning the last two World Cups and remaining unbeaten in the last two tournaments.

It is those sort of standards England are seeking to emulate as they rebuild their team under the new captaincy of Paul Collingwood and coach Peter Moores.

England have already recalled Matt Prior as wicketkeeper because of his attacking style of strokeplay and potential to be as destructive either at the top or in the middle of the order as Adam Gilchrist was for Australia.

"Matt has shown in playing Test

match cricket that he's a naturally aggressive player," said chairman of selectors David Graveney.

"He's an option to bat at the top of the order, but he's also an option to bat in the middle of the order.

"If you look at the way Andrew Symonds bats at number five for Australia, he bats the same way no matter what the situation and if they do get into trouble he has people like Mike Hussey to repair the situation if necessary.

"We are looking at the way the best teams play and to see if we have the best teams that can mirror that."

To that end England have called in two uncapped players -- Warwickshire batsman Jonathan Trott, who has a career one-day average over 40, and Hampshire all-rounder Dimitri Mascarenhas for his ability to contribute with bat and ball.

Trott is also a candidate to open the innings alongside Middlesex's Owais Shah, who has also been recalled for next week's two Twenty20 internationals and three one-day internationals against West Indies.

"We may look at players like Jonathan Trott and Owais Shah who bat three for their counties to open for us," confirmed Graveney.

"We don't want to put them under

Increase pace of development'

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can be handy as I also scored some runs," informed Sangakkara.

The 29-year left-handed batsman, who has played 64 Tests and 200 ODIs, still believes that there is no alternative to hard work to become a good player.

"I always believe in hard work. There is nothing miraculous behind the success of Sri Lanka cricket, rather it was hard work. Talent is important but without hard work you cannot achieve anything," observed the soft-spoken cricketer.

Praising Bangladesh's improvement at this level, Sangakkara said that the Tigers have to increase their pace of development.

"Bangladesh is improving side but they should increase the pace. You have talented cricketers but they have to prove their ability and you know without hard work it is not possible. I think there is a lack of consistency in their performance," suggested the experienced Lankan cricketer, who has a lot of contribution in his team's recent past success.

He emphasised on a blend of experienced and young cricketers to make a competitive team at the highest level.

"Good mixture of experienced and young players is important to make a team strong. I think I have played with number of good teams under different captains and it was a

tremendous experience to play with such a good team in last World Cup. Sri Lanka has been playing good cricket for the last two, three years and I think we could manage a good team with experience and young cricketers in the side," he said.

"I don't have any complaints about the workload with the dual job of wicket keeping and batting. The main thing is whether I enjoy the job or not and everybody should take responsibility," he said.

"Wicketkeeping is a tedious and hard job but as long as I am fit I don't feel any problem with the two duties," he added.

"Partnership is always important whether it is in bowling and batting. I have a very good understanding with Mahela (Jayawardene) and we have played lot of games together from the Under-15 level. We always complement each other while batting at the middle," said Sangakkara when asked about his partnership with his skipper with whom he had made a record 624-run third wicket partnership against South Africa at the Oval.

"I will try my best to score as much as I can in the series. And definitely our target is to win all the matches," he warned.

Henin trumps Mauresmo

AFP, Eastbourne

Justine Henin derailed the grass preparation of Amelie Mauresmo as she won the Eastbourne Championships for the second straight year on Saturday 7-5, 6-7 (4/7), 7-6 (7/2) at the expense of the defending Wimbledon champion.

Henin, coming off of a fourth French Open title from the past five years, remains an undefeated 8-0 at Devonshire Park after claiming a contest played in a devilish sea wind on the south coast.

The finely-balanced match which stretched for two hours, 36 minutes was a replay of the 2006 Wimbledon, which Mauresmo won over her Belgian rival.

In the interim, Henin claimed titles from Mauresmo at the year-end championships and Dubai in February, Mauresmo's last match before an emergency appendix operation which left her idle until April.

