

Phelps goes golden

Pellegrini's double delight

Swimming

AFP, Rome

Michael Phelps regained his golden touch here on Wednesday with a record-setting triumph in the men's 200m butterfly at the swimming World Championships.

Phelps finally caught the wave of world records washing over these worlds with a time of 1min 51.51sec -- and he didn't even need a polyurethane bodysuit to do it.

"I'm happy," Phelps said after bouncing back from his stunning defeat in the 200m free on Tuesday. "It was something that I really wanted to do last year, to break the 1min 52sec and coming into the night I just said I'm going to go for it and whatever happens, happens."

Phelps's world record was one of seven on the day, taking the tally at the halfway point of the eight-day competition to 22.

Zhang Lin became the first Chinese man to capture World Championship swimming gold, destroying Aussie distance great Grant Hackett's 800m freestyle world record.

Italy's Federica Pellegrini thrilled her legion of fans at Rome's Foro Italico with a victory in the 200m free, lowering the world record for the second time in two days with a swim of 1:52.93.

South Africa's Cameron Van Der Burg also notched his second world record in as many days with his triumph in the 50m breaststroke in 26.67.

America's Mary Deschenza threw in a world record in the heats of the women's 200m butterfly for good measure, and in the women's 50m backstroke semifinals Daniela Samulski lowered her own world record with a time of 27.39 in the first semifinal only to be pipped by Anastasia Zueva's 27.38 in the second semi.

The record tally has already risen past the 15 set at the 2007 World Championships, and is closing in on the 25 posted at the Beijing Olympics.

But this time Phelps, still swimming in the Speedo LZR suit that has been overtaken by the polyurethane marvels



PHOTO: AFP

Italian star Federica Pellegrini celebrates after winning the 200 metre freestyle by setting a world record in the Swimming World Championships in Rome on Wednesday.

unveiled this year, hadn't been at the forefront.

The 14-time Olympic gold medalist was upset in the 200m free on Tuesday, when Germany's Paul Biedermann took both his world title and world record.

The 24-year-old American had seemed non-plussed by his first defeat in world and Olympic competition since 2005, but he knew just what to do after the victory, raising both arms in celebration as he stood on the deck to acknowledge the cheers of the crowd.

"I do so many races that I can't get caught up in one event," Phelps said. "Last night, yeah, I was disappointed I didn't win. But I knew I had to put that behind me to get ready for tonight."

Phelps wasn't even wearing a bodysuit, going at the last minute with a waist-to-ankle version of the Speedo after his bodysuit felt too tight.

"This is what I've always worn in this race," Phelps said.

Suits or no, Phelps was never threatened as Poland's Pawel Korzeniowski and Japan's Takeshi Matsuda duelled for silver behind him.

"I tried to push on in the first 150 and get into as much open water as I could and then tried to just come up and last long," Phelps said.

Matsuda was lying second to Phelps until the final lap, when he was overtaken by Korzeniowski, who snatched the silver in 1:53.23 as Matsuda settled for bronze in 1:53.32.

Coach Bob Bowman said he knew Phelps was suffering at the finish.

"He swam a really fast first 150 and he paid for it a little on the last lap," the coach said. "I'm sure he'll be tired, but I knew nobody was getting by him. That's how he is."

Zhang turned in an aston-

ishing swim, slicing 6.53sec off the previous world record of 7:38.65 set by Hackett at the 2005 World Championships in Montreal.

Despite the blazing pace of the race, Zhang had enough at the end to pull away from Tunisian Oussama Mellouli, the defending 800m world champion and reigning Olympic 1500m champ. Mellouli took silver ahead of Canadian Ryan Cochrane.

"I'm more than five seconds quicker than Hackett's record and I'm still surprised," Zhang said. "I can't believe it."

Italy's Federica Pellegrini, who had set the mark of 1:53.67 in the semifinals on Tuesday, won the women's 200m freestyle title with a time of 1min 52.98sec, and sent fans at the Foro Italico into a frenzy as she outdid that performance and captured the title ahead of Americans Allison Schmitt (1:54.96) and Dana Vollmer (1:55.64).

The 20-year-old took the lead on the second lap, and pulled away inexorably as the crowd roared.

Behind her, Schmitt won the battle for silver, finally overtaking Vollmer on the final lap.

