



India's tennis sensation Sania Mirza in action against Japanese Ayumi Morita during their first round match at the Japan Open in Tokyo yesterday.

JAPAN OPEN Flying start for Lu

AFP, Tokyo

Taiwan number one Lu Yen-Hsun fought off a ferocious challenge from Asian Games gold medalist Danai Udomchoke to move into the Japan Open second round here Monday.

Lu, ranked 96 in the world, fought back from one set down to win the next two and run out eventual winner 6-7 (4/7), 7-6 (9/7), 6-1.

Meanwhile, Indian star Sania Mirza, second seed, overwhelmed Japan's Ayumi Morita by hitting an array of power-packed strokes from the baseline to score a 6-0, 6-4 victory in the women's singles first round.

The Thai number one needed court-side treatment at 3-4 down in the second set after developing backpain.

But Danai dug deep and broke back to level at 5-5, and then went ahead 7-6 in the tie-breaker -- only to see Lu fire a service ace before hitting a forehand winner to level the contest at one-set all.

Yousuf's denial

AFP, Karachi

Pakistani batsman Mohammad Yousuf Monday denied his last minute pull-out from the first Test against South Africa was linked to a legal notice from the breakaway Indian Cricket League (ICL).

The prolific 33-year-old last week made himself available to play for Pakistan after saying that he had cancelled a contract with the rebel ICL.

Yousuf was named in the 15-man squad for the Karachi Test, but minutes before the toss, selectors said he told them he could not play because he lacked match fitness and form.

He denied media reports the ICL had sent him a legal notice, saying, "It (the pull-out) has nothing to do with the Indian league and I have received no legal notice from them."

Yousuf said he had informed the selectors about his decision on Sunday.

"I told the selectors after practice on Sunday and my decision was taken after I realised that I would need time to get match fit. I have asked for ten days and hope that I will play in the second Test," said Yousuf.

The second Test starts in Lahore on October 8.

Totti's peace

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Trafford last week and it contained a video message," she said. "It's a nice touch and let's hope it signals a more peaceful atmosphere when we play Roma twice in the next few months. Sadly, however, I have still not had an apology from the Italian police."

At least 11 United fans were stabbed in clashes with Roma's notorious Ultras before and after last season's quarterfinal in Rome and there were revenge attacks when the Italians came to Old Trafford. Greater Manchester police are treating tomorrow's game as a high-risk fixture and there will be a significant uniformed presence. Roma fans were involved in another incident ahead of their 4-1 defeat by Internazionale on Saturday, when two Inter fans were stabbed near the stadium.

A workmanlike innings

Cricket

CRICINFO, Karachi

Even though Hashim Amla perished late on the opening day of the first Test, beaten by the new-ball movement of Mohammad Asif, his innings was of one of unadulterated patience, determined defence and steady concentration.

Although the majority of his time on the flat batting pitch in Karachi was spent playing second-fiddle to Jacques Kallis, who scored a century, there was still a need to stay and apply one's technique.

"The conditions were favourable for batting and Graeme (Smith) winning the toss really helped us," Amla said after the innings. "It is, however, a crumbling track and will deteriorate quickly which is why we are looking in excess of 500 as our first-innings

score."

The pitch was believed to assist the spinners greatly -- and it probably will more -- prompting Pakistan to go in with four spinners (two front-line and two past-timers) and only two fast-bowlers. An hour into the day's play, there was neither seam movement for Asif and Umar Gul, nor was there any sharp spin to assist Danish Kaneria.

Pakistan's decision to go into the Test with only two fast bowlers surprised Amla in particular. "It was definitely unusual to play against only two fast bowlers and four spinners," he said, "especially before lunch on the first day, but we were prepared for it and played them well."

Amla appeared to be troubled by the spinners more than he was by the fast bowlers. On various occasions he tried to counter by sweeping his way out of strife, but only managed to top-edge the ball into the deep. Luckily for him, the

ball landed safely on all occasions.

