

### NBL volleyball final today

**Sports Reporter**  
Defending champions Titus Club take on their arch-rivals Bangladesh Bites in a repeat of the NBL First Division volleyball league final at the Outer Stadium volleyball court at 3:30 this afternoon.

Yesterday, in the battle of the losing semifinalists Water Development Board beat Power Development Board 15-9, 15-3 and 15-10 to clinch the third position.

Works Minister Rafiqul Islam Miath will give away the prizes as the chief guest after today's final.

### Nat'l karate

**Sports Reporter**  
The two-day tenth national karate championships will be held from April 14, and 15 in Chittagong, says a press release.

The meet was originally scheduled for February 17 and 18 in Dhaka.

### More money likely for the needy

**Sports Reporter**  
The Ministry of Youth and Sports is considering raising the distressed sports persons' fund to 75 lakh taka from the present allocation of 55 lakh taka, according to a highly placed ministry official.

If the additional money is realised two hundred more poor sportspersons of the country will receive government grants and stipends.

At present 790 sports personalities receive government doles.

### Ali Cup soccer

**Sports Reporter**  
Ganaktuli Kishore Football XI (Reds) and Noor Sporting Club have moved into the final of the Ali Sports Cup juvenile football tournament.

Ganaktuli Reds and Noor Sporting Club won their respective semifinal encounters yesterday, held at two city venues.

At the Azampur ground, Ganaktuli Reds outplayed Ganaktuli Kishore XI (Yellows) by four goals to nil. Mohsin netted twice and Shah Alam and Swapan once each for the winners.

At the Outer Stadium, Noor Sporting Club beat Baddanagar Kishore Sangha by two goals to nil.

Raju and Maksud were the scorers.

### Rajshahi hockey

**Sports Reporter**  
The prize-giving ceremony of the Rajshahi Ali Imam Pintu memorial hockey league was held in Rajshahi yesterday, says a press release.

Boikali Sangha with ten points and Friends Sporting Club with eight points finished as champions and runners-up respectively in the eight-team league.

Mayor of the Rajshahi City Corporation Mizanur Rahman Minu gave away the prizes as chief guest.

### T & T badminton

**Sports Reporter**  
A five-day badminton competition of T & T Board began at the Telecom Training Centre yesterday, reports UNB.

Forty-eight shuttlers representing 10 teams are taking part in the competition.

### PDB athletics on

The two-day annual inter-office athletic meet of the Bangladesh Power Development Board (PDB) began at the Rajarbagh Police parade ground yesterday, reports UNB.

Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain, Minister for Energy and Mineral Resources, inaugurated the meet.

About 300 competitors from 28 teams including 18 offices and 10 schools of the PDB are taking part in the meet.

Acting Chairman of the PDB and president of the Sports and Cultural Committee of the organisation Obaidul Haque were present on the occasion.

State Minister for Youth and Sports Sadek Hossain Khoka will attend the closing function of the meet today and distribute the prizes.

### Ctg schools games

CHITTAGONG, Feb 10: Chittagong region earned the championship in the Chittagong divisional school and madrasa winter games and sports competition which ended at the Chittagong Stadium here this afternoon, reports BSS.

Chittagong region collected 215 points while Comilla region collected 137 points. In the boys' senior group Nasiruddin of Chittagong Government High School became individual champion securing 16 points. He also became the fastest boy in the senior group.

In the boys' (junior) group Md Jafar Iqbal of Rangamati Paharika High School became individual champion collecting 9 points.

## HK Sixes beckons Bangladesh

**Sports Reporter**  
Bangladesh is likely to take part in the world invitation six-a-side cricket tournament to be held from next October 1 to 3 in Hong Kong, according to an official of the Bangladesh Cricket Control Board (BCCB) yesterday.

The official, who preferred not to be named, said that the president of the Hong Kong Cricket Association Hatim Ibrahim had handed over the invitation letter to the BCCB vice-president, Raisuddin Ahmed during the ICC meeting in London last week.

The Hong Kong Cricket Association arranged the first ever Hong Kong Sixes meet last October when a team from Pakistan led by Javed Miandad won the championship beating arch-rivals India.

The six other teams which participated in the inaugural tourney were Australia, England, New Zealand, Sri Lanka, the West Indies and Zimbabwe.

However, the forthcoming tournament will not be restricted only to the Test playing nations; some associate members of the ICC will also be allowed to participate.

But it could not be ascertained how many non-Test playing nations would be invited for the Hong Kong Sixes tournament.

The BCCB will consider the

invitation letter at its meeting later.

