



Andrey Silnov of Russia clears 2.34 metres to win the men's high jump gold of the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games at the 'Bird's Nest' National Stadium yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

ITF under-14 meet starts

SPORTS REPORTER

The Prime Bank ITF under-14 tennis tournament began yesterday at the National Tennis Complex in Ramna.

Some forty-five participants including 13 girls from India, Malaysia, Sri Lanka, South Korea, Thailand, Saudi Arabia and host Bangladesh are taking part in the competition.

The tournament is being held on four events -- boys' singles, boys' doubles, girls' singles and girls' doubles.

Chief Advisor's Special Assistant for Youth and Sports Mahubul Alam inaugurated the six-day tournament as chief guest in the morning. Chairman of the meet's sponsor Prime Bank Limited Azam J Chowdhury was present as special guest on the occasion.

Federation president AMM Nasir Uddin, general secretary Mohammad Sanaul Haque, tournament director Mohammad Samiur Razzak and Prime Bank Limited managing director Mahubul Alam were also present.

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Overall Medal			
	16	17	18
GER	11	8	9
RUS	10	14	18
KOR	8	10	6
JPN	8	6	8
ITA	6	6	7
UKR	5	4	8
FRA	4	11	14
NED	4	5	4
ROM	4	1	3
ESP	3	4	2
POL	3	4	1
SVK	3	1	0
CAN	2	6	5
KEN	2	3	2
CZE	2	3	0
JAM	2	3	0
NZL	2	1	4
DEN	2	1	3
PRK	2	1	3
ETH	2	1	0
SUI	2	0	3
GEO	2	0	1
CUB	1	5	5
BLR	1	3	7
KAZ	1	3	4
ZIM	1	3	0
AZE	1	2	2
NOR	1	2	2
SLO	1	2	2
INA	1	1	3
BUL	1	1	2
FIN	1	1	1
EST	1	1	0
MGL	1	1	0
BRA	1	0	5
ARG	1	0	1
CMR	1	0	0
IND	1	0	0
PAN	1	0	0
THA	1	0	0
TUN	1	0	0
HUN	0	4	1
SWE	0	3	0
TUR	0	2	1
UZB	0	1	3
AUT	0	1	2
GRE	0	1	2
LTU	0	1	2
ALG	0	1	1
COL	0	1	1
CRO	0	1	1
KGZ	0	1	1
SRB	0	1	1
CHI	0	1	0
ECU	0	1	0
MAS	0	1	0
POR	0	1	0
RSA	0	1	0
SIN	0	1	0
TRI	0	1	0
VIE	0	1	0
ARM	0	0	5
TPE	0	0	2
EGY	0	0	1
IRI	0	0	1
LAT	0	0	1
MAR	0	0	1
MEX	0	0	1
TJK	0	0	1
TOG	0	0	1

Friendly tests for big guns

Football

AFP, Paris

Less than two months after Spain were crowned as the best team in Europe, the continent's big guns take to the stage anew Wednesday for friendly tests as they finalise preparations for their 2010 World Cup qualifying campaign.

The Spaniards, under new coach Vicente del Bosque, who has succeeded Luis Aragones, head for Copenhagen to face Denmark after ending a trophy drought stretching back to 1964.

In due course, the 'furia roja' will take on Armenia, Belgium, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Estonia and Turkey for the right to contest the World Cup in South Africa but first they and their neighbours have the chance to try out some new formations.

Del Bosque has thus included Barcelona's 17-year-old playmaker Bojan Krkic in his first squad and new faces in the shape of Atletico Bilbao defenders Andoni Iraola and Fernando Amorebieta and Sevilla winger Diego Capel.

But Spain also have injuries to take into account, including Arsenal midfielder Cesc Fabregas and defender Carlos Marchena of Valencia.

France coach Raymond Domenech is busy introducing young faces into his squad for the friendly against Sweden at Gothenburg.

Claude Makelele and Lilian Thuram's retirement from the international scene has made space for the next generation, led

by Philippe Mexes and newcomers Rod Fanni of Rennes and Yoann Gourcuff of Bordeaux.

