

Thailand beat Bangladesh 4-1

Sports Reporter Bangladesh suffered their third consecutive defeat in the second leg of the World Cup Asian Zone Group F qualifying round when they lost to Thailand 1-4 at the Al Nasr Stadium, Dubai on Wednesday. Bangladesh, who now have one win against six defeats, play their last match against Sri Lanka today. Mohammad Masud Rana scored the lone Bangladeshi goal in the 30th minute of the second half. Names of the Thai goal-scorers were not found. Earlier, Rumi Rizvi Karim failed to convert a spot-kick 20 minutes into the second half. In the first half, the Bangladeshi forwards also missed a couple of chances. On the whole our boys put up a disappointing performance. Japan virtually clinched the second-round berth with a 6-0 drubbing of Sri Lanka in the other match of the day. Japan, who are the only unbeaten team so far in the fray, leads the five-nation meet with seven straight wins. They are two points clear of their closest rivals, the United Arab Emirates, who represented Asia in the 1990 World Cup finals in Italy.

Bangladesh to take part in world sr v'ball

DHAKA, May 6: The draw for the seventh Asian senior volleyball championship was finalised in Manila, Philippines, yesterday, reports BSS. The championship begins in September in Thailand with 18 countries participating in four groups, according to a message received in Dhaka from Manila. Bangladesh along with China, Australia, Qatar and the Philippines have been placed in Group 'D'. Bangladesh will play China on September 11, Australia on September 12, the Philippines on September 13 and Qatar on September 15. Following are the remaining groups: Group 'A' - Thailand, Pakistan, P R Korea and Kuwait. Group 'B' - Japan, Iran, Sri Lanka and New Zealand. Group 'C' - Korea, Taipei, India, Saudi Arabia and Kazakhstan.

Div I hockey resumes today

Sports Reporter The Green Delta Insurance First Division hockey league resumes today at the Hockey Stadium after a week's recess owing to inclement weather. The league matches were postponed since last Saturday after the inaugural match between defending champions Mohammedan Sporting Club and Public Works Department (PWD) due to heavy rain. Abahani Krira Chakra take on Bangladesh Railway while Dhaka Mariner Youngs meet Azad Sporting Club today.

Sponsors' meet final tomorrow

Sports Reporter The day-night final match of Sponsors' cricket tournament between Gold Leaf XI and Beximco XI will be held tomorrow at the Dhaka Stadium. All the three participating teams finished their league engagements with one victory against one defeat. Navana XI could not make it to the final for having lower run rate.

Training for h'ball coaches

Sports Reporter A 15-day long training course for women's handball coaches, jointly organised by the Bangladesh Handball Federation and Japan International Cooperation Agency, will begin tomorrow (Saturday). Twenty-four handball coaches selected from all over the country will be taking part in the course.

Ali in Iran

TEHRAN, May 6: Former world heavyweight boxing champion Muhammad Ali arrived here yesterday to visit Muslim holy sites and meet Iranian officials, the news agency IRNA said, reports AFP. The US boxer will visit the eastern city of Mashhad and the tomb of Iran's late spiritual leader Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini in southern Tehran, the head of Iran's boxing federation Ahmad Nategh Nuri told IRNA. Mashhad is Iran's holiest city, the site of the burial of one of shi'ite Islam's most respected religious figures, Imam Reza.

