



Players of West Bengal kabaddi team pose for photographs with the Mizan International Club Cup trophy at the Kabaddi Stadium yesterday. They won the title defeating Japan by 14-10 points in the final.

PHOTO: STAR

Younis snub lamented

Cricket

AFP, Karachi

Former players and selectors Saturday criticised ex-captain Younis Khan's continued omission from Pakistan's winless tour of Australia, terming it an "injustice" and "loss" to the national team. The 32-year-old was omitted from both the limited overs and Test squads against South Africa announced in the last two days, despite the lifting in June of an indefinite ban imposed on him. Younis was among seven players banned and fined following Pakistan's winless tour of Australia, which was marred by disciplinary problems. Pakistan's chief selector Mohsin Khan said Younis had not been given clearance by Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) chairman Ijaz Butt, who wanted the player to contact him. Former chief selector Iqbal Qasim criticised the PCB for targeting Younis. "Younis's omission is a case of ego problem," Qasim told AFP. "Not selecting him despite his ban [being] overturned is [an] injustice and is definitely a loss to the team." Younis relinquished the captaincy in November last year after falling out with some teammates. He was recalled for the one-day series in Australia earlier this year before being banned. He was also overlooked for the tour of England, where Pakistan levelled a two-Test series against Australia 1-1 but went down 3-1 against England in Tests and 2-3 in one-day

internationals. Qasim lashed out at recalled batsman Misbahul Haq's appointment as Test captain. "This can only happen in Pakistan that a player who was not in the team is given the captaincy besides being recalled after a gap," said Qasim of Misbah, who was dropped from the Test team following the tour of Australia. Another former chief selector, Abdul Qadir, urged the PCB and Younis to resolve their differences. "I hope... the two parties, PCB or Younis, show flexibility and solve their differences, which will help the player to stage a comeback and help the team which needs him," Qadir told AFP. Qadir questioned Misbah's recall and appointment as captain. "Why did they drop Misbah if he was able enough to lead the team," said Qadir, a master leg-spinner in his day. "But since there are previous examples of players appointed captains from nowhere, we will have to accept it." Qadir termed the limited overs squad a "veteran eleven." "With ageing players like Mohammad Yousuf, Abdul Razaq, Shoaib Akhtar and Misbah, the Twenty20 and one-day squad is full of veterans," said Qadir. Former captain Aamir Sohail said Younis's omission was a loss. "I think Younis has some issues with PCB chairman and that's a problem in his selection and it's harming the team's cause," said Sohail, also a former chief selector.

Kiwis

FROM PAGE 17 find anything wrong with the wicket at Mirpur.

"The wicket did not turn massively but it was a bit slow and I expect it will not change that much but I can only say that after seeing the wicket," he observed. He also said that they always prepared them well no matter who the opponents are. "We try to prepare ourselves to play our best whether we are against Bangladesh or any other team. We look at how we are going to attack them in certain areas and try to figure out their strength and try to nullify those as well," he said.

Shahriar

FROM PAGE 17 management and captain who had earlier said that our main focus was to improve day by day. We won the first match but there is a lot of areas we must improve. We are very much positive and the team is in good shape and that's why we are confident about the third game," Nafees went on, adding that he was hopeful of a full-length third game as there is a sunny forecast for the next few days.

Asked about the Tigers' chance to win the series, Nafees said: "We want to think match by match. If we win the next match that will be a big step forward to earn a very good result in the series. Right at the moment we are however focusing on the next game and not thinking about the series," he added.

Shakib, Sachin

FROM PAGE 17 Babu however expressed his satisfaction over the progress of the renovation works at the venues in Bangladesh.

"We are confident that the venues will be ready before November 30. It doesn't matter if we need some more time for the structural renovation. The ICC will see whether the venue is ready for play," he said.

He also informed that they are planning to invite at least 500 guests for the opening ceremony which will be held at the Bangabandhu National Stadium on February 17 next year.

"We are expecting all 14 team's participation in the opening ceremony," he added.

He also said that the sale of tickets would not start from October 15 as scheduled before.

He hinted that there is a slim prospect of tickets for public for the opening ceremony.

"The capacity at the Bangabandhu National Stadium is 25000 and I'm afraid almost 90 percent would complementary tickets for dignitaries from different participating nations, local high ups and sponsors.

"However we are yet to settle all the issues with the agency who holds the right," he said adding that one must deal with Cricket Logistic, the England-based agency, for any kind of ticketing package.

