

Sport

Navana cricket from November 1

Sports Reporter Navana Premier Division cricket league will begin this year from November 1 as the Bangladesh Cricket Control Board (BCCB) plans to be through with the domestic season to ensure smooth preparation for the forthcoming ICC trophy. Yesterday, a meeting of the league committee with representatives of all but two clubs discussed matters related to early completion of the season which is planned to be fired away with the beginning of traditional curtain raiser 15th Damal Summer cricket tournament from the first week of October. A plan to distribute the gate money among the participating clubs is on the anvil, the details of which await finalisation in the next meeting of the committee on August 16. The meeting is expected to take decision about the quota of foreign players this year and the future of the pool system introduced last year. Every team was allowed to have the services of maximum of three national players and although controversy raged over the decision initially players and club played along the idea giving authorities the confidence to stick to the system.

Ball gets rolling today



Sports Reporter Although it would be tantamount to the proverbial headlong rush of the fools where angels fear to tread, one prediction will always hold good — Abahani Krira Chakra will try their best to avoid the memories of June 11 as the league champions take on Public Works Department (PWD) at 6:30 pm in the second match of the second round of the Star Premier Division football league at the Dhaka Stadium today. League champions Abahani, who got a new lease of life on August 4 following a 2-1 victory over arch-rivals Mohammedan Sporting Club in the last match of the first round engagements, began their quest of a second treble of league championships on a most unconvincing note as unfancied PWD held them to a one-all draw on the inaugural day of the year's bifid Senior Division soccer league. It was true test case of the adage morning shows the day as Abahani kept on toddling since June 11. Wari snatched a point from them in an entertaining two-all encounter. Rahmatganj of all

teams, who are almost certain to face relegation to Star First Division league, then held the skyblues hard. Abahani, champions for the last two years, lost their third point as the scrappy, tense match ended in a goalless draw to underline that going would be tough even for the big teams in this year's ten-team Premier league. Brothers Union, who also got off to a nightmarish start, losing their league opener to Wari by a solitary goal then delivered Abahani the blow they could ill afford near the end of the first phase with every team loathed to play nine matches each. They beat Abahani 3-2 to end their 49 match unbeaten run but in the very next match Abahani turned around to beat league leaders Mohammedans in a trouble-marred encounter to turn a significant corner. Mohammedans are still the league leaders with 14 points from nine matches but Abahani have reduced their three-point gap with them to just one and on the eve of the much deferred second round maintain a close second position with Brothers Union with each having collected 13 points from nine matches.

The return league twice failed to get started on time. Scheduled to begin on August 8 it was first delayed because of the short supply of policemen. Organisers DMFA put it off a second time from August 9 as referees refused to enter the grounds without effectual assurance about their security as the stadium remained tense following the decision of the league committee among other measures to suspend national and MSC custodian Syed Hassan Kanan for six matches for his involvement in the August 4 match between Mohammedans and Abahani. THAI STRIKER Samart Narksumparana, a 23-year-old Thai striker will play for Arambagh Krira Sangstha, who take on Victoria Sporting Club today in the day's first match scheduled for a 4:30 start. The registration formalities of the player, who reportedly plays for Sasana FC of Bangkok, was completed yesterday. Narksumparana will soon be joined by two more compatriots as the Arambagh officials are all set to bring in a defender and a goalkeeper from Thailand.

Dhaka Mariners finish fourth

Sports Reporter Dhaka Mariner Young's Club finished fourth in the Green Delta First Division hockey league when they beat Ajax Sporting Club by a solitary goal in their last league encounter at the Hockey Stadium yesterday. Mariners, who finished their league campaign with 21 points, got the match-winner in the 37th minute through Shahiduzzaman who souped the board from a goalmouth scramble following a penalty corner. Ajax, former league champions, rounded off their dismal campaign with ten points. In the other match of the day, Bangladesh Railway beat Dhaka Wanderers Club by a similar margin through the goal from Javed Hassan in the 57th minute. Railway ended their league engagements with nine while Wanderers finished with seven.



