

Tara propels Shatadal

CU CORRESPONDENT

Shatadal Club defeated Agrabad Naojoan Club 1-0 in an ANZ Properties Premier Division Football League match here yesterday at the MA Aziz Stadium.

Earlier on Tuesday, a match between the two teams was abandoned ten minutes were from time due to insufficient light.

Yesterday, Shatadal defender Khan Mohammad Tara scored the all-important goal from a long-range shot in the 32nd minute.

But, Naojoan at first got the chance of going ahead but that went in vain when Jakir missed a penalty in the 20th minute. Goalkeeper Babul saved the ball comfortably.

Army clinch b'ball title

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Army clinched the Premier Bank 23rd National Basketball title beating Bangladesh Navy 71-65 in the final at the Rajshahi Divisional Women's Sports Complex yesterday.

Earlier in the semifinals, Navy outclassed Khulna 90-61, while Army trounced Bangladesh Rifles 80-60.

Divisional Commissioner of Rajshahi Division Rahman Bhuiyan was the chief guest at the day's closing function and distributed the trophies.

Vice-president of Bangladesh Olympic Association M Mizanur Rahman was the special guest at the function, chaired by Police Superintendent and tournament committee chairman Shahabuddin Khan.

Div II football

SPORTS REPORTER

Little Friends Club came back from a goal down to beat Prantik Kirta Chakra 2-1 in the Second Division Football League at the Kamalapur Stadium.

After Eco netted the opener for Prantik in the second half, goals from Shahinor and Rubel scored for Little Friends.

In today's matches, T&T Club take on North Baridhara Club while Sadharan Bima are up against BG Press.

Bandarban in final

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bandarban

Bandarban XI moved into the final of the Bandarban Hilly District Council under-16 football tournament at the local stadium here yesterday.

They beat Naikhongchari 2-0 in the first semifinal with goals from Mong Nue and Zafar. In today's second semifinal, Alikadam XI take on Lama XI.

The final will be held on August 31.

A tough wicket

FROM PAGE 17 Bangladesh, Australia, AIS and Northern Territory players, members of the Bangladesh community, cricket officials and local dignitaries on the lawn overlooking the sea, Hampton lauded the Bangladesh cricket team.

"The Bangladesh side was the first international team to play Test cricket in Darwin when they came here in 2003 and they will always have a special place in our hearts," said the Sports Minister who also made special mention of Ashraf.

"To all school children I want to present Mohammad Ashraf who was 16 when he became the youngest batsman in history to make a Test hundred. He was also the batsman who scored a century when Bangladesh beat Australia in a one day international and he will be one to watch out for in this series."

Abahani meet

FROM PAGE 17 games and the return of ex-international Sujat at the heart of defence with full form proved they did not miss Nazrul's service at all in the quarterfinal.

History, though, will be against Farashganj, who have reached this stage of the Federation Cup for the second time after 2000 when they had eventually lost to Arambagh.

While Kamal Babu's Farashganj pin hopes on Enamul and slightly on two-goal Mamun, Abahani's ten goals in the meet have been mostly shared by Emily, who netted his fourth goal inside the first minute of the quarterfinal against Russel and surprisingly, Arif Khan Joy, who has three goals to his name although the holding midfielder is not famous as a marksman.

Ghana's striker Pomeyie has scored twice for the inaugural B. League champions but he was not used in the last match as Abahani look unsatisfied with his performance.

Although the Federation Cup has yet to draw big crowds, Bangladesh Television will telecast the two semifinals and the final live.



Action from yesterday's Senior Division Football League match between Agrabad Naojoan Club and Shatadal Club at the MA Aziz Stadium in Chittagong.

Mahela blames batters

Cricket

CRICINFO, Colombo

Mahela Jayawardene, the Sri Lankan captain, blamed inconsistent batting for his side's defeat in the ODI series against India. Sri Lanka needed to avoid a loss in the fourth ODI to stay alive in the series, but went down by 46 runs, handing India the trophy with one more match left in the contest.

