

A Viharunissa Noon player (C) shoots the ball against Maple Leaf during their Bata school handball semifinal at the Dhaka handball court on Friday. Viharunissa Noon won 15-4.

LOCAL SNIPPETS

SPORTS REPORTER

Narinda Government High School will face Ansar and VDP School in the boys' final while Viharunissa Noon School meet Sunnydale in the girls' final of the 17th Bata School handball tournament today.

In yesterday's boys' semifinals at the Dhanmondi Women's Sports Complex, Narinda outplayed Banani Bidyaniketan 20-12 while Ansars edged BIS 13-11. In the girls' semis, Viharunissa beat Maple Leaf 15-4 and Sunnydale eliminated Scholastica 11-1.

The third-place deciding matches will also be held today.

BANK CRICKET

Trust Bank and Standard Chartered recorded contrasting wins in yesterday's Bankers' Cricket competition.

Trust Bank (148-8 in 30 overs) snatched a one-wicket win over Bank Asia (147-8 in 30 overs) at the City Club ground while Standard Chartered (175-1) thrashed Exim Bank (173 all out in 35 overs) by nine wickets at the Jagannath Hall ground.

BOOST CUP

Keraniganj CA handed a thumping 10-wicket defeat on Maple Leaf in the Boost Power Cup Cricket tournament at the Kalabagan Club ground. Having bowled out Maple Leaf for 83 in 18.5 overs in the Twenty20 match, Keraniganj stormed to 86 without loss in 12.5 overs with Sazzad making 41 not out.

NAVY TENNIS

MMH Khan clinched the tennis double crown in the Bangladesh Navy Area tennis and squash competition which concluded at the Naval Headquarters Tennis and Squash Complex on Thursday. Khan beat MS Rahman 2-1 in the singles final pairing with MF Rahman, won the doubles final against KE Haq and MM Rahman 2-0.

KK Hasan and MA Hasnat won the veterans' doubles trophy while MA Gani lifted the squash title edging SM Jamil 3-2.

Assistant Chief of Naval Staff Rear Admiral Mustafizur Rahman distributed prizes as the chief guest at end of the four-day meet.

BEACH KABADDI

The first Beach Kabaddi tournament (men's and women's) will begin today at the Laboni Point in Cox's Bazar. Six women's teams and five men's teams are competing in the meet sponsored by Naf Corporation.

Gibbs arrested for drink-driving

AFP, Cape Town

South African opening batsman Herschelle Gibbs was arrested in the early hours of Friday morning for drink-driving in Cape Town, reports said on Friday.

Police spokesman Superintendent Billy Jones confirmed a 34-year-old man had been arrested at 1:45 am near Cape Town's seafont, but said "we are not at liberty to implicate people by name until they have appeared in a court of law."

Jones said the man, reported by the SAPA news agency and state SABC radio as being Gibbs, was pulled over for speeding.

"A breathalyzer test was conducted within the prescribed time and the man detained at 3:45 at the Sea Point Police station," he told AFP.

Gibbs was released on 500 rand (62 dollars/40 euros) bail, and would appear in Cape Town magistrates' court on June 27.

The South African, who was left out of the Test squad currently on tour in India but remains a regular in the one-day team, plays for the Cape Town-based Cobras franchise.

He was recently signed up to play for Hyderabad in the inaugural Indian Premier League, a multi-million dollar Twenty20 event which begins on April 18, in a deal worth 575,000 dollars.

No stranger to controversy, Gibbs was banned for six months over his role in a match-fixing scandal and he was also caught smoking cannabis during a tour to the West Indies.

Sacking stirred

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2001 and Sehwa's own 182-ball innings against Pakistan in Lahore in 2006.

South African coach Mickey Arthur said he had not seen anyone bat better.

"We were beaten by a champion player," Arthur conceded.

"In my wildest dream I did not imagine that India will score so quickly and it all came down to one player."

"He played every possible shot in a disciplined manner and put India in a strong position. We tried every possible way to contain him, including bowling outside the line, but nothing worked."

"This is the best batting I have ever seen."

Warne calls time

Cricket

AFP, London

Shane Warne will not return to play for Hampshire this season in a move that affectively signalled the end of the leg-spin legend's first-class career.

Australia great Warne, 38, who had one year remaining on his Hampshire contract, and had been due to captain them again this season, said business commitments as well as a desire to see more of his young children had prompted his decision to end an eight-year association with the English county.

Warne, second in the list of Test cricketers' all-time leading wicket-takers, will now retire from all first-class cricket following his involvement as captain and coach of the Jaipur franchise in the new Indian Premier League.

