

Lanka face selection row

AFP, Colombo
A selection dispute has hit the announcement of the Sri Lankan national team for the 20Twenty competition in Canada...

Sports Minister Gamini Lokuge told AFP he was considering a complaint from batsman Indika de Saram who had complained after not being selected for the team to play in the Canada Cup next month...

I have had a letter from de Saram. Also there was no name of a team manager in the team sheet sent to me. So I have returned it to Sri Lanka Cricket...

Sri Lanka Cricket on Wednesday sent the team for Lokuge's ratification before it could be officially announced. The team will be without seniors Muttiah Muralidaran, Chaminda Vaas, Kumar Sangakkara and Chamara Silva.

De Saram and another all rounder Chinthaka Jayasinghe feel aggrieved at not being picked despite good performances at home.

SQUAD SUBMITTED FOR APPROVAL

Mahela Jayawardene, Sanath Jayasuriya, Mahela Udawatta, Chamara Kapugedera, Jehan Mubarak, Tillekeratne Dilshan, Jeevantha Kulatunga, Farveez Maharoof, Nuwan Kulasekera, Thilan Thushara, Ajantha Mendis, Thilina Kandamby, Dilhara Fernando, Dilhara Lokuhettige and Kaushalya Weeraratne.

Injury scare for Vaughan

INTERNET, undated

Michael Vaughan could miss Yorkshire's final County Championship match of the season after straining a side muscle against Somerset on Saturday.

Vaughan picked up the injury bowling on the final day of the drawn match at Scarborough and also suffered soreness in his troublesome right knee.

Meanwhile, Darren Gough said his retirement could come a game early.

Missing out on Wednesday would be a setback for Vaughan as he attempts to win a spot on the tour to India.

Yorkshire director of cricket Martyn Moxon said: "Michael has got a little bit of an intercostal injury as well as his knee being a bit sore."

"It's a concern and obviously we will check him out over the next couple of days. He is obviously a doubt."

"He has worked really hard trying to get runs for us but we will just have to wait and see."

Vaughan won a new England central contract at the start of September but is by no means assured of a place on the tour of India, and had been hoping to prove his form before the end of the domestic season.

The irony is that the injury comes after he told journalists at Lord's in July that he had stopped bowling competitively because he found it was too much of a risk to his fitness.

Assuming Vaughan does not play against Sussex at Hove, it would be a controversial selection for him to then be picked for India following a run of dreadful performances for Yorkshire and England throughout the summer.

He may instead play some overseas club cricket and try to force his way into the side for the tour of West Indies next spring - much like Andrew Strauss did last winter when the Middlesex man was axed for the Sri Lanka tour but came back magnificently in New Zealand.

Meanwhile, Yorkshire captain Gough could have played his last game after casting doubt over his availability for the match at Hove.

He said: "I wanted to go out in style today - and that proved to me I am ready to retire, I am absolutely shattered now."

Match fees

FROM PAGE 17
approval, it will be introduced from next month's Merdeka Cup in Malaysia.

"We will also offer payments only during national camps till we find a sponsor."

Badal added that the national players will be insured and will have Tk 20,000 coverage in case of accidental death, Tk 10,000 for natural death and about Tk 5-7 lakh for injuries.

It would only be applicable for one year after a player loses his place in the national team.

Pan Pacific

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It was Safina's ninth career victory overall. She took home the winner's check of 196,900 dollars.

Safina improved her lifetime record against Kuznetsova to six wins and four defeats. She has not lost to Kuznetsova this season, and defeated her in the semi-finals at the French Open.

For Kuznetsova, who has yet to win a title this season, it was her fourth loss in a title match this season, after Sydney, Dubai and Indian Wells.

Yelena fails to better mark

Athletics
AFP, Shanghai

Russian pole vault queen Yelena Isinbayeva thrilled an adoring crowd with her winning jump at Saturday's Shanghai Golden Grand Prix despite failing in her bid to better her own world record.

