

Win for PWD

PWD beat Arambagh KS by a solitary goal in the Star Premier Division football league at the Dhaka Stadium yesterday. Mashaque scored the all-important goal in the 68th minute of the match. Dhaka Wanderers Club beat promoters East End Club by two goals to one in the First Division League encounter played at the same venue earlier in the day. There will be no soccer today on account of Ashura. The league programmes will resume tomorrow, Friday.

Wrestlers off to Lahore

Four wrestlers left Dhaka yesterday for Lahore to have special training for the forthcoming sixth SAF Games to be held in the city from December 20 to 27. The four wrestlers — Dulal Miah (fly-weight), Kamaluddin (feather-weight), Jamaluddin (welter-weight), Md Azim (middle-weight) — were accompanied by coach Faruquddin Ahmed. The Bangladeshi quartet will train in the Pakistani city upto November. Earlier, 24 wrestlers were picked for the Games. The 20 wrestlers lotted to stay back are likely to train under either an Iranian or an Indian coach expected to be in Dhaka shortly.

Div II cricket qualifiers end

Mirpur Nabin Kria Chakra won the inconsequential final of the Second Division qualifying cricket championship when they beat Gopibagh Friends Association by four wickets at the Mirpur Pallabi cricket ground yesterday. Sayeed Babu was the lone ranger as sent in to bat first in curtailed over match, Gopibagh mustered 96 for seven. Babu made 43 followed by Sayeed who made 15. Ujjal was the major bowling success claiming three for 15. Pavel took one for nine, Montu took one for 26. Mirpur Nabin KC ensured a four-wicket win when they raised 97 for six in 19.1 overs. Fraug, Montu scored 19 each for the victors while Joy chipped in with an unbeaten 12. Thirty extras considerably helped Mirpur Nabin's cause who, along with runners-up Gopibagh FA will play in Second Division league from the next season. Losers Gopibagh had some consolation when their Sayeed Babu was named man-of-the-match.

Careca heads for Japan

TOKYO, June 30: Japan, riding a soccer boom with the start of their professional league, have acquired a new star — Napoli's Brazilian international Careca, reports Reuter. A spokeswoman for Kashiwa Reysol said on Tuesday the 32-year-old striker would join them later this year. Kashiwa are in the Second Division but have applied to join the 10-team J-League which wants two more sides next season. The club, in the Kashiwa suburb of Tokyo, is part of electronics giant Hitachi. The daily Nikkan sports said Careca has signed a six-month contract worth 1 million dollars. In addition, Kashiwa were said to be paying a transfer fee estimated at 300,000 dollars to Napoli. Careca played in the 1986 and 1990 World Cups, scoring five goals in the 1986 finals, before being transferred to Napoli where he and Maradona spearheaded the club's drive to two league titles. Careca scored 73 goals in six seasons for the Italian club. Meanwhile, First Division Kawasaki Verdy has signed a seven-month contract with Brazilian midfielder Bismarck Barreto Faria from Vasco da Gama in an estimated 840,000 dollars deal.

Von Almsick hits out at neo-Nazis

BERLIN, June 30: Germany's double Olympic swimming champion, Franziska von Almsick, has hit out at the racist attacks in her country, reports AFP. "When I see what happens with the Turks here in Germany, I can really hate the Germans for it," the 15-year-old told Super Illu magazine on Tuesday. "How can house be set alight when there are people living inside them," she said, referring to the two arson attacks which claimed the lives of eight Turks in Milln last November and in Solingen last month. "It nearly drove me out of my mind," she said. Von Almsick devotes a portion of her earnings to initiatives designed to help foreigners living in Germany.

