

Sport

Adieu GMCC

Sports Reporter
BRIEF SCORES

LALMATIA CLUB: 227 for seven in 50 overs (Asif Iqbal 40, Anup Kumar 39, Marwar Hossain 27, Alam 23 n.o., Kamal Merchant 3/28).
GMCC: 188 all out in 48.2 overs (Alamgir Kabir 84, Dola 17, Nahid 3/41, Alam 2/31, Zaman 2/42).
Result: Lalmatia Club beat GMCC by 39 runs.

The Greater Mymensing Cricket Club (GMCC) faced the ultimate ignominy of being relegated from the Premier Division league when Lalmatia Club handed them a 39-run defeat in a relegation play-off match at the Jagannath Hall ground yesterday.

This was GMCC's second successive loss within 24 hours in the three-team play-off phase which eventually served the last nail in the coffin of the once aspirant-turned-pushover this year.

The parting shot by Lalmatia after Surjo Tarun's impressive 52-run win over GMCC on Sunday, not only ended the once front-runners long stint in the elite 12-team Premier league, but also earned them the dubious distinction of a demotion to the First Division along with Gulshan Youth who had earlier confirmed one of the two relegation slots after finishing at the bottom of the table in the six-team relegation league.

On the other hand, Lalmatia's victory ensured their place in the Premier league for at least one more year. They will now take on Surjo Tarun Club in an insignificant affair at the same venue today.

Back to the day's match, Lalmatia, sent into bat in the morning, piled up a commanding total of 227 for seven in the stipulated 50 overs. After a sound start with Lalmatia scoring 64 runs for the loss of two wickets, the solid foundation for an imposing total was, however, revolved round some useful contributions from the middle-orders.

Pakistani Asif Iqbal, who came into bat at number four, scored highest 40 runs for the winners while Anup Kumar, who shared a vital 53 runs for the third wicket with Asif, fell for 39. While skipper Shovon, who scored a handful of runs this season, scored a captains knock of an unbeaten 35 off 43 balls.

For GMCC, their Pakistan recruit Kamal Merchant with military medium took three wickets for 28 runs in his 10 economic overs.

In reply, GMCC, facing a daunting task of scoring 4.5 runs per over, seemed in a hurry to complete a disastrous campaign as soon as possible. They lost half of their wickets with 93 runs on the board and despite a valiant effort from Alamgir Kabir, who fought a lone battle with a dazzling 84, GMCC could muster 188 before being all out in 48.2 overs.

Alamgir, who came into bat at number three, hammered a dozen fours and a couple of sixes, but 16 runs away from what would have been a well-deserved century, his 129-ball vigal came to a sad end in the penultimate over.

"We are keen to improve our SAARC record": Dias



Sports Reporter

RUWAN KALPAGE

Sri Lanka A manager Roy Dias said that his side will try their best to keep the image of the World champions in the third SAARC cricket tournament, scheduled to start at the Dhaka Stadium tomorrow.

Dias, one of the leading Sri Lankan batsmen in the seventies and eighties and, another epitome of aesthetic batsmanship expressed his confidence while talking to the Daily Star in his hotel room immediately after the 16-member team arrived in the capital yesterday afternoon.

"We have a good set of young talented players in the team along with a few experienced ones, a fact which has made the side a balanced one. Most of the members of the team are young and did well in our domestic cricket this season," said Dias.

When asked about their opponents, the former Test cricketer said that he was yet to know their opponents. And when helped to the seeming might of the Pakistan team who had arrived a day earlier, the Sri Lankan manager said, "No doubt, they are really a powerful side but cricket is a funny game. It all depends on

Faruque can't go to Pakistan

Sports Reporter

Former national skipper Faruque Ahmed has decided to skip the forth-coming Pakistan tour of the BCB XI. Faruque, named captain of the second string Bangladesh team which will take part in the Wills Cup scheduled to begin from February 22, yesterday sent a letter to the BCB president explaining his non-availability due to injury.

The scapegoat of Bangladesh's ICC debacle in Kenya, though failed to impress the selectors for a place in the national team, however, surprisingly made captain of the BCB XI.

The middle-order bat sustained an injury during a practice session a couple of days back. "I am not going to Pakistan because of my injury. I have already informed the board about my problem and they have gleefully accepted it," said a visibly dejected Faruque with a bandage on his injured left hand.

In what was learnt that Hasanuzzaman, the young middle-order bat, is going to fill the void while Harun-ur Rashid Liton, who had earlier been selected vice-captain of the team, will lead the side in the Wills Trophy.



RUWAN KALPAGE

how do you play on a particular day. If my boys can play upto their potential, there is no reason why should not prevail over a team even as powerful as Pakistan."