"I was disappointed the way we played. We had our opportunities," Jayawardene said after the match. "Our one-day cricket hasn't been consistent especially the overall performances with the bat," he said. "If you are not capable of getting the runs it's quite difficult to win matches." Sri Lanka, set a competitive target of 259, were bowled out for 212.

Jayawardene, like his counterpart Mahendra Singh Dhoni, has led the scoring for his team, but none of the other batsmen have been able to back him up. Sanath Jayasuriya's 60

on Wednesday was the only other fifty for Sri Lanka in the series besides Jayawardene's two, and the remaining batsmen haven't been able to make up for the poor scores from Kumar Sangakkara.

Jayawardene admitted the lesser-known players need to step up their game. "That is something we really have to work with. Our guys need the confidence to go out there and express themselves which we have asked them to do," he said. "But they haven't been consistent. We definitely need to work hard and make sure we get it right because this is our future."

A positive for Sri Lanka, though, was the performance of their bowlers, especially the medium-pacers in the absence of Lasith Malinga. Dilhara Fernando and Farveez Maharoof. "That's something that we can fall back on," he said. "Especially with the injuries we've had guys who put up their hands and performed. Tilhan Thushara has been outstanding with ball and bat, so was (Nuwan) Kulasekera."

Besides picking up career-best figures of 5 for 47 in this game, the left-arm Thushara has also been Sri Lanka's second-highest run-getter in the series; an ideal replacement perhaps for Chaminda Vaas, who happened to pick up his 400th ODI wicket.

With a bowling line-up consisting of Ajantha Mendis and Muttiah Muralidaran, Sri Lanka can surely make opposition batsmen sweat, but Jayawardene wants his batsmen to put the runs on board. "We just need to make sure our batting is consistent," he said. "At the start of the series I said in one-day cricket you need to be very consistent with the bat. Putting runs on the board or chasing down targets -- we have to do it. That's where we lost the series."

Jayawardene said his team would be aiming to end the series with a win. "We do have some cricket in the near future so it's important that we finish on a high note," he said. "We played some really good cricket throughout the Test series and one-day series. It will be disappointing if you just give up on the next game."

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Vaas most consistent

Cricket

AFP, Colombo

If there were an award for the "most consistent fast bowler" in the history of Sri Lankan cricket, it would definitely go to Chaminda Vaas.

The left-arm seamer on Wednesday became the fourth bowler to take 400 wickets in one-day internationals after retired Pakistani pace duo Wasim Akram (502) and Waqar Younis (416), and compatriot Muttiah Muralidaran (479).

Vaas, 34, achieved the feat during the fourth one-day against India here when he had Yuvraj Singh caught by skipper Mahela Jayawardene at short mid-wicket for no score.

"Wasim was a very clever bowler. He was lethal and very good at outsmarting the batsmen. Waqar was entirely different. He bowled fast and used the yorker to good effect," Vaas recently told "The Island" newspaper.

"Murali has been an absolute champion and never loses his passion for the game. Soon he will

go past Wasim's record as the highest wicket-taker in one-dayers and it will be difficult to surpass him."

Fast bowlers like to hunt in pairs, but Vaas has been mostly toiling alone since his one-day debut against India in 1994. It is a tribute to his consistency that he has rarely let his team down.

Akram and Younis bowled in tandem, keeping pressure on batsmen from both the ends with their different styles. They were instrumental in making Pakistan a formidable bowling outfit in the 1990s and early 2000s.

"There were a lot of guys who were more talented than me. My game was limited, but I worked harder. You have got to make the most of your talent and nothing comes easy," said Vaas.

"I have enjoyed my cricket thoroughly. No regrets whatsoever. There have been a few good performances along the way, but for me winning the (1996) World Cup remains the greatest achievement."

