



Former Indian Test cricketer Mohinder Amarnath watches the opening match of the Sponsors' tournament between Navana XI and Gold Leaf XI at the Dhaka Stadium yesterday. On his right are chief BCCB selector Lutfur Rahman and vice president Raisuddin Ahmed.

Akram's bravado goes in vain

Sports Reporter

An authoritative unbeaten knock of 115 by Abahant batsman Akram Khan went in vain when his team—the Gold Leaf XI—went down by just two runs to the Navana XI in the "Sponsors" cricket tournament match at the Dhaka Stadium yesterday.

The inaugural match of the three-team competition devised by the Bangladesh Cricket Control Board (BCCB) to enable itself whittle down the list of probable players to represent the country in next year's ICC Associate Members' Trophy was played as a day-night affair starting at 2:30 pm.

Batting first, the Navana XI, named after the sponsors of the Premier Division league, piled up 216 for the loss of eight wickets in the 46 overs possible within the stipulated time.

In reply, the Gold Leaf XI, betting under floodlights, were all out despite Akram's brave and at times brilliant effort, for 214 with seven balls to spare.

Navana XI elected to bat when national skipper Minhazul Abedin Nannu beat Gold Leaf skipper Enamul Haq Moni in the spin of the coin.

It fell upon Nannu himself to justify his decision after both openers Masum and Liton were back in the pavilion with the total 56. Nannu produced a run-a-ball knock of 85 off 84 deliveries, an effort which must have made a favourable first impression on Mohinder Amarnath, the former Indian Test star whose services have been hired by the BCCB to pick and train the national squad for the ICC meet in Kenya next February.

Amarnath, along with BCCB chief selector Lutfur Rahman and vice president Raisuddin Ahmed, watched the proceedings—albeit with varying degrees of involvement.

Other probabilities included in the Navana XI like Atahar Ali and Selim Shaheed made useful scores without really settling down.

Efeef and Rahul, the spinners claimed two wickets each.

In reply, Gold Leaf XI started disastrously. Navana XI's Golam Nowsher Prince, the left-arm medium pacer, produced a telling spell which saw the back of the first four Gold Leaf batsmen with only 26 runs on the board.

Prince, who finished with figures of four for 20 off his 8.4 overs before having to limp off with a pulled muscle, clean bowled opener Rupam for one and Piyal and Aminul Islam Bulbul for noughts. Before that he induced Nurul Abedin Nobel to snick one into the safe hands of Masum after making just two.

Amidst this ruin stood Akram Khan. The burly batsman, with some help from his skipper Moni who made 43,

launched into the Navana attack which barring Prince's early venom had little bite to it. The only other batsman to reach double figures was left-arm medium pacer Anis who made 15.

In the end, although Akram looked quite capable of winning the match almost single-handed for his side, he was alas left standing at the non-striker's end as the tail folded at the other end. Akram made his runs off 141 balls, interspersed with seven fours.

Babul and Asif picked a wicket each while Selim Shahed redeemed his unimpressive essay with the bat by claiming two for 18 with his off-spinners.

Tomorrow, Gold Leaf XI will take on the Bexinco XI. The match will start at 9:00 am.

Army soccer on

BOGRA, Apr 29: The Sivar Area team defeated Rangpur Area team by two goals to nil in the opening match of the Bangladesh Army annual football championship at the Bogra Cantonment today, reports UNI.

Both goals were scored in the second half, one each by Capt Zahirul Islam and Lt Nk Ershad Hossain.



Gabonese divers salvage one of the bodies on April 28 after a plane carrying the Zambian national soccer squad of 18 players and five officials crashed into the sea shortly after take off from the capital Li Libreville. Nobody survived. The team was scheduled to play in the final round of the World Cup qualifiers this weekend.

Corpse bearer

LUSAKA, Apr 29: Two Zambian ministers left for Gabon on Thursday to collect the bodies of national soccer team players killed in an air crash off Libreville, reports Reuter.

Foreign Minister Vernon Mwaanga and Sports Minister Dipak Patel left for the Gabonese capital on a special Zambian Airways flight at 10 am (0800 GMT), presidential spokesman Richard Sakala said.