Kisloo, Akhlaq win men's doubles

The Bangladesh Textile Mills Corporation (BTMC) pair of Kisloo and Akhlaq clinched the men's doubles title of the Econo eighteenth national table tennis championships when they registered a straight sets win over the Biman-Ansars combination of Sadi and Munna at the Jessore gymnasium yesterday. The BTMC duo started the best-of-five final in a commanding style taking the first set 24-15. Sadi and Munna, however, showed determination in the second set and forced the eventual winners fight for every point before bowing down 19-21. The third set was even closer with both the pair refusing to let up the pressure and consequently carrying the match to deuce. Kisloo and Akhlaq, however, did not let their opponents clongate the match, polishing off the third set 22-20. Earlier in the semifinals, both the pairs were stretched to four sets before eliminating their opponents. The eventual champions had a tougher time as the Biman duo of Rochi and Sohel made them sweat before capitulating the first set 21-23. But the next set was surprisingly top-sided with Kisloo and Akhlaq racing to a 21-4 win. Rochi and Sohel displayed a spirited performance in the third taking the set 21-11. However, they could not keep up the pressure as Kisloo and Akhlaq wrapped up the match with a 21-19 victory. The other semifinals partially followed the similar paradigm with Sadi and Munna winning the first two sets and losing the third before rounding off with a victory in the fourth. The final scoreline was 21-17, 21-19, 16-21 and 21-10. In boys' doubles, Mahub of Dhaka and Hamlet of

Sports Reporter Bangladesh Ansars beat another Dhaka-Ansars combination of Mahid and Rubel in straight sets in the final to clinch the championship. Only in the third set, which was carried over to deuce, the victors came across any pressure. The final result was 21-10, 21-18, 23-21. In their respective semifinals, Mahub and Hamlet got rid of Gautam and Pappu of Narail DSA 21-18, 21-10, 21-16 while Rubel and Mahid were really pushed to their limits by Shaon of Dhaka and Sagar of Ansars before prevailing 19-21, 21-13, 19-21, 21-12, 21-18 in a nail-biting five-setter. Kisloo was on course for a double crown when he along with Ansars' Zobera Rahman Linu advanced to the final of the mixed doubles event beating his doubles partner Akhlaq and Shamima, a Jessore campaigner, 21-19, 21-16 and 21-16. Kisloo and Linu were battling it out with the Biman-Jessore colligation of Rochi and Rinu in the final when this report was filed last night. Rochi and Rinu outplayed the Ansar pair of Zulekha Akhter and Munna 21-16, 21-9, 22-20 in their semifinals. The men's singles semifinals were also in progress when this report was filed. Rochi played Mustafa while Sadi was pitted against Badal

N'ganj cricket

From Our Correspondent NARAYANGANJ, May 6: Eastern Cricket Club made it to the semifinals of the Gulbux Bhuiyan Smriti Second Division cricket league when they beat Chaturanga Krira Chakra by 28 runs in a rain reduced match at the local Osmani Stadium today. Eastern will take on Sitakshya Club in the second semifinal on May 8 while the first semifinal will be played between Narayanganj Cricket Club Red and Three Star Club on May 7. Today's match was reduced to a 20-overs-a-side affair because of a delayed start. Batting first Eastern Sporting made a 131 for the loss of six wickets with Anup hitting a brilliant 69. Apu and Faruq notched up 17 and 11 respectively. Harun claimed two wickets while Masud and Sohag picked up one each. In reply, Chaturanga KC managed 103 in their quota of 20 overs losing six of their men. Liton knocked 25 while Sohag scored 22. Suman dismissed two Chaturanga KC batsmen for 12 runs while Badal, Rommel, Rana, Apu took one apiece. Meanwhile, Kashipur Club outplayed Bhuigarh United Club 15-6, 15-5 in the Azad Products First Division volleyball league at the same venue. Shunno Hosiery Club take on Mandapara Jubo Sangha while Dredger Directorate will be up against Chaurapara Jubo Sangha tomorrow.

DC Cup soccer

Staff Correspondent BARISAL, May 6: Eskaton Club of Dhaka edged past Jessore Rainbow Club by a solitary goal in the ongoing DC Gold Cup football tournament at a local stadium today. Eskaton Club dominated the match from the word go but had to be satisfied with the goal from Waqil in the 20th minute of the match. The Jessore side, squandered an opening to equalise in the 32nd minute.

