Muslim Institute make Div II super league

Sports Reporter

The sixteen-team first round of the Sonali Bank Second Division football league concluded yesterday with Muslim Institute sharing points with Prantik Krira Chakra 1-1 at the Dhaka Stadium.

With this draw, Muslim Institute confirmed their berth in the eight-team super league to be held later on.

Others who have qualified for the super league are Shantinagar Club, City Club and Prantik Krira Chakra from Group A and Bangladesh Boys Club, Jurain Janata Club, East End Club and Dhaka Wasa.

Former First Division team Chalantika Krira Chakra, who have collected only two points from seven matches and East Bengal Sporting Club, who have managed three points also from seven outings, have been relegated from the Second Division and will play in the Third Division league next year.

Top two teams from the eight-team super league will qualify for the First Division league next year.

In yesterday's match, Muslim Institute drew first blood when Sk Noor scored from close in the 40th minute (1-0).

Md Nazrul Islam drew level for Prantik Krira Chakra in the 45th minute (1-1).

LEAGUE TABLE

Following is the points-table of the Second Division league after the completion of the 16-team first round which concluded yesterday:

Group A :	M	W	L	D	G/F	G/A	Pts
Shantinagar	7	2	5	0	13	9	9
Muslim Ins	7	3	3	1	11	8	9
City Club	7	3	3	1	7	5	9
Prantik KC	7	2	5	0	6	4	9
Lalbagh SC	7	3	2	2	7	6	8
Azad SC	7	1	3	3	6	9	5
Rayerbazar AC	7	1	3	3	3	5	5
Chalantika KC	7	1	0	6	7	14	2

Group B :							
Bangladesh Boys	7	3	3	1	11	5	9
Juraiti Janata	7	3	3	1	9	6	9
East End	7	3	2	2	8	5	8
Dhaka Wasa	7	3	2	2	9	9	8
Abhijatrik	7	3	1	3	7	9	7
B G Press	7	2	2	3	9	10	6
Mahakhali XI	7	0	6	1	9	11	6
East Bengal	7	1	1	5	5	12	3

Shuktara win in N'ganj Poura Gold Cup

From Our Correspondent

NARAYANGANJ, Sept 24: Local Shuktara Juba Sangsad edged past Mirpur Players Association 1-0 to move into the quarterfinals of the Narayanganj Poura Gold Cup tournament at the Osmani Stadium here this afternoon.

After a barren first half, Liton scored the decider in the 35th minute of the last session.

The tournament, which began yesterday, has been organised by the Narayanganj District Sports Association and participated by four teen teams including six from the Dhaka First Division league.

Earlier, Mohsin Club of Narayanganj made the quarterfinals by beating Hazipur Brothers Union in the inaugural match yesterday.

The six Dhaka Senior Division league teams are Rahmatganj Muslim Friends' Society, Arambagh Krira Sangstha, Eskaton Sabuj Sangha, Muktijoddha Krira Sangstha, Dhaka Wanderers' Club and Victoria Sporting Club.

Fancied Victoria Sporting Club will play Nitaiganj Krira Chakra in today's match at the same venue.

TEAMS

SHUKTARA: Rabiul, Tagar, Akhter, Goutam, Hossain (capt), Nitta, Tapan, Shaheen, Rabi, Siraj and Liton

MIRPUR: Razzaque, Ruhul Amin, Rafiq, Shahed, Babu, Imtiaz Sultan, Kabir, Moin, Shohag (capt), Zubair and Lipa.

BFF to send coach to India

Sports Reporter

The Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) will send a local football coach to the National Institute of Sports in Patiala, in Punjab, India for a nine-month long training programme which will begin from next month, according to a BFF source.

The BFF have already asked the DSAs and clubs to submit their nominees for the course.

The BFF also laid down a set criteria for the nomination of the candidate. According to this the candidate must be at least 35 years old and must be an HSC pass.

In addition, he must have the experience of either representing the national team or playing in the Dhaka First Division league.

The selection committee of the BFF will select the coach after receiving entries sometime early next month.

Maradona ready for action

SEVILLE, Spain, Sept 25: Diego Maradona underwent medical tests and had his first formal training session with Sevilla on Thursday, reports Reuter.

The Argentine declared he was fine, joking with reporters: "I don't think I could last the full 90 minutes at the moment, but I'd manage 89 minutes."

Maradona, transferred from Napoli for 7.5 million US dollars, plays his first game for Sevilla in a friendly against Bayern Munich on Monday.

Maradona, who recently completed a 15-month ban from world soccer for cocaine abuse, showed in training that he has not lost his basic skills, curling left-foot shots past Sevilla goalkeeper Juan Unzue.