It was Pellegrini's second triumph of the championships, after winning the 400m freestyle in a world record time on Sunday.

"Most of all I'm surprised by my time. In the semi-final I realised what I was capable of but today I was really tired physically and I never thought I would be able to go under 1min 53sec," she said.

"That's my 10th world record but it's the first time I've surprised myself."

With two gold medals and two new world records from this championship on home soil, Pellegrini said that's enough for now until the relay.

"My coach thinks I could do well in the 800m but I've never raced it this year, not even in a regional competition," she added.

"He gave me the choice and I have to say that I'm knackered, psychologically and physically."

"I'm not doing the 800m but I believe in the 4x200m freestyle relay."

Gold Cup football

SPORTS REPORTER

Rajshahi City Corporation (RCC) will launch the Councillor Gold Cup Football tournament in the city today.

For the tournament, the RCC will spend about Tk 14 lakh including Tk 7.5 lakh for formation of football teams in all the 30 wards, RCC authorities said in a press conference.

The tournament is being organized with the aim of stimulating soccer in the city.

National rugby

SPORTS REPORTER

The two semifinal matches of the Diamond Melamine 1st National Rugby Competition will be held today at the Outer Stadium ground.

In the first semi-final, group A champion Dhaka DSA will play against group B runners-up Chittagong DSA while group B champion Munshiganj DSA will take on group A runners-up Faridpur DSA in the second match.

Yesterday, Faridpur DSA beat Narail DSA by 15-03 points in the same venue to become the group A runners-up.

British archery coach arrives today

SPORTS REPORTER

British archery coach Richard John Pristman will arrive in the city today to train the national archery team ahead of the 11th SA Games set to take place next January.

Pristman holds an impressive career portfolio in which he won bronze in the Seoul Olympic in 1988 and in the Barcelona Olympic in 1992.

Currently, he works as coaching organizer for the England national archery team and also gives training to different age level teams.

Bangladesh Olympic Association (BOA) will be financing the coach's expenditures.

Pakistan

FROM PAGE 17

Pakistan was stripped of its rights as co-host in the aftermath of the attacks on the touring Sri Lankan cricketers in Lahore in March. Following the decision, the World Cup secretariat was moved from Lahore to Mumbai.

The PCB could not convince the other co-hosts that Pakistan could organise its share of matches at a neutral venue, most likely the United Arab Emirates, where Pakistan played five ODIs and a Twenty20 against Australia in April-May this year.

The cricket board initiated legal action against the ICC before the game's governing body guaranteed the 10.5 million dollar payment. But met ICC chairman David Morgan on Tuesday. They said no final agreement was made to defuse the legal threat but also stated that there would be further talks. During the interim period, the legal action is on hold.

"But as the competitor I am I also very much look forward to facing this."

News of his comeback to the sport he virtually made his own came 24 hours after the possibility had first been raised by his spokeswoman, Sabine Kehm.

"The whole thing will be considered by Ferrari. If they approach Michael, then he

Maria moves on

Tennis

AP, Stanford

Maria is back

Maria Sharapova took what she learned from a clumsy early win and turned it into a sharp, emphatic victory over fellow Russian Nadia Petrova on Wednesday in a second-round match at the \$700,000 WTA Premier Bank of the West Classic.

Sharapova needed just over an hour to beat 10th-ranked and fifth-seeded Petrova 6-1, 6-2, after a three-set win over Japan's Ai Sugiyama on Monday.

"I knew what I had to improve upon," Sharapova said. "I started that first match lousy. This time the goal was to get a better start."

Sharapova, who played her 17th match since returning to the court from a nine-month layoff due to right shoulder surgery, also had a pretty finish.

"I was aggressive the whole way through," she said. "I didn't have many letdowns and even when I made unforced errors I stayed with it."

The former world No. 1 player improved to 13-4 on the season and beat Petrova for the seventh time in eight meetings.

Sharapova was pushed to three sets in their last match at the French Open.

"This is the easiest score line I've had against her," Sharapova said. "Most of the time we go three sets. She's explosive and always goes for her shot."

