

Olympic Day tomorrow

UNB, Dhaka

Bangladesh Olympic Association (BOA) will observe the Olympic Day-2009 in the capital and five other divisional headquarters tomorrow as part of the International Olympic Committee's global programme to popularise the Olympic movement.

IOC, which earlier celebrated the "Olympic Day Run" as their main annual event, rechristened the programme this year as "Olympic Day" and requested all the national committees to observe the day on June 23.

India aim

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for a tour of this nature for young players to show what they're made of," said India coach Gary Kirsten.

"We're looking to those young players for the future as well. This is a great opportunity for these guys to stake their claim."

Kirsten also noted that India have been in great form in ODIs over the last year, losing only three matches of 18, and his side will be looking forward to extending that form.

The first two ODIs take place at Sabina Park on Friday and Sunday, followed by two more the following Friday and Sunday at St. Lucia's Beausejour Cricket Ground.

SQUAD

Mahendra Singh Dhoni (captain), Yuvraj Singh, Gautam Gambhir, Rohit Sharma, Harbhajan Singh, Pragyan Ojha, Yusuf Pathan, Murali Vijay, Subramaniam Badrinath, Rudra Pratap Singh, Praveen Kumar, Ishant Sharma, Abhishek Nayar, Ashish Nehra, Ravindra Jadeja, Dinesh Karthik.

Villa's mind

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"I don't believe that my future will be settled quickly," Villa, who has never hidden his desire to play for Real, said here.

Villa has been dealing with the transfer saga while helping Spain to a world record 15 straight victories and he is determined not to let it affect his concentration as the country looks to win its first ever FIFA trophy.

They are currently in the semifinals, which are played in Bloemfontein on Wednesday.

"Out of respect to my fellow team members, I am determined not let myself be disturbed by all the rumours about transfers," he said.

Maria writes herself off

AFP, London



Maria Sharapova admits she will go into Wimbledon with no real expectation of repeating her 2004 triumph.

Sharapova is feeling her way gently back into action after 10 months on the sidelines with a shoulder injury and has played just three tournaments so far this year.

The Russian looked more than a little rusty as she was outplayed by China's Li Na in the semifinals of the pre-Wimbledon WTA event in Birmingham and is refusing to consider a long run at the All England Club.

Asked if it would be expecting too much to win a Grand Slam so soon after a long lay-off, Sharapova said: "I think it is. It's a little too soon to put that in my mind."

"Just to be here is already an accomplishment in itself. When I look back to where I was say, 10 or 11 months ago, or even three months ago, I'm definitely blessed to be here."

"Every single tournament right now is still a test and for me it's almost like the beginning of the season, whereas for many players it's already the second half of the season."

"I'm still testing out where my game is, where my body is and where my shoulders are."

"I will take it one match at a time. This is definitely a time in my career where I can't look

into possible third round, fourth round or semi-final matches."

Sharapova, who plays Ukrainian qualifier Viktoriya Kuzanova in the first round, is currently ranked 59th in the world as a result of her injury woes.

"She conceded she was surprised to hear that the All-England Club had done their former champion a favour by handing her the 24th seeding."

"Was I surprised? I guess I'd say a little bit. It's strange because I didn't really give much thought into it before it even came out," she said.

"I've been out of the game

for so long, you know your ranking's going to drop and you don't expect to be seeded."

After so long out of the game, Sharapova is just happy to have the chance to get her competitive juices flowing again.

"There are many things I missed about the game," she said. "Getting pumped for the match the second you go on the court and hear the crowd and know you're in that environment again."

"Then the competitiveness of each match and pulling through tough situations in the match, or when you're up trying to close it out."



MARIA SHARAPOVA

Advantage Federer

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addicted to beating all possible records, but I'm very proud of them."

With Nadal sidelined, Federer's likely title rivals will be Andy Murray, who's bidding to become the first British men's champion since Fred Perry in 1936, former two-time runner-up Andy Roddick and world number four Novak Djokovic.

Murray, buoyed by being the first British winner at Queen's since Bunny Austin in 1938, boasts a 6-2 winning record over Federer.

A quarterfinal place last year is his best showing at Wimbledon where he was outclassed by Nadal in straight sets.

The 22-year-old world number three vowed not to get

distracted by the desperate hype of the home crowds.

"A lot of people use it as an excuse as to why a Briton hasn't won Wimbledon for so long but I don't feel it makes any difference once the tournament starts," he said.

"It's easy to get caught up in all of the hype. But I'll prepare the same as I do for all the big tournaments."

"I would love to win Wimbledon one day, but I don't think about it too much. I could easily lose in the first round if I have an offday."

World number four Djokovic was the runner-up on grass at Halle, but immediately wrote off his chances at Wimbledon where last year he was knocked out in the second round by Marat Safin.

Recently-married Roddick,

the runner-up to Federer in 2004 and 2005, has plenty to prove.