Sri Lanka were often called a two-bowler team because Vaas and off-spinner Muralidaran were the only proven match-winners. The

pair kept defying the odds to set up many victories.

Vaas may have just four hauls of five or more wickets in an innings in 322 one-day internationals, but is second to none when it comes to providing crucial breakthroughs with his ability to swing and seam the ball.

His first five-wicket haul came against India at Sharjah in 2000. His victims included ace batsman Sachin Tendulkar, Sourav Ganguly and Yuvraj.

India could never recover from the Vaas blows and were shot out for a meagre 54 chasing a 300-run target.

The Sri Lankan's best came in 2001 against Zimbabwe in Colombo when he became the first bowler to grab eight wickets (8-19), including a hat-trick. His figures remain the best in one-dayers.

He was to claim one more hat-trick, this time at the biggest stage. He stunned Bangladesh when he took three wickets with the first three balls of a match in the 2003 World Cup in South Africa.

Vaas may have shed some of his pace of late, but still retains variations to test the batsmen.

Dhoni unites India

FROM PAGE 17 tosses: some call that luck; with Dhoni, it's all part of the package.

In his book, What Sport Tells Us About Life, Ed Smith writes of the 19th-century historian Thomas Carlyle, who believed the bravery of heroes and leaders derived from their inspired and resourceful force. "The history of the world," Carlyle argued, "is but the biography of great men." Dhoni is no great, yet, but he has this amazing knack to inspire. And, since becoming captain and changing his approach to batting, he has played key roles with the bat. He averages 57.17 when in charge, with ten fifties and one century.

Many had criticised Dhoni's decision to skip the Test series, forgetting that he had to endure such a gruelling schedule this last 18 months (14 Tests, 56 ODIs, eight Twenty20 internationals and the IPL). In the Test side Dhoni has yet to cement his place, as one century in 31 matches suggests; in fact, he was dispensable at the time he announced he was opting out. Dhoni is the most important member of a young one-day side and he realised that for the better.

Numerous television chat shows slammed Dhoni for the loss in the series opener and for reportedly influencing the selectors to pick young talent instead of ageing, vastly experienced heroes. Now Dhoni has led this group, with their struggles and pressures, to win a series few expected them to even contest.

Unlike in the second and third matches, where Zaheer and Dhoni were virtually one-man shows, this was a collective victory.

"Contributive efforts are better because you are not relying on one individual," Dhoni said after the last game. "You will get individual performances brilliantly, but it's always better to win through a team effort. Everyone can enjoy it that way."

Consecutive fifties from Raina and Dhoni, Virat Kohli's maiden half-century to papered over the failures of Gautam Gambhir and Yuvraj, Munaf's two-wicket burst, Zaheer Khan's accuracy, wickets for the spinners. This match had it all, and that will give Dhoni immense satisfaction.

Critics can argue that India were helped by a complete batting failure by the hosts, and off-key series for Chaminda Vaas and Muralidaran. Dhoni will tell you that his bowlers got the measure of the batsmen, and there is no denying how Dhoni and S Badrinath's approach towards the spinners in game two sparked a revival. Sri Lanka were poor in this series, very poor, but India were good.

This isn't in the same league as the ICC World Twenty20 or the CB Series, but it should be toasted. It came after Mendis -- he who mauled India in the Asia Cup final -- and Muttiah Muralidaran made a mockery of the best middle order in Test cricket. The line-up India fielded resembled virtually that of the dismal Asia Cup final but, led by Dhoni and his sheer bullishness in believing Mendis could be overrid-

den, they overcame the odds. Ignore the awful times, and concentrate on the good ones, seems to be Dhoni's mantra.

Baseball, poets say, cannot be

scripted. Neither can cricket. After the barrage of questions they faced before this series, Dhoni and his bunch of upstarts can sit back and smile. They've defied the odds and deserved to win, and Carlyle would certainly have toasted their success.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard of the fourth one-day international between Sri Lanka and India in Colombo on Wednesday.

