

Russel, Abahani retain TT titles

SPORTS REPORTER

Biman's bid to regain the men's and women's titles in the AB Bank Metropolis Table Tennis League failed as both their teams lost on the final day of the competition yesterday.

In the men's league finale, Sheikh Russel handed their rivals a 3-1 defeat at the Woodenfloor Gymnasium to retain the title as well as taking sweet revenge of their first leg defeat to Biman.

Both Russel and Biman ended level on 22 points after 12 matches but the champions had the edge by virtue of set difference.

Russel, who had lost 3-2 in the first leg, flew in Indian paddler Ranabir Das for the super league match and he won both of his games against Manash and Hamlet, 3-0 and 3-1, respectively.

Mahbub blanked Hamlet 3-0 while Mostafa lost Russel's only set, 3-1 to Pappu.

The Abahani eves, however, emerged unbeaten champions when they outplayed Biman in straight sets for their sixth win with Rumi, Saleha and Soma defeating Tumpa, Seema and Rahima respectively by identical 3-0 margins.

Sports Adviser Tapan Chowdhury distributed prizes as chief guest.

Promote Shiv, says Gayle

AFP, London

West Indies captain Chris Gayle revealed that Shivnarine Chanderpaul could move up the batting order in the wake of their defeat by England in the first one-day international at Lord's.

Chanderpaul went in at number five and ran out of partners finishing 53 not out as the West Indies went down by 79 runs, chasing England's 225.

Gayle said Chanderpaul's place at number five was part of a plan to have a left-hander in the middle order to counter the threat of Monty Panesar's left-arm spin.

But he admitted it had backfired and that he and the coaching team will be discussing the matter ahead of the second match of the series in Birmingham on Wednesday.

Gayle said: "The only batsman who got a start was Shivnarine and that's something we have to look into. "Maybe we will have to put him in a bit earlier and it is something we will have discussions about. We will see if we can utilize him more. We thought we needed a left-hander in the middle for Monty Panesar -- that's why we did it.

"But we are looking forward to Edgbaston and can beat England 2-0."

Meanwhile England captain Paul Collingwood has a selection headache of his own after the performance of his pace bowlers.

In the absence of virus-victim Ryan Sidebottom three young pace men -- Jimmy Anderson, 24, Stuart Broad, 21, and Liam Plunkett, 22, -- took eight of the ten wickets to fall with Broad putting in the impressive figures of three for 20 from nine overs.

Collingwood said: "Ryan would have been playing so we are going to have to see what happens. But there is a lot of competition for places and that is good for the English cricket team.

Mahela presses

FROM PAGE 17 have been their batting on the third day, having said that the third day was probably the best to bat on that wicket. So they enjoyed the conditions," he remarked.

But the right-hander warned that the condition would not be same at P Sara, the home ground of spin wizard Muttiah Muralidaran, who as usual, was the wrecker-in-chief with a match haul of nine wickets.

"It's Murali's home wicket and he had a brief chat to the groundsman this morning. I also had a look at the wicket. It looks a very hard and firm wicket and hopefully a good one as well. We haven't played much cricket there," he explained.

Gloves go

FROM PAGE 17 "No doubt Pilot is very experienced as a keeper but Mushfiq showed even in the practice match that he has got the quality to become a good replacement. We have also considered Sharif (Mohammad) because he could be a useful batsman down the order in addition to his ability to swing the old ball, said Ashraf.

Money doesn't

FROM PAGE 20 Such is her potential that Larri Passos, the man who took Gustavo Kuerten to three French Opens, agreed to be her coach after being approached by Paszek's father Arif Mohamed.

"He was one of the guys I was looking for, a coach with a big heart, big focus. We spend many hours on the court and he can push you to the limit," said Paszek who was a set down to Dementieva when play was halted on Saturday because of rain.



PHOTOS: STAR

Women's champions Abahani (top) celebrate with the trophy while men's winners Sheikh Russel team members line up for a photograph at the Woodenfloor Gymnasium on the concluding day of the Metropolis Table Tennis League yesterday.

Youth pleases Kallis

Cricket

AFP, Belfast

South Africa stand-in skipper Jacques Kallis said the way in which younger players had made their mark eased some of the pain involved in a 2-1 one-day international series defeat against India.

Three close matches at Stormont ended on Sunday with India's second successive six-wicket win, this time with four balls to spare, in a fixture reduced by rain to 31 overs per side.

