

Nat'l youth cricket final today

The final match of the BEXIMCO 14th national youth cricket championship will be held at the Dhaka Stadium, reports UNB.

In the final, three-time winners Dhaka DSA will take on Bangladesh Krira Siksha Protisthan (BKSP), champions of the 1990-91 season.

Dhaka DSA won all their three Group A encounters against Jessore, Dinajpur and Chittagong en route to final while BKSP beat Sylhet, Sathkhira, Rajshahi and Comilla DSA in their Group B matches for place in the final.

Nine teams took part in the final round.

Cricketers back

Sports Reporter

Country's cricketers duly came back home yesterday after their 40-day tour of the African continent in connection with the recently-concluded fifth ICC Trophy in the Kenyan capital of Nairobi.

It was a quiet almost stealthy odyssey for Faruque Ahmed and his boys who failed to fulfil a nation's ambition of seeing its cricket team play in the next World Cup, the greatest competition of one-day cricket to be held for the second time in the sub-continent in 1996.

Bangladesh were ousted from the quarter-finals this year's ICC Trophy but their inability to make it to the last four struck an unprecedented note of despair among the cricket fans of the country simply because never in its 15-year-old history the world championship for the associate members of the ICC carried a promotional boost. There top finishers of the meet — champions UAE, runners-up Kenya and third placed Holland will play in the World Cup alongside the nine Test playing countries following a recent ICC provision.

Ekota march to qtrs

Sports Reporter

Fakirpool Ekota Club stormed into the quarterfinals of the Jadukar Samad Smriti juvenile football tournament as the Group B leaders after recording a resounding 14-0 victory over Russel Smriti Sangsad at the Outer Stadium yesterday.

In their last group match, the Fakirpool Youngsters, aided by a superb double-hat-trick from Saju, who scored as many as eight goals over all, had the match well under their control from the very first minute.

The quarterfinal matches will be played on Friday and Saturday.

The quarter-finalists are: Shahjahan Smriti Sangsad, Begumganj Udayan Jubo Sangha, Fakirpool Ekota Club, Little Friends Club, National Football Training Club, Gulzerbagh SC, Basabo Sunflower SC and Ganaktole Kishore Football Eleven.

Training course for fast bowlers

Sports Reporter

Lotus Kamal, a multi-national company, will organise a training course for the teenage fast bowlers some time this year.

The course, only for players who are under twenty and have a minimum height of five feet six inches, will offer handsome scholarships and free tuition for the selected candidates.

Interested players have been requested to contact Tanjeeb Ahsan Saad before March 20 at the Dhanmondi Club ground everyday from 10 am to 2 pm.

Shuttlers to take part in Asian meet

Bangladesh will participate in the Asian badminton championship to be held in the Chinese city of Shanghai April 6-11, reports UNB.

Reza-e-Ahmed will lead the three-member Bangladesh team in the prestigious meet.

Two players — Mahbubur Rob and Russel Kabir Sumon — will represent the country in the competition.

Zobaidur Rahman Rana and Hamidul Hoq Hamid were named as standby players for the competition.

Selected players have been advised to report at the Badminton Federation office by March 10.

Aussie hockey players to take no risk

SYDNEY, Mar 8: The Australian men's field hockey team has taken the precaution of having vaccinations to minimise health problems for this month's trip to Pakistan to defend the Champion's Trophy, reports AFP.

Abahani ride well on Mizan

Sports Reporter



A brilliant hattrick by Mizanur Rahman throttled Abahani Krira Chakra to the semi-final of the Charms Cup invitational football tournament as the popular Dhaka outfit blanked Mahindra and Mahindra of India at the East Bengal ground yesterday.

The lanky striker, who played for Brothers Union last year and now giving the Dhanmondi club a yeoman's service on loan, struck twice to help Abahani to formidable two-nil lead at first half.

He duly completed the treble midway through the second half and a minute to the final whistle Zakir, the industrious Abahani midfielder, rounded off the tally.