Maradona to quit Seville

MADRID, May 6: Argentina's Diego Maradona has said he will quit Spanish First Division club Seville at the end of the season because he can no longer keep up with the club's strenuous training schedules, reports AFP. The 32-year-old South American, speaking in a radio broadcast Wednesday night, said he intended to continue his playing career - but with a club where he would be under less pressure. He did not name a club. Maradona, who has been out of action for three weeks with a back injury but who hopes to play in Seville's last seven league matches of the season, has come under increasing criticism in Seville because of repeated injuries and regular absences from training sessions. The Argentinian super-star returned to football last September when he joined Seville after a 15-month ban for taking drugs. Meanwhile, the long-running battle between Maradona and the Spanish Football Federation (RFEF) seemed to be nearing a conclusion here on Wednesday with the player being fined around 4,275 dollars (2,850 pounds). Maradona was originally fined and banned for failing to attend a disciplinary meeting after being involved in a pitch brawl during Seville's match against Cadiz. Maradona, who claimed he was too ill to attend, responded by comparing Spain's football officials with the mafia. But he accepted the fine on Wednesday, adding: "It was fair but I don't think I deserved the ban. I'm too old to regret things, anyhow."

Seles taking it day-by-day

VAIL, Colorado, May 6: Monica Seles, who was stabbed by a spectator during a tournament in Germany last week, said here Wednesday she did not know how long she would be out of action, reports AFP. "I am taking it day-by-day," she said in her first public remarks since the attack last Friday. "For me, the big thing is to recover my arm. I don't want to look too forward." Seles looked relaxed at the Steadman-Jawkins Clinic, where she is being treated for the half-inch wide stab wound in her back. The left-hander sat with her left arm still, while doctor Richard Steadman explained her injuries. "I can't say how deep," he said of the wound. "It was deep enough to affect the muscles that rotate the shoulder. Her range of motion has improved in the last few days." Steadman would not speculate on how long her recovery would be or whether she would regain her previous level of play. "I can't offer assurances," he said. "From an objective standpoint, the area of injury did not affect a nerve or an artery. Muscles should heal. She's a great healer. My anticipation is that she can get to the same level as before." The 19-year-old player described the attack, which happened during a changeover. "I was down 3-0, and then came back to go up 4-3," she said. "I told myself to concentrate. I was leaning forward and felt something in my back. Something went in, and I saw blood going out. I turned back and saw a guy with a knife. I didn't know what was going on or how bad I was hurt."



MONICA SELES intended to kill Seles, but wanted to put her out of action so that his idol, Steffi Graf, would regain the world number one ranking. Seles said Graf visited her in the hospital. "It was emotional for both of us," Seles said. "We were crying. It was difficult for me and for her. It was an emotional couple of minutes." But Seles laughed when asked if she might retire because of the attack. "I love this game too much," she said. "I'm a strong person, mentally and on the court, too. I just want to get back, hit the ball, have fun and go forward with my life. Physically and mentally, it will take a while." She said she was in favour of tighter security at regular tour events. "In my opinion, security has to be improved," she said. "They shouldn't get paranoid, but they need to have stricter security. I don't think we need this to happen again."

Graf is next?

BERLIN, May 6: Security is being tightened for next week's tennis tournament here, with German number one Steffi Graf coming in for special attentions, reports AFP. The move follows the stabbing last Friday of Yugoslavia's Monica Seles during the Hamburg tournament. Her attackers, a German tennis fan, said he wanted Graf to regain top spot in the world rankings. Berlin tournament chief Eberhard Wensky said that security measures "are going to be multiplied fourfold" and he dismissed press speculation of a Serb "Get Graf" campaign. Plain-clothes police will accompany players throughout the tournament. The top seeds will have four or five each, with Graf being assigned six or seven from the moment she arrives at Berlin airport. "Of course, Steffi Graf is the most at danger, and we have reached an agreement with her family concerning her security," Wensky said. Graf, currently number two behind Seles, stands to regain the number one spot as her on-court rival will be out of action for several weeks. As for stories in the German press about a Serb desire for vengeance for the attack, Wensky dismissed the reports as "pure rumours." Graf is well aware that all the security measures in the world cannot make her completely safe. Referring to Seles' attacker, she said "unfortunately, there are a lot of people like that around," adding that she felt even less safe after security was tightened for last Saturday's semi-finals.

