

Holdings hustled out of meet

Sports Reporter

Last year's champions Faridpur were huddled off the competition but runners-up Dhaka set up a clash with hosts Bangladesh Kriya Shiksha Protishthan (BKSP) in the final of the 13th national youth hockey championship.

Former champions BKSP made the most of the familiar conditions when they disposed reigning champions Faridpur with a two-nil victory in one of the two semifinals played at the BKSP ground, at Jirani, Savar.

In an exciting ding-dong affair BKSP led the first half one-nil.

Cheered on by their supporters on a ground as familiar as one's own backyard, BKSP boys launched into offensive right from the bully.

Pitted against powerful opponents in an alien atmosphere, Faridpur took time to settle down for obvious reasons but once they found their bearings the match deviated from the tournament's hitherto prescribed path of embarrassingly big victory margins for the winners and painful absence of any contest.

Both teams went for swift raids at each other's citadel but at the 19th minute a defence lapse saw Faridpur receive a severe body blow from which they never really recovered.

Fazle Noman, the hard working BKSP winger, gave his side the much desired lead 16 minutes from the short whistle amidst the wild cheers of the partisan crowd (1-0).

BKSP, tipped as the hot favourites for this year's hastily and rather unceremoniously arranged meet, sealed the fate of the match when inside forward Shamsuzzaman sounded the board in the 56th minute (2-0).

The goal wrought havoc with Faridpur's resilience and resistance as they flaked out slowly, seemingly reconciled to their fate.

Although the second semifinal saw the ouster of one of last year's finalists, Dhaka District Sports Association (DSA), the runners-up of the

12th nationals, battled their way to Thursday's finale beating Dhaka Education Board (DEB), another Dhaka outfit, by the odd goal in three.

Here also the winners led the first half one-nil. Tareq Adil was winners' hero, finding the mark twice in a pacy, exciting session of hockey.

Dhaka went ahead quite early when Tareq sounded the board 17 minutes into the match (1-0).

He doubled the margin 20 minutes later (2-0). Far from being swayed by submission by these quick reversals, DEB stepped on the gas and went all out for equaliser. Instead of opening the gates for more goals against them, the boys of the DEB actually pulled one back when Din Islam Babu flicked the ball home with the final whistle ten minutes away (1-2).

Winners Dhaka DSA will take on hosts BKSP in the final of the 13th national youth hockey championship tomorrow.

Bangladesh seeded second

ICC Trophy from Saturday

NAIROBI, Feb 8: Cricket teams from Argentina, Denmark and Fiji are gathering in the Kenyan capital Nairobi for the fifth International Cricket Council (ICC) associate members' tournament opening on Saturday, reports Reuter.

Twenty teams are taking part, playing 75 matches of 50 overs a side over three weeks in the biggest tournament yet for the minnows of the cricketing world.

The three top finishers will win places in the next World Cup. Previously only the winner joined the nine Test-playing nations in the tournament, the next to be hosted by the Indian subcontinent in 1995.

"Now that three countries go forward to the World Cup, the tournament in Nairobi has so much importance," commented Robbie Armstrong, secretary of the organising committee.

Zimbabwe have run out easy winners thrice previously, but their 1990 Holland success thrust them into the ranks of the Test-playing nations. In their absence, the tournament lacks a clear favourite.

Holland, runners-up in 1990 and 1986, are the top seeds. But behind them are eight other teams with strong claims to one of the three World Cup places.

Second seeded Bangladesh have impressed in pre-tournament friendlies, including a six-wicket victory over fourth seeded Bermuda.

The Bermudians and their Caribbean style of cricket cannot be discounted despite struggling to score runs early in their innings. Their middle-order has some powerful hitters including Noel Gibbons who has played in all four previous ICC tournaments.

Hosts Kenya are third seeded

and have the advantage of playing on familiar grounds and at altitude — Nairobi is 1,800 metres (6,000 feet) above sea level — and have a strong batting line-up that includes three brothers.

The US and Canada boast teams with strong West Indian influences, while the three countries who are playing in the tournament for the first time, Namibia, the United Arab Emirates and Ireland, all have experience against strong opposition.

