

American tennis star Andy Roddick plays a backhand against Marc Gicquel of France during their second round tie of the US Open at the Flushing Meadows in New York on Thursday. PHOTO: AFP

Strauss blasts Shah

ANI, London

England captain Andrew Strauss on Thursday blasted Middlesex batter Owais Shah after he injured Kent batsman Joe Denly in a tackle during a warm-up football match.

Denly collapsed in agony clutching his left knee and was taken to hospital following a challenge by Shah during the kickabout.

Strauss was furious as Shah clattered into Denly despite a strict 'no-tackle' rule imposed by the team management.

The Sun quoted the skipper said: "You'd like to think the players would be sensible enough in the warm-ups not to take it too far. But I think they did today. When we play football, we have a no-tackling rule but I'm not sure it was heeded."

Denly, 23, is not the first England ace to be injured playing football in recent years. James Anderson twisted his ankle in a warm-down during a Test in New Zealand two winters ago and left on crutches. He bowled the next day but was below full capacity.

Denly was ruled out of Friday's NatWest Series opener against Australia at the Brit Oval -- and could be struggling to play in the remaining six games.

Strauss revealed he would consider banning football at the start of England's practice sessions in future.

Safe sailing

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"He's obviously a very tough competitor and he's been playing extremely well. It's going to be a tough one," he said.

"I look forward to that. I will try and play my best and play smart that day."

Also through to the third round was Russian eighth seed Nikolay Davydenko, who defeated Jan Hernych of the Czech Republic 6-4, 6-1, 6-2. Davydenko was a semi-finalist here in 2006 and 2007.

French Open finalist Robin Soderling of Sweden, meanwhile, needed just 16 minutes to clinch his second-round tie when opponent Marcel Granollers of Spain abandoned with a back strain after just two games.

Clubs

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A team needs uninterrupted training before the start of the season, if they intend to stay in the trophy race and the club ultimately would be the beneficiary through this type of training though it might take a bit more cost compared to running a training camp in Dhaka.

Maruf thought that the clubs might start their pre-season camp outside Dhaka though it ultimately totally depended on the management decision.

Veteran coach Golam Sarwar Tipu, the coach of Muktijoddha Sangsad, said the clubs might opt to train in the isolated place like Dinajpur BKSP or might choose a place near to the capital.

"The financial condition of our clubs is not good and nothing will be changed overnight, but they can take imitative like others to send the team outside Dhaka as most of the Dhaka club have no ground and others facilities."

Ecclestone certain of Indian GP

INTERNET, undated



Bernie Ecclestone has insisted that there will be an Indian Grand Prix on the Formula 1 World Championship calendar in 2011 as was originally projected -- brushing off fears that local politics have delayed the construction of the circuit to be used for the race.

F1 has never raced in India before, but the arrival of Force India in the top flight last year -- with Giancarlo Fisichella stunning the paddock by registering the Silverstone-based squad's first points with second place in the Belgian Grand Prix at Spa-Francorchamps last weekend -- allied to having two drivers on the fringes of the top flight in Karun Chandhok and Narain Karthikeyan have significantly boosted interest and passion for motorsport in the country.

The sport's commercial rights chief executive Ecclestone has revealed that he expects work on the track in Greater Noida on the outskirts of the capital of New Delhi to begin in October, telling news agency PTI: "It's been on for a long time, but there's never been any doubt -- the contract was signed long time back. We are waiting for the circuit to be constructed. The foundation stone would be laid in late October, and I will be in India to lay the foundation stone."

However, recent reports emanating from the world's second-most populous country sug-

gest that differences between race promoters JPSK Sports and the government are hampering progress, with the sports ministry blanching at the 36.5 million dollars fee being demanded by Ecclestone's Formula One Management (FOM) company for the honour of hoisting a grand prix there, regarding F1 as 'entertainment' rather than sport and something not particularly 'desirable' that would have 'no impact on the development of sports in the country'.

