

## Hanifs arrive

Sports Reporter

Aamer Hanif, who slightly missed the Pakistani Test bus, arrived in the capital yesterday along with his younger brother Aabed Hanif to play for Brothers Union.

The 24-year-old right-handed bat, who is expected to make his debut in the domestic cricket when Brothers meet Dhanmondi Club in their second match of the 15th Damal Summer Cricket tournament at the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium today, pronounced his intention of scoring a hundred in the match.

I am a little bit unhappy for not having a place in the Pakistan Test team," said a confident Hanif, who scored five centuries in the domestic cricket in only six matches for Allied Bank. "Sooner or later I will get a chance in the team."

An agile fielder and a useful seam bowler, Hanif has scored over 3,000 runs in first class cricket.

The younger Hanif is an



AAMIR HANIF

opening batsman and right arm off-spinner.

However, the Hanifs were almost thrown into confusion reportedly by a former national cricketer, currently an official for a premier side, who took the pain to go to Pakistan to have the two brothers change their mind.

## BU back to top

Sports Reporter

Brothers Union bounced back to the top of the table after a brief setback with a 4-0 rout of Narayanganj Chess Club in the ninth round of the First Division chess league at the National Sports Council chess room yesterday.

The defending champions, who slipped to the second slot behind Bangladesh Bfman 3.5-0.5 winners over Kanika, only in the previous round after suffering a stunning 1.5-2.5 defeat at the hands of Bobby Fischer Chess Club, now jointly share the lead with Biman, both having 26 and a half points each.

However, the star-studded Brothers Union, who boast Grand Master Niaz Murshed, IM Mahmood Ahmed Khan Lodhi of Pakistan and X V Sharavanan of India in their rank, certainly hold the upper hand as they have played one match less.

## BOA sticks to the gun

Sports Reporter

The orgy of accountability and unscrupulousness of the Bangladesh Olympic Association (BOA) officials continued unabated as they decided to host a reception to the silver winning Bangladesh Kabaddi team, the saviour of Bangladesh in the recently concluded 12th Asian Games.

The BOA, who by-passed some weighty agenda of over-riding importance in its last night meeting, decided to host a reception to the only medal-winners in the Hiroshima Asiad on November 22.

Besides the BOA, who had their president Gias Kamal Chowdhury in the chair after a long time, has also decided to invite Faezeh Rafsanjani, president of the Women's Sports Solidarity Council of the Islamic countries, by the end of the next month.

## Suhrid Sangha Div II b'ball champs

Suhrid Sangha of Luxmibazar emerged champions in the Mohsin Cup Second Division basketball league yesterday to earn promotion to the First Division next season, reports UNB.

## Fashanu fined

LONDON, Nov 17: John Fashanu was fined 6,000 pounds (9,500 dollars) by the English Football Association (FA) on Wednesday after criticising French international Eric Cantona in a newspaper column, reports Reuter.

It completed a bad 24 hours for the Aston Villa striker who has claimed he has been the victim of a conspiracy to implicate him in the match-fixing scandal.

# Abahani enter Round Two

Sports Reporter



Holders Abahani Limited have zoomed into second round of the 15th Damal Summer Cricket tournament.

The defenders of the curtain-raising title in domestic cricket emerged Group A champions yesterday with a massive nine wicket mauling of minnows Utdity in the day's lone engagement at the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium.

It was as easy as picking pawns from the backyard for the local outfit who bowled their opponents out for the lowest score in the tourney for the quickest victory, so far.

Akram Khan, who led Abahani in designated skipper Gazi Ashraf Hossain Lipu's absence, won the toss to ask his counterpart to make the first use of the wicket.

Quite expectedly Utdity batsmen had no answer to the mighty Abahani's incisive attack comprising Saiful Islam Khan, the quickest bowler on the prowl currently.

Just three batsmen got into the double figures with Alam making 17 before becoming one of the three victims of the

statistically successful Abahani bowler J H Mona who claimed three for 14 from five overs.

Saiful produced a hostile opening spell of two for five from six overs while Rahat, Durjoy and Titu picked up two and one each respectively to skittle Utdity out for 86 in 39 overs.

