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Deakes to miss out

REUTERS, Sydney

Australian world champion walker Nathan Deakes has been forced to pull out of next month's Beijing Olympics because of a hamstring injury.

The 30-year-old has been troubled by hamstring problems for the past four years but aggravated the injury while training in Switzerland last week.

He has been ordered to undergo immediate surgery to repair the damage, sidelining him until at least next year and ruining his chances of competing at Beijing.

"I'm still in a bit of shock," Deakes said in a statement.

"There was no decision to make unfortunately, my body made the decision for me."

"I have to have surgery to fix it as the hamstring tendon has come away from the bone at the pelvis. It will mean a six to nine month recovery process."

Deakes earned a bronze medal in the 20 kilometre walk at the 2004 Athens Olympics and was among the favourites to collect the gold in the men's 50km at Beijing after winning last year's world title in Osaka.

His withdrawal is also a major blow to Australia's hopes of winning a gold in athletics after Jana Rawlinson, a two-time world champion in the women's 400 metres hurdles, pulled out less than two weeks ago because of a toe injury.

Arambagh Jrs, Tangail FC win

SPORTS REPORTER

Tangail Football Club blanked Noakhali Football Academy 2-0 in a Group B match in the second phase of the Dhaka City Corporation Pioneer Football League at the Birshreshtha Shaheed Mostafa Kamal Stadium in Kamalapur yesterday.

Jagannath and Rubel scored one goal each for the winners.

In the other Group B game, Nadim scored both the goals in Arambagh KS Juniors 2-0 victory over Madraspari SC at the same venue.



Did U Know?

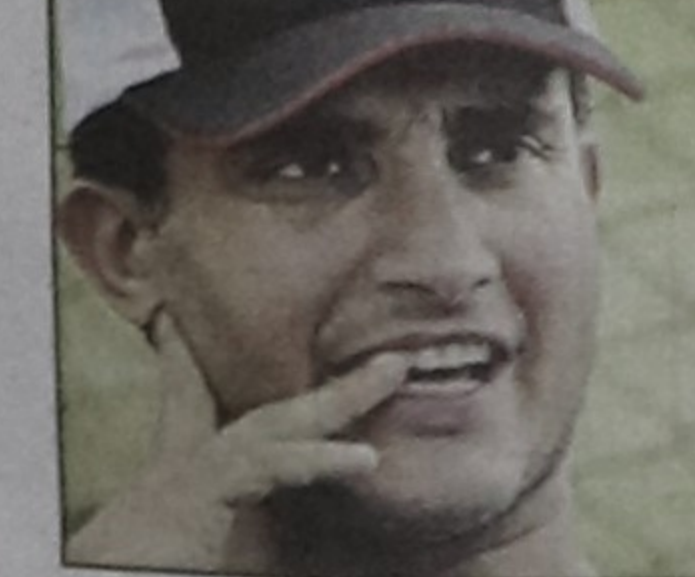
Tennis was played at the Olympics until 1924, then reintroduced in 1988.



STAR Cricket
England v South Africa
Second Test, Day Five
Live from 4:00pm



TALK TURKEY



Sourav Ganguly
(Star Indian cricketer)
"Fitness is a relative term. I mean to say that it does not necessarily mean that one who runs hard and lifts weights is fit. Cricketing fitness is different. So if you can perform, it means you are fit."

TEAM FOCUS: MOHAMMEDAN Promise modern football



AL MUSABBIR SADI

Country's most successful club Mohammedan came up with a surprisingly ordinary squad last year to frustrate their huge fan base. The mediocre side, however, finished runners-up -- although a distant second -- in the B. League, the only competition held last season.

For a club of Mohammedan's stature, such a result is never acceptable and the officials this year geared up by signing a number of major national footballers like Aminul, Hassan Al Mamun, Rajani Kanta Barman, Arman Aziz to strengthen their bid.

In spite of assembling a formidable squad, the only question that bothers the critics is whether their

new coach Maruful Haque would be able to handle the pressure.

Maruf may not have pedigree as this would be his first job for a top-flight team but he has already earned the respect of his charges who have tagged him as a 'technically strong coach' whose knowledge and ability to analyse the opposition are rare.

