

Preliminary squad today

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) will announce a 30-member preliminary squad today for the upcoming SA Games and SAFF Championship.

The national team management committee in a meeting, chaired by its chairman Badal Roy, has decided yesterday that a three-week conditioning camp will start from June 15 at Cox's Bazar.

There is also a chance for the national team to participate in the Merdeka Cup and if BFF receives the invitation then the booters will play a few practice matches in Thailand. After the three-week conditioning camp the players will reside at BKSP.

The team management committee also recommended the raise of monthly salary for the players during the camp to Tk 15,000 each from the existing Tk 10,000.

To run the camp BFF has to spend Tk 50 lakhs.

National TT from today

UNB, Dhaka

The AB Bank 30th National Table Tennis Championship begins today at the National Sports Council gymnasium.

A total of 386 paddlers from a record 48 teams - 45 for men, 14 for women and 36 for boys - are taking part in six events.

The events are: men's team, women's team, boys' team, men's singles, women's singles and boys' singles.

The competition will start at 9:30am and continue till 9:30pm everyday from today until June 13 with a break of one and half hours from 1:30pm. The finals will be held on June 14.

Out of a total budget of Tk 9 lakh, sponsor AB Bank provided Tk 7.09 lakh.

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Did U Know?

Mickey Wright, one of the most prominent female golfers of all time, was honoured with a 1976 induction into the World Golf Hall of Fame.



BTV & STAR Cricket
ICC World T20 Cup
Bangladesh v Ireland
Live from 6:30pm
Australia v Sri Lanka
Live from 10:30pm



Andre Agassi

(American tennis legend)
"It could be his destiny. Roger [Federer] deserves it more than I did. To win on all four surfaces in your career is one of the greatest achievements in sport."

TODAY'S T20 MATCHES

Bangladesh v Ireland
Venue: Trent Bridge
Time: 6:30pm
Australia v Sri Lanka
Venue: Trent Bridge
Time: 10:30pm

BANGLADESH V IRELAND Tigers aren't afraid

TIGERCRIKET.COM, Nottingham



Bangladesh's 25-run loss against India on Saturday has now put them in must-win situation against Ireland today if they want to qualify for the next round and the Tigers are determined to ensure that a shock doesn't occur like the Super Eights encounter against the same team at Barbados in the 2007 World Cup.

Today's match is scheduled to start at 1:30pm local time (6:30pm Bangladesh Standard Time) with state-run Bangladesh Television (BTV) and STAR Cricket beaming the live coverage of the Group A encounter.

"It was a match we were too anxious to win I guess because we thought that if we didn't then all our good work in that tournament will be ruined. We brought pressure on ourselves with the fear of losing to a team below us. But that's not the case here. The players are very confident and I have not seen the fear-factor in this side on this trip. They have good players, people with county cricket experience but we are up for anything," said captain Mohammad Ashraful who also believed that Bangladesh had a genuine chance of beating India on Saturday.

"There were little mistakes we made that turned the game in India's favour. We always thought that 181 was gettable on that track but we lost too many wickets inside the first 10 overs. We don't have power hitters in the middle and later order like India and therefore the

start was important. We did get the start but when I got out and Shakib [Al Hasan] and Zunaed [Siddiqui] followed it was a difficult chase from there on," said Ashraful who nevertheless was pleased with the bowling and fielding effort.

"We were good in the field and the bowling apart from an over each from Nayeem [Islam] and Rubel [Hossain] was fine."

All-rounder Shakib also echoed the sentiments of his captain.

"We just needed one of the top four batters to carry on after we got the platform. I thought the turning points in the game was the stumping chance missed when Yuvraj Singh was on naught and then in batting when I got out and Zunaed also fell in the same over," said Shakib.

"I have no doubt that if we play our natural game then we should not have any problems beating Ireland," added Shakib.

Coach Jamie Siddons rued the missed opportunity against India.

"When Ashraful and Zunaed were batting we only needed 8 an over. But we still went for sixes and got out. We could have pushed them even harder," said Siddons.

Bangladesh have an injury worry over left-arm spinner Abdur Razzak who did not make the team against India. Razzak, who had suffered a back strain during a gym session on Saturday was feeling much better according to Tigers physio Michael Henry.

