

A big loss: Abbas

AFP, Karachi

Star batsman Mohammad Yousuf's move to the Indian Cricket League is a huge loss to Pakistan cricket, former national skipper Zaheer Abbas said Thursday while another great criticised his decision. Yousuf, 34, joined the lucrative but unrecognised ICL on Wednesday, prompting the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) to ban him from national and international cricket.

"Under the scenario when Pakistan's batting strength is already weak, Yousuf's move to the ICL is a big loss," said Abbas, himself a batting legend in 1970s and 80s.

"Although it's a great loss to the country, you can't stop anyone from playing privately. Banning Yousuf is not the right step," said Abbas.

Yousuf left for India on Monday, hours after being named in a Pakistan squad to play three-one-day internationals against the West Indies at Abu Dhabi in what could have capped a glorious career.

The player, from a poor background, was plucked from the obscurity of a tailor's shop in the slums of the eastern city of Lahore to play a local match in the mid-1990s.

His well-crafted shots attracted attention and he rose through the ranks to become the backbone of Pakistan's batting line-up.

In 2006, he broke the world record of the most runs in a calendar year, scoring 1,788. His nine Test hundreds in 2006 is also a record.

Pretty

FROM PAGE 17
Tamim Iqbal. Tamim is wonderful batsman and he is nice to watch. Actually it's a very exciting young team," said Wikky.

There are also a number of Bangladeshi expatriates, mainly from Chittagong, who appeared at the stadium by taking a day-off and they are definitely expecting something special from the Tigers.

Something special from Ashraf, Tamim and co. would also please the local crowd as it would keep in tune with their sentiment of 'love cricket and love to watch cricket' regardless of who is playing.

Krejza snaps

FROM PAGE 17
Both batsmen were beaten by turning deliveries, with Dhoni losing his leg-stump and Ganguly edging to slip fielder Michael Clarke.

Left-handed Ganguly missed out on a rare feat of scoring a century in the first and last Test, hitting one six and eight fours in his 153-ball knock. Mohammad Azharuddin is the only Indian to have achieved the landmark.

Ganguly made 131 on his debut in 1996 against England at Lord's. There was no hint of collapse in the morning, as India did not lose a wicket in the two-hour session, adding 93 runs to their overnight total of 311-5.

Ganguly, who scored a century in Mohali, extended his impressive run in the farewell series as he cut and drove fluently. He used his feet well against Krejza, once stepping out to loft the bowler over long-on for a six.

But Krejza came back strongly after the lunch break, sparking a collapse which saw the hosts lose their last five wickets for 19 runs.

The spinner was on a hat-trick when he bowled Zaheer Khan and Amit Mishra in his 43rd over before finishing the innings in the next over with the wicket of last-man Ishant Sharma.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard at stumps on the second day of the fourth and final Test between India and Australia in Nagpur on Friday:

