

Nat'l championship begins

Sports Reporter

The Gold Leaf national cricket championship got underway at eight different venues across the country yesterday.

On the inaugural day, seven matches were decided while two teams received walk-overs.

In Dhaka, Dhaka University beat Bangladesh Agriculture University by nine wickets while Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET) got a walk-over against Bangladesh Public Works Department.

Electing to bat, Agriculture University were dismissed for a paltry 95 in 36.4 overs at the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium.

Shahid scored 26 while Bahadur and Kouahik made 16 and 13 respectively for Agriculture University.

Suppi and Pappu took two wickets each for Dhaka University.

In reply Dhaka University made 100 for the loss of one of their openers in 19.2 overs.

Richardson retains job

PORT OF SPAIN, Trinidad, Mar 27: Richie Richardson, who led the West Indies cricket team in the recent World Cup, has been retained as captain for next month's series against South Africa, the West Indies Cricket Board of Control announced on Thursday, reports Reuter.

The South Africans, led by Kepler Wessels, will play several one-day internationals and one Test match during their first-ever tour of the Caribbean which starts in early April.

Two of the one-day internationals will be played at the Queen's Park Oval in Trinidad, while Kensington Oval in Barbados is the venue for the lone Test.

West Indies vice-captain Gus Logie of Trinidad announced he was still recovering from a broken right arm and would not be available for the series against South Africa.

The South Africans have returned to the international sporting fold after more than 20 years in isolation because of Pretoria's apartheid policies, now being scrapped.

Navaña Premier Division cricket league runners-up Abahant Kira Chakra skipper Faruk Ahmed, who captained Dhaka University, scored an unbeaten 37 off 36 balls, a knock that included a six and five fours while Tapan and Shovon scored 29 and 25 respectively.

Tapan took the only wicket for Agriculture University.

At Tangail, Sirajganj DSA beat Gopalganj by 33 runs.

Batting first, Sirajganj were all out for 138 in 37.2 overs with Atiq scoring 44, Ujjal 16 and Saad Mahmud 10.

Al-Mahmud and Zubair took two wickets apiece for Gopalganj.

In their turn, Gopalganj were all out for 123 in 33.3 overs.

Zubair top scored with 26 while Manirul made 12 for Gopalganj.

Shahadat took three wickets for Sirajganj.

At Sylhet, Chandpur recorded an exciting seven-run victory over Brahmanbaria.

Sent into bat, Chandpur were all out for 146 in 43 overs with Minhaz and Suman making 30 each.

Bashir of Brahmanbaria took four wickets for 19 while Arif with three lent him able support.

Brahmanbaria, in reply, were dismissed for 139 in 41 overs.

Badar and Bashir scored 27 and 24 respectively for Brahmanbaria.

Minhaz and Mujib claimed three wickets each for Chandpur.

Chapai Nawabganj posted a 14-run victory over Pabna at Thakurgaon.

Batting first, Chapai Nawabganj were all out for 182 in 44 overs with Baki getting 44 and skipper Milton 40.

Alamgir and Milton of Pabna took three wickets each.

In reply, despite a brilliant 49 by Thanda and 30 by Milton, Pabna were booked for 168 in 43 overs.

Azad, Mithu, Suman and Rubel got two wickets apiece for Chapai Nawabganj.

At Barisal, Patuakhali beat Narail by two wickets.

Electing to bat, Narail made a handsome 247 runs for the loss of seven wickets in the 43 overs sent down by the beleaguered Barisal bowlers.

Lipon top scored with 59 while Litu and Towhid got 37 and 31 respectively.

Mukta of Barisal took three wickets for 28.

In their turn, Patuakhali cruised past Narail's total, scoring 248 in 42.4 overs with two wickets to spare.

Liton top scored with 77 while Nannu and Hemayet got 32 each for Patuakhali.

Lincoln of Narail took three wickets for 47.

Kurigram beat Natore by two wickets at Pabna.

Batting first, Natore were all out for 118 in 34.5 overs with Babu making 40.