"F1 is not purely sport," a ministry source told the Times of India. "It is entertainment, and this venture by JPSK is a commercial initiative. They sought our recommendation for an outflow of nearly 200 crore rupees (57.7 million dollars), which the ministry felt was not justified for a motor race. The proposed F1 race does not satisfy conditions which focus on human endeavour for excelling in competition with others."

The dispute, however, has been played down by Force India chairman and managing director Vijay Mallya, and JPSK Sports has revealed that it intends to approach the ministry again to seek its support.

"Yes, we went to the ministry seeking government concessions," acknowledged managing director Samir Gaur. "If need be, we will go again. We are 200 per cent committed to the F1 race in India. We are building a motor car racing track capable of holding an F1 race."

Sohail lambastes Butt

Cricket

ANI, Lahore

Former Pakistan captain and left hand opener Aamir Sohail has criticized Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) chief Ijaz Butt for misleading board patron, President Asif Ali Zardari and the public on the 2011 World Cup hosting issue.

Sohail, who resigned from the National Cricket Academy's (NCA) Director post recently, flayed Butt for calling general public 'naive'.

"Let me assure Mr. Ijaz that the people of Pakistan are not naive. They are passionate about cricket, knowledgeable and fully aware of what is going on in the world of cricket. With all due respect Mr. Ijaz, you are the one who is wearing blinkers and do not have a clue as to how to handle the affairs of cricket domestically and internationally," Sohail said.

Sohail, in his statement, said Butt has no idea about tackling issues at international forums and held him responsible for the 2011 World Cup hosting fiasco.

"His letter to the ICC president accusing the

chief executive officer of the ICC of influencing full members to support the IDI's (commercial arm of the ICC) decision to relocate matches from Pakistan does not augur well with diplomatic norms when you are handling international matters, Mr Ijaz must know," Sohail stated.

He lambasted Butt for the inept method in which the probe regarding March 3 terror attack on the visiting Sri Lankan cricket team in Lahore proceeded.

Sohail raised questions over the laid back attitude of the PCB, saying the whole issue was mishandled by the board.

"It was a major contributory factor in the subsequent developments vis-a-vis the World Cup 2011. The co-hosts were not contacted after the incident despite strong advice from some of his staff. Instead, he castigated ICC match referee Chris Broad. This did not go well in the world cricket regulatory body," The Daily Times quoted Sohail, as saying.

"It was height of incompetence of the PCB officials that rather than accepting the responsibility they tried to persistently pass the buck on the government," he added.

Elena, Jelena fall Aus ride

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Wednesday night and unable to focus.

Top seed Safina, seeking her first Slam title, rallied to beat 67th-ranked German Kristina Barrois 6-7 (5/7), 6-2, 6-3. The Russian made 38 unforced errors and double faulted 15 times but endured a roller-coaster day to advance.

As in a first-round narrow escape against Australian teen Olivia Rogowska, Safina lost the first set and went down an early break in the third.

French Open champion Kuznetsova, the top remaining seed in her quarter of the draw, routed Latvia's Anastasija Sevastova 6-4, 6-2. The sixth seed whose other Slam crown came at the 2004 US Open never faced a break point.

Sharapova, a former world number one back after right shoulder surgery, beat US teen Christina McHale 6-2, 6-1, and faces another US teen, Oudin, next.

Safina battled through to a third-round meeting with 72nd-ranked Czech Petra Kvitova who ousted Italy's 58th-ranked Tathiana Garbin

6-1, 6-3.

Six of eight higher-ranked players lost in Safina's section, the last of them 23rd-seeded Sabine Lisicki, who left the court in tears and a wheelchair.

Aussie qualifier Anastasia Rodionova ousted Lisicki 6-3, 3-6, 7-5 but the German twisted her left ankle on the final swing of the match and crumpled to the court screaming in pain. She was wheeled off still wiping her eyes.

Arman

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the scoring ability of the Black and Whites in order to launch their defence of the Federation Cup that starts from September 10.

