

# Victoria are Milnars league champs

Sports Reporter

A fine spell of accurate medium pace bowling by Iqbal helped Victoria to emerge as the champions of the Milnars First Division cricket league at they edged past strong rivals Udit Club by nine runs in the pulsating play-off yesterday at the Dhaka Stadium.

A sweet revenge was exacted for Victoria who lost to Udit in the first leg when Iqbal bowled two experienced Udit batsmen—first Udit skipper Imran and then Munir—to seal the fate of the match in Victoria's favour. The match was more of a prestige concern as both sides would play in the Navana Premier division cricket league from next year. Victoria without their skipper, former Bangladesh captain Roquibul Hassan, started disastrously after being sent in to bat by the Udit captain. Openers Didar and Ronny left cheaply as Udit spinner Rahul accounted for both of them.

Promising right-handed one drop batsman Mukul then teamed up with Wahidul to steady the rocking Victorian boat. Mukul batted patiently to score 33 while Wahidul contributed a rapid 31 made off 39 balls. Veteran Mainul Huq Mainu, leading Victoria in Roquibul's absence, chipped in with a useful 25 and Jewel threw his bat around a bit to hit a quickfire 34 with the help of one sixer and a four off 38 balls to give some momentum to the innings. With the tail wagging with a perky little 19 from wicket-keeper Barooah, Victoria were all out for 197 in 44.5 overs.

Sajid, Roquibul's son who opens the Udit batting, turned out to be the most successful bowler as he claimed three wickets for 14 runs as the Victoria batsmen threw caution to the winds in the end overs. Spinners Durjoy and Rahul bagged two apiece and Imran bowled his full quota of

batsmen then removed Rokon for a duck. Rahul and wicket-keeper Tipu then batted enterprisingly to take the score to 127 from 97. Mukul broke the partnership that was looking rather threatening for Victoria by dismissing Rahul for 39, made off 44 balls, with the

Durjoy, a very promising young batsman and two seasoned campaigners like Iqbal and Munir, who are no bunnies with the bat. But with the overs running out Durjoy had a go at the experienced Mainu and was bowled for three and Iqbal bowled Imran with the first ball of the final over and



Victoria Sporting Club who lifted the Milnars First Division cricket league title beating Udit Club in yesterday's play-off at the Dhaka Stadium pose for The Daily Star after the match. — Star photo

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# '94 Cup venues to be picked Monday

NEW YORK, Mar 20: Nearly four years since FIFA awarded the World Cup to the United States,

organizers still don't know where the games will be played or how many cities will be used. But the wait is almost over, reports AP.

"We're not going to really have a final answer until Sunday night," said US Soccer Federation president and World Cup USA 1994 chairman Alan Rothenberg. There are still some issues that remain."

At a news conference in New York on Monday, the 19 priority list cities will find out if they will host the world in June and July 1994.

World Cup USA 1994 was supposed to announce the 8-12 cities in December, but that has been pushed back three times. And although both FIFA

and US organizers both said 12 cities definitely would be used, that now has reportedly been scaled back to eight, mostly because of costs.

The reason for the delay is that we have an embarrassment of riches," Rothenberg said. "To the extent to which it is causing trouble, it's good trouble. Nobody expected 27 cities to bid for the games. We tried to limit the burden to 19 cities."

The 27 cities that sought games was a record.

The allocation for specific games in the 52-match, 24-team quadrennial championship won't be announced until FIFA's 48th Ordinary Congress in Zurich, Switzerland, July 2-3.

Before they get that far though, they have to figure out which cities they're going to use. A FIFA team led by general secretary Joseph "Sepp" Blatter will fly into New York on Sunday to hammer out final details with US organizers.

Rothenberg wouldn't say which details have to be discussed.

Regardless, 140 teams vying for the 22 available berths in the finals begin their march toward the World Cup on Saturday, with Puerto Rico travelling to the Dominican Republic to play the first of 582 qualification games around the world over the next two years.

Germany, by virtue of being defending champion, and the United States, for being the

host, qualify automatically. The rest of the world has to fight for it.

The 140 teams were drawn into qualifying groups within their geographic region in December. CONCACAF, the Spanish acronym for the Confederation of North, Central America and the Caribbean, kicks off the tournament with Saturday's game and another Sunday, when St Vincent and the Grenadines travels to play St Lucia.