Tito of Kurigram took five wickets for 26.

In their turn, Kurigram made 122 for eight wickets in 34 overs with Dinar making 26.

Mizu of Kurigram took five wickets for 28.

Sherpur DSA got a walk-over against Kishoreganj at Faridpur.

Bangladesh Railway will take on Rajshahi in the Dhaka zonal match today at the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium.

Imran's men to perform Umra

ISLAMABAD, Mar 27: Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif Thursday ordered special arrangements for the country's World Cup winning cricket team to perform a pilgrimage to Mecca, the official Associated Press of Pakistan (APP) said, reports AFP.

The team, which is due to return home Sunday to a heroes' welcome, is likely to leave for Saudi Arabia the next day to pray at the Muslim holy shrines in Mecca and Medina, the agency said.

Although the date for applications for Umra (minor pilgrimage) visas has passed, the Pakistani Foreign Office is making special arrangements through the Saudi embassy for the team to travel to the Muslim Eid festival at the end of the current fasting month of Ramadan in the first week of April, the agency said, adding the cricketers were expected to get awards.

A number of private business establishments have announced cash awards for the team.



Pakistan's man-of-the-final holding in triumph the World Cup trophy after the victory over England at the MCG on March 25. — AFP photo.

BU beat Muktis

Sports Reporter

Brothers Union, the Federation Cup champions, now lagging behind in the race for the First Division league title, won again yesterday against Muktiyoddha Sangsad. In a match marked by an unusually long period of power failure, the Gopibagh side wasted a number of afterstays yet managed to walk away with a comfortable two-nil victory.

Brothers Union, for whom it was their tenth victory, led the first half one-nil.

The winners, rigged in their traditional orange, took time to settle down but later created menacing openings with Satyajit Das Rupu and Saad Wahed and Skipper Manik working in tandem. The lights went out immediately after the game got underway and it took some 30 minutes for the restoration of power.

The 'black out' helped Brothers to sort things out and they were on target 18 minutes into the first half. Saad Wahed, the Iraqi striker nodded a ball home after the Muktiyoddha custodian Sohag unsuccessfully came out to foil move (1-0).

Brothers dominated the proceedings but could not increase the margin because of poor finishing by their forwards.

Brothers missed a fine chance to double the margin midway through the second half when Manik's header off a Wahed cross from the right went out off the woodwork with the goalkeeper beaten all ends up.

Brothers, however, made up for the missed chances when Satyajit Das Rupu made an attempt, more out of anticipation than certainty, and found the ball in the net much to his delight (2-0). Ripon floated the ball from a flag kick from the right and the ball travelled to a free Rupu after his teammate Wahed had failed to connect with his head.

Wahed missed an absolute sitter minutes later when he

TODAY'S MATCH

Rahmatganj vs Eskaton (6:45)

Pakistan lead Bangladesh 2-0 in Davis Cup

Pakistan took a 2-0 lead over Bangladesh in the Davis Cup Asia-Oceania Zone Group Two play-off, winning the two singles of the opening day at the Ramna National Tennis Complex yesterday, reports BSS.

Pakistan's number one Rashid Malik took just one hour to crush Bangladesh's number two Shibu Lal 6-2, 6-0, 6-1 in the first singles.

In the second singles, Bangladesh number one Hira Lal, elder brother of Shibu Lal, lost to Pakistan's number two Mohammed Khalid 1-6, 1-6, 4-6.

Hira Lal and Faisal S. Haq will take on Pakistan's Rashid Malik and Mohammad Khalid in the doubles today.

Earlier, Works Minister Rafiqul Islam Mian inaugurated the three-day tie.

Botham alleges Pak 'verbal abuse'

LONDON, Mar 27: Ian Botham has lashed out at Pakistan for allegedly aiming 'verbal abuse' at England players during the World Cup cricket final in Australia, reports AP.

helping when given out caught behind. And it wasn't just a 'get on your bike' type remark. It was very offensive."