INDIA: 258 all out in 49.4 overs (Raina 76, Dhoni 71, Kohli 54; Thushara 5-47)

SRI LANKA

Jayasuriya c Raina b Harbhajan 60
Warnapura lbw b Patel 6
Sangakkara b Patel 0
Jayawardene run out 16
Kapugedera lbw b Yuvraj 30
Dilshara lbw b Harbhajan 12
Vaas lbw b Yuvraj 17
Kulasekara st Dhoni b Harbhajan 12
Thushara c Raina b Zaheer 40
Mendis run out 2
Muralidaran not out 1
Extras: (b-4, lb-2, w-10) 16

Total: (All out in 46.3 overs) 212
Fall of wickets: 1-28, 2-38, 3-74, 4-106, 5-131, 6-140, 7-157, 8-190, 9-206

Bowler

O M R W
Kumar 4 0 25 0
Zaheer 9.3 3 27 1
Patel 9 0 48 2
Harbhajan 10 0 40 3
Yuvraj 10 0 53 2
Sharma 4 1 13 0

Result: India won by 46 runs and take winning 3-1 lead in the 5-ODI series.

Man-of-the-match: Suresh Raina. Toss: India. Umpires: Billy Doctrove and Gaminí Silva.

Bari back to BHF

SPORTS REPORTER

Ex-general secretary Shamsul Bari drew the highest votes in yesterday's Bangladesh Hockey Federation (BHF) election, which lost all interest after all the office bearers had been elected unopposed.

Votes were taken only for 19 member posts with 23 contesting.

Out of 73 councillors, 53 cast their vote with Shahriar Alam-Sajed Adel panel -- which withdrew their candidature after a failed negotiation with Jamil Uddin-Rashid Shikder panel -- boycotting the whole procedures.

It would be the first time an executive committee of the BHF would be without any representative from Abahani, a popular and one of the two most successful clubs in history of domestic hockey.

The veteran Bari, who has been suffering from different diseases and needs support to even walk, got 49 votes. He was not included in the ad-hoc committee.

The other elected members are Mohammed Yusuf, Nazirul Islam, Shahabuddin Ahmed, Mosaddek Hossain, Shafigul Islam, Abdullah Piri, Subhash Chandra, Imanul Islam, Yusuf Ali, Tofazzal Hossain, Mamunur Rashid, Jafrul Ahsan, Hasanuddin Shimul, Anwar Hossain Khan, Jamil Abdul Naser, Anvir Adel, Abdur Razzak and Meer Monwar Ali.

The office bearers elected unopposed: Pratap Shankar Hazra, MA Gafur, Azizur Rahman Raju, KMR Manzoor, Shahjahan Sarker (vice-presidents); Khondokar Jamil Uddin (general secretary); Abdur Rashid Shikder, Masirul Kabir (joint secretaries); Kazi Moinuzzaman (treasurer).

Ricky's bold prediction

CRICINFO, undated

Australia's captain Ricky Ponting believes it is only a matter of time before Twenty20 is part of the Olympics. Just days after the completion of the Beijing Games, Ponting said it was "inevitable" the new form would become an Olympic event, given its popularity in the subcontinent.

Ponting, who also called for a portion of the international calendar to be kept free for Twenty20 tournaments, was speaking at a dinner in Sydney to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the birth of Don Bradman.

"I actually think it's inevitable Twenty20 cricket will be an Olympic sport," Ponting said. "You think about the audiences in the subcontinent, 22 or 23% of the world's population is based in that area. The IOC could do a lot worse than put cricket in the Olympics."

Although he wanted Twenty20 to be part of the world's biggest sporting event, Ponting warned that the format had to be handled carefully by international cricket bosses. He has concerns about players chasing quick dollars rather than playing for their country.

LOCAL SNIPPETS

FROM PAGE 17

Wooden Floor Gymnasium.