Smith

FROM PAGE 17 start, putting on 90 for the first wicket off 42 balls. Bosman made 33 off only 15 deliveries.

Hamilton Masakadza and Chamu Chibhabha hit half-centuries as Zimbabwe put up a strong showing with the bat.

Viv bats

FROM PAGE 17 capability of stunning all," said Richards, who struck a monumental 192 in his debut Test in Delhi.

This is not the first time that he has been accompanying the national contingent as he was also present during the last edition of the Games in Melbourne.

Richards believes the Commonwealth Games will help India erase its 'one-sport' nation image as the Indian athletes have been doing well.

Australia hit 100 medals

AFP, New Delhi



Australia smashed through the 100-medal barrier at the Commonwealth Games on Saturday as the troubled showpiece teetered on the brink of a potentially damaging row.

Australian husband and wife Jared and Claire Tallent both medalled in the 20km walk with Jared powering to the men's gold while his wife took silver in the women's race, behind England's Jo Jackson.

"We try to help each other out. She helps me, I help her. It's great," said Jared.

Jackson's gold, as well as Nicky Hunt's victory in women's archery, allowed England to temporarily move into second place in the medals table, leapfrogging India.

But the hosts then hit back when ace shooter Gagan Narang won his fourth gold of the Games in the 50m Rifle 3 Positions individual event.

Narang joins gymnast Lauren Mitchell and swimmer Alicia Coutts, both Australian, as a four-gold medal winner in Delhi.

Australia's men's and women's hockey teams secured their passage into the semifinals while, in the boxing ring, Haroon Khan, the brother of England's world champion Amir Khan, also made the last four in the flyweights.

Away from the action, more problems simmered for the troubled organisers

when South African swimmer Roland Schoeman described a largely Indian crowd of acting like "monkeys".

Schoeman, a former world record holder, was furious that the noise generated at the start of his 50m freestyle semi-final meant he entered the water too early.

"It's unacceptable to be at a professional event and have people going on like monkeys. Someone like that doesn't deserve to be here," fumed the South African who went on to take the silver medal in Saturday's final.

"It's an absolute disgrace. There's a guy in the stands just shouting, shouting, shouting. Somebody like that needs to be ejected."

Lalit Bhanot, the secretary general of the organising committee, condemned the remarks on Saturdays "unfortunate" while Mike Fennell, the president of the Commonwealth Games Federation, said any racist outbursts would not be tolerated.

Schoeman immediately launched a damage-limitation exercise, using his Twitter account to make clear that his anger was directed at just one person.

"For the first time in my life I had some one scream out as we were going to start the 50m freestyle," he wrote on the micro-blogging site.

"The behaviour by that individual was unacceptable and my comments are directed solely at him."

Meanwhile, nine-time Commonwealth champion Leisel Jones was on the verge of another place in the record books if Australia's women win

gold in the 4x100m medley relay.

The 25-year-old on Thursday became the first woman to defend two Commonwealth titles in three consecutive Games after winning the 100m breaststroke to add to her 200m title.

Victory in the final women's event of the competition would give her 10 gold medals -- equalling the most number of golds by an individual in the Games and putting her alongside Australia swimming legends Susie O'Neill and Ian Thorpe.

On the track, Canada's Jared Connaughton was the only man under 2 seconds in the 200m first round, with Lesotho's Mosito Lehata second quickest.

Meanwhile Rhys Williams, the son of former Wales and British Lions rugby winger JJ Williams, was fastest into the 400m hurdles semifinals.

They ran their races just before a stray dog evaded security to dart across the finish line and onto the field, causing another headache for beleaguered organisers.

In the women's 400m hurdles, Ajoke Osunimos of Nigeria set the standard with a 55.86 run to qualify for the final ahead of Scotland's Eilidh Child.

Seven more gold medals will be decided Saturday evening with one of the biggest names making the trip to Delhi in action in the women's shot put.

New Zealand's Valerie Adams is the reigning Olympic, world and defending Commonwealth champion and looks unbeatable with a personal best of 1.5m further than anyone else in the field.

Nadal crawls into final

Tennis

AFP, Tokyo

World number one Rafael Nadal saved two match points in a nerve-racking final-set tie-break before beating Viktor Troicki Saturday to secure a place in the Japan Open final against Gael Monfils.

The Spanish top seed, who completed a career Grand Slam by winning the US Open last month, eventually saw off his Serbian opponent 7-6, 4-6, 7-6.

