

Agrani, Bima win

Sports Reporter

Agrani Bank further diluted fears of relegation when they beat Victoria Sporting Club by a solitary goal in the lone Star Premier Division encounter at the Dhaka Stadium yesterday.

In an all too familiar dull, prosaic encounter bankers sealed the fate of the match with a goal from Raj at the flag end of the first half.

Raj scored the all important goal utilising a cross from speedy winger Akhtar in the 44th minute of the first half.

The win enhances bankers collection to 14 from 16 matches.

Victoria on the other hand stay glued to their previous collection of 12 from 16 matches.

Sadharan Bima Krira Sangstha drove another nail in the coffin of already relegated Adamjee Sports Club when they recorded a narrow one nil victory against the Jute men in the Star First Division league at the Hockey Stadium yesterday.

Striker Mintu scored the match winner two minutes after the kick-off.

The insurance men now have 15 points from as many matches, definitely a lot better situation than Adamjee who face the axe with just three points in their kitty from 16 matches.

Meanwhile, two more referees — now from Sri Lanka — are due in the city to officiate the remaining Star Premier league matches. The pair would be an addition to two match officials from Malaysia who have successfully conducted a couple of Premier ties.

Foreign referees are being used for the time in the history of local football as controversy over the competency of local referees recently raged the football arena.

Udayan, Shaheen start with wins

Sports Reporter

Udayan Vidyalay and BAF Shaheen School and College recorded wins on the inaugural day of the National King Fan schools basketball championship that got underway at the wooden floor gymnasium yesterday.

In the low scoring but exciting first match Udayan beat K L Jubilee School 28-23.

Wastur with 10 and Asif with six alone among the Udayan scorers.

Vivekananda had the honours of being the highest individual scorer with 15 but still ended up with the losers. Mehmood made six.

In the second match of the day BAF Shaheen School and College had an easy 42-12 victory against Bangladesh Rifles School.

Magasud was the top scorer for the winners with 14.

Bony managed six points for the vanquished.

Earlier State Minister for Youth and Sports Sadek Hossain inaugurated the 12-day meet comprising 13 teams.

Morocco beat Mali 3-0

RABAT, Sept 16: Morocco beat Mali 3-0 (half time 2-0) in a soccer friendly in Casablanca today in a warm-up match for Morocco's World Cup qualifier against Zambia on October 10, reports Reuters.

Scorers: Laghrissi (25th, 55th minutes), Chaouh (37th).

Zambia overcomes hangover of tragedy

LUSAKA, Sept 16: Zambia said on Wednesday it would play a World Cup soccer qualifier against Morocco next month despite losing a protest against the proposed match officials, reports Reuters.

Zambia had appealed to the International Football Federation (FIFA) to replace Gabonese match officials after a row blew up with Libreville over investigations into an April air crash in which 18 members of the Zambian national team died.

Zambian authorities accused Gabon of blocking investigations into the crash of the Air Force plane shortly after taking off from Libreville en route to a World Cup qualifier in Senegal.

Winson Gumbo, acting chairman of the Football Association of Zambia (FAZ), said FIFA had rejected Zambia's request to change the officials for next month's because the Gabonese would be representing FIFA and not their home country.

Gumbo said the FAZ would accept the decision "Because Zambia is a disciplined country."

Zambian Foreign Minister Vernon Mwaanga said on Monday investigators had found some of the wreckage of the twin-engine aircraft in shallow water of the coast of Gabon.

All 30 people aboard died in the crash.



An exciting moment in the dull Star First Division encounter between Adamjee and Sadharan Bima at the Hockey Stadium yesterday. Bima won the match one nil. — Star photo

Barcelona at the beam's end

LONDON, Sept 16: Former champions Barcelona were on the precipice of elimination from the European Cup after a shock 3-1 away defeat by Dynamo Kiev in the opening salvoes of the competition on Wednesday, reports Reuters.

And AC Milan, beaten finalists last season and winners in 1988 and 1990, suffered a scare before running out 1-0 winners against FC Aarau who had three goal attempts disallowed.

Monaco, reluctant underdogs for banned European champions Marseille, needed a late own goal to beat AEK Athens 1-0 in the principality, while Manchester United marked their return to the European Cup after 24 years with a 3-2 away win against Honved Budapest.

