



PHOTO: COURTESY

Coaches of Urawa Reds Heart-full Club are seen conducting a training session to the students of Modhurkhola High School in Dohar on Wednesday. The Japanese coaches are now in Dhaka as part of a programme called "Heart-full Soccer in Bangladesh" with an objective to create healthy mind and to teach the joy of playing.

Franklin in NZ squad

ANI, Sydney
New Zealand has called up fast bowler James Franklin to join the squad for Saturday's second Test against Australia in Hamilton.

Australia leads the two-match series 1-0 after a 10-wicket win in Wellington on Tuesday.

"There has been a lot of rain in Hamilton of late, and it is fair to say that the conditions we saw today at Seddon Park, at this stage, are far different to those we experienced earlier in the season," New Zealand coach Greatbatch said in a statement.

"We thought it prudent to have all our bases covered, and James does that for us," Sydney Morning Herald quoted Greatbatch, as saying.

The Black Caps hope Franklin's batting will add depth to their tail at No.8, after New Zealand lost 5-9 in their first innings of the first Test and their last four wickets for nine runs in their second innings.

The 14-man squad also includes uncapped 19-year-old batsman Kane Williamson, who could be vying for a spot in the side with Mathew Sinclair to replace out-of-form No.3 Peter Ingram.

SQUAD
Daniel Vettori (captain), Brent Arnel, Martin Gupthill, Peter Ingram, Brendon McCullum, Tim McIntosh, Chris Martin, Jeetan Patel, Mathew Sinclair, Tim Southee, Ross Taylor, BJ Watling, Kane Williamson, James Franklin.

Club Cup

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were pitted in two different groups while the others were chosen through lottery which placed two giants Abahani and Mohammedan in the same group.

Group A comprises Abahani, Mohammedan, Mariners, Ajax SC and Bangladesh Police while Group B consists of last year's Sonali Bank, Usha Krira Chakra, Wari Club and Sadharan Bima after Azad Sporting Club and Bangladesh Boys skipped the preparatory tournament of the Premier Division League.

Calling, better

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Rokibul was given the best possible life by his handlers so that he could realise his talent as a batsman. He was given the honour of playing for the country when a lot of players like him are never even given a look-in. He was treated specially by everyone and why not, he has talent.

He took advantage of this in the cruellest way by deciding to throw the preparation of battle into disarray just days before it started.

He wanted to show the world that he was bigger than the game, a foolish attitude that sparked obvious flack and subsequently he was punished.

But what about his handlers because how these handlers treat young minds is far important than how they organise a cricket tournament or host foreign journalists. And when these minds are half-baked and remain so confused about themselves, it is urgent that only the best handlers should take care of the Tigers.

McCullum afraid of ODIs

Cricket

AFP, London

Brendon McCullum has warned "one-day cricket is in danger" as an international format. The New Zealand wicketkeeper-batsman believes Test cricket's traditions can withstand the rise of Twenty20 cricket, a form of the game in which he excels.

But even though the International Cricket Council's premier tournament is the 50-over-a-side World Cup, McCullum fears established one-day cricket may not survive the rise of Twenty20.

"It's a dangerous time for the 50-over format," McCullum told the April edition of the Wisden Cricketer magazine.

"At the moment T20 cricket has captivated a lot of people.

"Test cricket will always stay -- there're too many traditionalists, and it is considered the cream of the crop for most cricketers.

"One-day cricket is in danger."

Following his 56-ball 116 against Australia in the recent T20 international in Christchurch, McCullum does though see some downsides in world cricket's shortest format.

No doubt thinking of the example of New Zealand's Shane Bond and England's Andrew Flintoff, McCullum fears the impressive financial rewards on offer from Twenty20 cricket will deter already injury-hit fast bowlers from putting themselves through the greater physical demands of five-day Test matches if they can still earn good money for much less work.

"The one concern I do have is that genuine fast bowlers around the world will look at the option of four-overs-a-game two or three times a week versus the hard graft of Test match and one-day cricket and decide that four overs is their lot," McCullum said.

