

Marma hits hattrick

SPORTS REPORTER

Ahmarching Marma struck a hattrick as Khagrachhari crushed Shariatpur 8-1 in the first Inter-District Women's Football Competition at the Dhanmondi Women Sports Complex yesterday. Apart from Marma's feat, Rupali Chakma netted two for Khagrachhari while Mainu Marma, Trishna Chakma and Kobina Chakma also scored one each for the winners.

In the day's other match, Chameli scored twice as Rajshahi crushed Rangamati 4-0, also at the same venue.

Combined SC go down

UNB, Dhaka

Combined Sporting Club suffered the heartbreak of relegation after going down 0-2 against Victoria Sporting Club in the Green Delta Metropolis First Division Hockey League at the Maulana Bhasani National Hockey Stadium yesterday.

The club went down to the lower tier -- Second Division League -- after a couple of seasons. The old Dhaka outfit had a single point to show for all season.

After a barren first half, Sabbir Hossain and Rasheed Khan scored for Victoria to seal the fate of Combined.

Earlier in the day, Police AC played out a one-all draw with Mukta Bihanga Tarun Sangha at the same venue with goals from Rana Das of Police and Aatur Rahman of Mukta Bihanga, both coming in the first half.

Meanwhile, Wari Club, Farashganj Sporting Club, Bachelors Sporting Club and Dhaka Wanderers Club confirmed their place in the title-deciding super-four league which is likely to begin on Wednesday.

HK women on World Cup mission

AFP, Lahore

Neisha Pratt leads a determined Hong Kong women's cricket team against Pakistan here next week, vying for a place in the 2009 World Cup.

The visitors are scheduled to play three 50-overs one-day international matches against Pakistan in the eastern city of Lahore and the winners will earn a berth in the 2007 qualifying tournament in Ireland.

Eight teams will compete in the 2007 qualifying round, out of them two top teams will go on to the Women's World Cup to be held in India two years later.

"We are here to get a place in qualifying round for the World Cup and earn a lot of experience," the New Zealand-born Neisha told AFP.

The current series is played under the auspices of the Asian Cricket Council (ACC).

This is the first-ever international cricket competition undertaken by the Hong Kong team, which comprised half of expat players from India and Sri Lanka and half of locals.

Cricket is a fast-improving game in Hong Kong, whose men's team has taken long strides following success in the recent ACC Trophy in Malaysia, earning a place in the Asia Cup to be hosted in Pakistan in two years time.

"Despite having less facilities, the girls have put in a great deal of hard work over the summer," said Pratt, a former Northern Districts state player.

"The opportunity to qualify for a World Cup doesn't come around every day and we'll be giving it our best shot," she said.

The Hong Kong squad also includes Natasha Miles who caused a stir last season when she finished the season by taking 15 wickets playing in the men's Saturday League.

The Hong Kong team were lucky to get training facilities at Kowloon Cricket Club and have a healthy sponsorship from a cosmetics company.

Pakistan are placed better than their rival and their women's wing secretary Shamsa Hashmi hopes a win for the team.

Pakistan last qualified for the 1997 World Cup held in India but have since failed to clear the qualifying hurdle.

Australia are the current women's champion, winning the ninth World Cup held in South Africa last year. The women's World Cup was initiated in England in 1973.

SQUAD

Neisha Pratt (captain), Renee Montgomery (vice-captain), Chan Sau Ha, Betty Chan, Sarah Eames, Natasha Miles, Keenu Gill, Sam McIlwrath, Julie Atkinson, Godiva Li, Ishitaa Gidwani, Angela Kwan, Shaminda Wickramasinghe, Kylie Knott, Nasir Hameed (coach) and Mark Burns (manager).



Germany players erupt in celebration following their dramatic triumph in a shootout over Spain in the semifinals of the Field Hockey World Cup in Muenchengladbach on Friday.