Kepler Wessels, captain of the South African Test squad, and vice captain Hansie Cronje walk out of the Colombo airport after arriving late Tuesday for a five-week official tour. The South Africans will play three Tests. — AFP photo

M United aim to scale twin peak



LONDON, Aug 11: Manchester United await the opening of the new English soccer season this weekend bursting with an eagerness driven by success and a quest to become a dominant force at home and in Europe, reports Reuter. Since savouring the sweetest taste of triumph when they won the English league championships last season for the first time in 26 years, United have built up an unquenchable thirst for more. Far from being satisfied with delivering the frustratingly elusive league title to Old Trafford, Manager Alex Ferguson now wants to keep it — and add the European Cup. If United retain their league title they would become only the second club after Liverpool to do so since Wolverhampton Wanderers in 1959. "And if they capture the European Cup they would be the first English side to lift the trophy since Liverpool won it for the fourth time in 1984. To achieve one would be exceptional, but to do both would herald the beginning of a new United dynasty to rival the Liverpool of the 1970s and 80s. Ferguson believes he has the team to pull it off. "It is time to move on towards the next destination. Hopefully the next stop will bring either the European Cup, the retention of the title, or

both," he said. "I have watched in recent years how clubs who have won the title followed up with a relatively mediocre season in the league. But it is not in my own nature to relax, to let things drift. "I don't intend to take my foot off the pedal, but the question is can the players retain the same hunger?" Ferguson knows what it takes to win in Europe after United captured the Cup Winners' Cup in 1991. He added one player in the close season — Roy Keane, considered to be the most talented midfielder in the country and who cost an English record 3.75 million pounds (5.56 million dollars) from Nottingham Forest. Ferguson expects his main opponents to be Arsenal, 1992 champions Leeds United, a revived Liverpool, who have added English international Nigel Clough and defender Neil Ruddock, and Sheffield Wednesday, who bought England defender Des Walker from Italy's Sampdoria. Arsenal, winners of both the FA Cup and League Cup last season, have added midfielder Eddie McGoldrick from Crystal Palace. They won the league title in 1989 and 91. Wednesday were beaten by Arsenal in the two Wembley fi-

nals last season and they finished seventh in the league after losing 13 games. The arrival of Walker should ensure fewer defeats. Title runners-up Villa, who went so close to denying United, have also strengthened their side. Manager Ron Atkinson has added Chelsea captain Andy Townsend in midfield and Guy Whittingham, last season's top goalscorer in the First Division with 47 for Portsmouth. Former Manchester United star Steve Coppell, who quit as Crystal Palace manager when they were relegated last season, does not believe United will retain the title. He thinks they will be distracted and stretched by European Cup ties and picks either Liverpool or Arsenal. "My head tells me Arsenal, but my gut tells me Liverpool," he said. "For once they start with something to prove. Manager Graeme Souness has filled two obvious holes with Clough and Ruddock and with a revitalised John Barnes can cause a shock." United open the defence of their title away to Norwich on Sunday. The new season could make or break three talented managers, Ossie Ardiles, Glenn Hoddle and Kevin Keegan, charged with lifting Tottenham, Chelsea and newly-promoted

Newcastle respectively to former glorious heights. Former Argentine international Ardiles returns to his first English club spurs with the difficult task of healing the wounds opened by the acrimonious sacking of General Manager Terry Venables by chairman Alan Sugar. Hoddle, another Tottenham old boy who walked out on Swindon after taking them into the Premier League for the first time, is expected to inject new ideas at Chelsea with his brand of swift, passing soccer. Former Liverpool and England captain Keegan has revitalised a despairing Newcastle side and returned football fervour to the city. Swindon, minus their managerial maestro, will probably be among the sides battling a relegation. Others are likely to include fellow newcomers West Ham and perennial strugglers Oldham, Southampton and Sheffield United. There will be tension at international level as England fans wait to see if their side can qualify for next year's World Cup finals. England, their confidence sapped by recent disastrous results, need to beat Poland and San Marino and at least draw with the Netherlands, to succeed.

Good omen for Abahani

Sports Reporter Abahani Krira Chakra will now have to deal with the weaker challenge of Victory Club of Maldives as Jawwiyia Club of Iraq have reportedly pulled out of the 13th Asian Club championship. Abahani will take on their opponents first on September 24 in the 'home match' and then face them again in the 'away' encounter on October 1 this year to decide one of the two qualifiers from central Asia.

Schools TT ends

Sports Reporter Mahbubur Rahman Chowdhury rallied twice to beat his Dhaka DSA teammate Mohammed Tuhin in a tight five-setter to clinch the boys' singles title of the second Green Delta schools table tennis championship which concluded yesterday at the National Sports Council gymnasium. Mahbub, a govt Laboratory High School student, lost the first and third set, to find himself down by one set to two. But he kept his cool and stepped up the pressure on his opponent, a student of Ahmed Bawani High School, and took the next two sets. The final scoreline showed 17-21, 21-15, 22-24, 21-17 and 21-17. Farhana Parveen Tumpa dethroned defending champion Sajia Arefin Sumi when she won the girls' singles final with astonishing ease. Tumpa, a Rajshahi Govt Girls' school student, got rid of Sumi in straight sets — 21-12, 21-16 and 21-13. Earlier, Dhaka DSA and Gaibandha DSA took home the boys' and girls' team titles respectively.

