



Sonali Bank defender Shamsuddin Tuhin (C) desperately takes the ball away from Mohammedan's Pakistani import Mohammad Sabbir (L) during a Green Delta Insurance Premier Division Hockey League at the Maulana Bhasani Hockey Stadium yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

Serena may miss US Open

AFP, Los Angeles

Serena Williams told her fans Monday she's feeling better, but the WTA tour said her recent foot injury could jeopardise her participation in the US Open.

Williams cut her right foot on broken glass at a restaurant shortly after winning her fourth Wimbledon title.

The 13-time Grand Slam champion said Saturday that she would miss events in Istanbul, Cincinnati, and Montreal prior to the US Open, the last Grand Slam of the year which starts on August 30 in New York.

"Hey guys I'm doing better," Williams tweeted Monday. "Thanks for all the love."

But WTA tour spokesman Andrew Walker said Monday that Williams is questionable for the final Grand Slam of the year.

ESS off to Malaysia

SPORTS REPORTER

A 22-member cricket team of the European Standard School (ESS) will leave for Malaysia today to take part in 4th KAF International Youth Cricket Carnival to be held at the Royal Selangor Club ground.

Some 24 teams from 23 nations will take part in the tournament, said one of ESS directors, Bashirul Islam, at a press conference at the Bangladesh Sports Journalist Association yesterday.

ESS cricket team also took part in the third edition of the invitational meet and reached the semifinals.

More than

FROM PAGE 17 already paid 80 to 90 per cent of the players' payments and in another Tk 20 lakh has been earmarked for spending behind foreign players and running the camp, claimed Shikdar.

But now that they have skipped the league altogether, Usha KC are expected to be demoted to the first division according to the bylaws of the league. However, the court has directed the federation to take a decision on the Club Cup final according to the rules and regulations as soon as possible and consider the plaintiff club's (Usha KC) position to ensure that they can participate in the next league.



TEN Sports & SuperSport5
Sri Lanka v India
First Test, Day Four
Live from 10:30am



Premier Div Super League Hockey
Mariner Youngs v Ajax SC
Time: 4:00pm
Venue: Maulana Bhasani National Hockey Stadium

Afridi kicks up new fuss

AGENCIES, London

Sparking off a new debate, former captain Shahid Afridi has stated that there were some players in the Pakistan team who did not deserve to be in the Test side but were still playing five-day cricket despite not having the ability or commitment for it.

Afridi also insisted that he had not quit Test cricket because of problems with fellow players in the team.

"It was my own decision and it was a spur of the moment decision. I didn't consult anyone," he told Jang. "I would advise all these players who don't feel comfortable or like playing Test matches to not become a burden on the team and just focus on playing one-day and T20 cricket," Afridi said.

Named captain for the entire tour, Afridi suddenly announced his retirement from the longer version of the game after the humiliating 150-run loss to Australia in the first Test at Lord's.

The flamboyant all-rounder reasoned that he decided to quit Tests because he had lost passion for the five-day game and wanted to concentrate on limited overs cricket.

Afridi said it was time for some non-performing players in the Pakistan Test side to ponder their future.

"As captain I tried to advise some players to avoid playing Test cricket and decide on a future but they insisted on playing Tests. They have not done justice to themselves or the team with their performances," he said.

MSC just a point away

Hockey

SPORTS REPORTER

Mohammedan Sporting Club are just one point away from clinching the Green Delta Insurance Premier Division Hockey League title after thrashing Sonali Bank 5-1 in their penultimate Super Cup encounter at the Maulana Bhasani Hockey Stadium yesterday.

With twelve victories in as many matches, the Black and Whites tightened their lead with 36 points, three more than Abahani against whom they need a draw in the last match of the league on July 24 to regain the coveted title.

M a m u n u r R a h m a n Chayan and Russell Mahmud Jimmy struck two goals each while Pakistani recruit Mohammad Sabbir netted one for Mohammedan, who also defeated the same side 7-5 in the first-leg match.

Mohammedan had to wait 20 minutes to take the lead when Chayan, combining with Mohammad Saqlain and Kamruzzaman Rana, converted a penalty corner. Ten minutes later, Sabbir doubled the advantage.

In the face of constant attacks, the bankers' backline collapsed and conceded two more goals before the break as Jimmy, set by Musa Mia, made it 3-0 in the 32nd minute. Chayan converted another

penalty corner one minute from the half-time break.

Soon after the resumption of play, the players of both sides got agitated centering on a foul made by Mohammedan forward Jimmy and the game was suspended for five minutes before Jimmy was sent off for 15 minutes.

Mohammedan with one man short went on the back-foot in the face of attacks and Sonali pulled one goal back in the 43rd minute but failed to cash in on two penalty corners.