Europe begins its qualifying in April. Africa starts in October. South America won't get going until July 1993. And Asia and Oceania (South Pacific) haven't even set dates yet.

But on Monday, they'll at least know where they're going, if they get there.

FIFA hasn't signed off on anything," Rothenberg said about which cities will be used. "But you can figure as well as I that there are a handful that are pretty certain."

New York, Los Angeles and Chicago are considered locks to get games. The Silverdome in Pontiac, Mich., near Detroit is also the leading contender among the three domed stadiums, and FIFA apparently likes the novelty of playing indoors.

Los Angeles is the home of Rothenberg and it also had a crowd of over 100,000 for the soccer final at the 1984 Olympics. Chicago is the home of the US federation, and recently has successfully staged

two exhibitions involving the US national team.

New York, however, apparently was a city mandated by FIFA.

Despite the city's recent indifference to international soccer, and a stadium that would require a rule change or massive reconstruction costs, the world body reportedly has gone out of its way to make sure New York was included in the mix.

With the only other "New York" area venue available being two hours away in New Haven, Conn., Giants Stadium, which actually is in East Rutherford, N.J., across the Hudson River, is considered the most likely of any site to get games.

The inclusion of New York has left nearby Philadelphia, which has the additional problem of a conflicting Major League Baseball schedule, with the feeling at is out of contention. Scuttle officials say they get a similar feeling.

But other cities such as Dallas say they are confident.

Meanwhile, other preparations, like sponsorship sales, also are continuing, some, about as fast as the site selection.

"That's going slower than anticipated," Rothenberg said. "It's not a big problem. The recession has slowed us down. But they move slower under these conditions...."

"By the summer of 1994, we'll be hitting our peak. And that's when we want to hit it."

# Evergreen top Division Two

Sports Reporter

In a similar contest where the result mattered little, Evergreen Club outplayed Dhanmondi Club by eight wickets to stay at the top of the table of the Rank-Xerox Second Division cricket league at the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium yesterday.

Sent in to bat, Dhanmondi found the going extremely tough against the incisive new ball attack of Evergreen bowlers Taleb and Sohel. Mr Sundries top scored with 17 as none of the Dhanmondi batsmen reached double figures.

Taleb claimed three for 14 while Sohel captured another three for 18. Azmat took two for 16 and Munna one for one to skittle Dhanmondi out for 60 in 17.2 overs.

Azad and Shaheen went merrily about their task by putting on 32 for the first wicket and virtually won the match for Evergreen. Azad scored 16 and Shaheen made 14. Ikku of Dhanmondi removed both batsmen quickly but Azim with 12 not out made sure Evergreen won by eight wickets in 13 overs.

Both Dhanmondi and Evergreen will play in the Milnars First Division cricket league from next season.

# Nat'l cricket now from Mar 27

Sports Reporter

The 1991-92 national cricket championship will now begin from March 27, instead of the earlier scheduled March 22, at nine different venues across the country.

A record 59 teams, including 50 district associations, will take part in this year's competition.

Bangladesh Tobacco Company is likely to sponsor the meet.

# Volleyball semis today

Sports Reporter

Rajshahi take on Tangail while Dhaka meet Comilla in the semifinals of the 1992 Intradistrict volleyball tournament today at the Outer Stadium volleyball court.

Dhaka emerged as the champions of Group B with full six points from three outings beating Tangail, who finished as group runners-up with four points. 15-10, 15-17, 15-5 and 15-9 yesterday.

Rajshahi became the Group A champions outplaying Dinajpur 15-11, 15-6 and 15-9 yesterday. Rajshahi also collected six points from three robin league outings while Comilla managed four from as many outings to become the group runners-up.

Comilla made the semifinals beating Faridpur 15-4, 15-5 and 15-5 in their last league match.

Jessore beat Pabna 16-14, 4-15, 15-6 and 15-6 in the other encounter of the day.

The final of the eight-team tournament is scheduled for tomorrow, March 22.

Oli Ahmed, Minister for Communications, will attend the final as the chief guest.

# Full points for Fakirerpool

Sports Reporter

Fakirerpool Youngmen's Club registered their third victory in the First Division football league beating Bangladesh Road Transport Corporation by a solitary goal at the Dhaka Stadium yesterday.