They were accompanied by air force officers and technicians to try to find out why the twin-engine air force Buffalo plane crashed shortly after take-off on Tuesday night.

The ageing Canadian-built plane was carrying 30 passengers including the team, soccer officials and crew, when it plunged into shallow water off Libreville.

Zambia, one of Africa's top soccer nations, was a country in mourning today.

President Frederick Chiluba and Mwaanga cut short an official visit to Rwanda to return to Lusaka on Wednesday night.

A presidential statement spoke of the "sad tragedy" that had befallen Zambia, which had been a favourite to reach the World Cup finals in the United States next year.

Soccer experts, however, said Zambia still had enough soccer talent to reach the finals if a decision was made to continue.

Sakala said no decision had yet been taken. "Everyone is still stunned, in a state of shock."

The national team had been due to play Senegal in a World Cup qualifier on Sunday. The winner of the group, which also includes Morocco, will go on to the finals.

Sakala said the Zambian cabinet met this morning and Chiluba would make a television address to the nation this evening.

WORLD CUP ROUND-UP

In Moscow, Russia scored three superb second-half goals to sweep aside Hungary 3-0 in their World Cup Group Five tie and took a giant stride towards next year's finals in the United States.

San Marino, who had conceded 28 goals in their previous six World Cup qualifiers, let Poland score only once in a European Group 2 match in Warsaw.

In Ostrava, Czech Republic, Mark Hughes unleashed a superb first-half strike against Czechoslovakia to keep alive Wales's hopes of reaching next year's finals.

Hughes' goal helped Wales to a 1-1 draw in the European Group Four.

Spain, spurred by a double strike from Julio Salinas, hit back to beat Northern Ireland 3-1 in their Group Three qualifier at Seville, Spain.

Norway, with high hopes of reaching the finals for the first time since 1938, kept up their unbeaten qualifying run beating Turkey 3-1 in Oslo.

Norway, leading the European Group Two with nine points from five matches, were aided by goals from Kjetil Rekdal and Jan Aage Fjortoft in a three-minute period early in the first half.

Portugal blew out the Scottish hopes of a World Cup berth when they raced to a 5-0 victory in Lisbon.

Injury-plagued Scotland sank to fourth in the European Group One with this stinging defeat—six point adrift of the leaders Switzerland and Italy.

Barcelona's temperamental striker Hristo Stolechov and medio Zlatko Yankov scored once each as Bulgaria revived their World Cup hopes with a 2-0 win over Finland in Sofia.

BGIC basketball

Sports Reporter

Rising Force SC rallied to beat Josephite Hawks 46-41 in the BGIC Second Division basketball league at the basketball court adjacent to the wooden-floor gymnasium yesterday.

The winners, who trailed 23-28 in the first half, stepped up the pressure in the second session to snatch an enthralling victory. Rising Force owed a lot to Mujib who notched up 26 points.

Johnny and Caesar were the chief contributors for the losers caging 16 and 14 points respectively.

Dhaka Mariner Youngs Club got a walk-over against Flame Boys in the other match of the day.

Bakshi Bazar Club play against Young Angels while Victoria SC meet Rangers Club today.

No change in Windies squad

BRIDGETOWN, Barbados, Apr 29: Injured paceman Ian Bishop was named on Wednesday in an unchanged West Indies squad of 13 for the third and final Test against Pakistan, starting in St. John's, Antigua, on Saturday, reports Reuter.

Magical start for Mohammedans

Sports Reporter

The 1993 Green Delta First Division hockey league got underway at the hockey stadium with defending champions Dhaka Mohammedan Sporting running all over their opponents Bangladesh PWD to register a thumping 9-0 victory.

Although it was a flying start for the black-and-white champions to their league campaign one can only hope that such boring, one-sided outcomes are not repeated too often in this year's competition if it is to retain any charm by way of competitiveness.

Star-studded Mohammedans turned yesterday's inaugural tie of the 16-team league into a rude baptism for newcomers PWD who were soon made to feel like

innocent children in a hard-men's world. From the starting to the closing whistles play remained monotonously confined near the PWD citadel with the marauding Mohammedan forwards launching frequent forays that often bore fruit. Yet despite their overwhelming superiority the Mohammedan strikers messed up at least another half a dozen scoring opportunities.