Shyamal sinks Sonali Bank

Sports Reporter Shyamal scored twice to shape a two-nil win for Azad Sporting Club against Sonali Bank in the Green Delta First Division hockey league at the Hockey Stadium yesterday. Shyamal scored twice to shape a two-nil win for Azad Sporting Club against Sonali Bank in the Green Delta First Division hockey league at the Hockey Stadium yesterday. complaint against Abahani's recent signing of star Pakistani player Qamar Ibrahim who joined last year's league runners-up Tuesday along with compatriots Mahmud Hassan, Nayeem Amjad and Anjum Sayeed. According to an Usha official, dates back to 1985 when he came with Pakistan team to take part in the Asia Cup. Mahmud was also one of the members of the Pakistan team for the 1986 World Cup held in England. Nayeem Amjad, who plays in the full back position, is another veteran of '88 Seoul Olympiad and World Cup '90. He along with right half Anjum Sayeed will be making their debut in the Dhaka field on Friday. Anjum is the son of Anwar Sayeed who had coached the Bangladesh hockey team for the 1978 Asian Games. With Mohammedans, Abahani and Usha adding new dimension to this year's hockey league championship recruiting players from Pakistan local fans are not yet through with their share of thrill as Shabaz Ahmed, one of the finest forwards of recent times, is also destined to play in the Dhaka league. Both Abahani and Mohammedans are claiming to have ensured the services of this Pakistani superstar. However, from a practical point of view, Mohammedans have the better chance of having the last laugh because so far they have registered three players from Pakistan — Mumtaz, Shahid and Zahid — with one slot still to be filled. Their arch rivals, Abahani, on the other hand, have filled their quotas of four players.



Action from yesterday's Green Delta First Division hockey league encounter between Azad and Sonali Bank. Azad won the match 2-0. —Star photo

In the first match of the day, Shyamal first sounded the board with a field goal in the 26th minute. He then doubled the margin six minutes later in identical fashion. The win takes Azad's tally to six from ten matches while Sonali remain at nine from ten outings. In the second match of the day, Bangladesh Sporting edged past PWD club by a lone goal. Ripon scored the match winner in the 15th minute following a combined move. Bangladesh Sporting have four points and PWD only two having played ten matches each. There will be no match today on account of holy Ashura. Mariner Young's Club will play Sadharan Bima in the first match and Abahani Kria Chakra will take on Wari Club in the second match on July 2, Friday as the league resumes following a day's gap.

QAMAR OFFENDS USHA

Meanwhile, officials of Usha Kria Chakra, the Independence Day Cup champions, are planning to lodge official complaint against Abahani's recent signing of star Pakistani player Qamar Ibrahim who joined last year's league runners-up Tuesday along with compatriots Mahmud Hassan, Nayeem Amjad and Anjum Sayeed. According to an Usha official, dates back to 1985 when he came with Pakistan team to take part in the Asia Cup. Mahmud was also one of the members of the Pakistan team for the 1986 World Cup held in England. Nayeem Amjad, who plays in the full back position, is another veteran of '88 Seoul Olympiad and World Cup '90. He along with right half Anjum Sayeed will be making their debut in the Dhaka field on Friday. Anjum is the son of Anwar Sayeed who had coached the Bangladesh hockey team for the 1978 Asian Games. With Mohammedans, Abahani and Usha adding new dimension to this year's hockey league championship recruiting players from Pakistan local fans are not yet through with their share of thrill as Shabaz Ahmed, one of the finest forwards of recent times, is also destined to play in the Dhaka league. Both Abahani and Mohammedans are claiming to have ensured the services of this Pakistani superstar. However, from a practical point of view, Mohammedans have the better chance of having the last laugh because so far they have registered three players from Pakistan — Mumtaz, Shahid and Zahid — with one slot still to be filled. Their arch rivals, Abahani, on the other hand, have filled their quotas of four players.

