

Pepsi Asian Cup from today

Sports Reporter



The eighth Pepsi Asian Cup table tennis tournament begins at the Bangladesh Krira Shikkhya Pratisthan, Savar today.

Presidential Advisor for Youth and Sports Alamgir M A Kabir will inaugurate the ten-nation, 36-player meet at the newly-constructed BKSP indoor gymnasium at four this afternoon. President of the International Table Tennis Federation and a former world champion Ichiro Osumi of Japan will attend the opening ceremony as a special invitee of the Bangladesh Table Tennis Federation, the organisers of the meet.

Twenty-four male and a dozen female paddlers from China, North Korea, South Korea, Japan, Chinese Taipei, Thailand, India, Pakistan, Iran and hosts Bangladesh will be vying for the men's and women's singles titles. The winners in each section will earn US \$ 3000 while the runners-up will settle for half that amount each. The total prize money in the men's section is US \$ 11,000 and in the women's US \$ 9,000.

Bangladesh will be represented by two male and one female player in the persons of Ghias Atiq Anki, Saaduddin Ahmed Kisloo and Zulkhah Akhter. M Hafizur Rahman is the manager.

All the participating teams with the exceptions of Thailand and India had reached Dhaka by yesterday afternoon. The Thais and the Indians were due late last night.

According to the list of players available, Iran and Pakistan, who have sent two players each, will be competing in the men's singles only. China, North Korea, South Korea, and Japan have sent five players each, three men and two

women. Defending champions China, runners-up at the ninth Asian Table Tennis Championships in Nagata Japan in 1989 North Korea, third-placed South Korea, and fourth-placed Japan have all sent their second string selections in view of the coming world championships scheduled to be held in Japan next month. Yet, despite the absence of their top players, these four nations are expected to provide the keenest competition and should perform at a very high level. In the

MEN: Group A - Wu Wen Chia of Taipei, Adul Riduande of Thailand and S. Sriam of India; Group B - Wang Yonggang of China, Li Sung-II of DPR Korea and Gias Atiq Anki of Bangladesh; Group C - Kang He-Chan of South Korea, Takuya Tanaka of Japan and Xiong Ke of China; Group D - Kim Guk-Chol of DPRK, Majid Reza Ehteshamzadeh of Iran and Yoji Morimoto of Japan; Group E - Farjad Saif of Pakistan, Chang Wei Wei of China and Lee Chul Sung of South Korea; Group F - Takehiro Watanabe of Japan, Chu Kyu