"I'm talking about the 150-160 kph bowlers. That would be a shame, because I think there's something incredible about watching raw pace bowl a long spell in a Test."

DISASTROUS TOUR OF AUSTRALIA

Afridi appeals penalty

Cricket

AFP, Karachi

Pakistan's Twenty20 captain Shahid Afridi is the first to appeal against his punishment following a disastrous tour of Australia that saw the country's cricket board come down hard on top players.

Afridi was among seven players who were punished by a Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) inquiry committee, set up to investigate the team's dismal performance on the December-February tour.

The 30-year-old all-rounder, appointed captain for next month's World Twenty20 in the West Indies, was fined three million rupees (35,000 dollars) for tampering with the ball during a one-day match in Australia last month.

He was also put on a six-month probation during which his conduct will be strictly monitored.

Pakistan lost all three Tests, five one-day matches and the only Twenty20 international

on the tour.

Former captains Younus Khan and Mohammad Yousuf were banned for an unspecified period, while Shoaib Malik and Navedul Hasan were banned for one year and heavily fined.

Brothers Kamran and Umer Akmal were also heavily fined by the PCB in an unprecedented move on March 10.

PCB chief operating officer Wasim Bari confirmed Afridi was the first to lodge his appeal.

"Afridi has submitted his appeal against the fine with the PCB chairman Ijaz Butt and now one of three independent judges appointed to hear the appeals will take up the matter," Bari told AFP.

The PCB last week appointed two retired Supreme Court judges -- Muneer Sheikh and Jamshed Ali Shah -- and a former High Court judge, Irfan Qadir, to deal with the appeals.

"I have submitted the appeal," Afridi told AFP without giving details.

Malik, Naved and Younus have also hinted lodging appeal early next month. PCB has set a 30-day period for appeals.

Kedar snaps Delhi streak

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a serene partnership in the middle-overs between AB de Villiers and Dinesh Karthik, and a fiery finish provided by Jadhav.

It was Jadhav who gave Delhi the perfect finish, but for the majority of the innings they rode on the momentum provided by Warner. It was as though he was playing stick cricket -- see the ball and give it a mighty thump. The shot that stood out was a crunching pulled-six off Dale Steyn but what caught his mishap against was actually a mishap against the same bowler. It was just about bowler of length outside off and Warner went for an ambitious

pull, but the ball screamed towards the cover boundary. It was Twenty20 cricket at its best (or worst, depending on your point of view) and both the bowler and the batsman smiled.

There were no smiles from any bowler for the rest of the time when Warner flat-batted length deliveries over in-field and launched mighty sixes over long-on, but the entertainment ended when he fell, unable to clear his lofted hits, yet another of his lofted hits.

When he departed in the fourth over, the score read 44 for 1 and it soon turned to 58 for 2 with Sehwag falling to Vinay

Kumar, who is gaining a reputation for taking big wickets. The game changed in character from there on. De Villiers and Karthik preferred to deal in singles as they nudged and drove their way around. The period wasn't without its shares of thrills, with de Villiers pulling and Karthik sweeping Kumble for boundaries but it was definitely a lot quieter than at the start.

It threatened to get grimmer for Delhi when Karthik and de Villiers got run out -- Karthik backed up too far at the non-striker's end and de Villiers was caught short by a direct hit from Eoin Morgan at backward point -- but Jadhav, an unknown commodity for many of the Bangalore bowlers, connected with a few big hits to push Delhi towards a strong total. The shot of his stay was an audacious flat-batted six over long-on to a short delivery from Jacques Kallis, and he moved around the crease and also threw in a few deft shots -- a late cut against Kumble being the highlight. The bowlers, caught off-guard, didn't know whether to bounce at him or bowl full, and Jadhav exploited that to the fullest to push Delhi to a very competitive total.

SCORES IN BRIEF

DELHI DAREDEVILS: 183 for 4 in 20 overs (Jadhav 50 not out, De Villiers 45, Warner 33; Vinay Kumar 1-29)

ROYAL CHALLENGERS BANGALORE: 166 for 9 in 20 overs (Pandey 39, Kohli 38 not out, Kallis 27; Mishra 2-23, McDonald 2-42)

Result: Delhi Daredevils won by 17 runs.

