

MSC-Abahani final tomorrow

Afzal H Khan

It's to be an Abahani versus Mohammedans Dhaka derby tomorrow in the final of the BTC Club Cup charity soccer tournament.

In the second semifinal of the six-team tourney yesterday at the Dhaka Stadium local giants Dhaka Mohammedan Sporting Club shut out the Indian entrants by outplaying Calcutta league champions Mohun Bagan in a thoroughly one-sided affair on a soggy, slippery pitch. The final solitary-goal scoreline didn't quite reflect the total domination of the ninety-minute proceedings by the black-and-whites who virtually ran all over the famous Calcutta side, enjoying an exaggerated, even unfair share of the exchanges in such an important fixture.

Centre-forward Imtiaz Ahmed Naqub, who scored five goals in a row against Philippines in the Asian Group D pre-Olympic qualifiers in Seoul on May 26 last, got the only goal of the match for Mohammedans in the 22nd minute of play.

The goal was a beautiful piece of cake for Mohammedans. The Strapping 17-year-old lad received a ball from stopper Jewel Rana on the right, controlled it nicely, beat off challenges by two flat-footed Bagan defenders and sent a power-packed drive all along the ground that gave Bagan goalie Tanumoy Bose hardly a chance to move (1-0).

An incessant downpour since noon aggravated the already poor ground conditions and at times the puddles of water impeded the course and pace of play. The rain also affected the gates, with a sum of only Taka 2 lakh 39 thousand 210 being taken, much below the four-lakh plus receipts for the previous day's semifinal clash between Abahani Krira Chakra and East Bengal Club of Calcutta. Most of the ten thousand-odd crowd that braved the rain yesterday comprised hard-core Mohammedan fans who would watch their team



Mohammedan striker Zakir's powerpacked angular grounder lands straight into Mohun Bagan keeper Tanumoy Bose's grip in yesterday's BTC Club Cup semifinal at Dhaka Stadium. MSC won 1-0.

If Mohammedans muffed up at least half a dozen chances, most of them from close quarters, Mohun Bagan managed only one positive opening, in the very fourth minute of play. A brilliant header by Debashish Misra upon a Sudip Chakravarty chip from the right tested Mohammedan goalie Syed Hasan Kanan who pulled off a spectacular save. That, in all certitude, was the closest Bagan came to scoring. Mohammedans, relying on fast, sprinting runs along the two flanks, posed an unending series of problems for the slow Bagan defence. Right-winger Mamoon, inside right Shabbir, central striker Naqub, and the

young Zakir on the left constantly beat their opponent defenders with their speed and ball skills. But the pick of the

Mohammedan players on the day was midfielder Roxy who toiled ceaselessly. So hard was this long-haired lad trying that

perhaps it was his unbounding enthusiasm that earned him a yellow card caution from referee Abdul Aziz for a rather cynical foul on a Bagan player late in the game.

Aziz had earlier cautioned Bagan defender Achintya Beel for a hard tackle on Roxy.

Naqub should have doubled the margin for Mohammedans two minutes after the first goal but his powerful left-footed volley upon a Roxy pass from ten yards sailed just over the bar.

In the 37th minute Zakir and then Mamoon failed to score from five yards after Naqub had laid on neat centre inside the Bagan box.

Mohammedans survived a scare in the very second minute after resumption when Kanan fumbled while trying to collect an innocuous cross sent by an overlapping Bagan right back Sharaf Ali from the corner flag; a melee resulted but thankfully for Mohammedans the experienced Imtiaz Sultan Johnny managed a clearance. That was the only notable Bagan attempt in the entire second half.

Mohammedans fans saw four of their players — Naqub, Shabbir, Zakir and Mamoon miss in turn from a handshaking distance following yet another melee in front of the Bagan goalmouth in the 62nd minute.

In the 66th Zakir shot straight to goalie Tanumoy while Mamoon messed up one six minute from time. The tale of Mohammedan misses could go on and on.

It was a most mediocre showing by the Calcutta giants, a fact underlined by the clean shirt and shorts of their skipper and key striker Shishir Ghosh. They were outplayed in almost every department of the game and can proffer little excuse for a pedestrian performance that disappointed the connoisseurs of the game.

Bagan's exit followed the defeat of another Indian giant East Bengal at the hands of Abahani Tuesday and the elimination of the third of the Calcutta triumvirate, Calcutta Mohammedan Sporting, who failed to make the semifinals. One doesn't recall when all three Calcutta teams fared so badly — and played so poorly — in a tournament either at home or abroad.