Answering to a question about his teams poor performance in the past two SAARC tournament, Dias, who has three Test centuries under belt said, "We are aware of that and we will try to erase that discrepancy this time with an improved show. Let me assure you Sri Lanka's poor track record in the previous SAARC cricket tournaments was very much there in the consideration when the squad was formed."

When asked about his opponents, the dark left hand batsman and off spinner said, "We have heard about the Pakistanis but don't know anything about the others. Well, Pakistanis have sent a powerful side, but will also not keep quite against them."

About his own inconsistent form that has kept his way from the national team many a times, the dark Sri Lanka A skipper said, "Well, we have many good cricketers in our country who always fight for a berth in the national team. I was there last year and hope to be there again soon."

Dias and Kalpage apart, Roomette Ratnayake, the cricket manager of the team and a very common face to the local cricket lovers, also expressed his guarded optimism about his teams chance in the SAARC meet.

"One-day cricket is an uncertain game and a team's performance depend upon how they play on a particular day. If our boys can play according to their potentials, I see no reason to lose any match here," said the former national right arm medium pacer who was also the coach of Sri Lanka A in the second SAARC cricket tournament way back in 1994.

Wickramaratne and Dulip Kapila who will impress the local spectators.

Finally Dias, who have already visited Bangladesh twice in the past, hoped that hosts Bangladesh will do good in the meet because of their habit in playing on the synthetic turf. "They were runners up last time and hope they do even better this time. I do not know anything about the team but expect to see a good and balanced game in the tournament. Besides, we have Uplu Chandana who is a good leg spinner."

When Dias was free in his sayings, Ruwan Senani Kalpage, the captain of the team, was found taciturn in his conversation with the press. Talking to the Daily Star at the Sheraton poolside in the evening, a casually dressed Kalpage said, "We have come here to uphold the cricketing image of our country as World champions and at any cost we will try our best. Most of the members of the team are young and emerging players who will give their best in the tournament to get themselves selected in national team in future."

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Bangladesh warm up well

Sports Reporter

The Bangladesh national team warmed up well before the imminent third SAARC cricket tournament defeating the BCB XI by four-wickets in an exhibition match at the BKSP ground in Savar yesterday.

Bangladesh, one of the participants in the four-nation regional tourney which will commence at the Dhaka Stadium from tomorrow, facing a paltry BCCB total of 100, rattled up 101 for six with vice-captain Aminul Islam Bulbul notching up an unbeaten 28.

The dapper right-hander apart, opener Athar Ali Khan scored a painstaking 16 off 75 balls. While Jahangir Alam and one-down Sanwar Hossain chipped in ten runs apiece. Skipper Akram Khan fell for only six.

Earlier, sent in to bat in the morning on a tricky artificial turf, the BCCB eleven could manage only 100 before being bundled out in 33.3 overs.

After a disastrous start with the shadow national team reeling at 49/7, the face-saving total was built around a gritty unbeaten 30 from discarded national off-spinner Sheikh Salahuddin and a rapidfire 24-ball 20 by seamer Zakir Hossain. Together the two tallenders shared 33 runs for the eighth wicket.

Zakir Hossain of Abahani and Hasibul Hossain Shanto, who were responsible for the BCCB debacle, shared five wickets. Shanto took three, 33 in his nine overs while Zakir, the young new-ball bowler, celebrated his maiden call to the national team with impressive figures of 9-2-12-2. Besides, left-arm spinner Mohamed Rafique chipped in with two for 13.

Bangladesh, who finished runners-up in the second SAARC cricket tournament in 1994, will take on fancied Pakistan A in the inaugural match of the 10-day meet. The invitational tourney also includes defending champions India A and Sri Lanka A, who arrived in the capital yesterday.

Five GMs for United Insurance intl' chess meet

Sports Reporter

Five Grand Masters including Niaz Mursheed of Bangladesh have confirmed their participation in the third United Insurance Grand Masters chess tournament which begins in the city on Thursday.

This was informed by Matiur Rahman, the joint-secretary of Bangladesh Chess Federation (BCF) while briefing the local press about the preparation of the 14-player meet at the NSC conference room yesterday. BCF vice-president AR Khan and N Ahmad, additional general manager of sponsors United Insurance Company, were also present on the occasion.

Niaz apart, Russian GM Sergei Tiviakov (2615), Uzbek GM Alexander Nenashev (2580), Tithuanian GM V Malauskas (2530) and English GM Jim Plasket are the four other Grand Masters who have ensured their participation in the 13-round Swiss league meet scheduled to end on March seven. Besides, IM Naganan An Dong of Vietnam and Indian IM Parvenu Topsy have also enrolled their names for the meet.