She was one of several Olympic champions who returned to China after winning gold in Beijing for the one-day International Association of Athletics Federation's post-season event.

Isinbayeva, who won clearing 4.60 metres, blew kisses to the stands as she climbed off the mat after her last vault.

The greatest-ever female pole vaulter had said she wanted to make history in Shanghai but warned at a pre-event news conference that fatigue might prevent her from her world record of 5.05 metres in Beijing last month.

Beijing bronze-medalist David Oliver, fresh from winning the IAAF World Athletics Final in Stuttgart a week earlier, won the 110 metre hurdles in 13.25 seconds.

A foot injury had forced Olympic champion Dayron Robles to withdraw at the last minute and hometown hero Liu Xiang stayed away while he recovers from a long-term heel injury that forced him to dramatically pull out of last month's Olympics.

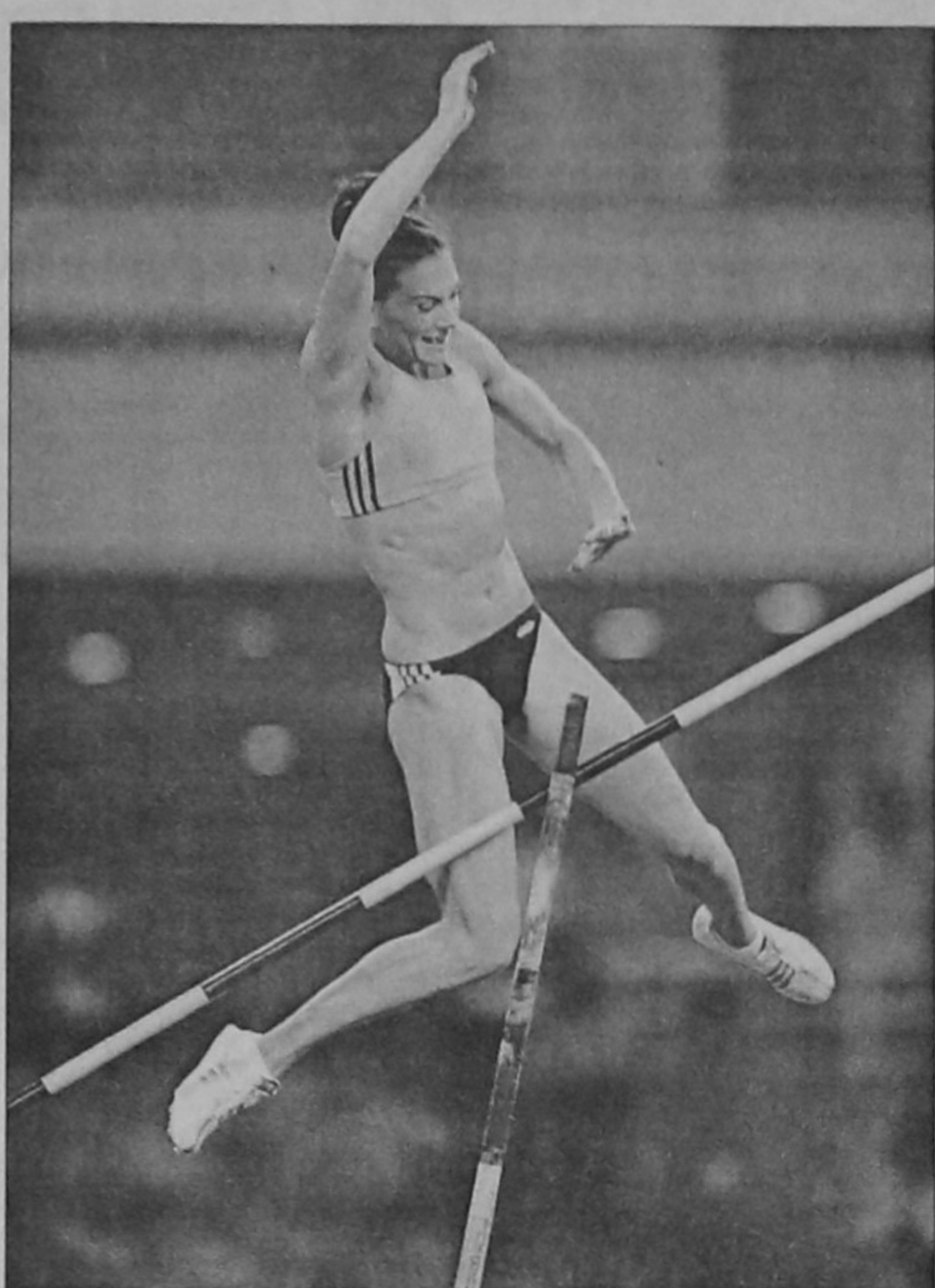
But Chinese hurdler Xie Wenjun helped restore fans' faith, placing second with a personal best time of 13.47 seconds.