Botham was clearly upset after being caught behind for a duck in England's 22-run defeat. He singled out opening batsman Aamir Sohail as the one who "gave me an earful" as he walked off.

"I'm surprised because I've always held their captain Imran Khan in the highest regard," Botham said. "Imran has always played the game in the most chivalrous way. He has been one of the world's great players who has cherished standards of decency and sportsmanship on the field."

"He'll have to pull his players into line if we're not to have a nasty atmosphere when England take them on in next summer's Tests at home."

It's not the first time Botham has fallen out with the Pakistanis. After returning from the 1983-84 tour of Pakistan Botham said he thought Pakistan was an ideal country to send your mother-in-law on an all-expenses-paid holiday. He was fined by the Test and County Cricket Board for bringing the game into disrepute.

Imran stays back as team leaves

MELBOURNE, Mar 27: World Cup cricket champions Pakistan left for Singapore today without their captain Imran Khan, who stayed behind to complete some business commitments, reports AFP.

Pakistan team manager Intikhab Alam said Imran would join the rest of the side in Singapore later.

"He still has things to do here but he will be joining us tomorrow evening and he will be going with us to Pakistan," Intikhab said.

Intikhab said celebrations in Pakistan would be far beyond his wildest dreams and already the players had engagements planned for the next week.

He said festivities were likely to continue right through until May, when the side heads to England for a five-Test tour.

"This is something out of this world. It will be more than red carpet when we get home," Intikhab said.

"Everything's been planned. The people at home are fanatics and it's something we have dreamt for."

"Everyone is excited and are waiting for the team's arrival."

"We have a month between before we go to England and it's going to be a hectic time now, I know that."

Prabhakar blames Azhar

NEW DELHI, Mar 27: Two leading Indian cricketers have blamed administrators and captain Mohammed Azhar-uddin for their team's failure in the World Cup won by arch-rivals Pakistan.

In interviews published to Australia, should be captain, Prabhakar said.

One player, who was not named, was quoted by the Pioneer newspaper as saying Azharuddin's style divided the team.

"There was a tendency with Azhar to ignore the senior players," he was quoted as saying.

"Instead of consulting the seniors he ended up consulting (18-year-old) Sachin Tendulkar, who is a great cricketer but does not have the sort of experience some of the senior players on the tour have."

Pioneer in Bombay.

Tykes eye Tendulkar

LEEDS, England, Mar 27: Indian Test prodigy Sachin Tendulkar is reported to be Yorkshire's new target for their first overseas player, reports AFP.

Brian Close, the former England skipper who is the county's cricket chairman, refused to confirm that the 18-year-old batsman had been approached.

But he did say that the English county were still determined to sign a foreign player following the withdrawal of Australian fast bowler Craig McDermott because of injury.

Close said, "We won't be discussing anything until our next meeting on April 3. Any talk in the meantime has to be speculation."

Tendulkar would become Yorkshire's first coloured player if he signed for the club.

Mariners are third

Dhaka Mariner Youngs Club finished third and Ajax Sports Club fourth in the Green Delta First Division hockey league, ending their league campaigns with a two-all draw in their last fixture at the Hockey Stadium yesterday.

Mariner Youngs have collected 26 points while Ajax 24 points from 15 outings each in the 16-team league.

Mariner Youngs had lost to title aspirants Mohammedan Sporting Club and held reigning champions Abahant Kira Chakra to draw while former champions Ajax lost to both the giants and dropped another point to unfancied Police Athletic Club.

The league championship issue has boiled down to a two-horse race between Mohammedans and Abahani. Mohammedans, who have won all their 14 matches, are a point ahead of Abahani, who have 27 from their 14 games.

The championship issue will be decided in the last 'match of this year's league between these two giants, scheduled for Sunday.

To retain the championship Abahani will have to win the tie while a draw will be enough for Mohammedans to clinch the title.

