

Pakistan draw with China

AFP, Kuantan

Three-time former champions Pakistan pulled off a face-saving 1-1 draw with China with just 40 seconds remaining in their opening Asia Cup tie at the Kuantan Hockey Stadium here Saturday.

The Chinese, who had beaten Pakistan 3-2 in the last Asia Cup in 2007 in Chennai, took the lead in the 61st minute through Hu Hui Ren.

China were coasting to another upset when a last-minute goalmouth melee allowed the Pakistanis to secure a precious point.

The move in the 70th minute saw Akhtar Ali scoring from close range when the Chinese defenders failed to clear in their semi-circle.

The match proved to be an anti-climax as the Pakistanis, with the return of four highly experienced players, were expected to dominate and collect full points.

Zia 14th in Mayor's Cup

SPORTS REPORTER

Grand Master Ziaur Rahman finished 14th in the second Mumbai Mayor's Cup Open International Chess Tournament in Mumbai, India yesterday.

GM Niaz Murshed became 23rd in the meet.

In the last round matches, Zia beat IM Sudhakar Babu of India and Niaz beat Saurabh Kherdekar of India.

A total of 415 players including 22 Grand Masters, 21 International Masters from several countries participated in the event.

Abahani

FROM PAGE 20

Rupu also said that they were hopeful of winning the trophy and the team had got enough time for preparation and the players were physically fit for putting up their best.

Abahani will employ two foreign players in Ibrahim and Samad, and the good news for them is that star striker Emily will be available for all matches.

The team manager also informed that they would set up the game strategy after watching the opponents' video footages, which have been collected from AFC earlier.

Meanwhile Sri Lanka Army team has already arrived in the capital yesterday and Ashgabat Turkmenistan are due this afternoon. All three participating teams will hold a pre-tournament press conference tomorrow at the BFF House.

The rate of the tickets for this tournament has been fixed at Tk 10 (eastern gallery), Tk 20 (western gallery) and Tk 50 (VIP enclosure). School students will be admitted free into the stadium on presentation of a valid student ID card.

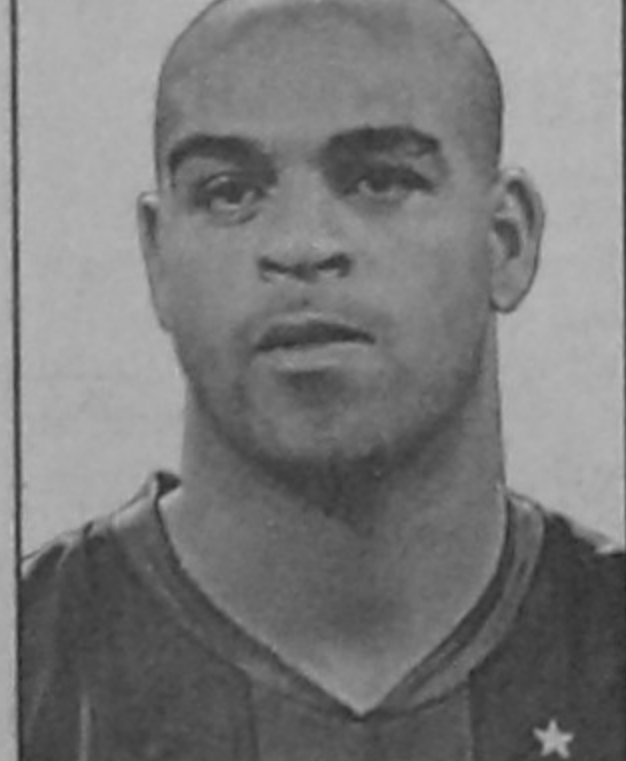


Did U Know?

Nona Gaprindashvili of Georgia was the first woman to win a men's chess tournament in 1977.



Talk Turkey



Adriano

(Brazil soccer star)
"I'm happy to be back - it was a life choice and that choice is Flamengo. There's nothing better than being back with Flamengo. I didn't leave [Inter Milan] because I didn't feel happy at the club but because I didn't feel good in the country." After rejoining his old Brazilian club.



Bangladesh Under-19s opener Amit Mazumder (R) celebrates reaching his hundred in the fifth and final one-dayer against Sri Lanka Under-19s at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

All-Russian final

Tennis

AFP, Rome

World number one Dinara Safina booked a date with Svetlana Kuznetsova in the WTA Rome clay court international final after an epic three-set victory over Venus Williams on Friday.

Safina came back from a set down to beat the five-time Wimbledon champion 6-7, 6-3, 6-4 in a match that lasted more than three hours.

