

Asian under-16 soccer qualifying round begins

Bangladesh swamp Maldives 4-0

A Correspondent



RAJSHAH, May 3 The maiden experience of hosting an international sports meet did not turn into nightmares for this northern divisional headquarters and its enthusiastic people as hosts Bangladesh crushed minnows Maldives 4-0 in the inaugural match of the fifth Asian youth under-16 Group Three qualifying round to give a rollicking start to the tournament at the local stadium here today.

Playing before a 15,000 strong crowd and many more on the adjacent roof tops because of want of room inside the recently renovated ground, the Bangladesh team ran all over their weaker opponents to take an unassailable 4-0 lead in the first half with midfielder Jahangir Hossain scoring two to the goals.

With the much-feared heat of Rajshahi kept at bay for once by a benign cloud cover and a cool, refreshing breeze, the Bangladesh boys drew the first blood pretty early when left-winger Hiru wanted a chance by shooting wide after having gained possession of the ball inside the box.

Bangladesh forced their first corner in the third minute of play but Hiru again missed the mark as his header sailed over the bar, letting out a collective hiss of disappointment from the full house crowd.

Two more chances were missed in quick succession and Jahangir had the ball in the net in the seventh minute

but the Thai referee ruled it out for an off-side. Mozammel Huq Chowdhury, the Bangladesh striker, prolonged the tale of misses when he failed to halt the duels in the ninth minute with Hossain Habib, the Maldives goalkeeper, at his mercy.

The battered Maldives defence gave in after repeated sorties in the 17th minute when defender Biplob Marmar the stopper-back who plays for Victoria in the Dhaka league, nodded the ball home from a flag kick from the left taken by the skilful Arman (1-0).

There was no let up in pressure as the Bangladesh boys went the whole hog to consolidate their position against the visibly weakest team of the five-team competition. Medio Jahangir, a promising player who plays regularly for Agrani Bank in the Dhaka First Division league, raced down the flank in the 27th minute and beat the Maldives keeper with a fierce shot after being freed by a fine job from Hiru (2-0).

Mohammed Arif of Maldives missed a golden chance, somewhat against the run of play, five minutes later when he dodged past a couple of Bangladesh players but failed to finish off as he shot over in haste.

Mozammel Huq Chowdhury made it 3-0 in the 36th minute and Jahangir Hossain doubled his haul to complete the rout two minutes later (4-0).

Bangladesh maintained the same vein in the post-match

session but poor marksmanship originating from complacency perhaps stopped them from increasing the margin. Jahangir Hossain missed a fine opportunity of notching up the first hat-trick of the tournament at the flag end of the match when he evaded the charging opponent goalkeeper but his goal-bound push was deflected away to safety by a Maldives defender.

Bangladesh coach Hassanuzzaman Khan Babu, a former national player, was not too happy over the performance of his boys. He told quering newsmen after the match that his players missed a dozen chances and he would have liked them to translate the territorial dominance into goals to emerge with a healthier score line.

Maldives coach Moussa Manik was anything but amused over the result. While lauding the performance of the host team, he also said that the average age of the Bangladesh players was more than that of his players.

State Minister for Youth and Sports Sadeq Hossain Khoka officially inaugurated the ten-day tournament comprising hosts Bangladesh, Nepal, Maldives, India and Pakistan. The opening ceremony was attended, among others, by Barrister Aminul Huq, State Minister for Law and Justice, president of the Bangladesh Football Federation Siddiqueur Rahman, Mayor of Rajshahi Mizanur Rahman Minu and Zafar Imam, the general secretary of Rajshahi District Association and secretary of

the organising committee.

The opening ceremony was marked by a march-past and a 'fair play' display by the members of the Rover Scouts. Multi-coloured balloons were released to add to the colour of the biggest ever sporting event to take place in Rajshahi.

Only 10,500 tickets were sold although the stadium with a capacity of 15,000 spectators was packed like sardines and some of the more enthusiastic spectators were seen infiltrating into the ground to the right of the press box.

Complaints were aired with regard to the distribution of the VIP cards as non-VIPs nearly outnumbered the VIPs, much to the embarrassment of the organisers.

TEAMS

Bangladesh: Nasrul Huq, Emdad, Biplob Marmar, Ujjal, Ruhul Amin, Zahidul Islam (Alauddin), Arman, Porfosh Dewan, Jahangir Hossain, Mozammel Huq Chowdhury (Montruzzaman), and Hiru.