SA expect a tough series

COLOMBO, Aug 11: South African cricketers are ready to face the challenges during their forthcoming international series here, players said Wednesday, reports AP. "This is a very well balanced side. I am confident they can play cricket under any given condition. It will be very good experience to us," said veteran Test batsman Kepler Wessels, who is leading the 15 member squad. The team, who arrived the Colombo late Tuesday, will play three Tests, three one day internationals and two three-day games during the 45 day tour. "Mike Proctor, the cricket manager, said his team is here to reverse the result of the World Cup encounter, the first ever official sporting link between the two countries. "We respect Sri Lanka cricket very highly. They showed us what they are capable of during that game. The forthcoming series is going to be very challenging," Proctor told a news conference. "Spin bowling is something that's going to be very interesting during the series and the manner in which we handled the Indians in the home series, I can't see any difficulty here," he said. The visitors have included two uncapped players in the squad — off spinner Pat Symcox, one of the two spinners and reserve wicketkeeper Stevan Palfaman. "The side is picked on merit. There is no colour discrimination in our cricket," Wessels said. Wessels is the only experienced player in the side, having played in 29 Tests. His five Test centuries include 141 against Sri Lanka in the one off Kandy Test in 1985 under Greg Chappell. The visiting skipper is more than happy to have local umpires in the international series. "We leave the decision making to the umpires, while we do our jobs," he said. Neil Perera, secretary of the Sri Lanka Cricket Board, who was at the news conference was noncommittal about the announcement of the ICC sponsored neutral umpire. "It is still under discussion between the ICC and our board. I am not allowed to comment with regard to the issues of neutral umpires and match referee," Perera said. Following the series between India and Sri Lanka where both sides were accused of sledging and ball tampering, it was decided a neutral umpire would stand with a local in the international series against South Africa. "After a 22-year international isolation, South Africa have played only five games. Since returning as a fully fledged Test nation in 1991, the South Africans have lost to the West Indies in the only Test in April 1992 and won the four-match home series one-nil against India. The South African squad: K Wessels (capt) H Cronje, A Hudson, J Cook, D Cullinan, J Rhodes, B McMillan, D Richardson, R Snell, A Donald, P Symcox, B Schultz, F de Villiers, C Eksteen, S Palfaman.

Monaco beat Bordeaux 3-2

MONACO, Aug 11: Monaco beat Bordeaux 3-2 in the French league here on Tuesday as Amara Simba and teammate Victor Ikpeba destroyed Bordeaux with three goals midway through the first half, reports AFP. Senegalese striker Simba, up front in place of injured German Jurgen Klinsmann, scored with two spectacular scissor kicks to boost the club from the principality. Coach Arsene Wenger's summer dealings in the transfer market paid dividends as Simba, Nigerian Ikpeba, and Belgian Enzo Sello, had Bordeaux's defence scratching their heads. Though Monaco cleverly used the acres of space on the wings, it was Bordeaux who scored against the run of play in the eighth minute. Complacency had entered Monaco's ranks as Christophe Dugarry, helped by a deflection, found the net with a sweet left-foot shot from the edge of the area. But lacklustre defending from Bordeaux cost them dear in a whirlwind 10 minutes midway through the half. Bad anticipation from Bordeaux keeper Gaetan Huard, left him stranded as Sello cut open the slack defence with a cross to Simba, whose dance of delight celebrated his accurate scissor kick. Four minutes later in the 21st minute, Ikpeba surged through to the by-line and scored from an incredibly acute angle helped by a deflection off Huard's shoulder. Simba made it 3-1 to Monaco minutes later, but Bordeaux coach Roland Courbis must have been fuming at his static defence. Philippe Vercuryse gave Bordeaux hope of a stirring comeback by scoring from a rebound off the post two minutes before half-time. But a relatively uneventful second half kept the score at 3-2, though Simba should have scored at the far post as Monaco continued to exploit space down the flanks.