Earlier, French fifth seed Monfils used an array of fine passing shots to beat Radek Stepanek of the Czech Republic 6-3, 6-3, staying in control throughout their semifinal.

"I played well in the first set, I played an unbelievable tie-break. After that, I lost my focus and lost my concentration in one game on my serve and it was impossible to come back in the second set," said Nadal.

"After 5-3 in the third, I started to play very bad. I can't understand why I lost my serve. It's impossible for me to understand how I lost. It was on my serve at 5-all and 30-love. That was the worst moment of the match for me."

"After that, I won and I'm in the final. I'm happy for that, but I'm not happy with the way I played in the last three games of the match," he added.

Nadal broke Troicki in the eighth game of the final set to lead 5-3, but let the Serbian come back into the match as he charged hard to the net to break back.

Troicki, ranked 54th in the world, scored another break thanks to a forehand volley by Nadal that landed in the net, taking the lead 6-5, but he also failed to serve out the match,

double-faulting on a break point to tie at 6-all.

Troicki was the first to get to match point, leading 6-5 in the tie-breaker with the Spaniard serving, only to see Nadal hit his favourite forehand winner.

Troicki was server on his second match point, but hit an easy forehand into the net.

Nadal gathered the momentum to hit a service return winner to take a commanding 8-7 lead and the match was his when Troicki hit his forehand wide to surrender the two-hour-38-minute battle.

"I played a great tournament and I'm still happy that I reached the semifinals," said Troicki.

"I could have lost in the second round to [Austria's Jurgen] Melzer... I was a match point down. And I made it to the semifinals. Right now, I'm disappointed, but still I think it was a good result for me."

"It gave me a lot of confidence for the next tournament. I hope I forget this match," he added.

Monfils, who lost to

Stepanek at the Brisbane International earlier this year, said the key was practice time against a serve-and-volleyer.

"It's tough, because there are not a lot of guys like him, I mean serve and volleyers. I tried to return good, to return with consistency, and tried to make him hit a volley every time, and I had a bit of luck," said Monfils.

"In Brisbane, I had a shoulder problem, so I couldn't serve 100 percent. I came today very strong. That made the difference," he said.



PHOTO: STAR

Bangladesh top seed Delwar Hossain is about to play a backhand return during his Anlene ATF U-14 tournament match against India's Goveas Aryan at the National Tennis Complex in Ramna yesterday. Delwar won the game 4-6, 6-2, 6-3.

Tops reach finals

Tennis

AFP, Beijing

Defending champion Novak Djokovic overcame an early challenge from American John Isner to advance to the final of the China Open on Saturday and qualify for next month's season-ending ATP championships.

On the women's side, Caroline Wozniacki and Vera Zvonareva lived up to their one-two seeding, setting up a final that will be a grudge match for the Dane, who lost to the Russian in the semifinals at the US Open a month ago.

Djokovic, the top seed in Beijing, unleashed an arsenal of crafty drop shots, sliced serves and explosive groundstrokes to defeat Isner in front of a sparse crowd at the Olympic Green Tennis Centre, 7-6, 6-2.

The 23-year-old Serb joins world number one Rafael Nadal and 16-time Grand Slam winner Roger Federer as the third player to qualify for the eight-man ATP World Tour Finals in London starting on November 21.

"This is a crown for my achievements, and I'm definitely satisfied with my consistency on the tour," said Djokovic, who will appear at the year-end event for the fourth consecutive season.

Djokovic struggled to find his rhythm at first, conceding an early break to the 25-year-old Isner, who won the longest match in tennis history earlier this year at Wimbledon.

But the world number two rallied back to 3-3, and the pair went to a tiebreak, sealed by the Serb with a fine crosscourt forehand winner.

Isner never regained his confidence in the second set, and Djokovic steamrollered past him, repeatedly catching the big American flat-footed with his blistering play from the backcourt.

"He's playing really well and he's really confident... I felt like he was on top of his game," Isner said.

In Sunday's final, Djokovic -- the 2008 Australian Open champion -- will face either Spanish eighth seed David Ferrer or big-serving Croatian Ivan Ljubicic, who ousted second seed Andy Murray in the quarterfinals on Friday.

Wozniacki, who takes over the world number one ranking on Monday on the back of her performance in Beijing, used her power from the baseline to overcome a knee strain and beat Israel's Shahar Peer, 7-5, 6-2.