"Danish (Kaneria) got a lot of turn just before lunch and that made it difficult for me to play him at the start. However, as I got in, settled down and spent more time at the crease, I adjusted well and played him better."

Inevitably he was disappointed at being dismissed so close to the end and with a century on offer especially "after all the hard work we put in." He has, at least, the consolation of putting his side into a commanding position so early in this Test.

"It was disappointing to miss a hundred but we are in a good position and will look for 500 because the pitch is deteriorating and it was a good toss to win," said Amla.

"Kallis and I were even but then he paced his innings and he is a kind of a player who can do that (change pace) easily," added the 24-year-old from Durban.

IPL nets big-name Lankans

Cricket

CRICINFO, undated

The Indian Premier League (IPL) received a boost as top Sri Lankan cricketers including Muttiah Muralidaran, Sanath Jayasuriya, Mahela Jayawardene and Kumar Sangakkara signed on. Although it will ultimately be down to various franchises to sign players onto their rolls, the latest announcement from Lalit Modi, the convenor of the IPL, makes it clear that these players are on board and available to be hired.

The signings of these players, along with Lasith Malinga, Dilhara Fernando, Farveez Maharoof and Nuwan Zoysa is the latest move from the IPL, which already announced that players like Shane Warne, Glenn McGrath and Stephen Fleming had expressed their interest to get on board.

"We at the IPL are committed to enticing an entire new generation

of sports fans into the grounds by showcasing some of the best cricketing talent on offer from the world over. It is in line with this philosophy that we have signed eight of the current Sri Lankan squad," Modi said while announcing the signings. "We are also in talks with some of the finest players in the international cricketing arena. I promise Indian fans that the IPL will truly be one of the finest cricketing leagues anywhere in the world."

Jayasuriya, the Sri Lankan captain, though likely to play county cricket in England, will take part in the IPL before the English domestic season begins. Speaking on behalf of the Sri Lankan players who joined the league, Jayawardene said, "Twenty20 cricket is an exciting new format for both cricket players and fans. We are all thrilled to be joining the IPL, an innovative venture that has the potential to fuel cricket's growth around the world during the coming years. We are looking forward to making our mark in the league."

NCL squads finalised

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Mahmudullah Riyad, Anwar Hossain Monir, Mosharraf Hossain, Mahbubul Alam, Shahadat Hossain Rajib, Mohammed Rafique, Mohammad Azim
RAJSHAH: Khaled Mashud (captain/wicketkeeper), Nayeem Islam, Anisur Rahman, Mushfiqur Rahman, Junaed Siddique, Hasanuzzaman Rozel, Jahirul Islam, Rabiul Karim, Rafiqul Islam, Mahbub Alam, Farhad Reza, Sohrwardi Shuvo, Saiful Islam Shuhash, Mohammad Shajada, Delwar Hossain, Saqlain Sajib, Sumon Saha, Alamgir Kabir, Shafaq Al Jaber, Shakil Haider
CHITTAGONG: Ehsanul Haque (captain), Gazi Salauddin, Dhiman Ghosh (wicketkeeper), Faisal Hossain, Nazimuddin, Elias Sunny, Tamim Iqbal, Nafees Iqbal, Wascorn Ahmed, Masumuddin, Shabbir Khan, Tarek Aziz, Mahbubul Karim, Aftab Ahmed, Raihanuddin Arafat, Gazi Alamgir, Ashiqur Rahman, Kamrul Islam, Sajjadul Haque Ripon, Mahmuduzzaman
KHULNA: Habibul Bashar (captain), Mustafizur Rahman, Jamal