The first thing Maruf did was taking the black and whites outside Dhaka for a two-week conditioning camp and return for the final stage of preparation for the coming Federation Cup.

"I chose Comilla as the venue because it's isolated, and ideal for the conditioning camps with a good ground, open spaces and hills," Maruf told the Daily Star yesterday.

"Our emphasis was on fitness. After developing the basics in Dhaka for one month (the national players got two weeks), we went for aerobic and anaerobic training for endurance, that is, building

strength and power. There had been lot of workouts including up and down-hill running for specific and general conditioning," said the former Badda coach who returned to the capital on Thursday to resume training at the BUET ground.

Maruf, who has taken online coaching degrees -- Football Fitness Level 1 under the English FA and Football Conditioning under International Coaches' Association (US based) -- apart from getting AFC's B and C Licences, informed that even his senior players responded well to the hard programmes.

"There has been no mishaps and Mithu, the only case of previous injury, has been recovering."

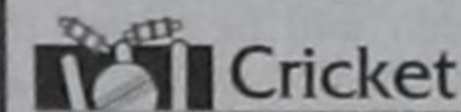
"Two weeks is not enough although we trained in three sessions. My boys are 40-45 percent fit now and I hope they would be 75 percent of their capability before the Federation Cup and fully fit for

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Coach Maruful Haque (back) watches the Mohammedan booters stretch during a practice session at the BUET ground yesterday.

Tendulkar's incentive



AFP, Colombo

Indian batsman Sachin Tendulkar's bid to become the world's leading scorer will dominate the three-Test series against Sri Lanka starting here on Wednesday.

Tendulkar is just 172 runs away from surpassing the 11,953 clocked up by retired West Indies captain Brian Lara -- a task within the reach of the Indian batsman who likes Sri Lankan pitches.

The superstar averages 111.66 from six Tests in Sri Lanka with four centuries. His last Test in the country was in 1999 when he cracked a half-century and a hundred in the Asian Test Championship.

The 35-year-old already holds three major batting records -- the highest number of centuries in Tests (39), and the most runs (16,361) and hundreds (42) in one-day internationals.

Australia captain Ricky Ponting

(10,099 runs) and India's Rahul Dravid (10,098) are the only active members of the elite 10,000 club.

Tendulkar, known for his flair and flamboyance at the crease, returns to Test cricket after four months due to a groin injury.

"He (Tendulkar) is too good," said Sri Lanka's senior wicketkeeper-batsman Kumar Sangakkara. "We know for sure that he is going to come hard at us at some point in the series and our bowlers will have to get him early."

"I know it's not going to be easy, but we have to hit the right areas to apply constant pressure on the Indians. And Sachin's wicket is a prized possession."

Tendulkar is one of the five veterans returning to Test cricket to boost India's chances of avenging their 2-1 defeat on the last tour of Sri Lanka in 2001. The others are Test captain Anil Kumble, Dravid, Sourav Ganguly and VVS Laxman.

India will pin hopes on experienced players to win the first away Test series under Kumble, whose

side has so far lost in Australia, but won at home against Pakistan and South Africa.

Off-spinner Harbhajan Singh returns to the side after a five-match ban for slapping teammate Shanthakumaran Sreesanth during a domestic Twenty20 match in April.

The tourists' pace attack also looks sharp with the presence of Zaheer Khan, coming back after a spate of injuries, and the fast-improving 19-year-old Ishant Sharma.

Dinesh Karthik looks set to pip Parthiv Patel for the wicketkeeper's job left vacant by Mahendra Singh Dhoni, who has opted out of the Test tour due to fatigue.

Sri Lanka, always formidable at home, go into the series after beating South Africa, England and the West Indies in the past four years.

Sri Lanka captain Mahela Jayawardene said the series would be closely contested as both sides had "quality players".

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Yao stays downbeat

REUTERS, Beijing



China's talisman Yao Ming was downbeat about his team's chances of winning a medal despite returning from injury to help them win two of three matches at the Stankovic Cup Olympic warm-up tournament in Hangzhou.