**NATIONAL CRICKET**  
Meanwhile, the BCCB has made a minor change in the venues for the 19th national youth and national cricket championships beginning from February 25 and March 7 respectively.

Jhenidah replaced Jessore and Pabna in the youth and national championships respectively.

The four other youth cricket venues are Comilla, Tangail, Satkhira and Thakurgaon.

The six national zonal venues are Sylhet, Tangail, Khulna, Thakurgaon, Dhaka and Pabna's replacement Jhenidah.

With the number of participating teams for national championship raised to 50 from 47, another zonal venue may be introduced, BCCB treasurer Reza-e-Karim told this correspondent yesterday.

The zonal champions along with the defending champions Chittagong and last year's runners-up Sylhet will contest in the final round to be held in the city in late March.

The finals of the youth championship will also be held in Dhaka with the zonal champions and holders Jessore and runners-up Rajshahi taking part.

**MILNARS FINAL**  
Meanwhile, the Milnars

First Division league title deciding play-off between Warf Club and Dhanmondi Club is scheduled for tomorrow at the Mirpur Pallabi ground.

Both Warf and Dhanmondi have 20 points from 12 outgoings, including four super league matches, each.

However, the match is only of academic interest since both teams have already earned promotion to the Navana Premier Division league next season.

### NAVANA CRICKET

Meanwhile, the prestigious Navana league resumes today after a day's break at two city venues.

Bangladesh Biman take on Kalabagan Kira Chakra at the Dhaka Stadium while Surja Tarun Club meet babes Uddy Club at the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium in the two matches of the day.

Following is the points table of the Navana Premier Division league, as on Tuesday:

Team	M	W	L	Pts
Abahani	8	7	1	14
Gulshan Youth	9	7	2	14
Mohammedans	7	6	1	12
GMCC	7	5	2	10
Brothers	8	4	4	8
Biman	8	4	4	8
Surja Tarun	6	3	3	6
Victoria	9	3	6	6
Uddy	8	3	5	6
Kalabagan	8	2	6	4
PWD	10	0	10	0

### Nat'l juniors from tomorrow

**Sports Reporter**  
The two-day eleventh national junior athletics championship will begin at the Hockey Stadium tomorrow February 12.

About 150 competitors from 20 teams will contest in 15 events. Thirty top athletes of this fray will be invited in the Bangladesh Kira Shiksha Pratishthan for coaching.

State Minister for Youth and Sports Sadek Hossain will inaugurate the meet at nine in the morning.

### Women leave for Iran today

A five-member Bangladesh women's team will leave for Iran today to participate in the first women's sports championship for the Islamic countries to be held in Tehran February 13-19, reports UNB.

Former sprint queen and joint secretary of the Women's Sports Federation Sufia Khatoun will lead the Bangladesh squad.

Other members are: Firoza Khatoun, Nilfar Yasmin (athletics), Kazi Shahana Parveen (shooting) and Monira Rahman Dalia (swimming).

Firoza, the fastest woman of the country, along with Nilfar will compete in the 60 and 200 metres sprints and the long jump.

Dalia, winner of six swimming gold in the recent Bangladesh Games, will participate in the 100 and 200 metres free-style, 100 metres butterfly and 100 metres backstroke.

SAF Games gold medalist Kazi Shahana Parveen will participate in her favourite air rifle event.

### Smooth sail for Seles, Shriver

CHICAGO, Feb 10: No 1-ranked Monica Seles needed just 49 minutes to defeat Kimberly Po 6-1, 6-2 in a second-round match at the Virginia Slims of Chicago tournament, reports AP.

The top-seeded Seles blasted away from the baseline Tuesday, while Po committed numerous unforced errors in trying to outslug her opponent.

Seles said she was somewhat bothered by the lighting at the University of Illinois-Chicago Pavilion, yet she never lost control of the match.

"While I lost the ball a few times, Kimberly played some great points," Seles said. "She broke me three times in the match, which has me somewhat concerned because I was not serving as well as I should."

It was Seles' first win at the Chicago tournament. In her 1990 debut, she lost in the first round.

In first-round matches Tuesday, Ann Grossman outlasted Betsy Nagelson 6-3, 7-6 (9-7) and eighth-seeded Pam Shriver survived her first test, downing Debbie Graham 6-0, 7-5.

Shriver's overall court finesse and patience wore down Graham, who beat Shriver in two previous matches.

"I thought to myself, wait a minute. No good player loses to anybody three times in a row. And I was right," Shriver said.

Shriver got off to a rocky start in the opening set, double faulting four times. After still winning, "I kind of knew this would be my day," she said.

Shriver broke Graham for the first time to make it 2-0, and then at 4-0, a close call went to Shriver.