Abahani lost wicketkeeper cum-opener Khaled Masud, who hit 74 in his side's seven-wicket victory over Sadharan Bima, cheaply but star batsman Minhaz stroked a flowing 38-ball 36 featuring five boundaries while JH. Mona remained unbeaten on 24 to complete a fine day of all round performance as Abahani posted 88 for one to wrap it up in 15.4 overs.

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## Youth meet in January

The national youth cricket championship for 1994-95 season will commence sometime in January simultaneously in different zones across the country.

District sports associations and other affiliated units have been requested to complete entry formalities with the Bangladesh Cricket Control Board by December 30.

## Nirman tourney

Meanwhile, the Nirman Schools cricket tournament for the 1994-95 season will begin simultaneously in different zones across the country from January 1.

The final round of the championship will, however, begin from February 15 in Dhaka.

Schools within and outside the Dhaka metropolis have been asked to complete the entry formalities by December 15.

## Lotus-Kamal trials on Nov 20

Sports Reporter

The primary selection for the second batch of the Lotus-Kamal fast bowling training programme will be held at the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium on November 20 at 10 am.

The foundation, who concluded its first ever year-long training session last year, has invited interested candidates under 19 years with a minimum height of five feet six inches to join the trials.

# Dress rehearsal of old foes



HOBART, Nov 17: England cricket captain Mike Atherton said Thursday that his team's build-up to the five-Test Ashes series has been hampered by the schedule drawn up by Australian officials, report agencies.

Atherton said the tourists would have preferred to play a warm-up match in Brisbane before the first Test, which starts on Nov 25, rather than facing an Australian XI in cold and windy Hobart from Friday.



MIKE ATHERTON

England will instead play a warm-up match in Queensland as their preparation for the crucial second Test at the Melbourne Cricket Ground.

Atherton said he felt the Australian Cricket Board (ACB) had deliberately made life difficult for his team.

"It happened to us last time in 1990-91," he said. "I don't think it's any coincidence. You just put up with these things."

"It would be nice to play a game in Brisbane before the Test match, but if you're not given that, you just have to get on with it."

England was defeated 3-0 on their 1990-91 tour when their itinerary was similar to this season.

England are guaranteed a testing workout against the Australian XI, who include several players on the fringe of Test selection.

Merv Hughes will lead the Australian attack, while the batting is built around Test hopefuls Matthew Hayden, Justin Langer and Damien Martyn, along with local hero Ricky Ponting.

"We're ready for the bigger game now, but this one has a bit of added spice because of the kind of team they've picked," Atherton said.

"It means it will be a competitive game."

England vice-captain Alec Stewart will return to his opening position after a three-week layoff with a broken finger, while the tourists have rested fast bowler Devon Malcolm and Phillip DeFreitas and batsman Graeme Hick.

Former England captain Mike Gatting was left out of team and his omission makes it almost impossible for the 37-year-old to be considered for the Test side.

Instead, the selectors have decided on a final eliminator between John Crawley and Craig White for the No 6 spot.

The Australian XI chosen to play England in the four-day match will treat the encounter like a Test match, Australian cricket coach Bobby Simpson said.

"We're treating it like a sixth Test match," Simpson said, setting the tone for the game.

Simpson, coach of the Test side, will be in charge over the next few days of 11 players on the fringe of Test selection, several of whom know that a good performance in Hobart could win them a place in the Brisbane Test.

They face an England side keen to bounce back from their four-wicket defeat at the hands of New South Wales in Newcastle this week. The visitors will also field players keen to secure a Test spot.

It has all the ingredients of a hard-fought encounter and Simpson guaranteed his side would be giving no quarter. "We'll be playing it as tough as we can," he said.

"It will be a test of our youngsters' integrity and temperament and it will give us a chance to look at them in a tougher environment than they will be used to in Shield cricket."

"We've brought our full management team to the match and given the seriousness with which we'll be playing it, we're confident of getting a good result."

Simpson was confident looking ahead to the Test

series. "We've got to start favourites as we're playing well and have got a lot of depth to our talent."

"And I understand England have a few worries at the moment with their fielding and losing wickets in a hurry, and it's nice that they have got a few concerns."

But, he added, "I haven't forgotten that England thrashed us in my first Ashes series in charge in 1986-87, but we'll be reminding our players that we've done pretty well against them in the last



BOBBY SIMPSON

couple of series."

Australian selectors will be eyeing Australian XI pace bowler Merv Hughes who is looking to regain his Test place after being dropped for the recent tour of Pakistan.

