

Six Indian athletes fail drug tests

AFP, Mumbai

Six Indian athletes, including two Commonwealth Games and Asian Games gold medalists, have tested positive for banned steroids, the country's anti-doping agency said on Friday.

The National Anti-Doping Agency (NADA) said that four of the athletes -- all of them women -- failed drugs tests after a national track meet in the southern city of Bangalore late last month.

All the athletes have been suspended pending the results of their B samples, which are due in the coming days, NADA director-general Rahul Bhatnagar told AFP from New Delhi.

Two of the athletes, Mandeep Kaur and Sini Jose, were part of India's winning women's 4x400m relay team in New Delhi last October. The win was the country's first track gold medal at the Commonwealth Games.

They were also part of the same team that won gold at the Asian Games in Guangzhou, China, in November, raising hopes that they could compete for a medal at next year's Olympics in London.

NADA's Bhatnagar said two other female 400m runners, Tiana Mary Thomas and Jauna Murmu, plus a female shotputter, Sonia, who goes by one name, also returned positive results.

Big guns

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Patel and Abhimanyu Mithun will jostle for the final pace place. Munaf, though, wasn't fit for the West Indies Tests, and that could play some role in his selection for England. Amit Mishra will be the extra spinner, Parthiv Patel the reserve keeper, and Vijay the extra opening batsman should India need one.

The final spot remains the one in the middle order. Suresh Raina has all but earned himself the No. 6 slot for the Lord's Test, but the extra middle-order batsman makes for an interesting debate. Cheteshwar Pujara is yet to recover from his injury - he picked up a knee injury during the IPL, when his foot got stuck in the turf as he attempted a sliding save - and is ruled out. Virat Kohli hasn't had a great debut series in the West Indies, and will be challenged by the Man of the Series in the World Cup. Yuvraj Singh was expected to make his Test comeback in the West Indies, but a chest infection kept him away. Now that he is fit, Yuvraj v Kohli, mentor and protégé of sorts, will make for some debate.

Final step

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opponent because she's a really good grass court player," said Sharapova, who won her only previous meeting with Kvitova on hard court at Memphis last year. "She's also a lefty, which on grass is very tricky. It will be tough. She's been playing really good tennis."

Kvitova is the first left-hander to make the final at the All England Club since her childhood inspiration Martina Navratilova in 1990. "I saw Martina in the locker room and she wished me good luck. I'm so happy but I don't really believe I am in the final," said Kvitova, who upset fourth seed Victoria Azarenka 6-1, 3-6, 6-2 to reach the final.

Azarenka believes Kvitova is capable of bucking the odds for a second time when she faces Sharapova in the final.

"I think she can beat anybody any day, because right now she has really good game. She's really going for it. She's going to play like this, I'm sure she has all the chances to win the next match," she said.



PHOTO: AFP

India paceman Ishant Sharma picks up his sixth wicket during West Indies's first innings on the third day of the second Test in Georgetown on Thursday.

Sharma shines in rain

Cricket

AFP, Bridgetown

Rain prevented India from making significant headway as they finished the third day of the rain-hit second Test with a 34-run lead over the West Indies here on Thursday.

India reached 23 without loss in their second innings when bad light stopped play after 11.2 overs, when only 42 overs were possible in close to three and half hour.

It followed a memorable day for Ishant Sharma, who became the fifth-youngest bowler ever to take 100 wickets.

He captured a career-best six for 55 from 21.5 overs as West Indies were dismissed for 190, in response to India's first innings total of 201.

Sharma collected his landmark scalp when he trapped West Indies captain Darren Sammy lbw for 15, triggering a collapse that saw the hosts lose their last three wickets for just four in the space of 12 deliveries.

Only compatriot Kapil Dev, New Zealand's Daniel Vettori, Pakistan's Waqar Younis and team-mate Harbhajan Singh were younger than Sharma's 22 years and 301 days when they took their 100th wicket in Tests.

The beanpole fast bowler generated sharp bounce from the lively Kensington Oval pitch and made life

uncomfortable for all the West Indies batsmen, including Marlon Samuels, whose unbeaten 78 was the top score. Sharma had no success before lunch, when he struck both Samuels and veteran left-hander Shivnarine Chanderpaul on the helmet.

He also saw champion off-spinner Harbhajan Singh provide India with the breakthrough after the interval, when Carlton Baugh Jr was caught at slip for two, edging an ill-advised drive.

Things started to get out of hand when he and the rest of India's bowlers began to get a little loose and Sammy and Samuels galloped West Indies closer to the lead with a stand of 43 for the eighth wicket.

Praveen Kumar almost stole Sharma's moment when extra cover Suresh Raina failed to hold on to an overhead chance with Sammy on 13.

But Sharma gained the lbw verdict from umpire Ian Gould with a delivery moving back and then served up two bouncers to Ravi Rampaul and Fidel Edwards that were fended to catchers behind the stumps to cap a memorable spell.

Abhimanyu Mithun had struck a vital blow for India in the five minutes before lunch, removing key batsman Chanderpaul as West Indies reached 138 for six at the interval.

