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Pistorius dream fading fast

AFP, Rome

South African double amputee Oscar Pistorius saw his hopes of taking part in the Beijing Olympics suffer another setback on Friday when he finished a long way outside the qualifying time.

Pistorius, who is bidding to make history by competing against able-bodied runners at the Games, clocked 46.62sec to finish in seventh place in the 400m B race at the Golden League meeting here, more than a second outside the 45.55sec qualifying standard. The 21-year-old, however, improved on his season-best time of 47.78sec which he set in Milan last week. His best ever performance remains 46.34.

Pistorius already holds the world records for the 100m, 200m and 400m Paralympic events, and is nicknamed the 'Blade Runner' because of his J-shaped carbon fibre prosthetic lower legs.

A legal battle that ended in May when the Court of Arbitration for Sport overturned a ban on him competing with able-bodied athletes cost Pistorius precious training time.

Pistorius has already said that his ambition is to take part at the 2012 Olympics in London when he will only be 25.



Did U Know?

When Gussie Moran wore a short, lace-trimmed skirt in 1949 Wimbledon Championships, she was accused by the All England Lawn Tennis Club of 'bringing vulgarity and sin into tennis', quite a contrast to the revealing clothing sported by today's women players!



Paul Russell

(Glamorgan chairman)

"This is not a gravel train, this is a little toy train that a couple of people have been playing around with for some time."

While making his views clear on the proposals for a franchise-based Twenty20 tournament in England.



STAR Cricket
England v South Africa
First Test, Day Four
Live from 4:00pm

JUNIOR ASIA CUP Bangladesh face Oman today

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Under-21 hockey team play their second match against Oman today in the 6th Men's Junior Asia Cup Hockey in Hyderabad.

The junior Bangladesh side are expected to win the match against their Omani counterparts as Bangladesh recently outplayed the same opponents 6-1 to clinch the AHF Cup held in Singapore recently.

Placed in Group B, Bangladesh will play their third and last match against strong Pakistan on July 14. Bangladesh conceded a 0-8 defeat against South Korea on Friday.

Lack of infrastructure & facilities to blame

Cricket

BISHWAJIT ROY

Bangladesh cricket coach Jamie Siddons said that it's not the players but the lack of infrastructure and facilities should be blamed for Tigers' poor showing in the international level.

The Australian was not ready to make straightway comments on the recent outburst of Gazi Ashraf Hossain, the former national skipper-turned-board's cricket operations committee chairman, while talking to this reporter at his Gulshan residence yesterday.

Rather he underlined his points to differ with the comments of the BCB high up.

"I don't need to comment on what he (Gazi Ashraf Hossain) said in the paper. It's not a question of capability rather what I say is that they are not ready," said Siddons when asked about Ashraf's painful observation that the country is unfortunate to live with so many incapable players competing in international cricket.

"Absolutely lack of infrastructure, there is no one else (behind the poor performance). The players are not to be blamed at all... players are what we provide... they need to produce. Right now we teach the players in international cricket but the fact is that we need to give them infrastructure first to teach them this before," he observed.

"You need the facilities, you need the proper competition and facilities must ensure in the whole country... You have to give modern gymnasium and many other things

