

Natants remain unimpressive

BDNEWS, Dhaka

Bangladeshi swimmers maintained their lacklustre performance at the 18th Commonwealth Games in Melbourne on Sunday.

Jewel Ahmed finished 23rd out of 32 swimmers in the men's 100m butterfly heat clocking 59.95 seconds. Jewel, who earlier finished 28th out of 43 in the men's 50m butterfly on March 17, recorded 59.73s in the same event at the 17th Commonwealth Games in Manchester 2002.

Rubel Rana, who took part in heat no. 1 to finish second keeping Sri Lankan Arun Karunaratne behind him among three swimmers, finished 24th out of 25 clocking 1:03.53s in the 100m backstroke.

Earlier on the first day of the competition, Rubel finished 24th among 26 swimmers in the men's 50m backstroke. The national champion improved his timing in 100m backstroke as his previous record was 1:05.05s at Manchester. Country's promising swimmer Rubel, however, failed to put his national record of 1:01:96s behind him.

Sabura Khatun became 25th, out of 27 contenders, in the women's 50m backstroke with 36.81 seconds. The lone Bangladeshi woman swimmer finished 44th out of 45 in women's 50m freestyle clocking 31.09s.

Rakib going great guns

SPORTS REPORTER

International Master Abdullah Al Rakib crossed another hurdle to maintain solo lead in the Mercantile Bank 32nd National Chess Championship when he beat IM Reefat Bin Sattar in the ninth round at the federation hall-room yesterday.

Rakib improved his tally to 8.5 points while IM Enamul Hossain Rajib was one point adrift the leader. Rajib, who played his eighth round game, won the board against FIDE Master Rezaul Haque.

The battle between country's two Grand Masters Niaz Murshed and Ziaur Rahman in this round ended in a draw.

Looking

FROM PAGE 12 me and the people of Khulna. When I was young I used to play cricket with my mates here and thought if someday we could have teams like the West Indies playing here," he said.

Khulna would also be proud of presenting a host of homegrown boys in the current national team including skipper Habibul Bashar, paceman Mashrafe Bin Mortaza, left-arm seamer Syed Rassel and left-arm spinner Abdur Razzak.

Tigers guard

FROM PAGE 12 Rafique, Mashrafe Bin Mortaza, Abdur Razzak, Syed Rassel and Shahadat Hossain.

KENYA (from): Steve Tikolo (captain), Thomas Oduyo (vice-captain), Jimmy Kamande, Alfred Luseno, Tanmay Mishra, Hitesh Modi, Collins Obuya, David Obuya, Peter Ongondo, Kennedy Otieno, Maurice Ouma, Kalpesh Patel, Martin Suji and Tony Suji.



PHOTO: AFP

Barcelona striker Henrik Larsson (C) celebrates with teammates after scoring against Primera Liga rivals Real Sociedad at the Anoeta Stadium in San Sebastian on Saturday.

PRIMERA LIGA

Barca extend lead

Football

AFP, Madrid

Barcelona extended their lead at the top of the Spanish Primera Liga after defeating struggling Real Sociedad 2-0 Saturday.

Goals from Henrik Larsson and Samuel Eto'o handed Barca a routine win against their opponents from the Basque region, who are languishing in the bottom half of the table.

The victory saw Barcelona go 12 points clear in the standings although Valencia and Real Madrid can narrow the gap if they win their matches in Sunday's fixtures.

Barcelona's superior firepower

was always going to pose problems for Sociedad, who had the worst defensive record in La Liga this season heading into the match.

Their back four had leaked no fewer than 51 goals before Saturday's game, and it was not long before that was increased to 52 as Barcelona took the lead. Larsson netting in the eighth minute.

Ronaldinho clipped an inch-perfect cross into the box and found the Swedish international, who teed up the ball with his first touch before rifling a low shot past Alberto.

There was controversy about the goal however, with Eto'o standing in an offside position when Ronaldinho played the ball into Larsson.

With Barcelona's midfield controlling play, Sociedad's strikers were forced to live off scraps of possession. Their best effort came when Mark Gonzales thumped a long-range shot against the post.