Shaful Alam netted the winner in the 20th minute of the second half.

Fakirerpool, donning sky-blue shirts, and BRTC in maroon jerseys, however, gave a lack-luster performance. The passing, attacks, tackling and finishing of both teams were indeed rather poor. In fact, the underdogs of the Dhaka league adopted a lackadaisical ap-

proach to the game which disappointed the sparse crowd. Shaful Alam got the only goal of the match for Fakirerpool in the 65th minute with a well-placed volley on an Apu pass from inside the box which beat the BRTC custodian Naju all ends up (1-0).

BRTC tried to come back into the game and soon afterwards created a beautiful chance of restoring parity but Fakirerpool goalie Dulal Hossain Dhonu, diving to his left, saved a powerful right-footer from Mahbub.

In the final minute of the match, BRTC created yet another chance to draw level but Ratan's shot from inside the Fakirerpool box missed the

target. The victory took Fakirerpool's points tally to ten from eleven encounters while BRTC have collected seven points from eleven engagements.

TEAMS  
FAKIRERPOOL: Dhonu, Dipu, Rakib, Swapan, Montu, Akram, Masud Karim, Masih, Salam (Bhola Roy), Bhutto (Apu), Anwar and Shaful Alam.  
BRTC: Naju, Babu, Sajjad, Shaheen, Shafiq, Noman, Debashish, Ujjal (Goutam), Motaleb (Ratan), Proshanta, Tipu (Mahbub).

TODAY'S MATCH  
Adamjee vs Wari Club (6:45 pm)

# Abahani overcome Ajax

Sports Reporter

Champions Abahani Krira Chakra kept their chances of retaining the title alive with a two-nil victory over Ajax Sports Club yesterday at the Hockey Stadium as the Green Delta First Division hockey league, suspended for four days due to inadequate security measure, got underway again.

The standard of the match, plagued with eye-soring mistakes from players of both sides, never rose over mediocrity and belied any expectations of a quality contest between two of the better known hockey sides.

Abahani, despite the pedestrian standard of the match, dominated the proceedings, particularly in the second half and Ajax, who after conceding the first goal had retaliated like someone with a shot in the arm, totally withdrew as the match progressed.

Abahani surged into the lead in the second minute with 'feared' full-back Jumman Lusal sounding the board with a stinging hit after Harun had pushed the ball from a penalty corner.

Ajax came back strongly, carrying out several forays towards the Abahani citadel. But Abahani custodian Rahmatullah Asir held the fort with some brilliant saves. The winners led the first half one-nil.

Abahani, who forced four penalty corners, increased pressure with intelligent moves down the flanks. Ajax goalkeeper Javed twice left his charge to pad away attempts by Abahani forwards. On another occasion, Jumman Lusal raced down the line to send in a neat cross from the right corner but the initiative went abegging as none of his teammates were in position to tap it home.

The second goal, which had been looming large for quite

some time, came in the 67th minute when Fazel and Zahid Hossain Raju did a lovely one-two on the right side before Zahid sounded the board 2-0.

With this win, Abahani's collection soared to 27 points from 14 matches while Ajax have 23 from 14 matches.

In the first match of the day, Wari came back from behind to beat Railway Sports Club 2-1. Veteran Selim put Railway ahead with an eighth goal from a penalty corner.

Kamrul Ahsan of Wari drew level from a penalty corner in the 46th minute. Reza converted a penalty stroke six minutes later to ensure two points for Wari.

Wari now have eleven points from thirteen matches while Railway played same number of matches to collect only six points.

TODAY'S MATCHES  
Police vs Usha (1.45 pm)  
Mohammedans vs Mariner Young's (3.15 pm)

# Sabatini in final at Graf's cost

Sports Reporter

KEY BISCAYNE, Florida, Mar 20: Gabriela Sabatini, buoyed by enthusiastic crowd support, outplayed Steffi Graf on Thursday to advance to the final of the 2.8 million dollar Lipton International Players Championships, reports Reuter.

Sabatini, seeded third, topped the second-seeded German 3-6, 7-6, 6-1 as partisan fans went wild, chanting in the stands for the victor.

In Saturday's final Sabatini will face fourth-seeded Spaniard Arantxa Sanchez Vicario, who easily dispatched exhausted fifth seed Jennifer Capriati 6-2, 6-4.