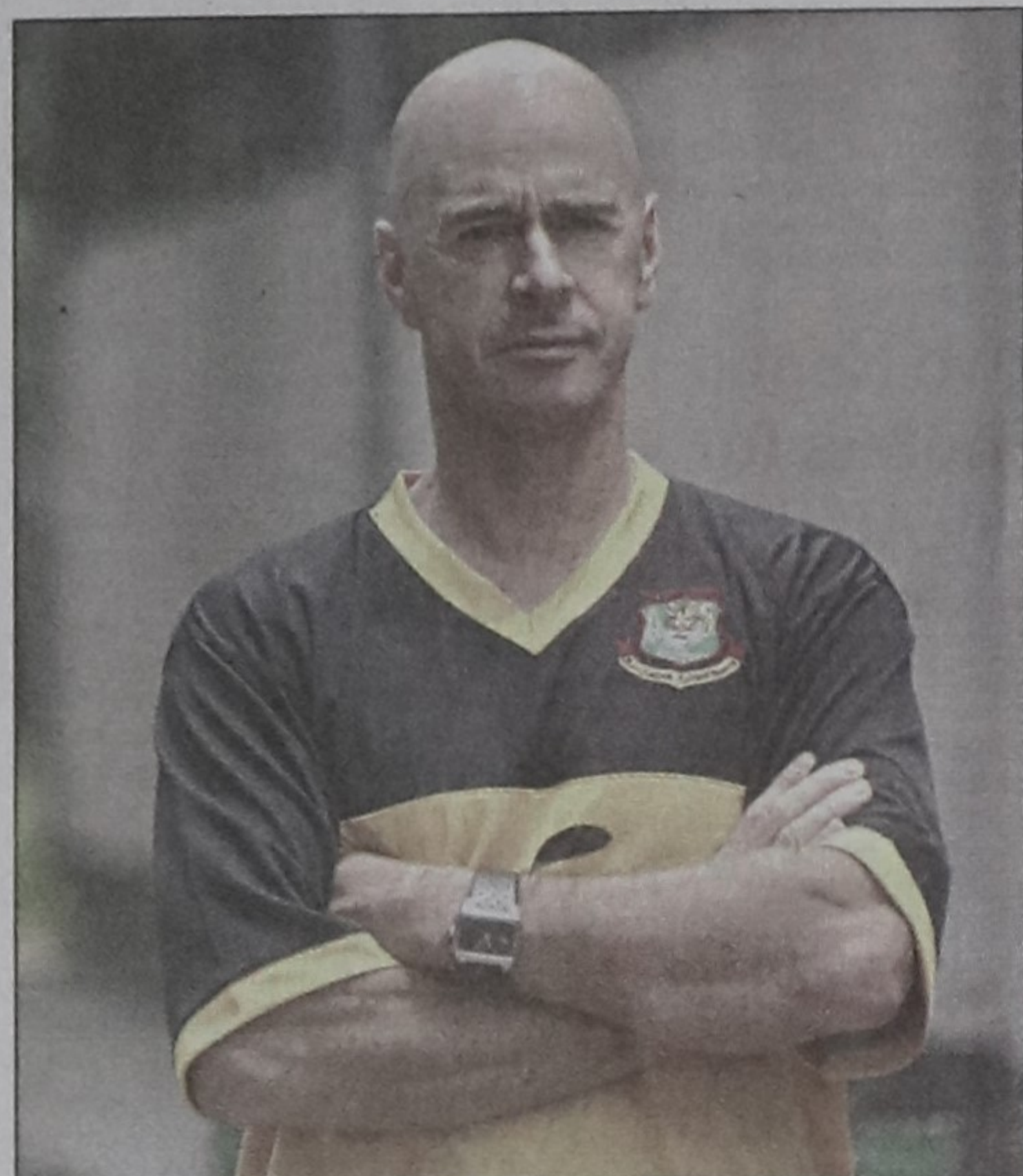
at least at all national grounds. You have to have level three qualified coaches at every level. Proper ovals for the players and I can go on and on," Siddons added.

The 43-year-old also requested everybody to focus on from where the players are coming rather than concentrating only on the national team.

"Our domestic competition is where the problem lies. This is not

stronger and no money being spent in infrastructure. No practice facilities for anyone outside the national team. We need to look at the real problems. It's not the national team rather we have to focus on from where they are coming from. They are not ready to play international cricket and that's why not succeeding yet.... This is very simple," he said.

"Everyone is talking about the



JAMIE SIDDONS... standing up for his charges

Prince stops the slide

Cricket

AFP, London

Ashwell Prince marked his first Test innings against England with a fifty as the Proteas launched the flow of wickets at Lord's here on Saturday.

South Africa, at tea on the third day of the first Test, were far from out of trouble at 156 for four, a deficit of 437 and needing a further 238 runs to avoid the follow-on target of 394.

But given 31-year-old left-hander Prince had come in at 47 for three, this position represented something of a recovery.

Prince, whose patient fifty came in two hours and 22 minutes off 82 balls with eight fours, was 52 not out with AB de Villiers, who'd so far helped him add 73 for the fifth wicket, unbeaten on 38.

South Africa, who'd lost three of their top order all in single figures, resumed after lunch on 78 for three.

Neil McKenzie hadn't added to his interval score of 35 not out when he edged fast bowler Stuart Broad between Andrew Strauss and Paul Collingwood, at first and second slip respectively. But his reprieve didn't last long.

England captain Michael Vaughan, in what is now customary practice for Test teams with a spinner, had given Monty Panesar a

couple of overs before lunch.

However, he then kept him going after the break rather than reverting straight away to an all-seam attack.

Vaughan was rewarded for his boldness when left-arm Panesar's first ball after lunch, the seventh in all, turned sharply and bowled right-hander McKenzie round his pads with the ball clipping the leg stump.

A stunned McKenzie was out for 40 and South Africa were 83 for four.

Prince, 20 not out at lunch, carried on going for his shots when given a chance and expertly steered Broad to the point boundary.

South Africa started Saturday on

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Young Imaan wins hearts

SPORTS REPORTER

Swapan Parvez became the new Premier champion of the Delta Life Open Squash tournament but it was Imaan Azimur Rahman who won everyone's hearts at the Dhaka Club court yesterday.

The very young Imaan, who played for Gulshan Club, clinched the Under-18 title of the competition after his win over Dhaka Club's Shahin the final.

The 13-year-old became the youngest ever player to win any squash tournament in the country.

Evidently, Imaan looked younger than a Class VII student and his achievement looked all the more amazing in a section where most of his opponents are much older than him.

He received his trophy from Golam Mustafa Talukdar, the secretary for youth and sports, who was present as chief guest.