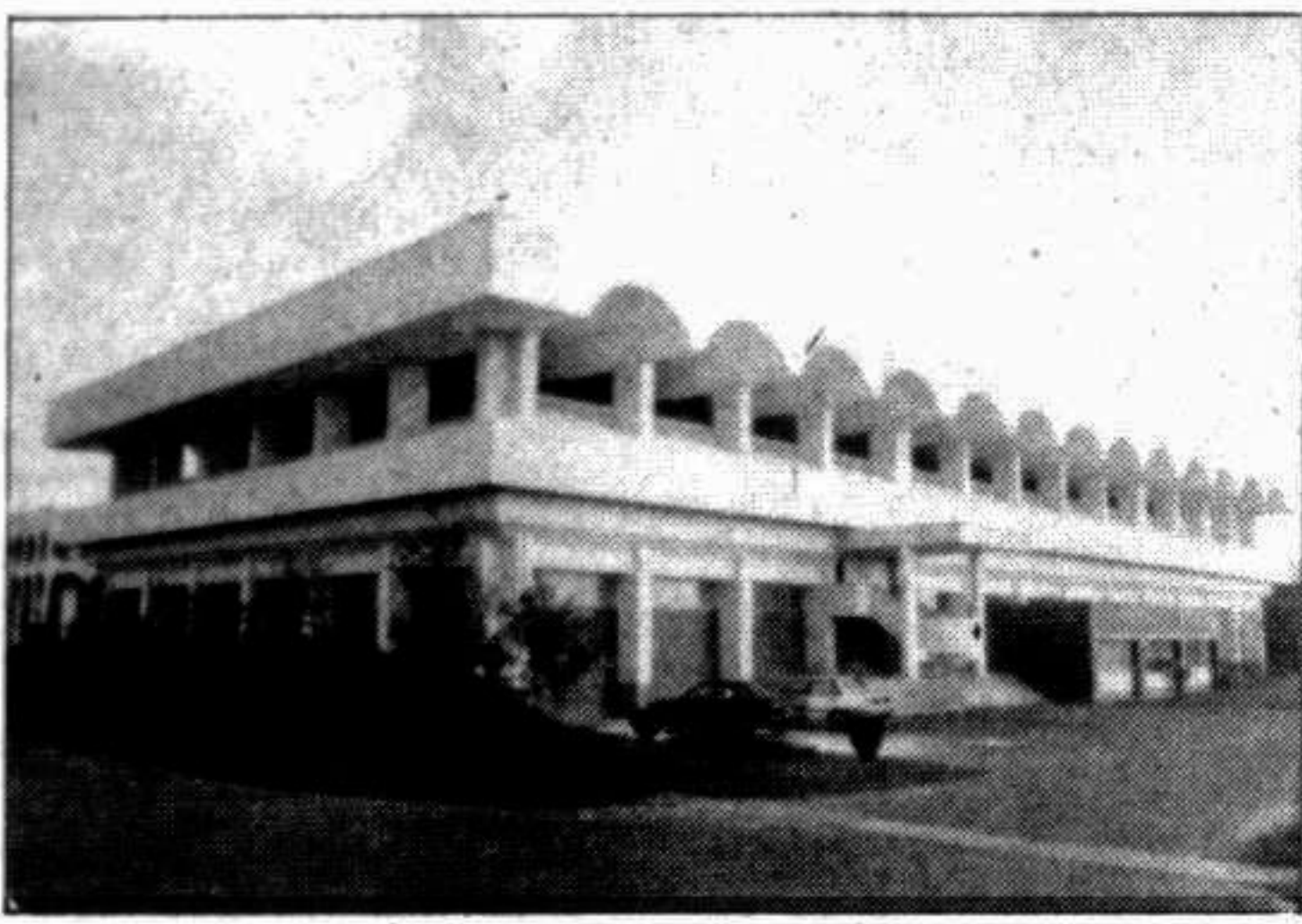
of Japan, Li Jong-Suk of DPRK and Suwaporu Praphutkul of Thailand; Group D - Fan Zianxin of China, Park Hae Jung of South Korea and Nuyoti Shah nee Roy of India.

The quarter-finals, semi-finals and finals will be decided by best of five games while the qualifying rounds will be decided in best of three games.

The winners and the runners-up of the eight men's groups will play to determine the first sixteen places while the winners and runners-up of the four women's groups will play to decide the first eight places on knockout system in play-off matches.

The men's competition will be initially played on a robin league basis with the winners and runner-up of the eight three-men clusters going through to the knockout stage to determine the quarterfinalists. The twelve women have been split into four equal clusters with the top two in each group qualifying for the quarter-finals.

BKSP, the only national institute of sports in the country, has been lavishly decorated with flags, posters and festoons for the occasion. A multi-purpose non-skid mat has been laid at the 3,000 capacity indoor gym last month to facilitate the holding of such an important international meet.



The BKSP indoor gym — the venue

Nigata ATTC, 19 nations had taken part with Bangladesh placing a poor 17th.

According to the draw, held yesterday at the BTTTF office with Chief Umpire and technical Delegate A M Lele of India in the chair, the first and third ranked players will meet in the first robin league matches of their respective groups. In the second leg, the second ranked player will play the third ranked while the first ranked in each group will face the second ranked tomorrow.

WOMEN: Group A - An Hi-Suk of DPRK, Shizuka Matsuzaki of Japan, and Park Kyung Ae of South Korea; Group B - Lin Li Zhu of Taipei, Zhang Qin of China and Zulkhah Akhter of Bangladesh; Group C - Tomoko Shimonaga

Tame draw at Auckland

AUCKLAND (New Zealand), March 5: A day which promised much willed in anticlimax as Sri Lanka allowed New Zealand to play out a tame draw in the third and final cricket Test today, reports Reuter.

The three match series also ended in a draw with the pally crowd slow hand clapping the players and chanting, "boring, boring".

Sri Lanka appeared to have a great chance to win their first Test and series away from home with New Zealand starting at 18 without loss in pursuit of a second innings target of 383 to win.

However, even after removing both openers early in the day, they seemed uninterested in forcing the win.

Captain Arjuna Ranatunga set defensive fields with seldom more than two players close to the bat.