Group A: Holland, Papua New Guinea, Ireland, Malaysia, Gibraltar.

Group B: Bangladesh, United States, United Arab Emirates, Argentina, East and Central Africa.

Group C: Kenya, Canada, Namibia, Singapore, Israel.

Group D: Bermuda, Denmark, Fiji, Hong Kong, West Africa.

First NZ-Pak Test on Thursday

AUCKLAND, Feb 8: New Zealand opening batsman Blair Pocock and Pakistan spinner Mushtaq Ahmed both passed fitness examinations Tuesday and are likely to play in the first cricket Test, which starts Thursday at Eden Park, reports AP.

Pocock was struck by a painful lower back injury while making 95 for a New Zealand XI against the tourists in Hamilton a week ago.

Physiotherapist Mark Plummer worked with Pocock on Tuesday and was satisfied with his recovery.

"As far as I'm concerned, unless something drastic happens overnight he will be playing," said New Zealand team manager Geoff Howarth.

Mushtaq's situation is slightly more complicated, and depends on whether the player or the team management have read his fitness more accurately.

Mushtaq hasn't played since he bowled four overs in the one-day tour opener at Hamilton nine days ago. Medical tests then revealed a tiny fracture at the base of his back.

Since then he has been restricted to light bowling and normal stretching exercises, but nothing strenuous.

Mushtaq had a 45-minute workout in the nets on Tuesday and Pakistan coach Intikhab Alam cheerfully pronounced him "almost certain"

to play. Mushtaq himself fell short of complete confidence.

Rather than giving a verbal thumbs-up on the state of his back, he held his hand out, palm down, and gave it a 50-50 wobble from side to side.

Pakistan won't name their team for the Test until shortly before play starts but five batsmen are considered certainties — opener Saeed Anwar, fellow left-hander Asif Mujtaba, captain Salim Malik, Inzamam-ul-Haq and Basit Ali.

The other opener will probably be the attacking, but erratic Aamir Sohail. He also offers some handy left-arm spin.

First choice wicketkeeper Rashid Latif will play, while new ball stars Wasim Akram and Waqar Younis will be backed up by either Aftab Rchman, Ashfaq Ahmed, or Amir Nazir, along with Mushtaq.

New Zealand will rely on a four-pronged fast-medium attack of Danny Morrison, Chris Cairns, Simon Doull and Richard de Groen, with some offspin backup, if needed, from Shane Thomson.

Sakib sinks Shantibagh

Sakib took six wickets for ten runs only as Rajdhani High School crushed Shantibagh High School by 78 runs in day's lone Nirman Schools XI cricket tie on the western strip of the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium.

Chasing a monumental victory target of 209 in 35 overs Shantibagh were all out for 130 in 23.5 overs.

Habib was the notable scorer for the losers with 33. Earlier, Rajdhani batted first and were all out for 208 in 34.4 overs.

Morshed topscored with 32 not out. Taslim and Biplob chipped in with 27 each.

Liton bagged three for 28 among the luckless Shantibagh bowlers. Hassan took two for 40.

Dhanmondi International School got walkover against Nawabpur High School in day's other match scheduled to be held on the western strip of the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium as Nawabpur failed to turn up.

Div Two cricket

Rayer Bazar, Evergreen and Nirman Schools XI recorded wins in their respective matches of the Second Division league at different city venues yesterday.

On the eastern trip of the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium (DCS), Lalbagh's Kamal captured six wickets for 34 runs but failed to stop Rayer Bazar marching to a four-wicket win. Rayer Bazar scored 132 for six wickets in 36.5 overs as Lalbagh batting first were all out for 131 in 37.1 overs.

Zahir was Rayer Bazar's most successful bowler claiming four for 20.

Mirpur Nabin KC outclassed Evergreen by eight wickets at the Mirpur Pallabi Cricket ground.

Evergreen batted first and made 90 for seven while Mirpur posted 91 for two wickets.

At the Dhaka Stadium, Nirman Schools beat Azad Boys by four wickets.

Azad batted first and collected 144 for eight while Nirman made 146 for six in 37.5 overs.



