

BOSE
Better sound through research

Experience the thrill of a powerful performance from Bose Home Theater.

Graphics Information Systems Ltd. 8811140

LIPRO
Presents
HIMOINSA
DIESEL GENERATORS
FROM SPAIN
Lipro Energy Ltd.
Call: 8817147, 8817918, 8818082



Did U Know?

Gymnastics was first included as an official sport in the Special Olympics in 1972, when 11 athletes competed in tumbling and free exercise routines.



Sven-Goran Eriksson
(Manchester City coach)
"Coaching a national team is always attractive, no matter if it is Mexico, England, Sweden or any other. It's a big commitment for any coach. I'm glad to be offered to coach Mexico."



SET Max
Indian Premier League
Rajasthan Royals v Bangalore Royal Challengers
Live from 4:30pm
Delhi Daredevils v Kings XI Punjab
Live from 8:30pm
STAR Cricket
England v New Zealand
First Test, Day 3
Live from 4:00pm
STAR Sports
Azlan Shah Hockey
Argentina v Canada
Live from 2:00pm
India v Malaysia
Live from 4:00pm
FA Cup Final
Cardiff City v Portsmouth
Live from 7:50pm
Primera Liga
Murcia v Barcelona
Live from 1:55am (Sunday)
ESPN
Hamburg Masters Series
Semifinals
Live from 5:00pm & 7:00pm

Zia, Rakib share second spot

SPORTS REPORTER

Grand Masters Ziaur Rahman and Abdullah Al Rakib won their respective eighth round matches to share the second spot along with two other players in the Mayors Cup 1st International Open Chess tournament in Mumbai yesterday. Zia beat Indian Grand Master Tejas Bakre and Rakib beat Indian GM RB Ramesh to improve their tally to seven points.

Another Bangladeshi GM Reefat Bin Sattar also won his eighth round board against Indian International Master Himanshu Sharma but he slipped to third position after losing his seventh round game against GM Michal Krasenkow of Poland. Reefat secured 6.5 points from eight matches.

Ganguly hopes for ODI recall

CRICINFO, undated

Sourav Ganguly has brushed aside notions of Twenty20 being a young man's game, pointing out how seniors players have thrived in the Indian Premier League.

"It's fashionable to talk of age, but I've always maintained that class and performance matter," Ganguly said ahead of Kolkata's clash against Mumbai. "If you look at the IPL, almost everybody who has got a hundred is over-30... Sanath Jayasuriya is almost 39... I myself missed a hundred narrowly." Ganguly had revealed his hopes of a one-day comeback after Kolkata's win against Delhi -- "I

SEE PAGE 15 COL 8

Story of a dull derby

CRICKET

MOHAMMAD ISAM

The lifeless Abahani-Mohammedan encounter was best summed up when Zunaed Siddiqui came on to bowl his off-spin in the 12th over. He cut a casual figure loosening his shoulders and measuring a short run-up. As he confirmed to see if the batsman on strike was left or right-handed while setting the field, Zunaed offered a smirk or it could have been a hapless smile.

If one had hopes of a contest, it was over well before Zunaed came on to bowl but that reaction gave a window into the mindset of these players and their attitude towards such a big game.

Sahagir and Nafees were smashing the fast bowlers but the pair was about to face spin for the first time and it was Zunaed instead of Suharwardi Shuvo, Pakistani recruit Aqeel Arshad or even Mohammad Ashraf's flighted leggies that usually come to life when in Tigers' colours. Zunaed went on to bowl a series of full-tosses and half-trackers

which were duly dispatched by Sahagir and Nafees to wherever they desired and who could blame him? He hardly gets a serious chance in the nets.

But it was the ominous statement that was served through their actions on the field that was quite alarming. The national cricketers lacked heart for a scrap and were just too slow to react to any situation. Why not throwing up a leg-spinner against the right-handed openers Sahagir and Mahbubul Karim, just to make it a little more interesting. A score of 133 can hardly be defended; trying to buy wickets would have been the right way to go.

Basically, it never looked like the traditional Abahani-Mohammedan rivalry rather it had the passion of a practice match of national players before a Test series.

Experimenting with the batting line-up by demoting Aftab Ahmed was as big a tactical blunder as promoting Anwar Hossain and Aqeel in the order. Also, the use of left-handed Faisal Hossain against the Abahani left-arm duo of Mohammad Rafique and Arafat Sunny masked the underlying concern of the club management

over Aftab's frailties. Then came the shenanigans during their bowling stint. That it was over in only 21.2 overs may have secretly delighted some of the Mohammedan players.