The Houston Rockets All-Star played a part in all three games but was clearly not fully fit as he continued his recovery from surgery on a stress fracture to his left foot in March.

China beat Serbia 96-72 on

Yao's return last Thursday, went down 72-71 to Angola on Saturday and rounded the tournament off with a 72-50 victory over a weakened Russia team on Sunday.

In the final game, the 7ft-6in (2.28m) center contributed just six points, his lowest tally as a starter for China in eight years, and missed the awards ceremony to receive treatment.

"My form in the games might be an illusion, caused by the differing quality of opponents," he told Sohu.com. "We have lots of problems, in rebound, in defence and in shooting quality, overall. These cannot be solved in one or two days."

In a series of short answers, Yao said "yes" he could get back to his best form, "no" he was not confident China could win a medal in Beijing and "strength" was the biggest difference between China and their first Olympic opponents, the U.S.

Basketball is hugely popular in China but the hosts will have to be at their best to take one of the top four places in their group and progress to the quarter-finals of the Aug. 9-24 tournament.

As well as the U.S., China's first round group also includes world champions Spain, Angola and two more strong European teams, Germany and Greece, who secured the final berths in Athens at the weekend.

Derby dominate Day One

SPORTS REPORTER

Left-arm spinner Musharraf Hossain picked up three wickets but still Derbyshire were in command against Bangladesh A on the first day of the three-day match at the County Ground, Derby yesterday.

A 123-run fourth wicket partnership between John Sadler and Chris Rogers guided the home side to 244 for four at tea after they had decided to bat first.

Left-handed Sadler returned to the pavilion just before the break when he was caught by wicketkeeper Mushfiquur Rahim off Musharraf. Sadler made 50 off 95 balls with five fours and a six.

Rogers, the Australian who played one Test, remained not out on 79 off 113 balls that featured ten boundaries and two sixes.

Left-handed Dan Birch scored 40 off 68 balls with six boundaries before being caught behind off Dollar Mahmud while right-hand Paul Borington added 25 off 78 balls with three boundaries before Musharraf trapped him.

South African-born Greg Smith was Musharraf's second victim, another caught-behind, for 19 off 29 with two boundaries.

BFF names full NTMC

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) yesterday named a large 9-member National Team Management Committee (NTMC).

BFF vice-president Badal Roy had been chosen chairman of the committee and worked with temporary members before the fifth SAFF Championship.

Satyajit Das Rupu, one of the temporary members, was missing in the full committee that included Nurul Alam Chowdhury, a losing candidate in last April's BFF election, as deputy chairman.

The inclusion of Sayeed Hasan Kanan, a member of the BFF executive committee led by SA Sultan, however, raised eyebrows.

Former national goalkeeper and also an ex-NTMC member, Kanan reportedly earned about Tk 4. 57

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Lanka ready

CRICINFO, undated

Sri Lanka, the official alternate venue for the Champions Trophy, is "very confident" of staging the tournament within the short preparation time available if Pakistan, the official host, is ruled out by the International Cricket Council board due to security reasons, Duleep Mendis, Sri Lanka Cricket's (SLC) chief executive has said.

"We are confident that we can hold the tournament within the short span of time if it's not possible to hold it in Pakistan," Mendis told Cricinfo. "We had confirmed our name as alternate hosts some time back and we stand by that."

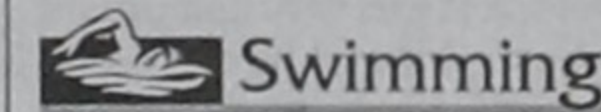
We are prepared logistically and on the security front and are very confident about hosting the

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Shikha Khatun of BKSP on her way to the 200m freestyle gold during the 24th National Age-Group Swimming Competition at the National Swimming Complex in Mirpur yesterday.

One more record for Anik



SPORTS REPORTER

Anik Islam continued his impressive show in the pool when he became champion in the four events including a new national record on the second day of the Keya 24th National Age Group Swimming Championships at the National Swimming Complex in Mirpur yesterday.

