

Div I chess from Nov 5

The Metropolitan First Division chess league, organised by Bangladesh Chess Federation, will begin in the city on Tuesday, reports UNB.

Waterpolo refs' clinic on

A week-long FINA regional waterpolo referees' clinic began at the Mirpur National Swimming Complex yesterday, reports UNB.

Wiseman drafted into NZ squad

AUCKLAND, Nov 2: Off-spinner Paul Wiseman was Saturday called into the New Zealand cricket squad to cover for injury victims Mark Haslam and Dipak Patel, reports AP.

Careca set to retire

TOKYO, Nov 2: Football star Careca announced Saturday that he will hang up his boots at the end of the season in the J-League, reports AFP.

Ma to undergo treatment

BEIJING, Nov 2: Top Chinese athletics coach Ma Junren is to go into a Beijing hospital later this month for treatment for intestinal and throat problems, the Shanghai-based Youth Daily said, reports Reuters.

Higuita quits home team

BOGOTA, Nov 2: Flamboyant goalkeeper Rene Higuita, who decided earlier this year not to play for Colombia in qualifiers for the 1998 World Cup, has quit his hometown team in the northwest city of Medellin, reports Reuters.

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Doctors in Dalian in the northeastern province of Liaoning examined Ma earlier this week and told him his condition could worsen if not treated promptly.

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For the proper perspective



It has only been a couple of months since our cricketers hogged the headlines of all the newspapers in the country by winning the Asian Cricket Council (ACC) Trophy in Malaysia.

The maiden triumph in any international meet by the national team carved a niche in the hearts of numerous sports-lovers of the country.

The government, opposition as well as different organisations overwhelmingly honoured the sons of the soil for their unique feat.

Some called it a poem of a success, many enthusiasts dubbed it a stupendous showing and milestone in our

quest for greater glory. It is advisable to pick up the lessons of our abashed dreams, especially from the Kenya debacle, and feel good about our progress — but not too good.

Kenya did not go to Kenya as underdogs. Unlike other participating nations, Bangladesh took off to Kenya with quite impressive credentials starting with a strong foundation, international exposure as well as comprehensive training under the tutelage of celebrated former Indian cricketer Mohinder Amarnath.

In comparison to other campaigners like hosts Kenya, who did not have even any domestic league, our boys frequently had had the chance to rub their shoulders with world class players like Wasim Akram, Neil Fairbrother, Richard Illingworth and Sri Lankan skipper Arjuna Ranatunga in a very attractive domestic league.

Our acquaintance with top level cricket has been over half a century now. As the then East Pakistanis, our elderly aficionados have the memories of a Test-playing nation and as Bangladeshis we have the bitter-sweet experience of an associate member country in the whole fraternity of this game.

Apparently, these 'edges' we held over others were not of much use when the question of delivering the goods came with our cricketers succumbing to their own nerves rather than the strength of the rivals.

Although the irony of history is that nobody learns from the past, but it is our moral obligation to dig out what actually went wrong in Kenya for the cause of our cricket.

Much was muttered and written about the Kenya bungle over the years. But nothing made the Bangladesh Cricket Control Board (BCCB) realise its moral obligation to clear the air.

In tandem with our practice players, the board attributed the cause of Bangladesh's failure to catch the great bus to the assembly of the more privileged cricket-playing countries to Amarnath's allegedly exhausting practice schedule. Its unofficially sponsored impression was that gruelling fitness training and the autocratic approach of the Indian coach did the most damage. It was generally agreed that Amarnath's recipe for

Al-Amin & S Ashfaqul Haque

tered our World Cup dreams but also put us on a detour in our quest for our ultimate goal — a place in the Ivy League of Test playing nations.

After long three years, the nation is now ready for another take-off for a flight to the elite echelon of cricket playing countries, in the seventh World Cup to be held in England in 1999.

But, "the way ahead" — like any signpost is easily read but not so easily followed! Years of dejection has taught us to be sceptical rather than getting carried away by the ACC success.

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FARUQUE

26-year-old cricketing history.

But a few, at the risk of being dubbed as pessimists, came up with a rather squint view of the achievement (terming the maiden triumph in any international meet by the national team carved a niche in the hearts of numerous sports-lovers of the country.)

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Damal cricket starts today

The 17th Damal Smitri cricket tournament begins here today, reports BSS.

President of Bangladesh Cricket Board Saber Hossain Chowdhury, MP, will inaugurate the tourney at the Dhammondi Cricket Stadium.

In the opening match Bangladesh Biman will take on Uttara Sporting Club.

Kremlin Cup Conchita's

MOSCOW, Nov 2: Top-ranking Conchita Martinez of Spain beat Australia's Barbara Paulus on Saturday to take the 400,000 dollars women's Kremlin Cup, reports AP.

In the final match that lasted 2 hours and 7 minutes, Martinez bested Paulus 6-1, 4-6, 6-4.