But on a short tour where future development was the priority for the Proteas, all-rounder Vernon Philander and off-spinner Thandi Tshabalala produced encouraging performances even if the 22-year-old duo were both omitted from the series finale in a conservative team selection.

South Africa, who had the worst of conditions, made 148 for seven after slumping to 28 for four thanks mainly to a fifth-wicket stand of 99 between Herschelle Gibbs (56) and Justin Kemp (61), fit again after a thigh problem.

Kallis, leading the World Cup semi-finalists in the absence of injured opening batsman and regular captain Graeme Smith, said: "We came on this tour wanting to give a lot of guys opportunities.

"Kempy came in and played unbelievably -- he's been in the set-up for a long time now and has been a regular."

"We thought that the conditions would suit the seamers -- especially with the rain around. To bowl spin with a wet ball -- and there was a good chance of that happening -- was going to be tough.

"We'd given Thandi a couple of games and needed to have a look at (fast bowler) Dale Steyn as well," Kallis explained.

"The way the new guys have come in and performed has shown we do have a bit of depth in South Africa -- which is useful for us, moving forward.

"We are trying to create variety in our bowling attack -- and we've seen a few options on this tour and the Afro-Asia tour.

"We came here with a young side, and I don't think we've performed badly against a very strong Indian side," said Kallis whose team next play international cricket against neighbours Zimbabwe in August before South Africa hosts the inaugural World Twenty20 in September.

Yuvraj Singh proved a key man for India, who came from 1-0 behind, his 61 not out Sunday following his unbeaten 49 in another six-wicket win on Friday. "He's an experienced player who's been in those situations before -- and he played the game

perfectly," said Kallis.

India face England in three Tests and seven one-day internationals starting with the first Test at Lord's later this month and all-rounder Kallis added: "I've always thought the Indians have been a strong side and perhaps over the years haven't performed as well as they could have.

"I think they're getting a good balance in the side with senior and junior players. I think it is going to help them that they've had a series against us and I think it will be a tough series between them and England."

Federer

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A police helicopter hovered above the venue in south-west London while all entrances were protected by a series of vehicle-blocking concrete slabs to foil similar attacks.

Ian Ritchie, the All England Club's Chief Executive, said the measures had been introduced on police advice that the tournament could be a target.

Ritchie said: "The barriers and extra searching of bags will make it slower for spectators getting in to the ground but the safety of everyone attending the Championships is of paramount importance and I'm sure everyone will understand why these precautions are necessary."

Nat'l Hockey Musa, Masum notch trebles

UNB, Dhaka

Musa Mia fired all five goals as Faridpur brightened their chances to reach the final of the 27th National Hockey Championship with a 5-1 defeat of Mymensingh at the Maulana Bhasani National Hockey Stadium yesterday.

The star-studded Faridpur maintained their unbeaten run in the super league with two wins and a draw. Earlier, they beat Rajshahi 4-0 and drew 2-2 with BKSP.

Captain and national centre-half Musa, adjudged man-of-the-match, opened the scoring from a penalty stroke in the very first minute and doubled the lead two minutes later. He added the rest on 8, 20 and 55 minutes.

Himel netted the consolation goal for Mymensingh after the break.

In the day's other match, BKSP thrashed Rajshahi 11-1 with Syed Al Masum slotting a hatrick.

Masum netted the first three goals, Shamim and Nannu netted two each while Tapash, Nahid, Talib and John scored one goal apiece for the winners. Issa netted the lone goal for the losers.

Lasith lets

FROM PAGHE 17

with that spell in the semifinal because it proved many things.

DSS: You were top in the World Cup with your performance. Have you enjoyed the tournament?

LM: I think so far it was my best performance because I took 18 wickets in eight matches. I really enjoyed the World Cup in West Indies. It also changed everything in my life because people now look at me wherever I go.

DSS: How excited were you when you took those four wickets off four balls against South Africa?

LM: Actually I only knew that it was a world record during the post-match press conference. It was a nice feeling to have taken four wickets in successive deliveries. It's really a fantastic experience. Actually I produced four quality deliveries including two slowers and a yorker to make it possible.

DSS: You are very popular in Bangladesh not only for your unusual bowling action but also for your hairstyle. Would you say something about your fashion?