Bill Ruel of Laguna Hills, California buys a one-of-a-kind Olympic T-shirt for 5,000 Norwegian kroner (US 72 dollars) from a vendor in Lillehammer on Feb 7. The shirt shows the number five indicating the number of days before the start of XVII Winter Games. — AFP photo

Mother's reaction

CHANDIGARH, Feb 8: "Mere Kapil ki tapasya ka phal hai" (this is the fruit of my Kapil's hard work) — this was how the superstar's mother Lajwanti Nikhanj reacted soon after his becoming the highest wicket-taker in Test cricket, reports PTI.

"I am grateful to the Almighty for bestowing his blessings on my son to enable him to bring name and fame to the country and inscribe his name in the history of world cricket in letters of gold," she said with tears of joy in her eyes. She then fumbled for words with emotion getting the better of her.

Mamma Nikhanj along with her other two sons, Bhushan and Ramesh, and other family members kept glued to the TV set praying for 'our Kaku's feat'. And the moment he struck in Ahmedabad. His mother thanked God with folded hands and her head bowed in reverence while other members of the family hugged her, danced around and offered sweets to each other and a few guests present for the big occasion.

A number of youngsters rushed to the Sector 16 Cricket Stadium where Kapil Dev had started his cricketing career and performed 'Bhangra' (dance).

Greggs, Winners post victories

Sports Reporter
Title aspirants The Greggs Club and Dhaka Winners Club careered to comfortable wins in their respective engagements of the Partex First Division basketball league at the Outer Stadium wooden-floor gymnasium yesterday.

In the day's first match, league-leaders Greggs stretched a fairly combative first half difference of 37-27 to a yawning final score of 96-44 against the hapless Hornets, who to their horror found two irrepressible scorers in Amy and Aju, principal accumulator of the bulk of Greggs points with personal contributions of 30 and 24 respectively.

Greggs now have won all seven matches and stay atop the points table with 14 points.

Suman and Arup of Hornets paid home rather poorly with 12 and 11 respectively.

In the more competitive encounter of the day, Winners registered a 76-63 win against Eagles.

Winners, who recorded their sixth win in seven matches, yesterday led the first half 33-24.

Eagles raised their game in the second half quite appreciably and trailed their fancied opponents by just four points but Winners still managed to ward the resurgent Eagles off.

Toufique led a gallant Eagles fightback with a haul of 17 points to his credit while Kabir deposited another 12.

For the victorious Winners Tanu topped with 16, followed by a heavier Asif, who being forced to dash to the court from office, did well to chip in with 15.

Winners chase Greggs hot on the heels with 13 points from seven matches.

Tofazzal boys' singles champ

Sports Reporter
Tofazzal lifted the boys' singles title of the M A Jabbar memorial tennis tournament beating Omar 6-2, 6-2 at the Engineers' Club court yesterday.

The semifinal encounter of the inter-club event between Engineers' Club and Gulshan Club was in progress at the time of writing this report.

Int'l Jr tennis from Feb 22

Sweden and Austria will take part in the eighth Bangladesh international junior tennis championships to be held at the National Tennis Complex here from February 22 to 26, reports BSS.

Sweden will send one boy Maciej Nierzwicki — to play in the boys singles.

Austria will send three boys for boys events of the five-day tournament, a regular under-18 event of the International Tennis Federation organised by Bangladesh Tennis Federation.

The Austrian boys are: Ingo Neumuller, Andreas Leber and Axel-Diester Wolfmayr.

Mariners TT

Victoria Sporting Club (Green) reached the Women's team event final of the Druti Paribhan Sixth Mariners table tennis tournament defeating Wari Club by straight 3-0 sets at the Dhanmondi wooden floor gymnasium yesterday, reports UNB.

Molly beat Aju by 21-10, 21-6. Rosy defeated Sweetie 21-11, 21-10 while Molly and Rosy pair overcame Aju and Sweetie pair 21-8, 21-14 in the women's team event matches.