Peer broke the 20-year-old Dane early in the first set, but Wozniacki roared back to a 5-2 lead. She then faltered, failing to convert on multiple set points before the Israeli finally conceded the set on a baseline error.

In the second, Wozniacki -- her left knee heavily strapped after a scare on Friday -- again fell behind but turned the tide, smacking a cross-court forehand to go up 4-2. She put the match away two games later on a Peer error.

When asked about the injury, the blonde Dane said: "It felt better today than it did yesterday... I had the tape for support. I still felt it a little bit, but it's not getting worse, so that's a positive thing."

"I'm just thinking about trying to be 100 percent fit for tomorrow, and I'm going to go out there and fight," Wozniacki said.

Zvonareva had no trouble defeating China's Li Na, the ninth seed, who never really got into the match and struggled with her serve, surrendering six breaks.

"It's always tough to play against Caroline, but it's a great challenge and I like the challenge," Zvonareva said.

"We have had some tough matches against each other. The US Open was two months ago. It's in the past. Tomorrow is going to be a new day."

Ratna-Sadia

FROM PAGE 17 10 less than 400.

"If one of us could do well, then we could have expected a medal," said a weeping Ratna, who was being consoled by Asif Hossain Khan. "Things were in favour of us, but I don't know why we started badly," she added.

Ratna and Sadia seemingly lost their confidence after having seen the competitors from Malaysia and Singapore as the former claimed that she wasn't aware of their participation.

After winning two gold, the Ratna-Sadia pair was considered the best in the 10m air rifle field. But yesterday's performance showed that Sadia suffered from lack of confidence. Ratna also thinks Sadia still needs some time to get over (the defeat).

Both Ratna and Sadia will compete in the individual 10m air rifle event today, but they were not ready to talk about Sunday's event.

Ponting lifts Aussies

FROM PAGE 17 pretty frustrated," said Watson of his captain.

"It was an important innings for him to set up some partnerships with Mike Hussey and Marcus North for a while there.

"Marcus is looking very good. It will be very nice for him and for the team to be able to post a good score, because it is a really nice batting wicket and we need a good total."

Katich fell in the first over after resumption when, having hit the third ball from Harbhajan for a boundary, he edged the fifth to Rahul Dravid at first slip.

Watson departed seven overs later when he attempted to cut left-arm spinner Ojha and edged a sharp catch to Dhoni behind the stumps.

Michael Clarke, who hit a century on debut at the same venue in 2004, made 14 when he edged Harbhajan to short-leg, where Raina dived to his left to take a low catch.

Hussey's defiant stand with Ponting ended in the second

over after tea when he was caught at gully by Sehwag off Zaheer.

Earlier, India's Venkatsai Laxman was ruled out of the Test after failing to recover fully from back spasms suffered during his match-winning knock of 73 not out at Mohali.

Laxman was replaced by debutant Cheteshwar Pujara, while opener Murali Vijay and Sreesanth came in for the injured duo of Gautam Gambhir and Ishant Sharma.

Australia awarded a Test cap to lanky fast bowler Peter George, who replaced the injured Doug Bollinger.

SCORES IN BRIEF

AUSTRALIA: First innings 285 for 5 in 85.5 overs (Ponting 77, Watson 57, North 43 not out, Katich 43, Hussey 34; Harbhajan 2-100, Raina 1-12)

INDIA: Dhoni, Sehwag, Vijay, Dravid, Tendulkar, Pujara, Raina, Harbhajan, Ojha, Zaheer, Sreesanth.

Toss: Australia. Umpires: Ian Gould and Billy Bowden.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

