

Muktis, BU share points



Appalling defensive errors made star-studded Mukti-joddha Sangsad Krira Chakra mull twin opportunities of a revenge and a booster to their maiden title quest as they settled for a two-all draw with Brothers Union in a crucial Star Premier league match at the Dhaka Stadium yesterday.

The sharing of points between the two major names after popular heavyweights Mohammedans and Abahani leave the latter minus another deterrent in their long drawn-out campaign for regaining the title.

Abahani, who are now all set to win the mantle back from arch-rivals Mohammedans, continue to reign at the top of the points table with 22 points from 13 matches, three more than Mukti-joddha, who, following yesterday's draw, languish at the second position with 19 points from 13 matches.



Action from last night's crucial Star Premier Division football league encounter between Mukti-joddha Sangsad Krira Chakra and Brothers Union at the Dhaka Stadium. The game ended 2-2. — Star photo

Brothers, who despite living upto their reputation of getting into the groove in the big matches, came out of the ordeal with a point to cling to the rather inconsequential

lethal forward in the country, presented the best moment of the match when he unleashed a thunderous free-kick from about 40 yards but the brilliant effort was obstructed by the

woodwork with Arun simply frozen under the bar.

Earlier, Mukti-joddha, who thoroughly outplayed Brothers in the first half, deservingly took the lead in the seventh minute of the match when hardworking Rakib, a former Brothers player, found the net from close to culminate a two-man move involving Mamun Joarder and Nakib.

Lanky Mizan doubled the margin two minutes before the short whistle when in a super solo surge from the midfield, he beat three Brothers defenders before having the ball nestled in the net.

PAIS THEY ARE

In a seemingly pre-arranged affair, Star First Division leaders Rahmatganj Muslim Friends Society and Sadharan Bima shared points in sterile drawn match played earlier at the same venue.

The draw leaves Rahmatganj still at the top with 21 points and Bima with 19, both playing 15 matches each.



— Star photo

TODAY'S MATCHES

Victoria SC vs Farashganj 4:30 pm (Dhaka Stadium)

Arambagh KS vs YMC 6:30 pm (Dhaka Stadium)

Baresi hangs up his boots



ROME, Oct 5: Italian captain Franco Baresi has retired from international soccer after making 81 appearances for his country, national coach Arrigo Sacchi said on Tuesday, reports Reuters.

Defender Baresi, 34, won his last cap four weeks ago during the 1-1 draw with Slovenia in Italy's opening qualifier for the 1996 European Championships.

Only goalkeeper Dino Zoff (112) and Defender Giachinto Facchetti (94) have made more appearances for Italy while midfielder Marco Tardelli also won 81 Italian caps.

"I had a long and frank conversation with Baresi who confessed his doubts about remaining in the national team until 1996," Sacchi said at a news conference in Florence where Italy are preparing for Saturday's European qualifier in Estonia.

"Baresi prefers to let others take his place and all we can do is say 'thank you' to this extraordinary player, one of the best I've ever worked with," added Sacchi, who also coached Baresi at AC Milan.

Baresi was left out of the squad for the Estonia match because of an eye injury sustained in AC Milan's Champions League win over Salzburg last Wednesday.

His Milan teammate Paolo Maldini appears certain to succeed him as captain, having led Italy when Baresi was injured at this year's World Cup.

The commanding Baresi made his international debut in Italy's 0-0 draw with Romania in December 1982. He had been a member of Italy's World Cup-winning squad earlier that year but did not play during the tournament in Spain.

He gave a masterly display in the World Cup final this summer, just three weeks after a knee operation. But that match ended in tears as Baresi missed from the spot and Italy lost out to Brazil on penalties.



FRANCO BARESI

last World Cup.

A superb tackler and reader of the game, Baresi had the ability to push forward out of defence and launch attacks after winning the ball.

Baresi was surprisingly omitted from the team which gave a disappointing display at the 1986 World Cup in Mexico but has been a virtual fixture in the squad ever since.

He played in the side which finished third on home soil in the 1990 World Cup before picking up a runners-up medal this summer.

Baresi said later in Milan it was time to make way for younger players in the national squad.

"Italy is entering a new cycle, working towards the European Cup and then the 1998 World Cup in France, so I thought now was the time for younger men to join the team, he told a news conference at AC Milan's headquarters.

"After the World Cup I've had to think long and hard about my future and, even though it's sad to stop, I'm sure I'm doing the right thing."

Baresi, sporting a black eye sustained in Milan's Champions League win over Austria Salzburg last Wednesday, said he would continue playing for the club until his contract ends next June.