In today's men's semifinals, top seed Jim Courier faces sixth-seeded fellow American Michael Chang, while Jakob Hlasek of Switzerland plays Alberto Mancini of Argentina.

Graf still holds a 21-10 career mark against the third-ranked Argentine. But Sabatini has she's beaten the former world number one in six of their last seven meetings.

Six of her wins over Graf have come in Florida, where Sabatini maintains a part-time residence close to the tournament site, giving the event a home town feeling.

Crowd support could not help Capriati however.

Capriati, who had put on a brilliant power display to upset world number one and defending champion Monica Seles less than 24 hours earlier, could not muster the strength

to stop the energetic Sanchez on Thursday.

"I was ready to fight, but you can't fight if your legs weren't really there," admitted the 15-year-old Floridian.

Rather than allow Capriati to set up on the baseline, Sanchez kept the tired

teenager on the run as she sprayed shots around the court.

"If she's not in position, she can't hit the ball hard," Sanchez said. "I knew when she has to hit the ball running, that's when she makes mistakes."

Sabatini, who also came back from a set down to defeat Graf in last year's semifinals, demonstrated an even sharper attacking game than in her 1990 win.

The third seed chipped and charged against Graf, taking command at the net or setting up booming passing shots after drawing the second seed in.

In the end, the crowd boosted Sabatini to a near whitewash finish as the Argentine completely dominated the final set and demoralised her opponent to deafening applause.

Graf appeared in control after twice going up a break in the second set. But Sabatini relentlessly challenged Graf's backhand and fought back to force a tiebreak, which she won 7-5 with effective volleys and passes.

Sabatini raised her fists in triumph and, although the celebration seemed premature, Graf had nothing left for the final set.



GABRIELA SABATINI

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# FIFA lifts threat against Brazil

ZURICH, Mar 20: FIFA lifted a threat to suspend former champions Brazil from international

soccer on Thursday after Brazilian football authorities agreed to suspend top club Flamengo, reports Reuter.

World soccer's governing body made the threat earlier this week after Flamengo started legal proceedings against FIFA for an international ban imposed on the club several months ago.

The dispute was sparked by the sudden re-election of Ricardo Texeira — son-in-law of FIFA president Joao Havelange — as president of the CBF last July.

But FIFA said in a statement it had dropped both its ban on the Rio De Janeiro Club and its threat to suspend the Brazilian Football Federation (CBF) after the CBF agreed to settle the matter "internally" by suspending Flamengo.

"FIFA has rescinded its

threat to suspend the Brazilian Association. After intervention by FIFA, the management of the Brazilian Association announced that the dispute involving the club Regatas Do Flamengo would be settled internally," FIFA said.

The club had initiated legal proceedings against FIFA to have an earlier suspension that had been imposed upon it quashed. Flamengo has now been suspended by the Brazilian Association, whereupon FIFA lifted the ban imposed on the club for infringing the statutes," the statement added.

Brazilian soccer officials had feared a ban could prevent three-time winners Brazil qualifying for the 1994 World Cup finals in the United States.

FIFA say Flamengo broke its rules prohibiting soccer matters being taken to civil courts by filing a lawsuit to reverse Texeira's election.

FIFA banned Flamengo from all international matches until the club withdrew the lawsuit

against the CBF.

But Flamengo refused to lift the suit and instead took out another against FIFA in a court near its headquarters in Zurich.

"We take a very serious view of this case, considering that it is the first time any legal action has ever been taken against FIFA. Bearing in mind the gravity of the situation, we may have to suspend the CBF," FIFA general secretary Sepp Blatter told the CBF in a faxed message on Tuesday.

FIFA spokesman Andreas Herren said FIFA now hoped its involvement in the saga would end.

"As far as we're concerned this should be the end of it. This matter should have been dealt with internally all along," Herrens said.

"All we want is for federations to control their members and for federations and clubs to reach consensus. Sports matters should be settled by sports bodies, not by civil courts."

# Italian clubs crowd Euro semis

GENEVA, Mar 20: Torino was paired with Real Madrid and Genoa received Ajax in UEFA's

draw Friday for semifinal matchups in the European Cup, leaving the possibility for a third consecutive All-Italian final in the UEFA Cup, reports AP.