Mohammedan got back their rhythm with the return of Jimmy, who finally completed the rout striking his second and the team's fifth in the second attempt after being denied by goalkeeper Probir Ghosh.

Nat'l boxing

FROM PAGE 17 will be awarded Tk 6,000 while the runner-up and third-placed finisher would be given Tk 4,000 and Tk 2,000 as prize money.

Bangladesh Amateur Boxing Federation general secretary Lt Col (ret'd) MA Latif said that they have been trying to bring a Thai coach for the national side ahead of the Commonwealth and Asian Games to be held later this year.

He also informed that they have plans to hold an international junior boxing competition in Bangladesh early next year.

London unkind to vuvuzelas

AFP, London

English Premier League clubs Arsenal and Tottenham have banned controversial vuvuzela horns from their stadiums this season.

Vuvuzelas provided the soundtrack to the World Cup in South Africa as fans blew the plastic horns throughout matches, creating a monotonous drone that drowned out crowd chants.

They were criticised by players and television audiences during the World Cup and several English Football League teams had already banned them.

Now Tottenham have become the first Premier League club to outlaw the horns, with north London rivals Arsenal quick to follow suit.

Tottenham officials believe vuvuzelas would ruin the atmosphere at White Hart Lane as well as posing a safety risk. "We are concerned that the presence of the instruments within the stadium pose unnecessary risks to public safety and could impact on the ability of all supporters to hear any emergency safety announcements," a club statement read.

"We are very proud of the fantastic atmosphere that our supporters produce organically at White Hart Lane and we are all very much looking forward to this continuing into the forthcoming season."

Arsenal have the same opinion and the club said: "Further to their hugely debated involvement at the World Cup Finals in South Africa, Arsenal Football Club has decided to forbid the use of vuvuzelas within Emirates Stadium with immediate effect."

"This decision has been taken to ensure the enjoyment and safety of supporters on matchdays, which is of paramount importance to the club."

2nd Test starts today

Pakistan may prefer Ajmal to Kaneria

Cricket

AFP, Leeds

Pakistan know they will be without former captain Shahid Afridi for the second and final Test against Australia at Headingley starting here on Wednesday.

But they could also be without leg-spinner Danish Kaneria too if they decide to recall off-break bowler Saeed Ajmal in a bid to counter the left-handers in Australia's top order.

However, as at Lord's last week, where Australia won the series opener by 150 runs, the question will be whether Pakistan's batsmen can put a big enough score on the board.

Opener Salman Butt has been promoted to the captaincy after Afridi's first game back playing Test cricket in four years saw him unsuccessfully try to slog his way out of trouble and then announce his retirement from the five-day game.

Afridi was then ruled out of the Headingley match and Pakistan's subsequent four Tests against England with a side strain.

Butt, formerly the vice-captain, led by example at Lord's with scores of 63 and 92 as he became the only Pakistan batsman to make a fifty in the match.

The 25-year-old left-hander now has the additional burden of captaincy.

But in Afridi's absence, a batting line-up that featured two debutants at Lord's in Azhar Ali and Umar Amin should be bolstered by the recall of former captain Shoaib Malik.

At Lord's, Pakistan lost 11 wickets in total to Shane Watson, who took five in their mediocre first innings, and occasional off-spinner Marcus North, who produced astonishing figures of six for 55.

Victory gave Australia a record 13th straight

Test win in a row over Pakistan and even though Headingley has a reputation for aiding swing bowlers, which will suit the likes of Mohammad Aamer and Mohammad Asif, runs will be at a premium.

Pakistan assistant coach Ijaz Ahmed, who made a century and a fifty during a drawn Test against England at Headingley in 1996, explained to reporters here on Monday: "I told them the [Pakistan players] the best thing to do is leave the ball outside off stump and the short ball."

Despite the instability caused by Afridi's exit, Ijaz insisted: "The boys are really keen to hit back."

For Australia the only worries are whether seamer Ben Hilfenhaus (shoulder) and North (illness), who both missed training on Monday, will be fit.

The uncapped duo of seamer Peter George and Usman Khawaja are waiting in the wings if needed.

And the way in which debutants Tim Paine and Steven impressed at Lord's suggests George and Khawaja will not be found wanting if given the chance.

One area where Pakistan should have an edge is in crowd support from the local Asian community, who are being encouraged to watch the climax of a series being played in England because of security concerns in Pakistan.

TEAMS

PAKISTAN (probable): Salman Butt (captain), Imran Farhat, Azhar Ali, Umar Amin, Umar Akmal, Shoaib Malik, Kamran Akmal, Mohammad Aamer, Umar Gul, Mohammad Asif, Saeed Ajmal.

AUSTRALIA (probable): Shane Watson, Simon Katich, Ricky Ponting (captain), Michael Clarke, Michael Hussey, Marcus North, Tim Paine, Steven Smith, Mitchell Johnson, Ben Hilfenhaus, Doug Bollinger.