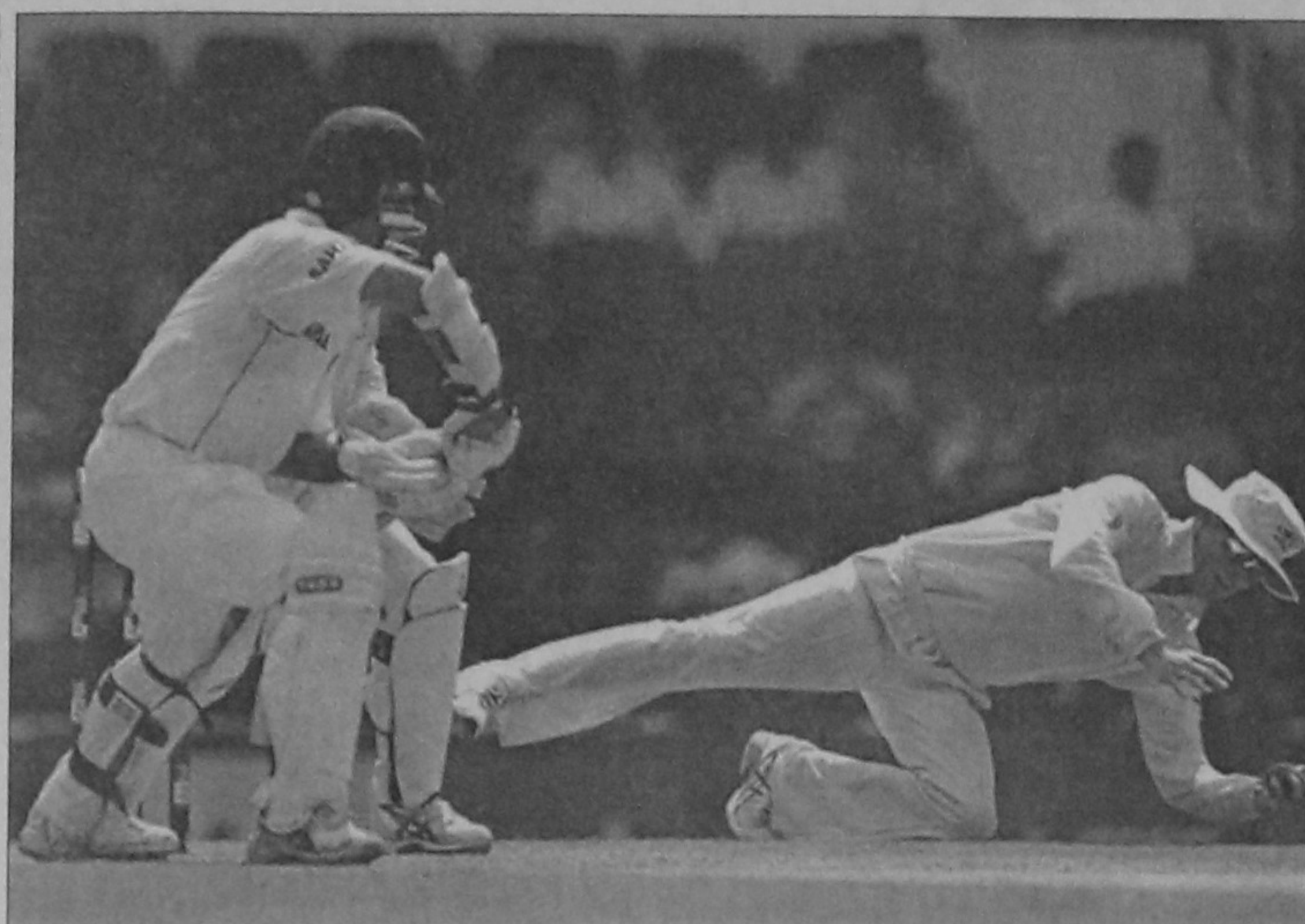
INDIA: First innings (overnight 311-5)

Sehwag b Krejza	66
Vijay c Haddin b Watson	33
Dravid c Katich b Krejza	0
Tendulkar lbw b Johnson	109
Laxman c Haddin b Krejza	64
Ganguly c Clarke b Krejza	85
Dhoni b Krejza	56
Harbhajan not out	18
Zaheer b Krejza	1
Mishra b Krejza	0
Sharma c Katich b Krejza	0
Extras: (b-4, lb-2, nb-2, w-1)	9
Total: (All out in 124.5 overs)	441
Fall of wickets: 1-98, 2-99, 3-116, 4-262, 5-303, 6-422, 7-423, 8-437, 9-437.	

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Lee	16	2	62	0
Johnson	32	11	84	1
Watson	20	5	42	1
Krejza	43.5	1	215	8
White	10	1	24	0
Katich	3	0	8	0

AUSTRALIA: First innings	O	M	R	W
Hayden run out	16			
Katich not out	92			
Ponting b Harbhajan	24			
Hussey not out	45			
Extras: (b-4, lb-2, nb-1, pen-5)	12			
Total: (For two wickets in 49 overs)	189			
To bat: Clarke, Watson, Haddin, White, Lee, Johnson, Krejza.				
Fall of wickets: 1-32, 2-74.				