Dimitri Mascarenhas will now captain Hampshire this season.

"My eight years involved with Hampshire have been a wonderful experience. Memories that will last with me forever and likewise the friendships that have been formed at the club," Warne said.

"Unfortunately I am retiring from all first-class cricket but will participate in the IPL with the Jaipur franchise as captain and coach."

"This was not an easy decision to make but due to some exciting busi-

ness opportunities and wanting to spend more time with my children, I had to make this call," Warne, Hampshire's captain since 2004, added.

"I was very lucky to have played with such a wonderful group of guys, thanks for the great times - thank you very much for your support and friendship."

"To all the fans that have turned up to watch Hampshire play, thank you very much for embracing me as one of you, and supporting me and the team, it meant a lot to me," Warne, named as one of Wisden's five cricketers of the 20th century in 2000, added.

Warne took 276 first-class wickets for Hampshire at an average of 25.59 with best match figures of seven for 99 against Middlesex at the Rose Bowl.

He also scored 2,040 runs with a best of 107 against Kent at Canterbury in 2005.

More than that, however, he sparked Hampshire's on-field fortunes with his bold and inspiring captaincy and so helped the team become one of English cricket's leading counties.

Hampshire chairman Rod Bransgrove said: "Hampshire Cricket has been hugely privileged to have enjoyed the unstinting loyalty of this living legend since 2000."

"The most effective and entertaining bowler of all time, Shane Warne was also a brilliant leader and strategist."

"I know this will be a major disappointment to many fans of both Hampshire and Shane but it has become clear to both of us, that Shane can no longer make the commitment required to continue to lead Hampshire."

"Warne will be sorely missed, never forgotten."

All-rounder Mascarenhas, the only England player to be so far signed up by the IPL, where he is due to play alongside Warne and Hampshire's Australia all-rounder Shane Watson, will not be available for county duty when the season starts next month. Wicket-keeper Nic Pothas is in line to captain the side in Mascarenhas's absence provided he has returned in time from the rebel Indian Cricket League.

"I hope to bring great success to the club and Hampshire supporters," Mascarenhas said.

"It is a huge honour to be made captain of such a prestigious club, following in the footsteps of the likes of Colin Ingleby-Mackenzie, Mark Nicholas and the great Shane Warne."

Credited with single-handedly reviving interest in leg-spin bowling, Warne finished his Test career at the end of last year's Ashes series in Australia with 708 wickets at an average of just over 25 apiece from 145 matches.

His record, however, has been surpassed by Sri Lanka's extraordinary off-spinner Muttiah Muralitharan.

Arbeloa describes horror start

INTERNET, undated

Alvaro Arbeloa has opened up on the strict regime at Liverpool and claimed he had to endure an 'inhumane' first few weeks before adapting to the demands of manager Rafa Benitez.

The 25-year-old full back has underlined his worth since arriving from Deportivo La Coruna for 2.5 million pounds 14 months ago and earned his first cap for Spain in Wednesday's 1-0 win over Italy.

As he prepared for Sunday's Merseyside derby with Everton at Anfield, though, he admitted Benitez's tough approach in training had caught him by surprise.

"I didn't know where I was in my first week with Liverpool," he said. "It went badly, and the image I remember from those early days is of the manager criticising everything I did, from the way I did some basketball practice to how I played my football."

"My first fortnight at the club was inhumane, but I am grateful to him now for filling me in on how the team works. It is a well-run club and I found it easy to adapt to their way of working."

"People say the manager is grumpy but I have only seen that once. He is serious-minded, though, and I can assure you nobody enjoys themselves during the training sessions. There is a great seriousness about them because that is where we go to work."

Off the pitch, though, Arbeloa has found the regime more forgiving. "Things are different over here compared to Spain," he said. "Star players can go out and have a beer and nobody will cause them any trouble."

Arbeloa described how Jamie Carragher rules Liverpool's dressing room while Steven Gerrard is the team's inspiration on the field.

"Jamie is the true boss in the changing room," he said. "He orders everyone around and yells a lot but, to be fair, he has a CV equal to Fernando Hierro's for Real Madrid and the Spain national team. He sees and hears everything and keeps us informed about what is happening."

DOHS end MSC

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partnership with opener Ashraf Aziz (56) led BKSP to 180-5 with three balls remaining after City Club had scored 177-7 in the allotted 33 overs.