Imran's fear

Cricket

AFP, London

Pakistan great Imran Khan fears fast bowlers "could go the way of the dinosaurs" if the international calendar retains its current congested schedule.

And the former Pakistan captain, who in 1992 led his country to World Cup glory, suggested axing 50-over cricket as a way of ensuring the "unprecedented" stress on fast bowlers was eased.

Imran, arguably the premier fast bowling all-rounder of his generation, made his remarks while giving the annual Cowdrey Lecture at Lord's here on Monday.

"Maybe we should eliminate 50-over cricket and just have Twenty20 cricket and Test cricket," he said.

"I don't believe Test cricket is the same standard as before," added Imran, who played against the fearsome West Indies pace attack of the 1980s as well as Australia's Dennis Lillee and Jeff Thomson.

The 57-year-old Imran, who since retiring from cricket has entered domestic politics, was at Lord's last week to see Pakistan lose the first of their two-Test series against Australia by 150 runs.

Defeat prompted Shahid Afridi to announce his retirement from Tests after just one game back as Pakistan captain.

Imran said Afridi was an

example of a fine Twenty20 player who lacked the temperament for the five-day format.

"The only test of a cricketer is the Test match because his talent and technique is tested," said Imran, the first Pakistani to deliver a lecture named after former England captain Colin Cowdrey.

"In Twenty20, if you are very talented you can get away with it, but a good Twenty20 cricketer will not necessarily excel in Test cricket."

Meanwhile Imran said the way the international game was structured put "tremendous pressure" on bowlers.

"The stress on fast bowlers is incredible. But cricket without fast bowling is never going to be the same standard if a batsman doesn't test himself against fast bowling."

"I saw [Australia's] Shaun Tait bowl in the Twenty20s and I thought an alien had come in -- you suddenly saw batsmen hopping about."

Imran, who led the call for 'neutral' umpires, said the standard of officiating at international level had improved greatly since his day and he insisted this would only get better with the increased use of technology.

"The spirit of the game suffered while I was playing. There was a lot of acrimony in the games and when India played against Pakistan. It deteriorated to depths you cannot imagine."

"Neutral umpires have changed everything, technology has eliminated so many of the controversies and results

are much fairer now. I think it should improve further with the use of [more] technology."

Muktis close

FROM PAGE 17 side in the title race.

Muktijoddha Sangsad's football manager Abdus Sattar confirmed that they had a successful discussion with Maruf and were on the verge of signing a deal with the AFC-licensed coach.

It was learned that Maruf would be given full freedom to deck up the squad and the team management would try to rope the players in line with Maruf's recommendations.

About time

FROM PAGE 17

Only City Club, Indira Road Krira Chakra and Dhamondri Club have their own academies at their club grounds and are run quite well with City Club's academy taking care of a large number of budding players in the city's northern reaches.

Young Pegasus stands out among the First Division teams. They have their own academy, but it is in Rajshahi.

There they practise all year long and most of the players are from Rajshahi and nearby districts. This obviously does well for the northern divisional headquarter but slightly discriminates against players from other districts, much like BKSP who pick players exclusively from their institute.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS
1 Wagon unstuck
5 German pronoun
8 Hawaiian dance
12 On the briny
13 Cattle call?
14 Soon, poetically
15 Celebrity
16 Three Bears' meal
18 Walk cautiously
20 Not wide
21 Actress Paquin
23 iPhone, for ex.
24 Concede reluctantly
28 Remove the lid
31 Lingerie item
32 Glacial ridge
34 Before
35 Rotating parts

DOWN
17 Knock socialites
19 Burden
22 "Get — on yourself!"
24 U.K. telly option
25 Historic time
26 Rooster trained to fight
27 Comfort
29 Work unit
30 Born comment
33 Hint
36 Pursues prey
38 1963 news-making villain
40 Blackbird
42 Teen's woe
43 Stir up
44 Paradise
46 Soft cheese
47 Poetic foot
48 Recedes
50 Wilde-beest

Solution time: 24 mins.

TRUER PATTOIS
CHANGE AROUSE
BENIGN BOTTLE
SNIT TEAM WED
SWAP ATE
ALP ACID WIRY
CARD CATALOGUE
EGAD ROME HMS
TEN MAGI
OFF OLES OBEY
VIAGRA CANAPE
UNLESS UNISON
MELLEES SACKS

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CRYPTOQUIP

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G U Q D Y Q J D K M P U H G I D U G D
Z J E K M P : L G M J N O J M X K U N .

Saturday's Cryptoquip: WHEN A SCHOOL HAS RULES CONCERNING HOW STUDENTS CAN WEAR THEIR HAIR, IS THAT A TRESS CODE?
Today's Cryptoquip Clue: U equals F