Jamaica's Usain Bolt and Asafa Powell also stayed away, but their countrymen dominated the men's 100 metres with Michael Frater crossing the line with a time of 10.05 seconds and Nesta Carter coming a close second.

Their fellow Jamaican Veronica Campbell-Brown followed up her Beijing gold medal-winning performance by winning the women's 100 metres, with a time of 11.01 seconds, beating American Lauryn Williams by 0.25

seconds. Jamaican Shericka Williams, who took Olympic silver in the women's 400 metres last month, beat Beijing gold medalist Christine Ohuruogu with a time of 50.88 seconds. Ohuruogu placed fourth with a time of 51.31.

In another post-Games rematch, America's silver medalist shot putter Christian Cantwell beat Poland's Tomasz Majewski -- who won gold in Beijing -- by throwing 20.84 metres on his sixth throw.



Olympic champion Yelena Isinbayeva of Russia fails to clear the bar but would have been a world record in the women's pole vault event at the Shanghai Golden Grand Prix on Saturday.

Reefat win in style

SPORTS REPORTER

Grandmaster Reefat Bin Sattar emerged unbeaten champion in the Destiny 2000 3rd Open FIDE Rating Chess tournament at the Chess Federation hall yesterday.

The Biman player earned eight points out of nine matches to clinch the title, while FIDE Master Minhazuddin Ahmed finished runner-up with 7.5 points.

The prize distribution ceremony of the event is being held today at the National Sports Council at 5pm.

Dr Golam Mostafa Talukdar, secretary of the ministry of youth and sports, will distribute prizes among the winners.

It may be over for Gough

AFP, London

Former England paceman Darren Gough hinted on Saturday that he may have played the last match of his career.

The 38-year-old had already announced this would be his final season and after suffering a series of nagging injuries in the county championship summer, he may skip the final game against Sussex next week.

"I wanted to go out in style today - and that proved to me I am ready to retire, I am absolutely shattered now," said Gough after Yorkshire's drawn clash with title-chasing Somerset at Scarborough.

"I bowled as quick as I have for a long, long time in my first spell. I had the opposition saying that is the quickest they have faced all season and when they say stuff like that, I'd like to finish on that note."

"When I look back I'm glad my last wicket was Justin Langer. I've had some great battles against him and it's nice to know my last wicket in Yorkshire was someone as good as him."

Gough will decide over the next few days whether he is fit to play at Sussex.

"I will see how I rock up on Monday morning and how the other bowlers are," he said.

Play in right

FROM PAGE 17
series played in the right spirit."

Ponting said although he had security concerns on his mind in the wake of a suicide attack on the Marriott Hotel in Islamabad that killed 53 people and wounded 266 in neighbouring Pakistan, he expressed no reservations about security issues in India.

But Ponting admitted security was on his mind as he said farewell to his wife and baby daughter.

"I've done it all day today, I've had a lot of discussions with my wife today about those exact issues," Ponting said.

"Our advice was not to go to Pakistan and the advice that we received the last few weeks to tour India has been positive."

Ponting said he was determined to address his own poor record in India, having scored only one 50 in 14 Test innings there and averaging just 12 as opposed to his career mark of 58.