England, having missed out on Euro 2008, host the Czech Republic at Wembley on Wednesday with coach Fabio Capello unable to field Michael Carrick, injured last weekend on duty for Manchester United.

Capello has named Tottenham's Jermaine Jenas as a midfield replacement.

The Italian left Portsmouth striker Peter Crouch off his list with 30-year-old Emile Heskey of Wigan included instead.

In Germany, the innovation will be in goal where Robert Enke of Hannover takes over after Jens Lehmann's retirement.

Skipper Michael Ballack of Chelsea will miss the friendly at Nuremberg against Belgium because of injury.

The Stuttgart trio of Mario Gomez, Thomas Hitzlsperger and Serdar Tasci are on coach Joachim Low's list along with the Borussia Moenchengladbach player Marko Marin. Heiko Westermann (Schalke 04) has also been called up in defence.

Memories of Basel could come back to haunt the Dutch, who have a reprise of their Euro quarterfinal clash against Guus Hiddink's Russia.

New Holland coach Bert Van Marwijk was no doubt hoping the 'Oranje' would do better than in their 3-1 defeat last June, when he named a 19-man squad for the encounter at Moscow's Lokomotiv Stadium.

The list includes Mark van Bommel (Bayern Munich), who is

coach Van Marwijk's son-in-law and who has been named captain.

Also featuring are Liverpool striker Dirk Kuyt, Andre Ooijer (Blackburn Rovers), Robin van Persie (Arsenal), Arjen Robben (Real Madrid), and Jan Vennegoor of Hesselink (Celtic).

Van Marwijk plans to stick with the approach including a lone strike up front favoured by his predecessor Marco Van Basten.

"The playing style is the best fit for the qualities of the players," he told uefa.com.

Neither defender Khalid Boularouz (Stuttgart) nor midfielder Orlando Engelaar (Schalke) is available, following recent injuries.

Hiddink warned it would be a serious clash as he bids to derail his compatriots once again.

"This will not be just another friendly for our team because the Dutch will be eager to settle the score, so we'll have to be ready," Hiddink told Moscow media on Monday.

Hiddink is including one newcomer, uncapped Spartak Moscow striker Nikita Bazhenov, for the match.

SELECTED FIXTURES

(all times GMT)
England v Czech Republic (at London, 2000), Denmark v Spain (at Copenhagen, 1915), Germany v Belgium (at Nuremberg, 2000), Romania v Latvia (at Bucharest, 1845), Belarus v Argentina (at Minsk, 1800), Austria v Italy (at Nice, 1945), Switzerland v Cyprus (at Geneva, 1845), Turkey v Chile (at Izmit, 1900), Russia v Netherlands (at Moscow, 1815)

Lolo falls in final hurdle

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With a serious foot injury leaving the title at the mercy of Cuba's world record holder Dayron Robles.

The 21-year-old did not disappoint in his second round heat, producing a sublime display to easily win and progress to the semifinals.

There was some solace for the home fans as Liu's training partner Shi Dongpeng qualified as well.

Robles, who is bidding to emulate compatriot Anier Garcia's win in the 2000 Games, said he was sorry he would not have the chance to race against Liu.

The first gold of the evening had already been decided as Russian high jumper Andrey Silnov won with a jump of 2.34 metres.

Bolt enjoyed a cat and mouse duel with defending champion Shawn Crawford down the home straight before cantering over the line in 20.09 - the fastest time of the semis.

Jamaica's women had set the

tone earlier as they seek to sweep the Americans in the 200m as they did in the 100m on Sunday.

The Americans are smarting after being swept aside for all three medals in the 100m women's race.

All six sprinters from the two countries moved to within a race of having another showdown, with Jamaica's defending 200m champion Veronica Campbell and the joint 100m silver medalists in Beijing, Kerron Stewart and Sherone Simpson progressing - the latter with the fastest time of the second round.