The good gain from yesterday's result is that the trophy will not leave our shores, a fact for which both Abahani and Mohammedans deserve credit.

The final is billed for a 5.00 pm kick off tomorrow with tickets for the galleries costing five taka more from the Taka 20 rates till Wednesday.

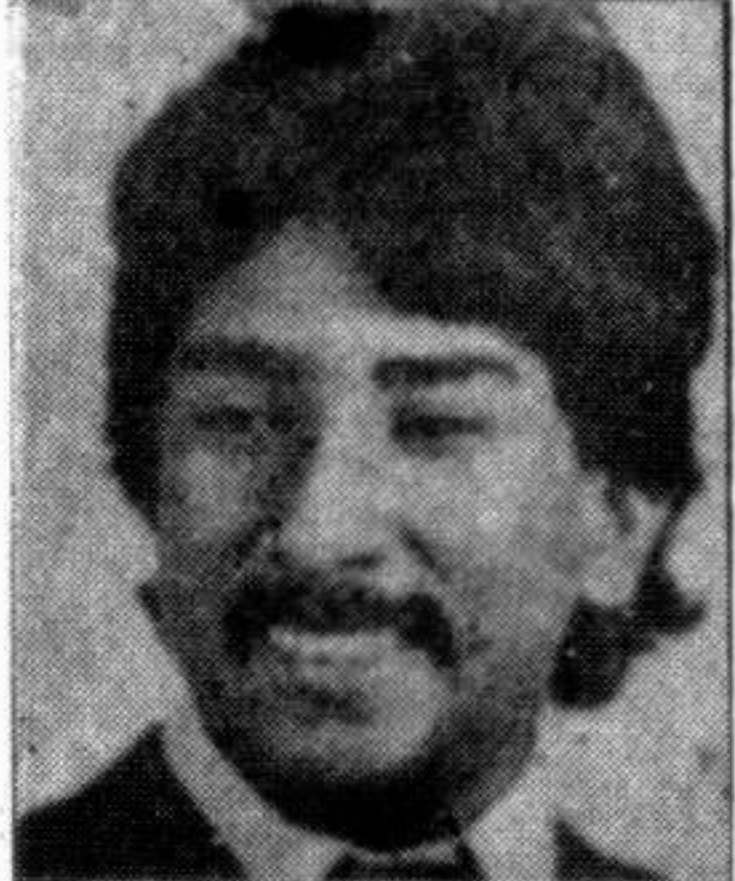
TEAMS
MOHAMMEDANS: Kanan, Abul, Kaiser, Jewel, Johnny, Tito, Shabbir, Roxy, Mamoon (Ayaz), Naqub and Zakir.

MOHUN BAGAN: Tanumay, Sharaf Ali, Achintya Beel, Sujit Dutta, (Debashish Sarker), Anruddha Koley, Debashish Misra, Sudip Chatterjee (Kabir Bose), Sattiyajit Chatterjee, Uttam Mukharjee, Shishir Ghosh (Capt) and Sudip Chakravarty.

Malik, Akram shine with bat

LONDON, June 5: Prolific Pakistan batting ace Salim Malik smashed a career-best 215 on Tuesday as Essex ran riot against Leicestershire at Ilford in the English county championship, reports AFP.

The 28-year-old maintained



SALIM MALIK

his superb recent form, which has seen him blast Gloucestershire for 163 in his last championship match and Kent for 173 last month, with 31 boundaries in a 196-ball innings.

His effort allied to a solid 63 from Mike Garnham steered second-placed Essex to 355. It would have been more but for an impressive six for 85 from Australian pacer John Maguire.

Salim's Pakistan teammate, all-rounder Wasim Akram, was also among the runs in the championship on Tuesday.

He hit 122, one short of his career-best score, with two sixes and 15 fours to rescue Lancashire from a desperate 115 for five against Hampshire at Basing Stoke.

Wasim shared a sixth-wicket stand of 135 with wicket-keeper Warren Hegg (69) to transform the visitors' fortunes as they were finally dismissed for 332.

Salim and Wasim's tons highlighted a great day for the batsmen in the championship, with centuries galore being the order of the day.

South African Jimmy Cook (152) and ex-England man Chris Tavare (162) tormented Glamorgan with a third-wicket stand of 242 as Somerset piled up a formidable 422 for five against Glamorgan at Swansea.

Cook's 45th century of his career came from 186 balls

with 13 boundaries, while Tavare's 41st hundred was four balls quicker with 16 fours.

