



Winners of the Advocate Abdur Rab Memorial Summer Open Badminton tournament pose for photographs at the Wooden Floor Gymnasium yesterday.

Gavaskar turns down IPL role

CRICINFO

Sunil Gavaskar has turned down the BCCI's offer to be part of the IPL's governing council, saying he felt that the league was a commercial enterprise and those working for it should be remunerated. The Indian board had said on Wednesday that members of the reconstituted council would no longer receive a salary.

"I have been contacted and I have declined because after yesterday [Wednesday] I had second thoughts," Gavaskar told NDTV. "The IPL is a commercial enterprise and non-BCCI members, former cricketers included, should be remunerated for the expertise, experience and time that they bring to the table."

Gavaskar had, on Wednesday evening, said he was willing to work in an honorary capacity but said this was not a turnaround. "Let me tell you for Indian cricket I am always there, but the IPL is a commercial enterprise." Under the old system, the three former cricketers on the council -- Gavaskar, Ravi Shastri and Mansur Ali Khan Pataudi -- were paid Rs 1 crore (approximately \$220,000) for their services.

Doing away with salaries was only one of the wholesale changes the BCCI made to the governing council at its annual general meeting in Mumbai on Wednesday. It dissolved the existing body and set up a new one with Chirayu Amin as the chairman. The council also included five other members -- Arun Jaitley, Ranjib Biswal, Anurag Thakur, Ajay Shirke and Rajiv Shukla -- and two former cricketers, one of whom was Shastri, who had agreed to work in an honorary capacity.

Shashank Manohar, the BCCI president, had said that he needed to check with Gavaskar and Pataudi whether they were willing to serve on the council without remuneration.

'I've no desire to play Test'

PTI, Karachi

Pakistan's ODI and Twenty20 skipper Shahid Afridi says he has no intentions of going back on his "emotional" decision to retire from Test cricket as he has lost the desire to play the longer format of the game.

"I have no real desire to play Test cricket and the reason I lost this desire was because I was not selected consistently for Test matches," Afridi said. "As it is I have a busy schedule and I don't think I have the time for Test matches," he added.

Tame start

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five foreign players (with the fifth being the goalkeeper) can be part of the starting eleven of all the teams.

Registered players for Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club: Aminul Haque, Sujon, Ariful Islam, Rezaul Karim, Wali Faisal, Nasirul Islam, Mintu Sheikh, Mamunul Islam, Atiqur Rahman, Shahedul Alam, Zahid Hossain, Majumder Komal, Shakil Ahmed, Jahid Hasan Emely, Enamul Haq, Tawhidul Alam, MN Shakil.

Registered players for Arambagh Krira Sangha: Akram Hossain, Mostofa Kaba, Khan Sharif, Parvez Sarker, Benjamin Cooper, Mostafizur Rahman Munna, Syed Russel Turjo.

Eng focus on Games

AFP, New Delhi



England's team at the crisis-hit Commonwealth Games admit it has been huge challenge getting this far, but insist they are now focused on sport and not the raft of problems blighting the event.

Ahead of the Games, which start on Sunday, competitors and officials had raised serious concerns about the cleanliness of the athletes' village, the condition of some venues, and security. Such was the worry that several English athletes took it upon themselves to withdraw, including world triple jump champion Phillips Idowu who said: "Sorry people, but I have children to think about."

But now that the bulk of their 359 competitors are settled in the athletes' village, chef-de-mission Craig Hunter said on Friday that the focus had switched to sport. "Our journey to the starting line here in Delhi has been challenging, but the mood in the village now is of commitment and energy," he said, in a press conference interrupted by a pack of wild dogs barking just outside.

"We are fully focused on sport and we are ambitious for everyone to do well here. We know that this is a unique experience for young first-time athletes who are passionate about achieving here en-route to the London Olympics or future world-level events in their own sports."

"For some, it is also an opportunity to set new records and personal bests." England will be battling to hold on to second place in the medals table after finishing runners-up at the last three Games, but are bracing for a stern challenge from Canada and hosts India.

Caroline-Elena showdown

Tennis

AFP, Tokyo

World number two Caroline Wozniacki ousted Victoria Azarenka of Belarus to take a berth in the final at the Pan Pacific Open women's tennis tournament on Friday.

The 20-year-old Danish top seed, who dropped only seven games in her three previous matches this week, needed a tough two hours and 51 minutes before clinching a 6-2, 6-7 (3/7), 6-4 victory in the semifinals.

