

BFF squad leaves for Qatar tomorrow

Sports Reporter

Nabi Chowdhury, a veteran footballer of the country and a member of the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) will lead the BFF team to Qatar, where the squad will play an exhibition match against Al Arabi Club on March 27 in Doha.

The 27-member BFF squad including 22 players selected for the national team, which will take part in the qualifying matches for the 1994 World Cup football tournament in Japan and the UAE next April and May, will leave Dhaka for Qatar tomorrow.

The exhibition match has been arranged to mark the retirement of the Qatari national striker Abdullah Al Saad of Al Arabi Club.

Al Arabi Club will bear all the expenses of the Bangladesh team.

National coach Kazi Salahuddin, ace striker of yesterday, has been named the coach for the BFF team while Md Mala is his deputy.

However, Abbas Salam is the assistant coach of the national team.

Irfakharul Islam Titon is the manager while Modabber Hossain Babu will accompany the BFF team as an observer.

Independence Day bridge held

Sports Reporter

Habibur Rahman and Sahabuddin Mia of Hazaribagh Modern Club emerged as champions in the Independence Day auction bridge competition which concluded last Monday at the Azimpur Community Centre under the aegis of Samashiti, a socio-cultural organisation, says a press release.

They beat Syed Akhter Hossain and Abdul Mukim of Mirpur in the final.

Seventeen pairs participated in the auction bridge championship.

FIH not convinced this time

NEW DELHI, Mar 23: The International Hockey Federation (FIH) refused on Monday to approve new dates for the three-times postponed Indra Gandhi Gold Cup tournament, reports Reuter.

The Indian Hockey Federation (IHF) wanted to stage the event from April 17-22, but the game's ruling body said it was "not convinced that the conditions in India had become conducive" to hosting the five-nation men's tournament.

"It is advisable to wait for a favourable evolution of today's situation in India," FIH official Els Van Breda Vriesman told the IHF.

The ill-fated event was postponed for a third time last week following a series of bomb explosions in Bombay.

It was postponed because of religious riots in the city in January and was called off again in February after the flares clashed with a cricket Test between India and England.

Merseille after Julio Cesar

MARSEILLE, France, Mar 23: French champions Merseille said on Monday they were interested in Juventus' Brazilian sweeper Julio Cesar, reports Reuter.

Marseille general secretary Jean-Pierre Bernes said he was in Turin on Sunday to watch Julio Cesar in action against Internazionale Milan and that he had spoken to Juventus officials.

The 30-year-old sweeper joined Juventus in 1990 after four seasons in France with Lorient and Montpellier.

Juventus are understood to be interested in Merseille's Croatian striker Alen Boksic but Bernes declined to say whether they had discussed a player swap.

Atletico coach resigns

MADRID, Mar 23: Atletico Madrid's Argentine coach Omar Pastoriza has quit after only a month because of a row with club president Jesus Gil, reports AFP.

Pastoriza, who joined on February 11, had been coach for only eight matches before resigning on Monday night.

Gil apparently wants too big a say in team selecting while Pastoriza has been criticised for the mediocre performances of his new Argentine recruit Jose Luis Villarreal.

"I want to keep my dignity," Pastoriza said in a radio interview.

Taking over from Spanish Luis Aragones, Pastoriza became the 12th coach at the club since Gil took charge in 1987.

He will be replaced by another Argentine, Yaslin Santos Ovejero, his deputy. Ovejero had also been coach here during August-September 1990 and June 1991.

Faruq, Bulbul at the helm

Sports Reporter

Faruq Ahmed of the Navana Premier Division league champions Abahani Krira Chakra will lead the Bangladesh Cricket Control Board (BCCB) President XI while Aminul Islam Bulbul of runners-up Mohammedan Sporting Club will captain the BCCB under-25 team against



FARUQ AHMED

Airport Gymkhana, a club team from Pakistan who will arrive in the city on April 29 on a ten-day goodwill tour.

The President XI will play the visitors in Sylhet on April 1 while the under-25 team will meet them in Khulna on April 4.

Faruq, the elegant right-handed batsman will wear left-arm pacer Golam Nowsheer Prince of Victoria Sporting Club as his deputy while burly Akram Khan of Abahani has been elected vice-captain for the junior team.