Former national captain Habibul Bashar scored 37 while Nayeem Islam 32 not out and Shakil Haider 30 as Surjo Torun stormed to 155-5 in 43.5 overs in a 45-overs a-side game at BKSP. Earlier, Monwar Hossain and Faisal Elahi each bagged three wickets to book Partex for 153 in 36.1 overs.

Sehwag

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Stadium in Chennai on Friday: SOUTH AFRICA: First innings 540 (Smith 73, McKenzie 94, Amla 159, Boucher 70, Harbhajan 5-164) INDIA: First innings (overnight 82-0) Jaffer Kallis b Harris 73 Sehwa not out 309 Dravid not out 65 Extras: (b-8, lb-8, w-2, nb-3) 21 Total: (For one wkt in 106 overs) 468 To bat: Tendulkar, Ganguly, Laxman, Dhoni, Kumble, Harbhajan, RP Singh, Sreesanth. Fall of wicket: 1-213.

Table with columns: Bowler, O, M, R, W. Rows: Steyn, Ntini, Morkel, Harris, Kallis, Prince.

Racism blights int'l sport

REUTERS, London

Abuse directed at Grand Prix racer Lewis Hamilton in Spain and an ugly confrontation between the India and Australia cricket sides provide depressing evidence that racism continues to blight international sport.

Hamilton, Formula One's first black driver, was booed and insulted by spectators who shouted racial abuse during testing at the Montmelo circuit in Barcelona last month.

India threatened to cut short their tour of Australia when spinner Harbhajan Singh was banned for three tests after the Australians complained that he had made racist comments about Andrew Symonds during the second test in Australia.

The suspension was overturned on appeal and Harbhajan was charged with the lesser offence of using abusive language.

Motorsport's governing body the FIA plans to use the Spanish Grand Prix in Barcelona on April 27 to launch an anti-racism campaign. It will work in conjunction with soccer's "Kick it Out" and "Football against Racism in Europe" organisations.

Piara Powar, director of the London-based "Kick it Out", told Reuters in an interview that television images and photographs

showed quite clearly Hamilton's race was being used to attack him.

He said the problem had clearly been an isolated one, however.

"Motor racing has a very clean image, it's a very international concern. You just don't associate it with the dirty world of racial abuse," Powar said.

"It has a different problem from other sports, the sport is very different, it goes from country to country. They don't have home games as such, there isn't a group of followers who follow it around with a close tribal identity as there is in football, so I wouldn't be surprised if we didn't see it again for a while."

Powar was dirty complimentary about the International Cricket Council (ICC).

"I think the Harbhajan Singh incident illustrates the failing of the governance of cricket. If the allegations have been brought and the player has been charged, have the discipline to charge him. That's the rule of natural justice," he said.

"Then when you find them guilty, find them guilty and stick by your sanction rather than chopping and changing. Competitions in sport must be seen to be beyond reproach."

Soccer in culturally and racially diverse Europe remains the flashpoint for many racial incidents.

Spain is one country struggling

to adjust to the challenges of large-scale immigration, while an influx of Romanians into Italy has created racial tensions.

Powar said there were problems in Eastern Europe and the Balkan countries that might not be obvious to the west.

"Nationalism is a very potent force in that region. As we have seen with the politics of the break-up in the Balkans, as deadly as anything that goes on anywhere," he said.

"And that is all played out through football as football is such a powerful cultural force. There are people who are not seeking to use it for positive ends, it's used for negative ends, to further tribal and sectarian issues to abuse people who are seen as outsiders, which I think are a major challenge for UEFA, the European commission and for national governments."

"I don't think we can pretend we are doing anything but scratching the surface. At the same time we do see isolated, small comings together which provide building blocks."

"I think our job is to be addressing the policymakers whenever we can all around Europe, making sure that governments are taking it seriously, making sure that UEFA is doing everything it knows it needs to be doing."

'IPL could be rescheduled'



AFP, London

The chairman of the billion-dollar Twenty20 Indian Premier League series says he is prepared to move his season forward to accommodate England cricket's big names.

Lalit Modi maintained that England's top players were keen to feature in the IPL series, which has already attracted stars from other Test-playing nations.

The new competition runs from 18 April to 1 June, putting it in direct competition with the English season.

"I know a lot of them are interested but we don't want to conflict with the English season," Modi told the BBC.

"If that means we have to move our matches a few weeks in

advance, we would be happy to do that to accommodate the English players."

"We would like to see a lot of the English players in the IPL but I cannot commit to them until the ECB (England and Wales Cricket Board) actually finds a window and clears them."

Modi said the first obstacle to overcome for the new league was to establish the competition's place in the sporting calendar.