Barcelona, knocked out in the second round by a 3-2 home defeat by CSKA Moscow last season, face a severe test of their European pedigree in the home leg in two weeks after two goals either side of halftime earned the Ukrainians victory.

Kiev shook the Spanish champions with a sixth minute goal from Pavlo Shkopenko, but Barcelona equalised through a penalty in the 28th minute by Ronald Koeman.

Then Viktor Leonenko scored twice, a penalty on the stroke of halftime and 11 minutes after the break to earn Dynamo their first win in four games against Barcelona over the last four seasons.

Other former champions Porto and Anderlecht beat Malta's Floriana 2-0 and HJK Helsinki 3-0 respectively.

Belgian police arrested 100 Cardiff city fans and Dutch police detained 29 Germans and two Dutch fans as fighting broke out before two games.

About 200 Cardiff city fans clashed with supporters outside a bar in the Belgian city of Liege and Dutch and Germans fought in Enschede where Bayern Munich beat FC Twente 4-3 in

the UEFA Cup. In Slovakia, Aston Villa's coach was pelted with bricks, cracking a window, as the English team made their way to the stadium for their UEFA Cup tie with Slovan Bratislava. No one was hurt.

And in Greece, a Cup Winners' Cup match between Panathinaikos and Shelbourne of Ireland was suspended for three minutes after home fans threw bottles and cushions on the pitch.

Benfica, another of Europe's former champions, needed a goal two minutes from time by substitute Rui Aguas to snatch a 1-0, with at home over GKS Katowice of Poland in their Cup Winners' Cup tie.

Dutch International Dennis Bergkamp dispelled all doubts about his early season form in Italy with a sparkling hat-trick for his new club Internazionale in their 3-1 UEFA Cup win over Rapid Bucharest.

He was outdone by Bulgaria's top marksman Vanyo Shishkov, who scored four as CSKA Sofia spoiled the Cup Winners' Cup debut of Liechtenstein's balzers with an 8-0 thrashing.

Italian International Roberto Baggio scored twice as UEFA Cup holders Juventus beat Kokomotiv Moscow 3-0 at home.

Real Madrid, whose coach Benito Floro is under threat of dismissal after a dismal home league defeat on Sunday, beat Lugano of Switzerland 3-0 at home in the Cup Winners' Cup.

Wei: A dice in Games diplomacy?

BEIJING, Sept 16: Wei Jingsheng, China's most prominent dissident, said after being released from prison that he hoped Beijing was chosen to host the 2000 Olympic Games, a family member said here Thursday, reports AFP.

But after 14-1/2 years in prison, Wei still believed that "A more enlightened political system is needed for China to modernize," his brother Wei Xiaotao said, adding that his quest for full democracy "will not change."

Wei Jingsheng was paroled Tuesday in a ploy by Beijing to strengthen its Olympic bid. Critics of China's human rights record in the west have campaigned against Beijing, citing cases such as Wei's.

Wei, 43, decided after being released to rest for a few days in a suburb north of Beijing, where he is staying in a villa along with two police, said the brother, who met with him late Wednesday for about two hours.

In a handwritten letter passed to reporters, Wei said he would return to the city "within a few days" and hold a press conference.

"He is absolutely free," the brother said. "He can come back at any time, it's up to him."

During their talk, Wei told his brother that he hoped the International Olympic Committee would select Beijing to host the 2000 Games when the group meets in Monte Carlo next Thursday.

"I think (President) Jiang Zemin said it will," Wei was quoted as saying. "I hope that Beijing's bid for the Olympics succeeds, but the right to decide belongs to the International Olympic Committee."

Wei was "more mature" than before, the brother said, adding that he expected him to be "less radical."

"Sometimes if you go forward the road gets narrower, so why not step back and let the road open wide? (Wei) understands this," he said.

Wei was jailed for 15 years in 1979 for his leading role in the Democracy Wall movement. At the time he advocated US-Style democracy, which he viewed in ideal terms, and condemned paramount leader Deng Xiaoping as a despot.

For the time being, Wei appeared to be simply enjoying life on the outside of prison, where he spent five years in solitary confinement in an underground cell, and figuring out what to do next.