Back to the keenly-contested Premier Division final and Swapan led 2-0 before defending champion Bhola, representing Sonargaon Hotel, fought back to take the third set.

Swapan, who however had the last laugh as he clinched the final in

3-1 sets to make sure that the country's squash gets a new winner after many years of Bhola's dominance.

Mohit took the honours in the A Division after his 3-0 straight sets win over Omar Bhai in the final to take the trophy. Shahid of Gulshan Club claimed the B Division trophy when he beat Johnny Ram of Chittagong Club by the same margin.

Swapan clinched the C Division title after his easy win over Sadaf.

In the above-40 Division, Commander Gani of Navy Club became champion after his 2-0

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Imaan Azim Rahman (L) of Gulshan Club receives the Under-18 champions trophy of the Delta Life Insurance Open squash tournament from the Secretary for Youth and Sports Mohammad Golam Mustafa Talukdar at the Dhaka Club premises yesterday.

Dhiman, Zunaed shine for A team

SPORTS REPORTER

Dhiman Ghosh and skipper Zunaed Siddiqui scored half-centuries against Warwickshire on the second day of their three-day match at Edgbaston in Birmingham yesterday.

Both batsmen each struck exactly 50 as Bangladesh A were bowled out for 252 in 71.5 overs. In their reply, the hosts were 10 for no loss after three overs.

Resuming on 117-2 from the first day, Zunaed took the single to move to fifty but spooned a catch to Jimmy Troughton off paceman Tim Groenewald. He struck nine boundaries in his 92-ball knock.

Dhiman took only 42 balls to reach his 50 that included eight boundaries and a six. He remained not out as he saw all the other batsmen make their way one by one during the lunch session.

Nayeem Islam, the right-handed batsman, scored a steady 30 before former Abahani recruit and England international Richard Illingworth, now an umpire, gave him the marching orders off the bowling of Andrew Miller.

Naqqash Tahir took three wickets while two each went to Miller, Groenewald and Lee Daggett.

Fed Cup now on July 26

SPORTS REPORTER

The start of the Federation Cup qualifiers has been deferred by a day as it's now on July 26.

The opening ceremony of the competition will be held at Bangabandhu National Stadium with Sunrise Sporting Club taking on Diganta Prasari of Rajshahi in the inaugural game.

A total of 11 teams, split into three groups, will play in robin-round league basis matches and five teams from three groups will join 11 clubs from B. League for the 16-team finals.

Tournament committee co-ordinator Fazlur Rahman Babul informed the reporters yesterday that the BFF plans to play the qualifiers except the opener at the Army Stadium, but they are yet to get response for the army sports board following the appeal to allot the stadium.

In another meeting of the BFF the Futsal Committee decided to hold a Futsal tournament with eight Dhaka teams from the professional football league taking part in the meet.

Babul said the committee decided to give Tk 20,000 to each of eight teams and it also provided the rules and regulations of the Futsal to club officials.

The participating teams would sit Monday and finalise a suitable date for the tournament.



SKY IS THE LIMIT: Russian pole vault queen Yelena Isinbayeva just clears 5.03 metres, a new world record in women's pole vault, during the Athletics Golden Gala at Rome's Olympic Stadium on Friday.

Isinbayeva hits new high

Athletics

AFP, Rome

Russia's Yelena Isinbayeva set a new women's pole vault world record of 5.03m at the Golden League meeting here on Friday but former 100m world record holder Asafa Powell suffered an injury scare.

Isinbayeva bettered her previous world record of 5.01m set in Helsinki in August 2005.

The Olympic and world champion, making her first appearance of the season outdoors, has now set 22 world records in the event (12 outdoor and 10 indoors).

Her latest world record comes just four weeks before the Beijing

Olympics get underway and took her closer to one of her ambitions - beating Ukrainian Sergei Bubka's record of setting 35 world records in the men's pole vault.

"I was ready for the record. It's what I wanted," said Isinbayeva.

"After I jumped 4.95m tonight I really felt like putting the bar at 5.03m rather than 5.02m. This is just the start. There is the Olympic Games and other records will come later."

Meanwhile, Jamaican sprinter Powell felt a cramping in his groin in his 100m heat at the Olympic Stadium and then pulled out of the final as a precautionary measure, said his agent Paul Doyle.

Powell clocked 10.19sec and had led his heat before easing up in

the last 30 metres.

"It's nothing serious, but he felt a cramp in his groin," said Doyle. "He will be back in training on Monday."

Doyle added that Powell was due to return to the track in Stockholm on July 22.

Portugal's Francis Obikwelu made the most of Powell's problems to win the final in a time of 10.04sec.

In the 400m, Jeremy Wariner just edged out compatriot and rival LaShawn Merritt who had won their last two races including the United States' Olympic trials last week.

Wariner, the Olympic and double world champion, took victory in 44.36secs with Merritt on his shoulder at 44.37sec.

"I worked the turn better. I ran

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ASCENT GROUP

5-A-SIDE INDOOR SOCCER CUP 2008

The battle of the Corporates begins on July 11.

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