Barcelona were always in control however and doubled their lead early in the second half through Eto'o.

Dutch midfielder Mark Van Bommel skipped into the penalty area and unleashed a fierce shot which cannoned off the woodwork and fell kindly for Eto'o, the African Player of the Year sidefooting home coolly.

Eto'o went close to making it 3-0 midway through the second half as he beautifully weighted chip drifted just wide of the Sociedad goal with Alberto beaten all ends up.

Big Phil in Eng frame

AFP, London

The Football Association (FA) have interviewed Portugal's Brazilian coach Luiz Felipe Scolari for the England manager's job, according to newspaper reports here on Sunday.

Scolari, who guided Brazil to World Cup success in 2002, is reported to have spoken to FA officials during a visit to London last week.

The 57-year-old had been invited to the Institute of Directors' spring sporting lunch alongside former England manager Sir Bobby Robson on Friday.

Scolari, whose Portugal contract expires after this summer's World Cup, is one of two high-profile foreign managers to have been linked with the post alongside Dutchman Guus Hiddink.

The FA are currently interviewing candidates and it was confirmed last week they had spoken to Charlton's Alan Curbishley. The FA denied reports that Bolton manager Sam Allardyce has been ruled out.

One of the candidates the FA has still to see is reported to be Gerard Houllier, the coach of French champions Lyon.

Former Liverpool manager Houllier was France's technical director when they won the 1998 World Cup.

L'pool apologise for fans behaviour

AFP, Liverpool

Liverpool have apologised to Premiership rivals Manchester United for the behaviour of their fans during last month's FA Cup tie at Anfield.

Merseyside Police and the club have carried out an investigation after United fans were attacked by home supporters who pelted them with human excrement, coins and food.

Liverpool stadium and operations manager Ged Poynton has written to United admitting standards of behaviour had "fallen short" of that expected.

Tensions between the rivals had been running higher than usual going into the February 18 match, which Liverpool won 1-0, after a controversial end to a Premiership encounter between the sides the previous month.

United's Gary Neville had run to celebrate in front of Liverpool fans after Rio Ferdinand headed a later winner at Old Trafford.

The cup tie was also marred by a section of home fans taunting United's Alan Smith after breaking his leg late in the match.

Chittagong

FROM PAGE 12

Even Dravid, playing his 100th Test, found runs hard to come by against the England pace trio of Hoggard, Anderson and Flintoff but did well to keep his end intact for nearly a session.

Batting became easier only when slow bowlers were pressed into the attack. Yuvraj straight-drove spinner Shaun Udal for two successive fours during his 47-ball knock.

England -- seeking to square the series -- earlier managed to post a healthy total despite losing their last seven wickets for 74, thanks to Flintoff and Shah.

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Seamers Shanthakumaran Sreesanth and Munaf Patel, and off-spinner Harbhajan shared six of the seven England wickets that fell on Sunday.

India let off Flintoff twice and Shah once, but Sreesanth (4-70), Harbhajan (3-89) and Patel (2-81) kept trying to keep their team in the contest.

Flintoff was on 29 when dropped off successive balls from Patel, first by Sehwa at second slip and then by Anil Kumble at gully. Shah got a life on 84 when Dravid failed to latch on to a catch off Harbhajan.

Leg-spinner Kumble claimed the prize wicket of Flintoff, caught at deep mid-wicket by Tendulkar while trying a big shot. The England captain, who made 70 and 51 in the second Test at Mohali, smashed three sixes and six fours.

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PREMIERSHIP

Gunners stroll towards Europe

Football

AFP, London

Arsenal were back to their stylish best on Saturday as the battle for fourth place in the Premiership, and the final Champions League qualifying spot, headed for a nail-biting finale.

Gunners fans were treated to a vintage display of attacking football as Charlton were beaten 3-0 at Highbury.

But Tottenham reclaimed fourth spot by beating Birmingham 2-0 later in the day and, with Blackburn and Bolton also winning, only four points now separate the four clubs.