THE MALDIVES: Hossain Habib, Sameer, Marujya, Ibrahim, M Arif, Hossain Zayed, Ismail Sharif, Zahir Ismail, Fath, Syed, Adnan Habib and Ahmed Ali.

Referee — Sri Somporn (Thailand)

Linesmen — Sri Booncharit (Thailand) and Md. Mohsin Arif (Sri Lanka)

TODAY'S MATCH
India vs Nepal (4.30 pm)

Volley ball nat'ls begin

Sports Reporter

The six-day BOIC 15th national men's and 9th women's volleyball championships got under way at the Outer Stadium volleyball court yesterday.

Three men's and two women's matches were held on the opening day. In the men's event, defending champions Bangladesh Army, Bangladesh Rifles and Bangladesh Navy won their respective matches while Bangladesh Jute Mills Corporation (BJMC) and Bangladesh Ansars won the two matches in the women's event.

Army beat Comilla DSA 15-4, 15-2 and 15-3. Rifles outplayed Dhaka DSA 15-5, 15-4, 15-8 and Navy got the better of Jessore DSA 15-5, 15-2 and 15-14 in the men's event.

The women spikers of BJMC outplayed Comilla DSA 15-8, 15-6, 15-3 while the Ansars women blanked Bogra DSA 15-3, 15-1 and 15-3.

Organised by the Bangladesh Volleyball Federation, 10 men teams and an identical number women's teams are taking part in the championships.

Earlier, Jute Minister ASM Hannan Shah inaugurated the meets.

Meanwhile Tangail, Rajshahi and Dinajpur DSAs and Rajshahi University, who were expected to compete in the men's event, did not turn up.

Six men's and four women's matches will be played today. Navy take on Pabna at eight O'clock in the morning while Army meet Dhaka, Bangladesh Power Development Board (PDB) face Dhaka, Jessore clash with Pabna, Rifles take on PDB and Airforce meet Faridpur in the men's championship in the afternoon session.

Div II cricket qualifiers

Sports Reporter

A meeting of the organising committee of the Second Division qualifying cricket competition will be held at the Bangladesh Cricket Control Board (BCCB) office at 6 pm on May 10, according to a BCCB press release.

Presidents or secretaries and the captains of the participating teams have been asked to attend the meeting.

Meanwhile, so far seventy-five fresh teams have enrolled their names with an entry fee of Taka 1200 each for the qualifying meet.

Forty teams took part last year. The competition, which is likely to begin from May 15, will be held at four city venues — the Dhaka Stadium, Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium, Mohakhali T & T ground and Mirpur Pallabi ground.

Econo TT on

Sports Reporter

Wari Club, Bangladesh Ansars, Bangladesh Textile Mills Corporation and Bangladesh Biman have moved into the team semifinals of the Econo Open table tennis competition which got under way in the city yesterday.

Wari Club beat Narail DSA, Ansars outplayed Mymensingh DSA and BTMC outclassed the Former Players' Association while Bangladesh Biman received a walk-over against Jessore DSA at the National Sports Council gymnasium.

Wari, Ansars and BTMC recorded straight-set victories over their respective opponents.

The two semifinals will be held today at 11 am at the same venue.

Organised by the Bangladesh Table Tennis Players' Association (BTTPA), the four-day tournament was inaugurated by Syed Yousuf Hossain, president of the Bangladesh Table Tennis Federation.

Ishtiaque Ahmed, president of the BTTPA also spoke on the occasion.

Meanwhile, the men's singles and doubles, the boys' under-18 singles and doubles and the ladies' singles begin today at the same venue.

Fifty men, seventy boys and eighteen women are taking part in the competition, representing ten teams.

Rani maintains her lead

Sports Reporter

National women's champion Rani Hamid maintained her lead in the 18th national chess championship.

ships. At the end of the seventh round of the 15-round robin league competition at the NSC chess room yesterday, Rani Hamid had six points to her credit, from five wins and

pieces. Rani opened with a Sicilian defence and thanks to several bad moves by her opponent, who had a most inauspicious start to this year's meet—having had to concede his first round match to Ziaur Rahman due to indisposition—it was a fairly easy victory for the only lady in the 16-player competition.

Defending champion Rec

sion. The draw took Shiplu's points tally to four from seven games.