A chanceless 125 by Darren Bicknell boosted Surrey to 290 for three from 96 overs in their rain-affected match against Nottinghamshire at the Oval.

Bicknell chalked up 16 boundaries and one six in his four-hour stay before falling to Eddie Hemmings.

Graham Cowdrey and Mark Benson both celebrated centuries for Kent against championship leaders Warwickshire at Tunbridge Wells, though their stand of 169 was marred when Benson was run out.

Cowdrey, on 50 at the time, atoned for this mishap, by completing 114 from 239 deliveries before falling in a five-wicket surge from Hong Kong-born England candidate Dermot Reeve.

Ian Hutchinson compiled a defiant 114 off 245 balls against Gloucestershire at Bristol out of a meagre Middlesex total of 209.

But former England off-spinner John Emburey put the champions back in the match



WASIM AKRAM

by removing three of the top home batsmen as Gloucestershire finished on 79 for four.

Northamptonshire seamer Tony Penberthy enjoyed a crucial three-wicket spell as well at Northampton to send Worcestershire sliding from 193 for two to 236 for six.

Opens Tim Curtis and Kevin Curran both recorded half-centuries and with run-hungry Australian Tom Moody firing 71 from 91 balls, a big total loomed before Penberthy's triple strike.

Pringle, Haynes likely to play

LEEDS, England, June 6: England all-rounder Derek Pringle and West Indies batsman Desmond Haynes

are likely to be risked in the first Test starting here on Thursday, reports AFP.

So important is the opening match in a Test series nowadays that both sides are ready to gamble on the fitness of these two key performers.

Pringle, the 32-year-old Essex batsman and seamer hoping for a Test recall after two years, will have a net on Wednesday in a final bid to prove his fitness.

Haynes, who is wearing a special corset to support his injured back, had a long bat in the net on Tuesday and, barring a reaction, looks likely to play.

Pringle said on Tuesday: "I've had spasms in the back and fielding is made a bit difficult when I bend. If it was an Essex match starting on Thursday, I would be available, but we'll have to wait and see." Uncapped Glamorgan seamer Steve Watkin has been called in as cover for Pringle and the Welshman joined a two-hour

training session on Tuesday.

But although the 26-year-old is the leading English qualified wicket-taker in the bowling averages this season with 31 victims at 22 runs apiece, it is Pringle who was the original selection because of his ability to hit the seam from a great height and so capitalise on Headingley's notoriously uneven bounce.

However, Headingley groundsman Keith Boyce reckons his pitch this year is the best he has ever produced for a Test.

Only once in the last decade has there been a drawn Headingley Test, but Boyce thinks the quicker bowlers will not get the help they have been used to over the years at the Yorkshire ground. That will be good news for Richie Richardson, who has yet to repeat the dazzling form he shows in the Caribbean in a series in England, despite being rated as the world's top batsman.

The hard-hitting Antiguan is certainly running into form at the right time with 289 runs from his last three innings, including a brilliant unbeaten 135 from 142 balls as West Indies beat Leicester-

shire by six wickets on Monday. If Richardson comes to grips with English conditions, it would go some way towards compensating the West Indies for the savage loss of knee-injury victim Gordon Greenidge from the first two Tests and possibly the whole series.

He is likely to be replaced by Phil Simmons, although Clayton Lambert, recently plucked out of English league cricket to reinforce the tourists squad, has made a late bid for a Test place and had the advantage of being left-handed.

West Indies physician Dennis Wright is working full time on Haynes to ensure that the tourists vice-captain plays at Headingley.

There's no doubt that Des desperately wants to play in the Test and at the moment we're doing all we can to get him fit," said Wright.

"Actually, I think he would be a lot better immediately if the sun came out and the weather warmed up. At the moment the boys are having to put up with both the cold conditions and the soft beds we get at the hotels. "But Des got the sort of in-

jury that will heal up in time, so hopefully the support he's wearing will help his posture and therefore his recovery."

England opening batsman Mike Atherton has also been suffering from a throat infection and did not take a full part in Tuesday's practice, but there is no doubt about his fitness for the Test in which the host nation are likely to give Test debuts to three players.

Worcestershire batsman Graeme Hick and spinner Richard Illingworth will probably be blooded along with Middlesex batsman Mark Ramprakash, leaving Leicestershire all-rounder Chris Lewis to carry the drinks.