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Zaheer	8	0	41	0
Harbhajan	16	0	57	1
Sharma	8	2	25	0
Mishra	9	1	31	0
Sehwag	6	1	11	0
Tendulkar	2	0	13	0



INCHES FROM THE GROUND: Australia's Michael Clarke takes a fantastic diving catch to stop Indian great Sourav Ganguly from becoming the sixth batsman to score a hundred on debut and his last Test yesterday. The left-hander fell for 85 to Jason Krejza on the second day of the fourth Test in Nagpur.

Heroes ride on Boje

Cricket

INTERNET, undated

In one of the most one-sided games of the ICL 20-20 Indian Championship, the Mumbai Champs were drubbed by 79 runs by the Hyderabad Heroes in game 32 on Thursday.

After Nicky Boje helped the Heroes post a formidable 214-run target, the Champs were restricted to a dismal 135-6 in Chandigarh and hence, allowing the Hyderabad team to book a place for themselves in the final four.

Champs were never in the hunt during their chase as they failed to get off the blocks through out their innings. Stand-in skipper Dheeraj Jadhav top scored with a polished 43 but none of his teammates could

come up with a half decent effort. Earlier, Boje's 49-ball 88 propelled the Hyderabad Heroes to a mammoth score of 214-6.

Boje, who was the last wicket to fall in the final over of the innings smashed five sixes and eight boundaries as his willow flourished with disdain. Boje was particularly severe on tweaker Avinash Yadav, hitting him for 24 runs in the 19th over with Justin Kemp.

The South African was well supported by the impressive Stuart Binny who blasted a 26-ball 51 with the help of five fours and three sixes.

The game, however, began disastrously for the Hyderabad Heroes as they lost Abdul Razzaq off the first ball of the game. Thereon, the Heroes managed a mini recovery through some cameos but the Champs were able to take wickets at regular intervals.

At the eight-over mark, the Heroes had lost Jimmy Maher (19), Ambati Rayudu (15) and Anirudh Singh (11) with the score reading 72-4.

But then, Boje and Binny added 92 runs in just 50 balls to take the Heroes to a gigantic score.

The Champs' chase began disastrously with a horrible mix-up, with both Jadhav and partner Robin Morris on the same side of the wicket.

Wicketkeeper-batsman Subhojit Paul and Jadhav attempted a recovery but then IS Reddy got into the act by taking three quick wickets for the Heroes as Champs buckled under pressure.

In the end, the game ended in a no contest with the Mumbai team needing 87 runs required off the last over.

Seeking a fresh start

Cricket

AFP, Mumbai

England will try to make a fresh start during their tough one-day series in India following their disappointing Stanford defeat, captain Kevin Pietersen said Friday.

England slumped to a humiliating 10-wicket defeat in the winners-take-all \$20m Twenty20 Stanford Super Series in Antigua last week, prompting widespread condemnation from fans and critics.

They are now set to play seven one-day internationals against the hosts, starting on November 14 in Rajkot, followed by a two-Test series.

"Last week wasn't special but it absolutely has no bearing on what will happen here in India," Pietersen told reporters here.

"This series is going to be very difficult. Beating India in India is tough. We drew the Test series last time but we got smashed 5-1 in the ODIs. We are just looking to

improve."

Pietersen, 28, said his players were drawing confidence from the 4-0 one-day whitewash of South Africa at home in August.

"We would've won 5-0 if it had not rained in the final ODI in Cardiff. To beat South Africa 4-0, it's something we haven't done before. We are learning how to win," he said.

Pietersen, on his first full tour as captain after taking over from Michael Vaughan during the South Africa series, also said his team will look to break the confidence of India captain Mahendra Dhoni.

"Dhoni is a free customer when he goes out. He doesn't get too emotionally wound up by the looks of things."

"At the end of the day the players who play with him just want to do well. In terms of his captaincy he oozes confidence in the dressing room. We just need to try and keep that confidence down."

England coach Peter Moores also said the Stanford games were history and his players were focused on the Indian contest.