Man-of-the-match: Kedar Jadhav.

Team Tigers

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the batsmen have gotten their feet slowly but surely, especially in the five-day version of the game. Still there is a long way to go but surely the team would be able to achieve the ultimate goal if they can continue their improvement graph.

Bangladesh might have at least won one ODI and drawn the second Test had not the umpires made some blunders and thus it could have been the Tigers best series against any top-ranked side but the team, in no way, can cling to the frustration rather they should take inspiration from their performance to move faster along the learning curve.

There are lot of areas where improvement can be name but first and most obviously one of them is their ordinary bowling.

NEW ZEALAND-AUSTRALIA 2ND TEST FROM TOMORROW

Watson's chances bright

Cricket

CRICINFO, undated

Shane Watson's chances of playing the second Test in Hamilton looked promising after he had a strong workout during a batting session in the Seddon Park nets on Thursday. Watson appeared unencumbered by the hip strain that kept him out of the win in Wellington, driving and pulling with full power against Clint McKay and a group of local bowlers.

Should Watson prove his fitness it will mean the axe for Phillip Hughes, who blazed to an unbeaten 86 as Australia chased down 106 to win the first Test at the Basin Reserve. Michael Hussey said Hughes would not be fazed by making way for Watson and the Australians were confident that Hughes would become a full-time member of the Test side in the future.

"He's a great young guy," Hussey said. "I think he just loves being around

the group at the moment. He is so young, there's so much time for him. All you can say is keep churning out the runs for New South Wales and when he gets his chance to play for Australia, keep showing everyone that he is good enough. I'm sure his opportunity is going to come up, where he'll make that position his own at some stage."

Hughes took a shine to the New Zealand pace attack in the second innings in Wellington, where the home bowlers took only five wickets for the match. James Franklin has been added to the New Zealand squad to replace the injured Daryl Tuffey and with some rain around in Hamilton two days out from the Test, the hosts faced a tough call on whether to use Franklin or the second spinner Jeetan Patel.

New Zealand lacked a spearhead in Wellington, where Chris Martin struggled for impact and his new-ball partner Tim Southee failed to take a wicket. The loss of Shane Bond and Iain O'Brien to

Test retirement in the past few months has been a blow for New Zealand but Simon Katich, who saw plenty of the seamers in his innings of 79 and 18 not out, said there were still challenges for Australia's top order.

"There's no doubt those two are big losses, Bond with his pace but also O'Brien, he has bowled well against us in the past and he was able to bowl at a lively pace and moved the ball," Katich said. "Both those guys are big losses to their attack. But their guys posed problems for us the other day. We had the best of the conditions batting first, there was a bit of hard work to be done early."

New Zealand must also decide on what to do with their batting line-up, with Peter Ingram under pressure having failed in both innings at the Basin Reserve. The veteran Mathew Sinclair and the teenager Kane Williamson are in the mix to come in to the side, although the conditions closer to Saturday will help determine the balance of the team.

'Invincible' Hamence no more

AFP, Melbourne

Ron Hamence, who toured England with Don Bradman's 'Invincibles' 1948 team, has died at the age of 94, Cricket Australia said on Thursday.

Hamence, who died in an Adelaide nursing home late Wednesday, was the oldest living Australian to have played Test cricket, CA said.

An attacking batsman, Hamence played 99 first-class games, including a Test in Australia in 1947 against England and two in 1948 against India.

Hamence's career spanned from 1935-36 until 1950-51 and he compiled 5,285 first-class runs at 37.75 with 11 centuries.

His death leaves Sam Loxton, 88, Arthur Morris, 88, and Neil Harvey, 81, as the only survivors of the Australian team that toured England undefeated to mark the end of Bradman's legendary career 62 years ago.

Serena 2009's best tennis player

AP, Key Biscayne

World No. 1 Serena Williams won the 2009 WTA Tour Player-of-the-Year award and also took the Doubles Team of the year honours with sister Venus at a ceremony held at the Sony Ericsson Open on Wednesday.