However, nothing should be taken away from Abahani's comprehensive and arguably their biggest victory over Mohammedan ever. The tactical masterstroke of pitching the ball up to the batsmen paid rich dividends. Ziaur Rahman's pace and ability to swing the ball late has finally come under notice.

And when Sahagir and Nafees batted, there hardly seemed any demons on the pitch. Although Sahagir's poor run of form throughout the season thwarted his chances when the Tigers' wicketkeeping position went up for grabs, he drove beautifully and played some attractive shots off the back-foot against the spinners.

Ultimately, it was just another game -- the most used line of superstars before they face an archrival in any sports. Unfortunately, one was compelled to watch 'just another game' and not a clash of the country's most illustrious sporting giants.

Mishra sinks Deccan

CRICINFO, undated



A dramatic final-over hat-trick by Amit Mishra, when Deccan Chargers needed only 15 runs off six balls, clinched a tense 12-run victory for the Delhi Daredevils and ended their four-match losing streak. Half-centuries from Gautam Gambhir and Shikhar Dhawan set Deccan a formidable target of 195 but Mishra's timely strikes in his two spells broke Deccan's growing momentum during the chase.

Desperate to break their run of losses, Delhi recovered splendidly after losing Virender Sehwag in the first over through a 133-run stand for the second wicket between Gambhir and Dhawan. They kept wickets in hand, which allowed Delhi to score 128 runs off the final 11 overs of the innings. Deccan, on the other hand, kept losing wickets at frequent intervals which, despite their consistently high run-rate, crippled them towards the end of their chase. Their top six batsmen all got into double figures but no one went past 40. Had someone played a long innings, the result would have been different because even though wickets fell at crucial junctures, Deccan got extremely close.

After six failures in the middle order, Deccan finally promoted Shahid Afridi to open the innings. The move paid off and Afridi made use of the fielding restrictions to go after Glenn McGrath and Mohammad Asif. Deccan rocketed to 44 after the first four overs but during that blitz they lost Adam Gilchrist, who drove McGrath fiercely towards mid-off, where Tillakaratne Dilshan held a low catch while diving forward.

The out-of-form Herschelle Gibbs joined Afridi and the pair plundered 34 runs off consecutive overs from Asif and McGrath through scoops over extra cover and pulls over deep square leg with tremendous bat-speed and power. Deccan galloped to 71 for 1 by the end of the Powerplays but the tide was about to turn.

Sehwag gave the seventh over to legspinner Amit Mishra and he had immediate success as Afridi sliced

his first ball to AB de Villiers at point. He struck again in his second over, foxing Gibbs with a googly and hitting middle stump.

The big-hitters dismissed, Delhi began to regain control while Rohit Sharma and Scott Styris settled down. The asking-rate had climbed beyond 11 an over but Sharma redressed the balance somewhat by taking 19 off an over from Rajat Bhatia, with two sixes -- over long-on and square leg -- and a dead-straight four.

However, Sehwag made another timely bowling change, Farveez Maharoof returning in the 13th over and bowling Sharma as he moved across his stumps to attempt a paddle sweep. The period that followed swung the game in Delhi's favour as Styris failed to impose himself on the chase. He didn't score a boundary

off his first 23 balls and then holed out on 29, leaving the responsibility of the final surge to Venugopal Rao.

Deccan needed 41 off the final 15 balls and Rao clouted Maharoof for sixes over the straight and midwicket boundary and a four over extra cover to bring the equation down to 25 off the last two overs. He was dismissed in the penultimate over, skying McGrath to Shoaib Malik at long-on but Ravi Teja gave Deccan hope by slicing a full toss over backward point for six.

Sehwag gave the final over to Mishra with Deccan needing 15 and once again he struck with his first ball: Teja's flat hit found Malik on the long-on boundary, effectively ending Deccan's challenge. Pragyan Ojha and RP Singh charged Mishra off the next two deliveries and both were dismissed, giving Mishra his

SEE PAGE 18 COL 1



PHOTO: INTERNET

Delhi leg-spinner Amit Mishra (C) is the toast of his teammates after claiming a hat-trick, the second of the Indian Premier League, against Hyderabad at the Feroz Shah Kotla Stadium in Delhi on Thursday.