"I'm feeling really good. I'm enjoying being here to play the final. It's a great feeling, I'm looking forward to that," said Wozniacki, who lost her opening matches in her previous two visits here.

"I was really happy that I won the match and that I was in the final. It was a tough match and Victoria is a great player and a good friend of mine. We always have tough matches and it was nice to win this battle."

In the final on Saturday, Wozniacki will play Beijing Olympic gold medallist Elena Dementieva of Russia, who defeated French Open champion Francesca Schiavone of Italy 6-4, 7-5.

Azarenka, playing her first tournament since her collapse in the US Open, got off to a good start, hitting a backhand winner down the line to take an advantage before breaking Wozniacki in the opening game.

But the Dane took the following four games in a row and won the set on Azarenka's sixth

Hunter said it was achievable, but would be tough.

"We have a dynamic team and I think we'll do the country proud," he said.

"Clearly India will be a real force with home advantage, and Canada who have invested massively in their athletics program."

"But we'll be there and in everyone's faces." While England has been hit by a string of high-profile pull-outs, it still has a clutch of Olympic and world champions, including Rebecca Adlington, Gemma Spofforth (swimming), and Tom Daley (diving).

In team sports, their women hockey players will be looking to build on their strong showings at the World Cup and Champions Trophy earlier this year, when they both struck bronze.

Although they face stiff competition from defending champions Australia, South Africa and India, the English women have avoided their rivals in the group stage and will be confident of reaching the gold medal match.

They also boast shooter Michael Gault, who is gunning to become the most medalled athlete in Commonwealth Games history.

The 56-year-old, England's oldest competitor, has won 15 medals from four Games to date and needs four more to set a new record, currently held by Australian pistol shooter Phillip Adams, who won 18 medals from six Games.

He said that despite all the problems plaguing the Delhi event, England was never going to pull out.

"I convinced myself that we would never pull out. We have invested too much. It was never going to be a non-event," he said.

"Only death or maybe a broken limb would have stopped me being here. I've worked for four years for this event."

double fault in the eighth game.

Azarenka, 21, again broke to love in the first game of the second set and added two more breaks, but each time Wozniacki broke back, saving one set point in the 10th game to force a tie-breaker.

Azarenka again lost a mini-break up twice, but a couple of winners from the base line gave her a 5-3 lead and then forced the Dane to misfire her shots to tie the contest at one set all.

However, Azarenka seemed to run out of steam as she went down 0-5 in the final set. Although she crawled back to 4-5 taking 12 points in a row, Wozniacki calmly served out to finish off the two-hour-51-minute battle.

"At 5-0 I felt really good, then Victoria started playing really, really well and it was 5-4. I know that Victoria is a competitor, she doesn't give up, she didn't have anything to lose anymore," said Wozniacki.

"She could just go for her shots and everything was going in. I was OK, I'm up 5-4 and it's my serve and I have a break, so I just need to get my first serves in," she added.

Meanwhile, Azarenka said: "It was a good match for both of us. In the first set I was doing everything right. I couldn't take the opportunities when I had them, so that cost me a lot of games today."

"There were so many close games, especially in the first set, and I couldn't take the opportunities as well as the beginning of the third set," added the 11th-ranked Azarenka.

Star light, Star bright

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The Daily Star had already embarked in raucous celebrations. The title was theirs, and Jugantor had been vanquished in a tense battle.

In reality, though it should not have come to penalties. Throughout the course of both 15-minute halves, The Daily Star was much the better team. Amidst a riveting atmosphere, punctuated by dance and karate routines, an under-performing Jugantor tried their best to keep up with The Daily Star's sparkling attacking duo of Najmul Alam Nobin and Al-Amin.

The rookie and the stalwart struck up a telepathic understanding as they consistently exchanged passes to break through the Jugantor defence, invoking memories of Romario and Bebeto in their heyday. Their finishing however was more Bangladeshi than Brazilian and that added to the difficulty in adapting to the new surface at the Handball Stadium, preventing the eventual champions from running away with this tie in normal time.

Jugantor were under the cosh for most of the game and even when they did venture forward, they found sweeper Morshed Ali Khan in imperious form. The veteran stopper belied his portly shape and advancing years with crucial interventions and no-nonsense football. His partner, captain Hasan Jahed Tusher proved an able foil as playmaker Abul Kalam Azad did his

namesake proud, knitting the team together in crucial moments.

Throughout the tournament, The Daily Star had relied on their brilliant attacking duo, but Friday's final win owed much to a team effort as normal time ended scoreless. Jasim hardly had a save to make the entire game, but in the shootout he came to life saving twice and psyching another shooter enough for him to screw his effort wide.

