

Ansars surge to the top of the table

Sports Reporter

The girls from Bangladesh Ansars switched into top gear yesterday to surge well past their main rivals from the Bangladesh Textile Mills Corporation (BTMC) to take an unassailable lead in the medals table of the national women's

medal a record-shattering feat by Mahfuza Rahman who clocked 1 min 14.46 secs for the 100 m free style in the girls between 15 and 17 years group. Their swimmers won two silvers and a bronze on the day, giving them a tally of eight gold to 12 for the Ansars.

In contrast, little Rajbari DSA had a very rewarding gold hunt yesterday, their young swimmers led by the little dynamo Mita Rani Shome doubling their tally of gold medals. They now have a most respectable six golds to their credit and Mita Rani herself has won half of them.



MITA RANI SHOME — The Rajbari girl flashes victory sign after winning the 200m individual medley title in 13-14 years' event.

The rest ten participating teams were completely shut out of the gold chase yesterday, although Munshiganj and Bandarban won a silver each while Narayananj picked up three bronzes and Pabna won another bronze.

REMARKABLE REHANA
The star of the day yesterday was undoubtedly Rehana Zaman of Bangladesh Ansars who accomplished a record-shattering double in the women's 100m butterfly and the 50m free style. The latter feat earned her the distinction of becoming the country's fastest swimmer among women and she deposed BTMC's wonder girl Laila Noor Mita in the process.

TWO HATRICKS
Mahmuda Sharif led the Ansars charge yesterday, winning her third gold medal of these keen championships with a new record in the women's 200m breaststroke. Mahmuda, who earlier Friday rewrote the 100m record in the style, and then won the 100m backstroke Saturday, covered the distance in 3 min 23.45 secs, nearly two seconds quicker than the old mark of 3:25.21 secs.

Noor-i-Afroz of BTMC took the silver and Jyotsna Akhter of Narayananj the bronze. Mita Rani Shome of Rajbari displayed her tremendous versatility by adding the 200m individual medley record for girls aged between 13-14 years to her earlier triumphs in the 100m freestyle and butterfly. Along with Mahmuda Sharif of Ansars Mita is the only other

swimmer to have scored a golden hatrick in the meet so far. Mita's Rajbari teammate Shima Rani Dutta won another medal by settling for the silver while Jyotsna Akhter of Ansars got the bronze.

Rehana Zaman of Ansars who was in fine fettle yesterday won her first gold of the day in the women's 100m but-



MAHFUZA RAHMAN triumphantly with a time of 1 min 31.15 secs, well inside the standing mark of 1:39.10. Her teammate Sulekha Parveen settled for the silver while the bronze went to Noor-i-Afroz of BTMC.

Later in the day Rehana repeated her golden form to dethrone Laila Noor Mita of BTMC as the country's fastest lady swimmer when she took only 33.10 secs for the distance, 1.37 secs better than Laila's mark set last year. For her part, Laila who failed to control her tears after the race, too swam a good time of 33.39 secs, also better than the existing mark. Tania Akhter took the bronze with a time of 40.12 secs.

Mahfuza Rahman Tania, one of the most promising prospects of the country, lived up to the pre-race billing by shattering the 100m freestyle mark for girls in the 15-17 years group with a timing of 1:14.46 secs. This compares well against the old time of 1:18.25 she herself set last year. Ansars pair China Akhter and Husna Akhter finished a distant second and third re-

spectively.
DILRUBA'S DOUBLE
Dilruba Akhter of Ansars who won the 200m breaststroke gold Saturday added the girls' 15-17-yrs 100m gold yesterday clocking 1:42.25 secs. Li Chin of Munshiganj came in second for the silver while the bronze went to Mili Akhter of Narayananj.

Among the younger girls, Manashi Chattopaddhaya of Rajbari won the girls' under-10 50m backstroke in 46.87 secs, with Munni of Ansars finishing second and Marufa Khatun of Pabna third.

Nibedita Das of Rajbari earned the 200m freestyle gold among girls in the 13-14 years group. Jyotsna Akhter of Ansars was good for the silver while Alyca Khatun of Rajbari took the bronze.