ASIA CUP

Sanath back in SL fold

CRICKET

CRICINFO, undated

Sanath Jayasuriya makes a return to the Sri Lanka squad for the Asia Cup in Pakistan after having been dropped for the one-dayers in the West Indies last month. Jayasuriya, who has retired from Tests, was included in the 15-member squad following the intervention of Ganiini Lokuge, the country's sports minister, after selectors had left him out of the original squad.

The selectors had met on Tuesday but the minister delayed ratifying the squad, which helped Jayasuriya make his case with an unbeaten 114 for the Mumbai Indians against Chennai.

The sports minister summoned the four-member selection committee headed by Ashantha de Mel, the former Sri Lanka fast bowler,

and asked them to reconsider and include Jayasuriya.

The out-of-form Upul Tharanga was omitted in order to accommodate the 38-year-old, who along with Sachin Tendulkar is the only player to feature in over 400 ODIs.

Three other players who were part of the ODI squad in the West Indies have been dropped -- fast bowlers Ishara Amerasinghe and Thilan Thushara, and legspinner Malinga Bandara. Farveez

Maharoof and Dilhara Fernando return from injuries while Muttiah Muralidaran, who had been rested for the West Indies ODIs, has been included as well.

Muralidaran's inclusion means he might play alongside Ajantha Mendis, the mystery spinner who bamboozled the West Indian batsmen with his several variations. Lasith Malinga was once again overlooked as he had not recovered from a knee injury. Mahela Jayawardene will lead the side, while Kumar Sangakkara, who's also his team-mate in the Kings XI Punjab side in the IPL, will be his deputy.

The tournament will be held in Pakistan from June 24 to July 6. Sri Lanka has been grouped alongside Bangladesh and United Arab Emirates. The top two teams from each group qualify to the next phase, where the teams will play each other once to decide the two finalists.

SQUAD

Mahela Jayawardene (capt), Kumar Sangakkara (wk), Sanath Jayasuriya, Mahela Udawatte, Tillakaratne Dilshan, Chamara Silva, Chamara Kapugedera, Kaushal Weeraratne, Farveez Maharoof, Chaminda Vaas, Dilhara Fernando, Muttiah Muralidaran, Ajantha Mendis, Jehan Mubarak, Nuwan Kulasekera



PHOTO: STAR

Usha forward Maksud Alam Habul (L) is guarded well by an Ajax defender during their Premier Hockey League match at the Maulana Bhasani National Hockey Stadium yesterday.

Usha keep winning

Abahani-MSC match today

SPORTS REPORTER

Usha Kriya Chakra destroyed Ajax Sporting Club 6-2 at the Maulana Bhasani National Hockey Stadium yesterday to join Abahani atop the points table of the Green Delta Insurance Premier Hockey League.

Defending joint champions Usha and Abahani both maintained their all-win record to come level on 18 points after six rounds.

Abahani, however, will face their first real test in the competition today when they meet archrivals Mohammedan in a crucial game.

Mohammedan have already dropped two points during a 2-2 draw with Sonali Bank but a win today will take the black and whites one point above the current joint leaders.

Both sides have armed their squads with two Pakistani players each although Abahani have more experience. However, the young Mohammedan did well to hold eventual Club Cup champions Abahani to a 1-1 draw in the semifinal of the season's curtain raiser before going down in the tiebreakers.

In yesterday's match, national striker Maksud Alam Habul notched a brace for Usha, who led 3-0 at the break.

It was Akhter who put Usha ahead after seven minutes while Habul and Titu found the net in the rest of the first half.

Ajax captain and prolific scorer Rahat Sarwar, who struck twice, pulled the first goal back for the Elephant Road outfit 11 minutes after resumption but Usha were runaway winners with strikes from Tarik Aziz, Habul and former national striker Rafique Islam Kamal, who will retire from the domestic scene this year.

Sarwar added Ajax's second to

SEE PAGE 18 COL 5

Warm-up matches for booters

SPORTS REPORTER

The National football team will leave Dhaka on May 25 if the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) can confirm preparation matches in Thailand for next month's SAFF Football Championship.

"We will know by tomorrow whether we are going to play matches in Thailand or not. We are almost certain to get two matches as our president is now negotiating with the Thai FA in Bangkok en route to Kuala Lumpur," said Badal Roy, BFF vice-president and chairman of the National Team Management Committee.

BFF president Kazi Salahuddin is accompanied by Golam Rabbani Helal and the duo will travel to Kuala Lumpur to meet AFC boss Mohamed Bin Hammam next week.