Talking to the press, Matiur said that two local International Masters --Ziaur Rahman and Rezaat-bin-Sattar will also feature in the meet and two other players-- Saifuddin Lavlu and Kayes Hasan -- have been kept as stand-by to fill up any gap made due to absence of the foreign players.

Bangladesh Chess Federation has approved a budget of Taka eleven lakh for the meet most of which will be paid by sponsors United Insurance Company Limited including US \$ 4,000 as prize money. The five Grand Masters joining the meet will also receive appearance money.

The draw of the competition will be held tomorrow at the federation office while the opening ceremony will be held at the "Jalsha Ghar" of Hotel Purbani on February 20 at 2pm. All the matches of the tournament will be held at the conference room of National Sports Council.

BEXIMCO tennis on

Sports Reporter

The BEXIMCO eleventh Bangladesh international junior tennis championship got off to a sedate start at the Ramna Tennis Complex yesterday.

The inaugural day of the week-long meet, an annual event in the calendar of the Bangladesh Tennis Federation (BTF), witnessed sixteen first round boys singles matches were decided at eight different courts of the renovated national tennis complex. But what was missing throughout the day is the lack of any competitive approach. Although the opening was duly solemnised with the State Minister for Youth and Sports Obaidul Qader inaugurating the meet amidst a hosts of BTF officials. Balloons were released and wise words delivered for the improvement of the game in the country, but our boys, apart from a few, looked as depleted as ever.

Besides, it seemed the tourney failed to attract too many foreign countries apart from a handful of players from neighbouring India. Although the organisers had earlier claimed that eight nations were to taking part in the meet, it finally dropped down to five including hosts Bangladesh. And surprisingly, the BTF's claim for the presence of the United States in the fray, hardly gives the real picture.

Naomi Cookson, the only player of the United States in the meet, has been residing in Bangladesh along with her family for the last couple of years. But the young girl is better known in local sports for her involvement in domestic swimming competition.

With Indians making the most of the first day's play where seven of their boys quali-



State Minister for Youth and Sports Obaidul Qader inaugurates the BEXIMCO eleventh Bangladesh International junior tennis tournament at the Ramna Tennis Complex yesterday.



The Sri Lanka A team, who came here yesterday to take part in the four-nation third SAARC cricket tournament, on their arrival at the Zia International Airport. — Star photo

