

Shakib leaves for Adelaide tomorrow

SPORTS REPORTER

Shakib Al Hasan will leave Dhaka tomorrow morning for Adelaide for treatment of his groin injury.

The number one all-rounder in one-day rankings is scheduled to consult Dr. Steve Saunders for physiotherapy assessment and treatment at the Saunders Sports & Spinal on Monday.

Coach Jamie Siddons, who is currently in Brisbane, will join Shakib in Adelaide.

The stand-in Tigers skipper, who led the team to a historic 2-0 Test and 3-0 one-day series victories in West Indies followed by a 4-1 series success against Zimbabwe, had to play with painkillers during both the West Indies and Zimbabwe tours due to acute groin pain.

It would only be possible to know his condition only after the consultation with his doctor.

Dragon blank Diamond

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Manikganj

Shyamol struck twice as Dragon Sporting Club blanked Diamond Friends Club 3-0 in the Hafizul Islam Khan Uttu Smriti First Division Football League at Shahid Miraz-Tapan stadium in Manikganj yesterday.

With the day's outcome, Dragon Sporting Club improved the tally to seven points from three matches to share the lead with City Club.

Diamond Friends Club followed the leaders with one point adrift.

Shyamol put Dragon ahead in the 34th minute and doubled the margin in the 58th minutes and Shahin scored the third goal in the 70th minute.



Did U Know?

Stopping off en route to Iceland, the Albanian national soccer team were thrown out of England in 1990 after going on a shopping spree at Heathrow. They had thought 'duty free' meant help yourself.



What to Watch

STAR Cricket
England v Australia
First ODI
Live from 8:00pm

TEN Sports
Sri Lanka v New Zealand
Second T20 Int'l
Live from 8:30pm
US Open Tennis
Live from 12:30am (Saturday)

ESPN
Sportscenter India
Sports News
Live at 9:30pm



Talk Turkey



Pele

(Brazilian soccer legend)

"Beating rival teams like Argentina has a different feeling. However, we all know who Maradona is. We cannot take into consideration anything he says. He has all the abilities to be a great coach, but he'd better not plan on beginning in the game against Brazil."

On recent remarks by Argentine coach Diego Maradona.



PHOTO: AFP

Kim Clijsters of Belgium celebrates her 5-7, 6-1, 6-2 win over Marion Bartoli of France in their second round match of the US Open at the Flushing Meadows in New York on Thursday.

Clijsters on track

AFP, New York



The remarkable comeback of Kim Clijsters gathered pace at the US Open on Wednesday, underlining her growing threat to the domination of the Williams sisters.

The 26-year-old Belgian defeated 14th seed Marion Bartoli of France 5-7, 6-1, 6-2 to reach the third round.

In just her third tournament back after a two-year "retirement" during which she got married and had a baby daughter, 26-year-old Clijsters started slowly but moved up through the gears to stun the former world top player.

She will next play another Belgian, Kirsten Flipkens, for a place in the last 16, where she could run into Venus Williams, who is struggling with a knee injury.

The 29-year-old American, who won back-to-back titles here in 2000 and 2001, wore a heavy white strapping to support her left knee in her tie against compatriot Bethanie Mattek-Sands, but she was rarely stretched and won 6-4, 6-4.

Younger sibling Serena, who is in the same half of the draw, later produced an awesome display of power hitting to demolish Hungary's Melina Czik 6-1, 6-1 and reinforce her position as the tournament's outstanding favourite.

Clijsters said that the key to her win over Bartoli had been a tactical change she had made after losing the first set.

"She was playing really well and dominating the points and my forehead was not going the way I wanted it too," she said.

"So it was a smart move to mix it up at the start of the second set. I was trying to figure out a way where I could mix my game up and break her rhythm."

"I like this more than the first match which I won one and one."

"I stayed focussed and worked out a game plan and that is more rewarding when you win a game like this."

Williams apart, other leading seeds to make it through from the second round were eighth-ranked Victoria Azarenka of Belarus, who coasted past Barbora Zlahavova Strykova of the Czech Republic 6-2, 6-1, and seventh-seeded

Russian Vera Zvonareva, who hit back to defeat compatriot Anna Chakvetadze 3-6, 6-1, 6-1.

In-form Italian Flavia Panetta, the 10th seed, recorded the first whitewash of the tournament, defeating India's Sania Mirza 6-0, 6-0, but China's top player Li Na kept Asian hopes alive with a 6-1, 6-3 win over tempestuous teen Michelle Larcher de Brito of Portugal.