Fittingly, it was him who stepped up to seal the deal, bag the man of the final award and secure The Daily Star a handsome cheque of Tk 50,000 as champions.

Jugantor though did not end the game empty-handed as Tk 25,000 made up for the heartbreak of a final loss.

All that was left was the crowning of the champions and Minister for Information, Abul Kalam Azad, did the honours as the chief guest. Special Guest Mohammad Hanif Bhuiyan, managing director of Rapid Securities also handed over the man of the match award to Jasim. Finally, Golam Quddus Chowdhury, managing director of Transcom Beverages, handed over the player-of-the-tournament trophy to Jugantor's Ujjal.

In the end however, yesterday only served to validate the old cliché of 'history repeating itself'. These two teams also met in the final back in 2000. On that occasion too, The Daily Star smiled all the way to the bank.

Double delight for Elina

SPORTS REPORTER

Elina won a double in the Advocate Abdur Rab Memorial Summer Open (Ranking) Badminton tournament yesterday.

Elina beat Shapla 21-11, 21-7 in the women's final at the Wooden Floor Gymnasium. She also won the women's doubles crown, partnering Shapla to beat Dulali-Nabila pair 21-7, 23-21.

In the men's group, Javed became champion with a walkover against Rais. Parash-Rais pair however beat the Javed-Hannan pairing 21-16, 18-21, 21-15 to win the men's doubles crown.

CHESS OLYMPIAD

Wins for men, women

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh men's and women's teams won their respective ninth round matches in the 39th World Chess Olympiad in Russia on Thursday.

The men's team beat Yemen by 2.5-1.5 points while the women got better of their Dominican Republic counterparts by 3-1 points.

In this round, FM Abu Sufian Shakil beat CM Abdul Moula Sabri, FM Mohammad Javed beat FM Gameel Mohamed, FM Minhazuddin Ahmed Sagar drew with FM Al-Hadarami Hatim while Debaraj Chatterjee lost against IM Al-Zendani Zendan. Men's team have nine match points and 19 game points after the ninth round.

In the women's section, WFM Shamima Akter Liza beat WFM Perez Eneida, Sharmin Sultana Shirin beat Jose Polanco Kenia, Masuda Begum beat Munoz Doris (Rating-1931) while WIM Rani Hamid lost to Hazim Elizabeth.

Zaheer, Ricky in on-field fracas

PTI, Mohali

He talked about keeping it a controversy-free series but Australia skipper Ricky Ponting was himself at the centre of an on-field showdown when he had a heated exchange with Indian pacer Zaheer Khan after being dismissed on the opening day of the first Test here.

The incident occurred in the 42nd over which was being bowled by Harbhajan Singh.

Shane Watson pushed the fourth ball of that over towards mid-wicket and called Ponting, who was batting on 71, for a quick single.

Before the Australian skipper could make his ground, Suresh Raina's throw hit the stumps.

After third umpire Sanjay Hazare adjudged him run-out, Ponting was walking back towards the pavilion when he turned back after hearing some comments from Zaheer.

Taylor

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wickets and he has enough respect for the emerging side.

"They have been playing cricket for the last three months and have done well in the last year or so," said Taylor.

"Certainly losing Tamim Iqbal is a big loss (for Bangladesh). The amount of runs he's scored in not only one-day cricket but Tests as well is really good," he said.

Taylor and co can expect more of the same training at the Mirpur venue as the weather forecast for the next two days look bleak.

Watson seizes the chance

Cricket

AFP, Mohali

Shane Watson made the most of two dropped catches to score a century as Australia posted 224-5 in their first innings at stumps on the opening day of the first Test against India on Friday.

The Australian opener, let off on nought and 37, made an unbeaten 101 for his second Test hundred to help his side recover from an early blow with a 141-run stand for the second wicket with skipper Ricky Ponting (71).

Watson, who cracked a century in each innings of a practice game before the Test, completed his hundred in the final session when he turned off-spinner Harbhajan Singh to deep square-leg for two runs.

He has so far cracked eight fours in his 279-ball knock. Tim Paine was the other not-out batsman on one.

India did not allow Australia to seize the initiative despite Watson's hundred as left-arm pacerman Zaheer Khan grabbed three big wickets, including two in the final session.

The fast bowler trapped Michael Hussey leg-before and then bowled Marcus North for duck. Hussey faced 76 balls for his 17 runs.