THUMBNAIL SKETCHES

- Ruwan Kalpage:** Born on 19/02/1970 in Kandy. Educated at St Anthony's College Katugastota. Left-hand batsman. Off-spinner and good fielder. Plays for Bloomfield C&C. Toured Australia, New Zealand, India, Pakistan and Sharjah. He represented Sri Lanka 'A' team against West Indies 'A' in 1996.
- Mohamed Naveed Nawaz:** Born on 22/08/1973 in Colombo. Educated at D S Senanayake College, Colombo. Right-hand batsman and good fielder. Plays for Bloomfield C&C. Toured in 1992 and 1993 with Sri Lanka youth team to England and Malaysia respectively. He represented Sri Lanka 'A' team against West Indies 'A' in 1996.
- Uplu Chandana:** Born on 07/05/1972 in Galle. Educated at Mahinda College, Galle. Six-A-Side team which toured Hong Kong in 1996. He represented Sri Lanka 'A' team against West Indies 'A' in 1996.
- Chaminda Mendis:** Born on 28/12/1968 in Moratuwa. Educated at Prince of Wales College Moratuwa. Right-hand batsman and good fielder. Plays for Colombo Colts C.C. Played for Sri Lanka under-19 team in 1987. Toured Australia to participate in the Youth World Cup in 1988. Toured New Zealand with the National side in 1995. Toured Sharjah to represent Sri Lanka 'A' in 1995. He was a member of the Sri Lanka 'A' team against West Indies 'A' in 1996.
- Waruna Waragoda:** Born on 18/02/1971 in Colombo. Educated at D S Senanayake College, Colombo. Left-hand batsman and good fielder. Plays for Tamil Union C&C. Toured Sharjah with Sri Lanka 'A' team against West Indies 'A' in 1996.
- Mohamed Naveed Nawaz:** Born on 22/08/1973 in Colombo. Educated at D S Senanayake College, Colombo. Right-hand batsman and good fielder. Plays for Bloomfield C&C. Toured in 1992 and 1993 with Sri Lanka youth team to England and Malaysia respectively. He represented Sri Lanka 'A' team against West Indies 'A' in 1996.
- Saman Jayantha:** Born on 26/01/1974, in Bhilapitiya. Educated at Dharmasoka MV's Ambalangoda. Plays for Singha SC. Right-hand batsman and good fielder. Toured Malaysia in 1993, with the Sri Lanka under-19 team. He represented Sri Lanka 'A' team against West Indies 'A' in 1996.
- Denagamage Jayawardena:** Born on 27/05/1977, Colombo. Educated at Nalanda College, Colombo. Plays for Singha Sports Club. Right-arm medium pace bowler, right-hand batsman and good fielder. Played for Sri Lanka under-19 team in 1993. Sri Lanka under-24 team in 1995 and Sri Lanka 'A' team in 1996.
- Pubudu Dasanayake:** Born on 11/07/1970. Educated at D S Senanayake College, Colombo. Right-hand batsman and wicket keeper. Plays for Bloomfield C&C. Toured Sharjah and India in 1993 with the Sri Lanka team.
- Ranasinghe Wickramaratne:** Born 21/02/1971. Educated at Ananda College, Colombo. Right-hand batsman, opening bowler and good fielder. Plays for Sinhalese Sports Club. He is a member of the Sri Lanka 'A' team in 1991.
- Dulip Kapila Liyanage:** Born on 06/06/1972 in Kalutara. Educated at Kalutara MV, Kalutara. Right-arm fast medium bowler, left-hand batsman & good fielder.
- Don Anurasiri:** Born on 25/02/1966 in Panadura. Educated at Sri Sumangala College, Panadura. Right-hand batsman, slow left-arm bowler and good fielder. Plays for Panadura SC. Toured England, Australia, Sharjah, New Zealand, India and Pakistan with the Sri Lanka team.
- Atukorale Ranjith:** Born on 11/12/1969 in Balapitiya. Educated at Dharmasoka College, Ambalangoda. Right-arm fast medium bowler, right-hand batsman and good fielder. Plays for Ambalangoda Singha SC.
- Mario Villavaranay:** Born on 22/08/1973, in Colombo. Educated at St Peters College, Colombo. Right-hand batsman, right-arm medium pace bowler and good fielder. Plays for Bloomfield C&C. Toured Malaysia in 1993 with Sri Lanka under-19 team. He represented Sri Lanka 'A' team against West Indies 'A' in 1996.
- Rumesh Ratnayake:** Born on 02/01/1964 in Colombo. Educated at St Peters College, Colombo. Right-hand batsman, right arm medium pace bowler and good fielder. Represented Sri Lanka upto 1993. A shoulder injury prevented him from continuing thereafter.
- Roy Dias:** Born 13/9/52 in Colombo. Educated at St Peters College, Colombo. Stylish right-hand batsman and outstanding fielder. Represented Sri Lanka for 15 years and possesses three one-day and two centuries in Tests and one-dayers respectively. Also scored 11 half-centuries in Test cricket and 15 half-centuries in one-dayers. Captained Sri Lanka 'B' against Zimbabwe.

European soccer scene

PARIS, Feb 17: Bobby Robson strengthened his hand as manager of Spanish giants Barcelona on Sunday when he earned the backing of club officials after his side beat Racing Santander 1-0 at the Nou Camp, reports AFP.

The win left Barcelona six points behind league leaders and bitter rivals Real Madrid who could manage only a 2-2 draw at home to Real Betis on Saturday.

After the match, the former England manager pleaded with reporters to help him win over fans who have been largely hostile since he replaced Dutch legend Johan Cruyff last summer.

ITALY

In Italy, European and world champions Juventus needed two goals from Alessandro Del Piero to overcome Perugia 2-1 and stay five points clear of the chasing pack.

Juve's title hopes received a boost when second-placed Sampdoria, unbeaten in seven matches, crashed 2-1 at home to Roma.

Elsewhere, 10-man AC Milan won 2-0 at home to third-placed Bologna with a Demetrio Albertini penalty was followed by a goal from Jesper Blomqvist following some George Weah magic.

Alas, the goal-scoring hero blotted his copybook when he was sent off in the second half.

Oliver Bierhoff, Germany's European Championship hero, came back from an injury absence to find the net in Udinese's 1-0 win over Cagliari — and Chile's Ivan Zamorano and Frenchman Youri Djorkaeff both scored as Inter Milan earned a 2-2 draw at Lazio.

FRANCE

In France, league leaders Monaco stood seven points clear after hammering Le Havre 3-0 on Friday thanks to two goals from Brazilian Sonny Anderson and another from Nigerian Viktor Ikpeba.

Just 24 hours earlier European Cup Winners' Cup holders Paris Saint Germain notched their first league win since November 29 when they scored a 2-1 win at struggling Lens.