The Kiwis finished at 261 for five wickets with Andrew Jones on 73 once again the mainstay of the home sides batting.

Ranatunga defended his negative tactics, we gave the option to New Zealand to see if they were keen to win and we

were waiting until they do a mistake, he told reporters.

New Zealand captain Ian Smith said of the visitors, "Obviously they didn't want to lose and who can blame them for that?"

Any thoughts New Zealand had of chasing victory diminished early when the reliable John Wright was caught by keeper Hashan Tilakaratne off Champaka Ramanayake for 20.

In a spell of three for 22 before and after lunch Graeme Labrooy gave Sri Lanka every chance of victory.

Getting good lift, he induced a confident Trevor Franklin on 31 to give Tilakaratne another catch.

He then bowled Mark Greatbatch for seven with a ball that nipped back and when he trapped Ken Rutherford for six, New Zealand were reeling at 117 for four.

But inexplicably Ranatunga failed to attack.

The inexperienced Shane Thomson joined Jones and with little or on pressure on him, he was easily able to stave off the Sri Lankan attack that was not supported by close fielders.

Leg spinner Asoka De Silva bowled a long spell but failed,

as he did through the series to gain penetration.

Thomson and Jones were able to add 100 in 109 minutes of comfortable batting until the second new ball was taken when Labrooy immediately had Jones lbw for 73.

Jones only hit four boundaries in his 251-minute stay and characteristically played few memorable shots, but he took his tally in the series to 513 scored at an average of 102.6, shading Sri Lanka's Aravinda De Silva who scored 493 at 98.6.

Thomson began edgily but played some elegant strokes later on when the draw was inevitable.

His 80 not out was his highest score in his three tests and included eight fours and six.

Labrooy ended with four for 42 from his 19 overs.

New Zealand remain unbeaten in home Test series since the 1978-79 season.

Rain the spoiler

COLOMBO, Mar 5: The third and final five-day international between Sri Lanka A and England A was drawn after heavy overnight rain ruled out play on the last day here Tuesday.

Australians resent Greenidge gimmick

KINGSTON, Mar 5: Australia are considering an official complaint to the West Indies Board of Control over the failure by Gordon Greenidge to field in the current first cricket Test, reports Reuter.

After being hit in the ribs and collar bone while batting, Greenidge did not field during the Australian innings. He opened when West Indies batted again without noticeably suffering restricted movement and made 35 in a crucial first wicket stand of 118.

Unlike Gus Logie and Des Haynes, who were also injured in the West Indies first innings, Greenidge did not require hurt at the time although he later went to hospital for a precautionary X-ray.

Australian manager Lawrie Sawle said no formal protest had been made but one was likely if Greenidge did not field when the visitors batted again.

Logie has not fielded either but Sawle said he had no objection as he was suffering from a bad cut and come bone damage. Logie was also recovering from the shock of his mother's death at the weekend.

Milan meet Marseille today

MILAN, Mar 5: Holders AC Milan are in buoyant mood for Wednesday's European Cup quarter-final first leg at home to French champions Marseille despite the absence of captain Franco Baresi and striker Marco Van Basten, reports Reuter.

On Sunday, Milan gave themselves the best possible fillip when they romped to a 4-1 win over Italian champions Napoli.

"We're thinking of Marseille with the calm of those who are in good health," said Milan's Dutch star Ruud Geulit.

"Against Napoli we played with the necessary speed. When we find this rhythm it's difficult to resist us," Geulit, who scored a fine goal in Sunday's win, added.

Marseille's Belgian coach Raymond Goethals, who watched the match, said he was impressed by Milan's strength in depth, which will be tested on Wednesday by Dutchman Van Basten's suspension and the injury to defensive stalwart Baresi.

Baresi's libero role will be taken by Alessandro Costacurta while Daniele Massaro is expected to replace Van Basten.

Milan are also certain of massive support, having already sold 80,000 of the 84,000 tickets for a total of 3.7 billion lire (3.2 million Dollars).

But their coach Arrigo Sacchi warned against over confidence.

Marseille only failed to reach the final (last season) because of a dubious (Beneficial) goal.

He is under no illusions about Marseille's determination to wrest the European Cup from Milan, winners of the competition in the last two seasons.

Marseille see in their clash with Milan the chance of a lifetime...in pass from the top at national level to the forefront of European football, Sacchi said.