In other games, French veteran Amelie Mauresmo lost 6-4, 6-0 to Aleksandra Wozniak and said she would consider her future in the game at the end of the year, while Maria Kirilenko of Russia upset Polish 12th seed Agnieszka Radwanska 6-4, 2-6, 6-4.

Bartoli was in command early on against Clijsters as both players struggled to hold their serves and she took the first set when Clijsters overcooked a forehand drive and then played a poor drop shot from 30-all on the French player's serve at 6-5 up.

But the Belgian, who won her only Grand Slam title here in 2005, varied her shot-making at the start of the second and Bartoli quickly unravelled as she was knocked out of her comfort zone.

The deciding set was all Clijsters with Bartoli looking increasingly tired and frustrated.

Venus Williams, who came within three points of a shock first-round loss to Vera Dushevina of Russia, said she was trying to play through the pain of her injured knee.

"I really just put all my focus on the match and playing the ball and getting to the ball, and I didn't focus on anything else, anything going on. Even with my body, I really do try to put that out of my thoughts," she said.

Williams will next play Slovakian suprise Magdalena Rybarikova with a likely fourth round matchup with Clijsters looming at the weekend should they both win.

Sister Serena, the defending champion and second seed who is seeking a fourth US Open title and a 12th Grand Slam title overall, took just 53 minutes to dismantle the unfortunate Czik in what was the first time a women's match had concluded the night-time session on the Arthur Ashe Stadium court.

"I'm feeling really good and I haven't felt much better," she said.

"I think there are still things I can do better and I'm glad there is because it means there are higher things to reach."

Why ban on SuperSport?

QUAZI ZULQUARNAIN ISLAM

Sports fans across the city are continually frustrated at finding themselves in the dark over TV coverage of some of the best sporting events from across the globe.

Sports, especially football from European leagues and World Cup qualifiers, have emerged as a growing interest with young people in the city charting the progress of their adopted club and country intently.

Most however are often frustrated at the utter lack of television coverage that has emerged since the government decided to impose a ban on popular free-to-air channels SuperSport 1 & 8 in July 2007.

"I don't understand why the government does not permit free-to-air channels like SuperSport. We continually miss out on important sporting events both in football and cricket," says Tausif, a resident of Dhanmondi.

At present ESPN-Star Sports, Ten Sports and Zee Sports are the operational sport channels that are authorized by the government. However, the three make up only a small slice of the pie as regards international sports events with SuperSport covering all of their above programs and much more.

In football alone, ESPN-Star Sports only holds the rights for the English Premier League while Ten and Zee

Sports, hold the rights to the UEFA Champions League.

"Almost all coverage [by the above channels] is one-dimensional and focus on English clubs," bemoans Zubair, a resident of Banani.

"Three years ago, we were inundated with sports channels with Neo Sports and SuperSport providing coverage of the Italian, German and Spanish leagues in addition to showcasing the World Cup qualifiers. At the moment we have to be content with only the English league."

International football matches involving national giants are also not shown in any of the four allowed channels leaving fans poring over the internet to catch updates of games.

South American giants Argentina and Brazil will clash tomorrow in a crunch qualifying tie and the game has provoked huge interest from fans with the Sports section of The Daily Star inundated with phone calls asking where the action can be caught live.

While SuperSport 5 is set to beam live coverage of the game, the government ban on downlink will mean that fans across the country will be bereft of the live action and have to contend themselves with news reports.

"In this age of information and globalisation, it is extremely frustrating that such a government ban will deny fans the chance to catch their favourite players in action. As a fan of Lionel Messi,

I am saddened at not being able to catch his games either for Barcelona (Spanish Premier League) or for Argentina," bemoans Sadat, another resident of Dhanmondi.

Anwar Parvez, President of COAB (Cable Operators Association of Bangladesh) sympathized with the plights of the viewers.

"SuperSport is an exceptional sports channel which showcases almost all cricket and football across the globe. It is extremely popular and we get numerous requests asking for it to be re-instated everyday."

"It is a free-to-air channel which anyone with a dish antenna can watch. I have appealed to the past [caretaker] government on numerous occasions for the ban on downlink to be overturned without success."

