

BCCB XI beat Nat'l Press Club

Sports Reporter

The Bangladesh Cricket Control Board (BCCB) Eleven beat the National Press Club by five wickets in a friendly cricket match at the Dhaka Stadium yesterday.

Set to score 116 in the stipulated 30 overs for a win, the BCCB XI posted the required runs in 28.2 with opener Lutfur Rahman notching up the highest individual score of 22.

Former national footballer Shafiqul Arefin, who had earlier enjoyed a wonderful time with the ball, followed Lutfur with an unbeaten 20 while Alim Islam, Tanjeel Ahsan and Khabir contributed double-digit scores of 19, 13 and 11 respectively.

Tanveer Naved, the National Press Club skipper, claimed two wickets and so did Raihan while Mustafiz Mamun got the other BCCB wicket to fall.

Earlier in the morning, a rapidfire 51-run partnership in 7.2 overs for the fifth wicket between Masud Ahmed and Afzal Khan gave the Press Club a semblance of respectability.

Masud Ahmed top-scored with an unbeaten 26-ball 31, made of four boundaries while Afzal Khan hit two fours in his 25-ball 20.

Other double-figure contributors were opener Fazlul Karim (15), Quamruzzaman (11) and Mustafiz Mamun (10).

Shafiqul Arefin and Alim Islam had two scalps each for 11 and 22 runs respectively.

Nat'l women chess qualifiers from March 10

The qualifying round of the 16th women chess competition, organised by the Bangladesh Chess Federation, will begin from March 10, reports UNB.

Interested women have been requested to enrol their names at the federation with Tk 50 each by March 9, said a press release issued yesterday.

Participants, who will represent their respective districts, have been asked to send their name with letter from district sports association concerned by March 9.

The competition will be held in Swiss league system and six players will play in the final round.

The champion, runner-up and two highest rated players will play directly in the final round to be held in round robin league system.

The final round will begin from March 18.

Ma plans a comeback

BEIJING, Mar 1: Unbowed by throat surgery, appendicitis and a serious car accident, the ousted trainer of China's world-beating "Ma family army" running team is planning a comeback, the Xinhua Wanbao newspaper said on Wednesday, reports Reuter.



Afzal Khan of National Press Club pulls Ataul Mullick of BCCB to the fence during yesterday's exhibition match played at the Dhaka Stadium. Authorities of country's cricket proved better players winning the cosy, chummy contest by five wickets.

— Star photo

Mexico pulls out of 2002 WC race**It's between Japan, S Korea**

TOKYO, Mar 1: A senior Japan soccer chief on Wednesday promised a fair fight with arch-rivals South Korea in the exclusively Asian battle to stage the 2002 World Cup finals, reports AFP.

"It's a competition against South Korea. The most important key to win the race is to show our enthusiasm to FIFA. We'll play fair," said Shunichiro Okano, vice-president of Japan Football Association.

The two were left as the only candidates after Mexico failed to meet Wednesday's deadline to get their candidacy to the International Football Federation (FIFA).

Japan and South Korea sent high profile delegations to the FIFA headquarters in Zurich to hand in their official bids.

FIFA had virtually promised that the 2002 finals would be the first staged in Asia. But Mexico's withdrawal, because of the fallout from the country's financial crisis, was a great relief to both countries as their technical facilities were widely considered inferior to those of the Mexicans who have twice staged the finals.

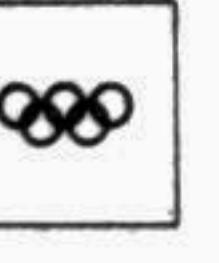
No matter what Okano says, Asian soccer chiefs are still anxious to avoid what promises to be a bitter behind-the-scenes battle with intensive lobbying in the runup to the final decision at a FIFA congress in June 1996.

South Korea has emphasised that it should be picked as "Korea is the only country in Asia and Africa to qualify for the World Cup four times."

Japan has never qualified and would be the first country that has never qualified for a finals to host a final.

But Okano, who is also chairman of the Japanese bid committee executive, said he believed Japan's football level was high enough to host the final.

"We are responsible for forming a strong team, because the host country has no need to take part in the qualifying rounds. But I think we proved we deserve to host the 2002 Cup by winning the World under-16 championships last year," he added.

Samaranch's Balkan mission

BELGRADE, Yugoslavia, Mar 1: The head of the International Olympic Committee voiced his support Tuesday for the re-integration of Serb-led Yugoslavia into the sporting world, reports AP.

Juan Antonio Samaranch arrived in Belgrade for talks with Serbian officials, including President Slobodan Milosevic, which focused on gradual re-introduction of Yugoslav teams into international sports.