"This morning, he is probably fishing. In the afternoon, he will probably take some shooting practice," Wei Xiaotao said, adding that the two celebrated their reunion with beer along with sister Wei Ling.

Wei was also making telephone calls to old friends to renew contacts.

"He's most concerned with A show of Chinese concern over Games

BEIJING, Sept 16: China reacted sharply Thursday to remarks by British Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd who has come out against Beijing's bid to host the 2000 Olympic Games, reports AFP.

Hurd was told by a Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman, reacting with unusual speed, that he should leave the decision making to the International Olympic Committee (IOC).

"Where to hold the Olympic Games is not decided by some politicians, it is decided by the ballot of the IOC," the spokesman said.

Hurd said Thursday in Sydney he felt strongly that Beijing should not get the Games.

Speaking in a breakfast television interview, Hurd said Manchester was the obvious place, but if Manchester failed, the Games should come to Sydney.

Asked how he would react if both were knocked out and Beijing won, he said: "I think that would be poor needs, I think that would be a bad choice."

Beijing, Sydney and Manchester are in the contest along with Berlin and Istanbul to host the Games, which will be decided in Monaco next week.

Also Thursday the official China Daily newspaper carried a letter in which Vice Premier and Foreign Minister Qian Qichen supported an IOC proposal to make 1994 the year of sport and Olympism.

The paper said the IOC proposal had been put by its president Juan Antonio Samaranch in May to Chinese President Jiang Zemin, Premier Li Peng and Qian Qichen.

what he will do when he returns. He doesn't have a fixed idea of some profession," he said, adding that "It is absolutely impossible" that he join China's rush to do business.

Details of Wei's detention also started to emerge.

He was held for the first five years in Beijing NO. 1 prison, where he was confined to a maximum security block with underground cells. He was then moved to far-west Qinghai province, China's Gulag, before ending up at a labour camp in Tangshan, about 200 kilometres (130 miles) east of Beijing.

Most of his teeth fell out due to lack of sunlight in the first five years of imprisonment, but otherwise his health was generally good.

Wei Xiaotao said reporters that Wei suffered from psychiatric problems during his detention were unfounded.

U-21 World Cup hockey semis today

TARASA, Spain, Sept 16: Germany, Australia, the Netherlands and Pakistan reached the semifinal round Wednesday in the men's portion of the Under-21 Junior World Cup field hockey tournament, reports AP.

In semifinal play Friday, Germany will play Australia and Pakistan face the Netherlands.

Germany played to a 1-1 draw Wednesday with England to finish atop Pool A with a 4-1-0 record for nine points. The Netherlands defeated Malaysia 5-1 to finish second in Pool A at 4-0-1 with eight points. In the day's other Pool A game, Egypt and Cuba drew 2-2.

Pakistan topped Spain 5-0 to finish the leader in Pool B at 4-1-0 for nine points. Australia defeated South Korea 4-3 to finish second in Pool B at 4-1-0 for nine points. In another Pool B game, Argentina defeated Scotland 3-0.

There are no men's games Thursday. In women's semifinals Thursday, Germany faces Australia and Argentina plays South Korea. The women's final is Saturday and men's final is Sunday.

ROK, Iran in Asian v'ball qtrs

BANGKOK, Sept 16: South Korea, runners-up in the last Asian Championships, defeated Taiwan 15-11, 15-10, 15-1 in a Group C first round match in the seventh Asian men's volleyball championships here Wednesday, reports AFP.

In Group B, Iran beat New Zealand 15-8, 10-15, 15-11, 15-8.

Both Iran and South Korea now go through to the quarter-finals of the competition, together with the other two top qualifiers from each group.

Qualifiers: Group A: Thailand and Pakistan; Group B: Japan and Iran; Group C: Kazakhstan and South Korea; Group D: China and Australia.

Istanbul to step on the gas for Games 2000

ANKARA, Sept 16: Prime Minister Tansu Ciller will lead a team of 150 Turkish officials and lobbyists to Monte Carlo next week to spearhead Istanbul's bid to host the 2000 Olympics, a senior official said on Wednesday, reports Reuters.

The team will present Turkey's bid to the International Olympics Committee which will name the host city for the Olympic Games on September 23.