Biman beat Dhaka 3-1 with wins from Rumi and Turbina. For Abahani, Saleha, Joyoti and Shoma won their respective matches to trounce Narail 3-0.

In the men's team event, Biman and Bagerhat moved into the finals from Group A while Feni and Pabna made it through wins from Group B.

In the boys' team final, Biman face Dhaka in the final.

SCHOOLS RUGBY

St Gregory High School thrashed Hammadia High School 17-5 in the first-ever School Rugby tournament, sponsored by Diamond Melamine, at the Outer Stadium rugby ground.

Hammadia recovered somewhat after going down by seven points to none in the first half as they scored five times in the second half. But St Gregory were always better as they ran out winners.

In the other matches, Nawabpur Government High School beat Islambagh Ashraf Ali High School 8-5 while Rahamatullah Model High School beat West End High School 8-7.

Aussies not

FROM PAGE 17 with a fine double of 132 not out and 31-3 in their final practice match on Wednesday.

Australia had a practice match against an Australian Institute of Sport side on Thursday.

SQUADS

AUSTRALIA: Michael Clarke (captain), Shane Watson, Michael Hussey, Andrew Symonds, Brad Haddin (wicketkeeper), Shaun Marsh, David Hussey, James Hopes, Cameron White, Brett Gervase, Mitchell Johnson, Stuart Clark, Nathan Bracken.

BANGLADESH: Mohammad Ashraf (captain), Mashrafe Bin Mortaza, Tamim Iqbal, Rokibul Hassan, Shakib Al Hasan, Alok Kapali, Dhiman Ghosh (wicketkeeper), Mahmudullah, Abdur Razzak, Shahadat Hossain, Farhad Reza, Mehrab Hossain, Nazmul Hossain, Dollar Mahmud, Zunaed Siddiqui.

Smith out of 3rd ODI

Cricket

BBC ONLINE, undated

South Africa's problems continued with news that skipper Graeme Smith will miss the third one-day international on Friday with a tennis elbow problem.

Smith has battled through the condition for much of the summer but will not be risked at The Oval, despite his side needing a win to keep the series alive.

The 27-year-old is set to miss the rest of the series and will see a surgeon to determine if he needs an operation.

Jacques Kallis is expected to captain the side in Smith's absence.

The all-rounder quit the vice-captaincy last year after he was axed from the Proteas' Twenty20 squad.

Kallis, who has also suffered tennis elbow problems, which in his case required surgery, has captained his country in the past, filling in for Smith on two separate occasions in 2006 and 2007 and taking charge of seven one-day internationals.

South Africa have lost the opening two matches of the series, the latest a humiliating 10-wicket defeat at Trent Bridge after the tourists could only score 83.

Smith was booed by the crowd at the post-match presentation, and apologised for his side's dra-

matic collapse.

Wicketkeeper Mark Boucher has given his backing to Kallis, who he believes is capable of helping South Africa out of the current crisis.

"I know he gave up the vice-captaincy a little while ago because there were a few issues there and there probably still are a few issues," Boucher said.

"But if it's a stand-in and an emergency I don't think he will say no to helping the team out."

Boucher, who has led South Africa in the past, is expected to be Kallis' vice-captain on Friday and he said his country still have it all to play for with three games to play.

"I said to the guys in the changing room after the game that not all is lost," he added.

"There's no reason why we can't change momentum. It's going to take a massive effort from the senior players but it's an opportunity for us to stand up and be counted."

England paceman Steve Harmison is convinced South Africa will be a different proposition following what he termed a "freak" defeat.

"Everything we did went well and everything they did went wrong," he said.

"They will come back strong at us. Smith is out but I'm sure he will be in there making sure his side come out fighting."

Harmison, who has made a triumphant return to the one-day side having announced his retirement in 2006, dismissed sugges-

tions that he only returned to the team to play in the forthcoming lucrative Stanford matches in the West Indies.

"I've always been criticised," he said. "I get criticised for changing my socks."