The American trio led by 2004 silver medalist Allyson Felix also easily reached the semifinals, though, neither she nor Marshvet Hooker or Muna Lee won their respective heats.

Neither the Americans nor the Jamaicans will threaten to win the women's 5000m but it should prove to be a fascinating duel between Ethiopian duo defending champion Meseret Defar and

Tirunesh Dibaba, who is bidding to add this title to the 10000m she won on Friday.

Argentina bury

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opposing game-breakers Messi and Ronaldinho with Argentine great Maradona watching on from the stands.

Argentina had the better chances, mainly when Messi was involved, nipping into tackles and showcasing his electrifying sharp acceleration.

Messi's fellow striker partner Aguiro fired a sizzler just wide into the side-netting in the 12th minute and Messi almost put Aguiro in but his pass went behind him after 33 minutes.

The Barcelona superstar almost broke the deadlock nearing halftime when he shook off two tackles and wriggled into a scoring position only for his shot to be deflected away by Brazilian goalkeeper Renan.

Uruguayan referee Martin Vazquez was kept busy issuing a total of seven yellow cards -- four to Brazil and three for Argentina.

Sehwag out

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yesterday and he is still in the hotel," Dhoni said during the post-match press conference.

"That's the way it goes in cricket. You can't really think about the guys you are missing. Instead, you must fill that space. That's the only way the team can win."

Sehwag was the top scorer in the recent three-Test series against the hosts as he made 344 runs, including an unbeaten 201 in his team's victory in the second match in Galle. India eventually lost the series 2-1.

He has made 5,810 runs in 191 one-day internationals with nine hundreds and 29 half-centuries.

Premier h'ball from today

SPORTS REPORTER

The 14th CUTE Premier Division Handball League begins today at the Outer Stadium handball ground with two matches billed for the opening day.

Narinda Progate Boys Club, Dhaka Mariner Youngs Club, Old Ideals, Victoria SC, Surjodaya KC, Menjis KC and Bratritho Samaj Kallayan Sangha are taking part in the tournament.

Last time runners-up Narinda will play against newcomers Bratritho SKS in the opening match at 3:30pm while Mariners face promoted side Menjis in the other opening day fixture.

Defending champions BDR are not allowed to play in the premier league as they have already participated in a separate league for the services teams.

Sponsors Mousumi Industries will provide the entire expenditure of the league amounting to Tk 2.37 lakh.

Adebayor signs new deal

AFP, London

Arsenal striker Emmanuel Adebayor has signed a new improved deal with the club tying him to the Gunners until 2012, according to an official statement Monday.

Togo international Adebayor scored 30 goals last season but was persistently linked with AC Milan and Barcelona during the summer.

However, a statement on the club's official website, www.arsenal.com, revealed that "Arsenal can today confirm that Togolese forward Emmanuel Adebayor has signed a new long-term contract with the club."

"Everyone at Arsenal looks forward to Emmanuel's continued contribution to the club over the coming years."

The 24-year-old Adebayor, whom Arsenal signed from Monaco in January 2006, said on the eve of the new season he would be staying put after agreeing terms on a new improved deal worth a reported 80,000 pounds (155,000 dollars) a week.

In pre-season friendly action some Arsenal fans barracked Adebayor amid the uncertainty over his future.

But coach Arsene Wenger expects him now to receive their full backing.

"We have to get behind him and support him because he is a tremendous force and (he is of) tremendous importance for the team - you want your own fans to be behind him."

"What happened in the transfer period did not always reflect his deep desire and there was manipulation from agents on both sides, but overall I am positive he will recover."

Wenger added: "Every player needs to feel wanted. I think he is settled in his own mind. He has given a lot in the first two games."

Chennai won't

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England ODI and Test series.

The first Test begins on December 11 and VB Chandrasekar, director of cricket operations for Super Kings, suggested Dhoni might make himself unavailable for the final to turn out for India. "More weightage should be given to Indian team," Chandrasekar told Cricinfo.

