

Mirpur Juba Sangha clinch kabaddi title

Sports Reporter
Mirpur Juba Sangha clinched the Metropolis kabaddi league title for the third time on a trot when they beat Azad Sporting Club by a hefty margin of 44 points to nine in a lop-sided final at the Outer Stadium court yesterday.



The players and an official of Mirpur Juba Sangha who won the Metropolis kabaddi league title for the third time in a row beating Azad Sporting Club in the final at the Outer Stadium court yesterday.

Afro-Asian Nations Cup final today
Japan take on Ivory Coast



TOKYO, Oct 3: Football's two emerging continents, Asia and Africa, face off here Monday as Japan and the Ivory Coast play for the Afro-Asian Nations Cup, reports AFP.

and sometimes mechanical skills drummed into the team by national coach, Dutchman Hans Marius Ooft. What the team lacked in flair, they found in spirit particularly in defence.

on and the team's return from Nigeria the president of the local FA reportedly ordered the squad disbanded.

ROLL OF HONOUR
Year Champions
1988 Sonali Bank
1989 Ahmed Bawany Tex 'e
1990 Mirpur Juba Sangha
1991 Mirpur Juba Sangha
1992 (not held)
1993 Mirpur Juba Sangha

BFF to make list of trained soccer coaches

Sports Reporter
The Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) has decided to compile an inventory of trained soccer coaches, according to a federation press release issued on October 2.

The 65,000 seats at the Tokyo National Stadium sold out in August, and such is the interest that two national TV networks will be carrying the match live.

For the Africans, even without several key figures currently playing with European sides, the Ivory Coast promises attacking football that will ooze with the confidence born of skills that seem an African birthright. The Ivorians threaten to make a mockery of Japan's rigid, programmed style.

While the Ivory Coast has nothing to show for its World Cup efforts, this match comes at just the right time for Japan which is focussing on the second round of the Asian World Cup qualifiers, which are held in Qatar October 15-28.

India reject invitation to go to Sharjah

NEW DELHI, Oct 3: India have turned down a request from the Sharjah-based Cricketers' Benefit Fund Series (CBFS) to play in the Champions Cup tournament later this month, reports AFP.

Jagmohan Dalmiya, newly-elected secretary of the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI), said Sunday India will not be going for the limited overs tournament that also features the West Indies, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

Dalimiya said he had conveyed BCCI's decision to CBFS coordinator Asif Iqbal, who made a last-minute plea on telephone to seek India's participation in the tournament that runs October 28-November 5.

India have not played in Sharjah since 1991, citing pro-Pakistani bias in the conduct of tournaments in the desert venue where India-Pakistan matches are the main attraction for expatriates of the two nations.

Dalimiya said India may play in Sharjah next year after receiving assurances from the CBFS that the tournaments will be conducted 'impartially'.



American Michael Chang poses with the Malaysian Open tennis trophy after beating Jonas Svensson 6-0, 6-4 in the final at the Malaysian capital of Kuala Lumpur yesterday.

Chang wins Malaysian Open title

KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 3: American Michael Chang beat Swede Jonas Svensson 6-0, 6-4 to win the 300,000 US dollars Malaysian Open Sunday, reports AFP.

Chang broke the Swede twice in the first set and three times in the second to take the match in 96 minutes and collect 39,000 dollars in prize money.

Novotna has a score to square with Graf

LEIPZIG, Germa-ny, Oct 3: Steffi Graf and Jana Novotna will clash for the first time since their memorable Wimbledon title showdown in today's final of the Leipzig women's tournament, reports AFP.

Novotna, who squandered a 4-1 final set lead against Graf at Wimbledon in July, earned another short at the German with a straight forward 6-1, 6-1 victory over Spaniard Conchita Martinez in Saturday's semifinals.

Graf, the top seed and defending champion, came back from one set down to overcome battling Austrian Judith Wiesner 6-7, 6-2, 6-6. Novotna, who held the biggest moment of her career in the intense pressure of Wimbledon's Centre Court, was quick to play down the clash as a revenge match.