PHOTO: AFP

Aussie-Deutsch finale

Hockey

AFP, Muenchengladbach

Germany booked a final clash against Australia in the men's field hockey World Cup championship after a dramatic penalty shoot-out against Spain here Friday.

Germany defeated Spain three penalty strokes to one in front of 10,000 noisy fans after the scores were locked at 2-2 at the end of 15 minutes of golden goal extra time.

Earlier Friday Australia came from behind to beat South Korea 4-2 to book their final against Germany on Sunday.

Bjoern Emmerling deflected in Germany's first goal from a free hit outside the circle 20 minutes into the second half.

Santiago Freixa converted Spain's fourth penalty corner flicking low through the pads of Germany's goalkeeper Ulrich Bubolz into the centre of goal nine minutes before the break.

Moritz Fuerste got a touch into goal from a centre from the left by Matthias Witthaus for Germany's go-ahead goal nine minutes after the break and Alex Fabregas answered for Spain in the same minute with a slap into the top of the net.

After the 15 minutes of golden goal extra time failed to produce a winner, the match was decided on penalty strokes.

Ulrich Bubolz saved strokes by

Spain's Santiago Freixa and Pau Quemada and Pol Amat's stroke did not reach the line.

Germany's Christopher Zeller, Timo Wess and Philipp Zeller flicked into the left side of the net.

Eduard Tubau made Spain's only successful stroke inside the left post while Moritz Fuerste for Germany made a poor attempt, easily saved by Quico Cortes, Spain's goalkeeper, for Germany's only miss.

Spain used Germany's fans to get into the game.

"We took the energy in the stadium and used it to our advantage and I think it was a great crowd tonight and a fair crowd," said Maurits Hendriks, Spain's coach.

"The seven penalty corners we received were well defended by Germany and some of my calls may have been unfortunate because I should have played more direct shots on goal than the variations I called from the bench," Hendriks said.

Bernhard Peters, Germany's coach was happy with the win.

"I am very happy tonight that my young team has made it into the final of the World Cup," Peters said.

"You could see the Spanish team was very strong penetrating the circle and we conceded too many penalty corners but my top man in the defence was Ulrich Bubolz and he saved many shots on goal from Spain," Peters said.

South Korea took a 1-0 lead in the first half through Jong Jang's conversion of South Korea's third

penalty corner and Australia played catch-up in the second half.

Bevan George deflected in a soft push by Brent Livermore when the push out of a penalty corner was not stopped clearly three minutes after the break.

South Korea went ahead 2-1 three minutes later when Seong Kang pushed between Stephen Mowlam's left pad and the right post.

Travis Brooks deflected in Australia's third penalty corner to earn the equaliser.

Australia scored again from a free hit outside the circle on the right, driven to the left post by Mark Knowles for Jamie Dwyer to deflect in.

Michael McCann drove into the middle of South Korea's net with five seconds on the clock for Australia's last goal.

"We started tentatively in the first half," said Barry Dancer, Australia's coach. "And the players showed more courage and penetration in the second half."

"I wanted to get into the finals but I am satisfied that we could get as far as the semifinals," said Sung Jun Cho, Korea's coach.

In other matches today, Pakistan beat Netherlands 3-2 and England beat New Zealand 4-3 for Netherlands and New Zealand to play off for fifth place and Netherlands plays New Zealand for seventh place.

Scholastica start well

UNB, Dhaka

Scholastica crushed Green Herald 11-3 in the inaugural match of the Bexi Fabrics third Mini Handball Tournament for girls at the Women's Sports Complex in Dhanmondi yesterday.

The winners led 9-2 in the first half.

In the other matches, Sunnydale completely outplayed South Breeze by 12-1, Dhanmondi Tutorials beat Summer Field 8-5, Aga Khan School crushed Siddiquies International 8-0 and Dhanmondi Quamunnisa High School beat Mohammadpur Preparatory School 6-2.