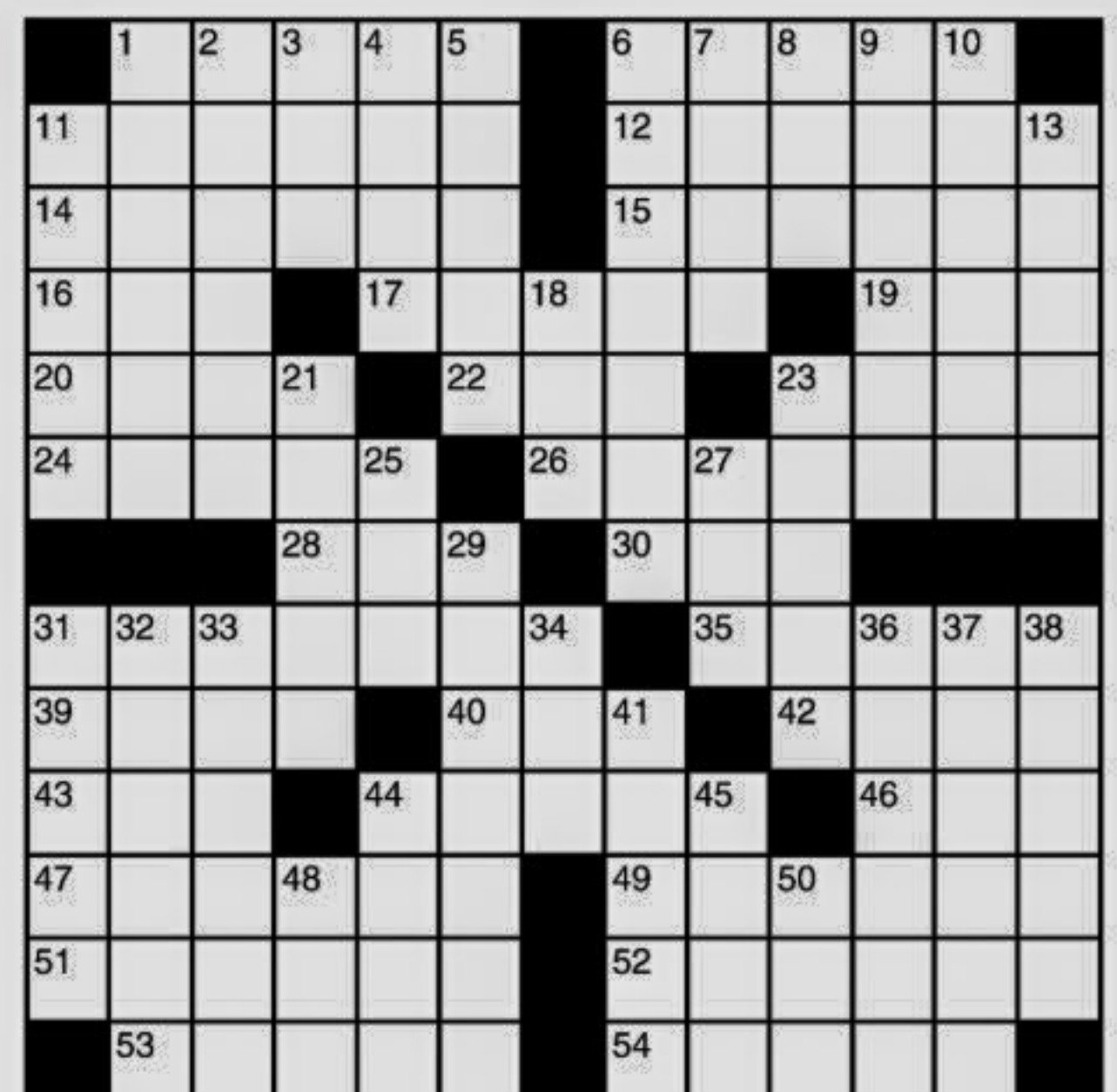
ACROSS 35 Former fillies lessons 6 Diminish 11 Complete harmony 12 First game of the season 14 Friend of Macbeth 15 Bicycle seat style 16 Mel of baseball 17 Post-shower wrap 19 Chap 20 Served perfectly 22 Benicio - Toro 23 Half (Prefix) 24 Pitched 26 Very small parts 28 Upper limit 30 Atmosphere 31 Site of peace and quiet

DOWN 1 Grab 2 Color worker 3 Atty.'s title 4 Sulk 5 Hairnet 6 Indian tobacco 7 October stone 8 Runic double-u 9 Tooth covering 10 Change the title 11 World War II vessel 13 Hindu royalty 18 Drenched

21 Transfer 23 Soda insert 25 Bankroll 27 Allen or Conway 29 Piece of eight 31 Photo-shop maker 32 Mountain ash trees 33 Grip firmly 34 Khan title 36 Wicker-work material 37 Natural gas component 38 Leaf pore 41 Trip around the world? 44 Exhaust 45 Palm starch 48 Female deer 50 Convent dweller

Solution time: 27 mins.

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CRYPTOQUIP

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G R Q M I Y W - I W Z H W R Z M A H ?
Yesterday's Cryptoquip: BECAUSE THESE KIDS ARE EFFICIENT AT ICING BAKED GOODS, COULD YOU SAY THEY'RE FROSTER CHILDREN?
Today's Cryptoquip Clue: V equals Y