The winner's cup and a check for 67,000 dollars top prize money were presented to Martinez by Germany's Steffi Graf to the applause of some 6,000 spectators.

Graf will be paired with Moscow's Mayor Yuri Luzhkov in a special doubles exhibition match on Sunday against President Boris Yeltsin's tennis coach Shamil Tarpishev and Larisa Neiland.

Men's play was scheduled to begin Monday.

Kendal rope in Nazir

LONDON, Nov 2: Pakistan seamer Shahid Nazir will join English Northern League side Kendal as their cricket professional for the 1997 season, reports Reuters.

Nazir, who captured five for 54 on his Test debut against Zimbabwe two weeks ago, replaces South African Meyrick Pringle.

Nazir, 21, led the Pakistani bowling averages during this year's tour of England, although he was unable to break into the Test side.

UEFA for video hindsight?

GENEVA, Nov 2: UEFA president Lennart Johansson said on Thursday he would support the use of video replays during matches to help decide disputed goals, reports Reuters.

"When it comes to goals we could use cameras to avoid making mistakes," said Johansson, announcing a new three-year sponsorship of the Champions' League. "But to stop a match to see if a ball was off-side — no."

Johansson's remarks were the first hint that UEFA, European soccer's governing body, might embrace new technology in this way.

In the past, UEFA and world football's governing body, FIFA, have been firmly against the use of video replays beyond helping to assist disciplinary cases.

However, Sir Bert Millichip, recently retired chairman of the English FA, is on record as supporting the idea with, for example a camera in each goal post to see whether the ball has gone across the line.

Video-replays have been used in North American football (NFL) and ice hockey (NHL) with mixed results.

Officials there for the most part have welcomed the assistance, but soccer referees so far have been less receptive, believing it would lessen their authority.

Johansson's comments were part of a wide-ranging satellite interview with journalists in five cities, Geneva, Amsterdam, Milan, Budapest and Athens.

Munich hold Bayern

MUNICH, Germany, Nov 2: 1860 Munich, playing with 10 men from the 57th minute, held big-spending local rivals Bayern Munich to an eventual 1-1 draw in front of 68,000 fans in the Olympic Stadium on Friday, reports Reuters.

The draw was enough to give Bayern a one-point lead at the top of the Bundesliga but their triumph could be overturned as second-placed VfB Stuttgart take on lowly St Paul today.

Bayern looked set for victory after 1860's Jens Jeremies, who had already been booked, was sent off for hand ball.

Their best chance came in the 79th minute when 1860's Pele was adjudged to have brought down Thomas Strunz in the box, but captain Lothar Mathaeus shot weakly from the spot and Bernd Maier made a comfortable save.

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BFF general secretary Harun-ur-Rashid MP (second from left) addressing the local press during a debriefing on Bangladesh under-19 football team's performance in the Asian youth championship at the Dhaka Stadium yesterday.

Delving into U-19 debacle

Bangladesh under-19 football team leader Shaikat Ali Khan Jahangir said lack of knowledge about international system of refereeing was one of the main reasons for his side's failure in the 30th Asian Youth football championship that concluded in Seoul last week.

Jahangir said this while debriefing the local press about the team's performance in the meet at the Dhaka Stadium yesterday afternoon.

Talking to the journalists Jahangir said our boys had a tough time in coping with the FIFA rules strictly followed by the man-in-black which they seldom experienced in the domestic leagues.

While explaining his views Jahangir came up with some poignant observations about the tourney.

"We have to plan for long-term training and provide all the facilities to our players if we want results from them," said a bearded Jahangir, who is also the secretary of the Mahanagari league committee.

"We will have to play football round the year," added Jahangir.

Besides, he pointed out that in South Korea they had to cope against stifling chill which his boys had never experienced.

"We played our first match against UAE in almost freezing conditions. The temperature was only three degrees," disclosed Jahangir.

"We should have gone there at least two weeks before to get acclimatised with the atmosphere," said Jahangir.

Jahangir added, technical manager Ashrauluddin Chhunu, coach OJ Pflister, BFF general secretary Harun-ur-Rashid MP and BFF joint secretary Badal Roy also spoke on the occasion.

Chhunu, the former national left winger, appointed as manager of the Bangladesh U-19 team for next two years, said that it was his first trip abroad in the capacity as an official.

About the performance of his boys, Chhunu said, "Our boys played well but that was not enough. Some silly mistakes forced us to concede most of the goals."

Bangladesh lost their first match against UAE 6-1, drew with Iran goalless, conceded a 2-5 defeat at the hands of eventual winners South Korea and went down fighting against Thailand 0-1 in the last Group B

Match. "The United Arab Emirates had undergone a five-month long plan for their preparation involving 2.5 million dollars," said Chhunu.

"They had a four-week tour in Holland and three weeks in Germany. They also toured France and Saudi Arabia before arriving in Seoul two weeks prior to the start," he added.