UEFA wants to look into it

LONDON, June 30: UEFA are asking the French Football Association for a detailed report on the Marseille bribery allegations, but are refusing to speculate on the European champions title defence prospects, reports Reuter. UEFA press spokesman Rudi Rothenbuehler said on Tuesday that any suggestion of Marseille being barred from the European Cup if found guilty of match-rigging allegations against Valenciennes was entirely hypothetical. "We are waiting for documents from the French Football Association. It is an internal matter right now," he said. "If, however, there should be some proof of these allegations and if there are international complications then we shall make our own enquiries," he added. Those enquiries would involve recent allegations in the Russian press by CSKA Moscow trainer Gennady Kostylev that Marseille offered his players money before both their European Cup ties this year. Russian newspaper Sport Express reported Kostylev saying, "They offered money to our players both before (the Marseille) game and the one in Berlin." He claimed his players also felt ill after the halftime break in Marseille. "Something wrong happened during the break. There must have been something wrong with the players' tea," Kostylev was reported as saying. "Many of them went out to Marseille in deep waters" MARSEILLE, France, June 30: The judge investigating the Marseille soccer bribery scandal seized documents in a surprise raid on the clubs headquarters on Wednesday, police sources said, reports Reuter. Judge Bernard Befly, who is investigating allegations that Marseille bribe Valenciennes players to lose a French league match on May 20, spent and hour taking documents relating to the clubs financial affairs, they said. Befly is expected to question Marseille general secretary Jean Pierre Bernes, who is in hospital suffering depression, later in the day. The claims are subject of a French judicial investigation and French soccer league president Noel le Great said on Monday that no disciplinary action would be taken until that was complete. Le Great suggested when the match-rigging scandal first broke that Marseille could be barred from the European Cup and demoted if found guilty. But then he said because an early legal decision could not be expected, sanctions could not apply until the following season. Two players have been placed under investigation. Valenciennes striker Christophe Robert and Marseille midfielder Jean-Jacques Eydelies.

Maradona had it before his time

SEVILLE, Spain, June 30: Diego Maradona has been sacked by Spanish club Sevilla hours before the expiry of his contract, the club's deputy chairman said on Wednesday, reports Reuter. Jose Maria del Nido told the state news agency EFE: "Maradona has been fired before the termination of his work contract with Sevilla." The former Argentine captain was informed of his sacking in a note from the club's lawyers sent on Tuesday, Del Nido said. The contract formally expires on Wednesday. Maradona joined Sevilla at the start of the season from Napoli after he completed a 15-months ban from the game for drug abuse. The Spanish club based his dismissal on five points. These included: The fact he had left the Andalusian capital on June 23; incidents in a match against Real Burgos when Maradona was substituted and stormed off hurling his captain's armband to the ground, his failure to attend training, his poor sporting performance and "lack of loyalty to the company." Last week Sevilla informed Maradona they would not pay him, or the Dutch company which acts as his publicity agents, some 140 million pesetas (about 1.1 million dollars) outstanding on his one-year contract. Del Nido said the notification of his dismissal "serves as support in the litigation pending with that company over the final payment, which must be resolved in the Dutch courts." Maradona has looks overweight and out of condition in most of his appearances for Sevilla, despite showing occasional flashes of his old genius. He missed seven of the club's final 10 games of the season because of back and leg trouble.

McCague branded a traitor, a rat

SYDNEY, June 30: Australian-raised pace bowler Martin McCague, called up to help salvage England's cricket fortunes, was labelled a traitor and a rat today, reports Reuter. "Martin's a traitor...he should be playing for Australia," Neil McCague, an uncle of the Northern Ireland-born fast bowler, told reporters. An editorial in today's Daily Telegraph Mirror in Sydney said: "Martin McCague will go down in Test cricket history as the rat who joined the sinking ship." McCague has been selected for England, already 2-0 down in the six-match Ashes Test series. The third Test starts at Trent Bridge on Thursday. McCague's uncle said he would be backing Australia and hoped his nephew's bowling was off-line. "My first home is Australia, my second home is Ireland, so I love to see the English beaten on both counts," he said. "Good luck to him I suppose, but I'll be hoping Martin doesn't bowl as well as he can." The Telegraph was more scathing, accusing McCague of opting for an easier English Test cap. "By virtue of a decidedly tenuous rule, the 24-year-old Western Australian qualifies for England because he was born in Northern Ireland," the newspaper said. "It doesn't matter that he left when he was two, spent more than the next 20 years growing up in Australia and attended the Australian Cricket Academy and played for Western Australia. "Even McCague's uncle has branded him a traitor for accepting an English Test cap — so much easier to earn in the current climate than the baggy green cap of Australia."

Cason-Christie duel to gild Bislett Games

OSLO, June 30: A duel between newly-crowned American 100 metres title holder Andre Cason and Olympic champion Linford Christie of Britain is the likely highlight of the Bislett Games on July 10, organisers said on Tuesday, reports Reuter. Other stars should include Czech javelin thrower Jan Zeleny, who set a world mark in Oslo last year which was never recognised as his javelin was not an accepted design. Zeleny set an official record in April. Cason, who won the US trials this month, will meet Christie, on form after back trouble, in an important test in the run-up to the World Championships in Stuttgart in August. Organisers told a news conference that Morocco's Khalid Skah, controversial winner of the Olympic 10,000 metres, would meet Yobes Ondieki. The Kenyan had asked for a fast opening pace, which could signal a world record attempt.