The second set was deadlocked at 5-5 when Shriver held serve, the broke Graham in the 12th game to win the match.

## Forget's most forgettable days

MILAN, Feb 10: World number 10 Guy Forget completed two of the most forgettable days of his professional career

when he crashed out in the first round of the 800,000 dollar Milan Indoor tournament on Tuesday, reports Reuter.

The number five seed was wiped off court 7-6, 6-3, by Dutchman Jan Stemerink, who continued his impressive form for last week when he was the losing finalist in Marseille.

On Monday, Forget and his highly-ranked doubles partner, Michael Stich, fell victim in straight sets to little-known Hendrick-Jan Davids and Libor Pimek.

It was the Frenchman's second opening round singles exit in three tournaments this year.

He failed to find the range on his powerful left-handed serve and managed only a 51 per cent success rate on his first serve.

Stemerink, a fellow left-hander ranked 39, seized on the opportunity to attack Forget's second serve and rushed forward to volley whenever he could, making 79 visits to the net to Forget's 27.

There were no such dramas for top seed Stefan Edberg who cruised through his opening match against the potentially dangerous Ukrainian Andrei Medvedev, 6-3, 7-5.

Medvedev started with a bang, winning the first three games but Edberg steadied and reeled off the next six to take the set, and a stranglehold on the match.

Ivan Lendl took the most difficult route possible to reach the second round when he squeezed past Diego Nargiso in three thrilling tiebreak sets.

At 32, the oldest player in the field, Lendl belied his advancing years to come back from a set behind and a serve break down in the second set to beat the 107th-ranked Italian 6-7, 7-6, 7-6.

After two hours and 50 minutes the former world number one eventually prevailed 8-6 in the final set tiebreak.

But it was hardly a convincing performance from the fourth seed, who started 1993 with defeat in the first round of the Australian Open and the second round in Marseille.

Lendl looked to have thrown away his chance in the final set tiebreak when he blew three consecutive match

points at 6-3 but then closed out the match with winners on the next two points.

Nargiso said Lendl's experience finally told in the end. "I



GUY FORGET

## Agassi eyes the crest

MEMPHIS, Feb 10: Third-seeded Andre Agassi scored a 6-2, 6-2 victory over Simon Youl in the second round of the \$780,000 Kroger-St Jude International, reports AP.

Agassi, ranked eighth by the ATP Tour, took the victory Tuesday night, jobbing the final point of the match over the Australian's head and breaking his serve.

Agassi said he is focusing on moving up to the top five, then the top three.

"It's going to require a bigger commitment on all sides," he said. "I'm going to have to sacrifice a lot of personal time. I'm going to have to pay more of a cost when it comes to preparing for tournaments."

Agassi, a 1988 winner of the Memphis tournament, won his first tournament of the year in San Francisco last week. He was ranked No 3 in 1988.

"There is a mixture of a lot of things I need to do, but it starts with making my tennis No 1," he said.

In an earlier second-round match, 10th-seed Mark Woodforde took his game to the net to beat Jimmy Arias 6-3, 6-3.

"One of his weaknesses is he couldn't really finish points

at the net," Woodforde said. Arias doesn't volley naturally, he said.

"He has a very good forehand, but I don't mind if he runs me around, because I can chase him down."

Arias, atop 10 player in the early '80s, came to the tournament ranked 175th. He moved to the second round with a 7-6 (7-4), 6-4 victory Monday over Brian Davenport.

Also in second-round play, unseeded Richey Reneberg eliminated 16th-seed Renzo Furlan of Italy 7-6 (10-8), 6-4.

Reneberg was sidelined for three months last year with a herniated disk and fell from 27th to 95th. Ranked 67th coming to Memphis, he said he hopes to approach 30th by the end of the year.

"Once you come back and play after you've been hurt, you really appreciate playing," he said.

Unseeded Todd Martin defeated 12th-seed David Wheaton 6-4, 6-3.

The tournament at The Racquet Club of Memphis wraps up Sunday.

Top-seed Jim Courier, ranked No 1, was scheduled to play Wednesday, as were second-seed Michael Chang and defending champion MaliVai Washington, the No 4 seed.



Former Australian fast bowler Dennis Lillee gives tips to India's all-rounder Manoj Prabhakar (R) on the eve of the second Test against England at the Chepauk, Madras yesterday. Dennis Lillee is in the city to oversee his Madras-based Pace Academy. — AFP photo

## England depend a lot on Gattling

MADRAS, Feb 10: Mike Gattling, swiftly emerging as England's key batsman on their Indian tour, goes back on Thursday to the ground where he came of age as a Test batsman, reports Reuter.