Baresi was persuaded by his wife to come out of his first international retirement in 1992 but he does not expect her to try to make him change his mind again.

"This time my wife is letting me quit for good," he joked.

the Japanese defence, who had kept the Pakistanis at bay in the first half, caved in under the late assault.

Pakistan were well served by skipper Shahbaz Ahmed, who set up the first and fourth goals with precise passing from the top of the circle.

The Japanese, who had beaten Oman 3-1 on Tuesday, wasted two good chances. Terukiyo Asai shot into goal-keeper Mansoor Ahmed's pads from five yards in the first half and Kenji Hasebe failed to deflect a Hasebe centre in the empty goal in the 35th minute.

"We are striking top form now," Pakistan's Dutch coach Hans Jorritsma warned. "Other teams will have to play their best to beat us."

MARAUDING MALAYSIANS

Super sub Lim Chiew Chuan banged in four goals as Malaysia opened their campaign in the Asian Games with an emphatic 7-0 victory over 10-man Oman.

The Malaysians, bronze medalists at Beijing four years ago, dominated the one-sided encounter but were lucky to escape any serious injuries against their rivals' rough play.

Oman's Mahfoudh Al-Sadri was shown the red card and two other teammates earned yellows for swinging their sticks wildly and swearing at the umpires.

Lim, who came in as a substitute in the 24th minute, scored his first goal two minutes later and slammed in three more in the second session to lead Malaysia's goal spree.

The other scorers were Maninderjit Singh, Mirnawan Nawawi and skipper Nor Saiful Zaini.

It was Oman's second successive defeat in Group A following their 3-1 loss to hosts Japan on Tuesday.

Soft or tenacity tennis?

Sports Reporter

A war is not lost until a war is over — if there is such an adage anywhere on earth, it is in the hearts of the five tenacious soft tennis players.

The fury of the frustrated five didn't even spare the State Minister for Youth and Sports, Sadeque Hossain, the National Sports Council (NSC) supremo, for the sensible role he played in omitting the Bangladeshi representatives in a sports completely unknown and unheard of in the country, from the Hiroshima-bound delegation.

With the 12th Asian Games already four days old, the quintet, which was only baptised in April this year to soft tennis, seem hell-bent on squeezing out their notion of 'justice'.

The State Minister told this reporter during an informal chat at his NSC office yesterday that he was approached personally to overturn the official decision of leaving the soft tennis players out. However, Hossain stood firm on his ground, saying, "I don't see any reason why we should take part in a game which has the least familiarity with the sports lovers of this country, let alone its bleak medal prospect."

The minister said he was unaware of the existence of any formal or interim body for soft tennis in Bangladesh and somewhat side stepped a query regarding Bangladesh Olympic Association (BOA) officials' participation in the congress of the Asian Soft Tennis Federation (ASTF), held in the South Korean capital of Seoul some time in July this year.

Meanwhile, for some unknown reasons, the BOA has not yet officially informed the Hiroshima Games Organising Committee (HAGOC) of Bangladesh's non availability for soft tennis even after the Ministry's directive to exclude the sports from the official list.

However, the five players and their mentor, who reportedly even dared to disturb the minister's morning walk, seemed determined to see things through and when this reporter headed for the office late last night they were hanging around the NSC chairman's office looking for a chance to place their plea — perhaps for the umpteenth time.

England to test Aussie one-day formula

PERTH, Oct 5: England will test an experimental format for limited overs cricket, with four innings instead of two, when they begin their tour to Australia next month, officials said on Wednesday, reports Reuters.

The tourists have agreed to play the one-day fixture against Western Australia at the WACA ground in Perth on October 27 under the amended rules.

Shah Sports Cup soccer

Sports Reporter

Asad struck twice in quick succession as Wanderers beat Bangladesh Green 2-0 in the only match of the sixth Shah Sports Cup football tournament at the Ganaktuli Eidgah ground yesterday.

After a barren first half Asad confirmed his side's victory with strikes in the third and 19th minute respectively.

AB Bank TT

Sports Reporter

Mariners, Bangladesh Bank, Cynthia Sports Club posted maiden victories in the AB Bank Metropolis table tennis league in a day marked by match-ups of lesser stars at the Dhanmendi Gymnasium yesterday.

After their eight successive defeats, Mariners, Bangladesh Bank and Cynthia, for the first time, ended up winners, beating Ajax, Lalmatia and Combined SC respectively by the similar margins of 3-1.

In the fourth match of the day, Swamibagh Boys also recorded a 3-1 win over Purbachal Parishad to earn their second win on completion of their nine round robin league matches.