"I've had a couple of disappointing Test series (in India). In 2001, I made next to no runs," Ponting said.

"The last series over there that we won, I broke my thumb and missed the first three Tests and came back for the last one, and that was the only one we lost."

"It's certainly a void in my cricket resume in India and I'm obviously hoping to rectify that over the next six or seven weeks."

Ponting said the series represented a great challenge for Australia's cricketers.

"There's no doubt they (India) have got a lot more experience than we have going into this series," he said.

Ctg-MSc

FROM PAGE 17
not allow us to win," the former Dhaka Premier League goalkeeper said.

"Our target is win the league and this result was unexpected," he rued.

TEAMS
CHITTAGONG MOHAMMEDAN: Mamun, Sharif, Shawkat, Dhiman, Pradip, Lincoln (Touhid), Daulat, Camara, Doe (Jitu), Ridon (Chowhrin) and Raphael.

SHEIKH RUSSEL: Biplob, Aminul, Hasan, Zahurul, Parvez, Saiful (Mobarak and Shahidul), Ighir, Said, Tanveer (Rakibul), Alfaz and Bulbul.

Rooney found the side-netting from 10 yards out on the right when he should have scored and put the game beyond Chelsea then was booked for a late challenge; and a minute later Chelsea scored.

Kalou could have won it when he shot over following a Neville block barely two minutes later.

Evra and Ronaldo were the final players to be booked before the latter tried a late overhead kick, saved comfortably by Cech.

Riley blew up as Drogba took his time over regaining his feet following the award of a free-kick on the edge of the box, the confusion bringing an end to an entertaining encounter that saw Chelsea move second behind Arsenal.

Gunners surge ahead

AFP, London

Arsenal surged to the top of the English Premier League for the first time this season after coming from behind to beat Bolton 3-1 on Saturday.

Goals from Emmanuel Eboue, Nicklas Bendtner and Denilson sent the Gunners clear on a day when Liverpool's title credentials were dented by their goalless draw against newly-promoted Stoke at Anfield.

Chelsea can reclaim top spot with victory over champions Manchester United on Sunday.

Bolton got off to a good start when Kevin Davies headed them into the lead, but Arsenal responded with a period of sustained pressure that produced goals for Eboue and Bendtner in quick succession and Brazilian midfielder Denilson's late strike wrapped things up at the Reebok Stadium.

Liverpool had started the day level with Chelsea on points and thought they were on their way to victory when Steven Gerrard fired in a 25-yard free-kick after only two minutes.

But the strike was controversially disallowed for offside and Stoke, thanks to an inspired display

by goalkeeper Thomas Sorensen, were not breached again.

It was the first time Liverpool had failed to win in 11 league matches at Anfield and manager Rafael Benitez was left fuming over what he described as an "unbelievable" decision by referee Andre Marriner.

"If we had scored the first goal, the game would have been completely different, very open," said the Spaniard. "But the referee disallowed it and nobody can explain why. In his position it is impossible to have a good view. It is very, very strange."

Elsewhere, Fulham's strong start to the season was checked by a 1-0 defeat at Blackburn that handed their new manager Paul Ince victory over his Fulham counterpart Roy Hodgson, who once managed the former England midfielder at Inter Milan.

Rogue Santa Cruz's knockdown enabled Matt Derbyshire to claim his third goal of the season and settle the contest six minutes from the end of a closely balanced match. The three points were enough to lift Blackburn out of the relegation zone.

There was no such relief for managerless and up-for-sale Newcastle, who dropped to second-from-bottom of the table after

a 3-1 defeat at West Ham.

Italian striker David Di Michele helped ensure his compatriot Gianfranco Zola's reign as West Ham manager got off to a flying start.

Di Michele, who was making his first start for the Hammers, scored twice before the break to put his new club in charge.

Matt Etherington then bundled in Di Michele's mishit shot eight minutes after the break before Michael Owen netted a consolation effort for the Magpies.