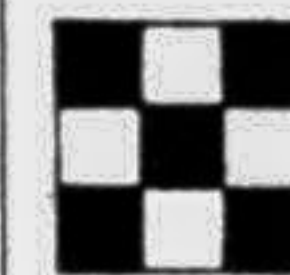
"Many months have gone by and it is a different surface," the Czech said. "I will just play my best and see what happens."

"It wasn't that I lost my concentration or that I was afraid of winning (at Wimbledon). I just gave Steffi a chance and, like the great champion she is, she took it."

Novotna, the third seed, celebrated her 25th birthday with a solid display of her strong serve-and-volley game in her 61-minute win over second seed Martinez.

Novotna's crisp volleying was too much for the Spanish baseliner. She ran away with the first set in 28 minutes and then broke serve to lead 3-1 in the second.

Short still short of a win



LONDON, Oct 3: British challenger Nigel Short and champion Garry Kasparov ended their 24-game chess match on Saturday pleased to have shared honours in a hard-fought draw in the 12th games, reports Reuter.

Kasparov leads 8-1/2 to 3-1/2 after five wins and seven draws. He needs only a 12-12 tie to retain the crown and 12-1/2 points will secure the 5/8 winner's share of the 1.7 million pound (2.5 million dollar) prize sponsored by the Times of London newspaper.

In Saturday's games, Kasparov continued his strategy of risky and ambitious play when defending with the black pieces and sacrificed a bishop early in the game to gain an armada of dangerous passed pawns.

Experts found it difficult to assess the delicately balanced endgame that eventually arose, with Short having an extra bishop to battle against the champion's dangerous phalanx of three pawns.

Kasparov seemed to have slightly more winning chances, but Short's accurate play kept the game roughly in balance.

Short managed to neutralise the champion's threats and was in no danger when the players agreed to split the point.

The draw completes Short's best week of the event, having

held the champion even with three complex and hard-fought draws.

But the challenger's biggest hurdle remains as the match has now reached the half way point with Kasparov still undefeated.

At a post-game news conference the players agreed that Kasparov's bold sacrifice neutralised Short's advantage of the first move and hinted that Kasparov had even gained the upper hand.

Kasparov said his decision to play an endgame with a mass of powerful pawns against a bishop had been misjudged, and that he then had to steer for equality.

"It was a good game, both sides played well," Short said. "So, have we reached perfection now?" Kasparov asked.

Kasparov, who has seemed fatigued in recent games, appeared to have regained most of his energy.

Andrew Page, Kasparov's manager, told Reuters that the champion had been busy with non-chess matters recently, but was now regaining his strength.

"It's a long, hard match and there (are) ways some down periods, but he's back now. I think Garry is going to be very, very dangerous next week," Page said.

The coming week's play is a "black week" for Short, who must defend against Kasparov's often lethal assault with the white pieces in two of the three games.

The official World Champion-

ship match, between Russian Anatoly Karpov and Dutchman Jan Timman, sanctioned by the world chess body FIDE, has been suspended for a week. At the half-way point in that 24-game series, Karpov leads Timman 7-5.

FIDE is still in emergency negotiations with the withdrawal of second-half sponsors Oman.

Besides supplying a venue and operating costs, an emergency sponsor must also provide the FIDE minimum of one million Swiss francs (697,300 dollars) for a title match after the organisers in the Netherlands failed to raise any money towards the advertised prize fund of 1.8 million pounds (2.7 million dollars).

FIDE sources indicate the match is unlikely to resume today in Oman and a delay until October 16 is probable if the match is to be salvaged at all.

Both Timman and Karpov have told reporters that they intend to take legal action against FIDE if the match is not revived and the minimum prize fund not met.

FIDE disqualified Kasparov and Short after a dispute over the conditions of their title match. Short and Kasparov responded by founding the Professional Chess Association, which is the organisation represented at the London match.