Chairman of Beximco Group Salman F Rahman formally inaugurated the four-day meet, organised by Bangladesh Handball Federation and sponsored by Bexi Fabrics.

A total of 16 teams, split into four groups, are taking part in the third version of the meet, initially on league basis.

Winning

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front of the cameras just for the pictures? I'm not the man for that."

Benitez, speaking in Liverpool, told reporters: "I don't know if what has happened between us about the handshakes is personal. But if he wants, I will shake his hand."

"I still have the same opinion now about him that I had when I first came to England. That opinion is that he is a very good manager with a very good team and great players."

"Always I say the same, but he prefers to talk about my team. I prefer to talk about my team and the game."

Chelsea are fourth in the table on nine points -- three behind leaders Manchester United -- and Liverpool are 10th, having taken four points from three games.

Zambrotta

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rested for his new clubs Champions League demolition of Levski Sofia last Tuesday.

Barcelona will be looking to maintain their 100% start to the season and Zambrotta is positive that Frank Rijkaard's squad rotation policy will benefit the reigning European champions.

"I think it is positive for the team because there are several players for each position," he said. "I think it is an advantage for the boss."

He added that he and fellow new signing Lilian Thuram knew the score before they agreed to join this summer.

"We had no problems signing and I think it is good that there is time to get back to full strength, especially considering the number of games we have to play."

Beckham

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England's disappointing showing at the recent World Cup in Germany.

Beckham described his shock when manager Steve McClaren told him he had been left out of the squad to play Greece in last month's friendly at Old Trafford.

"Steve had rung me a week or so earlier to ask me about my recovery from the injury I'd got during the World Cup and how I was fitness-wise," Beckham said.

"This time, he started asking about the injury again but then he moved on to what he really wanted to say. He just said he had got other ideas and he wanted to move on."

Report 'shocks' Shane

Cricket

AFP, Kuala Lumpur

Shane Warne has furiously backtracked from reported criticism of Australian coach John Buchanan, saying he was "shocked" at the way he claimed his words had been taken out of context.

British tabloid the Sun quoted him on Friday as saying Buchanan deserved few plaudits for Australia's world cricket domination. He also reportedly suggested the team didn't need a coach at all.

It prompted urgent voicemail messages for an explanation from Buchanan and Australian captain Ricky Ponting.

Warne, in England, Friday evening called Buchanan at his hotel in Kuala Lumpur, where Australia are playing a one-day tri-series with

India and the West Indies.

"Shane said he was shocked at the way he said his comments had been taken out of context," a Cricket Australia official who took part in the 10-minute phone conversation told AFP.

"He explained that the report did not represent his views. He said he is very committed to team solidarity. It was an amicable call and the team now moves on."

The legendary leg-spinner was quoted as saying that in his eyes the coach was simply something you travelled on to a match.

"He has been our coach during a successful era but that begs a question -- does the coach make the team or does the team make the coach?" he reportedly said.

"You need some sort of team manager more than a coach like we have at Hampshire with Paul Terry, where the captain runs the team and

the manager sorts out everything else.

"International players know how to play. You don't need a coach getting too technical. You can forget that you just need to bowl the ball."

Warne, who has previously had a strained relationship with Buchanan, no longer plays one-day cricket for Australia but remains a fixture of their Test team.

Last month he called for Australia's next coach to be a more experienced ex-player, in place of Buchanan who had a modest record at state level for Queensland.

During Buchanan's seven-year reign, Australia has gained outstanding success, winning 24 Test series, drawing one and losing two -- in India in 2000-01 and last year's Ashes series in England.

Svetlana makes it 12-0

Tennis

AFP, Nusa Dua

Svetlana Kuznetsova sweated to keep her record at the Wismilak International a perfect 12-0 Saturday night, twice recovering from a break down to defeat Lindsay Davenport 7-6, 7-6 to reach her third final.