The display earned former Chelsea favourite Zola a rapturous reception from the Hammers fans, which he admitted had touched him.

"It means a lot to me and also to the players," he said. "They worked very hard and well this week so when you get the results it is a great satisfaction."

Michael Chopra put his personal troubles to one side by scoring both goals in Sunderland's 2-0 lunchtime win over local rivals Middlesbrough, which lifted Roy Keane's side into the top half of the table.

Chopra, who has recently had treatment in an addiction clinic, came off the bench and produced two cool finishes in the final nine minutes of the match after England midfielder Stewart Downing had missed a penalty for Boro.

'Night racing' set for bow

INTERNET, Singapore

History will be made at the Singapore Grand Prix when the first Formula 1 is held at night providing a new dimension and challenge for racers.

Twenty drivers from 10 teams will zoom around the new 5.067-kilometre street circuit rimmed by 1,500 lighting projectors.

It's "boom time" for Formula 1 in Asia, said sports promoter Bernie Ecclestone, who proposed racing under floodlights three years ago in a bid to further enliven the sport.

For Singapore, the race is part of a drive to boost tourism and business.

More than 40,000 spectators from overseas have snapped up tickets for the September 26-28 event while viewers projected at 100 million watch on television.

While McLaren's Lewis Hamilton said he is looking forward to racing at night and views the sophisticated lighting as a challenge, others have raised concerns over the prospect of greater glare should rain.

None of the drivers have ever raced at night before.

Two practice sessions on Friday start at 7 pm (local time) and 9:30 pm. The qualifying session on Saturday begins at 10 pm and the

race at 8 pm.

Inspections will be made on Thursday before final approval is granted by FIA, motorsport's governing body.

The 150-million-Singapore dollar (112-million-US-dollar) tab for the race is not expected to generate an immediate financial bonanza, economists said.

It is the intangible benefits that are sought. "This iconic event will help to put us firmly in the global spotlight," said Muhammad Rostan Umar, communications director for the Singapore Tourism Board.

The public relations value including the live TV air-time has been estimated by media analysts as worth 300 million US dollars.

Singapore's debut on the Formula 1 circuit is aimed at turning the city-state into the "Monaco of Asia," enticing the super-wealthy who come to the race to consider setting up homes in the city-state.

Lavish parties and race-themed festivals are abundant this week. Top disc jockeys such as Johan Gielen from the Netherlands and the United Kingdom's Rob Wilder and Carl Cox are scheduled for many of the events.

Yacht parties and a variety of gala night festivities are being held. Adding to the carnival atmosphere are a Jamaican reggae band,

Brazilian samba dancer, still-walkers and break dancers.

Raffles Long Bar and rivals are setting up outlets throughout the circuit park.

For culture buffs, 12 sculptures and 12 paintings from such famous artists as Picasso were arranged to be brought to Singapore by the Opera Gallery.

The winner will receive a 580-millimetre-tall trophy featuring three sections layered with 20 pewter panels. The creation of artist Zulkifli Mahmud, the core is painted black while a section is highlighted in red, projecting the chequered flag colours.

The avalanche of guests hotels were expecting has failed however to materialize. Few of the spectators from abroad are coming earlier than right before the first night race or staying after the event ends.

Initially expecting to be forced to turn away guests, many hotels ended up cutting prices. Even trackside hotels such as Pan Pacific, Singapore are not full and those farther away have been hard hit.

Hotels charging as low as 20 Singapore dollars (15 US dollars) a night have been pleasantly surprised. "We expected to have some business but didn't expect to be full," said Spender Han, who runs Five Backpackers.

Yusuf floors Kiwis

Cricket
CRICINFO, undated

Barely 12 overs into the game, India A had lost half their side and hopes of a place in the final seemed a distant dream. New Zealand A may have even entertained thoughts of an early finish but, as it turned out, the entertainment was at their expense.

Yusuf Pathan, walking in at No.7, repaired a broken innings with an assault that included nine sixes and propelled the Indians to 305 for 8. New Zealand fell short by 81 runs and conceded a bonus point which means they need a sizeable victory against Australia on Monday.