"I am looking forward to playing with my new team-mates because they have given me a great welcome. They have made me feel part of the group because everything here is new to me and now I want to help them to give the fans the team they want," the 31-year-old midfielder said.

He said his medical tests had gone well. "Ankles, knees, stomach, back, blood and urine tests, they did everything. The doctor said I seem perfectly fit to play."

Sevilla club doctor Leal Graciani confirmed that all signs were the player was "in perfect shape."

Maradona was expected to sign a contract later on Thursday for one season with an option for a second year. Newspapers have speculated he will receive 3 million US dollars a season.

Meanwhile in Buenos Aires, Argentina's coach Alfio Basile said on Thursday he would be asking Sevilla to let Maradona play in an international tournament in Saudi Arabia next month.

Alternatively, Basile hopes he may be available for a friendly against Poland on November 25 in Mar Del Plata.

Basile said: "We're travelling to Saudi Arabia on October 12 and before that I'll be going to Seville to talk with Diego and the club's authorities to see if we can work out something."

Next month's tournament involves Argentina, Saudi Arabia, the United States and the Ivory Coast.

Basile said: "We want Diego to recover his footing, to get back into shape because we know that his enormous talent is still there."

Argentinian soccer star Diego Maradona shoots during a training session for his new club, the F C Sevilla on Thursday in Seville. — AFP photo

Too many idle stars in Italian league worries FIFA

ROME, Sept 25: FIFA, football's governing body, plan to tackle the problem of the surplus of foreign players in the Italian League which has left millionaire stars sitting on the bench, reports AFP.

General secretary Josef Blatters said the issue would be addressed at the organisation's December meeting.

"What's happening at the moment is not fair to the countries of origin of these players", he said in a television interview on Thursday.

"And it's not good for them that each week they must sit in the sidelines," Blatter added: "We want to open a dialogue to avoid the concentration of too many star players in one club, especially if the rules curtail them."

While not referring to any players in particular, the problem of a surplus in especially acute in AC Milan, where six foreigners must compete for the three places allowed under Italian League rules.

It has led to the farcical situation where 11-million-dollar signing Jean Pierre Papin of France and Dutch striker Ruud Gullit have been benched as coach Fabio Capello juggles his over abundance of talent.

Dutchmen Marco van Basten and Frank Rijkaard have secured regular spots with the Italian champions, while Gullit, Papin and nine-million dollar signing Dejan Savicevic of Montenegro have alternated in the attack.

Sixth foreigner, Zvonimir Boban of Croatia, has also been idle.

England's David Platt, bought for more than 10 million dollars from Bari, has also had to fight for his place in Juventus, while sweeper Laurent Blanc, frustrated with the position as the fourth foreigner at Napoli, moved this week to French club, Nimes.

NIMES LOAN BLANC

Meanwhile, a Reuter report from Nimes, France, said: French international Libero Laurent Blanc has been transferred from Napoli to Nimes on a one-year loan, the struggling French First Division soccer club said on Thursday.

Blanc, 27, moved from Montpellier to Napoli last season but never settled in at the Italian club.

He arrived in Nimes for a training session on Wednesday and was expected to make his debut for the club today in the French League against Sochaux. Nimes are currently 19th in the league.

The transfer fee was not disclosed but Italian press reports said Nimes paid Napoli one billion Lira (800,000 US dollars) for the loan.

Top teams prepare for tough time

PARIS, Sept 25: AC Milan and Bayern Munich, early leaders in the Italian and German leagues, both face their toughest challenges of the season so far this weekend, reports AFP.

Milan, unbeaten last season and winners of all three games so far, have the kind of selection problems most clubs can only dream about as they prepare to visit 1991 champions Sampdoria in Genoa.

With a surplus of non-Italian players to call on, coach Fabio Capello has had to spend as much time soothing bruised superstar egos as working out the best combination of his assets.

Dutch star Ruud Gullit was reported to have been plunged into a deep depression by being dropped last week and European player-of-the-year Jean-Pierre Papin, also dropped last week, has complained he hasn't had a fair chance to display his striking skills.

Nevertheless, Capello is likely to ignore their claims and opt for an attacking combination of Italy's Daniele Massaro, who has twice come on as a substitute and scored, and Dutchman Marco van Basten.

Second placed Torino travel to newly-promoted Pescara, while neighbours Juventus will be hoping for more of the same from England's David Platt, who scored on his league debut last week, when they entertain as Roma.

Inter Milan, who have a born-again Salvatore "Toto" Schillachi in the side, play host to Fiorentina.