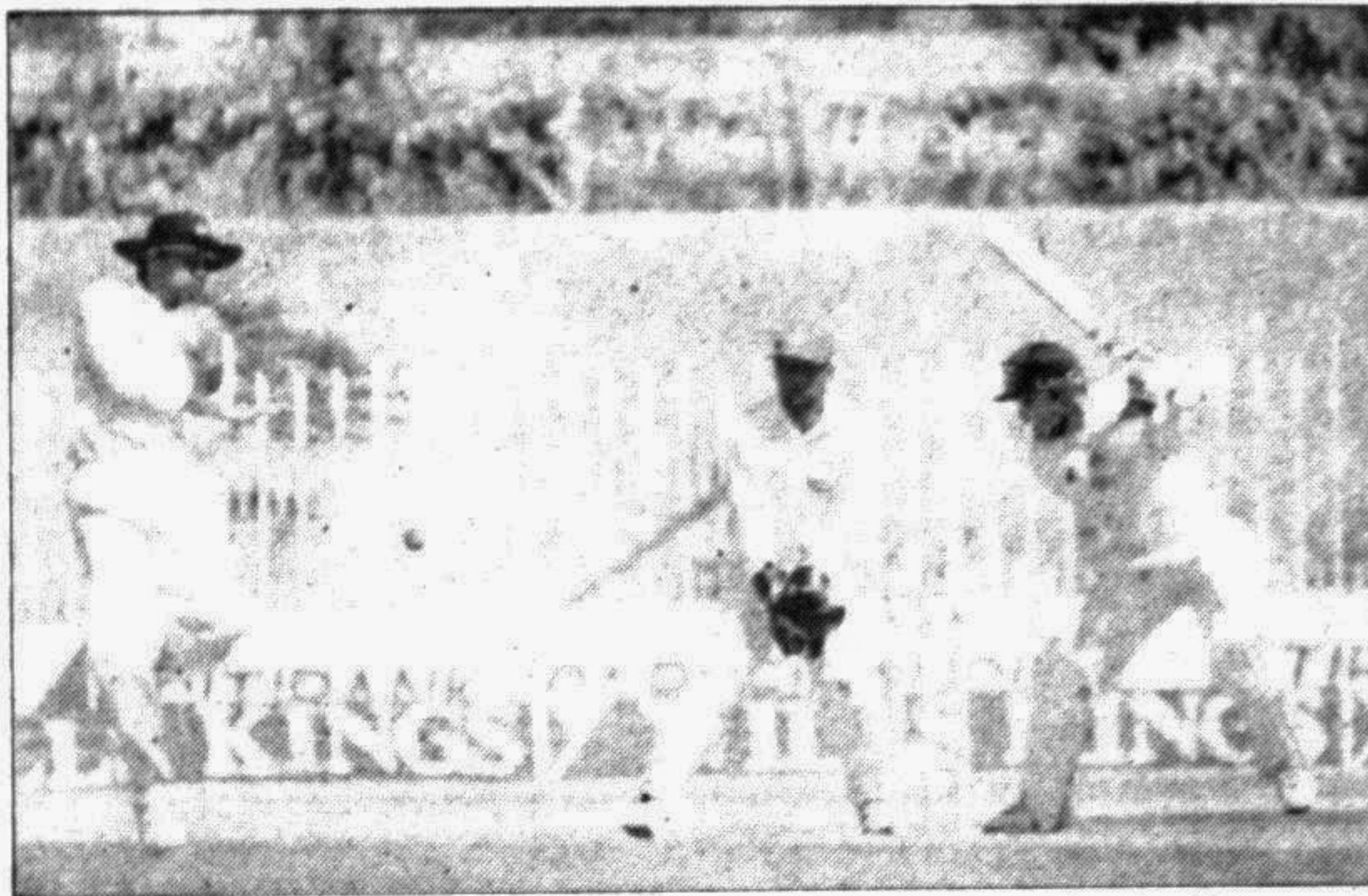
H'ball result

Sports Reporter

Brothers Union topped Group A in the M A Khan memorial handball tournament after edging past Bangladesh Ansars 21-19 in their last round robin league engagement at the court adjacent to the Dhaka Stadium yesterday.

The Gopibagh outfit, who will meet Bangladesh Navy in the first semifinal tomorrow, led the breather 10-7.

Rafique of Brothers Union with 12 goals was the top marksman in a lively encounter while Akram scored seven goals for Ansars, who finished runners-up in the group.