England, beaten by eight wickets in Calcutta, must win in the hot, airless bowl of Chepauk if they are to breathe life into their chances of taking the three-Test series. Gattling is the man who can inspire them to do so.

Eight years ago Gattling came to Madras with the burden of failing to record a Test century in seven seasons as an England player weighing heavily on his shoulders.

He made 207 and Graeme Fowler 201 as England won by nine wickets. Flush with self-belief Gattling went on to hit another eight Test Tons before being banned, in 1989, for leading a rebel team to South Africa.

Recalled for this tour, he top-scored in both innings in Calcutta and clearly has the best technique in the side for playing spin. And that, despite the memories Madras revives of Neil Foster and John Lever, will be a key factor in the Test.

Foster was England's other star in 1984/85, taking 11-163 in the match. Essex colleague Lever took 7-77 eight years earlier as England again won in Madras and Lever was accused of using Vaseline to swing the ball.

Essex team-mates Keith Fletcher, now coach, and Graham Gooch, now captain, are well aware of those performances but they are dangerously misleading.

In the last Test here, a surprising five years ago, leg-spinner Narendra Hirwani took 16 wickets on his debut to earn India victory over the West Indies.

The previous year off-spinner Greg Mathews took five in each innings as Australia played out the second tied Test.

The wicket has taken spin in recent domestic matches and, said Indian captain Mohammad Azharuddin this week, "the pitch should support our spinners."

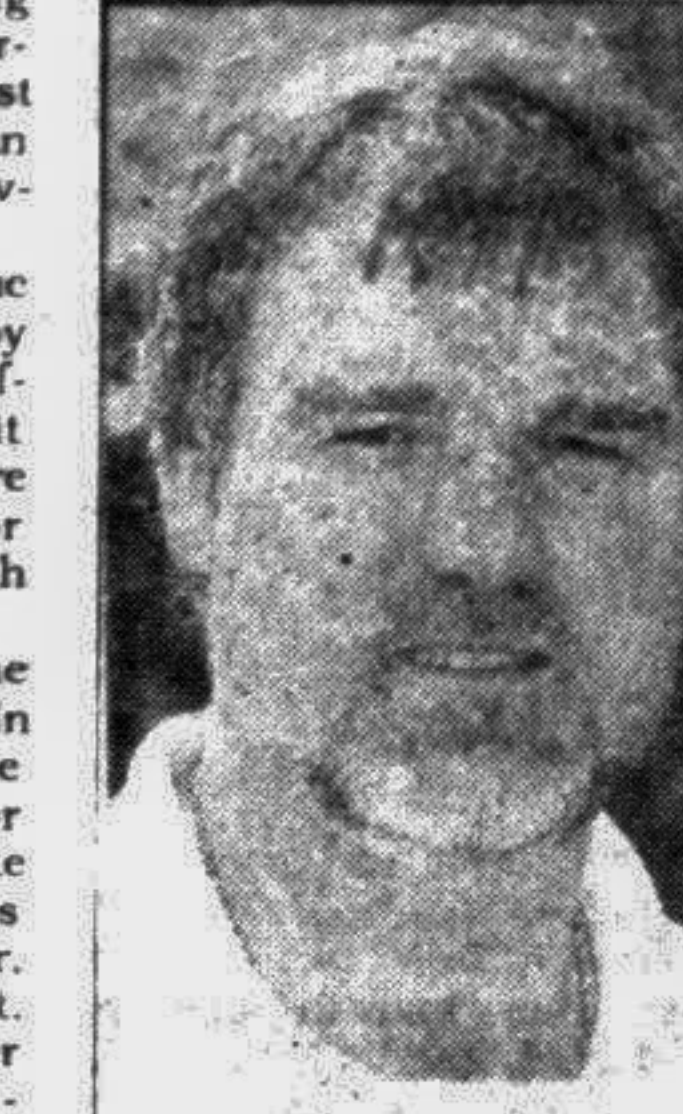
Given that spinners Anil Kumble, Rajesh Chauhan and Venkat Raju were the architects of the Calcutta win with 17 wickets between them that is hardly surprising.

A turning track holds few fears for India's batsmen either, as Gooch admits.

"They are very adept against spin, they have a good technique against it and are particularly good with the pads."

That is not the case with England and Gooch added: "We certainly need to bat between, we did not bat as well as we can in Calcutta and that led to our losing the Test. We need to raise our game."

Indian manager Ajit Wadekar has also called for improvement in his team's batting.



MIKE GATTING

"I want the top order to click and play to potential. If you take away the contributions of Azharuddin (182) and Sachin Tendulkar (50) from Calcutta there is not much to be happy about."

