

Nick, Kett lovebirds

ANI, London

Nick Compton, grandson of the great Denis Compton and Lady Kitty Spencer, niece of Princess Diana, have decided to go public with their romance when they stepped out together at a Lord's dinner.

The Somerset player, who was named as one of Wisden's cricketer of the year at the dinner, received a hug from his 22-year-old girlfriend after he received his award for becoming England's leading run-scorer, the Daily Express reported.

A diner told the publication that the pair seemed very fond of each other.

It was revealed on Friday that the 29-year-old Compton was smitten with the blonde beauty after the duo began exchanging messages on Twitter.

IPL's dipping viewership

CRICINFO, Mumbai

The Indian Premier League's (IPL) average first-week viewership has marginally dropped compared to the corresponding figures from 2012, according to Tam Media Research, the leading television ratings agency in India.

The television viewer ratings (TVR) for the first week slipped from 3.9 in 2012 to 3.8 this year, however there were only five games in the first week (till Saturday) as opposed to six in 2012.

The tournament's broadcaster, Multi Screen Media, put the drop down to the ongoing digitisation of cable television across dozens of Indian cities.

"With digitisation, there is a chaos, uncertainty. We have opened right in the middle of all of that," Neeraj Vyas, executive vice-president and business head of Max (the entertainment channel that telecasts the matches), told Economic Times.

The LC1 markets (towns with population exceeding one million) hold 25 per cent of the weightage. If you discount the LC1 markets, there has actually been a growth and the ratings show a 4.5, which is higher than last year."

The TVR figures also include the viewership on the broadcasters' sports channel, Six, which is showing the IPL for the first time, alongside Max, which has telecast the league every season. The ratings have also fallen for the IPL opening ceremony, down to 1.2 from 1.8 in 2012.

While the league's television ratings have dipped consistently, the numbers are relatively still healthy; typically, if a television programme on a general entertainment channel posts an average TVR of 4.00, it is considered to be a success.

Asia Cup

FROM PAGE 16

in Bangladesh from March 16 to April 6.

India declined to host the regional cricket extravaganza citing a packed international schedule.

If the Asia Cup is hosted by Bangladesh then the BCB, who hosted the tournament in March last year in Dhaka, will have to postpone their proposed tri-series involving Sri Lanka and Pakistan.

"We have to adjust it and arrange the tri-series later if we eventually get to host next year's Asia Cup," said Yunus.



Mumbai Indians' Sachin Tendulkar drives one through the offside on way to scoring a gusty 44 off 29 balls against Pune Warriors at the Wankhede Stadium in Mumbai on Saturday.

PHOTO: CRICINFO

Chennai clinch last-ball

FROM PAGE 16

six after being asked to bat. After Chris Gayle's early departure batting mainstays Kohli and de Villiers ceased the initiative with a furious 82-run third-wicket stand. Kohli scored 58 off 47 deliveries, but de Villiers was especially brutal, hitting eight fours and a six in his 32-ball 64. Chris Morris enjoyed the most success among the Chennai bowlers with three for 40 while Ravichandran Ashwin was the most economical, conceding 28 runs from four overs for one wicket.

In the day's previous match, batting first Mumbai Indians posted a challenging total of 183 for three, courtesy a fantastic 62 by Rohit Sharma and useful contributions from Sachin Tendulkar and Dinesh Karthik.

Sharma blazed his way to an unbeaten 32-ball 62 as Mumbai Indians posted a challenging 183 for three after opting to bat. He went all-out in the final few overs to help Mumbai Indians amass 109 runs in the back 10 after having scored 72 at the halfway stage. With Ashok Dinda (0-63) leaking runs with monotonic regularity, MI managed 68 in the final five overs. Sharma and Kieron Pollard added those runs in only 4.5 overs.

The Mumbai bowlers then took wickets

at regular intervals to restrict Pune Warriors to 142 for eight despite Mitchell Marsh's rearguard effort of 38.

Left-arm speedster Mitchell Johnson swung the match in Mumbai's favour at the onset as his inswinging yorker castled Pune's last-match hero Aaron Finch and then got one to come in to dismiss Robin Uthappa while Ross Taylor was run-out.

From 13 for three, the comeback was virtually impossible and the likes of Yuvraj Singh and captain Angelo Mathews also could not make much of a headway as the target became a tall order.