Sumona Akhter, the 11-year-old Ansars girl, won the 100m butterfly gold with a time of 1:39.48 secs while her teammate Elofa Akhter got the silver. Rather surprisingly, the brilliant Rajbari girl Mita Rani Shome, perhaps showing signs of fatigue after her treble triumph, came home third for the bronze in a slow 1:54.60 secs.

The meet ends today with ten events to be decided on the last day. Competition starts at 9:30 am and the finals are scheduled to start from two in the afternoon. State Minister for Women's Affairs Mrs Sarwari Rahman will do the honours as chief guest at the concluding ceremony scheduled for four this afternoon.

MEDALS TABLE

	G	S	B	Total
B. Ansars	12	13	10	35
BTMC	8	6	5	19
Rajbari	6	4	5	15
Bandarban	1	1	0	2
Munshiganj	0	2	1	3
Narayananj	0	1	4	5
Pabna	0	0	2	2
Total	27	27	27	81



Rehana Zaman of Bangladesh Ansars had a terrific day in the national women's swimming championships yesterday. She won two gold medals, improving the 100m butterfly and the 50m freestyle records in the process. Here she is seen on her way to becoming the fastest women swimmer of the country by clinching the 50m freestyle gold. — Star photo

Agassi may outshine Edberg Down Under



SYDNEY, Sept 29 : Colourful American Andre Agassi is set to outshine world number one Stefan Edberg as the main attraction when he makes his Australian tennis debut starting on Monday, reports Reuter. Edberg is top seed in the strongest field in the Australian indoor championships' 19-year history — a line-up slightly weakened by last week's withdrawal of second seed and defending champion Boris Becker with a back injury.

But it is Agassi, the tennis rebel who won over the crowds on his Wimbledon debut this year, that the local fans want to see in his first Australian tournament. Agassi, seeded four, has been drawn for a quarter-final confrontation with the big-serving Yugoslav Goran Ivanisevic, who is seeded sixth.

It was a dream draw for organisers of the one million dollar tournament which, providing there are no upsets, would also see emerging American David Wheaton against third seeded compatriot Pete Sampras, Edberg playing eighth seeded Michael Chang and American Derrick Rostagno against number two seed Ivan Lendl.

"I couldn't have asked for better," said tournament director Graham Lovett. "I don't think there has been a stronger quarter final field anywhere in the world this year and that includes Grand Slam events." If Agassi wins through to the quarter finals he will be playing the powerful Ivanisevic for the first time in a tournament.

Agassi is playing well and his stunning display in the recent US Davis Cup semifinal victory over Germany, which included a straight sets win against Wimbledon champion Michael Stich, has picked him up after a first round US Open loss.

"After the US Open, I really just focused my attention toward hitting a lot of balls and getting my confidence back and I think the Davis Cup was a reflection of all the work that I put in," he said.

McEnroe wins clash of veterans



BASLE, Switzerland, Sept 29 : An eagerly awaited semifinal between American veterans John McEnroe and Jimmy Connors proved a heavy disappointment at the Swiss indoor tennis tournament on Saturday, reports Reuter.

Defending champion McEnroe ran away with the match, thrashing Connors 6-1, 6-3 to reach the final of the 750,000-dollar event, where he will play Swiss Jakob Hlasek.

Connors failed to hold his service in the first set but broke McEnroe in the fifth game. McEnroe who has now won 19 of 32 encounters against Connors said: "I expected a tougher fight but it obviously was not Jimmy's day." McEnroe, the world number one from 1981 to 1984, added: "I hope I continue to improve from my 25th ranking or next year could be my last." McEnroe also said he would like to be in the Davis Cup final against France in November, playing doubles with Pete Sampras.

Hlasek, the Swiss number one and ranked 18th in the world, needed all his experience to overcome his 24th-ranked opponent. Volkov wasted a chance to wrap up the match in the 10th game of the third set. The 27-year-old Hlasek was 30-40 down but rallied well to level at 5-5 and then forced another tiebreak. Volkov's concentration wavered again when he squandered a 4-2 lead in the tiebreak.