FIDE Master Ziaur Rahman sustained his title hopes by beating Anisur Rahman of Dhaka Metro. The loss left Anis stuck on three points.

Two others, Khandaker Kayes Haasan of Ansars and Syed Iqbal Rakib of Dhaka Metro, also have three points



Ziaur Rahman (R) of Biman and Anisur Rahman of Dhaka Metro ponder their moves in the seventh round of the national championship at the NSC chess room yesterday. —Star photo

two draws. Rani's Biman team mate and defending champion Reefat bin-Sattar and former national champion Jamilur Rahman of Bangladesh Ansars shared the second spot with five points each. Another former champion Ziaur Rahman, also of Biman, was in third position with four and a half points.

International Woman Master Rani Hamid yesterday got the better of last year's runner-up Ziaul Kader Tuhin, forcing a decision in her favour by the 29th move.

Playing with the white

fat, who has already lost a game, to his schoolmate Ziaur Rahman in Round Two, yesterday needed all his skills to overpower a determined Niamul Huq Niru of Ansars. Niru, who topped the 108-player qualifying meet for the nationals, wasn't forced into submission until the 56th move.

Jamilur Rahman, a FIDE Master, representing Ansars, suffered a setback of sorts, being held to a draw by Syed Ruhul Kabir Shiplu in a match that lasted 22 moves before both players realised the impossibility of any other deci-

each. Yesterday, Kayes beat Nahid Mizid of Chittagong while Rakib lost to Abdul Khaleq of Jamalpur. Mizid has two and a half points and Khaleq two points to his credit.

The match between 1990 champion Syed Tahmidur Rahman of Biman and Khalimullah Khan Kalam of Dhaka Metro and that between Dhaka Metro team mates Amir Hossain and M R Hafiz were in progress at the time of filing this report last night.

The eighth round matches will be held today.

It's neck-and-neck in Bundesliga

BONN, May 3: Dramatic late goals kept Eintracht Frankfurt and VfB Stuttgart neck-and-neck in the race for the German First Division title on Saturday, reports Reuters.

But Borussia Dortmund, who had made up the leading triumvirate, lost precious ground after just managing to snatch a 2-2 draw at home to Borussia Moenchengladbach.

Eintracht, seeking their first championship for more than 30 years, scored three times in the last six minutes to stay top with a 3-0 home victory over struggling Duisburg. However, the Frankfurt

team still only lead on goal difference from VfB, who had to hit three in the last 13 minutes to beat city rivals Stuttgart Kickers 3-1.

Dortmund slipped a point behind after their disappointing draw but it could have been worse had midfielder Michael Zorc not snatched an equaliser in the dying seconds.

Only goal difference had separated the three before one of the most important afternoons of the season.

With three rounds of the championship remaining the tightest title race for years now looks unlikely to be decided before the last day on May 16.

Eintracht's flamboyant, cigar-smoking coach Dragoslav

Stevanovic was happy that his team had kept cool under pressure.

"I knew it was going to be a very tough game," he said. "What is important is that we stayed calm, tried everything and were rewarded for it."

Eintracht look favourites to succeed because they seem to have the easiest run-in to the championship.

But all three clubs have just two days of rest before facing awkward away games in a full programme of fixtures on Tuesday evening.

VfB must travel to Moenchengladbach, Dortmund visit Wattenscheid and Eintracht play at Karlsruhe.

White hopes to break the jinx

SHEFFIELD, England, May 3: Jimmy White celebrated his 30th birthday on Saturday by reaching the final of the World Snooker Championship for the fourth time, reports Reuters.

White completed a 16-7 semifinal win over Alan McManus to set up a repeat of the 1990 final against world number one Stephen Hendry, who had the day free after finishing off Terry Griffiths 16-4 Friday.

White and Hendry contest the best of 35-frames final on Sunday and Monday for a 150,000 pounds sterling (dollar 265,000) first prize.

Hendry won the 1990 final 18-12 but White, three time runner-up, has a different script planned this time.

Beaten 18-16 by Steve Davis in the 1984 final and 18-11 by John Parrott in 1991, White believes this is his year to shed the tag of being the most tal-

ented player never to win the game's top prize.

Leading 9-6 overnight, the world number three stretched his lead to 15-7 in Saturday's opening session, which left him requiring only one frame.

He took only 12 minutes to finish the job and demolish ideas of an All-Scottish final between Hendry and McManus.