The weather has not got only gloomier in Nottingham and it had rained continuously

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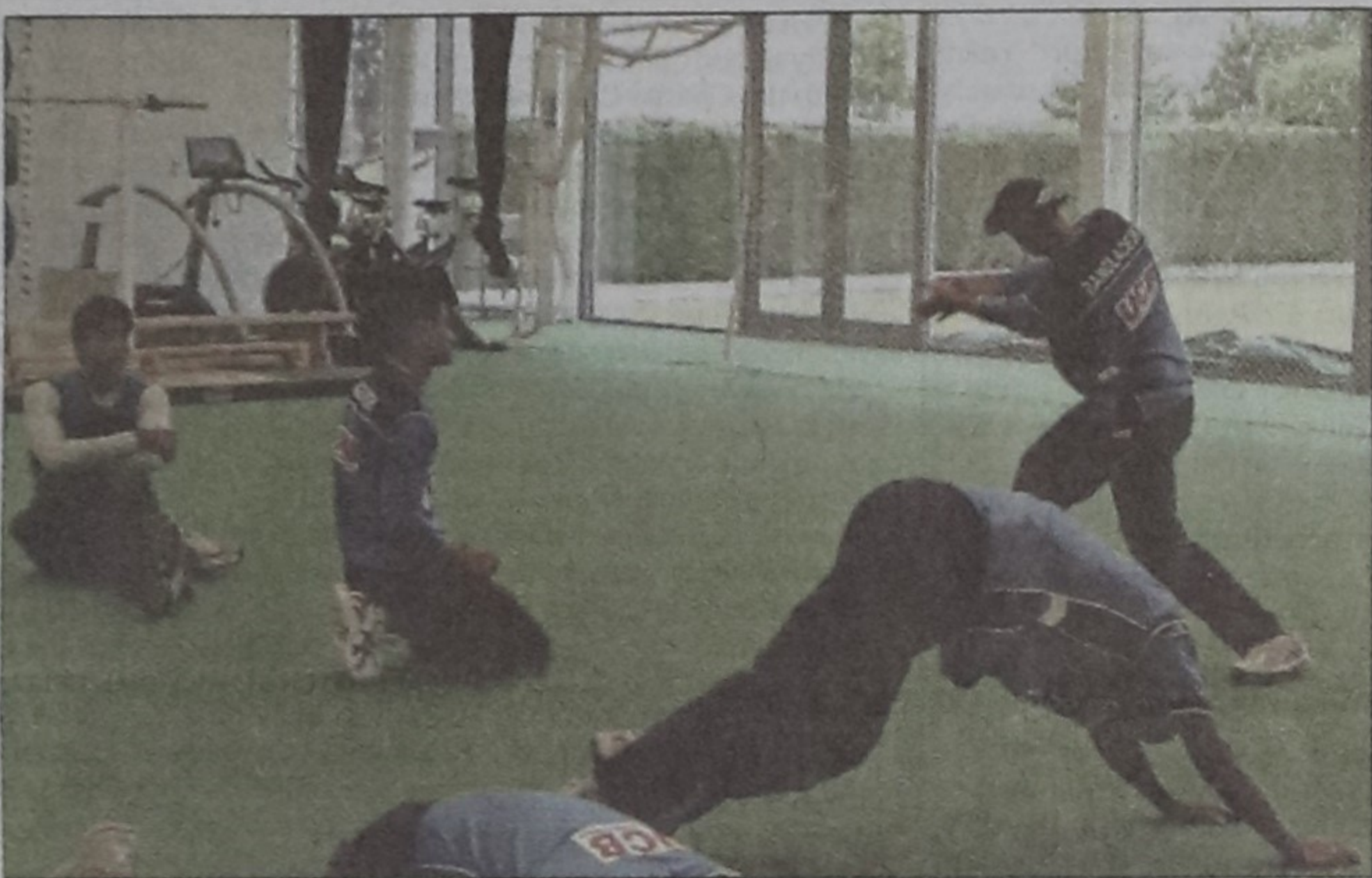


PHOTO: TIGERCRIKET.COM

National coach Jamie Siddons (R) makes a point as Shakib Al Hasan listens during the indoor practice at the National Cricket Performance Centre at Loughborough University in Nottingham yesterday.