Uddin Babu, Imrul Kayes, Monirul Islam, Mohammad Salim, Nazmus Sadat, Nahidul Haque, Ziaur Rahman, Sahagor Hossain (wicketkeeper), Tushar Imran, Dollar Mahmud, Shakib Al Hasan, Abdur Razzak, Monjurul Islam, Syed Raseel, Mashrafe Bin Mortaza, Robulul Islam Shibli, Shafiqul Alam, Fariduddin Masud
SYLHET: Rajin Saleh (captain), Alok Kapali, Imtiaz Hossain, Golam Mabud, Golam Mowla, Golam Rahman, Saif Mahmud, Rezaul Haque, Tapash Baishya, Nazmul Hossain, Hasibul Hossain, Enamul Haque (Jr.), Sajid Datt, Mushfiqur Rahim (wicketkeeper), Sirajullah Khadim, Nabil Samad, Sharifullah, Nizamuddin Ripon, Rashedur Rahman, Sadiqur Rahman
BARISAL: Shahriar Nafees (captain), Hannan Sarkar, Imran Ahmed, Raquibul Hasan, Nasiruddin Faruque, Shaheen Hossain (wicketkeeper), Abul Bashir, Arafat Salauddin, Ali Arman Rajan, Talha Jubair, Sajjadul Islam, Debobroto Paul, Labdur Rahman, Tarikul Islam, Humayun Kabir, Ashanullah Hasan, Raiful Islam, Prosenjit Bose, Monowar Hossain, Ariful Haque.

These players who have signed on will be part of a central pool of "designated players," that each of the franchises can choose from. Designated players constitute international cricketers from India and abroad. Each franchise can field a maximum of four such designated players while four other players will have to come from the under-21 age-group from the catchment areas around the home city in which a home team is based.

The IPL is scheduled for an April 2008 launch and will feature eight franchises in the first season, with each team playing seven home and away games against one another.

Farveez fires

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Broad	10	0	54	2
Collingwood	10	0	44	2
Swann	10	0	47	1
Shah	2	0	13	0
ENGLAND				
Cook c Sangakkara b Maharoof				46
Mustard c Malinga b Maharoof				27
Bell c Sangakkara b Maharoof				0
Pietersen c Sangakkara b Maharoof				1
Collingwood c Jayawardene b Fernando				9
Shah c Mubarak b Malinga				7
Bopara not out				27
Swann c Malinga b Dilshan				24
Broad run out				1
Sidebottom st Sangakkara b Dilshan				2
Anderson c Jayawardene b Jayasuriya				0
Jayasuriya				6
Extras: (w-6)				15
Total: (All out in 34.5 overs)				150
Fall of wickets: 1-43, 2-58, 3-60, 4-73, 5-91, 6-102, 7-144, 8-145, 9-149.				
Bowler	O	M	R	W
Vaas	5	0	32	0
Malinga	6	0	32	1
Fernando	7	0	23	1
Maharoof	10	2	31	4
Dilshan	4	0	20	2
Jayasuriya	2.5	0	12	1
Result: Sri Lanka win by 119 runs.				
Man-of-the-match: Farveez Maharoof.				
Second one-dayer: At Dambulla on Thursday				
Toss: Sri Lanka				
Umpires: Asoka de Silva (SRI) and Rudi Koertzen (RSA)				
TV umpire: Tyron Wijewardene (SRI)				
Match-referee: Javagal Srinath (IND)				

DFA constitution approved by FIFA

SPORTS REPORTER

The way to the long awaited election of the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) seemingly eased after FIFA endorsed the constitution of the District Football Association (DFA).

Football's world governing body had given the BFF executive committee, which expired in April this year, a maximum time of one year in May to amend its constitutions according to FIFA statutes before holding an election.

According to suggestions, the BFF sent a draft constitution of the DFA which has been approved by the FIFA.

The letter of approval and the DFA constitution arrived at the National Sports Council (NSC) on Sunday, admitted its secretary Aminul Islam Khan.

"Yes, we have received a letter from FIFA but can't comment on the DFA constitution at this moment. We have to go through it carefully," said Aminul yesterday.

BFF president SA Sultan, however, was hopeful about holding an election soon.

"We have sent the draft constitution to the NSC and if it is endorsed, we will take three days to approve the amendments. If the government cooperates, it would take less than a month to hold DFA elections," said Sultan.

According to FIFA statutes, only the representatives of the DFAs would be able to be councillors of the federation.