It's been six years since the American won his one and only Grand Slam title, but that 2003 US Open triumph preceded the Federer-Nadal era and the fear remains that Roddick's game is too unsophisticated for the new age.

It's always good to be confident but before that one should realise his position first.

At the end, realistically it's not just his captaincy but rather his position which is uncertain in the team.

Late father inspires Lu

AFP, London

When Yen-Hsun Lu walks on Centre Court to tackle Roger Federer on Monday, the Taiwanese player's first thought will be for his late father who inspired him to play at Wimbledon.

Lu was only 17 when his father died of a heart attack with the tragedy such a shock he briefly gave up the sport.

"After my father passed away, I didn't want to play tennis anymore. My family was supporting me to go back to the tennis court. But I could not; I did not have the spirit," the 25-year-old, world number 64, told Deuce magazine.

Then one day I remembered that my father had a dream that his son can maybe play Wimbledon some day and become Top 100. So, I used this as my energy because I wanted to make my father's dream come true."

Lu will be making his Centre Court debut on Monday, but it will be his sixth Wimbledon where his best performances remain second round runs in 2004 and 2005.

These days he works with Dirk Hordoff, the coach of German veteran Rainer Schuettler who was a semi-finalist here last year.

"Like most Asian players he is a very hard worker," said Hordoff.

"He gets his confidence by working hard. While he is always very fair to other people, he is very self-critical."

FORMULA 1

Red Bull 1-2 at Silverstone

AFP, Silverstone

reel off a series of fastest laps as he dominated proceedings under a partly-sunny sky.

Webber came home second ahead of Brazilians veteran Rubens Barrichello in a Brawn and his compatriot, Brazilian Felipe Massa of Ferrari.

German Nico Rosberg finished fifth for Williams ahead of world championship leader Jenson Button in his Brawn, Finn Kimi Raikkonen of Ferrari and German Timo Glock for Toyota.

"Thank you guys," said Vettel to his team on the slowing down lap. "It is a dream coming true! We have won the British Grand Prix."

Vettel's win cut Button's lead in the drivers' championship - the Briton now has 64 points with Barrichello second on 41 and Vettel third on 39. In the constructors' championship, Brawn lead with 105 ahead of Red Bull on 74.5.

WOMEN'S SCHOOL FOOTBALL

Viqarunnissa, Azimpur in last four

SPORTS REPORTER

Azimpur Girls' High School and Viqarunnissa Girls' School and College advanced to the semifinals of the Citycell Dhaka Metropolis Women's School Football Championship winning their respective matches at the Sultana Kamal Sports Complex at Dhanmondi, Dhaka yesterday.

Viqarunnissa will meet Siddheshwari Girls' High School at 4pm in the first semifinal while Azimpur play Sir John Wilson School at 5pm in the second, both at the same venue on Tuesday.

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In the day's last match at the same venue, Dholaiapar High School outclassed Islambagh Ashraf Ali High School 3-0.

Fahima, Isha and Adhara scored one goal each for the winners.

Isha of Dholaiapar High School was adjudged the player-of-the-match.

"He has that little bit of a feeling that maybe he wasn't the most wanted person at United. Rightly or wrongly, that's how he feels."

Joorabchian expects a decision to be known by the first week in July.

Tevéz's economic rights and transfer activities are owned by a group of investors, including Joorabchian.

Fidel misses first 2 India matches

AFP, St. John's

West Indies have named a 13-man squad without Fidel Edwards for the first two one-day internationals against India this coming Friday and Saturday at Sabina Park in Kingston.

The fast bowler withdrew from last Monday's Super Eight win over England in the Twenty20 World Cup seconds before the toss, after injuring himself in the warm-up.

It was later confirmed that the problem was an irritation of an nerve root in his lower back.

Edwards did not play on Friday in the semi-final at The Oval against Sri Lanka which West Indies lost by 57 runs to exit the competition.

West Indies officials have given no clear indication about how long Edwards is expected to be out of the game with the injury.

The selectors have rewarded Darren Bravo, the younger brother of all-rounder Dwayne Bravo, with his maiden call for West Indies, after a season of consistent scoring for his native Trinidad & Tobago in domestic competition.

The left-hander is the only new member of the squad, and his batting style has drawn more than a passing comparison to that of his fellow Trinidadian and West Indies batting legend Brian Lara.

SQUAD

Chris Gayle (captain), Denesh Ramdin (vice-captain), Lionel Baker, Darren Bravo, Dwayne Bravo, Sulieman Benn, David Bernard Jr, Shivnarine Chanderpaul, Narsingh Deonarine, Runako Morton, Ravi Rampaul, Ramnaresh Sarwan, Jerome Taylor.

Chelsea

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Joorabchian insisted their refusal of United's offer, that would have made Tevez one of the club's highest paid players, was because it simply came too late.

He said: "If it was, let's say, Wayne Rooney's contract finishing six months before, or Cristiano Ronaldo's contract finishing six months before, would they have offered a better deal to them at that time or would they have tried to secure their services a bit sooner?

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