At the other end of the table, Victoria Sporting, with only six points from 14 matches, stand at the very bottom of the league and in order to avert relegation they will have to win their last engagement against Bachelors Sporting Club, who have eight points from 14 matches. In case Victoria win, there will be a play-off between these wooden-spoonists to decide

Biman's sweet consolation

Sports Reporter

Bangladesh Biman pocketed their first trophy of this season when they tamed Brothers Union by two wickets in the final of the Independence Day cricket on March 26.

In a day of high-scoring match when more than five hundred runs were scored, Biman chased 253 and crossed the total with just two wickets to spare.

Biman skipper Shah Nawaz Shaheed Shanu won the toss and asked Brothers to make the first use of the strip. Brothers who had the services of Zahid Razzak Masum of Abahani, national and Mohammedan skipper Minhazul Abedin Nannu and Lalmatia medium pacer Anisur Rahman rattled up a huge 253 for six wickets from their quota of 45 overs.

Masum, the dashing opening batsman topscored with 61 made off 87 balls with the help of five boundaries. Brothers' guest performance luck did not end in Masum as Nannu also played a fine innings of 48 off just 51 balls.

The tempo, however, was provided by Shri Lankan all rounder Fernando who swung his bat like a cutlass to smash a whirlwind 51 off 24 balls. The Afro-haired right hand batsmen hit six fours and a sixer. Skipper Athar Ali remained unbeaten on a well made 36 off just 24 balls.

Veteran Jahangir proved to be the most effective bowler with his slow, undemanding stuff. He picked up two wickets for 31 runs. Enamul Huq Moni, the left-arm spinner who later played a cameo knock to pave the path of his side's victory, bowled beautifully to emerge with fine figures of one for 29 from nine overs.

When opener Tariquzzaman

Munir nicked a delivery from left arm pacesman Anis behind the stumps, the victory target looked a very, very tall order although not impossible. But veteran Ahmed Iqbal Bachchu batted positively to score a quick 36 and Selim Shahed returned to form with an excellent innings of 61 inclusive of three hits to the fence.

Nadir Shah sent back in form Zakaria to revive the Brothers hopes but Shanu then teamed with Moni to make things hum again for the airlines team. Shanu was in magnificent form making 58 off 59 balls but real assault came from Moni who scored a rousing 49 off 30 balls. His rapidfire knock included four hits to the fence. Piyal, Dalim and Jahangir chipped usefully to give Biman a meritorious victory as Biman made 257 for eight wickets in 44.5 overs.

Nadir Shah bowled well for Brothers to claim two for 41. Lipu, Nannu, Anis, Athar took one apiece.

Treasurer of the Bangladesh Cricket Control Board Reza-e-Karim distributed prizes among the winners.

SA welcome heroes

JOHANNESBURG, Mar 27: Cheering white and black South Africans lined downtown streets Friday to welcome the country's cricket team returning from the World Cup, reports AP.

The celebration came after decades of frustration for South African sports fans caused by the nation's isolation from international competition because of apartheid.

"It's much bigger than I expected but it's wonderful," said wicket keeper Dave Richards.

"It's wonderful how the country got behind us. It just shows what we've been missing."

Tens of thousands of people whistled and shouted as a parade featuring an open, double-decker bus carrying the 14 players weaved through the city.

About 10,000 people gath-

ered outside city hall to officially welcome the team home from New Zealand and Australia, the World Cup venue.

More than 3,000 people had waited for hours Thursday night for the team's plane to land at Jan Smuts International Airport.

Team manager Alan Jordan told the city hall gathering: "We have begun to heal our land."

People along the parade route threw flowers and brought cases of beer and other offerings to the bus carrying the players. One butcher had his workers carry out a slaughtered sheep.

The players received garlands and tributes at city hall. Captain Kepler Wessels thanked the emotional crowd.

"Your support helped us through the tough times, and the magnificent times," he said.



Biman skipper Shah Nawaz Shaheed Shanu (R) receiving the Independence Day cricket champions' trophy from BCCB Secretary Aminul Haq Moni after Thursday's final at the Dhaka Stadium. — Star photo