Graf, Navratilova in semis

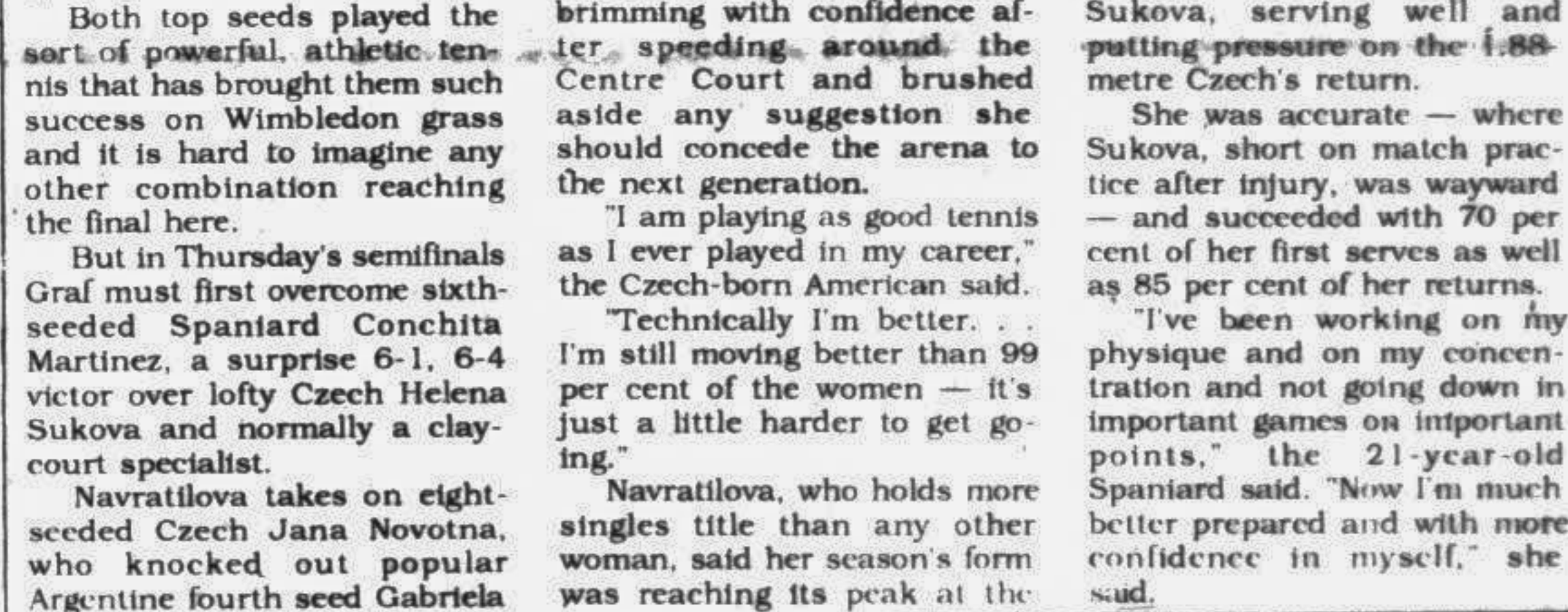
WIMBLEDON, June 30: The top two women's seeds Steffi Graf and Martina Navratilova romped into the Wimbledon semifinals on Tuesday, looking like they owned the place, reports Reuter. Sabatini 6-4, 6-3. Despite her apparently invincible form world number one Graf was obviously irritated with herself for allowing Capriati to dominate the start of the match. "I didn't play aggressively enough in the beginning. I missed a few forehands. The 100th women's Wimbledon, where she is sentimental favourite to win her 10th championship. "It's been a gradual ascent to better form and it's holding," she said. "You just win on heart rather than form sometimes. But you know they both seem to be working well now." Certainly Navratilova scuttled about the court with energy and enthusiasm, allowing her 22-year-old opponent no opportunity to go into the match. Zvereva appeared pinned to the baseline and, as Navratilova's grip tightened, she lost confidence producing a stream of unforced errors. Navratilova's semifinal opponent plays the same sort of game. She battered a hapless Sabatini from the net, taking full advantage of the speed of the court to slam away volleys. "I think playing Gaby on grass I felt I had the best chance I could have," Novotna said afterwards. "Because we've had no rain at all. The courts are very hard and fast, and I tried to take advantage of that and come in as soon as I could." Although she has career wins over Graf, injured former world number one Monica Seles and Arantxa Sanchez-Vicario, Novotna has failed to overcome Navratilova in seven previous meetings. The last time the pair met was in the semifinal of the Paris women's indoor tournament last February, when Navratilova made light work of her opponent on a slow surface, winning 6-1, 6-3. Novotna, 12 years Navratilova's junior, said the older woman, who defected in 1975, was never her inspiration. "I don't remember Martina growing up in Czechoslovakia — I'm too young for that — so all I remember of Martina is just that I saw her on TV." Martinez has also had seven meetings and seven defeats against her semifinal opponent, but she was clearly not feeling downhearted. "It's great because when you play against Steffi you are in the quarters or the semifinals so I'm very happy to be there and we'll see what happens," she said. Martinez, normally happier on clay, took the game to Sukova, serving well and putting pressure on the 488-metre Czech's return. She was accurate — where Sukova, short on match practice after injury, was wayward — and succeeded with 70 per cent of her first serves as well as 85 per cent of her returns. "I've been working on my physique and on my concentration and not going down in important games on important points," the 21-year-old Spaniard said. "Now I'm much better prepared and with more confidence in myself," she said.