SLATER THE SLAUGHTERER: Opener Michael Slater, who celebrated his third Test ton, is seen launching into a savage square cut off leg-spinner Mushtaq Ahmad as Aamir Malik at silly point goes into a reflex cover on the first day of the second Test between Australia and Pakistan in Rawalpindi yesterday. The visitors, trailing 0-1 in the three-match series, rattled up an impressive 305 for three at stumps. — AFP photo

Slater leads Aussie charge



RAWALPINDI, Oct 5: A record 176-run opening partnership put Australia in a comfortable position on 305 for three on the first day of the second Test against Pakistan on Wednesday, reports Reuters.

Sent in on a grassy wicket thought to be difficult to bat on, Australia's openers Michael Slater and captain Mark Taylor dominated the bowlers after tea because he was suffering from a stiff back.

"Akram was not completely fit today but is expected to bowl tomorrow," Pakistani team manager Intikhab Alam said.

Earlier the Pakistanis wasted the initiative that came their way when they won the toss by dropping easy chances offered by both openers off Wakar Younis when each had scored just two runs.

Taylor, who had scored only five runs in four outings on the tour, was put down by Inzamam-ul-Haq at second slip and Slater survived a spooned chance to point which Kamal failed to hold.

"The position could have been different had we taken our catches," Alam said. "But then cricket is not a game of ifs and buts."

Australia's previous highest first-wicket partnership in a Test against Pakistan was 134 by Alan Turner and IC Davis at Melbourne during the 1976-77 series.

At the close, Mark Waugh and Michael Bevan had reached a 100-run partnership for the fourth-wicket at a rate of a run-a-minute to deny any further success to the toiling Pakistanis.

Both Waugh and Bevan reached their half-centuries against a Pakistani attack unable to call on left-arm fast bowler Wasim Akram after tea because he was suffering from a stiff back.

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A sudden cloudburst during lunch delayed the proceedings for six minutes but the Pakistani bowlers could not exploit the weather conditions to their advantage after their exciting one-wicket win in the first Test at Karachi.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard on the first day of the second cricket Test between Australia and Pakistan on Wednesday:

AUSTRALIA: First innings

Taylor lbw b Mohsin Kamal	69
Slater c Inzamam-ul-Haq b Mohsin Kamal	110
Boon b Mushtaq Ahmed	4
M Waugh not out	61
Bevan not out	52
Extras: (b-3, lb-1, w-3, nb-2)	9
Total: (For three wickets)	305
Fall of wickets: 1-176, 2-181, 3-198	
To bat: S Waugh, I Healy, S Warne, C McDermott, J Angel, D Fleming	

Bowling

	O	M	R	W
Wasim Akram	13	2	33	0
Waqar Younis	21	3	75	0
Mohsin Kamal	15	3	64	2
Mushtaq Ahmed	20	0	88	1
Aamir Sohail	7	0	25	0
Aamir Malik	5	2	16	0

PAKISTAN: Salim Malik

Aamir Sohail, Saeed Anwar, Inzamam-ul-Haq, Zahid Fazal, Aamir Malik, Rashid Latif, Wasim Akram, Waqar Younis, Mushtaq Ahmed, Mohsin Kamal.

Fu forced to give way to Chi

HIROSHIMA, Oct 5: Fu Minxia was deliberately shut out of the gold medals today even though China closed in on a four-title sweep in the Asian Games diving, reports AFP.

China won the women's platform and men's springboard on Tuesday and go into Thursday's last two events — men's platform and women's springboard — with one hand on the titles after winning today's preliminaries.

But for Fu, 16, there will be no chance to win.

Head coach Xu Yiming ordered her to compete in the springboard and miss out on the platform, the event she has dominated since becoming the youngest world champion in 1991 as a 12-year-old.

That title went to China's Chi Bin, runner up to Fu at the Rome World Championships last month, with 14-year-old teammate Wang Rui taking the silver medal.

Xu overlooked Fu in order to give Wang, at 14 the youngest competitor at the Games, a first taste of international competition. She won her chance by taking the national title last year.

Xu said there were up to 20



CHI BIN

young girls ready to step on to the international boards in place of established stars so Fu had to step aside.

"The youngsters have to have experience," he said.

The Chinese are angry at the organisers for axing the one-metre springboard and reducing the tournament to four gold medals.

China could have brought along four more divers and probably won two more gold medals. Instead Xu has been forced to leave at home one-metre world champion Chen Lixia and the men's world silver medalist Lan Wei.

On the three-metre springboard, Fu came second in the preliminaries to Tan Shuping, 16, the successor to Gao Min, who was undefeated in every major international between 1986 and 1992.