He denied that plans for a second season within the same 12-month period, at the end of the summer, were close to completion.

"We may look at a second season years from now but I don't see a second year (within the same year) in the next three or four years at least," he said.

The English players' representative said Friday that English cricketers should be given the chance to play in the IPL.

Sean Morris, the chief executive of the Professional Cricketers'

Association, warned that if a solution to the issue was not found soon "money will talk."

"The value of the cricketer has just increased through what is happening in the IPL," Morris told the BBC.

"It's perfectly natural for the PCA to want our members to take advantage of that -- it's a unique opportunity."

He was responding to comments from ECB chairman Giles Clarke, who said: "We are not interested in people playing in the IPL."

Clarke said he would not change the English domestic calendar to suit the Indian league and maintained he was "not getting any pressure" from players wanting to sign up for an IPL team.

At present Dimitri Mascarenhas, the Hampshire all-rounder who has played international one-day and Twenty20 cricket, is the only England player signed up for the first season of the IPL.

Pakistan want SA filler

Cricket

AFP, Karachi

Pakistan is aiming for a home or away Test cricket series against South Africa in October after Australia pulled out of a tour due to security fears, the country's cricket chief said.

Pakistan are due to play only three Test series over the next two years, hosting India in December-January and then touring Sri Lanka and Australia in 2009.

Australia were due to play three Tests, five one-day matches and a Twenty20 here in March-April but the tour was postponed this month due to a wave of Islamic militant violence across Pakistan.

"The lack of Tests is worrying for us so we have negotiated with a number of countries and are hope-

ful to either host or tour South Africa for a Test series in October this year," Pakistan Cricket Board chairman Nasim Ashraf told AFP.

Pakistan's Australian coach Geoff Lawson said earlier this month he was surprised at his team's lack of Test series.

"It is strange that we play only three Test series in two years but I am not responsible for the FTP (Future Tours Programme) and I don't organise the programme," Lawson said earlier this month.

The FTP is a programme of Tests and one-day matches to take place between ten full members of the International Cricket Council (ICC) between 2001 and 2011.

Pakistan have partially filled the gap created by the Australian tour postponement by arranging a five-match one-day and one Twenty20 international series with Bangladesh.

Bangladesh arrive here on April 6 and start the one-day series with the first match in Lahore two days later.

"We are playing Bangladesh and then hope to have another five-match series with Sri Lanka before the Asia Cup in June. New Zealand and the West Indies have also shown interest to tour for a one-day series," said Ashraf.

"We also hope that Australia fulfil their commitment to tour us in April next year and we are negotiating on that as well."

Ashraf said he hoped either New Zealand or the West Indies would agree to tour before the ICC Champions Trophy, which Pakistan hosts from September 11-28.

Naved eligible to play

Cricket

AFP, Leeds

Pakistan pace bowler Rana Naved will be eligible to play for Yorkshire during the 2008 season, the English county announced on Thursday.

Naved's move to Headingley had been called into question because of his involvement with the rebel Indian Cricket League and there had been fears that the Pakistan Cricket Board might refuse him permission to play in England even though spinner Mushtaq Ahmed, whom the seamer played alongside at Sussex, was given the go-ahead to return to Hove despite his ICL links.

"I have maintained throughout the last few weeks that I would be allowed to play cricket for Yorkshire and that my participation in the Indian Cricket League would not get in the way of that dream," 30-year-old seamer Naved said in a statement released by Yorkshire.

He added: "I am not contracted to the Pakistan Cricket Board and could not see why they should wish to prevent me from playing the game I love in Yorkshire."

"I made many friends in the county when I played club cricket a few years ago and I am really look-

ing forward to pulling on a Yorkshire shirt. I will give everything I have for my county."

Yorkshire chief executive Stewart Regan expressed his relief after weeks of negotiations with both the Pakistan Cricket Board and the England and Wales Cricket Board.

"The last few weeks have been very complicated for the club and we have tried hard to cope with the conflicting feedback received in relation to whether this player could join us in 2008 given his participation in the unauthorised Indian Cricket League," he said.

"I'm extremely pleased that this now appears to be behind us and we look forward to welcoming Rana in early April when he will join up with the rest of the squad."

Yorkshire said they would still allow Naved time to recover fully from the shoulder injury he sustained when playing for Sussex towards the end of the 2007 season and that South Africa's Morné Morkel would deputise until the Pakistani proved his all-round fitness.

Naved, who has played nine Tests and 62 one-day internationals for Pakistan, will still be required to obtain a valid work permit but this should not be a problem in light of his recent spell at Sussex.