Her Russian compatriot Kuznetsova had a far easier semifinal as she stormed past Victoria Azarenka 6-2, 6-4.

It is the second week running the two Russians will play in a final after Kuznetsova beat Safina in the Stuttgart final 6-4, 6-3 last Sunday.

Top seed Safina started slowly against the fourth seed, as she had done all tournament,

and for the third straight match she dropped the opening set.

Williams had been the more aggressive and positive in that opener, hitting twice as many winners but also 50 per cent more unforced errors.

But the roles had reversed by the end of the match and Williams was gracious in defeat. She went up a break in the second set but Safina stormed back to win that 6-3 and set up the decider.

That was a see-saw affair with five breaks of serve and numerous other opportunities.

A backhand crosscourt winner from Safina gave her a third break and a 5-4 advantage, after which she served for the match.

But the last game was the most epic of all as Safina served three double faults, saved four break points and finally clinched victory on her third match point.

It was the first time she had

beaten Williams.

It is the second final each here for the two Russians having both finished runner-up once before, Safina in 2006 and Kuznetsova a year later.

But having both reached successive clay court finals it bodes well for Roland Garros, which starts later this month, although Kuznetsova insisted she's not looking that far ahead.

The result never looked in doubt as she dominated her Belorussian opponent from the start, breezing through the first set with three breaks of serve to one.

However, the sixth-seeded teenager broke Kuznetsova in the first game of the second set and looked to make more of a fist of things.

However, the match turned on a controversial point at 2-0 to Azarenka, when on game point Kuznetsova hit a shot that television replays showed had landed just out.

The umpire called it in despite Azarenka's vociferous protests and the 19-year-old let the matter get to her as she lost her way, and five straight games.

Amnesty

FROM PAGE 17

The rebel cricketers have been also worried with their fate with the BCB if they ultimately scrap the contract but BCB director Yunus found no reason to be worried with the future.

"I think BCB already showed that they are liberal enough because we recommended only a six-month cooling period for the cricketers. And since we made a public statement, there is no way they can think like that. If someone fulfils the requirement he will definitely be considered for the international cricket," assured Yunus.

Salma Rafiq

FROM PAGE 17

because of the gravity of her illness. She was the executive editor of Krira Jagat, once regarded as the best-read Bangla sports magazine.

Hailing from a sports family, Salma played a lot of games during her Dhaka University days when she was part of the fantastic Rokeya Hall trio of Sultana Kamal and Nazma Shamim who excelled in athletics.

After completing her honours in Bangla, she started her long career as a journalist in 1972. After working in The Daily Azad and weekly Kishore Bangla, she joined Krira Jagat when it was first launched in 1977. Since then she not only devoted herself in lifting the image of Krira Jagat but also involved in different sport federations.

Despite her tireless effort, Salma won one noticeable award -- the best women organiser in sport journalism -- from the Bangladesh Sports Writers Association this year.

Awards however will mean little to a selfless lady, who will definitely remain in the heart of countless reporters for the support she offered when those reporters turned to her to learn the basics.

Amit century makes it 4-1

SPORTS REPORTER

A superb hundred from Bangladesh Under-19s opener Amit Mazumder took the home side to a three-wicket win in the fifth and final one-dayer against Sri Lanka Under-19s at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

Chasing 228 for the win, left-hander Amit shook off the loss of two early wickets and smashed 102. He was dismissed soon after reaching the three-figure mark but Taibur Rahman remained unbeaten on 27 to see his side make it 4-1 in the one-day series.

Amit, who scored a century in the second four-day game too, hit ten boundaries and three sixes in his 127-ball knock. With his side in trouble, the free-scoring lefty added 132 for the third wicket with Anamul Haque (38) but both batsmen fell in successive balls of the 34th over to leave the home side at 148 for five. But the cool headed pair of Taibur and Sabbir Rahman (37) added 43 for the seventh wicket before Taibur, with a six and three boundaries, finished the job.

Earlier electing to bat first, the visitors were bowled out for 227 runs in the 50th over with a handy but slow 52 from Kusal Perera and a later order contribution from Chathura Peries, who scored 30 off 43 balls.

Junior athletics

SPORTS REPORTER

BKSP dominated the Dhaka Bank 25th National Junior Athletics Competition winning seven gold medals in the track and field events at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday. Comilla District Sports Association (DSA) followed the leader securing three gold medals.

A total of 304 promising athletes from 38 districts, educational institutions and affiliated associations across the country are taking part in the 33 events of this competition. 12 events were decided on the first day.