Following are the selected 14 players for the BCCB President team: Faruq Ahmed (captain), Nurul Abedin Nobel,

Iltanur-Rashid Liton, Athar Ali Khan, Sanwar Hossain, Habibul Bashar Suman, Azhar Hossain Shantu, Debashish Burroah, Asif Omar Belim, Golam Nawsher Prince (vice-captain), Jahangir Alam Talukder Dulu, Joydev Bashak, Javed Omar Belim Golla and A M Naimur Rahman Durjoy.

National and Mohammedan Sporting skipper Minhazul Abedin Nannu and Zahid Razaque Masum of Brothers Union, who will play six-a-side tournament in Bangkok next month were not considered for the senior team.

Following are the members of the under-25 squad: Aminul Islam Bulbul (captain), Jahangir Alam, Sajjad Ahmad Shipon, Akram Khan (vice-captain), Khalid Mohmod Sujan, Sheikh Salahuddin, Md Al Sharif Rokon, Md Khakhd Masud Pilot, Sharfuddinul Ihsan Shahid Saikat, skipper of the under-19 squad which played in Nepal last month, Md Saiful Islam, Zakir Hassan, Raimur Rashid Rahul, Md Mizanur Rahman Babul and Sajid Hassan.

Selected players of both teams have been asked to report to the BCCB on April 27 at 7:00 pm.

Airport Gymkhana, a Karachi-based club, will be led by former Pakistani Test player Rashid Khan.

Although the final players' list of the guest team was not available till yesterday afternoon, Rizwanuzzaman, another Test discard, is likely to accompany the 16-member squad.

Airport Gymkhana will play their first match against Mohammedan Sporting on March 30 at the Dhaka

Stadium. Then they will be off to Sylhet where they will play the BCCB President XI on April 1 at the Sylhet Stadium. The next day they will clash with Abahani Krira Chakra at the Dhaka Stadium.



BULBUL

prising selected players of the recently concluded league on April 6 at the Dhaka Stadium.

Airport Gymkhana will leave the city on April 7.

The BCCB, the organisers of the programme, are expecting the final players' list of the visitors within a couple of days.

Following is the tour itinerary of Airport Gymkhana: March 30: v Mohammedan SC, Dhaka

April 1: v BCCB President XI, Sylhet
April 2: v Abahani KC, Dhaka
April 4: v BCCB under-25, Khulna
April 6: v Navana XI, Dhaka

English flops offer no excuses

LONDON, Mar 23: England's cricketing flops have flown home to London after their disastrous

tour of India and Sri Lanka offering no excuses for their dismal performance, reports AFP.

As they arrived back at Heathrow Airport from Colombo late Sunday after losing all four Tests and five out of eight one-day games, team manager Keith Fletcher said: "Obviously we are very disappointed. But there is plenty of future for English cricket."

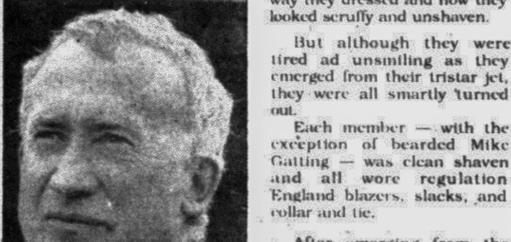
"We didn't play as well as we would have liked to have done and the Indians played far better than we did."

He said he was surprised by the outcome.

"We didn't go there to lose three-nil. That goes without saying. But having said that the Indians played far better than we did."

Asked if believed the team could pick themselves up to Australia this summer he said: "Of course we can. We've got to. I don't think the Australian have done too well over the past few months."

He was keeping the possibility of changes to the side close to his chest. "We'll have to wait and see," he said.



KEITH FLETCHER

The team's troubles continued right up until the moment they arrived back at Heathrow. Their scheduled flight from Sri Lanka was over four hours late arriving at Heathrow after an hydraulic problem during a stopover in Dubai. It then had to make an unscheduled landing at Istanbul to take on more

fuel. Much had been said of the team's appearance during the tour with criticism about the way they dressed and how they looked scruffy and unshaven.

But although they were tired and unsmiling as they emerged from their tristar jet, they were all smartly turned out.

Each member — with the exception of bearded Mike Gatting — was clean shaven and all wore regulation England blazers, slacks, and collar and tie.

After emerging from the customs hall at terminal four, they were reunited with their wives and girlfriends. Also on hand to welcome them home was Graham Gooch, who handed the captaincy over to Alec Stewart for the Sri Lanka leg of the tour.

