

Tomasson ends int'l career

Danish captain Jon Dahl Tomasson announced his retirement from international football on Monday ending his 13-year spell in the national side. The 33-year-old striker - scorer of 52 goals in his 112 international appearances - said it had not been an easy decision to take but in the end he felt he had achieved all he had wanted to at that level. "It was not an easy decision because the national team was a huge thing in my life and I have always been proud of representing Denmark," said Tomasson.



Long-version may be back

Cricket
SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) may step back from their decision not to arrange any longer-version cricket before the 2011 World Cup where Bangladesh is one of three co-hosts. To provide enough one-day matches for the Tigers ahead of the showcase event, the board has already slashed the two-match Test series at home against New Zealand and instead is going to host five one-day internationals in September-October. After the last board meeting it had also been confirmed that the longer-version of the National Cricket League (NCL), the lone first-class competition in the country, will take place after the World Cup, which will be inaugurated on February 17 next year at the

Bangabandhu National Stadium. But BCB's director and tournament committee chairman Gazi Ashraf Hossain informed yesterday that they are thinking of holding longer-version matches in at least the first round of the NCL. "The cricket operations committee is working on the issue. It was supposed to be placed before the today's [Monday] technical committee meeting but it was postponed. There is a chance to start the season with the National League longer-version matches because we don't want to waste any time," said Gazi Ashraf. "The national players will be busy with the home series against New Zealand but we can easily complete the first round of matches with the rest of the players. I think the national players will get enough opportunities to play limited-over games before the World Cup so there is no point of upsetting the domestic calendar," the former national skipper added.

As per the draft calendar, the Premier Division T20 will start from November 27 and the most coveted 50-over competition will likely start from December 8. The NCL one-day competition, which wasn't held last year due to time constraint, will take place after the conclusion of the Premier League. "So we have September and October in our hands and there is no point to waste the season's two months," said Ashraf adding that they are not interested to hurt the domestic calendar for the World Cup. In this season the Premier Division League matches may be held outside Dhaka due to the unavailability of the major venues like Mirpur and Fatullah due to construction work for the World Cup. The country's major cricket venues in Dhaka and Chittagong are under construction for the mega event. Bangladesh will stage eight matches including two of the quarterfinals.



England captain Andrew Strauss takes the aerial route on way to making 53 not out in the second innings to guide his side to victory in the second Test against Pakistan at Edgbaston in Birmingham yesterday.

Aussies keep Champs Trophy

Hockey
AFP, Moenchengladbach

Australia won a third successive Champions Trophy, and 11th in all, with a comprehensive 4-0 mauling of England on Sunday, shrugging off a 60-minute rain delay in the process. England secured the consolation of runners-up having never previously done better than fifth place while the Netherlands took bronze with a 4-1 defeat of Germany.

Australia coach Ric Charlesworth was delighted with his team's perfect record of six wins in six matches. "If you had told me before the tournament we would have these results I would have been very happy. You don't expect it will happen," Charlesworth said. "We came here with the most inexperienced team in the tournament and this has deepened the belief of a number of players that they can play at this level."

Germany gained a consolation goal from Florian Woesch. New Zealand finished last and were relegated after losing to Spain 3-2. New Zealand took an early lead when Nicholas Wilson powered a backstick shot from the left inside the right post across Spain goalkeeper Francisco Cortes.



Australia captain Edward Ockenden (C) holds the Champions Trophy as his teammates rejoice after beating England 4-0 in the final in Moenchengladbach on Sunday.

Blanket resignation at BAF

SPORTS REPORTER

Some 13 organisers including two vice-presidents, joint secretary and treasurer of the Bangladesh Athletic Federation have recently tendered their resignations to the BAF president citing lack of transparency of general secretary Shah Alam as their reason behind quitting. "We have submitted resignations because it is not possible to work with the current general secretary due to his dictatorial attitude. He has been doing things without informing the executive committee," said member Mahub Alam.

"There is no transparency in his activities, he has refused to submit financial statements of the federation and he sent two unknown person abroad without consent from the executive committee," alleged the former SAF Games gold medalist sprinter.

Alam also claimed that a couple of members of the 27-member committee are planning to resign from their respective posts.

President Ali Kabir also admitted that he has received the resignations and will look into the matter. "They raised some allegations. I am considering to look into the matter thoroughly," said Kabir.

"I have been in office for the last 22 months and everything had been running smoothly, and no one raised any questions till now. But suddenly some officials, backed by outsiders, are plotting to dissolve the existing committee so that they along with outsiders can assume power through the ad-hoc committee," explained Shah Alam claiming the allegations.

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England go 2-nil up

Cricket
AFP, Birmingham

SPORTS REPORTER

England captain Andrew Strauss survived being dropped three times to guide his team to a nine wicket win against Pakistan on the fourth day of the second Test at Edgbaston here Monday.

England, set 118 to win, finished on 118 for one as they went an unbeatable 2-0 up in this four-match series with more than a day to spare.