But Milan are equally motivated and still want to win.

Marseille, despite leading the French league by six points after beating Monaco 1-0 on

Friday, have been relatively uninspired of late with their attention clearly fixed on Milan.

The upheavals provoked by taking on first Franz Beckenbauer and then Goethals as coach in quick succession have clearly disrupted their preparations.

Goethals axed maverick striker Eric Cantona and experienced midfielder Jean Tigana from the squad to travel to Italy after first of pique in which both refused to go on the substitutes' bench against Monaco.

The surprise is the return of Yugoslav midfielder Dragan Stojkovic, who came through his first match with the reserves on Saturday after a serious knee injury which has kept him out for more than four months.

"I am happy with what I did. I had no problems and I felt better and better as the match went on", Stojkovic, who is likely to be on the bench in Milan, said.

"If Goethals needs me, I'll be there."

Goethals has tightened the defence in a Marseille team

Napoli fans on a rampage

NAPLES (Italy), Mar 5: About a thousand fans of Diego Maradona's Napoli soccer team wrecked a special train taking them home on Monday from a 4-1 hammering by AC Milan, reports Reuter.

with attacking, entertaining instincts.

Defenders Basile Boli and Brazilian Carlos Mozer no longer go rampaging upfield as they did under Beckenbauer.

For Marseille much will also depend on the service given to ace striker Jean-Pierre Papin, who has 19 league goals this season and who tends to rise to the big occasion.

Bandhan KC win Rajshahi cricket league title

RAJSHAHI Mar 5: Bandhan Krira Chakra clinched the Mulkhara First Division cricket league-91 championship beating Sultanabad Club by three wickets in the final at the Rajshahi Stadium here yesterday, reports BSS.

Battling first, Sultanabad scored 174 runs for nine wickets in 40 overs. In reply, Bandhan Krira Chakra made 178 for six in 39.4 overs.

Aruna De Silva stole the limelight in the match with a brilliant 66 which helped Bandhan win the title.

Aruna De Silva and Litton Sanker were adjudged the man-of-the-match and man-of-the-series respectively for their outstanding performances.

Major General Mahbubur Rahman, Chairman, National Sports Council distributed prizes among the winners.



The participants in the eighth Pepsi Asian Cup table tennis tournament on their arrival at Zia International airport yesterday. From top: Chinese Taipei, South Korea and Pakistan. The Japanese team, pictured at bottom, arrived late Monday night. The ten-nation meet begins at the BKSP indoor gym, Savar, today. — Star photo

Martina delays Monica's coronation

PALM SPRINGS (California), Mar 5: Martina Navratilova delayed the coronation of 17-year-old Monica Seles as women's world number one by beating the top-seeded Yugoslav 6-2, 7-6 on Monday to win the rain-delayed Virginia Slims of Palm Springs tennis tournament, reports Reuter.

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Seles as women's world number one by beating the top-seeded Yugoslav 6-2, 7-6 on Monday to win the rain-delayed Virginia Slims of Palm Springs tennis tournament, reports Reuter.

Seles will have to wait a week before officially ending the 3-1/2 year, record reign of Germany's Steffi Graf, who is entering her 186th consecutive week as number one.

Seles, who will pass Graf because the German can not earn enough points to keep pace at this week's tournament in Boca Raton, Florida, said she was not disappointed over the wait.

"It's okay," said Seles, who settled for the runner-up prize of 28,000 dollars. "It's not going to make a difference that I lost. It's already happened that I will be number one, so that's great for me. I can still say I will be number one."

Seles, at 17 years and two months of age, will be the youngest number one ever, claiming that distinction from American Tracy Austin, who was 17 years, four months when she became number one

in 1980. Graf was 18 years, two months old when she took the top spot in 1987.

Navratilova, who collected 35,000 dollars for winning her 154th career title, distanced herself from the subject of rankings by focusing on her own game.

This win is pretty sweet, I haven't beaten Monica for a while. I never thought about the number one ranking until the match was over," she said. "I was too busy chasing the ball."

Navratilova, third in the world, jumped to a 4-0 lead in 15 minutes by attacking the net and repeatedly hitting the line with shots and closed out the first set four games later.

Seles found the groove for her two-fisted groundstrokes in the second set and broke Navratilova with a sizzling forehand winner for a 3-1 lead, which began a run of six consecutive service breaks before Navratilova held to make it 5-5.