SA thrash Scotland

AFP, London



AB de Villiers's 79 not out provided the platform for South Africa to crush Scotland by 130 runs in the Proteas' opening match of the ICC World Twenty20 at The Oval here on Sunday.

Scotland, chasing an unlikely 212 to win after South Africa made 211 for five, slumped to 81 all out.

Theirs was the seventh lowest in all Twenty20 internationals and the second worst at the Twenty20 World Cup following Kenya's 73 against New Zealand in Durban two years ago.

Scotland collapsed to 13 for four inside three overs and only Kyle Coetzer's gutsy 42 off 32 balls, featuring three sixes, prevented an even greater margin of defeat.

This crushing reverse ended minnows Scotland's slim hopes of qualifying for the second phase Super Eights after their seven-wicket loss to New Zealand, the other team in Group D, in a rain-affected match at the Oval on Saturday.

De Villiers faced just 34 balls, striking six sixes and six fours.

South Africa quick Dale Steyn bowled Ryan Watson off the fifth ball of the reply and, after Scotland captain Gavin Hamilton fell to Wayne Parnell, two wickets were lost with the score on 13.

Navdeep Poonia was run out needlessly for nought before Colin Smith was bowled first ball by a 91mph Steyn Yorker.

Coetzer did give Scotland fans something to cheer by pulling Steyn for six but the match had been over as a contest long before then.

Scotland briefly stanchied

the flow of wickets before Neil McCullum was bowled by off-spinner Johan Botha to leave his side 35 for five.

South Africa saw captain Graeme Smith (38) and Jacques Kallis (48) put on 87 for the first wicket before off-spinner Majid Haq (two for 25) removed both openers in the space of four balls.

Kallis dragged an intended sweep against Haq onto his stumps having faced 31 balls with eight fours.

And three balls later Smith got a top-edge off Haq which was caught by Scotland wicketkeeper Smith.

Scotland put a brake on the run-rate and when Herschelle Gibbs was stumped by Smith off Watson, South Africa were 125 for three in the 15th over.

But the Proteas scored 83 runs off the last five overs although the last over did see Coetzer take a brilliant catch,

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Club Cup football

SPORTS REPORTER

The grouping was finalised for the final round of the Bashundhara Football Champions Club Cup in a draw held at the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) yesterday.

A total of 12 teams split into four groups will participate in the final round which will kick off in Jessore from June 12 and in Cox's Bazar from June 13.

The group champions will play the semifinals. The first semifinal will be held in Jessore on June 19 while the second semis in Cox's Bazar on June 20. The final is slated for June 23 in Cox's Bazar.

Shawkat Ali Khan Jahangir, chairman of tournament committee, informed that the champion team of the competition would get a chance to play the next B League subject to fulfillment of the criterion of the country's only professional football league.

The teams will receive Tk. 15,000 as participation money in addition to free accommodation. The champions and runners-up