Lazio are at home to Genoa but fans of Rome's second side will have to wait to see Paul Gascoigne weave his magic in a full league encounter.

Gazza's return to competitive football on Wednesday after 16 months out with a serious knee injury was a qualified success. The England midfielder scored one, made another and generally ran the show in a 3-0 friendly victory over his old club Tottenham.

Nevertheless Gascoigne could only manage a little over an hour and looked short of the fitness he will need to make his ball mastery count in the world's best league.

In Germany, unbeaten league leaders Bayern Munich also face a tough test when they receive Borussia Dortmund, the side that knocked them out of the German Cup in a penalty shoot out two weeks ago, at home.

The league leaders started the season with five straight wins but stuttered last weekend, managing only a 1-1 home draw with lowly Wattenscheid despite the debut of international midfield dynamo Lother Matthaus. Fourth-placed Dortmund were meanwhile winning 1-0 away to bottom-of-the-table Cologne.

Among the other teams chasing Bayern, champions Stuttgart, who pipped Dortmund and Eintracht Frankfurt for the title on the final day of last season, take on mid-table F C Kaiserlautern. Bayer Leverkusen are at home to Schalke and Einteracht are away to UEFA Cup champion Werder Bremen.

Saturday also sees SSV Hamburg playing their first match under the command of Benno Mohlamann. The second from bottom side, still without a win, are away to Wattenscheid. Mohlamann was promoted from assistant to coach following the sacking of Egon Coorder on Monday.

Spain's weekend programme has been completely overshadowed by Diego Maradona's scheduled debut for Sevilla in a money-spinning friendly against Bayern on Monday.

The Andalusian club has brought forward their Sunday match against Logrones to Saturday to give the players time to rest ahead of the brilliant Argentinian's curtain call in front of a packed 40,000 crowd and a worldwide TV audience of millions.

Managing Director of the Pragati Insurance Ltd A K M Rafiqul Islam inaugurated the eight-team super league of the Pragati Insurance Third Division football league at the Mirpur Stadium yesterday. The DMFA secretary Kazi Mishu was present at the opening ceremony.

TCCB fines Lamb £5000

LONDON, Sept 25: English county Surrey have been given a suspended fine for ball-tampering, the illegal practice which sparked a major row, involving one of their players, between England and Pakistan this season, reports Reuter.

The Test and County Cricket Board (TCCB) said on Thursday they had fined Surrey a maximum 1,000 pounds sterling (1,700 US dollars), suspended for two years, for repeated breaches of the rules and regulations.

Surrey were warned in both 1990 and 1991 for breaching the law which bans players from altering the condition of the ball.

The TCCB's action came just 24 hours after they had fined Allan Lamb a record 5,000 pounds (8,500 US dollars) for breaking his England contract by alleging in an unauthorised newspaper article that two Pakistan bowlers had tampered with the ball.

Lamb accused Waqar Younis, who plays for Surrey and competed in the two games for which the county were previously warned, and Lanchashire's Wasim Akram of repeatedly tampering with the ball to produce "murderous late swing that won them the Test series."

Pakistan officials and the two bowlers repeatedly and vehemently denied any charges of ball-tampering.

The International Cricket Council, who investigated the claims, were severely criticised by the English media for refusing to reveal why a ball was changed during a one-day international between England and Pakistan.

Lalmatia beat Gandaria in Div III super league

Sports Reporter

Lalmatia Club made a good start by beating Gandaria Famous Sporting Club 3-1 in the inaugural match of the eight-team super league of the Pragati Insurance Third Division football championship at the Mirpur Stadium yesterday.

Asadullah, Sajjadul Islam and Mozammel Haq scored for Lalmatia while Babu Das Deba pulled one back for Gandaria Famous.

Asif Ahmed and Ripon Das of Gandaria Famous and Aziz of Lalmatia received the yellow cards for rough play.

The six others teams of the super league are, Maghbazar Kishalay Sangha, Purbachal Parishad, Matuail Juba Sangha, Badda Jagarani Sangsad, Bashabo Tarun Sangha and Kadamtala Sangsad.

The top two finishers of the league will earn promotion to the Second Division league next year.

Managing Director of Pragati General Insurance Ltd, the sponsors of the meet, AKM Rafiqul Islam inaugurated the super league. General Secretary of the Dhaka Metropolis Football Association Kazi Mishu was also present.

Earlier, 17 teams in two groups had participated in the first round with the top four teams from each cluster moving into the super league.

Nabarun Sangsad, who had not turned up for any of their matches, have naturally been scratched from the league and will play in the Pioneer League next year along with Power Development Board Sporting Club, who finished last in Group B.