In other second round matches, third-seeded and fourth-ranked Elena Dementieva beat Maria Kirilenko, 6-1, 6-2; Samantha Stosur downed Monica Niculescu, 6-1, 7-5; and Daniela Hantuchova upset seventh-seeded Agnieszka Radwanska, 4-6, 7-6 (6), 6-1, in a match that lasted over two and a half hours.

Serena and Venus Williams warmed up for their second round singles matches with an efficient 6-1, 6-0 doubles victory over Liga Dekmeijere and Julie Ditty.

Britain's Anne Keothavong, who left her doubles match after crashing into a fence Tuesday night, is out for the rest of the season. Tests on Wednesday morning revealed a severe left knee sprain.

Twitting from off the field

Cricket

AFP, Birmingham

Australia batsman Phillip Hughes announced Thursday he'd been dropped from the side to play England in the third Ashes Test on his own Twitter page.

Hughes was dropped after a run of low scores and struggles against short-pitched fast bowling during the first two Tests of the series.

The 20-year-old left-handed opener managed 36 in the drawn first Test in Cardiff and scores of four and 17 in England's 115-run victory at Lord's, which put them 1-0 up in the five-match series with three to play.

According to a report in the Australian newspaper, Hughes's place is set to be taken by Shane Watson, even though the all-rounder has never batted higher than No 6 in a Test match.

"Disappointed not to be on the field with the lads today, will be supporting the guys, it's a BIG test match 4 us," Hughes

wrote on his Twitter page.

"Thanks 4 all the support!"

Hughes burst on to the international scene this year with hundreds in both innings of his second Test, against South Africa in Durban.

Last weekend Watson, whose international career has been blighted by injuries, scored 84 and 50 in the tour match against Northamptonshire.

But in eight Tests he has scored just 257 runs at a low average of under 20.

Watson's last four Test innings have all ended in single figure scores.

Hughes had a superb tour of South Africa (scoring 415 Test runs at 69.16) and had a prolific stint with county side Middlesex earlier in the English season when he scored 574 runs at 143.50.

He scored those runs in just five innings, including three centuries as he surpassed Australia great Don Bradman's start to a maiden first-class season in England -- 566 runs in five innings in 1930.

T20 Champs

FROM PAGE 17

The tournament is being organised jointly by the Indian, Australian and South African cricket boards to cash in on the growing popularity of the Twenty20 game.

India will be represented by the Royal Challengers, Deccan Chargers and Delhi Daredevils, the top three teams of the Indian Premier League which was held in South Africa in April-May.

The other teams confirmed are Victoria and New South Wales (Australia), Cape Cobras and Diamond Eagles (South Africa), Otago Volts (New Zealand), Trinidad (West Indies) and Wayamba (Sri Lanka).

The two teams from England will be finalised after the country's domestic Twenty20 Cup ends in mid-August, the organisers said.

The 12 teams will be divided into four groups with the top two from each group advancing to the second round, where eight teams will be further split in two groups.

The top four teams will contest the semi-finals.

BCCI to discuss

FROM PAGE 17

submitting a mandatory form to the ICC informing the governing body of their whereabouts.

The 11 Indian cricketers named in the International Registered Testing Pool are Harbhajan Singh, Gautam Gambhir, Irfan Pathan, Zaheer Khan, MS Dhoni, Yuvraj Singh, Munaf Patel, Sachin Tendulkar, Virender Sehwag, Jhulan Goswami and Mithali Raj. Reports suggest that they are yet to submit their 'whereabouts' forms.

The ICC's Anti Doping Policy now requires (as per a mandatory instruction from WADA) players in the testing pool to inform the ICC 90 days in advance (each quarter) about a location and time that they will be available each day in that quarter for testing.

If the player is not in the location at the time specified he will have a 'strike' recorded against his name. Three such 'strikes' and the player will have breached the code and could face a two-year suspension from the game. Tim May, the chief executive of the Federation of International Cricketers' Associations (FICA), echoed the players' concerns when he told Cricinfo in May that there were concerns about privacy and practicality.

Schumi's return hailed

AFP, Berlin

Michael Schumacher's stunning decision to dust off his racing helmet and come out of retirement to help Ferrari in their hour of need had the German media in raptures on Thursday.

"An angel for Ferrari" was how Berlin daily Tagesspiegel summed up the news of the 40-year-old German's comeback to the cockpit to fill in for injured Ferrari driver Felipe Massa.