South Asian Jr Tennis from Monday

SPORTS REPORTER

Hosts Bangladesh yesterday named their team for the first Junior South Asian Tennis Championship, which begins in Dhaka on Monday.

Omar Faruk Sunny, Mofazzal Hossain and U Sue Sue will represent Bangladesh in the 5-nation meet while Amol Roy has been named non-playing captain.

The inaugural competition for South Asians will be organised by Bangladesh Tennis Federation (BTF).

Other competitors -- India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka are expected to reach Dhaka tomorrow.

BTF president and health secretary AMM Nasiruddin will formally inaugurate the five-day meet at the National Tennis Complex in Ramna.

The league-basis tournament will follow Junior Davis Cup rules of International Tennis Federation (ITF).

Latif back

FROM PAGE 17
which Mr. Malik was awarded a life ban, which was overturned last month, therefore I have no other choice but to step down as the wicketkeeping coach," Latif had written in his resignation.

Latif played 37 tests for Pakistan -- six as captain -- between 1992 and 2003, scoring 1381 runs. He collected 119 catches and 11 stumpings. Latif also played 166 ODIs, taking 182 catches, completing 38 stumpings and scoring 1709 runs.

Yousuf blames Malik

Cricket

AFP, Karachi

An angry Mohammad Yousuf on Friday blamed the attitude of Pakistan cricket authorities and captain Shoaib Malik for his move to the unofficial Indian league, denying he was motivated by money.

The 34-year-old was banned from all cricket in Pakistan after he joined the lucrative Indian Cricket League (ICL) on Wednesday.

Yousuf said the attitude of Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) and Malik pushed him towards the ICL.

"Everyone is saying that I have signed (up for) the ICL because of money but the real reason was the attitude of the PCB and (Shoaib) Malik which forced me to join the league," Yousuf told BBC Urdu radio in an interview from India.

Yousuf left for India on Monday, hours after being named in Pakistan's squad to play three one-day internationals against the West Indies in Abu Dhabi.

The player had previously been left out of the side for a four-nation Twenty20 competition in Canada in October because of visa problems. But he said that was not the whole story.

"I was told that my visa for Canada was delayed. In fact afterwards I got to know that my visa

was applied (for) in a wrong manner and I was left out of the team and no one from the PCB bothered to talk to me," he added.

"I am the senior most player and team's best performer for the last several years but I was left out of the team. They don't want me in the team so why not I join a league where I am welcomed?"

"(The) captain never gave me the respect I deserved." Yousuf signed for the ICL in September last year after being left out of Pakistan's Twenty20 World Cup squad. The PCB managed to convince him to continue playing for the national side and return the ICL signing on fee.

But he was lured back to the ICL once more after missing the Canada tournament.

"The PCB must give respect to the senior players and if they don't, more and more senior players will leave for the ICL. That has been the case since last year," said Yousuf.

The ICL authorities said they have dropped all the cases against Yousuf for breach of contract in 2007. Yousuf will now make his ICL debut for Lahore Badshahs on Friday.

Yousuf said he still harbours hopes of playing for Pakistan.

"I know I still have three to four years of cricket left in me, so I can still play for Pakistan provided I am accepted by the PCB and my teammates, especially the captain."

Tendulkar far from retiring

PTI, New Delhi

Two of his celebrated peers, Anil Kumble and Sourav Ganguly have decided to walk into the sunset after glorious careers but Sachin Tendulkar says his body is "doing fine" and he has no plans to retire in the immediate future.

"My body is doing fine and at the moment I am not thinking of any plans to retire. Normally I prefer to think of the present, not what I am going to do in the next four, five or six years of my life," said Tendulkar even though he has been rested for the upcoming One-Day series against England.

"If I think it is time to hang up I will let everybody know. There is nothing to hide in it. I know it will make news but that I don't think it is a negative news that I have to hide from everyone," he added.

Tendulkar was however non-committal when asked if he was thinking of playing in the 2011 World Cup which will be held in the sub-continent.

"I normally prefer to think of which match I am going to play next and what sort of planning I should do and which bowling attack would be used on me."