At the other end of the table, Portsmouth beat a weakened West Ham 4-2 to give their hopes of survival in the top flight another massive shot in the arm after last weekend's last-gasp win over Manchester City.

Goals from Robert Pires,

Emmanuel Adebayor and Alexander Hleb allowed Arsenal to stroll to a third consecutive win.

Gunners boss Arsene Wenger remained cautious though: "The team is growing and we have hit good form, but we have to keep it going until the end of the season.

The passing and movement was very pleasing and we're getting better and better but we know we can't drop any more points."

Tottenham denied Birmingham an escape from the relegation zone with a 2-0 win at St Andrews, young winger Aaron Lennon and Robbie Keane notching second half goals.

Manchester United consolidated their grip on second place with a 2-1 win at relegation-threatened West Brom, courtesy of a double from French striker Louis Saha, who was once again preferred to Ruud van Nistelrooy.

Nathan Ellington pulled a goal back for the Baggies 12 minutes from the end but Bryan Robson's side were unable to claim what

would have been a precious equaliser.

First half goals from Lomana LuaLua, Sean Davis and Pedro Mendes put Portsmouth in control at Upton Park.

West Ham pulled a goal back through Teddy Sheringham. Svetoslav Todorov's strike ensured there were no nerves at the end of the travelling Pompey supporters before Yossi Benayoun notched West Ham's second in the dying seconds.

Blackburn maintained their pursuit of Champions League football by beating Middlesbrough 3-2 despite having Robbie Savage sent off early in the second half.

Bolton are also still in the hunt for the final Champions League spot. Goals from Kevin Davies and Kevin Nolan secured a 2-0 home win over bottom side Sunderland.

Wigan took all three points at Manchester City, thanks to Lee McCulloch's 55th-minute strike.

SERIE A

Trezeguet brace licks Livorno

Football

REUTERS, Rome

Juventus showed no sign of loosening their grip in the Serie A title race as striker David Trezeguet scored twice in a 3-1 win at Livorno on Saturday.

It took Juventus just three minutes to unlock Livorno defence, Pavel Nedved nodding Alessandro Del Piero's cross to Trezeguet who was clear on the edge of the box to fire past Marco Amelia.

Livorno striker Cristiano Luccarelli forced a diving save from Gianluigi Buffon with a long-range shot but it was winger Marc Pjrtzel who pulled them level in the 52nd minute.

He caught Giuliano Giannichedda in possession just

outside the Juventus area, accelerated past two defenders and fired a low shot into the bottom corner.

Livorno's celebrations lasted less



TREZUQUET

than a minute before Trezeguet ran on to a Nedved through ball to break the offside trap, held off the challenge of defender Jorge Vargas, and slotted home his 20th goal in 26 Serie A matches this season.

As the clock ran down, Livorno pushed forward in search of another equaliser leaving their defence exposed and Del Piero added Juve's third goal in the final minute of stoppage time.

Earlier, Cagliari moved four points clear of the relegation zone when they won 2-1 at bottom side Treviso.

Level at halftime after goals by Cagliari striker Mauro Esposito and Treviso's Walter Basiglio, the visitors sealed the victory in the 77th minute when David Suazo converted a penalty after Esposito was fouled by defender William Viali.

India under pressure

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NZ close in on series win

Cricket

AFP, Wellington

New Zealand tightened their grip on the second cricket Test against the West Indies here Sunday, ripping through the top order to leave the tourists at 118 for four in their second innings at the end of the third day here Sunday.

Again the out-of-form Brian Lara surrendered his wicket cheaply, and the struggling West Indies still require a further 62 runs to make New Zealand bat again.

Only Chris Gayle showed the determination required to turn the Test into an even contest, after New Zealand were all out in their first innings early in the day for 372 in reply to the West Indies' 192.

But even Gayle succumbed to a lack of concentration in the second to last over before tea, when he attempted to sweep Daniel Vettori out of the ground but was instead trapped plumb in front to be dismissed for 68.