Flach adds to Lendl's woe

MASON, Ohio, Aug 11: Unheralded American Doug Flach will always remember his 23rd birthday on Tuesday as the day he upset Ivan Lendl in the second round of the 1.65 million dollar ATP Championships, reports Reuter. "Obviously, I'm real excited," said the 177th-ranked Flach after defeating the fifth-seeded Lendl 7-6 (7-4), 2-6, 6-2. Flach, whose older brother Ken is a well-known doubles player, added: "This is the biggest win in my tennis career and to have it come on my birthday is so exciting." Unseeded Andre Agassi scored a 6-3, 6-7 (2-7), 6-3 first-round victory over 11th-seeded Todd Martin. This tournament is the first since the Swiss Indoors in October 1987 in which Agassi has not been seeded. "Today everything was favourable," said the 28th-ranked Agassi. "I was strong, ready, competitive and stayed within myself. I'm working to maximise my ability so I can feel I can beat whoever I have

to." Third-seeded Stefan Edberg of Sweden, playing in his first tournament since Wimbledon and since the birth of his daughter Emilie on July 14, easily defeated Switzerland's Jacob Hlasek 6-4, 6-3 in another second-round match. Ninth-seeded Goran Ivanisevic of Croatia retired in a first-round match due to an injury to his left arm with the score 6-3, 3-1 in favour of Brazil's Luis Mattar. X-rays of the 11th-ranked Ivanisevic's arm were negative. Top-ranked Pete Sampras's evening match was cancelled on Tuesday because of rain. The top eight seeds received first-round byes. After winning the first set in a tiebreaker, Flach was in trouble at the end of the second set, losing his serve in the sixth and eighth games. But he didn't fold in the third set despite facing one of his favourite players. He broke Lendl's serve in the first game of the third set and again in the fifth game at love. He ended the match by serving three of his nine aces

in the final game. "It was kind of weird to look across the court at him," said Flach of his first outing against Lendl. "I admired him growing up. I was a little in awe." Flach has been busy the last two weeks, scoring 10 consecutive match wins. He won last week's challenger tournament here after having to play qualifying to gain access to that event. Including the Lendl victory, Flach has only won five career matches on the ATP Tour. The seventh-ranked Lendl, who was a finalist here last year, had one of his increasingly frequent off-days. "I just didn't play well," said Lendl. "He has a lot of confidence and he's playing pretty well on these fast courts. He took a few chances and made them." Since the Italian Open in May, Lendl's best result was reaching the quarter-finals in Montreal two weeks ago. He lost in the first round of the French Open and the second round of Wimbledon.

Austin comeback isn't a joke

MANHATTAN BEACH, Calif., Aug 11: It's time to take Tracy Austin's comeback seriously, reports AP. Showing flashes of her old form, Austin upset 12th seeded Gigi Fernandez 6-3, 6-4 Tuesday night in a first round match in the dlr \$375,000 Virginia Slims of Los Angeles women's tennis tournament. Austin is making a comeback at age 30 after taking four years off the tour because of injuries from a car accident. She played in two tournaments earlier this year and more recently played team tennis with the Raleigh NC team. Fernandez, 29, is ranked 35th in the world. Austin, the youngest woman ever to win the US Open when she did so in 1979 at 16 years, nine months, is not ranked. "I felt like I was hitting the ball well most of the time," a smiling Austin said after the 66 minute match at the Manhattan Country Club. "Some of the old stuff felt like it was still there. You know like passing shots. "This really felt good. The more I play, the more it comes back. But I'm still not totally comfortable."

ASF move to settle things

SYDNEY, Aug 11: The Australian Soccer Federation (ASF) has moved to quell a row over match payments by resolving a pay dispute with the national team days before Sunday's World Cup playoff with Canada here, reports said Wednesday, reports AFP. There were reports that the Australian team skipped training Tuesday afternoon after the ASF failed to get back to a players' representatives before a deadline imposed by the disgruntled players.

Richards' dream shattered

LONDON, Aug 11: Viv Richards' dream of one last Lord's final was dashed at Hove on Tuesday when Sussex work up just in time from a batting nightmare, reports AFP. Richards' adopted county set Sussex the apparently modest target of 221 after an innings in which only Matthew Maynard got going. But the home team lost early wickets and at the half-way stage seemed hopelessly adrift, scoring at under two runs an over. With 20 overs left they needed 131 with only five wickets in hand. The first threat of rain on Richards' parade came from fellow West Indian Franklyn Stephenson. Sussex's Barbadian pace bowler had taken 3-25 in the Glamorgan innings and threw the bat for a rapid 25. Sussex skipper Alan Wells raised the tempo and, in a 15-over stand of 107 with Neil Lenham (47), snatched the game from Glamorgan. Wells