LM: I love to do it. I never follow anyone so I have my own style. Even I can change my hairstyle before the start of the second Test match. Actually I love to do something unusual and that's my passion. I don't follow the latest fashion rather I always try to make something new.

DSS: But we learned that your mother doesn't love your hairstyle? LM: Yes (laughing), you are right.

Robinho fires

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minutes from time as a swift Mexico counter-attack saw substitute Cuauhtemoc Blanco cross for Bravo to plant a header past goalkeeper Cristian Mora.

Ecuador ensured a nervy final five minutes for Hugo Sanchez's side as a long-range strike by Edison Mendez reduced the deficit but they could not conjure an equaliser.

The result was the second defeat of the tournament for Luis Fernando Suarez's men but they can still make the quarterfinals if they defeat Brazil on Wednesday in Puerto La Cruz.

Biddyut Reds

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Manju fluff two chances inside the first five minutes of the second half. Both the times, the striker failed to keep his shot on target and was immediately substituted by Tapu, whose first touch on the ball from seven yards went straight to goalkeeper Titumir after Shakil had done the spadework.

Muktijoddha got the match winner against run of play in the 80th minute when Maruf initiated a move down the middle. The midfielder picked Moni at the right flank where the Reds captain evaded Masud Rana's final charge and chipped the ball for Biddyut to nod home seconds after replacing Moroccan recruit Ibrahim.

Brothers almost got the equaliser a couple of minutes later but Tapu's header on a centre by Liton was palmed out by Titumir. The ball went on to hit the underside of the crossbar and dropped on the line before fullback Titu made the final clearance and ensure three points for Muktijoddha.

TEAMS

MUKTIJODDHA: Titumir, Hassan Al Mamun (Saiful), Ghansah, Rajani, Titu, Ibrahim (Biddyut), Arman Aziz, Maruf, Parvez Babu, Kanchan and Moni.

BROTHERS: Nizam, Rony, Shuvra, Jewel, Masud Rana, Monwar (Liton), Faisal (Rintu), Shakil, Inani, Junior and Manju (Tapu).

CAS drops WADA case

Cricket

AFP, Karachi

Pakistani cricket chiefs said Monday they had been vindicated after international sport's top court dismissed an appeal against reprieves for Shoaib Akhtar and Mohammad Asif in a doping case.

The Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) based in Lausanne, Switzerland said on Monday that the challenge by the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) did not come under its jurisdiction.

New ball pair Akhtar and Asif tested positive for the banned steroid nandrolone in internal Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) tests last year and were banned for two years and one year respectively in November.

A month later, a Pakistani appellate committee, prompting the WADA appeal, controversially

reinstated both.

"The ruling by the CAS obviously shows that the procedure adopted by us was correct and justified," PCB chairman Nasim Ashraf told AFP.

"When we told the news to Akhtar and Asif both were very happy and relieved and said their innocence was proved," he said by telephone from Glasgow, where Pakistan are set to play a one-day international against India.

"We followed the rules and regulations and that is why we have won this case. The PCB's policy has been proven correct and we are satisfied by this," he added.

Ashraf said the PCB is now fully in line with the anti-doping body's rules.

"Our new doping policy complies with WADA and we have strict rules on that," Ashraf said.

"The important thing about this case was that players always said they took protein substances unknowingly and this decision

exonerates them."

The CAS said in a statement that it had reached the conclusion "with some considerable regret."

The court said it found that the PCB provides no right of appeal to the CAS. Furthermore, the International Cricket Council's code did not contain any rules that obliged the Pakistani board to allow such appeals, it added.

"We feel it exonerates the two fast bowlers and vindicates our stance," PCB spokesman Ahsan Malik said.

"We did our best and were convinced that the matter was closed after the appeal committee exonerated the players. We feel the latest ruling vindicates our stance," said Malik.

Both Akhtar and Asif missed this year's World Cup held in the Caribbean due to injury but are among the 15-man squad that will face India in Glasgow on Tuesday.

Murali's WR dilemma

Cricket

AFP, Colombo

Muttiah Muralidaran said Monday he will tour Australia later this year amid the possibility of being crowned Test cricket's most successful bowler on Shane Warne's home soil.

The Sri Lankan's 683 wickets leave him just 25 short of equalling the retired Australian leg-spinner's world record tally of 708.

With two more Tests of the ongoing home series against Bangladesh still left, the 35-year-old could head to Australia in November within striking distance of surpassing Warne.