Smooth sail for sub par Capriati

ROME, May 6: Jennifer Capriati ousted Italy's top player in straight sets in the Italian Open Wednesday but showed few sparks and complained of pain in her serving elbow, reports AP. Still looking for her first tournament win on the European circuit, the fifth-seeded Capriati downed Sandra Cecchini 6-3, 6-2 in one hour and 25 minutes. No. 1 seed Arantxa Sanchez Vicario of Spain, the hottest player on the women's tour, breezed to victory 6-2, 6-0 in a rain-interrupted match against Rosana De Los Rios of Paraguay. No. 2 seed Martina Navratilova also advanced easily, defeating fellow American Debbie Graham, 6-0, 6-4. Capriati had trouble holding serve but later, her right elbow packed in ice, explained: "I felt pain in my right elbow while serving. It's not

JENNIFER CAPRIATI tennis elbow. I don't know what it is."

Third umpire in Ashes series

LONDON, May 6: England are set to employ a third umpire in this year's Test series with Australia to help determine close run-out and stumping decisions, reports AFP. If a two-match trial in the Benson and Hedges Cup, one of the two English country knockout competitions, proves a success later this month, it is likely to be used in the six Ashes Tests. "We don't want to commit ourselves beyond the two-match experiment in the Benson and Hedges Cup, but it's not inconceivable we will use the system in this season's Test series," said TCCB official Tim Lamb. Last month England seemed to be shying away from television replays, saying they did not want to be pushed into a quick decision. But Lamb insisted today "suggestions that Australia are trying to force us into TV replays could not be further from the truth. There's no question of them trying to pressurise us."

West Indies clinch the series 2-0

Rain brings the curtain down ST JOHN'S, Antigua, May 6: Rain caused the third Test here between the West Indies and Pakistan to be abandoned as a draw without a ball being bowled on the fifth and final day today, reports AFP. Earlier an AFP report said: An inspired spell of fast bowling by Waqar Younis, in which he took four wickets for 20 runs, briefly deflected the West Indies and Pakistan from its course to a certain draw here Tuesday. An inconclusive result was still on the cards at the end of the day as the West Indies, who reached 153 for four, held an overall lead of 265. The penultimate day of the final Test of the series which West Indies have already won, was shortened by rain delaying the start until 45 minutes after lunch. When Younis, who had struck twice in his very first over, took his fourth wicket, the West Indies were 68 for four and Desmond Haynes and Carl Hooper, who now came together, formed their last pair of recognised batsmen. They remained together until the close, almost two hours later. Haynes, had batted for 205 minutes. He was unbeaten on 64 after facing 160 balls. Although Haynes, who is now in line to score his third century in the series, batted with rigid concentration and cool calm, he too had his problems while Younis' tall was up, and he had to survive one very confident appeal for lbw, which was the fate of three of Younis' four victims. Younis was twice on a hat-trick. His first two wickets were got with the fifth and sixth balls of his very first over. Phil Simmons was bowled, driving over a ball of near yorker length. Then Richar-

Malaysia enhance WC chances

KUALA LUMPUR, May 6: Malaysia gave themselves their first true hope of a World Cup appearance by finishing level with Saudi Arabia and Kuwait in the first leg of the Asian Group E qualifying round Wednesday after beating Macau 9-0, reports AFP. The win gave Malaysia a total of four points in the first leg, equivalent to Saudi Arabia and Kuwait who both drew with the home side. On goals, the Malaysians shared the same tally of 11 as the Kuwaitis while the Saudis scored seven. "Albeit the heat, different pitch and crowd in Riyadh, I think this is the best shot this country has ever had to make it into the World Cup," Malaysian team manager Ken Worden said after the match. The game, played on a swampy pitch following heavy rain, one of Malaysia's best

Army soccer

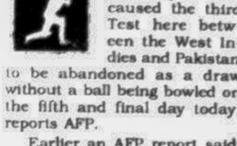
BOGRA, May 6: Three matches of the Bangladesh Army football championship were more decided at Bogra Cantonment on Wednesday, reports UNB. Log Area beat Dhaka Infantry 2-1 in a Group B match. Meanwhile, Rangpur Area defeated Chittagong Area 3-1 in a Group A match. In another match of the group Mymensingh Area beat Savar Area by a solitary goal. Twelve teams are participating in the championship which began on April 29 at the Bogra Cantonment, Inter Services Public Relation (ISPR) source said today.