Stewart would not comment on the outcome of the tour.

"I've had long journey," he said.

Asked about his immediate plans he said: "I'll have a week off and then go back with surgery."

Italy will be without Baggio

ROME, Mar 23: Italy will be deprived of gifted Juventus playmaker Roberto Baggio on Wednesday

when they seek a victory over Malta which would lift them to the top of their World Cup qualifying group, reports Reuter.

Baggio, scorer of 16 goals in just 27 internationals, badly bruised his side as his club defeated Benfica in a UEFA Cup tie last week and has been ruled out.

Coach Arrigo Sacchi has already named his team for the European Group One tie in Palermo with experienced Sampdoria forward Roberto Mancini replacing Baggio.

Sacchi gives Atlanta de-

fender Sergio Porrini and Parma striker Alessandro Melli their debuts as injuries reduce their options.

The unrated islanders from Malta will be hoping to repeat their performance against Italy last December when they were unlucky to lose 2-1.

Italian captain Franco Baresi was sent off in that match but returns to add poise to the defence after missing Italy's encouraging 3-1 win over Portugal through suspension.

That result was Italy's best in the campaign so far, their poor performance in Malta preceded by disappointing draws with Switzerland and Scotland.

A win over Malta would lift them above current group leaders Switzerland, although

the Swiss would have a game in hand.

Two nations from the six-strong group qualify for the 1994 World Cup finals in the United States.

The 24-year-old Porrini gets his first cap after a number of other candidates for the right back spot were struck down by injury.

Melli, part of the Parma side which ended Milan's record unbeaten 58-match league run on Sunday, will be asked to lend his strength to an attack deprived of Juventus frontman Pierluigi Casiraghi.

Malta coach Pippo Psaila has problems of his own with defenders John Buttigieg, Joe Brncat and Richard Buhagiar all suspended.

Wari Club hockey camp from Mar 29

Sports Reporter

The hockey camp of Wari Club will begin on March 29, says a press release.

All the players of the club have been asked to report to the club tent in Motijheel on March 28 at 5:00 pm.

Meanwhile, the annual general meeting of Wari Club will be held on April 10 at the club premises.

All the members have been asked to pay their subscription by March 30.

Too many odds against Advocaat

ROTTERDAM, Mar 23: Dutch national coach Dick Advocaat is being forced to field a second string team against San Marino in their World Cup qualifier on Wednesday, but he still wants to see lots of goals, reports Reuter.

"We need at least 12 goals in the two matches (against San Marino) to beef up our goal difference," Advocaat said.

The Netherlands will be missing big names such as Marco van Basten, Ruud Gullit, Frank Rijkaard, Dennis Bergkamp, Ronald Koeman, Dany Blind and Wim Jonk all out due to injury or suspension.

But Advocaat has shaped a team around a five-man attack aimed at overwhelming San Marino's partitners.

"We need to play over the wings, as San Marino defend like a handball team — all players around the box," he said.

"No long balls through the air, no nervous build up and patience that will be the way to do it," Advocaat said.

The Netherlands are currently third in Group Two with five points from four games, behind England with five from three and Norway with seven from four matches.

Two teams qualify for the finals in the United States in 1994 and goal difference could play an important role.

After a poor start in the group, when the Dutch lost 2-1 away to Norway and drew 2-2 at home against Poland, they returned to winning ways with two 3-1 victories home and away to Turkey.

Povlsen named for Danish WC squad

COPENHAGEN, Mar 23: Denmark coach Richard Moeller Nielsen included inspirational Dortmund striker Flemming Povlsen in his squad on Tuesday for a crucial World Cup qualifier at home to Spain on March 31, reports Reuter.

Povlsen, injured when the European champions showed flashes of their best form against Argentina last month, is one of three changes from the 16-man squad which lost on penalties to the south American champions.

The others are utility player Jakob Friis-Hansen of French club Lille and midfielder Stig Toefling of Denmark's AGF.

They replace defender Torben Ptechnik of Liverpool, midfielder Michael Larsen of Denmark Silkeborg and Borussia midfielder Johnny Moeby who are out with injuries.

Friis Hansen, who played the last of his three games for Denmark in 1991, was selected after Moeller Nielsen watched him give a solid performance last Saturday in Toulon.