PROBABLE TEAM
ENGLAND: Graham Gooch (captain), Mike Atherton, Graeme Hick, Allan Lamb, Robin Smith, Mark Ramprakash, Derek Pringle, Phil Defreitas, Jack Russell, Richard Illingworth, Devon Malcolm.

WEST INDIES: Viv Richards (captain), Desmond Haynes, Phil Simmons, Richie Richardson, Gus Logie, Carl Hooper, Jeff Dujon, Malcolm Marshall, Curtley Ambrose, Courtney Walsh, Partick Patterson.

Stars brace for the semis

PARIS, June 5: The sometimes tedious preliminaries are over, and four of the best players in

women's tennis are ready to square off in French Open semifinals that they welcome as eagerly as the fans, reports AP.

"When I get to the semis, it's a relief," said Monica Seles, the top seed and defending champion. "I know from here on in I have to play great tennis."

First in line for Seles is one of the two women vying to usurp her No 1 Ranking, third-seeded Gabriela Sabatini. Each has lost only one set in the first five rounds.

Steffi Graf, also in the hunt for the No 1 spot, plays Arantxa Sanchez Vicario in Thursday's other semifinal. It's a battle of two former French Open champions, neither of whom has lost a set thus far.

The only semifinalist who hasn't won the tournament before is Sabatini, owner of the best won-lost record on the tour this year.

"I have a very tough match," Seles said, happily. "If I win, I have another tough match."

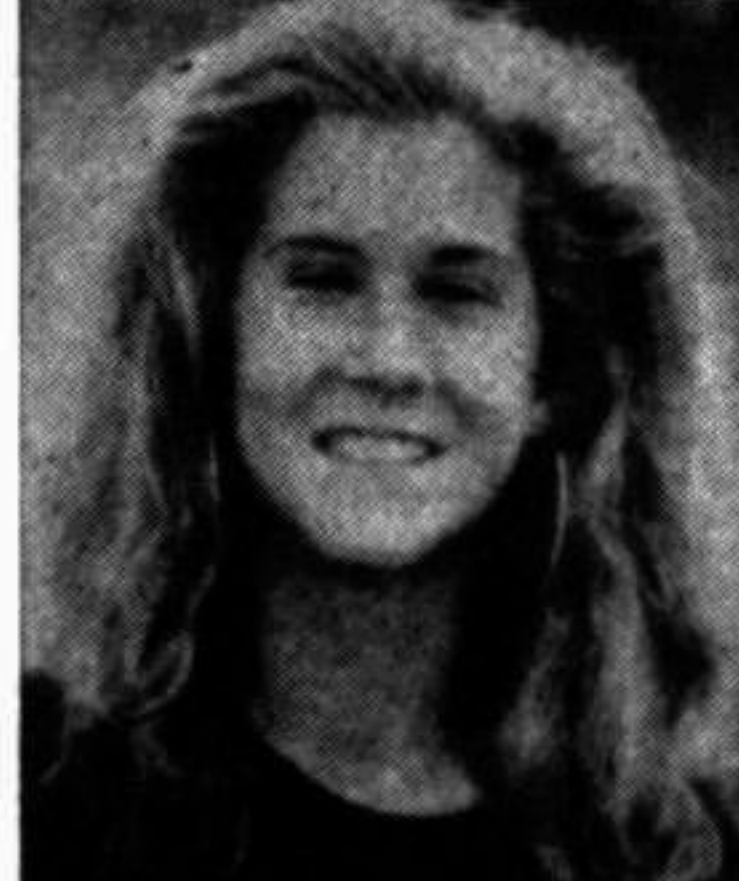
One of the men's semifinals was set Tuesday, when Boris Becker and Andre Agassi demolished their quarterfinal foes. Agassi routed Jakob Hlasek in 75 minutes, 6-3, 6-1, 6-1, while Becker said he played "almost perfect" tennis against Michael Chang, winning 6-4, 6-4, 6-2.

Agassi and Becker have split their six head-to-head matches, with Agassi winning the last three.

In the other half of the men's draw, top-seeded Stefan Edberg was to play for a semifinal berth Wednesday against ninth-seeded Jim Courier. The other quarterfinal matched

12th seed Michael Stich of Germany against Argentina's Franco Davin.

Twice a point from defeat against Jana Novotna, she battled to a 5-7, 7-6 (12-10), 6-0 victory, winning 10 of the last 11 games in what she de-



MONICA SELES

scribed as one of her greatest comebacks.

Sabatini trailed 5-2 in the second set before rallying, and



GABRIELA SABATINI

finals for the fourth time. She will meet defending champion Monica Seles on Thursday.