Strained thigh forces Navratilova out



ESSEN, Germany, Sept 29 : American veteran Martina Navratilova was forced to retire from her semifinal against compatriot Mary Joe Fernandez in the Essen invitation women's tennis event on Saturday because of a thigh strain, reports Reuter.

After winning the first set 6-3, the 34-year-old Navratilova found herself hampered by a muscle injury in her left thigh and pulled out with Fernandez, leading 2-1 in the second set.

Navratilova, who injured the muscles in a round robin group match on Thursday, said she still hoped to be able to play in the International Women's Cup tournament in Milan next week. "I knew that I would not have been able to play to the end and be fit for the final because of the problem so it was better to retire," the American said. "I hope after a few days' rest it will be okay for Milan."

St Germain stumble



PARIS, Sept 29 : Paris St Germain, the only side still unbeaten in the French First Division, wasted a golden opportunity to join pacesetters Monaco and Marseille at the top of the table this weekend when they were held to a goalless draw at lowly Rennes, reports AFP.

On Thursday leaders Monaco crashed to a shock 1-0 defeat at Caen and on Friday, Marseille had to be satisfied with a 1-1 draw at Auxerre. But Paris St Germain, who are now unbeaten in 486 minutes of First Division football so far this season, could do no better than earn a share of the points against stubborn Rennes side who, despite being second from bottom in the standings, dominated the first-half.

Only some magnificent goalkeeping by the experienced Joel Bats enabled the Ours side to come in level-pegging at halftime. Rennes started like an express train and Serge Le Dizec (21), Jean-Luc Ribar (24) and Brazilian frontrunner Maria Baltazar (33) all squandered excellent chances. The visitors finally settled down and in a second-half of excellent quality more than held their own against a surprisingly talented Rennes side. Actual goalscoring chances, however, were few and far between on both sides.

Nantes, who had been only four points behind Monaco, were left shell-shocked as they crashed 3-1 at Sochaux — a team that had pocketed only one point in five previous encounters. The home players were always in charge — their recently signed Yugoslav striker Zlatko Vujovic giving them the perfect start with a

goal after just 10 minutes. Late second-half goals by Algerian forward Cherif Oudjani (63) and Alain Caveglia (70) put the issue beyond doubt although Reynald Pedros (80) scored a consolation goal for Nantes. Cannes scored their first away win of the season when they beat Metz 2-1. Their scores were Franck Priou (38) and Alojza Asanovic (66) while Francois Calderaro (50) got the Metz goal.



Dilruba Akhter of Bangladesh Ansars won her second gold medal of the national swimming championships by lifting the 100m breaststroke crown at Women's Sports Complex pool yesterday. — Star photo

Eintracht to the fore



BONN, Sept 29 : Eintracht Frankfurt fired three goals past Borussia Dortmund to take over the lead in the German Bundesliga on goal difference on Saturday as title challengers VfB Stuttgart and Hamburg drew 1-1, reports Reuter.

A first-half goal from midfielder Ralf Weber and second-half strikes from forward Lothar Sippel and German international Andy Moeller kept Eintracht's unbeaten run at home intact.

After 11 games, the Frankfurt side are level on 15 points with last week's leaders VfB, now second, and third-placed Bayer Leverkusen, who briefly took over the top spot on Friday with a 2-0 win at lowly Bochum. Hamburg are fourth, one

point behind. With 12-times champions Bayern Munich failing to stamp their usual authority on the league, the early-season title race has turned into a close battle at the top. Just three points separate the leading nine clubs. Bayern, who drew 1-1 at local rivals Nuremberg on Friday, are eighth, three points behind the leading trio. Reigning champions Kaiserslautern beat struggling Borussia Muenchengladbach 4-2 at home on Saturday to move up two places to fifth with 13 points. Eintracht had to work hard against Borussia Dortmund in the first half before Weber struck a neat shot into the far corner of the net in the 21st minute. But after the break Sippel scored with a neat chip from



YOKOHAMA, Japan, Sept 29 : The World Bridge Championships open in the Japanese city of Yokohama on Monday with defending champion Brazil bidding to retain the Bermuda Bowl against a strong challenge from the perennially successful Americans, reports Reuter.