Gold medalists of the day's events are: Milan of Kushtia (800m race for juvenile boys), Poly Akhter of BKSP (800m race for juvenile girls), Kulsum Akhter of Dhaka Division (shot put for girls), Mezbahul Haque of BKSP (high jump for boys), Hosna Akhter of Comilla (javelin throw for juvenile girls), Habibur Rahman of Comilla (long jump for juvenile boys), Taslima Akhter of BKSP (long jump for juvenile girls), Sherin Akhter of BKSP (high jump for girls), Mesbah Ahmed of BKSP (200m sprint for boys), Sherin Akhter of BKSP (200m sprint for girls), Faruquul Islam of Comilla (200m sprint for juvenile boys) and Taslima Akhter of BKSP (200m sprint for juvenile girls).

State Minister for Youth and Sports Ahad Ali Sarker inaugurated the two-day meet as chief guest in the afternoon.

PCB to sue ICC

Cricket

AFP, Lahore

Pakistan is mounting a legal challenge to the International Cricket Council's decision to move its World Cup matches over security fears, the nation's cricket governing body said Saturday.

Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) said the decision to deprive it of the fixtures was legally flawed, and that it had served notice of the challenge through its lawyer to ICC president David Morgan.

"The PCB believes that the manner in which the decision was taken, with no security assessment of Pakistan or any other host country and without the issue being on the agenda of the meeting, it was legally flawed," PCB chairman Ijaz Butt said Saturday.

The ICC last month stripped Pakistan of 14 World Cup matches, including a semi-final, citing the "uncertain security situation" in the country.

Co-hosts India will now host 29 matches inclusive of a semifinal and the final, while Sri Lanka will host 12 matches with one semi-final and Bangladesh eighth matches and the opening ceremony.

"There was no prior notice that the Cup matches will be moved and more could have been done in an indiscriminate manner before the decision was taken," said Butt.

"We believe that more could and should have been done to review the actual situation to deal with the matter on a non-discriminatory basis."

Butt said the issue had been referred to the president of the ICC's dispute resolution committee.

"He can either refer the matter to the dispute resolution committee which is made up of ICC Officials or to independent arbitration before the Court of Arbitration for Sport," Butt said.

"The PCB prefer impartial arbitration, in the interest of justice, equity and fair play. The PCB will push for this matter to be expedited so the PCB's status can be restored as soon as possible."

Former ICC President Ehsan Mani also criticised the ICC decision last week, saying the manner in which it had been taken was "ill-conceived" and "made in haste" -- a charge denied by the ICC.

Pakistan's already dented reputation as a safe venue was in tatters after attacks by armed militants on the Sri Lankan team bus in Lahore on March 3 left seven Sri Lankan players and their assistant coach wounded and eight policemen dead.

Even before the attacks foreign teams had refused to tour Pakistan over security fears in a country locked in an increasingly bloody conflict with Taliban and Al-Qaeda extremists.

In February, the ICC was forced to move the eight-nation Champions trophy from Pakistan to South Africa after several teams refused to tour Pakistan.

'We lost the plot'

Cricket

AFP, London

West Indies captain Chris Gayle said his side had "lost the plot" after they suffered a 10-wicket thrashing by England that saw them beaten inside three days in the first Test at Lord's here on Friday.

Battling innings from Australia-born Brendan Nash (81) and wicket-keeper Denesh Ramdin (61) did at least prevent the embarrassment of an innings defeat in the first of this two-Test series.

That was scant consolation for Gayle, whose side had been in the game when they reduced England to 275 for seven.

But a pivotal eighth-wicket stand of 83 between Ravi Bopara, whose 143 was his best at this level and first since his previous Test appearance in Barbados, where he made 104, and Graeme Swann, whose 63 not out was also his highest score at this level, swung the

match England's way.

West Indies quick Fidel Edwards took six for 92 but the tourists didn't help themselves by dropping six catches after tea on Wednesday's first day in what was the earliest start to a Test in England.

Man-of-the-match Swann, who twice dismissed Shivnarine Chanderpaul, ranked as the world's number one batsman coming into this Test but who only made four runs in the game, then sparked a first-innings collapse.

That saw the West Indies bowled out for 152 in reply to England's first innings 377 and from then on the tourists were struggling to save the game.

Off-spinner Swann, who posed particular problems for Chanderpaul by turning the ball away from the left-hander, finished with a total haul of six for 55 in what was the 30-year-old's first Test in England.

And there was more good news for the hosts in the first innings when debutant quick Graham Onions took five for

38, including three wickets in one dramatic over.