SuperSport was initially banned in July 2007 along with all free-to-air channels. COAB later appealed to the government for an upturn of the ban of 64 free-to-air channels, citing huge demand from the public. 34 were granted permission but SuperSport missed the cut.

"I hope the government looks into this matter as soon as possible with a view to overturning the ban. There is an immense demand for this channel and the technology permits us to showcase a wide array of sports [through SuperSport] without any worry of misappropriation of funds."

SA GAMES PREPS 5 athletes go to Malaysia

SPORTS REPORTER

As part of preparation for the upcoming 11th SA Games, five leading athletes left Dhaka yesterday to have improved training at the IAAF-High Performance Training Center in Malaysia.

They are sprinters Najmun Nahar Beauty and Imran Bhuiyan, hurdlers Jesmin Akhter and Afzal Hossain and long jumper Al Amin.

The regional sports extravaganza will be held in Bangladesh from January 29 to February 9 next year.

Bangladesh Olympic Association (BOA) will bear the expenses of the three-month training programme for the athletes.

22 chosen for GP-BCB Academy

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) yesterday picked twenty-two players to join the GP-BCB National Cricket Academy's (NCA) training camp.

The camp will begin on Sunday and the selected cricketers have been asked to report at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur by 4:30pm the same day.

The players are Rony Talukdar, Nadimuddin Mintu, Mohammad Mithun, Nasir Hossain, Shuvagato Hom, Marshall Ayub, Farhad Hossain, Tanveer Haider, Saqlan Sajib, Robiul Islam, Muktar Ali, Subhashis Roy, Kamrul Islam, Shaiful Islam, Emon Ahmed, KM Shakil, Hamidul Islam, Nizamuddin, Jamunul Islam, Anifal Haque, Golam Kibria and Myshukur Rahman.

Federer, Nadal move on Safin bids Grand Slam bye

AFP, New York



Five-time defending champion Roger Federer booked a third-round US Open date with former world number one Lleyton Hewitt Wednesday while six-time Grand Slam winner Rafael Nadal cruised in his opener.

World number one Federer, seeking his 16th career Grand Slam title, ousted Germany's Simon Greul 6-3, 7-5, 7-5 while Nadal's bid to complete a career Slam began with a 6-2, 6-2, 6-3 victory over Frenchman Richard Gasquet.

Knee tendinitis kept Nadal from defending his 2008 Wimbledon title and sidelined him for two months, making this his first Grand Slam match since losing to Sweden's Robin Soderling in the fourth round of the French Open, a defeat that snapped his four-year title streak at Roland Garros.

"Seems like I was two years outside of competition. I was two months," Nadal said. "I'm fresher than ever in this tournament. I don't know if this fresher is good but I'm fresh."

That's dangerous news for Federer, who has lost to Nadal in five Slam finals and could meet him again for this year's US Open crown.

"Fantastic having him back. It seems like he is

doing well. He won very easily and that's great," Federer said. "If he's physically in great shape, obviously he's got a great chance to go far."

"If he's on, he's going to be hard to stop," Greul provided a somewhat grueling test for Federer, who was forced to save two set points in the 10th game before the Swiss star held, broke in the 11th game and held again for the set.

Federer netted a backhand to surrender a break in the second game of the second set and trailed 0-30 in the fourth game before roaring back, taking six of the last seven games to move on after one hour and 58 minutes.

"I knew I could be in for a battle," Federer said. "The level was really high. There was a lot of intensity. I'm glad to get through with a win."

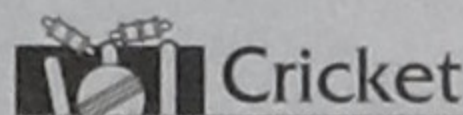
Federer's US Open unbeaten streak stretched to 37 matches as he set up a rematch of his first US Open final triumph in 2004 against Australia's Hewitt, who defeated Argentina's Juan Ignacio Chela 6-3, 6-3, 6-4.

"I started his run here in the finals in 2004," Hewitt said. "It would be nice if I could be able to be the one to finish it."

Federer has beaten the Aussie 13 times in a row and stretching that streak would ensure the Swiss star remains atop the rankings no matter what else happens in the Flushing Meadows fortnight.

SEE PAGE 18 COL 2

Kiwis shock Sri Lanka Second Twenty20 tie today



AFP, Colombo

Jacob Oram and Daniel Vettori shared five wickets as New Zealand came from behind to shock Sri Lanka by three runs in a Twenty20 international here on Wednesday.