Bangladesh, before trimming the 28-member squad, will play two warm-up matches at home against the African footballers living in Dhaka on May 22 in Narshingdi and an eleven of former internationals and veterans led by ex-national captain Alifaz Ahmed on May 24.

Abahani to play opener against Nepal Police



SPORTS REPORTER

Abahani will have to travel to Malaysia in the last week of June to play their AFC President's Cup matches in Petaling Jaya, a city adjacent to the capital Kuala Lumpur.

The Asian Football Confederation (AFC) announced yesterday that the Group A matches, also involving Nepal Police Club, Tajikistan side Regar TadAZ and WAPDA of Pakistan, will be played at the MPPJ Stadium from June 22-26, according to AFC website the-afc.com.

The group was originally scheduled to be staged at the Dashrath Stadium in Kathmandu in April but

an alternative venue had to be found after Nepal withdrew as hosts due to the political situation in the Himalayan nation.

Bangladesh professional league champions Abahani could have had enjoyed the advantage of being the home side as the AFC agreed to the proposal of Bangladesh Football Federation to host the group after Nepal's denial. But BFF pulled out due to last month's election as the football's governing body in the continent had to settle for a neutral venue.

Abahani, who return to Asian club competitions after over a decade, will kick off the action on June 22 against Nepal Police Club, who were runners-up at last year's AFC President's Cup when they were known as Mahendra Police Club.

Later on the day, inaugural President's Cup winners Regar TadAZ meet WAPDA.

Two days later WAPDA face the Nepal outfit in the early fixture after which Tajikistan champions Regar continue their quest for a second President's Cup title when they square-off with the sky-blues from Dhaka.

Group A concludes on June 26 with Abahani taking on WAPDA and Nepal Police coming up against Regar.

The group champions advance to the semifinals, where they will join defending champions and Group B winners Dordoi Dynamo of Kyrgyzstan and Turkmenistan club Ashgabat, who emerged victorious after a thrilling conclusion to Group C that saw three of the four teams tied on six points.

The three group winners will be joined by the best runners-up in the semifinals which have been scheduled to take place from September 19 to 21 at a venue still to be confirmed.

Sidebottom thwarts Kiwis

CRICKET

AFP, London

Ryan Sidebottom turned in a miserly spell of four wickets for five runs in 10.1 overs Friday as New Zealand were bowled out for 277 on the second day of the first Test here at Lord's.

But considering New Zealand had been 104 for five, in overcast, seam-bowler friendly conditions after losing the toss, theirs was a fine recovery.

New Zealand captain Daniel Vettori did his best to keep England at bay with 48 before he was last man out, bowled by Sidebottom.

Vettori's innings supplemented wicketkeeper Brendon McCullum's excellent run-a-ball 97 which began New Zealand's fightback on Thursday.

England were 26 without loss when bad light forced an early tea. Andrew Strauss was nine not out and Alastair Cook 16 not out.

Earlier, Sidebottom returned innings figures of four wickets for 55 runs in 28.2 overs.

The Nottinghamshire left-arm quick's haul was all the more impressive as he didn't take a wicket until his 24th over.

Vettori, primarily a left-arm spinner, has won himself a deserved reputation as one of the best No 8 batsmen currently in world cricket.

New Zealand's enduringly fragile top-order has often left the 28-year-old having to bat his side out of trouble.

And on Friday, once more showing good judgment in both defence and attack, Vettori proved a thorn in the side of England's bowlers.

Sidebottom, the Black Caps'

tormentor-in-chief with 24 wickets during England's 2-1 Test series win in New Zealand in March, found his line Friday after a wicketless first day and took two for three in 7.5 overs before lunch.

Vettori, however, guided his side nearer 300 with three well-struck fours in as many balls off James Anderson.

He was in sight of his 17th Test fifty when, three balls after stoppage for bad light, Vettori was bowled by Sidebottom after making a late decision to try to leave the ball.

In all, he batted for 162 minutes and faced 100 balls with six fours.

New Zealand, after Sidebottom removed Jacob Oram for 28 with the help of a first slip catch by Strauss, looked as if they might get through the morning session for the loss of just one wicket.