"Merv has a chance here to show his true talents. He's had problems with injuries but I understand he's been bowling well in his last match and he'll be looking forward to the challenge here," Simpson said.

## TEAMS

**AUSTRALIAN XI:** Damien Martyn (captain), Matt Hayden, Greg Blewett, Justin Langer, Ricky Ponting, Stuart Law, Mark Atkinson, Paul Reiffel, Marv Hughes, Gavin Robertson, Jo Angel.

**ENGLAND (from):** Michael Atherton (captain), Alec Stewart, Graeme Hick, Graham Thorpe, Graham Gooch, John Crawley, Steven Rhodes, Phillip DeFreitas, Darren Gough, Martin McCague, Joey Benjamin, Craig White, Mike Gatting, Phillip Tufnell, Devon Malcolm, Shaun Udal.

# Sluggers surge into qtrs



NEW YORK, Nov 17: Wimbledon champion Conchita Martinez and two young baseline sluggers captured the final three quarterfinal berths Wednesday at the season-ending Virginia Slims Championships, reports AP.

Martinez, seeded third in this 16-player field at Madison Square Garden, eliminated Natalia Zvereva of Belarus 2-6, 6-2, 6-4; No. 5 Mary Pierce overcame her own mistakes in time, to oust South Africa's Amanda Coetzer 5-7, 6-3, 6-3 and No. 7 Lindsay Davenport defeated Anke Huber of Germany 6-2, 6-3.

With Martina Navratilova into her first day of retirement, heavy groundstrokes replaced the spins, placements and angles she had used in winning a record 167 tournaments. At least until Martinez and Zvereva took to the court.

While Martinez and Zvereva spend most of their time on the baseline, neither is adverse to coming to the net when spotting an opening, read to pressure an opponent. Late in the match, Zvereva repeatedly came to the net to rally from a 5-1 deficit to put the final set back on serve at 4-5.

It made no difference, however, as she lost her serve at

love in the 10th game to close the best match of the day.

Where Martinez and Zvereva varied their long-range shots, Davenport and Huber were content to stand at the baseline and try to belt the ball past each other.

There was no disguising tactics: just hit hard, harder and hardest. The only diversion was an occasional moon ball to allow the players to get back into position for another barrage of groundstrokes.

The Pierce-Coetzer match had a bit more variety, but just a little. Pierce has some of the hardest groundstrokes in women's tennis, but she and Coetzer roamed the court, using a short ball to come to the net.

Pierce, who has reached five finals in 1994 but hasn't yet won, raced to a 5-2 first-set lead. Coetzer captured the next five game to win the opening set, then had a break

Chan Khan dead

Former cricketer and national coach Chan Khan died of cancer in Dhaka last night. He was 75, reports BSS.

The Bangladesh Cricket Control Board (BCCB) condoled his death and conveyed sympathy to the members of bereaved family.

His namaz-e-janaza will be held at the Rankin Street Jame-Masjid after Juma prayers.

point against Pierce in the first game of the second set.

Pierce held service, broke Coetzer, then held again for a 3-0 advantage. Although she captured the second set, Pierce sprayed shots all over the Garden, most of them landing in the court.

"I felt like I had chances early in the second set," Coetzer said. "I just was too anxious and I didn't take my opportunities. ... I really felt today that I was in the match."

In the third game of the final set, Pierce was given a warning for taking too much time between points. She responded by breaking Coetzer for a 2-1 lead, an advantage she overtook as she moved into a quarterfinal meeting against top-seeded Steffi Graf, whom Pierce upset during her surprising run to the French Open title match.

"I'm very excited," Pierce said about the opportunity to play Graf again. "I always enjoy playing against the top players."

Davenport next plays No. 4 seed Jana Novotna, and Martinez faces No. 8 Kimiko Date of Japan in the quarterfinals.

While Davenport is the higher ranked of the two, and thus seeded in this 16-player field, Huber has been one of the hottest players on the tour the last two months.

## Comaneci engaged

NEW YORK, Nov 17: Nadia Comaneci, the 1976 and 1980 Olympic gymnastics gold medalist, has tumbled for Bart Conner, the US gymnast who took gold at the 1984 Olympics, reports AFP.

Now it's wedding bells for the champions.