Shivnarine Chandepaul, who was dropped by Stephen Fleming at first slip when on five, was unbeaten on 13, with Dwayne Bravo on two when play was halted because of bad light three overs after tea.

Daren Ganga was the first wicket to fall after posting a 50-run opening stand with Gayle, when he slashed at a wide delivery from Chris Martin and was caught by wicketkeeper Brendon McCullum.

Martin was the most threatening of the New Zealand bowlers, with far more certainty about his line and length than in the first innings, and was the unfortunate victim when Chandepaul was dropped.

Runako Morton gave Fleming his fifth catch of the match when he edged James Franklin soon after lunch to be out for seven, and the seriously out-of-form Lara followed soon after.

In his final appearance at the Basin Reserve, the scene of his only century against New Zealand, Lara clipped a Nathan Astle half-volley straight to Hamish Marshall at point.

What was a precarious situation for the West Indies became desperate as Gayle departed soon after and they slumped to 113 for four after being 54 for one.

In four innings on tour, Lara has posted scores of 5-0-1-1.

New Zealand lead the three-Test series 1-0 after their 27-run victory in Auckland.

The home side had resumed the day at 335 for seven in their first innings and lost Astle in the first over, playing forward to Daren Powell and edging the ball to Denesh Ramdin without adding to his overnight score of 65.

Fidel Edwards, who was kept back for the first half hour, was then introduced to the attack and in his second over took the final two wickets in successive balls to finish with five for 65 while Powell had four for 83.

SCORES IN BRIEF WEST INDIES: First innings 192 (Morton 63, Gayle 30, Franklin 5-53, Mills 3-53)

NEW ZEALAND: First innings 372 (Fulton 75, Fleming 97, Astle 65, McCullum 23, Vettori 42, Franklin 28 n.o., Mills 10; Edwards 5-65, Powell 4-83)

WEST INDIES: Second innings 118 for 4 (Gayle 68, Ganga 23, Morton 7, Lara 1, Chandepaul batting 13, Bravo batting 2; Martin 1-28, Franklin 1-41, Vettori 1-14)

BARISAL-SYLHET

Half-centuries by the top three Sylhet batsmen raised chances of a draw but Marshall, who followed up his 107 in the Barisal first innings with six wickets for 90, changed the scenario at the Barisal Stadium. The home side will chase 163 runs to win on the final day after restricting Sylhet's second innings to 322.

Opener Intiaz Hossain (62 off 49 balls) and Golam Rahman (88 off 180 balls), who resumed on 73-0, were separated on 99 but Rahman found an ally in his brother Golam Mawla (51) during a 104-run second wicket partnership.

CHITTAGONG: 341 and 184-1 in 60 overs (Tamim 49, Nafees 81 batting, Nazim 43 batting, Shuvo 1-37)

RAJSHAHI: First innings- 240 all out in 94.1 overs (Jahurul 18, Farhad 57, Nayeem 96, Shamimul 14, Kamrul 28, Alamgir 1-24, Ehsanul 3-20, Yasin 3-87, Sunny 3-60)

DHAKA: 464 and 114-3 (Uttam 60, Kamrul 21, Opee 2 batting, Mehrab Jr 14 batting, Monirul 1-26, Sadik 1-25)

KHULNA: First innings- 378 all out in 89.2 overs (Sadat 17, Tushar 198, Sahagir 50, Monirul 20, Jamal 23, Zia 28, Sharif 4-76, Mosharraf 2-84, Sunny 2-56)

SYLHET: 194 all out and 322 all out in 104.2 overs (Intiaz 62, Rahman 88, Mawla 51, Mabud 35, Ezzaz 2-34, Sadiqul 15, Nabil 13, Sonnet 1-39, Nadiq 2-35, Marish 6-90, Monir 1-43)

BARISAL: First innings- 354.

Aussies share spotlight

AFP, Melbourne

Mighty Australia found themselves sharing the Commonwealth Games spotlight with England, Scotland and even humble Isle of Man on Sunday.

The day, dubbed Super Sunday, began with an emotional home gold medal for mother-of-two Kerry McCann who retained her women's marathon title.