"The legend returns" was Bild's headline above a photograph of a jubilant Schumacher on its front page.

Despite "two children, seven world titles, and 900 million euros," Schumacher is coming back, the paper commented.

Schumacher's family gave their assessment of the news. His father, Rolf, reckoned his son was making the right move, pointing out with reference to Michael's motorcycle accident in February: "Motorbikes are more dangerous than F1".

As for his brother, former F1 driver Ralf, Schumacher will still be "sufficiently quick" despite his time off the track.

The Berliner Zeitung daily meanwhile put forward their take on the reasons behind his return.

"He's doing it for the team that made him, he's a team player."

The Tagesspiegel carried a warning for Schumacher however, noting that the "good old days of F1" have evolved, with or without Schumacher.

The newspaper suggested F1 has become too expensive, even for the big manufacturers, and that numerous circuits are struggling to meet the "enormous demands of F1's great money man Bernie Ecclestone".

SL survive late scare

FROM PAGE 17

Afridi injected some energy into proceedings, clubbing Malinga over midwicket for six, but there was nothing distinguished about the lazy slice to Thushara that ended his innings at 27. Once Younis Khan flayed Thushara down to Mathews at third man, and Misbahul Haq popped one back to Murali off the leading edge, the cause was hopelessly lost.

Fawad Alam and Abdul Razzaq delayed the inevitable while making no dent on the asking-rate, but it was left to Gul and Mohammad Aamer to send some frissons of worry through the Lankan camp with some cavalier hitting in their own Powerplay. Some sloppy bowling from Malinga helped their cause and it was left to Mahela Jayawardene to seal the deal late on with a direct hit from point to run out Aamer. With Malinga yanking Gul next ball, it was all over.

It could have been so very different for Pakistan, who had seen Razzaq and Aamer bowl really well with the new ball in the morning. The initial breakthrough was delayed only because of indifferent fielding. Akmal put down a sharp chance off Sanath Jayasuriya down the leg side, denying Razzaq a fairytale return after two years in the wilderness. And Razzaq himself could have had Jayasuriya a couple of overs later, but a miscue straight back down the pitch was embarrassingly dropped right in front of the batsman's face.

At the other end, Upul Tharanga was in poor touch, beaten repeatedly outside his off stump with feet scarcely moving. It was Jayasuriya who went first though, slashing the second ball he faced from Gul down to Aamer at third man. Aamer had impressed with the new ball, bowling with pace and beating the bat often. And after Tharanga was put out of his misery, nicking one behind, it needed a 48-run stand between Sangakkara and Jayawardene to resurrect the innings.

As in the Test series, Sangakkara seldom failed to cash in on the bad ball, stroking Gul through mid-on and cover, and clipping Younis'

part-time medium-pace through midwicket for fours. But just as it seemed that the time was ripe to accelerate, he was undone by a Saeed Ajmal delivery that dipped and turned, and the attempt to cut merely looped to point.

Then came an almighty stutter. Chamara Kapugedera edged Afridi behind, and the onus was on Jayawardene to up the ante. Thilan Samaraweera couldn't do much on his return to the side, miscuing a pull to mid-on, and when Jayawardene was caught short going for a non-existent second run by Younis' flat throw from midwicket, the wheels were off and the axle nearly broken.

But Mathews and Kulasekera didn't panic, scoring in singles and twos before the Powerplay was taken. The final flourish did the rest, as the previously economical Afridi and Gul were taken apart. Gul tried to return the favour when Pakistan took their own Powerplay late in the game, but by then, it was far too late to be anything more than a consolation.

SCOREBOARD Scoreboard of the first one-day international between Pakistan and Sri Lanka at the Rangiri International Stadium in Dambulla on Thursday:

SRI LANKA Tharanga c Akmal b Razzaq 17 Jayasuriya c Aamer b Gul 15 Sangakkara c Afridi b Ajmal 36 Jayawardene run out 33 Kapugedera c Akmal b Afridi 8 Samaraweera c Younis b Razzaq 10 Mathews c & b Aamer 43 Kulasekera c Razzaq b Aamer 16 Muralidaran b Aamer 32 Thushara not out 8 Malinga not out 4 Extras: (b-1, lb-4, w-4, nb-1) 10 Total: (For 9 wkts in 50 overs) 232 Fall of wickets: 1-31, 2-45, 3-93, 4-105, 5-125, 6-131, 7-173, 8-204, 9-223.