Opening batsman Strauss and Jonathan Trott were both 53 not out, with England winning their sixth Test in a row.

"We had a few butterflies because we knew we had to work hard for a Test match win. It was a timely reminder for us we have to work for a Test match win. All credit to Pakistan."

England had made just seven when Alastair Cook was clean bowled by left-arm quick Mohammad Aamer after a full length delivery kept low.

England could then have been 17 for two when off-spinner Saeed Ajmal, with only his third ball, induced an edge from Strauss, playing a forcing shot, on 10.

But debutant wicketkeeper Zulqarnain

Haider, brought in after Kamran Akmal missed several chances and bagged a pair in Pakistan's 354-run first Test defeat at Trent Bridge, could not hold the tough catch with England then on 17 for one.

Zulqarnain then failed to hold a simpler chance off a defensive edge from Strauss, on 38, with Ajmal again the unlucky bowler.

Strauss, was on 43 when Mohammad Asif, running back at mid-off, failed to hold a skyer off Shoaib Malik but England were almost home.

Trott went to his second fifty of the match with a cover-driven four off Malik that levelled the scores before Strauss's inside-edged single off Ajmal ended the match.

Pakistan were earlier dismissed for 296, after resuming on 291 for nine, with Asif (14) caught in the gully by Kevin Pietersen off Stuart Broad.

Umar Gul, batting with a runner, was 13 not out. But Gul's hamstring injury meant the paceman was unable to bowl.

Zulqarnain, in on a king pair, top-scored with 88.

It represented a remarkable recovery after Pakistan made just 72 -- their lowest score against England -- in the first innings.

England off-spinner Graeme Swann took a

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Tri-series from today

Cricket
AFP, Dambulla

SPORTS REPORTER

Mahendra Singh Dhoni's India go into a triangular series in Dambulla on Tuesday keen to extend their impressive run in the one-day game in Sri Lanka.

India, who clash with New Zealand in the opening day-night match, have won two bilateral series, a tri-series and the Asia Cup in Sri Lanka over the past two years.

Each side will play the other twice in the preliminary league before the top two qualify for the final on August 28.

India are also fresh from a morale-boosting victory over the hosts in the final Test in Colombo last week, helping them square a three-match series 1-1.

The Indians have rested record-breaking batsman Sachin Tendulkar, key spinner Harbhajan Singh and opener Gautam Gambhir

for the one-day tournament, but have enough depth in batting and bowling to test their rivals.

Dinesh Karthik is likely to open the innings with hard-hitting Virender Sehwag in place of Gambhir.

India's batting has been boosted with the return of Yuvraj Singh, who was dropped for the Asia Cup. He has so far scored 7,345 runs in 250 one-day internationals.

Batting is India's main strength, with Dhoni, Yuvraj, Sehwag, Suresh Raina and Rohit Sharma capable of dominating any attack with a rich stroke-play.

New Zealand, who were runners-up in the Champions Trophy in South Africa last year, will test their bench-strength in the absence of skipper Daniel Vettori and aggressive opener Brendon McCullum.

The Black Caps geared up for the tournament in style, winning both their practice matches.

Skipper Ross Taylor, Scott Styris, Jacob Oram

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New Zealand captain Ross Taylor (L), India captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni (C) and Sri Lanka captain Kumar Sangakkara pose for photographers with the tri-series trophy at a press conference in Dambulla yesterday.

David ends drought

Tennis
AFP, Washington

SPORTS REPORTER

Argentina's injury-plagued David Nalbandian snapped a 19-month title drought by winning Sunday's Washington Classic final and likes his chances of adding a deep US Open run to his comeback success.

Nalbandian won his first ATP title since January 2009 at Sydney by beating eighth seed Marcos Baghdatis of Cyprus 6-2, 7-6 for the 281,500-dollar top prize from the 1.4 million-dollar tournament, a US Open tuneup event.

"If I continue playing this good, I have a chance to go very, very far," Nalbandian said of the year's last Grand Slam event that starts August 30.

The former world number three was sidelined nine months after hip surgery, made a brief return early in 2010, then missed two months with a sore hamstring before coming back in July to help Argentina reach the Davis

Cup semifinals. "We passed very tough moments in the last year and a half with the surgery," Nalbandian said. "We have to enjoy this moment. It's tough to come back and play this well. Now we have to keep going."

At 117th in the world, Nalbandian is the lowest-ranked player to win an ATP title this year, a feat that will lift him back into the top 45.

"If he plays like that, he can beat a lot of guys in the top 10," Baghdatis said.

The 28-year-old South American has missed the past six Grand Slams and had not played an ATP event since April, but captured his 11th career crown and dropped only one set all week.

"I didn't expect to win the first tournament (where) I came," Nalbandian said. "It's very important. I was working very hard. I was fighting so much. This makes me feel very good, not only (about) the ranking but my game."

Nalbandian said he has moments when he hits the ball as well as he ever has but noted, "I hit the ball good a few years ago too."

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SPORTS POLL
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