German coach Otto Pflister said that until and unless the refereeing system prevailing in this country is not changed and follow the correct international procedures, the standard of the game will never improve.

Harun-ur-Rashid, who claimed football is now a money-spinner, emphasised the need for sponsors to come forward to improve the standard of football.

Ctg MSC Star v'ball champs

CHITTAGONG, Nov 2: Mohammedan Sporting Club became champions in the Star volleyball competition beating Regency Sports 3-1 at the local stadium gymnasium here today, reports BSS.

Four teams participated in the tournament held under the auspices of Chittagong Star Club.

Alhaj Dastagir Chowdhury — former general secretary of CJKP distributed the prizes among the winners as chief guest.

Superstars play down bait

PERTH, Nov 2: Brian Lara and Shane Warne, popularly rated the world's best batsman and bowler respectively, meet head-on over the next few months in one of cricket's most intriguing clashes since the days of Don Bradman and Harold Larwood more than half a century ago, reports AFP.

But the West Indies and Australian superstars, lead actors in a five-Test series starting November 22, are adamant they are not simply focused on each other in the battle for the Sir Frank Worrell Trophy, currently held by Australia.

Warne is the leg-spinning wizard who has consistently mastered the world's best batsmen in recent years. His first 44 Tests have netted him an extraordinary 207 wickets, at a miserly average of 23.53.

Australia's unhealthy over-reliance on his finger-flicking magic has been underscored by the consistently poor form of Mark Taylor's side in the one-day series in India.

Warne missed the tour because of lingering problems with his spinning finger, now said by those in the know to be healing rapidly after surgery and likely to be close to 100 per cent by the opening Test.

When asked if he believed he could master Warne, Lara said: "That will not be the high point of the series for me. There are going to be six or seven bowlers out there — and he is going to come at me in every Test match."

"I have to keep each every one of them away from my stumps and away from getting me out."

The rivalry with Shane is great, of course, and he, being one of the best leg-spinners ever in the game, is certainly going to be a challenge to me and others in the team.

"But if I get over that challenge there are still five or six more bowlers to handle. So, if you focus on just one person, you would be wrong."

Warne said that, from a bowler's perspective, it was essential that all the concentration should be on one batsman.

"As Brian plays out, there is not just one player in the side," he said.

"Brian and Sachin Tendulkar are probably the two best batsmen in the world at the moment."

"If you focus on just one, you can tend to forget the others. There are 11 players in a team and you have to concentrate 20 wickets to win a Test match."

Despite attempts by the two major combatants in this ea-

gerly-admitted series to play down their confrontation, the fact remains a nation glued to its radios will almost surely to a half when Warne bowls to the little West Indies maestro.

Lara starts with a significant psychological advantage. In eight Tests in which the pair have appeared on opposing sides, Warne has dismissed him only once.

That statistic is remarkable considering the blond-headed hero from Victoria captured 10 wickets at 31.30 in four Tests in the 1992-93 series in Australia and 15 at 27.07 in another four in the Caribbean early last year.

Lara wants a more consistent tour than his sojourn of four years ago.

During that series he sculptured a memorable 277 in the Sydney Test — an innings he still regards as even better than his Test record.

But he was disappointed he managed only 189 in another seven Test knocks.

This time he has set himself a target of three or four centuries for the five-Test series.

Just how far he advances along that path will almost certainly be determined by his success against his archrival.

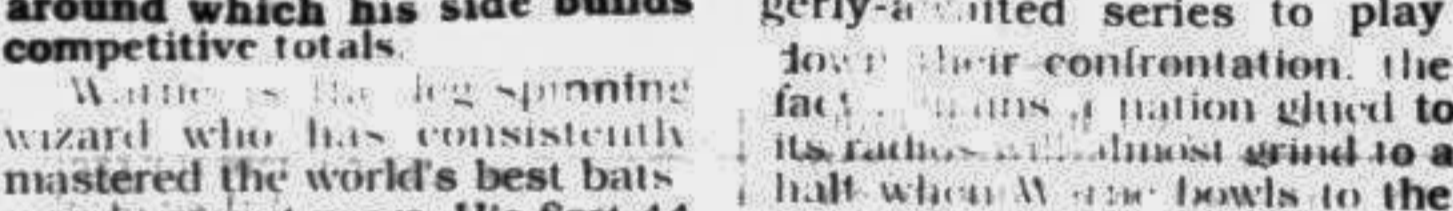


BRIAN LARA

Now at the peak of their skills, the 27-year-olds say it could be fatal for them to zero in on the other, overlooking other top quality players.

Lara, an apparently rejuvenated player after a bitter brush with West Indies officialdom, is seen as the key to his team's hopes of taking the prize back to the Caribbean.

The holder of the world's highest Test score (375 against England in Antigua) and the biggest first-class score (501 not out for Warwickshire against Durham at Edgbaston, Birmingham), the little left-hander with the footwork of a ballet dancer must be the fortress



SHANE WARNE

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