The top-seeded Russian and her Californian opponent both worked hard in the tropical heat, with Kuznetsova rushing occasionally to the sidelines to swap rackets when her grip began to slip.

The champion in 2002 and 2004 will face either Swiss second seed Patty Schnyder or French sixth seed Marion Bartoli in Sunday's final at this beachside resort.

The loss was the first here for Davenport, 7-1, who now travels to Beijing for next week's China Open. The American had beaten Kuznetsova in three of their

previous four meetings. Kuznetsova fired nine aces as she stormed to the victory in a shade under two hours.

"I'm so happy to win in two sets," said the Russian after the battle of former Grand Slam champions. "I was a break down in each set and really had to work to get back."

Kuznetsova looked like losing the second set as she trailed 5-2, but mounted a fight back which left Davenport to break back the final game and force a second tie-breaker.

In that decider Kuznetsova lost a 5-2 lead, Davenport levelling at 5-5 all on the Russian's double-fault.

But two ensuing backhand errors from the 30-year-old American third seed handed over the victory.

"It was a good match, very close," said Davenport, who has played in only six tournaments this season due to back problems as she missed nearly six months.

"She played better when she

was down and I maybe let up a bit in the second set.

"It was just a few points here and there. A few of those going my way and the match could have been in my hands."

"I wasn't playing as sharp as I would have liked, and that hurt me. She's been playing well and with lots of confidence."

The first set was marked by twists and turns, with Kuznetsova losing serve in the seventh game only to claw it back in the eighth.

The Russian then showed her nerve by recovering from 0-30 down in the next game, finishing for a 5-4 lead with a pair of concluding aces.

The show of strength from the top seed continued, with Kuznetsova adding a third ace for a 6-5 lead, only to see Davenport take it into a tiebreaker.

Kuznetsova prevailed in 55 minutes as she converted on the first of two set points from consecutive Davenport unforced errors.

Rain robs Australia

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But India's bowling was tight, with spinner Harbhajan Singh the pick of the bunch, taking 2-24 off 10 economical overs. Munaf Patel grabbed 3-53.

With Test opener Matthew Hayden kept on the sidelines again, Watson and Phil Jaques opened nervously.

Under dark skies and with thunder rumbling, India got their breakthrough in the 10th over when Sehwag caught Jaques for 25 when he edged Patel.

Captain Ricky Ponting came to the crease in an attacking frame of mind, unleashing four boundaries in his 19 before being bagged by Tendulkar at short fine leg as he attempted another big hit off Pathan.

Watson, who was dropped early in his innings, was motoring at the other end, but India's bowlers gave little away and Martyn fell cheaply, out for four to an edge off RP Singh.

Clarke helped Watson keep the scoreboard ticking over before

Watson fell, flicking a delivery from Harbhajan Singh to Suresh Raina at midwicket.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard in the DLF Cup third one-day international between Australia and India at Kinrara Oval on Saturday:

AUSTRALIA	
Jaques c Sehwag b Patel	25
Ponting c Raina b Harbhajan	79
Potting c Tendulkar b Pathan	19
Martyn c Dhoni b R Singh	4
Clarke c Raina b Patel	64
Cosgrove c Dravid b Harbhajan	4
Haddin run out (Sehwag)	16
Hogg c Dhoni b Agarkar	12
Johnson c Dhoni b Agarkar	1
Clark c R Singh b Patel	7
McGrath not out	1
Extras: (b-1, lb-6, w-5)	12
Total: (All out in 49.2 overs)	244
Fall of wickets: 1-64, 2-92, 3-113, 4-157, 5-167, 6-200, 7-230, 8-232, 9-243, 10-244.	
Bowler	
Agarkar	8.2 0 50 2
Patel	10 1 53 3

