

BTMC gymnasts reign supreme

The two-day 11th national junior gymnastics championship concluded yesterday at the National Sports Council (NSC) gymnasium with Bangladesh Textile Mills Corporation (BTMC) establishing their absolute supremacy, reports UNB.

The BTMC team, a major force in the country's gymnastics, grabbed 25 of the 26 medals at stake including all the eight golds to clinch the top slot.

Dinajpur DSA bagged the remaining medal, a bronze, from the eight-event meet.

M Zahidul Islam Rumi and Sharmin Sultana Sumi, both from BTMC, emerged individual champions from boys and girls' groups. Teammates Akther Hossain and Morsheeda Akther finished runners-up.

President of the Bangladesh Gymnastics Federation M Nurul Huda MP and Commerce Secretary Mofazzal Karim distributed prize among the winners.

Fifty one gymnasts, including 15 girls, from eight teams took part in the competition.

Honours even for BU, Boys

Sports Reporter

Believe it or not — Brothers Union, the traditional third force in the local football circuit, twice came from behind before settling for a 4-4 draw with relegation-threatened Bangladesh Boys in the only Star Premier Division football league match at the floodlit Dhaka Stadium yesterday.

The footballers in orange, who are virtually out of the title race, played with little motivation against their lowly Gopibagh neighbours and only flashed when they were under threat of an embarrassing defeat.

Brothers Union, who also shared points with Boys in their first leg engagement in a 1-1 draw, took a 2-1 first half lead after conceding the first goal in the 17th minute.

In a somewhat see-saw second half, Brothers found themselves on the verge of an embarrassing defeat, but thanks to Shahjada, who kept his cool when converting a penalty four minutes from time, they got away with a face-saving point.

Shahjada apart, Ranjan struck twice and Ropon got one for Brothers while Sana netted two and Ameer Khan and Bayazid notched up one apiece for Bangladesh Boys.

Ranjan's two goal took him to the top of the individual scorers' list along with Kazakov of Mohammedans and had his keeper allowed him to take the spot-kick he would have over-taken the Russian with 10 goals.

Yesterday's outcome left Brothers at 20 points and Bangladesh Boys at 9, both playing 15 matches each.

In the other match of the day, Victoria's promotion hopes simply evaporated when they drew goalless with East End in a Star First Division football league match.

The highlight of the match, however, involved two officials who were ordered off the field for their undesired sideline conduct.

Away at the Mirpur Stadium, Sadharan Bima and Shantinagar also shared points in a goalless deadlock.

TODAY'S MATCHES

Dhaka Wanderers vs Eskaton SS 4:30 pm (Dhaka Stadium)

Mohammedan SC vs Muktijodha Sangha 6:30 pm (Dhaka Stadium)

Mudassar Eleven clinch Ekota soccer title

Sports Reporter

Mudassar Eleven clinched the Ekota football tournament title with a 2-1 tie-break win over Saathi Eleven at the Handball court adjacent to the Dhaka Stadium yesterday.

The regulation period of the final ended goalless.

Kamruzzaman, sports editor of the Bengal daily Dainik Bangla, gave away prizes among the winners.

Pavin receives first round bye

ENGLAND, Oct 11: Defending champion Corey Pavin was made the top seed and given a first-round bye in the draw Tuesday for the 1994 World Match Play Championship, which starts Thursday at Wentworth, reports AP.

Pavin, ranked No. 9 in the world, will play the winner of Thursday's first-round match between No. 8 seed Vijay Singh of Fiji and Sweden's Jesper Parnevik.

Coming off a victory last weekend at the Tokai Classic in Japan, Pavin travels to Wentworth's West Course attempting to become the first player to win the richest top prize in European golf in back-to-back years since Seve Ballesteros in 1984-85.



Members of the BTMC gymnastics team who emerged champions on the concluding day of the 11th national championships at the NSC gymnasium yesterday. — Star photo

SIKHS, Oct 11: Ace marksman Hwang Sun-Hong scored from the penalty spot in injury time Tuesday night as South Korea defeated archrivals Japan 3-2 to advance to the semifinals of the Asian Games soccer tournament, reports AP.

It was Hwang's second goal of the game, and his 11th in only four games in the tournament.

South Korea, a three-time Asian Games champions, now face Uzbekistan, who crushed Turkmenistan 3-0 in a match between two tournament rookies.

China got two second-half goals to down Saudi Arabia 2-0, while Kuwait edged the United Arab Emirates 2-1 after 30 minutes of extra time. The Middle East rivals were level 1-1 after regulation time.

South Korea trailed Japan 1-0 at halftime despite dominating possession, and the match looked like heading for extra time after a drama-filled second half.

Kazu Miura, Japan's Italian-based striker, put the home team ahead in the 31st minute with a sharp piece of close-range finishing, but the Koreans equalized in the 52nd minute on the opportunism of Yoo Sang-Chul.

Hwang, a World Cup veteran, put the Koreans in front with a 78th minute header

after a smart build-up involving Han Jung-Kook and speedy substitute Choe Dae-Shik.

Defender Masami Ihara was both the hero and villain for Japan in a dramatic finish.

First he unleashed a swerving long-range drive to equalize with four minutes remaining; and then he pulled back Ha Soek-Ju in the penalty area to concede the decisive kick.

Hwang, a consummate professional, kept his nerve despite the noise of the baying crowd and slotted the spot kick into the net, sending goalkeeper Kikuchi Shinkichi the wrong way.