"I have come back for cricketing reasons. The selectors, coach and captain know how I feel on certain issues but I am available for the winter."

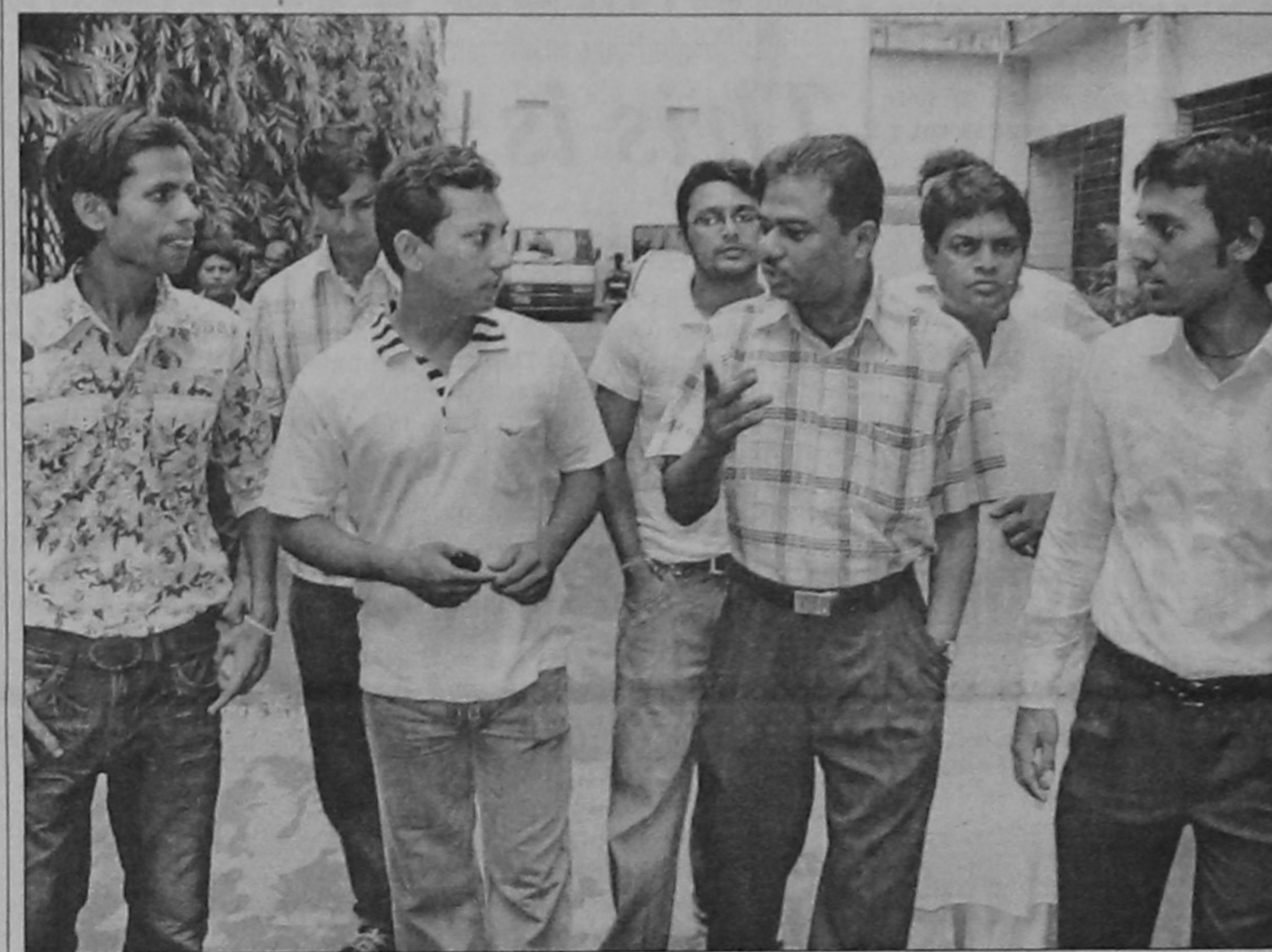
"Three months ago I never saw myself playing one-day cricket again but I have realised a few things, and to play international cricket well you need to continue playing."