The 13th game of the London match is scheduled for Tuesday with Kasparov having the advantage of the white pieces.

M United outstride rivals



LONDON, Oct 3: Manchester United strengthened their grip on the English Premier League title on Saturday when they won 3-2 at Sheffield Wednesday while none of their nearest challengers managed a victory, reports Reuter.

United won with two goals from Mark Hughes and one from his Welsh international teammate Ryan Giggs to go five points clear of second-placed Arsenal, who were held to a 0-0 draw at Anfield by Liverpool, who have now gone 500 minutes without a goal.

Aston Villa, who began the day third, crashed 2-0 at home to Newcastle, who clocked up their first away win of the season with goals from Malcolm Allen from a penalty and Andy Cole, his 11th in 11 games.

Wimbledon, who started the day in fourth place, crashed 4-0 at Leeds, who climbed from fifth to third after the most emphatic win of the day in the Premier League.

At the other end of the table bottom-placed Swindon are still looking for their first win after losing 3-1 at home to Blackburn, whose first goal came from Alan Shearer.

The goal from the 23-year-old striker, starting his first match after five games as substitute following a long injury lay-off, boosted his chances of earning a recall to the England team for the crucial World Cup qualifier against the Netherlands on October 13.

Hughes was the architect of United's win over Wednesday, scoring twice and also creating Giggs' goal midway through the second half.

Chris Bart-Williams had put the home side in front in the 47th minute to the delight of a 34,548 all-ticket sell-out crowd, but Hughes levelled just three minutes later.

United went ahead in the 66th minute after Eric Cantona attacked Wednesday down their right flank before slipping the ball to Hughes just inside the area. The Welshman controlled with his first touch and then despatched the ball with his second for his fifth goal of the season.

Five minutes later, Hughes put Giggs in the clear, allowing the exciting teenager to finish off the move nonchalantly.

In contrast, Liverpool and Arsenal produced a goalless draw at Anfield in a match Liverpool should have won.

Teenage striker Robbie Fowler had a hat-trick of chances to beat the Londoners, but the 18-year-old England youth star, making his home league debut, wasted all of

them. He sent a close range header straight at England goalkeeper David Seaman soon after half-time and in the space of three minutes he twice failed to beat Seaman after slipping past full-back Lee Dixon.

Arsenal did not have a shot on target until the 70th minute when Paul Merson fired lamely at Bruce Grobbelaar. It was the first 0-0 draw between the two teams at Anfield in 27 meetings since 1967.

England manager Graham Taylor was at Swindon to watch fit-again Shearer put Blackburn ahead after 15 minutes and show that his match fitness and stamina are improving by adding his second and Blackburn's third in the last minute.

But their win was soured when Paul Warhurst was carried off with a suspected broken leg in the first half after a collision with Swindon's Terry Fenwick.

While Taylor must have been pleased by Shearer's progress, he must be equally concerned that Les Ferdinand, England's outstanding player in their World Cup win over Poland last month, was left out of Queen's Park Rangers side for the match against Ipswich with a hamstring strain.

Even without him, QPR were too powerful for Ipswich, who had Stuart Slater, their new 750,000 pound (1.12 million dollar), signing from Celtic, making his debut.

Shah Sports Cup football

Sports Reporter

Apu scored twice to lead the Tejkunipara Rafiq Smriti Sangsad march into the round of eight in the Shah Sports Cup juvenile football tournament.

In one of the two matches of the meet at the Outer Stadium, the Tejkunipara side scored a 2-1 victory over Nabarun Kishore Sangha after leading the first half (1-0).

Apu scored the first goal four minutes into the first half and then added another one in the 13th minute of the second session. Yousuf reduced the margin when he neatly converted a spot-kick.

The other match of the day was a one-sided affair with Dhaka Football Coaching Centre racing away a comfortable three-nil winners over Chandnight Tarun Sangha. After a barren first-half, the winners got all their goals in the second half through Sohail, Mahbub and Hasib in the 11th, 17th and 22nd minute respectively.