R Singh	7	1	35	1
Pathan	4	0	32	1
Harbhajan	10	0	24	2
Sehwag	10	0	43	0

INDIA

David c Martyn b Johnson	6
Tendulkar c Haddin b Johnson	12
Pathan b Johnson	0
Sehwag run out (Haddin)	8
Yuvraj c Hogg b Johnson	0
Raina not out	1
Dhoni not out	0
Extras: (lb-1, w-7)	8
Total: (For 5 wks in 8 overs)	35
Did not bat: Agarkar, Patel, Rudra Pratap, Harbhajan	
Fall of wickets: 1-20, 2-20, 3-34, 4-34, 5-35	
Bowler	
Johnson	4 0 11 4
McGrath	3 1 10 0
Clark	1 0 14 0
Result: No result.	
Toss: Australia.	
Umpires: Mark Benson and Tony Hill.	

Appointment of manager New twist

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"I don't know how he got it without my knowledge," said a surprised Rahman.

However, it was learnt that a BCB high-up had provided him with the cellphone.

Two leading Bangla dailies yesterday reported that Harunoor, an assistant director of the BKSP, was court-martialed on charges of tampering a certificate during his stint with the Bangladesh Air Force.

And in 1996, he had to go into forced retirement for another wrongdoing.

There was also controversy about his exploitation as the chef de mission of the Bangladesh contingent to the 2004 Paralympics in Greece while the national cricketers also had a bad experience with him in BKSP during the national team camp.

The BCB however stated in a press release that his first tour would be the ICC Champions Trophy in India next month, which will secure his job depending on success.

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then the vote could be recounted and there could be a change in the presidency of Real Madrid," said Baldasano.

Presiding judge Milagros Aparicio will now have to decide whether or not the votes should be counted.

However, Calderon has said he will present a suit of his own at a criminal court to get the postal vote declared null and void in which case a decision would be delayed until that case was resolved.

Ancic exacts Croat revenge

Tennis

AFP, Beijing

Mario Ancic earned revenge for Croatia as he defeated Hyung-taik Lee 4-6, 6-1, 6-1 to reach the final of the China Open Saturday, eliminating the Asian who stunned compatriot Ivan Ljubicic in the previous round.

Ancic, competing in his first event since Wimbledon after a summer of back and knee injuries, will await a winner from the second semi-final between Australian Open

finalist Marcos Baghdatis of Cyprus and Thai Paradorn Srichaphan.

The 22-year-old Ancic improved his chances of possible qualification for November's season-ending Masters Cup in Shanghai as he defeated Lee in two hours, nine minutes.

The Croatian, best friends with Davis Cup teammate Ljubicic, whom Lee defeated in the quarterfinals, stands tenth in the chase to the eight-man year-end event.

Fourth-seed Ancic recovered after losing the first set to the Korean, eventually breaking Lee six

times with a turnaround in the final two sets.

Ancic has now won 19 of his last 21 matches as he reaches his fourth final of the year.

His haul from those performances remains just one title at 's-Hertogenbosch, the Netherlands, in June prior to Wimbledon.

He placed runner-up to Finn Jarkko Nieminen at Auckland to start the season in January and did the same in Marseille a month later.

Lee's lone ATP title came in Sydney three years ago.

Ds propel Proteas

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made useful contributions as Zimbabwe reached 137 for two in the 33rd over before losing wickets in trying to force the pace.

Stand-in captain Jacques Kallis and fellow pace bowlers Charl Langeveldt and Andre Nel each captured two wickets for South Africa, who were playing their first one-day international in more than six months.

Kallis captained South Africa for the first time in a one-day international, with Smith still recovering from an ankle injury which kept him out of a recent tour of Sri Lanka.

Prosper Utseya returned to captain Zimbabwe after missing his side's nine-wicket defeat against the Eagles franchise team in Kimberley Wednesday. He won the toss and decided to bat.

Zimbabwe made a slow start and lost Terry Duffin with the total

on 21 in the eighth over when the left-hander edged Makhaya Ntini to Kallis at second slip.

Sibanda mistimed an attempted pull three balls after passing fifty for