SCORES IN BRIEF

ROYAL CHALLENGERS BANGALORE:

165 for 6 (De Villiers 62, Kohli 58, Agarwal 24; Morris 3-40, Ashwin 1-28). CHENNAI SUPER KINGS: 166 for 6 (Jadeja 38 not out, Badrinath 34, Dhoni 33, Raina 30; Rampaul 3-31, Mohammad 2-15). Result: Chennai Super Kings won by 4 wickets

Player-of-the-match: Ravindra Jadeja

MUMBAI INDIANS: 183 for 3 in 20 overs (Sharma 62 not out, Tendulkar 44, Karthik 41; Finch 1-11, Yuvraj 1-13). PUNE WARRIORS: 142 for 8 in 20 overs (Marsh 38, Yuvraj 24, Suman 23; Johnson 3-33)

Result: Mumbai Indians won by 41 runs.

Player-of-the-match: Rohit Sharma.

Shikhar Dhawan might have had a dream Test debut -- scoring a swashbuckling ton against Australia -- but in the very match he fractured his finger while fielding. It forced him to not only miss the last Test against the Aussies but has also kept him away from the first few weeks of the ongoing Pepsi Indian Premier League.

While he is still to join his teammates -- in the Sunrisers Hyderabad -- Dhawan isn't one to repeat over the timing of the injury.

Speaking to Mail Today, Dhawan said injuries are a part and parcel of any sportsman's life. But he was quick to ascertain that he couldn't wait to be a part of the carnival.

"Firstly, I must say that I am itching to get back on to the field. I wouldn't crib over the timing of the injury as it is a part and parcel of an athlete's life. You can't

really plan the timing of the injury. It will still take a while -- maybe another week -- before I can get back on to the field."

"I had a really good IPL V, so I would wish to carry on from where I had left last season. I feel that while we are a new team, the nucleus of the side is very much the same to the one that represented Deccan Chargers last season. While I haven't had a really long time with the outfit as I have been spending quite some time in Australia, I did spend some time with our coach Tom Moody and some of the other members of the coaching staff and I feel that we have a perfect unit," he said.

While he is still to join his teammates -- in the Sunrisers Hyderabad -- Dhawan isn't one to repeat over the timing of the injury.

Speaking to Mail Today, Dhawan said injuries are a part and parcel of any sportsman's life. But he was quick to ascertain that he couldn't wait to be a part of the carnival.

"Firstly, I must say that I am itching to

get back on to the field. I wouldn't crib over the timing of the injury as it is a part

and parcel of an athlete's life. You can't

really plan the timing of the injury. It will

still take a while -- maybe another week --

before I can get back on to the field."

"I had a really good IPL V, so I would

wish to carry on from where I had left last

season. I feel that while we are a new team,

the nucleus of the side is very much the

same to the one that represented Deccan

Chargers last season. While I haven't had

a really long time with the outfit as I have

been spending quite some time in Aus-

tralia, I did spend some time with our

coach Tom Moody and some of the other

members of the coaching staff and I feel

that we have a perfect unit," he said.

Dhawan has itchy feet

MAIL TODAY, New Delhi

PEPSI
INDIAN
PREMIER
LEAGUE

Shikhar Dhawan might have had a dream Test debut -- scoring a swashbuckling ton against Australia -- but in the very match he fractured his finger while fielding. It forced him to not only miss the last Test against the Aussies but has also kept him away from the first few weeks of the ongoing Pepsi Indian Premier League.

While he is still to join his teammates -- in the Sunrisers Hyderabad -- Dhawan isn't one to repeat over the timing of the injury.

Speaking to Mail Today, Dhawan said injuries are a part and parcel of any sportsman's life. But he was quick to ascertain that he couldn't wait to be a part of the carnival.

"Firstly, I must say that I am itching to

get back on to the field. I wouldn't crib over the timing of the injury as it is a part

and parcel of an athlete's life. You can't

really plan the timing of the injury. It will

still take a while -- maybe another week --

before I can get back on to the field."

"I had a really good IPL V, so I would

wish to carry on from where I had left last

season. I feel that while we are a new team,

the nucleus of the side is very much the

same to the one that represented Deccan

Chargers last season. While I haven't had

a really long time with the outfit as I have

been spending quite some time in Aus-

tralia, I did spend some time with our

coach Tom Moody and some of the other

members of the coaching staff and I feel

that we have a perfect unit," he said.