The Australian and South African players taking part in the Champions League -- Matthew Hayden, Michael Hussey and Mahaya Ntini for Super Kings and Graeme Smith for Rajasthan Royal Challengers -- will also be involved in international encounters till December 2, one day before the Twenty20 tournament starts. While Hayden and Hussey are expected to be part of the Australian Test squad in a Test series against New Zealand, Smith and Ntini are likely to be involved in a home series against Bangladesh.

Chandrasekar said the franchise expected the event to be held in Mohali, Delhi and Jaipur, the venues that were announced last month before the tournament organisers put that decision on hold to evaluate other offers.

Looking ahead to the team's chances and preparations for the Champions League, Chandrasekar said, "I would rate all teams equal. Any team can win a Twenty20 game on their day. We might hold a preparatory camp without the key players like Dhoni, Michael Hussey and Matthew Hayden."

He also said that it's highly unlikely that Super Kings will recruit new players for the tournament as most of the big players would be available to play.

Apart from Chennai Super Kings, the IPL runners-up, the inaugural Champions Twenty20 tournament comprises Rajasthan Royals, the IPL winner, Western Australia and Victoria, Australia's domestic Twenty20 finalists, South Africa and Dolphins, the South African finalists, Middlesex, England's champion, and Pakistan's Sialkot Stallions.

ICC chief worried

AGENCIES, Beijing

World cricket's leading administrator has said the "perilously close" start of

next month's Champions Trophy in Pakistan made the ongoing uncertainty over the tournament a "concern."

David Morgan, the president of the International Cricket Council (ICC), was speaking just hours before Haroon Lorgat, the governing body's chief executive, was due to hold a news conference in London on Tuesday following his talks with the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB).

Lorgat, who has already met with the England players and management, is due to hold similar discussions in his native South Africa later this week.

Players and officials from England, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa, are known to have severe doubts about competing in the September 12-28 one-day tournament because of a wave of militant violence in Pakistan.

"It's a concern that we haven't yet had confirmation from all eight countries that they are prepared to go to Pakistan," Morgan, in Beijing to attend the Olympic Games, told AFP here Tuesday.

Haroon Lorgat is in the UK currently, meeting the board of ECB today (Tuesday) he is due in South Africa at the end of the week."

Morgan, himself a former ECB

chairman, added: "The scheduled start time for the tournament is perilously close so, of course, I am concerned."

England captain Kevin Pietersen, after meeting with Lorgat, said: "It's a big decision for the board to make and the players have said whatever they needed to say."

In July, the ICC -- where some insiders have long feared a split between the powerful Asian bloc led by India, cricket's commercial powerhouse -- and the rest of the world's leading teams -- set up a special security taskforce.

And last week the garrison city of Rawalpindi was dropped as a Trophy venue.

But this does not appear to have allayed fears in several countries.

Both Sri Lanka, where fighting between the government and the separatist Tamil Tiger movement has been in progress for over 30 years and England, often cited a target for terror attacks because of Britain's involvement in US-led military operations in Iraq, have been suggested as alternative venues.

Last week ICC general manager David Richardson, the former South Africa wicketkeeper, said a decision over relocation needed to be made "in the next few days," if that was what the cricket world wanted.

But with the start of the tournament rapidly approaching, logistical issues mean there may well soon come a time beyond which

moving the tournament from Pakistan is no longer an option.

Asked when the cut-off date for moving the tournament was, Morgan replied: "I don't know the answer but I am sure it is capable of being played in another country should that be necessary."

"Sri Lanka is an option there are other options too but I wouldn't wish to go into that detail at the present time."

Former Australia fast bowler Geoff Lawson, now the coach of Pakistan, has urged his compatriots to take part after they postponed a full tour of Pakistan because of safety concerns.

Fresh security fears were raised last week when a roadside bomb blew up a Pakistan Air Force vehicle in the north-western city of Peshawar, killing 13 people, while fighting was also underway with militants on the Afghan border.