India off to great start as Paes gets the better of Bates

NEW DELHI, Sept 25: Exhibiting his vast repertoire of strokes young Leander Paes stunned England number one Jeremy Bates in four sets to get India a remarkable start in the crucial Davis Cup World Group qualifier here today, reports PTI.

The 19-year-old former junior Wimbledon and US Open champion turned an "unkind draw" into his advantage and tamed his opponent 6-2, 6-7 (3-7, 7-5, 6-1 after about three hours of battle at the Centre Court of the Delhi Lawn Tennis Association.

The fancied England player, who had a series of excellent victories recently over Michael Chang, Thierry Champion and John McEnroe, was handicapped today with a sore elbow and pulled stomach muscle.

Bates committed as many as 14 double faults in the match which he described as his "worst ever Davis Cup performance".

Paes said, "It's a great win. Bates started of well but lost his tempo midway."

"My strategy was to keep him (Bates) away from the net and it succeeded. And he lost his rhythm and wore down," Paes said.

Paes said he always started from "scratch and then give his best. Today it turned out to be my best."

AFP added, Ramesh Krishnan and Mark Petchey were level on two sets all Friday when bad light stopped the second singles match in the Davis Cup World Group qualifying tie between India and Britain.

Petchey had fought back to draw level 3-6, 6-3, 3-6, 7-6 (7-2) at the Delhi Lawn Tennis Association's Centre Court when Darkness fell in a marathon match that had already lasted three hours and 11 minutes.

Petchey is fighting to level the tie which India lead 1-0 after Leander Paes beat British number one Jeremy Bates in the opening singles. The match resumes Saturday.

Swiss bank on Rosset against Brazil

GENEVA, Sept 25: Switzerland are putting their faith in Marc Rosset's fearsome serve and a fast carpet surface for this weekend's Davis Cup semifinal against Brazil, reports Reuter.

Brazil, who like Switzerland have never reached a Davis Cup final, prefer the slower clay on which they sensationally defeated Germany and Italy.

But hosts Switzerland, who upset Cup holders France in the quarter-finals, have chosen a fast court to favour their serve and volley specialists Rosset and Jakob Hlasek.

Olympic singles champion Rosset, 21, who beat then world number one American Jim Courier on his way to gold in Barcelona, is one of the fastest servers on the circuit and has been timed at 213 kph.

Geneva-born Rosset hammered over 50 aces in training at the Palexpo venue and has this month replaced Hlasek as the Swiss number one.

Brazilian Davis Cup stalwart Luiz Mattar, 29, whose five tournament wins have all come on clay, was surprised at the speed of the court. "I have played indoors in Basle which was reputed to be fast but it is nothing compared to this court," he said.

Today's opening singles, when Jaime Oncins is expected to face Rosset, could well spell the end of an unbeaten run in nine Davis Cup ties for the 22-year-old from Sao Paulo. All his wins were on clay.

Oncins, a pure baseliner, last month replaced Mattar as Brazil's number one.

Swiss captain Roland Stadler said his players were fired up for the three-day tie.

"You can feel the tension in their reactions when they make errors during training. But I am sure it will all wash away when they are on court," he said.

"Of course, the pressure will be on us this time. Against the Netherlands and France we were the outsiders and had nothing to lose."

Against French Open champions Hlasek and Rosset in the doubles, Brazil's captain Paulo Cleto is likely to stay with Fernando Roese and Mattar, who beat Italy's doubles pair in the previous round.

No favours for Stefan Edberg

MINNEAPOLIS, Sept 25: "Great, isn't it?" Stefan Edberg said when he heard the news.

Edberg's worst surface is red clay, not coincidentally the surface the US Tennis Association picked for this weekend's Davis Cup semifinal between the United States and Sweden at Target Centre, reports AP.

"The first thing you've got to go with is what's best for your game, not necessarily what's not good for another person's game," Andre Agassi said Thursday after learning he'll meet Edberg, the world's top-ranked player, in Friday's second singles match.

Jim Courier plays Nicklas Kulti in the opening match. The US doubles team of John McEnroe and Pete Sampras takes on Edberg and Anders Jarryd Saturday. Sunday features two more singles matches: Courier vs Edberg and Agassi vs Kulti.

The winner of the best-of-five event advances to the Dec 4-6 final against the winner of the Brazil-Switzerland semifinal, which is being played this weekend in Geneva.

"I feel Jim and I are, arguably, the best clay-courters right now," Agassi said. "With that in mind, you've got to go with our strengths and hope that, along the way, it fits in a few of their weaknesses."

It does.