Having practised for a week in Dhaka, Mohammedan left for Mymensingh on August 31 for the conditioning camp.

Maruf believed that the players would improve with every match and will be able to show their worth in the season's curtain-raising tournament.

PCB undecided on Kiwi series venue

ANI, Lahore

The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) is still undecided regarding the venue of the 'home' one-day international series against New Zealand scheduled to be held in November.

While it was being speculated that the series would be held either in the UAE or Malaysia, Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) chief Ijaz Butt said final decision in this regard would be taken after his meeting with the UAE authorities next week.

"I will meet a member of UAE team in Dubai on September 7 to take a decision on this matter," The Daily Times quoted Butt, as saying.

"I told them the rates for holding the ODI matches against Australia in Abu Dhabi in April this year were reasonable. Naturally, we don't want to incur a loss and I informed him to give us rates like that of Abu Dhabi," Butt added.

Speculations are that Pakistan might host New Zealand in the United States or Malaysia if the PCB fails to convince the UAE cricket authorities regarding hosting the matches in that country.

"These are available options for us although our first preference is to have the series in Abu Dhabi and Dubai," a PCB official said.

New Zealand was to tour Pakistan in October-November this year, but refused to visit the country citing deteriorating security conditions there.

Later, the New Zealand Cricket Board agreed to split the series into two parts.

It was decided that Pakistan would host the Kiwis in an ODI series at neutral venues in October-November and the Test series in New Zealand in November-December.

Uttar Baridhara Club leave for Kolkata

SPORTS REPORTER

Uttar Baridhara Club, a Dhaka First Division Football League team, will participate in the Datta Narayan Adhikary Smriti Winners Football tournament in Koch Bihar, India.

The Dhaka outfit will take on Santos Barasat of West Bengal on Sunday in the first match of the eight-team knockout meet.

Kiwis post

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Sri Lanka, World Twenty20 finalists in June, must score almost nine runs an over to draw the two-match series after New Zealand won Wednesday's opening game by three runs.

McCullum and Ryder bulldozed the Sri Lankan attack for the first 10 overs, racing to 83 runs without being separated.

The pair took 19 runs in Malinga's second over as McCullum slashed a six over point and drove the next ball through the covers for a boundary.

Veteran Sanath Jayasuriya broke the stand in the 11th over when he beat McCullum in the air and the batsman offered a simple return catch.

Ryder took over after McCullum's departure, striking two sixes and a boundary in the 12th over sent down by Tillakaratne Dilshan which yielded 20 runs.

Sri Lanka hit back with two quick wickets as Ryder was caught in the covers off Ajantha Mendis and Ross Taylor (16) was trapped leg-before by Jayasuriya.

Jayasuriya finished with 2-22 and Mendis took 1-21, while pace spearhead Nuwan Kulasekara went for 40 runs in four wicketless overs.

SCORES IN BRIEF
NEW ZEALAND: 170 for 4 in 20 overs (McCullum 49, Ryder 52, Taylor 16, Gupull 32, Oram 17 not out; Jayasuriya 2-22)

Windies

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want to see their best players represent them, and the hope is that the impasse will soon be over so cricket can again be the winner.

"It is difficult as chairman of selectors when you are unable to pick your best team. There is a concern about (players retiring to play Twenty20 cricket), but from the players I have spoken to that is not on the cards. Most want to play cricket for the West Indies and are looking forward to doing so again at some point in the future."

'Time to prove ourselves'

Cricket

CRICINFO, undated

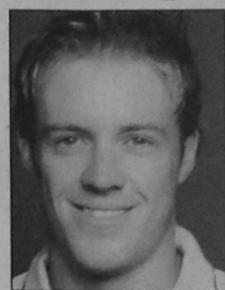
AB de Villiers believes the ICC Champions Trophy presents South Africa with an "ideal opportunity" to prove they are the best in the world. South Africa are currently No.1 in the ICC ODI rankings but their record in ICC tournaments has been below expectations, having only emerged triumphant in the inaugural Champions Trophy in 1998. They've reached the semifinals of the competition each time except in 2004, appeared three times in the final four of the World Cup, qualified for the semis of the ICC World Twenty20 this year and were knocked out in the Super Six round of the same tournament at home in 2007. But de Villiers was confident his team would go the extra mile this time around.