Mizan, who scored in Abahani's two previous engagements — a 2-1 win over IFA Eleven and a 1-1 draw with Calcutta Mohammedans — opened the account in the tenth minute of the match when he latched on a Mamun Joarder pass and fired the ball

home from close (1-0).

Fifteen minutes later the speedy striker weaved his way from the right flank to catch the custodian of the Bombay outfit napping with a neat placement (2-0).

Mizan scored his fifth goal of the meet, arranged for the welfare of the distressed Calcutta journalists when he thundered in a 25-yarder volley to evoke the memories of a similar goal against Calcutta Mohammedans a couple of days back in the 30th minute of the second half (3-0).

Abahani who went to Calcutta with a hurriedly rustled team, and no practice worth mentioning, dominated the proceedings with some concerted organised football.

While Abahani waited to a delightful win, their arch rivals reigning Dhaka league champions Mohammedans Sporting Club were locked in a goalless draw with Calcutta giants East Bengal.

Although the result poses no immediate problem for league champions East Bengal,

Kiwis keen to bounce back



WELLINGTON, Mar 8: New Zealand cricketers have a sense of déjà vu as they prepare for Wednesday's one-day international against Pakistan at the Basin Reserve, reports AP.

With New Zealand 2-0 down in the five-match series, the home side is in a must-win situation. And for seven of the 13-man squad, that is a repeat of March 24 of last year.

That day New Zealand were 2-0 down in the five-game series against Australia after losses at Dunedin and Christchurch. Even the venue was the same — and on that occa-

sion. New Zealand bounced back from a tight position to win by 88 runs.

They went on to win a thrilling fourth match at Hamilton by three wickets before losing the decider in front of a packed Eden Park on the final ball of the series.

Batsmen Mark Greatbatch, Andrew Jones and Chris Harris, wicketkeeper Tony Blain and bowlers Danny Morrison, Chris Pringle and Gavin Larsen were in that New Zealand side a year ago.

Greatbatch and company are now hoping they can repeat the feat against Pakistan, but win a fifth-match decider. New Zealand captain Ken

Rutherford hopes the players realise the significance of the match.

Hopefully a lot of thought has gone into individual's play. There comes a time when the talking's got to stop and the action has to start. Rutherford said after training at a cold and windy Basin Reserve on Tuesday. Tomorrow is make or break as far as the series is concerned.

The New Zealand batting order will stay the same, with Greatbatch going in first. Rutherford remains optimistic that New Zealand can prosper if they get a quick start.

That takes a bit of pressure off the middle order and with the likes of Chris Cairns and Shane Thomson, there are players with the ability to hit over the field, he added.

Pakistan are confident of putting the series beyond doubt. They will field the same 11 from the first two games and believe they have an edge over the New Zealanders.

The main architect behind the UAE's booming cricket scene, Abdul Rehman Bukhatir, scoffed at suggestions that the team may be forced out of the World Cup.

"There are many teams in the ICC tournament who also fielded players of other nationalities, so why there should be a problem about the UAE team?" asked Bukhatir, one of the few nationalities to have played the game of cricket here.

To the backdrop of enthusiastic support for the game, because of the proximity of the region to Asia and because of the large Indian and Pakistani communities, Bukhatir formed the highly successful Cricketers Benefit Fund Series in the late 1970s.

The UAE's problem is that only one of the players at the ICC trophy was a citizen — skipper Sultan Zarwan. All the rest were from Pakistan, India or Sri Lanka, who have, however, served the mandatory five years in the country, as required under ICC rules.

UAE cricket officials, speaking on condition they not be named, said there have been unofficial protests by a number of teams against the inclusion of non-nationals in the

series side.

The ICC is expected to take a decision on the protests by many of the participating teams in the Kenyan tournament when it holds its next meeting in July, they said.

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UAE success soured

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ASF looks forward to 98 World Cup

SYDNEY, Mar 8: Australian soccer officials began a push today for an Asia-Pacific competition every four years for the region's national sides, reports Reuter.