"We are very disappointed, in the manner we lost the game in three days, especially that last session on the first day," said Gayle, who led his side earlier this year to a 1-0 series win over England in the Caribbean.

"Fidel Edwards bowled brilliantly and set the game up for us."

"We lost the plot basically," he said as he reflected on the first-innings batting collapse. "It was a disaster for us."

West Indies were only playing in this two-Test series, which concludes next week at Onions's Durham home ground in Chester-le-Street, after Zimbabwe were excluded from Test cricket and original stand-ins Sri Lanka pulled out because of their players' Indian Premier League commitments.

"I've never been in England so early," said opening batsman Gayle. "You are up against it."

Victory meant England had won the opening Test of a series for the first time in 15 attempts and ended a run of six successive drawn Tests at Lord's.

It also gave former Zimbabwe star Andy Flower a win in his first Test since being confirmed as England's team director following his spell in caretaker charge in the West Indies.

Flower never lacked for character as a world-class batsman and it was clear this quality was what he admired most about England's match-winners.

Reflecting on Bopara's contribution, Flower said: "I thought Ravi Bopara was brilliant. He's got a nice cockiness, a nice confidence about him."

"His intent is not one of arrogance. He's a very nice bloke, he's mischievous," he also told Sky Sports.

But Flower was delighted that the 30-year-old Swann, a relative latecomer to international cricket, had won the man-of-the-match award.

"Graeme Swann is the leading wicket-taker in Test cricket this year. It's nice for him to get some recognition," he said.



PHOTO: STAR

Faruquul Islam (222) of Comilla sprints during the Dhaka Bank 25th National Junior Athletics competition at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday. Faruquul won 200m gold.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

1 VHS

contemporary

5 "El —"

8 TV's Dr. McGraw

12 Mosque

VIP

13 Privy

14 Carnival attraction

15 Effervescent

17 Lecherous look

18 Pitcher part

19 "Caddyshack" critter

21 Passé

24 Harp's ancestor

25 Cupid's alias

26 Unsteady

30 Intention

31 Actor

LaBeouf et al

32 Fish eggs

33 Dilettante's interest

35 Ready for anything

36 Trenches

37 Walking sticks

38 Senescence

41 "— Town"

42 Rowboat needs

43 Chewing in small bits

48 Menageries

49 Prior to

50 Concept

51 Catch sight of

52 Shaft of light

53 Hen pen

DOWN

1 Clothing protector

2 Ostrich's cousin

3 Bill

4 Strolls

5 Paper holder

6 Charged bit

7 Leftovers carrier

8 Drive on

9 Lofty

10 Not working

11 See 17-Across

16 Cover

20 Spheres

21 Conked out

22 Met melody

23 Grant's is famous

24 Body parts often

"girded"

26 Bleach

27 Persia, now

28 Iditarod terminus

29 The Bee —

31 Punch hard

34 Obstrep-erous

35 Vampire repellent

37 Newsroom newbie

38 Leak slowly

39 Vietnamese's land

40 Let fall

41 Do what I say

44 Savings plan acronym

45 "— not choose to run"

46 Ultra-modern-

47 Space

Solution time: 21 mins.

AGO

FABLE

SOP

BOW

AMAIN

ORE

SOLICITOR

LEE

CIS

NOTION

ABSENT

SLAP

RIO

GAG

LUSTY

ELLS

DIAM

TIRE

SKIMP

GAB

SEA

DORK

ROOMER

BANGOR

TON

EVE

SOLITAIRE

RES

INANE

NUN

MRS

TEPID

NED

AGO	FABLE	SOP
BOW	AMAIN	ORE
SOLICITOR	LEE	
CIS	NOTION	
ABSENT	SLAP	
RIO	GAG	LUSTY
ELLS	DIM	TIRE
SKIM	GAG	SEA
BONK	ROOMER	
BANGOR	TON	
EVE	SOLITAIRE	
RES	INANE	NUN
MRS	TEPIO	NED

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12					13			14		
15				16				17		
			18			19	20			
21	22	23				24				
25					26			27	28	29
30				31				32		
33			34					35		
				36			37			
38	39	40					41			
42					43	44		45	46	47
48					49			50		
51					52			53		

CRYPTOQUIP

IXISVKA AXMN PXCW KDXSE
EQZP WGMNX JQX JKP KBKRZCW
KE MGA EKZC KAMKYG
WKBGP: "IZCDKVV VZRKAY."

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: WHEN TV WEATHERMAN AL IS MANAGING HIS INVESTMENTS, I BELIEVE HE HIRES ROKER'S BROKERS.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: K equals A