"We came short a few times, but there are many players in the team who are eager to improve," he told Bold. "We believe we are the best team in the world and now is a good chance to prove that. It's the ideal opportunity."

South Africa have hosted two ICC tournaments at home and have disappointed each time, but are training rigorously for the Champions Trophy which commences on September 22. They are currently in Potchefstroom,

attending a training camp, and de Villiers admitted it's the hardest they've been made to work.

"It's the hardest I have trained with this team," he said. "We run three or four times every day, attend net sessions, sweat in the gym and



AB DE VILLIERS

work on our fitness in the pool."

South Africa have played ten ODIs this year, all against Australia, winning seven and losing three. They've won both the ODI series against them, home and away, but will be playing their first ODI after a gap of more than four months. de Villiers said the intense preparation, which includes practice matches, was adequate for gearing up for the Champions Trophy. "We have not played much cricket in recent times, but have a few training games behind us," he said. "I believe we are all pro-

fessional enough to gear ourselves mentally for the tournament."

One of the practice games de Villiers was referring to took place in Potchefstroom on September 3, with Johan Botha's XI beating Jacques Kallis' XI. JP Duminy was the star, making 68 in 78 balls with four boundaries. The match was a high-scoring encounter with both teams managing over 270, and coach Mickey Arthur said he was encouraged by the batting performances on a pitch that wasn't too favourable. "The pitch was very slow which did not make conditions easy for the batsmen," he said. "I was very impressed with all our senior batsmen. Duminy looked as though he had never stopped playing from last season, AB de Villiers showed excellent intensity and Boucher confirmed what an outstanding power hitter he can be."

Arthur expected the tracks for the tournament to be similar. "Generally speaking I was very happy with what we got out of this game," he said. "The fact that we played on a slow pitch is no bad thing. I expect the pitches to be on the slow side for the start of the Champions' Trophy as it is being played very early in the season and we will get more of the same for other upcoming tournaments such as next year's ICC World Twenty20 in the Caribbean and the 2011 World Cup in the subcontinent."

Fisichella joins Ferrari

AGENCIES, undated



Giancarlo Fisichella has been given the green light by Force India to race for Ferrari for the remainder of the season, with immediate effect.

"Following extensive discussions over the past 24 hours, the Force India Formula One Team has agreed to release Giancarlo Fisichella from his contract to join the Scuderia Ferrari Marlboro team for the remainder of the

2009 season, starting with immediate effect," Force India said in a statement.

Force India team boss Vijay Mallya said that he would not have stood in the way of the Italian taking a race seat with Ferrari.

"Giancarlo and his management team approached me yesterday with the proposal from Ferrari," Mallya said.

"For any Italian driver, a Ferrari race seat is a long-held dream and for Giancarlo it was no exception. No one should stand in the way of this."

"Furthermore the agreement will secure Giancarlo's

long-term future with Ferrari and it would be incorrect to jeopardise this, particularly when Giancarlo has made such a vital contribution to Force India."

Ferrari also announced that Fisichella will be their reserve driver next year.

"We considered what could be his role inside the team in the near future, also taking this year's experiences into account. He will be the reserve driver in 2010," team boss Stefano Domenicali told the Ferrari website.

Amazingly, Mallya said that there had been no financial settlement with Ferrari over the switch of Fisichella, who caused a minor sensation when running Ferrari's Kimi Raikkonen close in Sunday's Belgian Grand Prix for Force India's first ever championship points.

"This agreement has been made in good faith and for the good of Giancarlo and the sport in general," Mallya insisted.