Australian Soccer Federation (ASF) president Neville Wran said the tournament, to be played between World Cups, would be along the lines of the existing European Championships.

Test match game they profess to care so much about.

"Certainly a rap over the knuckles and a fine in a wobbly currency is insufficient punishment."

Melbourne's The Age columnist Peter McFarlane wrote from the press box: "Warne is fast developing a reputation as an extremely bad-mannered young man on the field, a situation that has been allowed to worsen through the summer."

"Not only is Warne to blame, but what on earth are his captain, Allan Border, and the national team coach, Bob Simpson, doing in condoning this behaviour?"

Warne, the leg-spinning wonder, was reported to match referee Donald Carr for his tirade at South African opener Andrew Hudson, upon dismissing him for 60 in his team's second innings.

There was no let-up today in the disgust of the duo's behaviour, with the role of team coach Bob Simpson and captain Allan Border in the controversy coming under scrutiny.

Former Test skipper and respected television commentator Richie Benaud said from Johannesburg: "I thought the umpires demanded 10 marks out of 10 for the way they han-

gaged Friends hang on

Sports Reporter

Gopibagh Friends kept alive their hopes of earning promotion to next year's Milnars First Division cricket league with a massive eight-wicket win over Kathalbagan in the Second Division super league play-off match at the Mirpur Pallabi ground yesterday.

Kathalbagan, virtually out of the race after suffering two consecutive defeats, decided to bat first after winning the toss and made 157 for nine in the allotted 40 overs.

In reply Gopibagh Friends aided by two half centuries, reached the victory target of 158 runs in 31.4 overs, losing only two wickets.

Opener Himesh hammered a sparkling 54 with the help of eight hits to the fence in his 65-ball knock. Laba, who stayed at the crease till the very end, scored a polished 52.

He hammered six boundaries and a huge six in his 65-ball innings.

Earlier in the day, Liton, Ripon and Babu evenly shared six wickets among themselves, conceding 22.30 and 33 runs respectively to restrict Kathalbagan to a surmountable score.

Georgie with 22 hit the highest score among the batsmen while 20 extra runs proved quite handy as far as the respectability of the innings was concerned.

ACB steps in

JOHANNESBURG, Mar 8: The Australian Cricket Board (ACB) today had started an inquiry into the behaviour of bowlers Shane Warne and Merv Hughes who "sledged" South African batsmen here on Sunday, reports AFP.

The two men were fined 1,000 rand (295 dollars) each and severely reprimanded after an initial inquiry Sunday night by match referee Donald Carr, the former England captain.

Umpires David Shepherd of England and Barry Lambson of South Africa had lodged complaints with Carr for "verbal abuse" by the two of South Africa's opening pair of Andrew Hudson and Gary Kirsten.

What exactly occurred in the middle was not known, but television replays showed Hudson checking his stride on his way back to the pavilion after being dismissed for 60 by Warne as the Australian shamed at him while being held back by a teammate.

Hughes is believed to have "sledged" Kirsten after catching him for 35 off Tim May.

Australia began the final day of its first Test with South Africa at Wanderers cricket ground here Tuesday with an overnight 123-2, needing 454 to win. Australia were dismissed for 256 in their second innings.

The wickets, as in the first

innings, were evenly shared among the four seam bowlers. Brian McMillan took three for 61 and there were two each for Allan Donald, Fanie de Villiers and Craig Matthews.

It was man-of-the-match Hansie Cronje, though, who delivered the final blow, having Tim May caught at short leg by Gary Kirsten after he and Merv Hughes (26 not out) had staved off the inevitable for 68 minutes with a last wicket partnership of 21.

Starting the final day on 123 for two, Australia were soon in trouble.

Mark Waugh hit two boundaries to take him to 28 but then edged a delivery from Donald to wicketkeeper Dave Richardson in the fifth over.

The catch marked Richardson's 50th dismissal in his 12th Test, beating the previous fastest to that mark by Australian wicketkeeper Rodney Marsh who reached his half-century of victims in 13 Tests.