Beijing, Sydney, Manchester and Berlin are also competing for the turn-of-the-century Games.

"Whatever the result, historical Istanbul deserves the Olympics," the statement by Ciller's chief adviser ambassador Volkan Vural said.

The selection of Istanbul which represents religious and cultural amalgamation... will be a display of international solidarity," he said.

Istanbul, at the crossroads of Europe and Asia, has picked "Let's meet where the continents meet" as its main slogan for its campaign.

"Istanbul will have no problems at all in preparing for the Games if it is selected," Sinan Erdem, head of Turkish Olympics Committee said on television.

SL soldier on doggedly

COLOMBO, Sept 16: Sri Lanka put on a tedious batting display against South Africa to end the third day of the third Test on 245 for 5 at the Saravanamuttu Stadium here Thursday, reports AFP.

It was left to an enterprising 43-run sixth wicket stand in 12.5 overs between Sanath Jayasuriya and Hashan Tillekeratne to brighten the gloom in the latter stages before bad light stopped play 17 overs before the scheduled close.



Arjuna Ranatunga, the stocky Sri Lankan skipper appears to have negotiated well this thunderbolt from South African fast bowler Allan Donald, touted as the white lightning. The Sri Lankan southpaw made 50 as his side snailed to a tedious but useful total of 245 for five at the end of the third day of the third and final Test between Sri Lanka and South Africa in Colombo yesterday. — AFP photo

It's end of the running for Gower

LONDON, Sept 16: David Gower, snubbed by England yet again, is facing the end of his glittering Test career, reports AFP.

Who says so? Gower himself, after he learnt he had not been picked as part of the 17-man squad to tour the West Indies this winter.

"If you are a betting man you might suggest this is the end of my Test career," he said. "As time goes by it is harder for me to convince the powers that I'm their man."

"The odds are against it and the likelihood they will return to anyone other than Graham Gooch met summer is diminishing."

But he signed off with one final bitter broad side aimed at former England skipper Gooch, who only last week publicly backed Gower as a tour candidate — even though he himself had ignored him for the tour of India and Sri Lanka last winter as well as the Ashes Series.

"His comments took me completely by surprise and came two or three years too late," said Gower. "What brought about the change of heart, god only knows. But it hasn't worked because my name is not on the list. Mike

Atherton is the man in charge and he has his own very strong ideas.

New England captain Mike Atherton argued it was time for England to turn to younger men, a policy which will probably mean the end of Gower, Mike Gatting and Allan Lamb as test performers.

"We felt we wanted to build what happened at the Oval," said Atherton. "The side played with a lot of spirit. We want to take that on and make a clean break with the past."

Asked whether the old guard should now abandon all hope of resurrecting their international careers, the skipper could only offer, not necessarily and headed "We feel this is the best way to go. We've tried to view things long-term, not just short-term."

Gower has played only three Tests since scoring two centuries on the 1990-91 tour of Australia.

He would not predict his retirement, despite the fact that many believe he no longer has the stomach for the grind of county cricket.

He said: "I'm not making any big, bold, rash decisions on the spur of the moment. There are options and Hampshire are very much one of them because I have a year to go on my contract."

Harsh words for skeptics

LONDON, Sept 16: Top international athletics official Arne Ljungqvist hit out on Tuesday at "irresponsible" people who have been swift to accuse China's record-breaking women runners of doping, reports Reuters.

"This is an extremely bad example of irresponsible behaviour from people who make such accusations," said Ljungqvist after international cynicism greeted the four world records set in six days by China's Wang Junxia and Qu Yunxia.

"This is possibly the major tragedy of the introduction of doping in sport that it has poisoned the atmosphere in this way," Ljungqvist, chairman of the International Amateur Athletic Federation (IAAF) Medical Committee said in a telephone interview.

Earlier on, such a performance was applauded and rewarded and those who succeeded in this way became stars. Now they become victims of suspicion of a very unpleasant type."

American Lynn Jennings, fifth behind Wang in the 10,000 metres in last month's World Championships, and British team manager Joan Allison are among those who have gone on record as saying they believe the Chinese women use performance-enhancing drugs.