Striker Zahed Biswas who plays on the left stole a march on his equally fleet-footed and prolific teammates by netting four of the team's nine goals, a feat that should give him all the inspiration to try and top the scorers' list when the league concludes.

Sadek, their new signing this year, was also on target with two goals while Ejaz, Asif and Alam scored once each to complete the tally.

PWD goalkeeper Aftabuddin must have really been relieved to hear the final whistle.

Earlier, N A Chowdhury, Managing Director of Green Delta Insurance Company Ltd, the sponsors, formally inaugurated the meet. He was introduced to the players of Mohammedans and PWD prior to the start of the match.

TEAMS
MOHAMMEDAN SC: Mantu (Don), Ejaz, Ronnie, Nannu,

Nixon, Shabbir (Asif), Alam, Sadek, Litu, Rubel (Hias) and Zahid Biswas.

BAKSHI BAZAR PWD: Aftabuddin, Mohammad Hossain, Saifuddin, Rana, Babu, Aslam, Deen Islam, Shabbir Ahmed, Abul Kalam, Emran Hossain (Ripon), Mofizul Haq and Al-Mamun.

Dhaka Mariner Youngs Club will take on Azad SC while Abahani KC will face Bangladesh Railway on Saturday, after a day's break.

Schools kabaddi

Sports Reporter

Maniknagar Junior High School registered a huge 41-27 win over Dhaka Residential Model School in the fourth BGIC schools kabaddi tournament at the Outer Stadium yesterday.

The winners, who earned two lonas against Residential School's one, led the first half 22-12.

In the first match of the day, Motihel Model High School posted a comfortable 19-10 victory over Ansars and VDP High School with one lona. They led the first session 10-3.

Notre Dame School take on Haider Ali High while Gandaria High face KL Jubilee High School and College in today's fixtures.

BFRA election today

The triennial general meeting and election of the Bangladesh Football Referees' Association (BFRA) will be held at its Outer Stadium office today, reports UNI.

The general meeting will begin at 10 am while election will be held at 2:30 pm, an association press release said.

Lillee's prescription for pacemen

Sports Reporter

ADELAIDE, Australia, Apr 29: Australia's former fast great Dennis Lillee Thursday launched cricket's first injury prevention programme for pace bowlers which he hopes will bolster the stock of young speedsters here, reports AFP.

Lillee, who overcame a serious back injury to become Australia's most successful fast

bowler with 355 Test wickets, said the programme was designed to identify and eliminate possible causes of injury in young fast bowlers, with a particular emphasis on back injuries.

Lillee said the days of budding fast bowlers being told to completely change their bowling action because they were too chest-on had long since passed.

"What we are concerned about is that bowlers are either totally side-on or totally front-on. It's the mixed in-between type of action that is the worry."

Promising pace rookie Wayne Holdsworth, in England with the Australian side to battle for the Ashes, was a bowler who had achieved success with a front-on action, he said.

"I've had a bit to do with Wayne recently and he's a front-on type of bowler, and if he keeps following the technique we have worked on I'm sure he'll do well and bowl quickly," he said.

"The West Indian fast bowlers rarely have a back problem and most of their guys are front-on, the guys that do have problems have mixed actions."

"And Thommo [Jeff Thomson] never had a problem in his life because he was totally side-on. It's been worked out through a lot of research that those two actions are considered to give bowlers less chance of developing back problems."

He was joined at Adelaide Oval Thursday by other former Australian cricket heroes Ian Chappell, Rod Marsh and former fast bowling partner Jeff Thomson for the launch of the programme.

The programme examines a number of areas such as screening of bowlers, preparation, overbowling and bowling techniques in a bid to minimise pace bowlers' exposure to injury.

Lillee said back problems were some of the most prevalent injuries among fast bowlers, and he hoped the new programme would go a long way towards shortening the injury list.