"We want to talk with the NSC soon about the DFA and the BFF polls and hope to clear things," Sultan added.

BKSP trounce Mymensingh

SPORTS REPORTER

Defending champions BKSP dumped Mymensingh 10-1 to make a flying start in the Super League of the Araf Apparels 21st National Youth Hockey Championship at the Maulana Bhasani National Hockey Stadium yesterday.

The Savar sports institute all but sealed the fate of the match before halftime when they consolidated a 7-1 lead.

Ajit notched hat-trick scoring four goals, Pushkar fired three while Jubair, Saddam and Rubel scored one goal apiece.

Jasim scored a consolation goal for Mymensingh.

Last year's runners-up Dhaka also made a confident start with a 4-2 victory against Faridpur at the same venue.

Alamgir, Afsar, Faisal and Rashid scored one goal apiece for the hosts. Skipper Reaz and Saiful reduced the margin for Faridpur.

Clubs remain

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"It might have been the fault of the previous board not to hold the competition in time but no way can we use this as an excuse not to play. I don't understand what's wrong if they start the season with this league," he added.

Meanwhile, as per schedule, the relegation league involving Brothers Union, City Club and Indira Road is expected to start on October 4.

Giggs set

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he can't break it this season.

"He will not play every game for us this season but he will be here next season, that is for certain," Ferguson added. "He could even catch Bobby before the end of May."

"We have plenty of Premier League games left and, hopefully, another 10 European ties. There is also the FA Cup, so it is possible."

Kallis leads

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left-arm spinner Abdul Rehman. South Africa preferred paceman Andre Nel over veteran all-rounder Shaun Pollock after rookie pacer Morne Morkel failed to regain fitness following a leg injury.

The second Test starts in Lahore on October 8.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard on the opening day of the first Test between Pakistan and South Africa at the National Stadium in Karachi on Monday:
SOUTH AFRICA: First innings
Gibbs c Hafeez b Gul 54
Smith lbw b Hafeez 42
Amla b Asif 71
Kallis not out 118
Prince not out 3
Extras: (b-1, lb-2, nb-3) 6
Total: (For three wks in 90 overs) 294
To bat: De Villiers, Boucher, Nel, Harris, Steyn, Ntini.
Fall of wickets: 1-87, 2-109, 3-270.
Bowler O M R W
Asif 18 5 51 1
Gul 17 5 53 1
Kanerai 23 2 76 0
Rehman 10 1 40 0
Malik 8 2 31 0
Hafeez 14 0 40 1
PAKISTAN: Shoaib Malik, Salman Butt, Mohammad Hafeez, Younis Khan, Misbahul Haq, Kamran Akmal, Mohammad Asif, Umar Gul, Danish Kaneria, Faisal Iqbal, Abdul Rehman.
Umpires: Mark Benson (ENG) and Simon Taufel (AUS)
TV umpire: Riazuddin
Match referee: Alan Hurst (AUS)

Hair's life made 'hell'

Cricket

AFP, London

Darrell Hair, the Australian umpire who accused Pakistan of ball-tampering in the final Test at The Oval last year, refused Monday to apologise as he took cricket's world ruling body to court.

Hair is suing his employers, the International Cricket Council (ICC), who have not allowed him to stand in a Test or one-day international since last year's controversy, for racial discrimination.

Speaking before the start of the case at the Central Office of London Tribunals, Hair said the affair had made his life "hell."

"My life has been turned upside down, but I make no apologies," he told BBC radio. "I didn't forfeit the Test match. The laws provide for things under certain circumstances and I think it was pretty clear that one team was refusing to play."

Hair was one of two umpires officiating in the fourth and final Test between England and Pakistan at The Oval who awarded England five penalty runs because they believed Pakistan had illegally tampered with the ball.

Pakistan were incensed by the decision and refused to return to the pitch after the tea interval. The match was eventually forfeited and England took the series 3-0.