China's diving academy has turned out a string of world beaters since Gao began her six-year world and Olympic reign.

Now established stars like Fu and Tan are nervously looking over their shoulders as Xu prepares a fresh batch of young divers for the Atlanta Olympics in 1996.

After her platform win, Chi said: "Atlanta is along way off. They are queuing up for places on the team."

Inhospitable hosts?

HIROSHIMA, Oct 5: Ma's army and the rest of China's superstar athletes at the Asian Games are going cold turkey on turtle blood, reports Reuters.

Chinese swimming super-coach Chen Yunpeng said today the sporting elixir made famous by his colleague, athletic coach Ma Junren, would not be on the menu during the Asian Games.

"According to the customs law of Japan, no live animals are permitted to be brought into the country, so we didn't bring any turtles with us. And as we can't afford to buy any here, the swimmers won't be eating them," Chen said.

China's jealously-guarded recipe of turtle blood, honey, ginseng and mystery Chinese herbs was revealed last summer to be the secret weapon behind the phenomenal success of Ma's long-distance women runners and Chen's unbeatable squad of female swimmers.

The effects have so far been less noticeable on China's men's squad, but the athletics supercoach has brought a handful of "Ma's men" to Hiroshima to compete for the first time on the international circuit.

"The turtle diet has a long-term strengthening effect and is not considered to give athletes any kind of short-term boost," Chen said. "So the lack of turtle should not influence their results."

That certainly seems to be the case — China's women swimmers have so far won every gold medal at the pool, all but one of them in Asian Games record-beating time.

Burma beaten, bewildered



HIROSHIMA, Oct 5: Burma were beaten and bewildered and reduced to eight men by the end of their Asian Games soccer match against the United Arab Emirates on Wednesday night, reports AP.

Burma had three players sent off and coach Gerhardus Blok banished from the touchline as they lost 2-0 to the Emirates in a Group D game. The Emirates now lead the group ahead of Japan and Qatar, who tied 1-1.

Defenders Soe Naing and Sann Win and midfielder Kyi Lwin all were dismissed by Saudi referee Abdurrahman Alzaid in the second half. The Emirates also had one player — midfielder Saad Bakhit Saad — ousted.

Striker Adnan Altalyani scored a goal in each half, boosting the Emirates' chances of advancing to the quarterfinals of the 18-team tournament.

Altalyani found the net with crisp shots in the 43rd and 58th minutes as the Emirates improved to four points after its opening two games.

Qatar took a 21st-minute lead against Japan when captain Adel Al Mubarak scored with a header, but the host nation equalised through striker Takuya Takagi in the 56th minute, although Qatar was convinced the goal should have been disallowed for offside.

The Japanese were fast and flashy but lacked composure in attack and will need to beat Burma in their final group game to advance.

In other games played Wednesday night, Uzbekistan moved toward a quarterfinal berth from Group B with a 1-0 victory over Hong Kong. Azamat Abduraimov scored the goal midway through the first half as Uzbekistan recorded their third straight victory in their impressive Asian Games debut.

Saudi Arabia kept alive their hopes of progressing with a 4-2 win over Thailand. Hamed Aljohani and Mohammed Aloromi scored two goals apiece, while Dusit Chalermnan got both goals for the Thais.

South Korea scored their second straight victory in Group C, clinching a quarterfinal berth with a 2-1 win over Oman through an own goal and a shot from tournament leading scorer Hwang Sun-hong.

China maintained their unbeaten record with a 3-2 victory over Bahrain in Group A and now have two wins and a draw from the first three games. Peng Weiguo opened the scoring for the Chinese and Li Xiao then found the net twice. Hamed Ali netted both Bahrain goals.

Defending champions Iran, however, were held to a 1-1 draw by Turkmenistan in the other Group A game. Karim Bagheri scored an 86th-minute equaliser for the Iranians after Chariyar Moukhadov had shot Turkmenistan ahead from the edge of the penalty area.

The Emirates-Burma game was a wild affair.

Soe Naing was the first player ousted after a reckless challenge in the 52nd minute and Blok was ordered from the bench soon afterward.

Sann Win was dismissed in the 74th minute — but he was on a stretcher at the time after injuring himself while committing a foul on midfielder Mohammed. Saad was ejected for reacting angrily to the tackle.

Kyi Lwin joined the bizarre procession to the locker rooms in the 89th minute after illegally using his elbow in a tackle.



China's top athletics coach Ma Junren poses with track stars Wang Junxia (L) and Qu Yunxia on the steps of the team bus following their arrival at Hiroshima Airport on Oct 4. — AFP photo