In a bid to ease concerns, the ICC have announced the 50 overs per side event will start on September 12, a day later than planned, to avoid the seventh anniversary of the 9/11 attacks on the United States.

Monday saw Pakistan Cricket Board chairman Nasim Ashraf announce his intention to resign just hours after Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf quit.

"I will continue to work until a new chairman is appointed and I don't see my leaving affecting the Champions Trophy because the PCB is an institution and institutions are not run by (one or two) individuals," Ashraf said.

Asif faces lengthy ban

Cricket

AFP, Karachi

Pakistani fast bowler Mohammad Asif is facing a two-year ban from cricket after his 'B' sample tested positive for the banned steroid nandrolone, his lawyer said Tuesday.

The 25-year-old tested positive during the Indian Premier League competition held between April and June, and the Pakistan Cricket Board suspended him in July on the basis of his first sample.

"We have just completed the test on Asif's B sample and it has come back positive," his lawyer Shahid Karim told AFP by telephone from Switzerland.

"But I can tell you that the quantity of nandrolone has varied, which we can contest. We hope to further this case once we get an official test report from the IPL."

He said the 'A' sample contained a concentration of 6.2 nanograms per millilitre of urine, while the 'B' sample contained 5.4.

World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) regulations state that if a player is found to have a concentration greater than two nanograms of nandrolone per millilitre, the sportsman may be banned.

Asif, who has played 11 Tests and 31 one-day matches, said he was confident that the discrepancy would help him.

"I am confident of getting out of this mess," said Asif, regarded as one of the best talents at the international level.

"Both my lawyer and medical experts are confident that we can fight this case and come out clean."

Asif said he was desperate to get back on the cricket pitch.

"The last few months have been upsetting and I want to put them behind me," he added.

Asif first tested positive for nandrolone in 2006 along with fellow paceman Shoaib Akhtar. He was banned for two years and Akhtar for two, but the bans were overturned on appeal.

Separately, Asif also faces a possible ban or fine from the Pakistan Cricket Board after he was detained in Dubai, while returning from the IPL competition, on charges of possessing an illegal drug.