Indian all-rounder Kapil Dev waves to the crowd after capturing his 432nd wicket, that of Sri Lanka's Hashan Tillekeratne to eclipse Sir Richard Hadlee's Test-wicket haul of 431 during the third and final Test between India and Sri Lanka in Ahmedabad yesterday. — AFP photo

Profile of a low-profile bowler

AHMEDABAD, Feb 8: While statistics often conceal more than they reveal, they do full justice in recalling the magnificent career of cricket's most successful bowler, Kapil Dev, reports APF.

The 35-year-old Indian all-rounder had assured himself of a place in cricket's Hall of Fame long before he surpassed New Zealander Sir Richard Hadlee's 431-wicket haul here Tuesday.

Kapil's brilliant 15-year career is littered with broken records and unprecedented feats that confirm his status as one of the game's all-time greats.

Test cricket apart, the prolific seamer is also the most successful bowler in one-day internationals with a tally of 248 wickets.

That he has sent down more deliveries in Test cricket than any other bowler — 27,506 before the start of the third Test here against Sri Lanka — and played more Tests (130) than anyone except Australian captain Allan Border is a tribute to Kapil's physical endurance and stamina.

Born on January 6, 1959, Kapil has not missed a Test match due to injury since making his international debut in the dusty Pakistani town of Faisalabad in October 1978.

And he would have played 130 matches on the trot if he had not been dropped for one Test in 1984 for playing what the then-captain Sunil Gavaskar and the national selectors thought was a rash stroke.

Rated as one of the game's great all-rounders, Kapil has been equally prolific with the bat.

The youngest player ever to achieve the double of 1,000 runs and 100 wickets at the age of 21 Kapil is the only all-rounder to score more than 5,000 runs and claim 400 wickets.

Kapil adjusted superbly to the slow, grassless wickets in India — any fast bowler's nightmare — having realised early in his career that movement off the seam and in the air was more beneficial than hurling the ball at express speed.

Half his 130 Tests have been played at home where he has picked up 219 wickets as compared to 213 abroad.

His best series at home was against Asif Iqbal's Pakistan in 1979 when he claimed 32 wickets in six Tests. Abroad, his best tally was 25 in five Tests in Australia during the 1991-92 season.

Kapil inspired an entire generation of Indians, who grew up on the exploits of the famed spin quartet of Bishean Bedi, Bhagwat Chandrasekhar, Erapalli Prasanna and Srinivas Venkataraghavan, to realise that a career could be made by bowling quick.

Till he appeared on the scene, India's seam attack was something of a joke with captains usually using it to take the shine off the ball before handing it to spinners.

India now fields at least three seamers in Tests abroad — even four as in Sydney against Australia in January 1992.

While leg-spinner Anil Kumble is the only quality spin bowler in India, a host of seamers like Javagal Srinath, Venkatesh Prasad, Prashant Vaidya and Bhupinder Singh are waiting in the wings to step into Kapil's shoes.

There are at least three pace academies in India, prompting calls for spin bowling schools as well.

Kapil has had a less successful stint as captain, winning just four of the 31 Tests India played under him.

But he achieved what no other Indian captain has ever done — lifting the World Cup in England in 1983 after defeating the mighty West Indies in a low-scoring final at Lord's.

His running feud with India's other superstar Sunil Gavaskar is part of cricket folklore, although Kapil insists the dispute was a creation of the sensation-seeking media.

The game of musical chairs played by the selectors in pitting one against the other fuelled the feud.

Kapil took over from Gavaskar after a humiliating 3-0 defeat in Pakistan in 1982, but the little master was back at the helm when the West Indies thrashed India in 1983 by a similar margin.

Kapil returned as captain when Gavaskar voluntarily stepped down in 1985 and stayed on until 1987 when India failed to reach the World Cup final at home.

A distraught Kapil, who has played under eight captains including juniors like Krish Srikkanth, Ravi Shastri and Mohammad Azharuddin, wanted the job back in the twilight of his career, but was ignored by the selectors.

Maybe, it wasn't a bad decision after all, for Kapil was left alone to concentrate on realising the bowler's ultimate dream.

Now that he has reached the peak, all India is fervently praying he carries on for several more years. For they may never see another like him again.

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