With five points from four games against group leader Spain's nine in six, the European champions will face their World Cup campaign's moment of truth in Copenhagen.

SQUAD: Peter Schmeichel, Mogens Krogh, Lars Dolsen, March Rieper, Jakob Kjeldbjerg, Jakob Friis Hansen, Kim Villforts Bria Steen Nielsen, John Jensen, Henrik Larsen, Bjarne Goldback, Mstig Toefling, Brian Laudrup, Lars Elstrup, Mark Strudal, Flemming Povlsen.

Sabatini replaces ailing Seles

HOUSTON, Mar 23: Gabriela Sabatini replaced ailing Monica Seles as top seed of the 375,000 dollar Virginia Slims of Houston on Monday, a day when rain forced the suspension of play with only one main-draw match completed, reports Reuter.

Seles, who pulled out of the Lipton championships in Key Biscayne, Florida last week, was still suffering from the flu on Monday, tournament organisers said.

Sabatini was then reached by telephone and she agreed to join the tournament. The fifth-ranked Argentine, who lost to Steffi Graf last week in the Lipton semifinals, received a first-round bye and will not play until Thursday night.

Sixth-ranked Jennifer Capriati of the United States is the second seed.

Eighth seed Julie Hladard of France beat Argentine Florencia Labat 7-6 (7-3), 6-2 in the only match of the main draw that was completed — or even started — on Monday before rain forced suspension of play.



FAR FROM THE MADDING PRESSURE: Former Pakistan captain Imran Khan chats with Henry Blofeld prior to the start of the first one-day international between Pakistan and the West Indies at the Sabina Park yesterday.

Pakistan make 223 for six

Sports Reporter

Pakistan were 223 for six wickets at the completion of their 50 overs in the first one-day international against the West Indies at the Sabina Park, Jamaica yesterday according to the Star TV monitored here in Dhaka last night.

Left-handed opener Aamir Sohai topped scored with 87 while Inzamamul Haq chipped in with a rapid-fire 49.

West Indian skipper Richie Richardson won the toss in the morning and had no hesitation in asking his counterpart Wasim Akram to bat first on a slightly damp wicket because of overnight showers.

Openers Rameez Raja and left-handed Aamir Sohai started very tentatively against Ambrose and Walsh, who opened the West Indian attack. Right-handed Raja looked completely out of sorts against the West Indian bowlers, who too failed to make the most of the conditions conducive to the quicker bowlers.

The pair, however, succeeded in putting on 67 in 23 overs before Raja was bowled by Simmons, the most parsimonious of the six bowlers used by the West Indian captain.

Pakistan were coasting along at 185 for one when Inzamam, after having played a

characteristically aggressive 49 off 50 balls including two huge sixes off part-time left-arm spinner Adams fell before Ian Bishop back his second spell. He took 15 runs from an over off Adams, who gave away 33 runs in three overs.

The gangling Trinidadian, who was warned for slipping in beams had Pakistan skipper Akram caught by Hooper at short thirdman in the same over — with the fourth ball of his seventh over to be precise.

Basit Ali, playing his first one-day international of his career was welcomed by a beamer but went on to play a confident albeit brief knock of

17 before being stumped by Murray off Hooper.

Miandad, who came at number five, holed out to Simmons at long-on off Hooper for 16.

Pakistan reached a total of 200 or more than that against West Indies for the first time in nine outings. Pakistan had lost seven matches on trot against the West Indies.

SCOREBOARD
Scoreboard of the first one-day international between Pakistan and the West Indies at the Sabina Park, Jamaica yesterday.

PAKISTAN:				
Aamir Sohai	c sub (Arthurton)			
b Ambrose				87
Rameez Raja	b Simmons			22
Inzamamul Haq	lbw Bishop			49
Wasim Akram	c Hooper			0
b Bishop				0
Javed Miandad	c Simmons			16
b Hooper				16
Basit Ali	st Murray			b
Hooper				17
Rashid Latif	not out			1
Extras:				30
Total: (for six wickets)				223
Fall of wickets:				1-67; 2-185; 3-185; 4-187; 5-221; 6-223.
Bowling:				
Ambrose	10	1	31	1
Walsh	10	2	40	0
Bishop	9	1	54	2
Simmons	10	2	26	1
Hooper	8	0	28	2
Adams	3	0	33	0

AAMIR SOHAIL ... 87

Sydney offers green Olympics

SYDNEY, Mar 23: Sydney, whisker ahead of Beijing in the scramble to host the 2000 Olympics, said

today it would stage an ecologically friendly Games with the active support of the environmental group Greenpeace, reports Reuter.

