

Jr badminton from today

SPORTS REPORTER

The junior and sub-junior badminton tournaments will begin at the Woodenfloor Gymnasium today.

Sports Adviser Tapan Chowdhury will inaugurate the competition as chief guest at 6pm, while the matches will begin at 9.30 in the morning.

A total of 120 shuttlers including 24 girls from 31 district sports associations and four divisional sports associations will take part in the meet.

Eng struggle

FROM PAGE 17 AFP adds: The match was due to start at 3 pm local time, four hours later than scheduled, after a wet outfield meant no play took place before lunch.

Both sides were unchanged from the teams that drew the first Test at Lord's, where India clung on with one wicket standing before bad light and rain cut short play on Monday's final day.

Former India captain Sourav Ganguly, a senior member of the middle-order, was declared fit after overcoming a slight lower back strain for what was the second of a three-Test series.

India's Sachin Tendulkar started this match needing just 25 more runs to become only the third batsman in history to score 11,000 Test runs after world record-holder Brian Lara (11,953) and Allan Border (11,174), both of whom have now retired.

TEAMS

ENGLAND: Andrew Strauss, Alastair Cook, Michael Vaughan (captain), Kevin Pietersen, Paul Collingwood, Ian Bell, Matt Prior (wicketkeeper), Chris Tremlett, Ryan Sidebottom, Monty Panesar, James Anderson.

INDIA: Wasim Jaffer, Dinesh Karthik, Rahul Dravid (captain), Sachin Tendulkar, Sourav Ganguly, VVS Laxman, Mahendra Singh Dhoni (wicketkeeper), Anil Kumble, Zaheer Khan, Rudra Pratap Singh, Shanthakumaran Sreesanth.

B. League

FROM PAGE 17 Amalesh Sen's side on the defensive and Russel came close to reduce the margin quite often.

Biab, who was not required to make a single save in the first half with Abahani enjoying superior ball possession, palmed away efforts by stand-in Russel skipper Bulbul and Nayan while Moroccan striker Noureddine Zaim screwed his shot over the lone keeper after getting the ball near the six-yard box after Pradip's mistimed clearance.

TEAMS

ABAHANI: Biab, Siraji, Nazrul, Pradip, Mintu, Ujjal, Parvez (Pranotosh), Joy, Abul, Ibrahim and Emily.

RUSSEL: Zia (Niloy), Aminul (Yusuf), Shawkat, Hassan, Mishu, Fetah, Saadane, Nayan, Tanvir, Zaim and Bulbul.

Referee: Mansoor Azad.

Simao signs

FROM PAGE 19 from rival Spanish side Valencia and French champions Lyon for Sabrosa who was part of the Portuguese side that reached the Euro 2004 final and last year's World Cup semi-finals.

Simao, the top scorer in the Portuguese league in 2003, arrived at Benfica in 2001 from Barcelona for a fee of around 13 million euros after two seasons with the Spanish side.

Alteco, who finished seventh in the Primera Liga last season, have now spent nearly 50 million euros on new signings.

They have signed Uruguay striker Diego Forlan from Spanish side Villarreal, Brazilian left wingback from Santos and midfielders Luis Garcia from Liverpool and Raul Garcia from Osasuna.

Heinze calls

FROM PAGE 19 Heinze and Liverpool's case appears to hinge on a written confirmation from United that they would sell him to any club willing to meet their £6 million valuation.

However, despite receiving a bid of the required amount from Rafa Benitez's side, United refuse to allow the player to move to their rivals.

Heinze signed for United in 2004 from Paris St-Germain, and has two years remaining on his contract.

Partizan booted

FROM PAGE 19 appeal.

A week ago in the southern Bosnian town of Mostar during the match with Zrinjski, Partizan Belgrade's fans provoked incidents with supporters of the host team.

Twenty-seven policemen and nine fans were injured in the clashes after the match that ended with Zrinjski's 6-1 defeat.

Matches between Bosnian Croat and Muslim teams and those from neighbouring Serbia are treated as high risk events, following Bosnia's 1992-95 war that pitted the country's three ethnic groups against each other.

Subject to any appeal, Zrinjski will progress to the second qualifying round.



ICL gaining edge

Cricket

CRICINFO, undated

The ICL will be based on the Twenty20 game, the least developed of cricket's three formats in India. The first edition of the BCCI's own Twenty20 tournament sank without a trace, shunted to the end of the domestic calendar last season, when it was in direct competition to the World Cup in the Caribbean. Few recall who won, fewer still care. Least of all, apparently, the BCCI itself. India's provisional squad for the Twenty20 World Championship in South Africa later this year has precisely three representatives from the two domestic finalist teams. That's three among 30 players, and it's anyone's guess if any will make the final cut.