Conner designed the engagement ring he gave Comaneci last Saturday on her 33rd birthday in an Amsterdam hotel, an agent for the duo said Wednesday.

No wedding date has been set.

Comaneci was the first gymnast to receive a perfect 10 score, doing so at the 1976 Montreal Olympics. She won three golds, two silvers and a bronze medal there, then added two golds and two silvers four years later in Moscow.

Conner won team and parallel bars titles at the 1984 Los Angeles Games.



NADIA COMANECI

Comaneci and Conner are bound for the World Team Gymnastics Championships that begin Monday in Dortmund, Germany.

Nadia will return to Romania for the first time since she defected in 1989 following the competition.

The couple will perform in Bucharest's largest arena on the fifth anniversary of her defection, an arena that will be named for Comaneci that night. Both will return to the United States in early December.

Conner and Comaneci have been close friends since she came to the United States five years ago. He is a US television commentator and both are hosts of a food and fitness television show.

## Akram may miss part of SA tour

KARACHI, Nov 17: Wasim Akram may miss the early part of Pakistan's tour of South Africa which starts on November 30 because of a nagging sinus problem, reports Reuter.

Arif Ali Khan Abbasi, ad hoc committee member on the Board of Control for Cricket in Pakistan (BCCP), said on Wednesday ACCP was being sent to London for treatment and might not be able to leave with the touring team on November 26.

"We don't know the time required for the treatment," he said. "It is possible Wasim would not be available for the early part of the tour."

AFP added: Pakistani pace bowler Wasim Akram hopes to leave with the team for South Africa even though he was suffering from sinus problems, his wife said yesterday.

Wasim's wife, Huma Akram, speaking by telephone from the couple's home while her husband was out, said her spouse would be leaving within two or three days for London for examination by an ear, nose and throat specialist on November 21.

"He very much wants to return home to accompany the team when it leaves for Pakistan on November 26 for the South Africa tour," which is due to start on November 30, Huma said.

She said local doctors had told him that he would need only a "short treatment" lasting two to three days.

But, she said, he would make a final decision after the checkup in London.

Wasim missed the final Test of a three-match series against Australia at Lahore earlier this month due to sinus trouble.

## Boon dashes Gloucester's hopes

LONDON, Nov 17: Australian Test batsman David Boon has decided against joining Gloucestershire next season, reports Reuter.

The 33-year-old Tasmanian is unwilling to risk a troublesome knee injury by playing a full season of county cricket for the first time.

Gloucestershire wanted Boon to replace fast bowler Courtney Walsh, who will be touring England with West Indies, as their overseas signing next year.



Spain's Caminero leaps over Denmark's Fris Hansen during a European Championship qualifier in Seville on Nov 16. Spain humbled the defending European champions 3-0. — AFP photo

# Italy's night of ignominy



LONDON, Nov 17: The unfashionable footballing nations of Croatia, Georgia and Israel stole the limelight on a night of surprises in European Championship qualifying matches on Wednesday, reports Reuter.

Croatia stunned three-times world champions Italy 2-1 in Palermo to maintain their 100 per cent record and open a three-point lead at the top of Group Four.

Georgia, who started playing internationals only two years ago, routed Wales 5-0 in Tbilisi to send the Welsh crashing to their biggest defeat since 1953.

While Israel's 2-0 success against minnows Azerbaijan in neutral Turkey was not in itself an upset, what was surprising was that Israel ended the night in second place in Group One behind Romania to remain on course for their first appearance in a major international final.

Although the qualifying competition does not end until November 1995, the credentials of Group One rivals France and Poland must be queried after Poland failed to beat a 10-man French team in Zabrze.

The match ended goalless. France's third successive 0-0 draw in the group. They could arguably claim a moral victory after having midfielder Christian Karembeu of Nantes sent off for bringing down Roman Kosecki from behind in the 50th minute.

Macedonia also raised the flag for the newly emerging soccer nations of Eastern Europe with a creditable 1-1 draw in Group Two against Belgium in Brussels.

Spain continued their decade-long jinx over defend-

ing champions Denmark, beating them 3-0 in Sevilla, their fifth victory over the Danes in major championship matches going back to the 1984 European Championship semi-finals in France.

The result maintained Spain's 100 per cent start in Group Three and left them five points clear of the pack which includes the champions, Belgium, Cyprus — 2-0 winners over Armenia — and Macedonia.