Leading figures in the game, including Malcolm Speed, Dave Richardson, David Morgan and John Jameson, will be appearing in the witness box during the hearing which could last for two weeks. Morgan, who takes office as President of the ICC on Monday, is not scheduled to be called until October 11.

The standpoint of Hair, who was 55 on Sunday, is that

although he is still being paid a retainer by the ICC, the career of Billy Doctrove, his colleague and friend who stood with him at the Oval, has not been affected.

Inzamamul Haq, the then captain of Pakistan who has been served a witness summons to attend the hearing on Monday, was eventually cleared of ball-tampering, but Hair, who remains on the ICC's elite panel but does not receive any match fees, was effectively sacked as an international umpire.

He has since officiated in ICC



DARRELL HAIR

Associate matches in Kenya, Toronto and Ireland and was on the ECB's reserve list last year, officiating at grounds such as Fenner's at Cambridge and the Parks in Oxford and in women's matches.

He moved last March from his house in Lincoln to live in his native Australia with his wife Amanda.

Hair's claim for racial discrimination is based on the fact that Doctrove, a black West Indian, who will support him from the witness box along with Chris Kelly, the ECB's umpires manager, is still allocated top-level matches.

He will be represented by Robert Griffiths QC, a member of Marylebone Cricket Club's (MCC) committee who in the past represented Kerry Packer, the instigator of World Series Cricket.

Their case will be based on the premise that the umpire's decision is final.

Opposing them on behalf of the ICC is Michael Beloff QC, who chairs its disciplinary Code of Commission panel and has represented the Rugby Football Union as well as the Premier League in England.

The ICC, whose legal expenses are expected to reach one million pounds (two million dollars), will be flying in executives from all around the world in addition to Speed, its chief executive, and Richardson, its general manager.

Since filing his law suit, Hair, who flew in to London last Thursday after attending an ICC umpires seminar in South Africa, has been immersed in preparing for the hearing with his legal team and trying to relax by visiting the Hunter Valley vineyards in Australia.

Their representative lawyers have been unable to reach a settlement.

Inzamam flew back to Pakistan when his contract with Yorkshire was concluded on the last day of the season, leaving his car keys and house keys with Stewart Regan, the chief executive, and it is not clear whether he will be returning to London.

He has made himself unavailable for Pakistan's first Test against South Africa which starts Monday in Karachi but failed to offer an explanation to the national selectors.

The tribunal has no power to compel the attendance of an individual from the sub-continent, but it could decide to issue sanctions that could lead to prosecution.



Action from yesterday's Araf Apparels 21st National Youth Hockey Championship match between Dhaka and Faridpur at the Maulana Bhasani National Stadium.

Schuster's happy

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with Robinho operating on the other flank.

With Wednesday's Champions League match against Lazio in mind Ruud van Nistelrooy was rested.

Raul almost opened the scoring after 13 minutes but was denied by the post.

At times, Real looked worryingly open and that will give Lazio hope.

However Real seem capable of winning without playing well and on 65 minutes Spanish international Sergio Ramos accepted a Robben pass to score the winner.

Villarreal went top of the table for the first time in their history in

midweek and continued their purple patch with Argentine defender Fabricio Fuentes scoring a rare goal just after the hour mark to sink Bilbao.

"The important thing is to forge a winning habit," said Villarreal coach Manuel Pellegrini.

"We have started the league well and I hope we can take that into the UEFA Cup too."

Villarreal have now taken 39 points from a possible 42 with the 5-0 defeat by Real the only blot on their record.

Elsewhere Atletico Madrid notched their third straight win with a 2-0 victory against Osasuna.

Bremen wait

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midfielder Torsten Frings is hoping to play a role against the Greeks having recovered from a pre-season knee injury.

And Schaaf admitted Bremen are interested in signing Bayern Munich striker Lukas Podolski with the 22-year-old struggling to break into Bayern's first-team as Miroslav Klose and Luca Toni continue to rack up the goals.

"We have been following Lukas for quite some time," Schaaf told Sunday's edition of the German tabloid Bild.