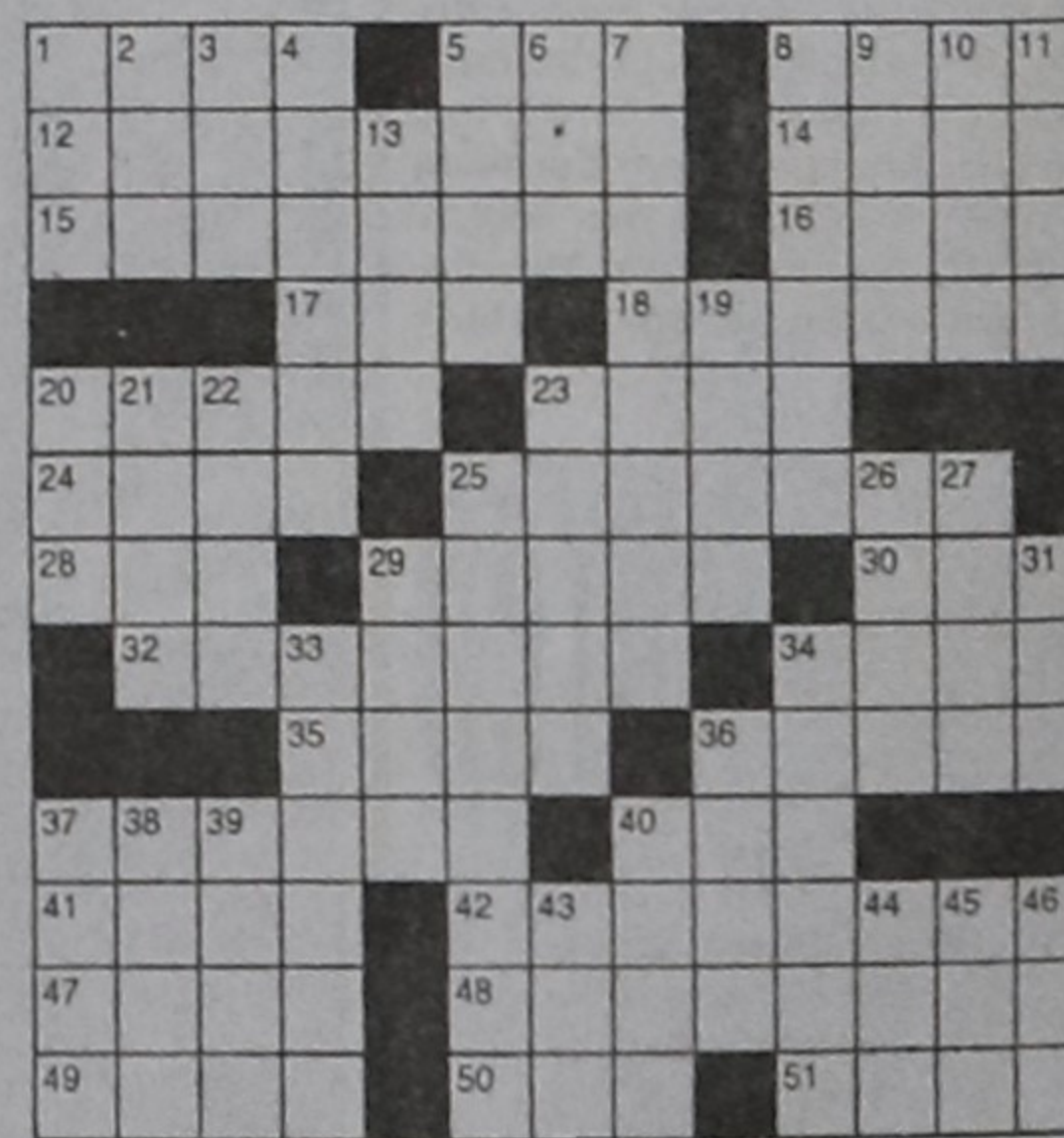
He was held for 19 days before police deported him.

The matter will now be taken up by the IPL's drugs tribunal, which will study the issue and take a decision in accordance with the International Cricket Council's anti-doping code.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS
1 Tibetan monk
5 " & Order: Criminal Intent"
8 Imperfection
12 Opposite of
14 Highway division
15 Octopus' arm
16 Bits and pieces
17 Saute
18 Persian Gulf state
20 Illegally
23 Kelly or Rayburn
24 Authentic
25 Spirally plant stem
28 "Platoon" locale
29 Surpass
30 Filch from
32 Lease signatories

DOWN
1 Realtor's offering
2 "Hall"
3 Chaps
4 Willy
5 Linus' sister
6 Every iota
7 Time off, for many
8 Bouquet component
9 "Doctor Zhivago" role
10 Opposed to
11 Into the sunset
12 To the degree
13 Exceptional
19 Destroy
20 Coffee-shop vessel
21 Tidy
22 Lord's wife
23 Reach
25 Wolfarm
26 Rainbow
27 Just hang about
29 Gallery tools
31 Hive denizen
33 Thread transporter
34 Old 45s, e.g.
36 Kouril-kova
37 Lotion additive
38 Singer Vikki
39 Grouch
40 Part of the foot?
43 Superlative suffix
44 Perched
45 Praise in verse
46 Fresh



CRYPTOQUIP

SQKQIUQC BQALZG RV K

YAQHI QB IZQJOZ PXQ XKG

RZSLZ PZKAV QB OZKACUCY

RQAZG QB ZGHSKIQQC

Saturday's Cryptquip: WHEN I DISCOVERED HOW MUCH THAT STUNNING NEW WATCH COST, I WAS OVERCOME WITH TICKER SHOCK.

Today's Cryptquip Clue: J equals P



Chief Advisor's Special Assistant for Youth and Sports Mahubul Alam inaugurates the Prime Bank Limited ITF under-14 tennis tournament at the National Tennis Complex yesterday.

PHOTO: COURTESY