But not all of Europe's giants ended the night with red faces.

Former world champions Germany survived a potentially awkward trip to Tirana with a 2-1 win over Albania in Group Seven, while Bulgaria beat Moldova 4-1 in the same section to lead the group.

Norway leapfrogged above the Czech Republic and the Netherlands to lead Group Five after they won 4-0 in Belarus as the Czechs and Dutch drew 0-0 in Rotterdam.

And the Republic of Ireland maintained their 100 per cent start with their third successive win in Group Six, thumping rivals Northern Ireland 4-0 for their first win in Belfast.

They lead Portugal, who also have a maximum haul of nine points from three games, on goal difference.

Greece also maintained their perfect start, beating San Marino 2-0 at home. They lead Group Eight with nine points ahead of both Scotland and Russia on seven following their 1-1 draw in Glasgow.

England, the only team already through to the finals in 1996 as host nation, beat African champions Nigeria 1-0 at Wembley thanks to a David Platt goal two minutes from half-time.

While Georgia's 5-0 demoli-

tion of Wales was the biggest surprise in European soccer since the Faroe Islands beat Austria 1-0 in a European Championship qualifier four years ago, Croatia's victory in Italy was the most impressive performance of the night.

Many of the Croatian players were denied the chance of playing in the 1992 European finals for the former Yugoslavia following the dissolution of that country — but they are making up for lost time now.

Earlier group wins over Estonia and Lithuania were to be expected but Croatia proved they have the class to reach the finals as two goals by Davor Suker Vanquished the Italians in Palermo.

Suker, who plays his club soccer in Spain with Sevilla, took his tally to eight goals in seven appearances for his country.

Wednesday's defeat is bound to increase the pressure on Italian coach Arrigo Sacchi, even though it was only the sixth time in 34 games since he took over in 1991 that his side have lost.

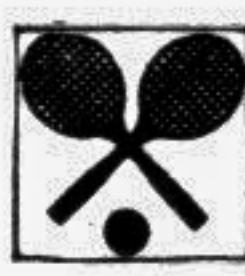
Sacchi's tactics and team changes have made him unpopular and this could be one defeat too many for the former AC Milan coach.

Eighteen matches were played across the continent but the only other team to match Georgia's five-goal performance were Faroe Islands, who thumped the Faroe Islands.

The Faroes, who have never come close to another competitive victory since their famous win over Austria, did not help themselves by having defender Tummas Hansen sent off after conceding a penalty in the 51st minute.

Finland scored four times after his departure to complete a 5-0 win.

# Becker beats Sampras again



FRANKFURT, Nov 17: In a clash of past champions, Boris Becker produced one of the best matches of his already impressive year and frustrated top-ranked Pete Sampras with a 7-5, 7-5 victory Wednesday at the IBM/ATP Tour World Championship, reports AP.

Becker posted his second straight win over Pete Sampras in a month. Earlier, Michael Chang crushed Alberto Berasategui 6-1, 6-0.

Berasategui, who has won three games in two matches, said he was suffering from a wrist injury and only played to protect his ranking.

Stefan Edberg, No. 8, made a successful start by beating fourth-ranked Goran Ivanisevic 6-3, 6-4.

Sampras now has to beat Edberg Thursday to stay alive. Ivanisevic, 0-2, a semifinalist the last two years, was eliminated.

Ivanisevic had 26 aces in losing to Becker Tuesday, but he managed only 6 against

Edberg. The Swede had only 3, but also made a lot less errors in the 57-minute match.

Becker also beat Sampras en route to lifting the Stockholm Open in the last week of October and is now 5-5 against the American in his career.

Becker won the tour-ending championship of the top eight players in the world in 1992, but failed to qualify last year after dropping out of the top 10.

He is back at No 5 now, after winning four titles this year.

He is in his element in Frankfurt's Festhalle, where he celebrated his 25th birthday on the day he won the 1992 title and where he is cheered by 9,000 adoring fans every time he plays.

With 13 indoor titles since its inception in 1990, Becker leads the ATP Tour.

Becker broke Sampras for decisive 6-5 leads in each set and never dropped his own serve.

Becker hit two aces in the last game with second serves, the last one giving him three match points. He missed the first serve but clinched the match when Sampras returned his second serve to the net.

The eight players are split into two round-robin groups, with the top two from each advancing to the semifinals.