The tourists, restricted to 141-8, hit back to keep the World Twenty20 finalists down to 138-9 in a tense finish at the Premadasa Stadium.

Oram finished with 3-33 and skipper Vettori took 2-11 as Sri Lanka lost seven wickets for 71 runs after Tillakaratne Dilshan's brilliant 57 off 28 had lifted them to 67-2 in the seventh over.

Oram, bowling the final over with Sri Lanka needing nine runs with three wickets in hand, dismissed Malinda Bandara and Nuwan Kulasekara off the first two balls and conceded

just five runs in the over.

Ian Butler, who did not play in the preceding Test series which Sri Lanka swept 2-0, took 2-29 including the important wicket of Dilshan, who was snapped up at point by Ryder.

The second Twenty20 match will be played at the same venue on Friday before New Zealand join India and Sri Lanka in a limited-overs tri-series starting here on September 8.

New Zealand fast bowler Shane Bond, returning to official cricket after two years, was plundered for four consecutive boundaries by Dilshan in his first over.

Bond, who broke links with the unauthorised Indian Cricket League to be eligible for New Zealand again, finished with 0-27 in his four overs.

New Zealand's innings revolved around Ross Taylor's 60 off 45 balls after Vettori won the toss and elected to bat on the slow wicket.

SEE PAGE 18 COL 1

Ecstasy school hockey sponsor

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Hockey Federation (BHF) got a sponsor to bring the National School Hockey Tournament back on to the field after a five-year break.

A fashion house, Ecstasy, came forward to revive the school competition by providing Tk 10 lakh as sponsorship money.

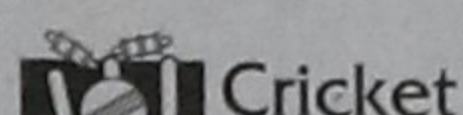
A press conference was held yesterday at a local hotel to announce the sponsor's name where it was informed that the schedule would be announced after the school examinations.

The sixth version of the tournament, which has never been held on regular basis, is likely to be held in December.

A total of 34 schools will take part in six divisions and two top teams from each division will get the tickets to play in the final phase in Dhaka.

SEE PAGE 18 COL 4

Oram didn't know it!



AFP, Colombo

New Zealand's Jacob Oram said Thursday he was unaware he had taken a hat-trick during the thrilling three-run win over Sri Lanka in a Twenty20 international.

Oram's three wickets in three balls, but in separate overs, was missed by almost everyone at the Premadasa Stadium on Wednesday night, including Oram's teammates, the Sri Lankans and television commentators.

The tense finish and the helter-skelter nature of the Twenty20 game ensured the rare feat was forgotten, till Oram returned to the team hotel late at night after the match.

"The first I knew of it was when I got to the hotel," Oram, 31, a veteran of eight years in international cricket, said.

"My parents had watched the match and the old man had e-mailed to say congratulations on the hat-trick."

"That was the first I had heard of it."

The tall all-rounder took a return catch off Angelo Mathews with the last ball of his third over, the 17th of the innings.

He was then called on to bowl the final over

with Sri Lanka needing nine runs with three wickets in hand to surpass New Zealand's 141-8.

Oram dismissed Malinda Bandara and Nuwan Kulasekara off the first two deliveries, both to catches in the deep, and conceded just five runs in the over to clinch victory for the Kiwis.

It was only the second hat-trick in Twenty20 internationals after Australian fast bowler Brett Lee's three in three against Bangladesh in the inaugural World Twenty20 in South Africa in 2007.

Oram, who thought he was on a hat-trick after the two wickets in the final over, said he was not surprised no one noticed that it had already been achieved.

"A lot happens in the last overs of these Twenty20 games, it's pretty intense out there," he said. "And it happened in two separate spells, so it's not surprising."

The win was New Zealand's first on the current tour of Sri Lanka where they were defeated in both the preceding Test matches.

The second Twenty20 match will be played at the Premadasa Stadium on Friday before New Zealand join India and Sri Lanka in a limited-overs tri-series starting here on September 8.



PHOTO: AFP

HATRICK HERO: New Zealand all-rounder Jacob Oram (C) celebrates with teammates after dismissing Sri Lanka's Nuwan Kulasekara, his second of three successive victims, during their Twenty20 match at the R Premadasa Stadium in Colombo on Wednesday.