QPR won 3-0 with Devon White scoring twice and Simon Barker adding the other in an eight-minute spell midway through the second half.

Norwich, who knocked Dutch side Vitesse Arnhem out of the UEFA Cup in their first-ever European tie in mid-week, moved into fourth place with a 1-0 win over Coventry thanks to a goal on the stroke of halftime from Ruel Fox.

The highest-scoring match was on the South Coast where Southampton, with only one win in their opening nine matches, led 20 and then 3-1 before being held to a 3-3 draw by 10-man Sheffield United.

United had David Tuttle sent off early in the second half for a second bookable offence, but salvaged a point with two goals in the last nine minutes by Norwegian striker Jostein Flo.

Peter Reid, the former Manchester City player-manager, made his debut for the Saints who remain just a point above Swindon in 21st place.



Action from yesterday's Shah Sports Cup juvenile soccer tournament match between Dhaka Football Coaching Centre and Chandnight Tarun Sangha at the Outer Stadium. Dhaka Football Coaching Centre won the match by three goals to nil.

Marseille back in the hunt



PARIS, Oct 3: A late winner against Lille on Saturday put Olympique Marseille firmly back in the hunt to regain the championship they were stripped off after bribery allegations, reports AFP.

Lille, right on France's northern border with Belgium, is a notoriously difficult place to come away from with two points and the match looked to be heading for a 1-1 draw before Rui Barros capitalised on a defensive error two minutes from time.

Lille's Danish defender Per Frandsen carelessly lost possession to Jean-Christophe Thomas who quickly fed Barros. The Portuguese international finished superbly to give Marseille the points that lifted them from eighth to fifth place.

Cox's Bazar soccer

From Our Correspondent

COX'S BAZAR, Oct 3: A second-minute goal in the second half from Kashem enabled Friends Union Club to etch a victory over Rashid Club in the Cox's Bazar football league at the local stadium today.

Ramu Brothers Union take on Olympic Sporting Club today in the day's only match.

Barros' compatriot Paolo Futre had given the visitors a 27th minute lead, slotting home after Lille keeper Jean-Laudé Nadeau had failed to hold a shot from Daniel Dutil.

Eric Assadourian headed an equaliser five minutes from the break and the well-balanced match seemed destined for a draw until Frandsen's concentration slip.

Marseille remain two points off the pace as Bordeaux came away with a 2-0 victory from Strasbourg, thanks to a double from Philippe Vercursey — his fifth and sixth goals of the season.

The win put them out in front alone as Cannes and Paris Saint-Germain both drew.

Cannes were involved in a dour 0-0 draw at Metz while PSG and Martiques separated at 1-1.

Newly-promoted Martiques shocked the league leaders when Philippe Anziani fired home after only six minutes.

But two minutes later PSG were level, Brazilian midfielder Rai finding himself completely unmarked to meet a centre from David Olima.

Didier Tholot hit the bar for Martiques in the 30th minute and George Weah completely missed the target after being put clear by Rai four minutes after the break. But those were the only clear chances either of

team created and the match petered out into a tame draw.

Monaco, who head Marseille on goal difference, had to rely on a piece of luck to snatch victory at Caen.

The Normandy club had squandered at least four clear chances before Nigerian victory Ikepeba, who had been on the field less than a quarter of an hour, skidded onto a ball that had stuck in the waterlogged goalmouth nine minutes from the end.

STANDINGS
Standings after this week-end's games in the French First Division soccer league:

Table with 7 columns: G, W, D, L, GF, GA, Pts. Rows include Bordeaux, Paris-SG, Cannes, Monaco, Marseille, Sochaux, Nantes, Auxerre, Metz, Strasbourg, Montpellier, Caen, Saint-Etienne, Lens, Lyon, Angers, Le Havre, Lille, Toulouse.