Though all three have retired from international cricket, Warne is active on the county circuit. Lara looks to have gas in his tank still, and anyone who saw McGrath bowl in his last international match, the World Cup final, would find it hard to believe that he has reached pensionable age.

That's only half the story; the other half is the ICL's running battle with the Board for Control of Cricket in India, aka the Bureaucratic Custodians of Cricket in self-interest. The BCCI has rejected the idea of the ICL and has asked everyone it has control over -- which is pretty much the entire cricket establishment, home and away -- to steer clear. Or else.

The board's proprietary stand over cricket in India is, at the very least, at odds with ground realities. The farcical way it runs the national team is well known; less documented, though perhaps more damaging, is how it runs all other levels of cricket in the country. And all other aspects, from umpires to ground scheduling.

The board's objection has little to do with the ICL being a privately run league. There are hundreds of those in India; among the most famous are Mumbai's Times League and Kanga League, which have coexisted with the official system for years, functioning as finishing schools for some of Mumbai's best players, and hugely benefiting Indian cricket. The key difference between those and the ICL is this: the ICL involves television programming, and so treads directly on the BCCI's turf. All else flows from there.

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The opportunity now stares the board in the face. It can outsource the administration of Twenty20 cricket to the ICL, and let the new league throw up a pool of players who can be cherry-picked for the national team. Unlike the established players, they will have specialised in the shortest version of the game. Also, they will have picked up skills not only from the likes of Lara and McGrath but also from, say, Stuart Law, a key member of the Lancashire team that is a serious contender for this year's Twenty20 Cup in England.

The BCCI has never been hot on nurturing a system; the rise of one-day cricket in India -- even the World Cup victory 24 years ago -- has been more by accident than design. By embracing the ICL, the board can feed off a system that is already in place and is effectively someone else's headache. This way, it can focus on its core competence -- making money.

Over in the West Indies, the umbrella cricket board has, after a year's resistance, bought into Allen Stanford's vision for cricket in the region. Last year the West Indies Cricket Board (WICB) stymied the final of the Stanford 20/20 tournament, an all-stars game between the best of the West Indians and a South African side for a \$5million purse. Stanford bit his lip and tried again, and the upshot is that the next season has the WICB on board, Cricket Australia and Cricket South Africa interested, and

the ICC worried.

The ICL's biggest problem currently is the lack of a venue, with the BCCI leaning heavily on those who own stadiums, at home or abroad, to close all doors to the rebels or risk losing India matches. But the ICL can well flex its own muscles and simply make the down payment on a ten-year lease. Money is not the problem now, and the suits at the BCCI are amateurs against the industrial strength of the Zee group, the ICL's backers.

Zee can learn from Stanford here. If the BCCI continues to hold out and play the neighbourhood bully, the ICL, which has already tied up with a leading infrastructure development company, could simply build its own workspace. Stanford's complex, near the airport in Antigua, includes a cricket ground, banks, restaurants, a health club with swimming pool, gym, and aerobics studios; a hotel and conference centre are in the works.

In fact, there is a precedent closer home, in the form of the Sahara group, which has built a plush mini-city in the forbidding rocky hills near Pune in western India, and then attracted a host of big names in sport -- Daley Thompson, Anna Kournikova, Boris Becker, Nadia Comaneci and Edwin Moses among them -- as brand ambassadors.

Other problems, including hiring players, can be dealt with similarly. The BCCI could yet be hoist by its own petard: its failure to invest in a cricketing culture, and the resulting lack of viable opportunities for former cricketers could make any option seem attractive. The carrot of a pension when they eventually retire -- approximately Rs 35,000 a month -- will not mean as much to a Ganguly or a Laxman as the chance of playing with some big names.

That it should come down to this zero-sum game is a pity. Indian cricket is big enough for two players, or 20, or 200, and it would help if they were pulling in the same direction. Instead of cutting its nose off to spite its face, the BCCI should wake up and smell the coffee -- and the opportunity.

Lights on at Lord's

Cricket

AFP, London

Lord's Cricket Ground is to stage its first floodlit match in September, owners Marylebone Cricket Club (MCC) announced on Friday.

Temporary floodlights will be installed for the Second Division Pro40 League one-day match between Middlesex, who are based at Lord's, and Derbyshire on September 10.

Keith Bradshaw, the Australian secretary and chief executive of MCC, said: "MCC is delighted to be hosting its first floodlit match at Lord's. We are pleased that Westminster Council has approved the use of temporary floodlights for the September 10 encounter and are greatly looking forward to

hosting another big occasion.

"This will be an historic match for all concerned, which I'm sure will prove popular with members and public alike," he added of a fixture that had been switched from its original venue of Southgate, Middlesex's second home ground, in north London.

Lord's is a world-class venue and we're always looking at ways to maintain and improve our facilities. A match under temporary floodlights will not only end the season at Lord's on a high note, but will provide us with very useful information with regards the staging of such matches here."