Test bowlers such as himself, West Indian Ian Bishop

N'ganj cricket

Sports Reporter

From Our Correspondent NARAYANGANJ, Apr 29: Sitalakshya Cricket Club marched into the last four of the Gulbux Bhuiyan Smriti Second Division league when they registered a resounding 102-run victory over Tanbazar Sporting Club at the local Osmany Stadium today.

Having won the loss, Sitalakshya decided to bat first in the rain reduced 25 overs-a-side encounter and piled up 198 runs for the loss of four wickets. Alam with 59 topped the scorecard, also starred by Shyamol (38 not out) and Maksud 35 not out. Mannan claimed two wickets for 24 while Piyal and Rony picked up one apiece.

In reply, the Tanbazar cricketers could only manage 96 for eight in their 25 overs with Shah Nawaz and Raju scoring 38 and 35 respectively. Rob dismissed three Tanbazar batsmen for 18 while Shyamol returned figures of two for nine.

Narayanganj Cricket Club Red take on Three Star Boys tomorrow.

Mosharraf's feat

Sports Reporter

Mosharraf Hossain Khan, the ace swimmer of yesterday, bagged two gold and a silver in the fourth Australian Masters' Games in Perth, according to a Bangladesh Swimming Federation press release signed by its vice president Professor AKM. Mohsin yesterday.

Mosharraf, who is a Deputy General Manager of the BTMC, set new Australian national record in the 50m butterfly and 100m backstroke clocking 30.84 and 1:09.23 seconds respectively. He won golds in the 50m backstroke and butterfly and finished second in the 100m backstroke.

Film stars to play today

Sports Reporter

Film actors will take on the film producers at a charity "cricket" match at the Dhaka Stadium in a day-night gala today. The show, including a cultural function involving famous stars and starlets, is scheduled to start at three in the afternoon.

The proceeds, which should be sizeable given the fact that most of the actresses and leading singers will also be on show, will go to the welfare fund of the Chalachitra Shilpi Sangskritik-o-Krira Kallyan Samity.



Players of defending Senior Division hockey league champions Mohammedan Sporting Club being introduced to N A Chowdhury, managing director of Green Delta Insurance Company Ltd, the sponsors, before the start of the inaugural match of this year's league at the Hockey Stadium yesterday.

Cantona carves French victory

Sports Reporter

PARIS, Apr 29: Two goals from Eric Cantona gave France a 2-1 victory over Sweden on Wednesday to

take them a big step closer to next year's World Cup finals in the United States, reports Reuter.

Cantona, who had cancelled out an early Martin Dahlin goal from the penalty spot, struck the winner eight minutes from time to keep France firmly at the top of European qualifying Group Six, two points ahead of Bulgaria.

A spirit of generosity, perhaps induced by thoughts of April in Paris, prevailed in a game which could almost have been billed a charity match.

French keeper Bernard Lama gifted the Swedes their goal after just 14 minutes when he failed to hold a Bastie Boli backheader. Dahlin accepted gratefully as he put the ball into an empty net.

But the French were on the receiving end of a benevolent penalty decision three minutes before the break. Swedish defender Patrik Andersson seemed to time his tackle on David Ginola to perfection but the referee pointed to the spot and Cantona made no mistake.

Cantona's winner also owed much to the unsought assistance of Swedish keeper Thomas Ravelli, who failed to get down to the Manchester United forward's soft volley from a Jocelyn Angloma cross.

Cantona stepped into the breach in the absence of injured AC Milan striker Jean-Pierre Papin, taking his tally to 17 goals for his country in 31 appearances.

Sweden came to the Parc des Princes with three wins out of three in the group and French side who rarely looked likely to score until the penalty, which at least allowed their best move of the match.

The goal obviously boosted French confidence because they came out after the interval playing some of their fluent, cultured football.

Diminutive playmaker Corientin Martins was outstanding in his first full match in the number 10 shirt, showing the potential to blossom into another Allan Giresse.

The match reached a crescendo of excitement in the final 10 minutes with several chances at both ends.

Cantona's winner came barely a minute after Stefan Rehn struck the post with a ferocious long-range shot and the Swedes were unlucky not to get a late equaliser when Klas Inngesson screwed a good chance across the face of goal.

France's victory was their 15th in the last 16 World Cup and European Championship qualifiers they have played and left them with 10 points from six matches.