"The Durham captain (Dale Benkenstein) made an interesting point when he said 'you're better off getting injured playing too much than not playing enough'."

TEAMS

ENGLAND (from): Kevin Pietersen (captain), Matt Prior, Ian Bell, Owais Shah, Andrew Flintoff, Paul Collingwood, Ravi Bopara, Luke Wright, Samit Patel, Steve Harmison, Stuart Broad, James Anderson, Alastair Cook, Graeme Swann, Tim Bresnan.

SOUTH AFRICA (from): Jacques Kallis (captain), Hashim Amla, Herschelle Gibbs, AB de Villiers, JP Duminy, Mark Boucher, Albie Morkel, Vernon Philander, Johan Botha, Morne Morkel, Dale Steyn, Makhaya Ntini, Justin Ontong. Umpires: Nigel Llong and Simon Taufel.



Hockey players having a chat with Bangladesh Hockey Federation's new general secretary Khondokar Jamil Uddin (3rd from R) during the federation polls at the NSC yesterday.

Djokovic hobbles on

FROM PAGE 17

Slams this year (French Open and Australian Open) but has never made it to a final in 20 career major appearances.

Jankovic has six career singles titles but just one victory to show for her consistent play this year. The pesky Swede Arvidsson made Jankovic work for Wednesday's win.

"It was really tough. I am completely out of breath," second-seeded Jankovic said immediately after the two-hour, 45-minute match. "I was pushed to the limit."

Jankovic moves through to the third round where she will face China's Zheng Jie who beat Anabel Medina Garrigues of Spain 6-1, 6-4 on Wednesday. Zheng reached the semifinals at Wimbledon earlier this year.

Jankovic, who has suffered a string of injuries this year, took a couple of tumbles on Wednesday but got through the match unscathed.

Drama queen or tennis warrior -- only Jankovic knows how much of her constant grimacing on the court is real or not.

"I was concerned I was going to get my dress dirty," she said of one of her spills. "That was my biggest concern."

Five Russians, including four seeded players, advanced on Wednesday while Vera Zvonareva became the first seeded Russian casualty.

Beijing Olympic gold medalist Elena Dementieva beat Pauline Parmentier of France 6-2, 6-1. Dementieva, the runner-up in 2004, is making her 10 straight US Open appearance.

"You have to find a way to win," said Dementieva, of Moscow said. "The most important thing is to stay positive in the difficult moments in the match even when you feel tired."

Dementieva, who is ranked sixth in the world, moved through to the third round where she will face Great Britain's Anne Keothavong who surprised 25th seeded Francesca Schiavone 6-2, 3-6, 6-4.

Third-seeded Svetlana Kuznetsova beat 18-year-old

Sorana Cirstea 7-6 (7/3), 6-1.

"It was all about the first set," Russia's Kuznetsova said. "When I got into a dangerous situation I started moving her around a little bit more. In the second set I was able to gain more confidence."

Another Russian Olympian Zvonareva was sent crashing out of the event, losing her second round match 6-3, 6-3 to unseeded Tatiana Perebrynina.

Zvonareva was in the same side of the draw as Jankovic and Lindsay Davenport who beat another Russian Alisa Kleybanova 7-5, 6-3 in a night match.

In the other evening match, American eighth seed Andy Roddick defeated Frenchman Fabrice Santoro 6-2, 6-2, 6-2 on the strength of 15 aces.

Russian fifth seed Nikolay Davydenko dispatched Dudi Sela 6-3, 6-3, 6-3 in a men's first round match.

World No. 1s Rafael Nadal and Ana Ivanovic highlight the schedule on Thursday.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

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