Organisers said if Sydney staged the Games all companies involved would have to live by strict environmental rules. Tickets would be printed on recycled paper and solar panels would provide

electricity in the Olympic Village.

International Olympic Committee (IOC) officials polled last week gave Sydney a slight edge over Beijing to host the turn of the century Games but both cities will be on tenterhooks until the IOC announces its decision in six months time.

Istanbul, Manchester, Berlin and Brasilia are also gunning for the Games. Milan crumpled under the weight of political corruption scandals and dropped its bid earlier this month.

The Olympic movement has said it wanted to put environmental protection at the heart of future Olympics, the Sydney bid chief executive Rod McGeoch told a news conference.

Greenpeace, which set out the guidelines, backed Sydney's bid because its approach was the most ecologically sound, Greenpeace spokeswoman Karla Bell told reporters.

Last June, the International environmental pressure group won a nationwide design competition for the Sydney Olympic Village which would house up to 15,000 athletes. It has been closely involved with the city's bid since then.

The guidelines set out to minimise the waste that would be created by 300,000 people attending the Games and demanding transport, tickets, food and programmes each day.

Wood for the Olympic Village would come from plantations, not forests, and other building materials would be reusable.

At the Barcelona Games last year 124,000 kgs of paper were used, over three million tickets were printed and 600,000 meals were served, according to the Sydney 2000 Bid Committee.

Australia has bid for the last two Olympic Games. Brisbane lost out to Barcelona while Atlanta outdid Melbourne.

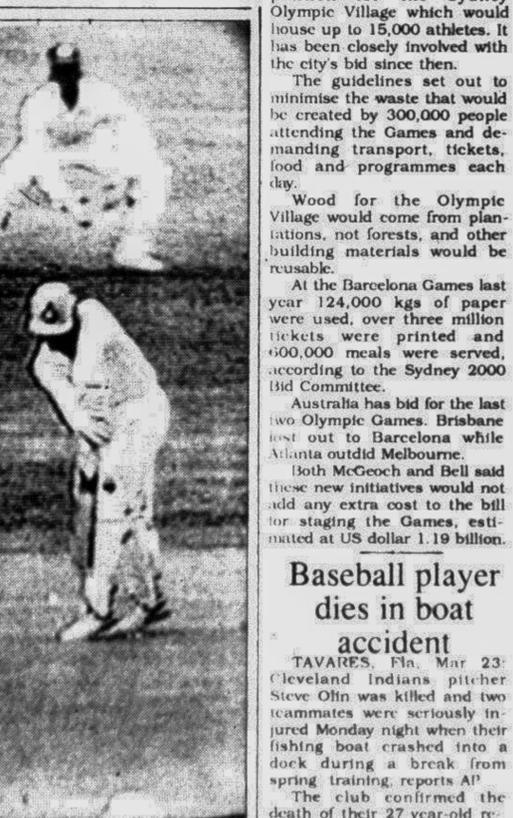
Both McGeoch and Bell said these new initiatives would not add any extra cost to the bill for staging the Games, estimated at US dollar 1.19 billion.

Baseball player dies in boat accident

TAVARES, Fla. Mar 23: Cleveland Indians pitcher Steve Olin was killed and two teammates were seriously injured Monday night when their fishing boat crashed into a dock during a break from spring training, reports AP.

The club confirmed the death of their 27-year-old relief ace, and injuries to two other pitchers — Tim Crews and Bob Ojeda.

The accident happened at 7:30 pm in this central Florida town on the only scheduled day off the Indians had during spring training.



APPEARANCE ... Pakistan opener Rameez Raja posed for a solid defensive stroke.

REALITY ... a beauty of a Courtney Walsh delivery beat him hollow. Rameez survived the occasion to make 22 before being bowled by Phil Simmons during the first of the five one-dayers at the Sabina Park, Jamaica yesterday.

Star TV photo



World chess champion Garri Kasparov (L) and his British challenger Nigel Short give photographers a moment at Simpson's in the Strand in London on March 22, where they announced plans for their new Professional Chess Association and give details of the bids to host the 1993 world chess title.

— AFP photo