The BKSP student, who set a new record in the 400m individual medley on the opening day besides clinching first places in the 200m butterfly and 200m freestyle, set the day's lone record in 100m butterfly when he clocked 1:0.41s to eclipse the previous best timing of 1:1.58s.

Anik bagged the day's first

medal for leaders BKSP when he finished first in the 1500m freestyle with a timing of 20:11.39s.

After that he also won the 200m backstroke in 2:28.53s and clocked 57.62s to clinch the 100m freestyle title.

BKSP rode on Anik's success to secure 15 gold, 11 silver and 4 bronze out of 32 events on the second day while Bangladesh Ansar bagged 11 gold, 8 silver and 9 bronze.

Alamgir Swimming Club of Rajshahi hauled 4-2-5 and Nikli Swimming Club of Kishoreganj and Kushtia DSA earned one gold each.

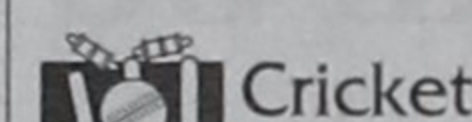
Jyotsna Khatun, who secured three gold on the opening day, guided Ansar to maintain the second position by winning four gold on the second day in 800m freestyle, 200m breaststroke, 100m butterfly and 100m freestyle.

Jewel Ahmed of Bangladesh Ansar was the other star performer of the day as he clinched three gold in 100m backstroke, 400m individual medley and 200m butterfly.

The winners in the other events are Muslima Khatun of Alamgir Swimming Club (100m backstroke, 200m butterfly), Palash Chowdhury of BKSP (100m butterfly, 50m freestyle), Arifa Khatun of Ansar (100m butterfly, 200m backstroke), Al-Amin of Kushtia (50m breaststroke), Papiya Akhter of BKSP (50m breaststroke), Wahidul Islam of BKSP (200m breaststroke), Kulsum Khatun of Alamgir Swimming Club (400m IM), Shanta Haider of BKSP (50m freestyle), Sabana Khatun of Ansar (200m backstroke), Ariful Islam of BKSP (200m freestyle, 50m freestyle), Shikha Khatun of BKSP

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It's upto Flintoff now



AFP, Leeds

Andrew Flintoff was doing his best to delay South Africa as the Proteas closed in on an innings victory in the second Test at Headingley here on Monday.

England, at tea on the fourth day, were 182 for six in their second innings -- still needing a further 137 runs to make South Africa bat again.

Wicketkeeper Tim Ambrose was 16 not out and all-rounder Flintoff, in his first Test after 18 months out injured, nine not out having batted for more than an hour.

But, with just the England tail to come and more than a day's play left, South Africa were well-placed to go 1-0 up in the four-Test series.

England, who'd already lost star batsman Kevin Pietersen cheaply, had only added 10 runs to their lunch total of 130 for four when Ian Bell was out.

He cut forcefully at a short delivery from fast bowler Morne Morkel only for AB de Villiers, whose 174 had been the centrepiece of the Proteas' first innings 522, in the gully to hold a brilliantly one-handed catch as he dived to his right.

It was a particularly sweet moment for de Villiers, booed by some fans after appearing to have claimed a catch off Andrew Strauss on Friday when in fact he'd dropped the ball, and he pointed toward his critics in the Western Stand as his teammates celebrated his fine effort.

Opener Alastair Cook had fought hard for his 60, batting for

nearly five hours when, trying to turn pace-bowling all-rounder Jacques Kallis legside, he got a leading edge and was caught by Hashim Amla, seemingly specially placed in an unusual short cover position.

England had earlier been just 12 minutes away from getting through the morning session without losing a wicket when nightwatchman James Anderson's gutsy 111-minute vigil for a Test-best 34 ended when he was lbw to Dale Steyn.

South Africa-born Pietersen then struck three superb boundaries in his first four balls on his way to 13.

But his fifth, from Kallis, got big on him. Trying to leave it too late, the ball took the shoulder of the bat and gave gleeful wicketkeeper

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Yao Ming (R) of China makes his move to the hoop under pressure from Fedor Likholtov of Russia during their Stankovic Cup basketball invitational in Hangzhou on Sunday.