Mithun bowled Chanderpaul for a painstaking 37, ending the durable left-

hander's resistance that helped to prop his side up as they continued from their overnight total of 98 for five.

Mithun made the breakthrough after Chanderpaul and Samuels added 77 for the sixth wicket following a rain delay at the beginning of the day.

India had West Indies reeling on 57 for five, but rain, as well as Chanderpaul and Samuels, initially prevented them from making further inroads into the hosts' batting.

A delivery from Kumar had been guided by Samuels between third slip and gully to third man for the first boundary of the morning to bring up the 50-run partnership with Chanderpaul.

Mithun, however, ensured that India did not have to bear a fruitless toil, when he got Chanderpaul to drag a short delivery into his stumps in the penultimate over before lunch.

India are looking to wrap up their second straight Test series victory over West Indies in the Caribbean.

SCORES IN BRIEF

INDIA: First innings 201
WEST INDIES: First innings 190 (Sarwan 18, Chanderpaul 37, Samuels 78 not out, Sammy 15; Sharma 6-55, Mithun 2-34)

INDIA: Second innings 23 for no loss (Mukund 8 not out, Vijay 3 not out, extras 12)

SL dissolves cricket board

AFP, Colombo

Sri Lanka's sports minister said Friday he had forced the national cricket board committee to step down following allegations of financial mismanagement.

Minister Mahindananda Aluthgamage said the Sri Lanka Cricket (SLC) committee, headed by former player Somachandra de Silva, was asked to resign on Thursday.

De Silva is being replaced by millionaire businessman and former SLC board chairman Upali Dharmadasa.

"One of the main tasks is to keep an eye on the finances. We are in a financial crisis after the World Cup," Aluthgamage told a news conference. "We spent more than we budgeted for."

Sri Lanka co-hosted the 2011 World Cup and was left with a \$69 million bill, with media reports suggesting that mismanagement by the SLC had been responsible for cost over-runs.

"The SLC cash problem will hopefully ease a bit when we shortly get a govern-

ment grant and a government loan," the minister said.

On Wednesday the International Cricket Council (ICC) launched a probe into "black marketeering" of World Cup tickets, after its executive board received a confidential report criticising the handling of ticket sales in India, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh.

The SLC has been run by successive interim committees -- appointed by the government -- for the last seven years.

On Thursday, the ministry said it would abide by a new ICC directive, requiring all national boards to be elected without political interference.

The new SLC committee's tenure will be restricted to six-months with the sports ministry promising to hold elections in January next year.

All member boards have been given until the next ICC meeting in June 2012 to implement the new ruling and a further 12 months -- to June 2013 -- before any sanctions will be considered.

Premier Div

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the winners. On Thursday, Mohammadpur Basketball Club beat Eagles 89-45 while Europa Youth defeated 54-29.

Mahela hits

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But it was not long before left-hander Sangakkara swept him for four, his fifth boundary, to bring up a 53-ball fifty.

Then a single off medium-pace Bresnan took Jayawardene through to his 15th ODI hundred and fifth against England in 118 balls with seven boundaries.

Jayawardene, more of a touch than a power player, then opened his shoulders to drive Bresnan straight back over his head for four.

Jayawardene and Sangakkara surpassed their previous Sri Lankan third-wicket ODI record partnership against England of 140 at Chester-le-Street in 2006.

However, they were separated when Sangakkara, advancing down the pitch, was beaten by a sharply turning delivery from Swann and stumped by Kieswetter.

Jayawardene, on 118, then saw a leaping Cook at cover drop a tough chance off Dernbach.

But his superb innings ended when, deceived by a Swann arm-ball, he was stumped having faced just 150 balls with 14 boundaries.

SCORES IN BRIEF

SRI LANKA: 309 for 5 (Jayawardene 144, Sangakkara 69, Mathews 46 not out; Swann 2-42)

FIDE suspend Bangladesh for unpaid dues

SPORTS REPORTER

FIDE, the apex body of world chess, has recently suspended the Bangladesh Chess Federation following their unpaid dues of Tk 35,000.

The suspension means that the Bangladeshi chess players will not be eligible to take part in tournaments outside Bangladesh until the federation pays the dues. The FIDE also removed all rated chess players of Bangladesh from the website.

The general secretary of Bangladesh chess federation's ad-hoc committee, Mokaddesh Hossain, was out of reach as he kept his mobile off and the land phone of the federation was found busy whenever calls were made.

However, deputy general secretary Masudur Rahman Mallik informed that Mokaddesh Hossain looks after the financial matter of the federation and this situation had arisen due to the general secretary's negligence.

Mallik also informed that the chess federation was suspended by FIDE for the second time as the apex body had earlier suspended them for the same reason six months earlier.

The deputy general secretary said that the federation would send the dues on Sunday through Sonali Bank.

Djokovic

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turning point came when Tsonga was serving for the first set while leading 5-4.

Djokovic won the first three points, and Tsonga saved all three break chances. But at deuce, Tsonga double-faulted to give Djokovic another chance, and this time he converted when the Frenchman sent a forehand wide.