The surface at the MA Chidambaram Stadium favoured batting but New Zealand's sharp fielding and poor communication between India's batsmen resulted in three run-outs, leaving the hosts 66 for 5. It was in this disarray that Yusuf Pathan began his

innings, receiving valuable support from Rohit Sharma and brother Irfan, and his 148 off 127 balls proved the difference between the two sides.

Yusuf's innings was filled with positive intent. He looked aggressively for singles early on, played the ball into gaps, improvised when necessary, and pounded nearly every loose ball that came his way.

The frontline bowlers had succeeded in checking the top-order but the spinners and back-up seamers failed to contain Yusuf and Rohit.

New Zealand's captain Peter Fulton tried to stem the flow of singles by bringing Brent Arnel back into the attack but Yusuf greeted the new-ball bowler with a straight drive for four. Offspinners Nathan McCullum and Jeevan Patel tried bowling a yorker length but Yusuf merely paddled those away.

The shorter deliveries were dispatched square of the wicket on both sides and the fuller ones were hit straight.

Rohit fell after a workman-like

36, caught behind by Reece Young diving to his right. Irfan joined Yusuf and they didn't let the initiative slip, adding 59 at a run-a-ball. The spinners offered too many freebies: full tosses were clubbed for sixes, one full-blooded pull by Yusuf off Patel landed on the roof.

Fulton brought back Grant Elliott towards the end but the move proved costly. Yusuf began the over on 95 and, taking cue from Luke Ronchi, moved to 101 with a straight six. The next ball was driven past the bowler for four, and the pressure began to tell on the fielders when a skier was spilled at deep midwicket and rolled towards the boundary. He made room and scooped the next ball to extra cover before carting him into the stands at deep midwicket, making it 25 for the over.

Mark Gillespie was punished in the final overs, and his no-balls didn't do his team any favours. Neil Broom dismissed Yusuf off the final ball of the match as he miscued a loft to McCullum at long-on.

'A great chance'

Cricket
PTI, Kolkata

Drafted into the Rest of India side for the Irani Trophy match in place of injured Sachin Tendulkar, hard-working middle order batsman Subramaniam Badrinath terms it a great opportunity coming his way to make it to the Test squad with a good knock against Ranji champions Delhi.

Badrinath, who is captaining India A in a triangular series involving A sides of Australia and New Zealand before his inclusion in the Rest team, is itching to go out in the middle at Vadodara.

"Maybe the time has come for me now. It's a great feeling... Tremendous to know that I'll play for Rest. I would like to make use of this opportunity; a good knock means chance to make the Test squad against Australia," said the Tamil Nadu batsman who scored a match-winning 69 not out against New Zealand A on Wednesday.

"I can't ask for more, if I make a debut against the world champions," Badrinath told PTI from Chennai in an interview.

Shrugging off the notion that luck plays a role in a cricketer's career, Badrinath says he believes in hard work.

"I am not somebody who is a firm believer in luck. I believe in hard work and wait for the right opportunity. The incidents in the past (of coming so close to selection but not making it) have made me strong mentally," he said.

True for somebody with a first-class average of 55.92 and 40-plus in List A matches - only Ricky Ponting and Sachin Tendulkar, among batsmen still active and with at least

50 innings, have a higher first-class average but yet has been ignored in the last three years.

Despite three successful Ranji seasons since 2005-06 when he averaged almost 80 scoring 636 runs from seven matches, Badrinath never made to the playing eleven of the national side, though he was called up for the three-ODI Australia series last October.

But the cool and soft-spoken Badrinath never gave up his unflinching will and showed his anguish.

Call it luck or fate, Badrinath, having remained in the sidelines for about 10 months, was named Tendulkar's replacement in the Sri Lanka ODI series.

"A coincidence," says Badrinath, who did not let the selectors down in his debut series.