"Some of the batsmen got out to bad shots and that is not what I like to see. We must not be complacent just because we are one-up."

India are likely to be unchanged while England welcome back Michael Atherton to open after missing Calcutta through illness. Alec Stewart will play and keep wicket despite a bruised finger.

Should England, despite constant references to how well the seamers are bowling and how effectively the Indians play spin, avoid repeating the error of playing four seamers as in Calcutta, slow left-armers Phil Tufnell can expect a recall alongside leg-spinner Ian Salisbury.

Philip DeFreitas, recovered from his groin injury but the latest flu bug victim, vies with

the in-form Paul Jarvis for the third seamer's spot.

### TEAMS

**INDIA:** Navjoy Sidhu, Manoj Prabhakar, Vinod Kambli, Sachin Tendulkar, Mohammad Azharuddin, Praveen Amre, Kapil Dev, Kiran More, Anil Kumble, Rajesh Chauhan, Venkat Raju.

**ENGLAND:** Graham Gooch, Michael Atherton, Mike Gatting, Robin Smith, Alec Stewart, Graeme Hick, Chris Lewis, Ian Salisbury, Paul Jarvis or Philip DeFreitas, Devon Malcolm, Phil Tufnell.

## England happy with the pitch

MADRAS, Feb 10: England have declared themselves happy with the pitch for the Second Test with India which opens on Thursday, reports Reuter.

Team manager Keith Fletcher said on Tuesday: "It looks like a good cricket wicket. It should turn on the fourth of fifth day and there should be a bit of pace on the first two."

"You can't tell until the day but if it plays like the nets (placed on the outfield). And it looks like them, it should bounce."

His feelings were echoed by captain Graham Gooch who said: "It looks a good pitch."

It is understood the Indian management had asked the groundstaff to take off most of the grass before the Test and some was removed.

But Gooch said: "There looks some grass on it now but it is their home wicket. They are entitled to do what they want to it."

The last time India play'd here five years ago leg-spinner Narendra Hirwani took 16 wickets on an underprepared wicket as the West Indies were beaten.

In an unfortunate mix-up on Tuesday morning the English squad had turned up for their first practice session to find the net run-ups had been watered by mistake.

The players returned in the afternoon when the ground had dried out in the fierce sun.

Fletcher said: "I don't think it was done deliberately. It's just one of those things but the bowlers would not have been able to stand up properly."

"I've made sure that the groundsmen know we aim to practise tomorrow morning and he's promised not to water it time."

## Ben — haunted by unholy past

GHENT, Belgium, Feb 10: Ben Johnson — the athlete — is back. If only he could outrun the questions about Ben Johnson — the drug cheat, reports AP.

However fast the Canadian goes, the same old questions keep haunting him more than four years after he was stripped of his gold medal in the 100 metres at the Seoul Olympics.

And Johnson is running fast these days, beating top-class opposition indoors and even setting a season's best time in the 50-metre dash.

"I can still run. I still have it," he told reporters Tuesday, a day before the Coke Light "door meeting here."

In Grenoble, France, he ran the 50 metres Sunday in 5.65 seconds — the top time of the indoor season and only .04 seconds off the world record. He came to Ghent, lured by its reputation for a fast track.

It is another step on the comeback trail for an athlete who used to shatter world records regularly but at one time was suspended for life. Johnson has had to fight adversity and disbelief ever since returning to competition in 1991.

"Mentally I didn't have it," he said, reflecting on two years of mediocre performances.

These were only highlighted by his much ballyhooed misadventure with his nemesis Carl Lewis in France and his failure to earn a medal at the Olympics in Barcelona.

Part of the problem, too, was getting over the effects of being on steroids for years.

Not going back to Francis, left him with a choir of coaches who didn't know me from the beginning. They didn't know me as a sprinter."

He faltered and his career seemed all but over after the Barcelona Olympics last August when he failed to make the 100 metre finals and the Canadian relay team dropped the baton.

It seemed certain that Johnson was just another also-ran without his steroid fuel.

"But I couldn't leave," he said. So he skipped a vacation and went straight back to the basics, "returning to the man who taught him many."

Percy Duncan, Canada's vetted sprinting coach, had handled Johnson when he was 15 and now has given him back some of the enthusiasm of those days.

"That's what put me in great shape again," Johnson said. How eager Johnson is this season was evident upon his return in Hamilton, Ontario, early in the season when he was too fast out of the blocks twice and was disqualified.

Johnson used to bench-press 400 pounds (180 kilograms) easily.

"I lost 40 per cent in power" when starting the comeback, Johnson said. "The muscles I need to run with — I didn't have them."

"Bad coaching"