"Even if I have to play in 2011 World Cup it is 700 days to go. For now my focus is on the next four days against Australia," he told a news channel.

Tendulkar, who hit his 40th Test hundred in Nagpur, said he will miss Sourav Ganguly with whom he shared a special understanding on the field while batting.

"I will definitely miss him. It happened many a times with Sourav that when we were on the wicket and between the overs we used to know looking at each other's face that there is a lot of stress and the situation is important or whether it is necessary to relax."

L'pool reward Benitez

AFP, Liverpool

Rafael Benitez has been rewarded for Liverpool's best start to a Premier League campaign with a move by the club to extend his contract as manager beyond 2010.

The Spaniard, who has been in charge at Anfield since 2004, will next week begin talks with the club's American owners, George Gillett and Tom Hicks, on a new deal, Benitez revealed on Friday.

Benitez is hugely popular with the Liverpool fans but has had a troubled relationship with Gillett and Hicks.

It emerged last year that the Americans had made an approach to Jurgen Klinsmann about possibly taking over from the Spaniard while Benitez has been publicly critical of their transfer policy and is regularly linked with other jobs, most notably at Real Madrid.

Differences between the manager and the boardroom have become less acute in recent months as Liverpool have shown signs that they are equipped to mount a serious bid to claim the club's first English title since 1990.

Benitez revealed that contract talks were planned on Liverpool's official website, www.liverpoolfc.tv.

"I received a phone call from Tom Hicks on behalf of George Gillett also," Benitez said. "They are talking about a meeting with my advisors and a contract extension. This is very positive news."

"We decided to meet in the next week and now my advisors are in contact with them. We haven't spoken about the length of the contract but we talked and we all want to find a solution as soon as possible."

Old boys feel

FROM PAGE 17
Bangladesh can win a match this time.

"We are not announcing anything but Myanmar are not much better than us. Indonesia are supposed to be very good, if they bring their number one team, but if they beat the hosts in the opening match (November 11), a place in the semifinals is likely for us," said the attacking midfielder, who had scored one of the most memorable goals for the country, against India in the SAFF Championship semifinal in 2003 in Dhaka, on way to win the trophy.

"We just need to keep up the good work from Malaysia to bring result from this tournament."

Like Rajani and Munna, Afaz is also nearing the end of a glorious career and he remains the only member of the 1995 side that won Bangladesh's first title abroad under late Monem Munna.

"I want to make my return to the national team permanent. So I would be giving my hundred per cent," said Afaz, who is top scorer with seven goals in the ongoing B. League but was ignored for the Merdeka Cup after being recalled to the national side after more than a year.

"The team look spirited to me and I am enjoying the new environment of the national team," added the ace striker.

Udinese take on Inter

AFP, Rome



Champions Inter Milan host high-flying Udinese in the game of the weekend at the San Siro with top spot potentially up for grabs for the winners.

Inter's bitter city rivals AC Milan actually head the championship standings after 10 matches and face a trip to Lecce on Sunday.

The southerners will have to be careful as Milan have been finding some late winners recently, scoring three minutes from time to beat Napoli 1-0 last weekend and three minutes into injury to defeat Sporting Braga in the UEFA Cup on Thursday night.

But all eyes will be on Inter and Udinese's clash as both sides trail Milan by just one point.

Udinese, alongside resurgent Napoli, have been the biggest surprises this season with a potent attack that has mustered a league-leading 19 goals, three more than Inter and four more than Milan.

With Italy internationals Antonio Di Natale, Fabio Quagliarella and Simone Pepe as well as Antonio Floro Flores, they have many options and strength in depth.

But they are not so solid at the back and Inter will provide them with their sternest test of the season.

Their confidence is sky high following a second UEFA Cup

group stage win in a row, at Spartak Moscow on Thursday.

Di Natale missed that match but general director Pietro Leonardi is sure he'll be available on Sunday.

"I know he felt a bit better (on Thursday) and I hope that on Sunday he can rejoin the group," he said.

"For the rest everyone will say that Udinese will be a bit tired but seeing the way they played (on Thursday) you wouldn't say so."