Serena Williams, wearing high heels despite a knee injury, was all smiles when picking up her award. She won the Australian Open and Wimbledon in 2009, was a semifinalist at the US Open and a quarterfinalist at the French Open.

The Williams sisters won the 2009 Australian Open, Wimbledon, and US Open doubles titles as well as the doubles crown at Stanford.

SONY ERICSSON OPEN

Henin's winning start

Tennis

AFP, Key Biscayne

Justine Henin advanced to the second round of the Sony Ericsson Open by beating Jill Craybas 6-2, 6-2 on Wednesday.

Henin double-faulted five times Wednesday and struggled with inconsistent groundstrokes. But she saved seven of eight break points while converting five of six.

The 33rd-ranked Henin, a former No. 1 and seven-time Grand Slam champion, is mounting a comeback this

year after a 20-month retirement. She'll play fifth-seeded Elena Dementieva in the second round Friday.

"I realise it's gonna take a little bit of time to really be in the good rhythm and find myself again on the court, and I have to get used to different kind of things," Henin said.

"I didn't live this life for almost two years, so that takes a little bit of time."

Henin will face a stiffer second-round test from Dementieva. Henin said she is looking forward to the match to find out where she is with her game.

"Now I'm gonna have a

rough round, tough match," Henin said. "That's what I want. So it's gonna be perfect to test myself."

Seeded players had a first-round bye.

James Blake of the United States struggled to oust 18-year-old Serbian wild-card recipient Filip Krajinovic in a 6-7 (6), 6-4, 6-4 first-round win.

After the 2-hour, 13-minute match, Blake joked that "I should be home in bed by now," but credited the teen for keeping him on his toes.

"I'd take that ability at 18 years old over what I was working with at that age," Blake said of Krajinovic.

"I really don't want to give a prediction, but I think, in my opinion, that kid has got some talent."

Melanie Oudin closed out the evening with a 6-2, 6-4 win over Michaella Krajicek of the Netherlands.

Making her first appearance in Miami since 1996, 39-year-old Kimiko Date Krumm of Japan earned a 7-5, 3-6, 6-4 victory over Anna Chakvetadze of Russia.

Date Krumm, who retired from the tour in 1996 and started to play again in 2008, spent 2 hours, 32 minutes on the court in beating Chakvetadze.

Sachin puts

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caught by Dhoni off Balaji in the 19th over, the team was nine runs short of victory target of 181.

SCORES IN BRIEF

CHENNAI SUPER KINGS: 180 for 2 in 20 overs (Raina 83 not out, Badrinath 55 not out, Hayden 20; McLaren 1-23, Harbhajan 1-25)

MUMBAI INDIANS: 184 for 5 in 19 overs (Tendulkar 72, Dhawan 56, Pollard 20, Bravo 14 not out; Muralidaran 2-32, Joginder 1-23, Jakati 1-30, Balaji 1-50)

Result: Mumbai Indians won by 5 wickets. Man-of-the-match: Sachin Tendulkar.