Batting at No.7, where batsmen hardly get to score big and sacrifice their wickets in throwing their bats in the slog overs, Badrinath played like an experienced batsman with a defying 27 not out, very crucial in the context of a low-scoring 143-run chase in Dambulla, which India won by three wickets and the Tamil Nadu right-hander earned high praise from his skipper Mahendra Singh Dhoni.

"It feels great to have begun like that. Being a debut series, it was very important for me. I did not want to do anything extraordinary but played according to the context of the game and it worked as Dhoni and I scored the vital runs," Badrinath said, recalling his 60-run sixth wicket partnership that took the team to a win in the second one-day.

Badrinath acknowledges that he's really going through a high at the moment and the selection to the Irani Trophy game has come at the right and opportune moment.

Cantwell won by nearly half a metre.

Kenya's Wilfred Bungei, another Olympic champion, beat his own Shanghai Stadium record by winning the men's 800 metres with a time of one minute 44 seconds.

The event, which is in its fourth year, is vying to be upgraded and added to the list of Golden League events, currently a series of six in Europe with a one-million-dollar jackpot for each event shared by the winners.

Blues escape home defeat

FROM PAGE 17
There was a running battle throughout the afternoon between home left-back Ashley Cole and Hargreaves, while late tackles and dissent littered proceedings and saw seven visiting players booked - only Mikel was cautioned for Chelsea.

United centre-half Rio Ferdinand could have scored two minutes before the opening goal. He won the ball in midfield and continued his run as Berbatov found Rooney; the England striker cut inside and played in his international team-mate, whose shot from an angle on the right was saved by Czech shot-stopper Cech.

Two minutes later United were in front after Evra battled on the left side of the penalty area to win the ball and opted to pull it back to Berbatov instead of shooting. His shot was saved, but Cech could do nothing about the follow-up from Park.

Van der Sar was hurt in a challenge with Florent Malouda - for which the home fans wanted a penalty, although it seemed fair - and left the match with a quarter of an hour to go in the first period, replaced by Tomasz Kuszczak.

Scholes and Ferdinand both went into Mike Riley's book, the

former for a mistimed tackle and latter for dissent. The referee seemed intent from the start on penalising any challenges of strength; however that did not affect the flow as the attacks went from end to end.

Before the break Lampard played in Anelka on the right and the France striker shot over the near post with Joe Cole in the middle. Soon after Kuszczak saved from Alex and Anelka almost got to the rebound as Ferdinand came across quickly to concede a corner.

Rooney then took the ball cleanly from John Terry on the right and cut across the pitch, playing it inside to Berbatov who helped it to Park when he could have shot himself. The pass to the Korean was poor and Chelsea survived his effort on goal.

There were fewer clear-cut chances in the second half as United dug in and Chelsea applied pressure in the final third. Cristiano Ronaldo replaced Scholes and introduced pace into the occasional breaks out of defence, but had no joy.

Neville and Berbatov went into the book before Joe Cole went clear on the left, only to see Kuszczak

stand tall to block his left-footed shot from an angle.

Mikel saw yellow before Luiz Felipe Scolari introduced Kalou for the fatigued Ballack, but in between Anelka missed a golden chance to level for the Blues.

Joe Cole played an inch-perfect cross to give the France striker the chance to finish from a few yards out with the goal gaping, but he continued to miss the ball completely.

Rooney found the side-netting from 10 yards out on the right when he should have scored and put the game beyond Chelsea then was booked for a late challenge; and a minute later Chelsea scored.

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CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS 41 Picture of health? 3 November stone 24 Prior to Ostlich's kin 4 English Soaring channel? 47 Farm 5 Walled-off genre 7 Binge female 6 Lacy-mose one 28 Really parcel 13 -- the 52 Weir 7 Big bag 30 Dinner for Dobbin 8 Country-club staffer 31 Summer-time abbr. 14 Game 54 Pitching stat 9 Gun the engine 32 Wall Streeter's deg. 15 Play with Bubble 56 Hiwa- that's craft 10 Compass pt.