"I am happy to be in the semis," Sabatini said. "It's a big match and I feel very prepared mentally, and physically I feel very good."

Sabatini already holds a victory this year over the top-ranked Seles, beating her in the Italian Open final. And the Argentine has the best record on the women's tour this season with a 40-3 mark.

ing showdowns.

Seles won 6-0, 7-5 over seventh-seeded Conchita Martinez of Spain, who dropped the first set in 23 minutes but battled gallantly in an hour-long second set.

Graf improved her career record against France's Nathalie Tauziat to 14-0 with a 6-3, 6-2 victory. Sanchez Vicario, seeded fifth, overpowered No. 4 seed Mary Joe Fernandez, also 6-3, 6-2.

Sanchez Vicario, who as a 17 year old beat Graf in the title match two years ago, said she felt no qualms about a rematch.

Graf also was asked about the 1989 final.

"People will always remember it," she said. "But I'll try to make the memory change and do better this time."

SABATINI'S ESCAPE
It was the third consecutive time that Sabatini had rallied after being within one point of losing to Novotna.

Sabatini came from behind to beat Novotna at the European Indoor semifinals in Geneva and the Virginia Slims tournament in New York last year.

She was in familiar territory when she was down 8-7 and 9-8 in the tie-breaker. She knew she still had a chance to win.

"Sometimes that came to me," Sabatini said. "I knew I had to keep fighting."

Both times Novotna committed an error that tied the score and gave Sabatini another chance.

"I always play too safe," Novotna said. "Maybe I should have done something else, but now it's too late to think about it."

"I was trying to make her miss," Sabatini said. "I was trying to do something to put her off."



GABRIELA SABATINI

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BORIS BECKER

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Novotna outplayed Sabatini at the French Open last year. "That was Sabatini said.

Ali has a new mission

DEER LAKE, Pennsylvania, June 5: Once he floated like a butterfly. Now he has the walk of a caterpillar, reports AP.

Once, he stung like a bee. Now, he limits his jabs to occasional witty repartee.

Mostly he observes. He prays. Muhammad Ali has gone silent.... almost.

He does realize the power and popularity he retains, however. On Tuesday, Ali took a stroll down memory lane at his former training camp, accompanied by two dozen media members and former confidants. His traveling companions were drawn by Ali's aura, just as the public still is when he walks down a street in any city, at any time, and is besieged for autographs.

Those companions also were drawn to Deer Lake to share those memories, and the smile that lit up Ali's face as the bus turned up the road to the training site made the 2 1/2-hour ride inopportune.

"It's just like old times," the 49-year-old Ali said in the whisper that often passes for his voice. "Like the old days."

Ali retired for good in 1981, his body still relatively unmarked. The beatings he had taken through more than 20 years of floating and stinging seemed to have done little damage.

How wrong we all were. Soon, the ravages of Parkinson's Syndrome, probably brought on by all those punches received, became apparent. His speech was slurred when it was audible at all. His body shook, sometimes trembled. Those afflictions serve as a constant reminder of how brutal boxing can be.

But on this day everyone wanted to go back, back to the days Ali ruled the ring, the sporting world, the real world.

"I think this helps him a lot, really lifts his spirits," said Wali Muhammad, one of Ali's trainers for two decades. "I'm glad for him. It brings back a lot of good memories for all of us."

"When we were walking around before, he said to me, 'We're back home.' He's even thinking of moving back up here."

Ali spends much of his time on his farm in Illinois. But this 6-acre collection of log cabins in the hills of eastern Pennsylv-

vania has that special hold provided only by a place someone builds, nurtures and prospers in. That Ali the Muslim preacher who can afford to live anywhere and do anything, would consider returning to live a relatively spartan life, seems perfectly fitting.

"See how his face lights up when he gets here," said Jeremiah Shabazz, whose association with Ali spans a quarter-century.

"People used to come here



MD ALI

from all over the world. I don't know how they found this place. They came from Japan, China, India, Europe....

"He bought this place in 1972 and the only times he didn't train here were the fights we lost. We learned from those mistakes and came back to the woods."

Ali is back in the woods again standing on a boulder painted with Sonny Liston's name. He is doing his best imitation of a bear's growl, mugging for the cameramen.

Next, he is entering the mosque he had built for his five daily prayer sessions. He participates in a 10-minute prayer at Zuhr, the Muslim zenith of the day.