Hosting the 12-day event for the first time, the Japan contract bridge league has decided to employ some of the high-technology wizardry for which their country is famous. Computers will be used to deal and score the hands and the sponsor, computer giant NEC, has provided a network of personal computers to give spectators in a separate theater up-to-the-minute coverage on a 100-inch (245-cm) projector.

Sweden, as well as from Pakistan, who include the mercurial Zia Mahmood, perhaps the world's best player at present.

Competing in the Bermuda Bowl, the Open World Championship, will be 16 teams who qualified from an initial 86 entrants through zonal elimination contests. Sixteen teams who survived qualifying rounds will vie for the Venice Cup, the women's World Championships. While Brazil and the United States must be the leading contenders for the Bermuda Bowl, fierce opposition can be expected from the Europeans led by Britain, Poland and

Switzerland, who include the mercurial Zia Mahmood, perhaps the world's best player at present. Host nation Japan leads the rest of the qualifiers — Hong Kong, Surinam, Canada, Argentina, Iceland, Egypt, Venezuela, Australia and America II. In the Venice Cup, the four semi-finalists from the last women's championships two years ago are all here. While Germany, the Netherlands and Canada have identical teams to 1989, the United States have a new but equally talented squad. Australia and China, along with European champions Austria, must be in with good chances too, but this event looks more open. The remaining contestants are Britain, Argentina, Egypt, Martinique, Chinese Taipei, USA II, India, Venezuela and Japan.

Each series begins with a five-day round-robin, from which eight teams qualify for the final knock-out stages. While conditions for the players themselves should be as comfortable as usual, spectators will enjoy real-time electronic coverage of the championship matches. "In previous championships, players' moves were relayed from the game rooms by telephone," said Akito Omasa of the Japan contract bridge league, "officials then had to write these by hand on an overhead projector."



Start of the 200m individual medley event for girls between 13-14 years at Dhanmndi Women's Sports Complex pool yesterday. — Star photo

Pozzi dents Aussie hopes



BRISBANE, Australia, Sept 29 : Unknown Italian Gianluca Pozzi mects American Aaron Krickstein in the final of the 320,000 Australian dollar (256,000 US) Queensland Open today after beating Australian hopeful Jason Stoltenberg, reports AFP.

Krickstein has not reached a tournament final since going down to Gilbert last year and has experienced a title drought since winning the 1989 Tokyo indoor championships.

Pozzi, 26, ranked 136 in the world, crushed the 114th-ranked Australian 6-3, 6-1 on Saturday night to reach his first final in the Association of Tennis Professionals' tour. The 21-year-old Stoltenberg, who defeated top seed and defending champion Brad Gilbert to reach the semifinals, admitted the match was "a chance gone missing." Pozzi, who does not have a personal coach, said later: "I lost to Krickstein in four sets at the Australian Open in 1990, but I think if I can play well, it will be a close match. He's the favourite so there won't be that much pressure on me."

A former top ten player, now ranked 50 after being plagued with injury worries this year, Krickstein will top two million US Dollars in career prize money if he takes home the winners' cheque today. Asked about his chances he said: "It will be tough, but on paper I should win. I'm disappointed but I'll learn from it and that's the way I look at all my matches now," he said.

Third seeded Krickstein, 24, won through to the final for the second successive year, beating Russian second seed Andrei Chesnokov 7-5, 6-4 in their semifinal earlier on Saturday.

Hungary soccer coach resigns

BUDAPEST, Sept 29 : Hungarian national football coach Maiman Meszoly resigned on Friday, two days after his team drew 2-2 against the Soviet Union and their chances of reaching next year's European Championships finals disappeared, reports AFP. The Hungarian federation said Meszoly would be replaced by his assistance Robert Glazer.