"Now we'll think about Inter with the spirit of wanting to give our all. But if they're better than us, we'll accept the result. I am sure we'll play a great match."

Inter boss Jose Mourinho could decide to recall Brazilian forward Adriano to his line-up after leaving him out of the last three squads.

Adriano upset Mourinho by repeatedly turning up late to training but the player's agent revealed earlier in the week that striker and coach have made peace.

The Portuguese boss may also make some changes at the back following Inter's defensive debacle in Tuesday's 3-3 Champions League draw at Cypriot minnows Anorthosis Famagusta.

FIXTURES

Saturday	Bologna v Roma, Torino v Palermo
Sunday	Catania v Cagliari, Chievo v Juventus, Fiorentina v Alaiola, Genoa v Reggina, Inter Milan v Udinese, Lazio v Siena, Lecce v AC Milan, Napoli v Sampdoria

Argentine centre-back Nicolas Burdisso had a nightmare and was at fault for two goals while although his central partner Marco Materazzi scored, he has rarely been first choice this season.

Christian Chivu may revert to the centre of defence while Walter Samuel is also pushing for a recall.

Milan for their part will likely bring their big guns back for the trip to Lecce having left goalkeeper Christian Abbiati, full-back Gianluca Zambrotta, midfielders Clarence Seedorf and Massimo Ambrosini and forwards Kaka, Ronaldinho and Marco Borriello out of the starting line-up in the UEFA Cup.

They will be looking for an eighth victory in their last nine scudetto matches.

AS Roma will try to arrest their recent Serie A slide as they travel to lowly Bologna, one of two teams to have changed coaches in midweek, alongside Chievo.

Former Roma player Sinisa Mihajlovic will lead Bologna against the capital-based club in his debut as a coach.

Despite losing their last four league matches, Roma showed signs of improvement in Tuesday's 3-1 Champions League victory over Chelsea.

Coach Luciano Spalletti has already confirmed he will stick to the 4-4-2 formation used against the Premier League leaders meaning captain Francesco Totti will be partnered by Montenegro's Mirko Vucinic up front.

Venus overcomes Serena

Tennis

AFP, Doha

Venus Williams made certain of reaching the last four of the WTA Championships with a landslide 5-7, 6-1, 6-0 victory over sister Serena Williams here on Thursday.

The result brought the first love set between them in any of their 18 WTA Tour matches and twice reduced the younger sibling to tears.

The Wimbledon champion's win over the US Open champion was her third in three days, enabling her to finish her top of her round robin group, and ensuring that she joined Jelena Jankovic and Vera Zvonareva in the knock-out semifinals of the women's season-ending event.

But Serena, who has only one win, will need to beat Olympic champion Elena Dementieva on Friday if she is to be sure of keeping alive the chances of an all-Williams final.

"I couldn't keep a ball in play," Serena said. "I couldn't keep more than two balls in play. I have no idea why."

"I have never played like that before. I have never been in a situation where I can't do anything. I was very, very frustrated."

So much so, that from 1-2 in the second set she lost ten games in a row, her eyes welling up at 0-3 in the final set and then again at the end as she walked back to the chair.

As she became increasingly confused, she played worse and worse, and her indecision about taking a ball twice confused a ball boy, making some of the crowd laugh.

But the only time Serena gained the relief afforded by a sense of humour was afterwards when she said: "I didn't look like a top eight player - maybe top 600 in the juniors." Her own eloquence about the disaster made her grin.

Venus admitted that her pleasure in playing well was tempered by her sympathy for her sister. Asked what she might be able to do to help her, she said: "There is nothing I can do."

"She just has to figure it out in her head as in the other matches, even though this one was against me. So she just has to take some time and she will come out stronger."

Venus has never made the final of this event, and much may depend on her fitness, and especially the condition of a knee, which she several times touched. Asked about it, she said: "I am doing okay," but declined to elaborate.

National Museum of Science & Technology			
Agargaon, Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka-1207.			
Ref: NMST/Lib/B-6/1(2)/2003/402		Date: 30-10-2008	
Invitation for Tender			
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