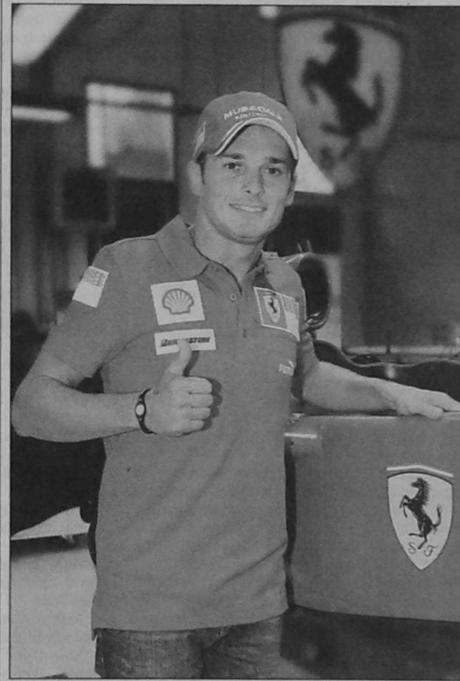
"A competitive Italian driver in a Ferrari for Monza is a positive story for Formula One, which can only help raise the sport's profile in these difficult times."

Fisichella would now be expected to make his Ferrari debut at the next Formula One Grand Prix at the Italian circuit of Monza on September 13.

The 36-year-old replaces Luca Badoer as Kimi Raikkonen's teammate, after the Italian test driver filled in for two races following Felipe Massa's accident at the Hungarian Grand Prix.

Stand-in Badoer, 38, struggled in his two races as a replacement for Massa. Making a comeback after almost a decade away from grand prix racing, he qualified last in Valencia and Belgium and was also last to take the chequered flag in both races.

Force India are yet to announce who will replace Fisichella for them for the remainder of the season.



Italian driver Giancarlo Fisichella poses next to the Ferrari F60 at Ferrari headquarters in Fiorano Modenese on Thursday. Giancarlo Fisichella has been given the green light by Force India to race for Ferrari in the five remaining Grand Prix of the season. PHOTO: AFP

Diego plans to attack

INTERNET, undated



Argentina coach Diego Maradona has called for all-out attack from his side in their must-win 2010 FIFA World Cup South Africa qualifier against arch-rivals Brazil tomorrow night.

Maradona's men currently hold fourth spot in the South American qualifying zone - the final position which would guarantee a place in South Africa next summer - with four games remaining. With Ecuador just two points behind, the pressure is on Argentina to get at least a point against the Brazilians.

Playing for a draw is not in Maradona's thinking, however. "We have to play in Brazil's box. We can't let them breathe," said the former World Cup winner.

Maradona requested to have the game moved from River Plate's home ground to a more intimate venue in Rosario City. And the fans' support, coupled with an attacking lineup, has left the hosts' coach confident of success.

"We'll attack them down the wings with Maxi Rodriguez and Jesus Datolo, down the centre with Juan Sebastian Veron, with Lionel

Messi and Carlos Tevez creating havoc, with Javier Zanetti moving forward from the back," he said. "The free-kicks and corner-kicks can also be good for us. We have a lot of options, we have to play our best game against a great team."

Brazil are in far better shape than Argentina. They currently lead the standings by a point from Chile and a win against Argentina could see them clinch a place in South Africa, providing other results also go their way this weekend.

Brazil's Real Madrid playmaker Kaka believes having the points in the bag could give them a psychological edge tomorrow. "It will be a very tense duel. They will have much more pressure on them than us and we have to use that in our favour," said the former AC Milan star.

"We need to show patience and be clever to play in a stadium that will be new for them too. If I was in their position, with such troubles to qualify for the World Cup, it would be impossible for me to sleep at night."

Manchester City star Robinho is expecting the home side to adopt a rough-and-tumble approach. "They will hit us, that's normal and they always do it. We will play hard too, but with the ball," he said. "They want to create a war-like atmosphere, but we have to play football and score goals."