"We support Yugoslavia's re-integration because it's good

Christie to lead Brits in Barcelona

LONDON, Mar 1: World and Olympic sprint champion Linford Christie will head Britain's team at next week's World Indoor Championships in Barcelona, Spain, reports AP.

Christie, who had previously announced he would skip the event, was selected by the British Athletics Federation to compete in the 60 meters at the March 10-12 event.

World champion hurdlers Colin Jackson and Sally Gunnell are skipping the indoor championships.

Courier, Edberg advance

SCOTTSDALE, Arizona, Mar 1: Second-seed Jim Courier and third-seed Stefan Edberg won first-round matches at the 328,000 dollar Mass Mutual men's championships on Tuesday, reports Reuter.



Juan Antonio Samaranch (L), president of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) shakes hands with Jasna Sekaric, current European and world champion in sharp shooting, during his meeting with members of the Yugoslav Olympic Committee and sports personalities in Belgrade on Feb 28.

Sport**BEXIMCO nat'l youth cricket from Mar 10**

The first phase of the 15th BEXIMCO national youth cricket championship, organised by the Bangladesh Cricket Control Board (BCCB), will begin on March 10 at six zonal venues of the country, reports UNB.

About forty-five teams, divided into six groups, will take part in the tournament to be held at BKSP, Noakhali, Rangpur, Faridpur, Dinajpur and Jessor.

Defending champions BKSP and runners-up Dhaka DSA will directly play in the eight-team final round to be held in Dhaka alongwith six other zonal champions.

— AFP/UNB photo

So far so good for Italians

LONDON, Mar 1: Italian teams held a slender edge over the Germans in the UEFA Cup quarter-finals on

Tuesday while France's interest all but evaporated with Nantes crashing 5-1 away to Bayer Leverkusen where three men were sent off, report agencies.

Veteran midfielder Giancarlo Marocchini gave Juventus an invaluable away goal as the Italian league leaders drew 1-1 at Eintracht Frankfurt in their first leg clash.

Pole Jan Furtok equalised

Walsh off to NY for medical advice

KINGSTON, Mar 1: West Indies fast bowler Courtney Walsh has left Jamaica for New York to seek medical advice for nagging back pain, the Gleaner newspaper reported on Tuesday, reports Reuter.

The 32-year-old vice-captain was troubled by back pain throughout his recent tours of India and New Zealand where he served as captain in the absence of Richie Richardson.

Walsh's match-winning bowling on both tours was apparently unaffected by the pain, but he will be called into action again later this month with the start of Australia's two month tour.

Japan, the 1992 Asia Cup holder, watched the country's first-ever ticket for the World Cup frittered away in the last 15 seconds of the 1993 qualifying rounds in Qatar. It saved some face by beating South Korea in a penalty shootout to retain the Dynasty Cup last June 1996.

South Korea has emphasised that it should be picked as "Korea is the only country in Asia and Africa to qualify for the World Cup four times."

Japan has never qualified and would be the first country that has never qualified for a finals to host a final.

Japan has already been making preparations for several years and we believe that Japan is qualified to fulfill all of FIFA's requirements, including those for stadium, transportation and others," said Okano.

The great success of the J-

League demonstrates the growing popularity among Japanese fans. Holding the World Cup would give even greater impetus to the growth of football in Japan," he added.

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South African began the final day at 13 for one needing 82 for victory and reached 85 for two in just 21.5 overs.

The win was a morale-booster for the tourists, who face New Zealand in a one-off Test match starting Saturday at Eden Park in Auckland.

Nightwatchman Clive Eksteen (18) was the only batsman dismissed Wednesday. He gave a return catch to off-spinner Paul Wiseman when on 18.

He was out with the score at 78 and captain Hansie Cronje came in and sent his first ball from Wiseman over the mid-wicket fence for six to clinch the win.

Hudson dominated the Academy XI bowlers from the start of play, twice sending deliveries from Glen Jonas to the cover boundary, pulling another shortish ball dismissively to the long-on fence and hooking Kerry Walmsley for six behind square leg.

Hudson moved from eight to 33 before Eksteen had added a run.

Hudson reached his half-century off 76 balls with five fours and a six just before the winning runs were scored.

Lankans settle for draw

WANGANUI, New Zealand, Mar 1: Hashan Tilkeratne hit an unbeaten 68 Wednesday as Sri Lanka held on for a draw in their four-day cricket match against a New Zealand Select XI at Victoria Park, reports AP.

Sri Lanka were set a target of 356 for victory but made no attempt to chase the runs and were 155 for five wickets when play was called off.

Tilkeratne and Chamara Dunusinghe (5 not out) averted the possibility of defeat by adding 50 runs in the final session after the tourists struggled to 105-5 at tea. The pair shared a 56-run partnership.

The normally free-scoring Sri Lankan batsmen were mostly content to occupy the crease.

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