ALL FIRED UP... Jana Novotna of the Czech Republic rejoices after hitting a winner against Argentine Gabriela Sabatini in the women's quarterfinals of the Wimbledon tennis championships on Tuesday. Novotna made it to the last four with a straight sets victory. —AFP photo

Ray Mercer pleads not guilty

NEW YORK, June 30: Heavy weight boxer Ray Mercer pleaded not guilty on Tuesday to offering a 100,000 dollars bribe to Jesse Ferguson in the ring last February to throw their fight, reports Reuter. In a loud voice, the 32-year-old Mercer, whose 10-round shock loss to Ferguson cost him a million-dollar-plus shot at Riddick Bowe's world heavyweight title, told Manhattan Supreme Court Judge George Roberts he was pleading "Not guilty." The judge released Mercer on his own recognizance and set the trial date for July 12. Mercer said he was going back home to Indianapolis, where he was arrested on Sunday. Mercer, a 1988 Olympic gold medalist, is alleged to have offered the bribe repeatedly during the February 6 fight at Madison Square Garden, which he lost by unanimous decision. Manhattan district attorney Robert Morgenthau, who earlier in the day announced the arrest and one-count indictment, said Mercer faces a maximum of seven years in prison if convicted. The prosecutor said the fight had been videotaped by HBO, the cable television broadcaster of the bout, "the tapes confirmed that Mercer repeatedly attempted to persuade Ferguson to let Mercer win," Morgenthau said. Morgenthau said the 36-year-old Ferguson, who did not report the bribe, will not be charged with any crime. Ferguson earned the title shot that had been virtually promised to Mercer, and was knocked out by Bowe in the second round on May 22 in Washington. Mercer, who was wearing dark purple trousers and shirt, no socks and brown shoes, remained silent despite reporters' repeated questions after his court appearance, but stopped to shake hands with well-wishers in the street. Mercer's lawyer Dominick Amorosa said: "He has categorically denied his guilt in this matter. My understanding is that Ferguson has said on TV that no such bribe was offered. We are shocked and dismayed that this man has been detained."



Frenchman Cedric Pioline prepares to serve during his quarterfinal match against seeded Swede Stefan Edberg in the Wimbledon men's singles yesterday. Pioline was leading 4-2 in the second set after conceding the first 7-5. —Star TV photo



Third seed American Jim Courier cools his system during a change-over in his Wimbledon men's singles quarterfinal encounter against compatriot Todd Martin yesterday. Courier moved into the semifinal with a 6-2, 7-6, 6-3 triumph. —Star photo