Muralidaran said he will be available for the two Tests against the world champions in Brisbane (November 8-12) and Hobart (Nov 16-20), and even hinted the milestone may be achieved there.

"I am looking forward to playing in the Test matches and maybe it (the record) will happen there, but the main focus is winning the series, which we have not done in Australia," he said.

Muralidaran has endured a controversial relationship with Australian cricket ever since he was called for throwing by local umpire Darrell Hair during Sri Lanka's tour

Down Under in 1995-96.

Two years later, another Australian umpire, Ross Emerson, called Muralidaran during a one-day series there, prompting a biomechanical analysis of his bowling action at the University of Western Australia in Perth.

The International Cricket Council cleared Muralidaran's action, but Australian crowds were unconvinced and continued to jeer the off-spinner whenever he took the field.

Muralidaran refused to play Sri Lanka's Test series in Australia in 2004 in protest at being branded a chucker by Australian Prime Minister John Howard earlier in the year.

Howard, a self-confessed "cricket tragic," said when asked if Muralidaran threw: "Yes, they proved it in Perth too with that (biomechanics video) thing."

Muralidaran confirmed he did not tour Australia in 2004 because of Howard's remarks.

"I was disappointed with what the Australian Prime Minister said," he said ahead of the second Test against Bangladesh starting at the P. Sara stadium on Tuesday, adding that he was hurt by the comments.

Muralidaran said he was ready for more taunts from Australian crowds during November's Test series.

"I have gone there a couple of times since the 2004 series," he said. "People were shouting, saying various things, but that's Australia."

"They will still shout, but you have to be mentally tough."

Former Australian cricketer Tom Moody, who coached Sri Lanka for two years before returning home last month, confessed he was embarrassed by the way Muralidaran was treated in Australia.

"It's the only situation we find in the whole of the cricketing world where we have this disgraceful slant on a cricketer," Moody told The Australian newspaper last month.

"My take on it, and I hope I'm right, and I've shared this with Murali, is that it's Australia's nature to show that response in a way of respect and acknowledgement of someone who is pretty special and unique."

Costa joins

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departure of Dutchman Kevin Hofland to Feyenoord.

Wolfsburg struggled last season, finishing just outside the relegation places.

Former Bayern Munich coach Magath has been brought in to replace Klaus Augenthaler.



PHOTO: INTERNET

England's young fast bowler Stuart Broad cleans up West Indies' Denesh Ramdin for a duck in the first one-day international at Lord's on Sunday.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS	42 Quantity	3 Press	22 Sycophants'
1 Mayflower, for one	45 "Merci"	4 "Allakazam!"	replies
5 Craze	49 "The Velvet Fog"	5 NOW doctrine	24 Gasoline ratio (Abbr.)
8 Grand poetry	51 Nevada city	6 Candle count	25 Historic time
12 Singer Vikki	52 "Survivor" setting	7 Mini-nequin?	26 Pine variety
13 Conceit	53 Rowing tool	8 One with a new	27 Odists, in a way
14 Create	54 Were-wolf's inspiration	9 South Carolina symbol	29 Farm female
15 Lotion additive	55 "— of Our Lives"	10 Sooner St.	30 Farm female
16 "Doby-Dick"	56 Moines lead-in	11 Wit-nessed	33 Prurius
18 Art of growing dwarfed plants	57 Picnic invaders	17 Churchill's gesture	36 Fries lightly
20 Assistant who does errands	DOWN	19 Verdi opera	38 Jenna Elfman TV role
21 Wee	1 Wound cover		40 Lennon's lady
23 Before	2 Head light?		42 Surrounded by
24 Tunes			43 Small plateau
28 Engrave			44 Walked (on)
31 Favorable vote			46 Night glower
32 Very, in music			47 Entanglement
34 Piourette pivot			48 Half the offspring
35 Ties up the phone			50 West of Hollywood
37 Rapid decline			
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41 Of a specified type			

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		50 West of Hollywood

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CRYPTOQUIP

EW D KEQZ WHSSJU JUBHN
D ZVIH QJVBLKX HRLDLH,
E IVHRR XJV YEIZL RDX
Z H E R U H S S - Y D B J K H N .
Saturday's Cryptquip: BECAUSE HE CONTINUALLY EYEBALLS PEOPLE RUDELY, HE HAS EARNED THE NICKNAME "STARE MASTER."
Today's Cryptquip Clue: R equals S