Then surrounded by workers for the Muhammad Ali Save Our Children Foundation, he opens up. It is vintage Ali without the decibels.

"Boxing was my field mission, the first part of my life," he said. "I predict all the preachers in the world, all the churches and religions, I will beat them in working for good. I will spread more religion and get more people than all of the religions. I will be the greatest evangelist ever."

SOCCER SCENARIO

Gullit ready to leave AC Milan



RUUD GULLIT

MILAN, June 5: Dutch forward Ruud Gullit said Wednesday that he's ready to leave AC Milan and join another team if the Italian club does not trust his complete recovery from a recent knee surgery, reports AP.

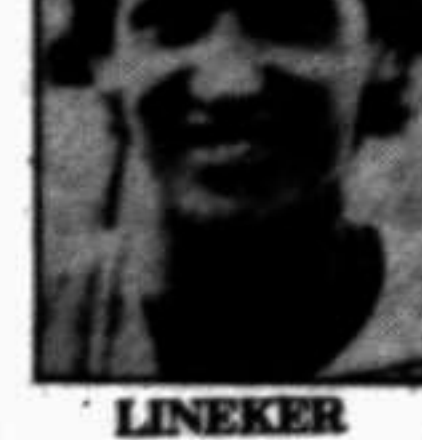
"I want total confidence from Milan officials, otherwise I am ready to leave. Bids from several non-Italian clubs are not missing. I'm ready to transfer. Some people are uncertain about my future while I'm certain of my comeback," Gullit said in an interview with Milan's Gazzetta dello Sport, Italy's largest sports daily. The Dutch star, the captain of defending European champion Netherlands and one of the most popular European players, has recently undergone a surgery to remove some cartilage from his right knee.

Milan doctors said he would be back in action in August. Gullit's right knee had been already operated three times in 1989 and the player was sidelined for almost an entire season. Milan officials said recently Gullit is going to be confirmed for the next season along with his fellow-Dutch Marco Van Basten and Frank Rijkaard.

However, there has been growing speculation in the Italian press that Gullit may be substituted in view of his uncertain form. Gullit's contract with Milan, a former European champion, expires in 1993.

Rumors about Gullit were part of the post season trading as most Italian clubs sought new players to strengthen their lineups for the next championship.

Lineker wants to be a journalist



LINEKER

AUCKLAND, New Zealand, June 5: England soccer captain Gary Lineker said today he wants to be a journalist when his playing days are over, reports AFP.

"Journalists have the ability to put players under so much pressure" he said in an interview here. "We can never please. If we play poorly we're blasted and if we win we played against poor opposition. Sometimes I can't understand you lot."

Lineker's touring team is currently getting flak from the home press for an indifferent 1-0 win over New Zealand Sunday. Lineker already writes columns for magazines and newspapers and has begun a successful television commentary career.

"I have to be a bit careful what I say," he said. "I can't be too critical because I usually have to go out and play against the players I'm commenting about the following week. If I upset them they might decide to take it out on me."

Lineker has scored 41 goals for England and hundreds for Leicester, Everton, Barcelona and Tottenham Hotspur.

BKSP tie in Khulna fetches Tk 3.50 lakh

THE match between Bangladesh Krira Protsishthan and Khulna Police Commissioner Eleven held at Khulna Stadium on May 29 in aid of the cyclone victims fetched Taka three lakh and fifty thousand, reports BSS.

According to a police press release, the Commissioner of Khulna Metropolitan Police, Mr Abdul Hakim Khan handed over the money towards the Prime Minister's Relief Fund on Tuesday.

Dutch put 7 past the Finns

KOTKA, Finland, June 5: The Netherlands beat Finland 7-1 (halftime 1-0) in a European under-21 soccer championship Group Six qualifier on Tuesday, reports Reuter.

Scorers: Finland-Sami Yla-Jussila (76th minute), Netherlands-Artur Numan (43rd), Max Huiberts (46th, 72nd), Gaston Taument (53rd), Dean Gorre (62nd), Ronald Boer (71st), Rene Binken (78th).

Attendance: 356. Standings (tabulate under played, won, drawn, lost goals for, against, points):

	P	W	D	L	Gf	Ga	Pts
Netherlands	5	4	1	0	19	3	9
Portugal	4	3	1	0	6	1	7
Finland	3	0	0	3	1	9	0
Malta	4	0	0	4	3	16	0

Remaining matches: June 26 Finland v Malta, Sept 10 Portugal v Finland, Oct 15 Netherlands v Portugal, Oct 16 Malta v Finland.