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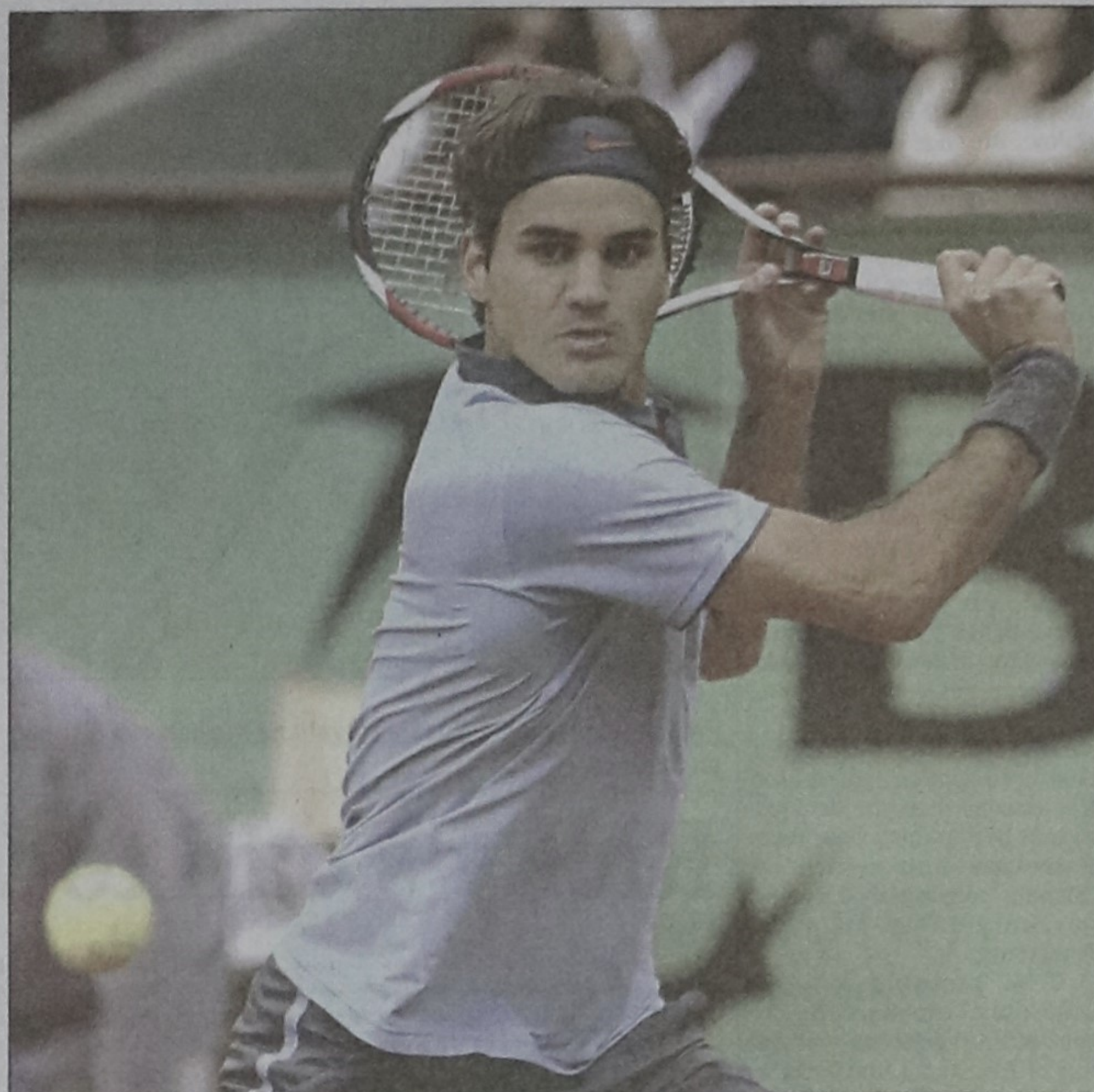


PHOTO: AFP

Swiss super star Roger Federer plays a backhand against Swedish Robin Soderling during their French Open final match at Roland Garros in Paris yesterday.

Federer breaks clay jinx

AFP, Paris



Roger Federer gloriously completed a career Grand Slam on Sunday by capturing a record-equalling 14th major with a 6-1, 7-6 (7/1), 6-4 win over Robin Soderling in the French Open final.

The 27-year-old world number two finally won a Roland Garros crown at the 11th attempt and in his fourth successive final having come up heartbreakingly short in the last three showdowns against Spanish nemesis Rafael Nadal.

His victory, ironically over the Swedish 23rd seed who

shocked four-time Nadal in the last 16, took him level with great friend Pete Sampras as the holder of 14 Grand Slam titles.

He also moved into a select group made up only of Fred Perry, Don Budge, Rod Laver, Roy Emerson and Andre Agassi as men who have won all four of the Grand Slam events.

"It was probably my greatest victory, I was under big pressure. I did it and it's phenomenal," said Federer who broke down in tears after being presented with the trophy by Agassi, the 1999 champion, and while the Swiss national anthem was played.

Soderling, who has now

lost 10 times in 10 meetings with Federer, admitted the Swiss was a deserving winner.

"Roger was too good for me today, he played much better. He is a worthy winner and for me he is the best player in history," said Soderling.

"He gave me a lesson in how to play tennis."

Any doubts over Federer's ability to overcome his Paris jinx were quickly dashed as the Swiss star, playing in a record-equalling 19th Grand Slam final and riding a tidal wave of support, dominated Soderling.

He broke the first game on a Soderling double fault and was soon a second break to the good to lead 4-0 when a sweetly-timed drop shot left

the Swede stranded behind the baseline.