"I'm very happy with all parts of my game and I'm going to enjoy the final," White said. "I know it's my fourth time in the final and I've yet to win one but I'm going to treat it as though it's my first."

"If I lose again, what I've achieved so far will count for nothing. I know Stephen's game inside-out, he knows mine. We have 100 per cent respect for each other."

Judo coaching

Sports Reporter

The Bangladesh Judo and Karate Federation has organised a coaching programme on martial arts at the Dhanmondi indoor complex.

Experienced trainers will impart coaching which will feature separate arrangements for the girls.

Interested students, boys and girls have been advised to see the trainer and man-in-charge at the gymnasium to complete the entry formalities by May 7 at any time between 4 and 8 pm, says a Bangladesh Judo Karate Federation press release.

Coaching camp for lifters

Sports Reporter

A weightlifting coaching camp under a Chinese coach will begin on May 16 at the national weightlifting complex, Outer Stadium, said a Bangladesh Weightlifting Federation (BWF) press release yesterday.

Interested lifters of local clubs and sports organisations have been advised to enrol their names with the BWF office by May 14.

Italian b'ball

TREVISO, Italy, May 3: American forward Darren Daye pumped in points and Italian center Walter Nagnifico added decisive points in the final minute Saturday night as Scavolini Pesaro upset Benetton Treviso 99-88 in the opener of the best-of-five finals of the Italian League play offs, reports AP.

Leeds celebrate with another win



LONDON, May 3: Leeds United celebrated the English First Division soccer title they clinched a week ago with a 1-0 home win over Norwich on Saturday. Striker Rod Wallace scoring a fine solo goal after 25 minutes, reports Reuters.

Despite a week of celebrations culminating in captain Gordon Strachan hoisting aloft the league trophy at their packed Elland Road ground amid wild cheering and fireworks, there was no hangover.

French striker Eric Cantona, who before the match signed a three-year contract to complete his 900,000-pound sterling (US 1.59 million dollars) transfer from Nimes, came close to scoring twice early on.

Leeds finished on 82 points with Manchester United second on 78 and Sheffield Wednesday third on 75.

United, favourites up to last weekend to lift their first title in 25 years, rediscovered their scoring touch too late in a 3-1 home win over Tottenham.

LINEKER SIGNS OFF

England captain Gary Lineker, bound for Japan next year bowed out of English club soccer in front of a 42,000 crowd at Old Trafford with Tottenham's consolation goal four minutes from time. It was his 322nd goal in 625 first class matches.

He will lead England in the European Championship, but goes to Japan next season to end his club career.

Middlesbrough came from behind in a dramatic match at Wolverhampton to win 2-1 and clinch promotion after finishing second in Division Two behind Ipswich.

They change places with Luton Town, who lost 2-1 at Notts County and go down after escaping relegation on the final day of the season for the previous three years.

Luton needed a first away win of the season and defeat for Coventry at Aston Villa to extend their spell in the top flight in next season's new Premier League to 11 years.

Coventry obliged by going down 2-0, including a 20-second opener from their former striker Cyrille Regis.

But university students Rob Matthews' two goals sealed Luton's fate after Julian James had given them an early lead.

There was minor crowd trouble at several Second Division matches with promotion and relegation issues at stake, but none boiled over.

Mounted police rode onto restore order at Bristol Rovers where the match was held up for several minutes as Charlton fans invaded the pitch after a disallowed goal.

Charlton, who lost 1-0, needed a win for a possible place in the promotion play offs. The place was secured by Kenny Dalglish's expensively assembled Blackburn Rovers after a 3-1 win at Plymouth.

The match at Wolverhampton went ahead despite a fire which destroyed a section of Wolves' Molineux ground early in the morning and which police said was caused by arsonists.

Middlesbrough were down to 10 men when Micky Mowan

was sent off midway through the first half for retaliating and they went behind to an early second half goal by Andy Mutch.

But goals from Bernie Slaven and Paul Wilkinson in a five minute spell gave Middlesbrough the points.

Leicester, who began the day behind Middlesbrough only one goal difference, fell 2-1, at home to Newcastle, whose victory ensured Kevin Keegan's side escaped the drop to the Third Division.

Derby County, Leicester, Cambridge United and Blackburn qualified for the promotion playoffs.

WRIGHT'S HATTRICK

Arsenal bowed out as 1991 champions with a 5-1 rout of Southampton at their Highbury ground, striker Ian Wright scoring a hattrick to take his season's tally to 31 goals, four less than First Division top scorer Lineker.