But Sweden, with six points from four, are in with an excellent chance of qualifying from the six nation group in which two teams will go to the United States.

Their captain Jonas Thern was carried off with a leg injury after just 25 minutes, disrupting the fluency of their midfield, but the Swedes still looked sound enough to be a good bet for next year's finals.

Their defence was as solid as a rock and their fast counter-attacks troubled a

Van Vossen to Holland's rescue

Sports Reporter

LONDON, Apr 29: Substitute Peter van Vossen rescued the Netherlands from a potentially mortal World Cup defeat on Wednesday with a penalty five minutes from time to earn a 2-2 draw against England, reports Reuter.

The injury-hit Dutch appeared to be heading for their second European Group Two defeat when Anderlecht striker Van Vossen — on for a disappointing Ruud Gullit — calmly struck home the spot kick for his sixth goal in only his sixth international.

Sampdoria defender Des Walker, normally the rock of England's defence, gave away the penalty when he tugged at the shirt of impish young winger Marc Overmars as he raced past him into the box.

England made a perfect start in search of their first victory over the Dutch in four games when John Barnes scored his first international goal for three years with a spectacular curling free-kick after just one minute.

Barnes, jeered every time he touched the ball by fans disappointed by his contribution the last time he played at Wembley, silenced the booing before it could begin when he sent the ball past a helpless Ed de Gooij.

Captain David Platt put England 2-0 ahead with his

seventh goal in five games from a rebound in the 23rd minute, but the Dutch lifted their heads and another of their rising young stars, Dennis Bergkamp, made it 2-1 11 minutes before halftime.

Berft of key players Marco van Basten and playmaker Ronald Koeman, the Dutch never looked like breaking England down in the second half of a game they said they could not afford to lose.

England, who lost midfielder Paul Gascoigne at half-time after he was elbowed in the head by Jan Wouters, may live to regret another dropped point at home although they stay joint second with the Dutch and have a game in hand over them.

Feyenoord midfielder Rob Witschge was guilty of the foul on Paul Ince that gave away the free-kick on the edge of the penalty area from which Barnes scored only his 11th goal in 70 games.

England's second came from a piece of magic by Gascoigne, who dribbled through two defenders, exchanged a one-two with Platt and then saw his shot balloon off a defender to drop at Ferdinand's feet.

Ferdinand's shot struck the bar of the far post and Platt pounced eagerly on the rebound.

But Ferdinand, playing only his second international, was guilty of wasting two good

chances when clean through with only the keeper to beat, although once he was sent sprawling under a challenge from behind by a defender.

Bergkamp, joint top scorer at last year's European Championship and Internazionale-bound next season, brought the Dutch to life with his 13th goal in 22 internationals.

Bayern Munich playmaker Wouters chipped the England defence from deep in midfield for Bergkamp to run on and flick the ball past the stranded Woods into the corner of the net.

De Gooij saved the Dutch three times with sliding tackles outside his area on England players clean through.

Dutch coach Dick Advocaat took Gullit off in the 70th minute in favour of the young Anderlecht striker who scored two goals against both Turkey and Poland in earlier group games.

The gamble paid off when Van Vossen, under pressure from a screaming crowd, tucked away the Equaliser to keep Dutch hopes alive.

As tension grew in the second half both John de Wolf and England's Martin Keown, who marked Gullit out of the game, were booked.

Botham, Larkins lead Durham home

Sports Reporter

HARTLEPOOL, England, Apr 29: Former England stars Ian Botham and Wayne Larkins steered Durham to a six-wicket win over the Minor Counties in the Benson and Hedges Cup preliminary round here on Wednesday, reports AFP.

Wayne Larkins made a watchful 42 and Botham a rapid 35 not out as Durham scrambled home with seven balls to spare after restricting the counties to 156 for eight in their 55 overs and booked a home tie with Hampshire on May 11.

Many of the Minor Counties batsmen contributed to their own downfall, with gold award winner Andy Fothergill picking up four catches and a stumping.

Benson and Hedges Cup preliminary round result: Hartlepool: Minor Counties 156-8. Durham 157-4. Durham won by 6 wickets.

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