Bowler O M R W Aamer 10 0 45 3 Razzaq 10 0 33 2 Gul 8 0 46 1 Ajmal 10 0 40 1 Younis 2 0 13 0 Afridi 10 1 50 1

PAKISTAN Akmal b Thushara 20 Malik b Kulasekera 9 Afridi c Sangakkara b Thushara 27 Younis c Sangakkara b Kulasekera 4

Younis c Mathews b Thushara 12 Misbahul c and b Muralidaran 9 Fawad c Sangakkara b Jayasuriya 31 Razzaq lbw b Muralidaran 17 Gul b Malinga 33 Aamer run out 23 Ajmal not out 0 Extras: (lb-5, w-5, nb-1) 11 Total: (All out in 44.4 overs) 196 Fall of wickets: 1-29, 2-41, 3-48, 4-73, 5-78, 6-95, 7-134, 8-134, 9-196.

Bowler O M R W Kulasekera 7 1 30 2 Malinga 8 4 50 1 Thushara 8 0 29 3 Muralidaran 10 0 46 2 Mathews 5 0 22 0 Jayasuriya 6 0 14 1 Result: Sri Lanka won by 36 runs.

Man-of-the-match: Muttiah Muralidaran. Toss: Pakistan. Umpires: Steve Davis (AUS) and Asoka de Silva (SRI). Match referee: Alan Hurst (AUS).

Pak players

FROM PAGE 17

The 33-year-old Akhtar, who is suffering from "genital warts", was withdrawn from the Pakistan team that won the World Twenty20 in England last month.

Akhtar then told a television channel that he considered suing team managers for releasing a private medical report.

Last year, Akhtar was banned for five years after he publicly criticised the PCB for dropping his central contract.

A PCB appeal committee reduced the ban to 18 months but levied a fine of seven million rupees (95,000 dollars) in July last year.

A further Akhtar appeal suspended the ban but upheld the fine, and the PCB awarded him a central contract earlier this year.

Akhtar, however, has failed to keep his place in the team because of injury and lack of form. He was dropped from the ongoing five one-day internationals in Sri Lanka after he failed a fitness test last week.

The bowler was also not included in the preliminary squad for the Champions Trophy to be held in South Africa in September and October.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS 40 Varnish ingredient 41 Small salamander 4 Regions 9 Pismire 12 Vast expanse 13 Ballroom favorite 14 Actress Myrna 15 Letter from the Vatican 17 Cleopatra's slayer 18 Floral garland 19 Undeveloped stage 21 Reacted in horror 24 Leeway 25 "Uh-huh" 26 Thickness 28 Dynamite inventor Alfred 31 Disposition 33 Formal 25-Across 35 "I never — man I didn't like" 36 Porcine sniffer 38 Pen point

DOWN 20 Prosperous claim time 21 Workout venues 22 Charlize Theron film, "Flux" 23 Ibis' kin 27 Hankering 29 Handy Latin abbr. 30 Frilly 32 Song for two 37 Cheap print 39 Lullaby composer 42 Lock of hair 44 Sphere for one 45 Basketball tactic 46 A Great Lake 50 Chicken — kind 51 Suitable 52 Zodiac sign 53 Once around the track

Solution time: 24 mins. J A M M I L D J C B M A G A A V E R N O L O M E X G I V E O R U M G R I T N E Y S P E A R S S W E P T P E W A M Y P O L O G E O A L E E A O K L U G S T A I R T S E A B I T O G R I T I S H E M P I R E L O B E H E L P R U M A S I A E R I E I S M B A S K D E E R S M Y

Grid for crossword puzzle with numbers 1-53.

CRYPTOQUIP

A D S T X R D P G D J X R P G T B
A N Y O Z H Y C T Q C Y P C T S P D B
Q D C M Y B Y H P M K D, K M J G P I Y X
R T I M P O T R N Y Z J - O M Z B D B ?

Saturday's Cryptoquip: WHEN YOU GIVE CRYDING CHILDREN NEW TOYS TO SETTLE THEM DOWN, I SUPPOSE YOU'VE PLAY-CATED THEM.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: I equals Y