Moscow stays ahead of Russia

MOSCOW, May 3: Russian President Boris Yeltsin, used to getting his way in Parliament and the cabinet room, suffered defeat on Saturday — on the soccer pitch against leaders of Moscow City Council, reports Reuters.

Yeltsin's team of ministers was ably led by captain and State Secretary Gennady Burbulis, more accustomed to issuing orders from behind a desk.

But the Russian government team lost 1-0 to the City Council before 3,000 enthusiastic fans at Moscow's Luzhnik stadium.

"Moscow's goal was scored purely by chance because they deliberately knocked out our goalkeeper," Yeltsin, who wore a purple and yellow tracksuit to coach his team from the touchline, said afterwards with a smile.

Fans howled with laughter as leading figures on both sides, many with bulging waistlines, collided or fell over the ball.

Russian team members complained they had been too busy working on economic reforms to train properly. Some hinted that their opponents had cheated by fielding too many young players.

"The Moscow side is much tougher than the International Monetary Fund," said economic reform Supremo Yegor Gaidar, who remained on the sidelines after returning from grueling talks in Washington with western financial leaders.

World chess champion Garry Kasparov, playing for the Russian team, muffed, a chance to level the score as full time approached. "Chess is much easier than football," he gasped.

Moscow Mayor and team trainer Gavril Popov gave Yeltsin a consoling hug afterwards.

"Moscow must always be slightly ahead of Russia, otherwise there could be problems," he said.

but his 29 tally in the league is one better than the Tottenham striker's First Division haul.

There were also First Division hat-tricks for David White in Manchester City's 5-2 win at Oldham and Scottish striker Frank McAvennie in relegated West Ham's 3-0 home win over Nottingham Forest.

Liverpool, who meet Second Division Sunderland in next Saturday's Football Association (FA) Cup final at Wembley, were held 0-0 at Sheffield Wednesday.

An FA Cup triumph will put Liverpool into Europe next season in the Cup Winners' Cup, while Wednesday's third place in the division put them in the UEFA Cup.

Sunderland, who barely escaped relegation prepared for their second FA Cup final as a Second Division side since their upset win over Leeds in

1973 with a 2-2 draw at home to Cambridge.

In Scotland, Rangers celebrated their Premier Division title by breaking the 100 goals mark in a league season for the first time.

Top scorer Ally McColist's first of two goals in a 2-0 win at Aberdeen was his 37th of the season and the champions' 100th.

Rangers will be looking for the double when they meet Airdrieonians, who drew 1-1 at St Johnstone, in the Scottish FA Cup final at Glasgow's Hampden Park on Saturday.

Celtic lost what had looked a certain UEFA Cup place when they crashed 2-1 at home to Hibernian, failing to recover from a Derek Whyte own goal in the 10th minute.

Hearts won 2-0 at home to Falkirk, leaping gleefully into second place to grab the UEFA Cup slot.

Barnes under scrutiny



LONDON, May 3: Liverpool's John Barnes needs every opportunity left to him at the end of a disappointing season to show he is a must for England, reports Reuters.

The news that the richly gifted player is fit for next Saturday's Football Association (FA) Cup final will have been as well received by England manager Graham Taylor as by Liverpool and their fans.

Barnes was cleared to play in the Wembley final despite being substituted after 20 minutes of Liverpool's 0-0 draw at Sheffield Wednesday on the last day of the English League season.

He pulled up sharply after chasing a through pass and immediately came off, pointing to his thigh. Barnes has been plagued by injury all season.

But Liverpool caretaker-manager Ronnie Moran said: "It was just a precaution — he'll be okay for next Saturday."

"The ball hit him on the thigh and started a spasm. It is nothing serious but there's no point in taking risks just a week before a cup final.

A good performance would not only help Liverpool win the FA Cup for the third time in seven seasons but also go some way towards ensuring Barnes is a member of

England's squad for the European Championship finals in Sweden in June.

Barnes, who has rarely reproduced his often superb club form for his country, had to pull out of last Wednesday's championship warm-up match in Moscow.

After the match, in which other players staked a claim to places in the squad, Taylor said: "He is one of the players who will be looking at himself now and wondering."