"Rana has always been a player I've thought very highly of and I am extremely relieved and pleased that he will be with us this year," said Yorkshire coach Martyn Moxon.

"He proved in India recently he can bowl and take wickets but we want to be satisfied that he can also cope with the demands of fielding, especially throwing, before we play him in the first eleven."

"He is a very determined man and his desire to play for this club and cut through all of the politics involved, has been particularly impressive."

Meanwhile Sussex were equally relieved to have secured the services of leg-spinner Mushtaq, their leading wicket-taker for the last five seasons.

Mushtaq has often been unplayable since moving to Hove. He took 83 wickets in Sussex's 2003 title triumph, 80 when they won again in 2006 and 60 in 2007.

"The necessary paperwork for the ECB has now been completed and Mushtaq will return to Sussex this season," said Sussex chairman Gus Mackay.

"We were always confident he would be okay but it has been a nervous wait so we are very happy that his registration has now been completed."

Sullivan sets trials alight

Swimming

FP, Sydney

Australia's Eamon Sullivan headlined another night of top-class action as he swam to an astonishing second 50-metre freestyle record in as many days at the Australian Olympic trials here.

Sullivan shaved 0.13 seconds off his own mark set a day earlier with 21.28 sec, sending a signal that he is the man to beat in Beijing.

In the very next race 15-year-old Cate Campbell underlined her potential as she moved to within reach of the women's 50m freestyle world record.

Sullivan is suddenly the new Ian Thorpe of Australian swimming, with his appearance Friday drawing the biggest crowd of the week, most of whom were cheering well before he was introduced.

And he didn't disappoint, swimming what coach Grant Stoelwinder described as a "perfect" race.

Sullivan, whose girlfriend

Stephanie Rice smashed the world records in the 200m and 400m individual medleys earlier this week, is locked in a fierce rivalry with Frenchman Alain Bernard.

Bernard holds the world 100m freestyle record and briefly held the 50m mark this week until Sullivan claimed it back on Thursday, before lowering it again in Friday's final.

The 22-year-old from Perth then went close to Bernard's 100m mark in Wednesday's final, touching the wall just two-hundredths of a second outside the world record.

Sullivan said his form over the past week should have his opponents worried ahead of the Olympics, but he said he wouldn't get too carried away.

"Hopefully they'll be shaking in their boots," he said.

"But you never know, it's a long year and it's an Olympic year so there's still a lot of national trials to go, so I wouldn't be surprised if there's a lot of fast times coming up."

Sullivan, who ignored Stoelwinder's advice when he set the 50m world record on Thursday, said this time he had paid attention after being on the receiving end of some harsh words.

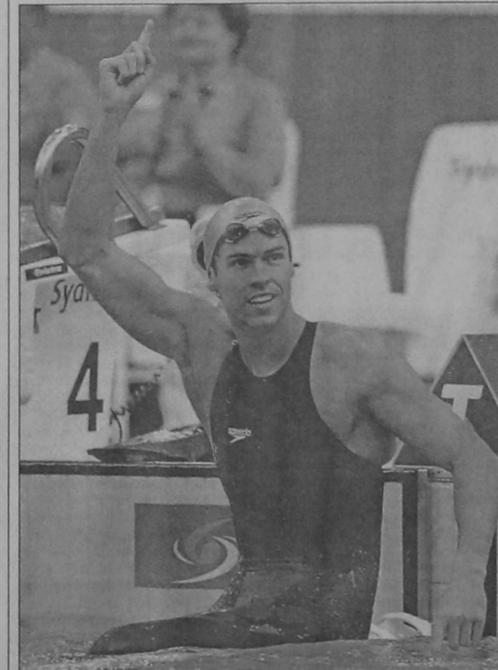
"I went against what my coach told me last night and still broke it (the record)," he said.

"I got a few words spoken to me tonight and I followed it and have swum faster."

In the night's other highlights, Campbell swam 24.30 in the women's 50m freestyle semifinals to slash 0.18 off her own Commonwealth record and move within reach of Dutchwoman Marleen Veldhuis's world mark of 24.09.

"I don't know what the rest of the world is thinking but hopefully they look at me as a little bit of a threat," Campbell said.

Andrew Lauterstein claimed the 100m butterfly title, Meagen Nay swam a Commonwealth record 2mins 08.55secs in the 200m backstroke and Kylie Palmer won the women's 800m freestyle. The championships conclude Saturday.



Australian swimming sensation Eamon Sullivan celebrates after winning the final of the men's 50m freestyle at the Australian Swimming Championships in Sydney on Friday.