Venues not ready yet

FROM PAGE 16

are long-term procedures and we had little time in arranging these games. And NSC could not let funds at such short notice," Miku explained to the reporters. Meanwhile, the organising committee of the games sought cooperation from the media and political parties for smooth staging of the sports extravaganza in a separate views exchange programme yesterday.

A six-member delegation of the games, led BOA vice president by Harun ur Rashid, was scheduled to meet the leader of the opposition and BNP chairperson Khaleda Zia at her Gulshan office last night to seek cooperation during the games.

Tamim

FROM PAGE 16

the Sri Lanka trip due to a shin bone injury, but the left-hander may play the first Test only as a batsman. The selectors informed reporters while announcing the squad at home that based on the fitness report at the time, Shakib's chances of bowling in the first Test were fifty-fifty.

'He never slapped me'

Cricket

PTI, New Delhi

A day after the ghost of 2008 'Slapgate' tumbled out, controversial fast bowler S Sreesanth on Saturday sought divine blessings by visiting the Sai Baba shrine in Shirdi, Maharashtra.

Sreesanth, on Friday, revealed that all the 'Slapgate' claims were far from truth as he was never slapped by his then India teammate Harbhajan Singh.

Instead, Sreesanth said that he was elbowed by the senior off-spinner.

Sreesanth said he wants to move forward and won't speak more on the issue.

"I don't want to say anything more as I am playing in IPL. I just shared my feelings and came here to do the same. I want to do well in the matches ahead. I want to work hard to make a comeback to Indian side for the South Africa tour," he said.

Before speaking to media, Sreesanth wrote about his visit to Shirdi on his Twitter page.

"Om Sai ram..had a gr8 darshan @shirdi..it's all gods grace," he wrote.

Five years after the infamous 'slapgate', one of the protagonists of the drama, Sreesanth, has made an explosive claim, saying that the entire incident was planned and that his former India teammate Harbhajan Singh was a 'backstabber'.

The temperamental Sreesanth made a

series of revelations on the 2008 incident on his Twitter page on Friday, creating a fresh controversy in the IPL, a day after

Gautam Gambhir and Virat Kohli were involved in an ugly on-field spat.

"To be whr lam ..I've no complaints..but now I want u All to know the truth. He [Bhajji] never Slapped me..the video will show u all..wt he did," Sreesanth wrote in a series of expletives-laden tweets.

"All blamed me for getting emotional ??c mon who doesn't get emotional whn u know the person who u worship is a backstabbing person Nd..." he tweeted.

"Disgusting ..that's all I can say..u should get hold of the video..them u will know te truth..wht he did is completely out of control," he said.

Sreesanth, who is currently playing for Rajasthan Royals, demanded that the videotape of the incident be made public.

"I don't want Bhajji to feel bad now..I need to tell the truth to the world..wht happend was bad..it's not my fault at all..and all media ???"

The pacer also claimed that Harbhajan did not slap him but elbowed him.

"I want the world to c it..Whn I went to shake hands afte the match..he had lost it..he had already planned to hit me/elbow me all his anger" he said.

Interestingly, Harbhajan and Sreesanth are due to square off on April 17 in Jaipur, when Rajasthan Royals play Mumbai.

Sreesanth, playing for Kings XI Punjab at that time, and Harbhajan, competing for Mumbai Indians, faced off after the game, an incident that left the pacer in tears. Harbhajan was banned for the rest of the tournament, while Sreesanth was let off with a warning after disciplinary proceedings.

Monaco, Isner in semis

Tennis

AFP, Houston

Defending champion Juan Monaco crushed Robby Ginepri 6-1, 6-0 in the quarterfinals Friday of the US Clay Court Championships, setting up a re-match of last year's final with John Isner.

Only this time Monaco and runner-up Isner will meet in the Houston semifinals after Isner booked his spot with a 6-3, 3-6, 6-3 win over Ricardas Berankis earlier in the day.

The third-seeded Monaco, of Argentina, needed just 56 minutes to dispatch American qualifier Ginepri in their first contest in five years. Monaco did not face a break point and broke Ginepri

five times on the clay court at the River Oaks Country Club.

The other semi will see top seed Nicolas Almagro battle 144th-ranked Rhyne Williams.