In the second set, Djokovic controlled play and took advantage of Tsonga's increasing unforced errors. The Serb broke in the first and fifth games to take a 5-1 lead, and held at love in the final game.

Leading by two sets against Tsonga does not mean the match is over, however. On Wednesday, six-time Wimbledon champion Federer won the opening two against Tsonga but lost in five, and Djokovic found it just as tough.

While serving for the match at 6-5, Tsonga broke to force another tiebreaker, and then saved a pair of match points.

But Djokovic didn't let the setback get to him. He held at love in the opening game of the final set, and then broke Tsonga at love to take a 2-0 lead before hanging on the rest of the way.

TESTS THROUGH TIME



Runs, guts & glory

Allan Border was the grouchy, bearded face standing at second slip that some of us grew up with in the 1980s.

Apart from the small matter of 11,174 runs and 27 centuries in Test cricket, he led Australia a record 93 times and won or saved many a game with more his mental strength than batting talent.

But Border's greatest contribution and lasting legacy would be the way he painfully built the Australian team from scratch after the retirement of Denis Lillee, Jeff Thompson and the Chappell brothers. He took over the captaincy after Kim Hughes resigned in tears in 1984 and for a decade, he shaped Australia's future leaders and a team that ruled world cricket for the best part of another two decades.

It is strange to find out that he was a reluctant leader and in his first match as captain, Australia suffered a 191-run defeat at the hands of West Indies in Adelaide.

In his first Ashes campaign as the captain, Australia suffers a 1-3 loss, but he was the team's best batsman by a stretch, second only to David Gower for the series.

It was a very young team he took to England and after a massive defeat in the first Test at The Oval, Border fought tooth and nail to compose 196 in the second game at Lord's. Afterwards, he marshaled the 127-run chase with an assured 41 not out while the rest were folding quickly. He stemmed the flow of wickets and eventually walked out with a four-wicket win, but couldn't salvage the series later on.

As youngsters like Craig McDermott, David Boon, Geoff Marsh, Steve Waugh and Dean Jones slowly became part of the side, Border found assistance in Bob Simpson who took over the coaching duties. One can imagine how difficult it was for Border in those days but through sheer single-mindedness and a hunger for runs and wins, the left-hander slowly built a team that were capable of winning important games.

After the World Cup triumph, Australia slowly found their footing. Pegged back by West Indies during those days, it was Border who rose to the occasion.

In the 1988-89 series against the mighty Caribbeans, he resurrected Australia from a poor position with, unusually, his left-arm spin. This talent of Border was crucial in the World Cup final the year before in Kolkata but now it was more devastating.

On a bare and slow pitch, Border embarked on an all-round performance seldom surpassed by any captain. He destroyed a well-placed West Indies with 7 for 46, including the wickets of Richie Richardson, Viv Richards, Carl Hooper, Gus Logie and Roger Harper.

His fourth-wicket partnership of 170 with centurion Boon gives Australia a big lead, but his bowling is further called upon to keep Haynes down to 143 in the second innings, and the target to 80. Fittingly enough, he hit the winning runs.

In the 1989 Ashes, his plan to be overly grumpy pays off as the confused Englishmen were forced into mistakes. He became the first Australian leader since Bill Woodfull in 1934 to win back the Ashes in England.

In 1993, his straight drive off Carl Hooper got him to 10,000 Test runs, the second man after Sunil Gavaskar and in the next month, passes the Little Master's 10,122 runs to become the highest scorer in Test history through a lofted sweep for four off Dipak Patel in front of a very small crowd in Christchurch.

After the 1993 Ashes win, he retired after the South Africa series of 1994. His steadfast batting in his last-ever innings was a stark reminder of how he operated and what he felt for the Australian team: a parental pride and concern.

-- Mohammad Isam

Powell lays down a marker

Athletics

AFP, Lausanne

Asafa Powell has thrown down the gauntlet to world sprinting rivals including Jamaican compatriot Usain Bolt by running the fastest 100m of the season so far.

Powell clocked a rapid 9.78 seconds at Thursday's Diamond League meeting here, dipping under 9.8sec for the blue ribbon event for the eighth time in his career.

Only double sprint world and Olympic champion Bolt (five times with a world record best of 9.58sec) and American Tyson Gay (five times with a best of 9.69sec) have run faster, while another Jamaican, Nesta Carter, has also managed to time 9.78sec once in his career.

"It was a fantastic run, a bit cold out there,

but I managed to push through," the 28-year-old Powell said.

"I'm starting to draw the benefits of a different training programme that I was able to complete last winter without being disturbed by injuries.

"I got a great start. We've been practising that for a very long time now. I definitely can't wait to face Usain."

Bolt opted out of the Lausanne meet and Gay was also absent after picking up a hip injury that saw him withdraw from the US national championships which means he will miss out on the August 27-September 3 world championships in Daegu, South Korea.

That left Powell, who held the 100m world record for three years until Bolt's breakthrough in 2008, to showcase his talents in cold, blustery conditions on a track where he set his own personal record of 9.72sec three years ago.



PHOTO: AFP

Mahela Jayawardene celebrates his 15th ODI hundred during the second game against England at Headingley yesterday.