Soderling, the first Swede in the Roland Garros final since his coach Magnus Norman finished runner-up to Gustavo Kuerten in 2000, stopped the rot with a hold to trail 4-1, but Federer quickly nipped further ahead to 5-1.

Soderling's uncompromising forehead, which was a dagger to the heart of Nadal, was looking more like a blunt instrument in the damp and chilly conditions.

His service game crumbled again in the seventh game as Federer claimed the opening set.

It had taken just 23 minutes with the Swiss losing just two

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'WC decision on June 19'

CRICINFO, undated

A final decision regarding Pakistan's rights to host the 2011 Cricket World Cup will be taken on June 19, the Pakistan Cricket Board chairman Ijaz Butt has said.

A preliminary conference aimed at reaching an out-of-court settlement to the dispute over shifting matches out of Pakistan will be held in London on June 15.

"Now Sharad Pawar [ICC vice-president] will take part in the June 15 meeting through teleconferencing," Butt was quoted as saying in the Dawn. "However, on June 19 a three-member committee - comprising ICC President David Morgan, me and Pawar - will take a final decision in England."

"Presently, I cannot reveal to the media PCB's stance for the forthcoming meetings as

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AUSTRALIA V SRI LANKA

Ponting & co must win

AFP, Nottingham



Ricky Ponting's Australia must perform or face an embarrassing early exit from the World Twenty20 when they take on emotionally-charged Sri Lanka on Monday.

The Australians, stunned by a seven-wicket defeat at the hands of the West Indies on Saturday following Chris Gayle's explosive 88 off 50 balls, cannot afford another loss.

Even if they emerge victorious, Ponting's men are not assured of advancing to the Super Eights because a Sri Lankan win over the West Indies on Wednesday will throw up a three-way tie to be decided by net run-rate.

The loss to the West Indies with 4.1 overs to spare could spell further disaster for Australia, who must not only beat Sri Lanka, but do so by a big margin to improve their net run-rate.

"It all lies ahead of us," Ponting said ahead of the group C match at Trent Bridge.

"We know exactly what we have to do and if we are good enough, we've got it done."

The defeat against the West Indies was Australia's fourth Twenty20 loss in a row.

The shortest version of the game has not been particularly kind to the undisputed kings of Test and one-day cricket, who have won only 11 of their 22 games so far.

Ponting, however, was quick to stress that all was not lost for his team.

Australia suffered a shock defeat by Zimbabwe in the

inaugural World Twenty20 in South Africa in 2007, but still managed to reach the semi-finals where they lost to eventual champions India.

"This form of the game can change very quickly," Ponting said. "We're in exactly the same position as we were last time."

"I guess some of the guys that were in the tournament last time will know what we have to do. There is nowhere else where we can go now."

Sri Lanka will be charged up for their first international match since the horrific terror attack on their team bus in the Pakistani city of Lahore in March while on their way to resume a Test match.

Seven Sri Lankan cricketers and an assistant coach were injured in the attack, which left eight Pakistanis dead.

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PHOTO: AFP

AB de Villiers of South Africa plays the ball on the on-side during their ICC World Twenty20 Cup match against Scotland at The Oval in London yesterday.

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Long way to go: Gayle

AFP, London



West Indies captain Chris Gayle said there was plenty of work left for his side after he led them to a crushing seven-wicket win over Australia in their first match of this year's ICC World Twenty20.

Opening batsman Gayle dominated the Australia attack during a blistering innings of 88, off just 50 balls, which featured six sixes and six fours.

Australia quick Brett Lee was made to look like a club bowler during four overs that cost 56 runs, with Gayle striking him for a six out of the ground and then hitting him onto the roof of the stand above the players' dressing rooms at the pavilion end.

"This is only the first game, we still have a long way to go," Gayle told reporters after a morale-boosting win which followed heavy defeats in both Tests and one-day internationals against England earlier on their tour of the United Kingdom.

"In Twenty20 it's so short we tend to concentrate a bit better but there were too many fumbles in the field," Jamaica left-hander Gayle, 29, said.

"After a tough series against England, we wanted to put a smile back on our fans' faces," added Gayle ahead of the West Indies' match against Group C rivals Sri Lanka at Trent Bridge on Tuesday.

Gayle received excellent support from Andre Fletcher (52) in an opening stand of 133 - the third highest for any wicket in all Twenty20 internationals.

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