unbeaten 106 came off 131 balls. He said later: "We knew all the pre-match publicity was about Viv trying to get back to Lord's in his last season, but it's a hard game out there and we like to ruin fairytales whenever we can." Richards had a quiet game by his extraordinary standards, contributing 22 to a stand of 53 with Maynard but going for 25 off three overs. Now 41-year-old, the former West Indian captain was so desperate to help Glamorgan to their first final since 1977 he played despite the death of his father at the weekend. Maynard, batting with a hairline fracture to a knuckle in his left hand, made 84. At Taunton, Warwickshire's middle order saw the county to a healthy 252 for eight after both openers went with only 27 on the board. Man-of-the-match Dominic Ostler hit 58, Paul Smith 33, Roger Twose 41 and skipper Dermot Reeve 28 not out. Somerset's Dutch Paceman Adrianus van Troost claimed 3-57. In reply, Somerset fell off the pace early on and, unlike Sussex, never managed to step it up. Nick Pollard held the innings together with 61, but he

perished with the rest of the side when the asking rate reached nine an over. Reeve defied concussion to see the match out. After his side's victory, he was nursing the headache that was a legacy of a collision with Somerset wicketkeeper Neil Burns as he completed a sharp single. Reeve said: "I can't remember facing another ball after deciding at first to stay on for a couple of overs. Apparently I hit one ball down to third man for single. The next thing I knew I was in the physio's room. I've been concussed before, once when I was hit by a cricket ball, and it's an odd feeling." When Warwickshire fielded, Reeve lost strike bowler Gladstone Small with a hamstring strain after just five overs. But he coaxed a fighting performance from his team of walking wounded and took three vital wickets himself. Small's remaining complement of overs had to be bowled by Twose and Jason Ratcliffe, while Warwickshire's Tim Muntun (hips train), Keith Piper (hairline fracture of the ring finger) and Paul Smith (trapped nerve in left elbow) were all playing through in injury.



Scene from yesterday's Green Delta First Division hockey league match between Ajax Sporting Club and Mariner Young's Club at the Hockey Stadium. Mariners won the match 1-0. — Star photo

Sanchez storms to Round 3

MANHATTAN BEACH, Calif., Aug 11: Arantxa Sanchez-Vicario capitalized on her strong serve Tuesday to rout Michelle Jaggard-Lal of Australia 6-1, 6-2. In the second round of the dlr \$375,000 Virginia Slims, of Los Angeles, reports AP. The top-seeded Spaniard lost only three points on service in the first set and won the last four games of the second set, losing just three points of a possible 19. She won in 52 minutes. Sanchez-Vicario will face No 14 seed Julie Halard of France in the third round Thursday. Halard advanced Tuesday with a 6-2, 6-1, victory over Clare Wood of Britain. In a first-round match Tuesday night, Tracy Austin, showing flashes of her old form, upset

12th-seeded Gigi Fernandez 6-3, 6-4. Fernandez is ranked 35th in the world. Austin, the youngest woman ever to win the US Open when she did so in 1979 at 16 years, nine months, is not ranked. Austin is making a comeback at age 30 after taking four years off the tour because of injuries from a car accident. She played in two tournaments earlier this year and more recently played Team Tennis — a US professional league which has attracted such aging stars as Jimmy Connors and Martina Navratilova — with the Raleigh, NC team. In other second-round play, No 3 Gabriela Sabatini of Argentina eliminated Kathy Rinaldi 6-3, 7-6; No 4 Magdalena Maleeva of Bulgaria defeated Laura Colarsa of Italy 6-3, 6-4; No 5 Helena Sukova of the

Czech Republic downed Danielle Scott 6-1, 6-2, and No. 8 Zina Garrison-Jackson topped Audra Keller 6-3, 6-4. In the first round, No 10 Lori McNeil beat Karine Quentrec of France 7-5, 6-3; No 16 Angelica Gavaldon of the Mexico overpowered Rosana De Los Rios of Paraguay 6-1, 6-0; Liz Smylie of Australia eliminated Jolene Watanabe 6-0, 6-3; Natalia Bardone of Italy ousted Maria Jose Gaidano of Argentina 6-2, 3-6, 6-3; and Elena Likhovtseva of Kazakhstan topped Louise Field of Australia 6-4, 6-2. The Sabatini-Rinaldi match, played before the Austin-Fernandez match Tuesday night, lasted over two hours, mainly because of long rallies and deuce games. The seventh game of the second set went to deuce seven times before Rinaldi held her serve.