But it ended with England and Scotland mugging Australia's men in the pool before Tyle of Man, who had only won two golds in the history of the Games, won a cycling gold.

Australia still top the medals table after four days of action with 28 golds, more than double England's tally of 13 with India on eight and Scotland on 6.

In the pool, Simon Burnett got one over his South African training partner Roland Schoeman on a glorious night for England with two more swimming golds.

The 22-year-old Englishman won the 100 metres freestyle in a new Games record time of 48.57 seconds.

Rebecca Cooke rounded off a rousing night for the English when she successfully defended her 800m freestyle title and Scotland got in on the act when David Carry won his second gold, and his country's fourth in the pool, in the 400m individual medley in a Tartan one-two finish.

Jessica Schipper kept the Australian flag flying with a record-

breaking win in the 100m butterfly final for her country's eighth gold of the Games meet.

Burnett downed South African world bronze medalist Ryk Neethling and silver medalist Schoeman for his greatest swimming triumph, but he gave much of the credit to Schoeman.

Carry, who claimed gold in the 400-metre freestyle final on Thursday's opening night, led a Scottish one-two finish with Euan Dale taking the silver.

World champion Skipper clocked a Games record in beating teammate Libby Lenton for the women's 100m butterfly gold medal.

Schipper clocked 57.48 seconds in beating Lenton by 0.32sec for her first gold of the Games.

Kerry McCann produced a memorable performance fitting for the return of athletics to the Melbourne Cricket Ground after a 50-year absence as she retained her women's marathon title.

The 38-year-old mother of two prevailed in an epic battle with Kenya's Helen Cherono Koskei.



Did U Know?

English giants Chelsea made history in 1999, when they fielded an entire starting eleven with no British players involved.

TALK TURKEY

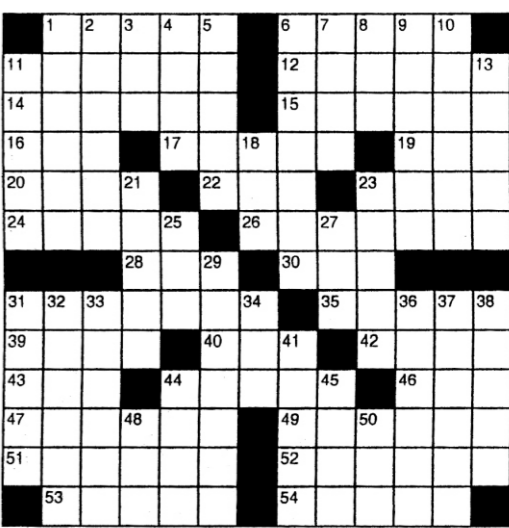


Arsene Wenger

(Arsenal manager) "I love Real Madrid. It is certainly, after Arsenal, a club I love because of my childhood. It was the team I admired when I was a kid and I have a lot of good memories for Real Madrid."

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS 1 Bundle of bit 40 Baby louse 6 Con-temptible critters 11 Courierier 12 Little hooters 14 Billfold 15 BB, e.g. 16 Phonograph 17 Sets up a bivouac 19 Churchill gesture 20 Currier's partner 22 Abner's adjective 23 Bartok or Schick 24 Meshlike 26 Put one over on 28 Computer acronym 30 Round table address 31 Nomadic Arab 35 Screwed up



CRYPTOQUIP Z B L R P M Z F F V Y J I X R L N I E V Y , Z Z K L O Z C V N Z R B Z F R E F V P M V R E K Z O N E J V L C M E S F L S X V F R M Z E V . Yesterday's Cryptogrip: WHEN THE MAN'S DOG TOOK A BITE OUT OF A BOOK, I TOOK THE WORDS RIGHT OUT OF ITS MOUTH. Today's Cryptogrip Clue: B equals F The Cryptogrip is a substitution cipher in which one letter stands for another. If you think that X equals O, it will equal O throughout the puzzle. Single letters, short words and words using an apostrophe give you clues to locating vowels. Solution is by trial and error.