"When athletes are not allowed to perform well without being subjected to suspicion I

am extremely upset on behalf of them and on behalf of competitive sport in general," Ljungqvist said from Stockholm.

"I don't take it for granted that they are doped unless I have the proof in my hand."

Ljungqvist said Wang, whose three world records last week included slicing 42 seconds off the 10,000 metres mark, and Qu had been treated unjustly.

"Sport is supposed to be a good example in society of fair behaviour. I think this is an extremely good example of the exact opposite."

Ljungqvist said the Chinese women underwent a tough training regime which could account for their outstanding performances.

"The attempt to explain it by drug abuse is an unintellectual approach for me," he said. "I tend to look for normal, rational explanations."

Ljungqvist said distance running was a relatively new sport for women.

"It is not long ago that 800 metres was the maximum event for women. These events that we are talking about are very young events in the sport's history. You must then expect fairly quick progress in performance."

The 3,000 metres for women was introduced as an Olympic event in 1984 while the 10,000 metres came in only at the Seoul Games four years later.

Ljungqvist's comments echoed remarks made earlier on Tuesday by British national coaching director Frank Dick,

Jayasuriya smashed an unbeaten 35 off 45 balls with seven fours while Tillekeratne made 29 not out in their 64 minute unbroken stand.

Resuming from an overnight 117 for 3, Sri Lanka could add just 128 runs in 72.5 overs on the third day.

When play resumes on Saturday after Friday's rest day, the Sri Lankans have to shed their defensive attitude and accelerate the scoring rate if they are seriously interested in winning the test and squaring the series.

For two whole sessions Sri Lanka batted monotonously against a South African attack that simply went through the motions by keeping the batsmen in check.

The Sri Lankans were content to remain in a shell rather than try to overtake the South African first innings total of 316.

The overnight pair of skipper Arjuna Ranatunga and vice-captain Aravinda de Silva decided to trudge from the commencement of the third day's play.

They added just 3 runs in the morning before Ranatunga was dismissed for 50 in the third over after lunch by the fiery leftarm paceman Brett Schultz.

Sri Lanka's two senior batsmen were separated after a 101-run fourth-wicket stand in 202 minutes.

The snail-paced approach was enlivened slightly when middleorder bat Hashan Tillekeratne hit the day's first boundary after 33 overs.

Yet the second session was a virtual re-play of events in the morning when Tillekeratne and De Silva garnered just 44 runs in 29 over.

De Silva then paid the penalty for being over-cautious following a 46 run fifth wicket association with Tillekeratne.

He went forward defensively to a ball from off-spinner Pat Symcox, missed and was ruled out leg before in the third over after tea.

In the previous over, De Silva had survived a confident appeal for a catch by wicket keeper Dave Richardson off Schultz.

The diminutive De Silva spent 384 minutes in the middle to score 82 with eight boundaries.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard on the third day of the third and final cricket Test between South Africa and Sri Lanka on Thursday:

SOUTH AFRICA: First innings 316 (D Cullinan 102, D Richardson 62, M Muralidharan 4-64)

SRI LANKA: First innings (overnight 117-3) Mahanama c McMillan b Schultz 25

Hathurusinghe c Richardson b Donald 1

Dassanayake run out b De Silva lbw b Symcox 82

Ranatunga c Richardson b Schultz 50

Tillekeratne not out 29

Jayasuriya not out 35

Extras: (b-3, lb-5, nb-7) 15

Total: (for five wickets, close) 245

Fall of wickets: 1-1; 2-27; 3-55; 4-156; 5-202.

To bat: K Dharmasena, D Liyanage, C Ramanayake, M Muralidharan.

Bowling (to date) O M R W

Donald 21 8 45 1

Schultz 28 9 37 2

McMillan 29 1 7 64 0

Snell 25 8 44 0

Symcox 18 5 47 1

Predicament of a long distance runner

DURBAN, Sept 16: A South African runner who claimed he had won a long distance race in the United States has been banned from road racing for 15 years after local organisers found he had dropped out of the race, reports Reuters.

Siphon Mkhahleli claimed on his arrival back home earlier this month he had won the Leadville trial 100 mile (160 km) race in Boulder, Colorado in a record time.

But South African road running officials contacted US organisers and found that Mkhahleli had pulled out before the halfway stage.