The Yugoslav held her own serve to lead 6-5 and had five set points on Navratilova's serve in the 12th game, but Navratilova saved them with a dazzling display of serving to force a tiebreak.

Navratilova broke through at 5-5 in the tiebreak with an ace to set up match point at 6-5.

MSC win big

Rupali Bank are now certain to face relegation following their humiliating 169-run defeat at the hands of Mohammedan Sporting Club in their Navana Premier Division cricket league match yesterday at the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium.

Rupali Bank, chasing a mammoth target of 338 runs for victory, were bowled out for a poor 168 runs in 57.1 overs.

This was Mohammedan's fourth win in seven matches. Mohammedans, after losing three consecutive matches, broke the losing streak with this win.

Rupali Bank with two tough matches to go, one against GMCC and the other against defending champions Abahani, are in dire straits. Even if they should win those two matches, they will still have to hope that Lalmitia lose all their remaining games. In that case they will play Lalmitia in a play-off match to decide the relegation.

Resuming at 21 for two from 11 overs, Rupali Bank, despite a brilliant 77 not out by opener Billu, folded their innings at 168 in only 57.1 of their stipulated 75 overs. Nadeem, 18, Balu, 15 and Nripen with 12 runs were the other Rupali batsmen to reach double figures.

Wahidul Ghani captured three wickets for 34 runs while Anis and Shantoo bagged two wickets each for 34 and 38 runs respectively. Skipper Nannu, Rubel and Gamage got one wicket each for 17, 14 and 30 runs respectively.

Earlier, on the opening day, Monday Mohammedans scored a mammoth 337 runs in 71 overs.

Skipper Minhajul Abedin Nannu slammed 138 runs, rescuing his side from a precarious 38 for five wickets at one stage. Mohammed Ali scored an unbeaten 59 followed by Gamage with 52. Iskander took three wickets for 33 runs.

Today's match

Kalabagan vs Gulshan Youth (Dhaka Stadium).

Div II cricket

Sports Reporter

Four matches were decided in the Rank Xerox Second Division cricket league yesterday at different ground in the city.

Spread Eagles beat Gandaria Cricketers by 53 runs at the Mirpur Pallabi ground.

Spread Eagles, batting first, scored 196 runs in 34.1 overs. Fahim topscored with a superb 76 off just 79 balls. Siraj 39, Sohel 14 and Tipu 13, were the other notable scorers. Tipu took four wickets for 31 runs.

In reply, Gandaria were all out for 143 runs in 31 overs. Monti 55, Atiar 18, Mofiz 18 and Nasim 13 were the leading Gandaria batsmen.

Rony with three wickets for 35, Fahim two for 21, and Rubayat with two for 33 runs were the successful Spread Eagles bowlers.

City Club crushed Young Pegasus 'B' by nine wickets at the Mohakhali T and T ground.

Young Pegasus 'B' were shot out for 90 runs in 32.5 overs and in reply City Club hit 91 for the loss of one wicket in 17.3 overs.

In another match at the Dhanmondi Club ground, East End Club overcame Shantingar 'A' scored 133 runs in 34 overs and, in reply, East End hammered 136 runs for the loss of seven wickets in 29.2 overs.

Dhanmondi Club recorded an exciting eight-run victory over Nabin Sangha in a high-scoring match at the western strip of the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium.

Dhanmondi Club, batting first, scored 219 for the loss of seven wickets in their allotted 35 overs. In reply, Nabin Sangha were all out for 211 runs in 33.5 overs.

Winners, Angels cagers win

Sports Reporter

Angels Club kept their winning streak with a convincing 81-57 points victory over Josephites Club in the super league match of the Partex First Division basketball league yesterday at the wooden floor gymnasium.

Angels led 37-27 at the breather. Dulal with 23 and Ami with 19 were the leading scorers for Angels while Josephites' American recruit Eddie Smith top scored with 31 points.

Angels' collection rose to 26 points from 13 unbeaten matches while Josephites have 16 points from their 13 games.

Dhaka Winners defeated Gregs Club 86-69 after a close first half lead of 44-41 points. Asif Hossain 24, Maroof 20 and Micheal were the main scorers for Winners while Asif 19, Khaled 18, and Minto 13, were the top Gregs scorers.