BGIC basketball

Sports Reporter Bakshibazar Club registered a narrow 49-46 victory over Josephites Hawks in the BGIC Second Division basketball league at the wooden-floor gymnasium yesterday. The winners trailed the first half 20-27. Tanveer topscored with 18 points for Bakshibazar followed by Kayes with 11. Ashim and Liton caged 11 and 10 points respectively for the losers. In the other keenly-contested encounter of the day, Rising Force overpowered Young Angels 50-46. The winners led the first half 29-26. For Rising Force Mujib was the topscorer with 18 points while Pappu and Aziz scored 12 each. Nizam and Raihan scored 16 and 12 respectively for the losers. In today's matches Victoria Sporting Club will be up against Dhaka Mariner Youngs Club while Rangers Club will play against Mitford Friends Club.

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trapped lbw. Arthurton fell to the next ball, a straight one. This time, however, the hat-trick ball was confidently played by Hooper. There was a change of umpires during Younis' lethal spell. England's 'Dickie' Bird, the 'independent' umpire, retired shortly after giving out Richardson. He was suffering from a trapped nerve in the back, brought about by an injury he suffered on the field yesterday. While standing at square-leg, during Pakistan's innings, he was struck in the base of the spine by a throw from Keith Arthurton and had to receive treatment on the field. It was the reserve umpire, Clancy Mack, who denied Younis his appeal against Haynes and then sent Lara and Arthurton packing. Younis' deadly spell was not delivered with the new ball. He had come on for the 13th over with the score 34 without loss. He had bowled another spell at the end, but could do no further damage. Pakistan's two other pace bowlers, Wasim Akram and Ataur Rehman made no impression on a pitch that had become very slow.

SCOREBOARD

Close of play scoreboard of the fourth day of third cricket Test between West Indies and Pakistan here Wednesday. WEST INDIES: First innings 438. PAKISTAN: First innings 326. WEST INDIES: Second innings: Haynes not out 64, Simmons b Younis 17, Richardson lbw b Younis 0, Lara lbw b Younis 19, Arthurton lbw b Younis 0, Hooper not out 29, Extras: (b-8, lb-5, nb-11) 24. Total: (for four wkts) 153. Fall of wickets: 1-36; 2-36; 3-68; 4-68. To bat: J. R. Murray, C. E. L. Ambrose, W. K. M. Benjamin, A. C. Cummings, C. A. Walsh.

Table with columns: BOWLING, O, M, R, W. Rows: Akram, Ataur Rehman, Nadim Khan, Younis, Mujtaba, Basit Ali.

Umpires: H. D. Bird (substitute: C. Mack) and S. U. Bucknor.



WAQAR YOUNIS ... 4 for 23

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Samaranch greets M United

MANCHESTER, May 6: International Olympic Committee President Juan Antonio Samaranch has congratulated Manchester United on their English Premier League triumph and boosted the city's bid for the 2,000 Games, reports AFP. In a message to Manchester 2,000 chairman Bob Scott, Samaranch wrote: "I wish to express to you my congratulations for the great victory of Manchester United in winning the English Premier League title. "After 26 years of expectation I can imagine the great celebrations of this joyful event in the city of Manchester." The letter stunned Scott, who enthused: "I'm absolutely delighted by president Samaranch's wonderful message. "It underlines the fact that United's superb victory is making news all over the world and that can only be good for Manchester and the bid." The IOC vote on the host city for the 2,000 Olympics in Monte Carlo in September.

Standings

Table with columns: Team, Goals for, Goals against, Points. Rows: Malaysia, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Macau.

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Saudi forward Fahad Al Mehalel (L) and Kuwaiti mid-fielder Masha Al Anzi battle for the ball during the World Cup Asian Group E soccer pre-qualifying match in Kuala Lumpur on Wednesday. The match ended goalless. - AFP photo