Edberg isn't exactly helpless on red clay. Although the only Grand Slam event he hasn't won, the French Open, is played on clay, he did reach the 1989 final before losing to Michael Chang and the 1991 quarterfinal before falling to Courier. He won this year's tour event in Hamburg on clay.

"But he's not as comfortable on clay as he is on grass and hardcourt," Sweden's captain, John-Anders Sjogren, said. "So while they have two of the best clay-court players, I think they chose clay to bother Stefan."

STEFAN EDBERG

It's ironic that clay is the American's choice against Sweden. Traditionally, Europeans have been better on clay than US players.

In fact, the last time these nations met, in the 1984 Davis Cup final in Sweden, the hosts chose red clay because Mats Wilander and Henrik Sundstorm were better on that surface than McEnroe and Jimmy Connors.

That year, the 18-year-old Edberg teamed with Jarryd to hand McEnroe and Peter Fleming their first-ever Davis Cup doubles defeat, clinching Sweden's surprising victory.

As good as Edberg has become since his Davis Cup debut eight years ago, US team members say it would be foolish to focus solely on him.

"After the experience at Lyon, I don't think you ever can cut anybody out," said Agassi, who opened the 1991 Davis Cup final by beating Guy Forget before host France won the next three matches and the title.

"We went there and they were saying that Forget was the man to beat and, after I beat him, most likely we're gonna win the whole thing pretty easily.It didn't turn out that way."

Kulti, who beat Agassi in a 1990 clay-court tournament, defeated McEnroe and Chang at this year's French Open. Since then, however, he has played poorly and his ranking has dropped to 71st. He wasn't even chosen for Sweden's Davis Cup team until Magnus Gustafsson got hurt last week.

"I'm surprised that his results have been so uneven since the French Open," McEnroe said of the 21-year-old Kulti. "I think he's certainly capable of playing some very fine clay-court tennis. But whether he's gonna beat Andre or Jim, no, I don't think he'll beat either of them."

Which would put Sweden's fate squarely on the racquet of Edberg —in a US arena, on the US-selected surface, less than two weeks after he needed three five-set victories to win the US Open.

"It's going to be a tough weekend," he said. "I feel we are very much the underdogs."

Mac puts the record straight

MINNEAPOLIS, Minnesota, Sept 25: John McEnroe was holding court at a Davis Cup news conference on Thursday when suddenly he was interrupted by a now familiar sound — the whirring of a camera rewinding, reports Reuter.

The memory of McEnroe's US Open tantrum earlier this month, which was sparked by the same noise during his match against Davis Cup teammate Jim Courier, brought an eruption of laughter from journalists, players and tennis officials who were gathered in the room for the interview session.

McEnroe, who was in an especially jocular mood, turned to the photographer.

"Could you wait until after the press conference to do that please," he said, bringing another wave of laughter.

"Let me ask you this," McEnroe continued, "Do these cameras automatically rewind at the end of the ...."

McEnroe was then interrupted by Courier, who said: "They automatically rewind just before you serve, John."

After another raucous laugh, McEnroe, whose US Open histrionics eventually led to a photographer being ejected from the courtside area, decided he had to set the record straight about the highly publicised incident.

"And I want to say I wasn't the person who had that photographer thrown out," said McEnroe, who had stormed around the court shouting that the guilty party should be ejected or at least flogged for his transgression.

"I want to make that clear because people insinuated that I had that photographer thrown out. It was because he flipped the bird (made an obscene gesture) to the referee."

"So let's get that clear."

That clear, McEnroe finally decided to let teammates—Courier, Andre Agassi and Pete Sampras — answer a question or two about the Davis Cup semifinal between the United States and Sweden to begin the next day.

BCCB deadline

Sports Reporter

The inter-club transfers of cricket players for the 1992-93 season ended on Thursday, September 24.

Starting from September 18 it gave the players seven days to make up their minds. The deadline has passed, yet the melody lingers on as the Bangladesh Cricket Control Board (BCCB), in a circular yesterday, asked players to contact the BCCB within three days to report about any dispute in the list of the 178 players who sought transfers this year.

35 picked for coaches' course

Sports Reporter

The selection committee of the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) has nominated 35 coaches for a week-long training camp under a German coach which will be held from November 1 to 7 at the Mirpur Stadium, according to a BFF source.

Among the 35 coaches, five are from the First Division league, six from the Second Division, another six from the Third Division while ten coaches have been selected from the Pioneer league.

In addition, coaches of the eight district sports associations, who played in the Ma-o-Moni Cup national under-14 soccer finals held from August 26 to September 3, have been selected for the course.

National coach Abdus Sadek and assistant coach of the reigning First Division league champions Abahani Krira Chakra Abdul Gaffer will assist the German coach during the programme.