England is due to host the World Twenty20 in 2009 with the inaugural edition taking place in South Africa this September.

Twenty20 matches, pioneered in England, have proved popular

with spectators wanting to watch cricket after office hours and that has led them to requiring floodlights with some matches ending when daylight is fading.

Lord's, which styles itself as the "home of cricket", may feel floodlights are required to maintain its pre-eminent position among English cricket venues although it has been thought in the past that objections from local residents and Westminster Council would prevent permanent structures being built around the ground.

Several grounds in England already have permanent floodlights including Hampshire's Rose Bowl ground, Hove -- the home of county champions Sussex --, Chelmsford, Essex's headquarters east of London, Derby and Cardiff.

Warne eager to sign

Cricket

CRICINFO, undated

Shane Warne says he is keen to take part in the breakaway Indian Cricket League (ICL), which has already signed Brian Lara for its inaugural multi-million dollar Twenty20 tournament.

Yet even as the buzz around the ICL grows, so does the confusion, with Warne's manager denying reports that he had been signed on and one top ICL official -- and former cricketer -- contradicting another.

"Playing cricket in India is always an experience," Warne wrote in his column for the Times. "That is one reason why I am keen to take part in the new Twenty20 League in October and November. The organisers are ambitious and, if the whole package is right, then I'll be out there."

"Brian Lara has committed to it and I have been speaking to him and a few other players. I know that I will miss the game during the winter, having retired back home. This is ideal at roughly three weeks long. People the world over are turning to Twenty20 for a quick fix of cricket and they will love the spectacle in India."

On Thursday, Kapil Dev, the chairman of ICL's executive board, told Cricinfo Warne and Glenn McGrath were "on the verge of signing" and that the news would be released within 24 hours. But the managers of both players who denied that the former Australian cricketers were close to joining the ICL.

According to Cricket South Africa's acting president Norman Arendse, there were long-term benefits for South Africa in hosting the competition, such as attracting more young black players to the game.

City rope

FROM PAGE 19

ness when he says that he wants to build a strong team, which is not fighting at the bottom of the table but at the other end.

"This is one way in which he has shown that, and I'm very happy about it."

Petrov was also wanted by Tottenham and Eriksson praised City's directors for their efforts to land the star and his new teammate Geovanni.

"I'm sure that a lot of clubs wanted both of them and I'm very happy that the board were able to get them. They will do very well for us, I'm sure about that."

Mali greets

FROM PAGE 17

the round robin stages, to R160 (22.8 dollars) for a spot on the grand-final in the final.

He said very few tickets were still available for some matches, and South African supporters had bought out most.

Thousands of hard hats, which have become necessary due to the big shots flying around stadiums in Twenty20 matches, will be given away free to spectators.

The winning team of the tournament, which kicks off on September 11 with a match between South Africa and the West Indies, would go home with 1.9 million US dollars.

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Get back

FROM PAGE 17

credit for this glory.

"He laid the base of this team and the start was positive. Hard work by players and the management later carried us this far. I also want to dedicate this success to late Munna bhai who had been inspiration for us as player and manager."

"We were determined to finish the job today and the team played like real champions. Now we can play freely against Muktiuddha and want to sign off with another win."

"I believe Abahani deserved this. From the transfers to this day, the teamwork was excellent from top to bottom."

"But I want to give a message to two persons, who gave the instruction and support to build a strong team to retrieve our glory: our Chief Patron Sheikh Hasina and Abahani chairman Salman Rahman. Both are in jail now but their inspiration brought us this success," told the former national footballer.

Ireland make it to U-19 WC

BBC ONLINE, undated

Ireland qualified for the 2008 ICC U19 World Cup in Malaysia after beating Scotland by six wickets in Belfast to win the round-robin European qualifier.

Ben Ackland stroked an unbeaten 71 and opener Chris Doherty (36) helped the Ireland team to the final of the Stanford 20/20 tournament, an all-stars game between the best of the West Indians and a South African side for a \$5million purse. Stanford bit his lip and tried again, and the upshot is that the next season has the WICB on board, Cricket Australia and Cricket South Africa interested, and

the board's objection has little to do with the ICL being a privately run league.

"It is a fantastic achievement because we desperately wanted to qualify for the Kuala Lumpur event which we have done with flying colours," said Thompson.

"The team is shaping well and we look to be heading in the right direction.

"We know it will be a tougher competition in Malaysia but the way we are performing and peaking, I am confident that we will be able to put up some strong performances."

Ireland's crucial game against Scotland at Osborne Park was delayed by rain which it reduced to a 34 overs contest.

Scotland, put into bat, recovered from a top order collapse to reach a competitive 157 in its 34 overs.

Bayern sweat