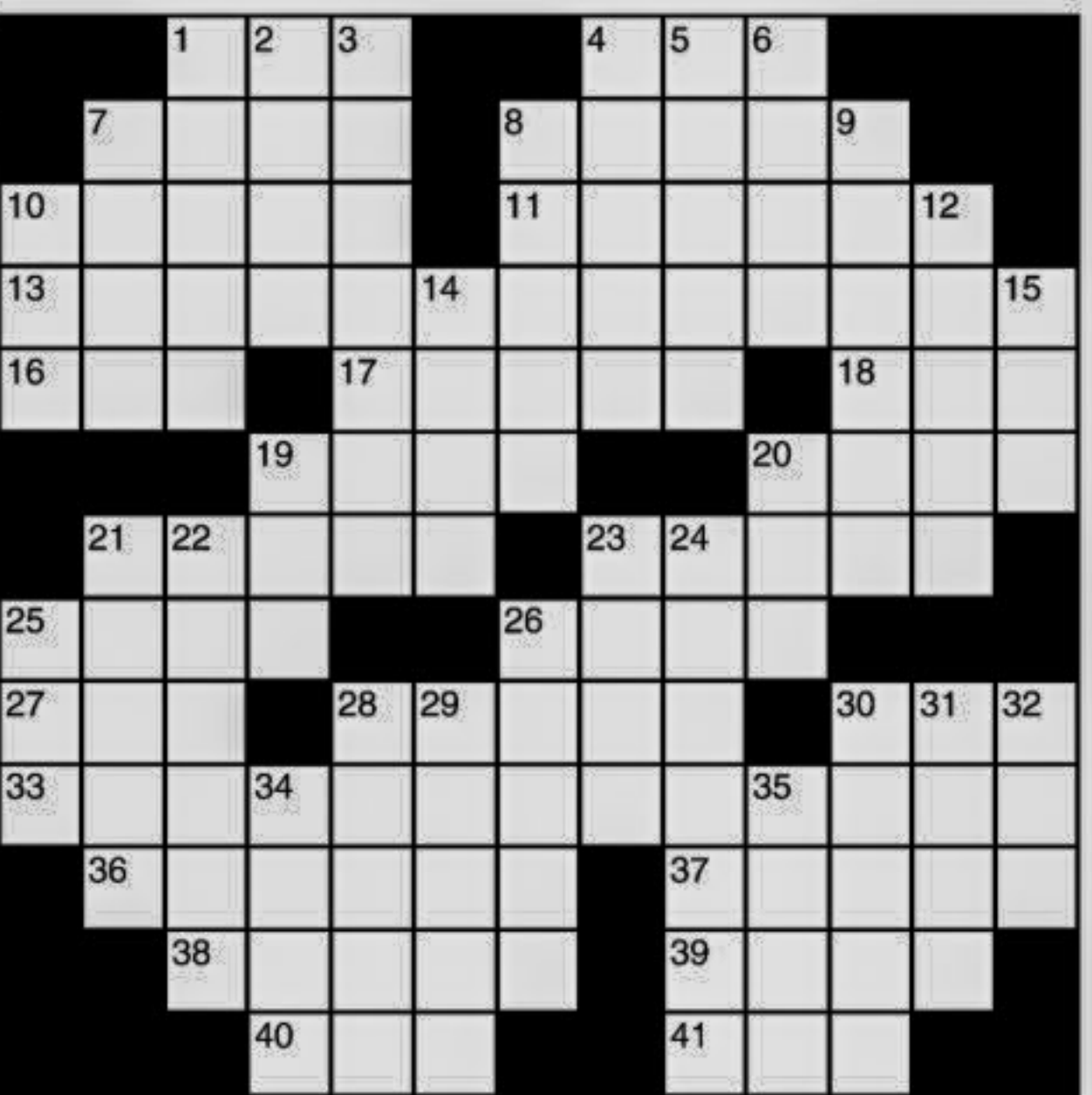


PHOTO: AFP

Serena Williams poses with the 2009 WTA Tour Player-of-the-Year trophy during the awards giving ceremony at the Crandon Park Tennis Centre in Key Biscayne on Wednesday.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS
1 Puncturing tool
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41 Explosive letters
DOWN
1 Extraterrestrial
2 Salvation
Solution time: 21 mins.
IRKS OWN RAPT
CENT CHI OGRE
ODOR COXSWAINE
NOXIUS TERMS
FIR SYN
GAVEL ROXANNE
ODE ANY OAR
TOXEMIA LUNGE
RID PEN
AREAS FOX TROT
BOXSCORE RATA
EDIE HAS UNTO
LETS STY EGOS



CRYPTOQUIP

V U X O F S N D H V N G D G X K K W
Q H X P K F G D X Z Z Q O H Q R P F S N
W D Q R V Y I G N X W I F ' N
N Q U U F S V H Y U S D R V H - N Q R - H V X

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: I HEAR THAT THE POPULAR CRUISE LINE PLANS TO OFFER MOST OF ITS CUSTOMERS A HALF-PRICE SAIL. Today's Cryptoquip Clue: Q equals U