Inter Milan beat Roma in last season's UEFA Cup final and Juventus downed

Florentina in 1990. Italian clubs are hoping for a fourth successive triumph in the competition after Napoli's victory over Stuttgart in 1989.

In the Cup Winners Cup, Monaco was drawn with Dutch club Feyenoord and Belgium's FC Bruges will meet Germany's Werder Bremen in that tournament's semifinals.

Monaco, which reached the semifinal two years ago, is trying to become the first French team to win a European title

The last German club to win a European honor was Bayer Leverkusen, which won the UEFA Cup in 1989 after beating Werder Bremen in the semifinal.

The first legs of the semifinals will be played April 1 with the return leg set for April 15.

Also set for those dates will be the fifth and sixth rotations of the third round of the Champions Cup. For the first time this season.

# CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

1 Ade or coal lead-in

5 Spinner

8 Actress

12 Old Norse poem

13 Summer refresher

14 Buffalo's lake

15 Designer Cassini

16 Island off California

18 Hybrid animals

20 Beds for ranch hands

21 Legal matter

22 Warm embrace

23 Famous jockey

26 Flowering tree

30 Decorative lamp top

31 Indistinct

32 Direct an arrow

33 Sicilian seaport

36 Large pleasure boat

DOWN

1 Gator's cousin

2 Island dance

3 Dill weed

4 Take into account

5 Mexican dishes

6 Anagram for soda

7 Favorite

8 Large white sturgeon

9 Emerald Isle

10 Fall gradually

11 Afternoon parties

17 Border on 19 Jamie — Curtis

22 Breakfast treat

23 Dry, as wine

24 Psych. org.

25 — picker (fussy one)

26 OSS successor

27 Malay gibbon

28 Porky, for one

29 French spirit

31 Party mix

34 Marshals

35 One of the tides

36 Slugger's need

37 Dumas character

39 Dull finish

40 Wood sorrels

41 Part of a horse's collar

42 Above

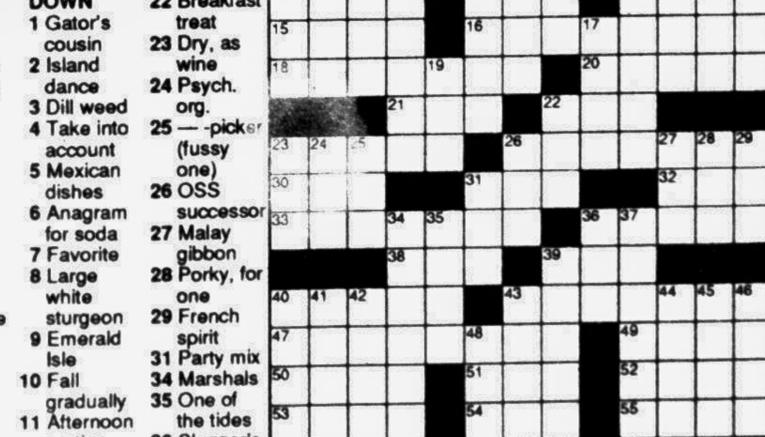
43 Orator

44 Diminish

45 Spy's devices

46 Pub pints

48 North American Indian



Solution time: 24 mins.

SEES LOW SPAN  
ELLA ABA OLLA  
EBAN PIGBOATS  
PANDAS SONNET  
ARIL BET  
PIGLATIN RACE  
ALA LUCIA ION  
WEST PIGMENTS  
LOB THOR  
AVISOS TRUCKS  
PIGSKINS PROP  
ASHE LOU TOLA  
RATS OWN SWAT

CRYPTOQUIP

9-17 Y VYZI QE JE EPP QE

QOI TKXIQTXXZ, FMQ Y

QOEMJOQ FIQUEP EP YQ.

Thursday's Cryptoquip: WHY DO WE DRIVE ON THE PARKWAY AND PARK ON THE DRIVEWAY?

Today's Cryptoquip clue: Q equals T

The Cryptoquip 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.

Thursday's answer 9-17

# Vialli back in Italian colours

ROME, Mar 20: Sampdoria striker Gianluca Vialli was recalled to the Italian squad on Thursday for next week's friendly soccer international with Germany, reports Reuter.

Vialli was suspended and missed last month's hastily arranged friendly with tiny San Marino, which some newspapers suggested was especially staged to free the Sampdoria man to play against world champions Germany.