Australia, who scored 101 runs in the morning after electing to bat on a pitch lacking pace and bounce, could manage only 45 in the last session. Even Watson could add only 26 to his test score of 75.

Left-arm spinner Pragyan Ojha kept a tidy line and length, conceding 39 runs in 31 overs.

Australia were comfortably placed at 154-1 before slipping to 222-5, losing well-set Ponting, vice-captain Michael Clarke (14), Hussey and North.

Ponting, averaging just 20.85 in 12 Tests in India before this match, looked set to play a big knock before he was run out by Suresh Raina's direct-hit at the striker's end from mid-wicket.



Australia opener Shane Watson launches the ball over extra cover during his century on the first day of the first Test against India in Mohali yesterday.

Flower makes shock return

Cricket

CRICINFO

Grant Flower, the 39-year-old batsman, has made a shock international return more than six years after he last played for Zimbabwe, being named in the squads for the tour of South Africa next month.

In August, Flower had returned to Zimbabwe after six seasons with Essex, to be the batting coach of the national team and the player-coach of the Mashonaland Eagles franchise.

He was one of Zimbabwe's leading players during his 12-year international career, in which he has so far played 67 Tests (3457 runs at 29.54) and 219 ODIs (6536 runs at 33.69).

In 2004, he became one of the key players to leave in an exodus following Heath Streak's

removal from the captaincy. Essex were relegated to the second division of the County Championship, but Flower's 527 runs at 65.87 were pivotal to the county reaching the semi-final of the Clydesdale Bank 40 competition.

Delhi still

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information to the media. He believes if India can provide the results and updates as fast as the organising committee of the Doha Asian Games did in 2006, then the failure could be covered.

Pragati Maidan, a venue for large exhibitions, trade fair and conventions, is being used for the Commonwealth Games where security is very tight. Security guards were cordial to the foreign media people.

The big city hotels also had a welcoming outlook with mascot 'Shere' reading, "we are ready".

Words were exchanged between Zaheer and Ponting after the Australian skipper's dismissal. Ponting hit 10 fours in his 124-ball knock.

The Australian captain produced some delightful strokes during his stay at the crease, driving Ojha through the covers to reach his half-century and then square-driving and flicking Zaheer for two fours.

India were left a bowler short in the afternoon when paceman Ishant Sharma departed the field during his eighth over with a leg injury.

Zaheer, returning to the Test squad after missing the recent Test series in Sri Lanka due to injury, was unlucky not to dismiss Watson with his second delivery as Virender Sehwag dropped a catch at gully.

The fast bowler did not have to wait long for his first success, trapping Simon Katich (six) leg-before in his third over.

India introduced spin after 10 overs on a slow track, but Ojha and Harbhajan could not break the Ponting-Watson stand in the morning.

Watson was lucky to survive on 37 when wicket-keeper Mahendra Singh Dhoni failed to hold on to an edge off Ojha.

He played some handsome shots, straight-driving Sharma and then pulling Zaheer for two fours. He then struck two successive fours off Sharma before the paceman left the field.

Harbhajan, a doubtful starter on Thursday due to a leg injury, was declared fit in the morning.

The second and final Test starts in Bangalore on October 9.

SCORES IN BRIEF

AUSTRALIA: First innings 224 for 5 in 90 overs (Watson 101 not out, Ponting 71, Clarke 14, Hussey 17; Zaheer 3-45)

INDIA: Mahendra Singh Dhoni (captain), Virender Sehwag, Gautam Gambhir, Rahul Dravid, Sachin Tendulkar, Venkatesai Laxman, Suresh Raina, Harbhajan Singh, Pragyan Ojha, Zaheer Khan, Ishant Sharma.

Vijender, Shera grab the spotlight

AFP, New Delhi

Ace boxer Vijender Singh and Commonwealth Games mascot Shera were the cynosure of all eyes during the felicitation and flag hoisting ceremony for the Indian Commonwealth Games here on Friday.

As soon as the Olympic and World Championships bronze medallist walked into the open amphitheater to participate in the event, he was surrounded by young volunteers and media shutterbugs.

The function started with the hoisting of the tricolour amid the sound of drum beats and followed by the national anthem and cultural events.

A special performance, which was an amalgamation of modern dance and yoga, got a huge round of applause from the audience.

"Our team members are getting excellent facilities at the Games Village. The facilities being provided here are above all standards."



School children shake hands with Commonwealth Games mascot 'Shera' during the felicitation and flag hoisting ceremony of the biggest sporting event in New Delhi yesterday.