"It was a close one," said Henin, now with 34 career trophies. "Conditions were very tough for both of us."

Mauresmo heads to Wimbledon starting Monday pleased with a good week on the grass while sorry to have missed out on the title in her first final from four appearances here.

Chawla troubles Ireland

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in four overs, had Dominick Joyce, younger brother of England batsman Ed, on 18, fending outside off-stump, edging to second slip where Sourav Ganguly took a sharp catch with the ball almost behind him.

Ireland were struggling against the swinging ball and when William Porterfield was bowled by experienced medium-pacer Agarkar they were 56 for three in the 17th over.

Chawla then got in on the act, Gary Wilson bowled for 13 as he played across the line.

The 18-year-old, the successor to Anil Kumble, now retired from one-day internationals, had his second wicket when Kevin O'Brien top-edged a sweep to Rudra Pratap Singh and Ireland were five down without a hundred on the board.

When Australian-born captain Johnston came to the crease, Ireland had slumped to 111 for six after Chawla had Andrew White caught behind.

Johnston though defiantly pulled Sreesanth for Ireland's first six, in the 41st over.

IRELAND

Porterfield b Agarkar 16

Carroll c Karthik b Sreesanth 7

Joyce c Ganguly b Sreesanth 18

N O'Brien Sharma b RP Singh 52

Wilson b Chawla 13

O'Brien c RP Singh b Chawla 3

White c Karthik b Chawla 8

Johnston c Yuvraj b Sreesanth 34

McCallan b RP Singh 4

Fourie not out 4

Whelan st Karthik b Tendulkar 5

Extras: (lb-12, w-16, nb-1) 29

Total: (All out in 50 overs) 193

Fall of wickets: 1-14, 2-47, 3-56, 4-

5, 6-83, 6-111, 7-159, 8-168, 9-187

Bowler O M R W

Sreesanth 10 0 50 3

RP Singh 10 2 36 2

Agarkar 10 2 27 1

Ganguly 6 1 15 0

Chawla 10 2 29 3

Tendulkar 4 0 24 1

INDIA: Ganguly, Gambhir, Dravid, Sharma, Tendulkar, Yuvraj, Karthik, Chawla, Agarkar, RP Singh, Sreesanth

Umpires: Billy Bowden and Mark Benson.

New roads have been built and systems of transport improved.

Toronto could host Indo-Pak matches

AFP, Karachi

Pakistan's cricket chief said Saturday that his country was eager to play one-day matches with archrivals India at neutral overseas venues, primarily in North America.

"Pakistan is eager to squeeze a one-day event at offshore venue and large number of Pakistani and Indian people in North American countries demand for such events," the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) chairman Nasim Ashraf told reporters.

Ashraf said discussions were underway to play at least one event per year at a neutral venue.

The nuclear-armed South Asian neighbours started playing each other at cricket again three years ago after their sometimes tense relations improved. India had severed cricket ties in 2000.

They are due to play a one-day international in Glasgow, Scotland on July 3, aiming to raise funds for charity.

Pakistan and India regularly played at neutral sites previously, most notably in Sharjah. They also played two tournaments in Toronto in 1996 and 1997.

LOCAL SNIPPETS

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men's under-55kg events while Rezaul Karim and Rezaul Ahmed grabbed gold medals in under-45kg and under-50kg.

In the other two categories -- under-60kg and under-70kg -- Biplab Ahmed of hosts Sylhet and Nazmul Hossain of Habiganj won respectively.

NATIONAL VOLLEYBALL

UNB adds: Bangladesh Navy and Police reached the semifinals of the 23rd National Volleyball Championship winning their respective matches at the Mirpur Indoor Stadium. Navy crushed Khulna in straight sets 25-4, 25-9, 25-8 while Police defeated Kushtia, also in straight sets 25-15, 25-8, 25-21.

In the two semifinals, Police will take on Rifles while Navy face Army today.

Match referee

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"The first