But with the second delivery

SEE PAGE 18 COL 5

Pistorius makes history

AFP, Lausanne

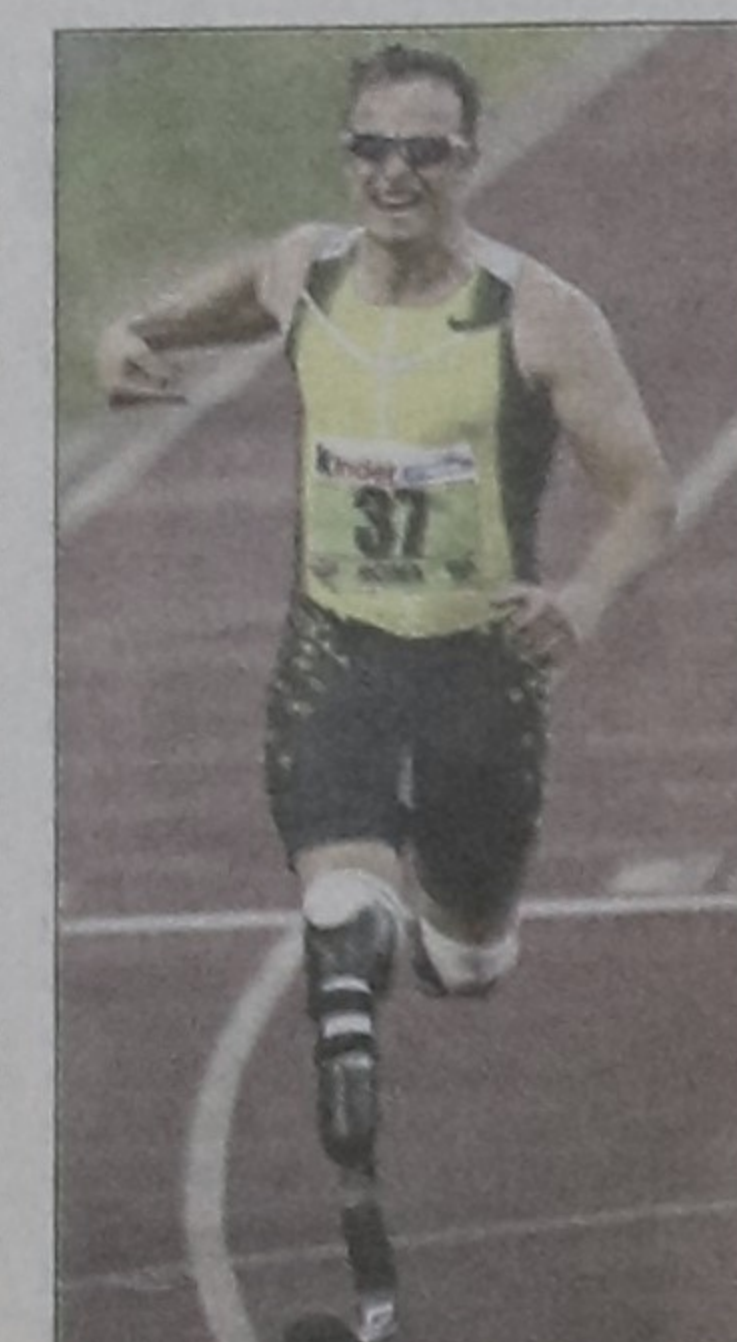


South African Paralympics champion Oscar Pistorius won an appeal at the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) Friday that could pave the way for a historic participation in the Beijing Olympics.

The disabled 21-year-old sprinter runs on specially adapted carbon fibre blades after having his legs amputated below the knee when he was 11 months old because he was born without fibula bones in his legs.

The International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF) had banned the 400m runner from all competitions involving able-bodied athletes because of claims that the artificial legs he uses give him an unfair advantage.

However, CAS ruled Friday against the IAAF decision, adding:



OSCAR PISTORIUS

"... it is revoked with immediate effect and the athlete is eligible to compete in IAAF events while wearing the Ossur Cheetah Flex Foot Prosthetics, as used in the scientific tests requested by the IAAF and presented as an exhibit at the CAS hearing."

The decision is a huge boost to Pistorius' bid to compete in the able-bodied events in Beijing. However, to do so the South African now has to overcome the minimum Olympic qualifying time of 45.95sec, or 45.55 if another South African runs less than 45.95. Pistorius' personal record is 46.46.

After hearing the news the South African said: "Today I can pursue my dream of competing in the Olympic Games. If it's not for Beijing, it will be for London in 2012."

Pistorius, who has an 11-month-old baby, has thanks to his prosthetics, won Paralympic titles and challenged the times set by top-level able-bodied athletes.

SEE PAGE 18 COL 6