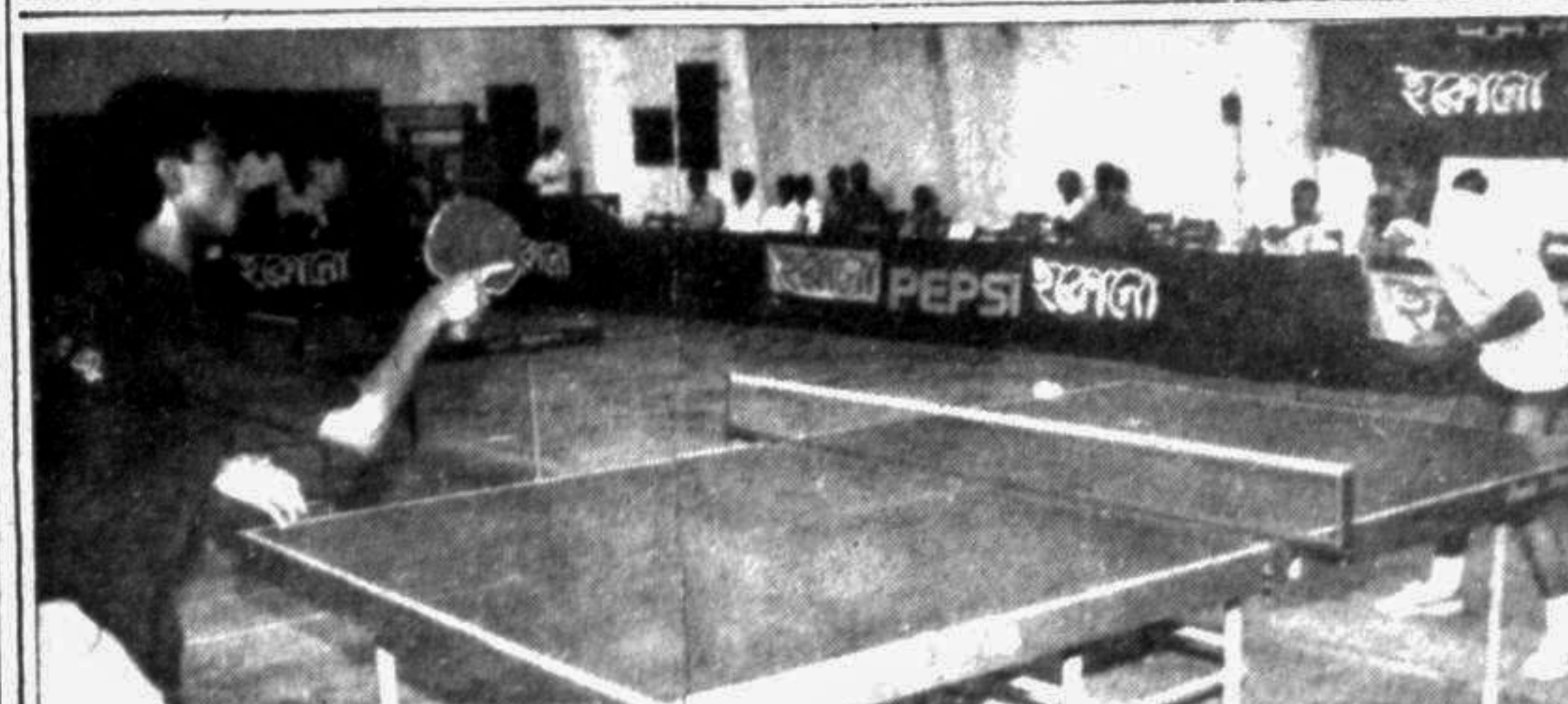
Barnes has appeared in only one of England's last 10 internationals and Taylor has just two left — away to Hungary and home to Brazil — in which to draw his final conclusions.

The Liverpool forward, a disappointment in the 1990 World Cup and 1988 European Championship, has also not scored for England for two years.

His selection for Sweden may hinge on the match with Brazil, who were on the receiving end of Barnes's most brilliant international goal in Rio De Janeiro in 1984.

The Mail on Sunday newspaper reported that Manchester City were hoping to sign Barnes, rated at three million pounds sterling US \$ 5.30 million dollars after his contract with Liverpool expires on June 30.

This interest is unlikely to interfere with the 28-year-old player's game and may even act as a spur.



Action from the opening day of the Econo Open table tennis tournament at the NSC gymnasium yesterday. —Star photo