It was a win the Koreans richly deserved. They were quicker and more positive for the majority of the game.

The Koreans were very strong and very physical," said Japanese captain Tetsuji Hashiratani. The Japanese players were unhappy with the venom in some of the Korean tackles, he said.

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13th and 32nd minutes as Uzbekistan scored their fifth successive victory of the tournament.

Azamat Abduraimov was the other Uzbekistan marksman — from the penalty spot in the 19th minute — as the fast-moving and crisp-passing Uzbekistan had the match wrapped up before halftime and survived some pressure in the second period.

Shkryin now has netted seven times in five games in Hiroshima.

China, aiming for their first Asian Games soccer title since 1954, got their goals from Cao Xiangdong from close to goal in the 77th minute and from Li Xiao two minutes from the end with a shot from 20 meters.

Saudi coach Ivo Wortmann had predicted his team would win if it was level at halftime, but it didn't work out that way.

Kuwait took a 50th minute lead when Khaled Alhusaini scored from close range, but the Emirates forced extra time when Adnan Altayani scored from 18 metres (yards) out in the 89th minute.

Asked if he expected his contract to be renewed, Falcao responded: "You should not ask me. You should ask the Japanese Soccer Federation."

Japan and South Korea both are bidding to be named host for the World Cup finals in 2002 and victory has certainly boosted the Koreans' morale, if not their case.

Prolific striker Igor Shkryin was on target in the

21-year-old former Wimbledon and US Open junior champion, who lifted India to the men's team title last week, dropped just four games on his way to easy victories in both events.

He routed Indonesia's Suwandi Suwandi 6-1, 6-0 in just 50 minutes in matches held over from Monday when rain washed out play.

The 18-year-old Suwandi, who lost to India's number two Asif Ismail in the team final, held his serve just once against the in-form top seed.

Paes returned to court an hour later with Davis Cup partner Gaurav Natakar to brush aside Thailand's Narathorn Srichaphan and Vittaya Samre 6-2, 6-1.

Paes, who will play both semifinals on Wednesday, said Monday's break had been invaluable.

"It helped me get some rest. But if I continue to win my singles matches as quickly as I did today, the doubles will not be problem, because Gaurav is a great partner," he said.

World Cup semifinalists

Sweden have the chance to extend their lead at the top of Group Three when they take on Switzerland in Berne while second-placed Hungary play a friendly against Germany.

But Turkey could take over the second place if they beat Iceland at home and the Swedes lose or draw.

The Swiss are weakened by the loss through injury of leading goal scorer Adrian Knup and FC Zurich's seasoned defender Juerg Studer.

Kubilay Turkyilmaz, the Galatasaray striker dropped for the World Cup but now in outstanding form for his Turkish club, looks a definite starter after changing his mind about never to play for the national side again.

Swedish coach Tommy Svensson reckons the clash with the Swiss will be his team's toughest away qualifier.

The Netherlands travel to Norway for a Group Five clash determined to erase some bad memories after opening their World Cup qualifying campaign in Oslo with a 2-1 defeat.

Dutch coach Dick Advocaat

is expected to give a debut to rising new star Michael Reiziger, a 21-year-old Ajax defender who played himself into the picture with excellent performances against AC Milan and AEK Athens in the Champions League.

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Denmark's time to deliver

LONDON, Oct 11: Champions Denmark, already under pressure for dropping points against newcomers Macedonia, face a critical European Championship qualifying game against Belgium on Wednesday.

With Povlsen and Larsen out, only five of the team which won the 1992 title remain.

Coach Richard Moeller Nielsen, who failed to take the Danes to the World Cup, came in for massive media criticism after last month's opening 1-1 draw and knows the clamour for his head will increase if they fail to beat their Group Two rivals in Copenhagen.

Injuries have not helped his cause and the Danish coach gambles on inexperienced home-based players — debutant Jens Risager, and Brondby teammate Mark Strudal, who will earn his sixth cap, Olis Peter Rasmussen of Salborg.

Spanish coach Javier Clemente is not underestimating Macedonia as his World

cup quarter-finalists become the second visitors to one of Europe's newest capitals, Skopje, in the former Yugoslavia.

Clemente, whose side escaped from Cyprus with a somewhat fortunate 2-1 win last month, has made it clear he regards Macedonia as one of the danger sides in the group, and even potential qualifiers.

The Spanish squad contains one new name — Italian-born forward Pier Luigi Cherubino of Sporting Gijon, who is 23 next Saturday.

Pier has been one of the main figures of a lively and very youthful Sporting side, whose successes include a victory over champions Barcelona at the start of the season.

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Maradona always a hero

BUENOS AIRES, Oct 11: Diego Maradona may be in the bad books of world soccer governing body FIFA but his popularity is undiminished in his native Argentina, where his appearance in a low-key charity match on Monday drew a crowd of 30,000, reports Reuter.

Thousands of Maradona fans invaded the pitch, forcing the match to be suspended for 40 minutes while they tried to get close to their idol, who has been banned by FIFA for 15 months for failing a drugs test at the World Cup finals.

At the final whistle, Maradona's light blue team lost 6-4 to the red and whites — both sides being made up of sporting and showbusiness personalities.

Maradona, who led Argentina to the World Cup title in 1986, made an unimpressive debut on Sunday as coach of struggling club Deportivo Mandiyu, who lost 2-1 at