Bastia stayed third despite not playing — their match at Caen being postponed because of flooding and Bordeaux went sixth after forcing a 2-2 draw at Guin Gamp.

GERMANY

In Germany Juergen Klinsmann scored twice to put Bayern Munich back on top of the Bundesliga on Saturday with a 3-0 home win against Saint Pauli.

Bayern had been displaced by Dortmund 24 hours earlier after the reigning champions kicked off the second half of the season with an impressive 3-1 home triumph over Bayer Leverkusen.

PORTUGAL

Brazilian Mario Jardel scored a hat-trick to help 10-man Porto to a 4-2 away win over Chaves on Saturday. It kept the champions' 16-points clear on top of the Portuguese First Division.

Second-placed Sporting Lisbon beat Rio Ave 2-0 at home, while Benfica, a further point behind, beat Setubal away by the same margin.

KL preparing for C'wealth Games

KUALA LUMPUR, Feb 17: Malaysia is spending 800 million dollars on making sure next year's Commonwealth Games, the first to be held in Asia, go without a hitch, reports AFP.

The government assured today that everything would be ready for the XVI Commonwealth Games in Kuala Lumpur from September 11 to September 21, 1998.

"We will ensure that no effort is spared towards hosting a successful Commonwealth Games in 1998," Minister of Youth and Sports Muhyiddin Yassin told some 100 members of Commonwealth foreign missions and embassies.

The delegation was briefed on preparations for the Games and toured the 900 million ringgit (360 million dollars) National Sports Complex in Bukit Jalil, on the outskirts of Kuala Lumpur.

The complex houses a 100,000-seat stadium, a smaller indoor stadium, a hockey stadium, swimming complex and Games Village, which is accessible by the light rail transit system to be operational by March next year.

Hashim Mohd Ali, executive chairman of the organisers, said two billion ringgit (800 million dollars) will be invested in the construction and upgrading of venues, support services and other costs.

Hashim, a former chief of the armed forces, said 140,000 hotel rooms would be available for the 60,000 tourists, including 1,500 journalists, who are expected to flock the city for the historic event.

More than 10,000 people are expected to take part in the opening and closing ceremonies of the Games, he added.

Malaysia is the first Asian host in the 68-year history of the Games. Six thousand athletes and 1,500 technical officials from 70 nations will take part in 15 events from September 11 to September 21.

Cricket, hockey, netball and rugby will make their debut at the event. All the events will be held in Kuala Lumpur, except shooting which will take place in the northeastern island of Langkawi.

Kramnik had held a 7.5-point lead with just the last two rounds to play. The match ran for five hours and 45 minutes, with Kasparov — winner of the Las Palmas tournament in the Canary Islands last December — playing his white pieces for 57 moves.

The Linares tournament will also be remembered for a fine performance by Hungary's Judit Polgar, 20, the only woman to figure among the world's best chess players.

She ranked fifth overall, ahead of India's Viswanathan Anand, Kasparov's last challenger for the world title.

Results of the 11th and final round:

- Viswanathan Anand (India) bt Alexei Dreev (Russia).
- Boris Gelfand (Belarus) drew with Alexei Shirov (Spain).
- Pedrag Nikolic (Bosnia) drew with Vassili Ivantchouk (Ukraine).
- Veselin Topalov (Bulgaria) drew with Michael Adams (Britain).
- Judit Polgar (Hungary) bt Jeroen Piket (Netherlands).
- Garry Kasparov (Russia) bt Vladimir Kramnik (Russia).

Bridge Notes

By An Expert

Hands from Bermuda Bowl

Score: Pakistan 95 1/2 U.S.A 99

♠K J 9753
♥AQ 6
♦J
♣73

Board: 51
Dir: South
Vul: E-W

♠A 862
♥10753
♦K 964
♣Q

♠AKJ 854

♠K 854
♥KJ92
♦Q7
♣AKJ 854

Open Room
West: Solodar
East: Levin
South: Fazli

Closed Room
Masood: Meckstroth
Zia: Rodwell

Both North-South pairs did well on Board 51, finding their cheap sacrifice at 5♠ with great dispatch. Both East-West pairs, however, took the push to 3♠, a hair-raising contract that just made with two winning finesses — no swing!

Open Room

The bridge world's expert community has never been able to produce a consensus opinion as to the best treatment of a hand such as west's. Solodar is a member of the "lets" start at the four-level school and so blasted 4♠ immediately. Munir, who could usually expect at least four clubs from Fazli, plunged with 5♠ (4 NT would not have been "unusual" for them). Levin had no way to know who was saying so he forged on with 5♠ as the sound middle-of-the-road action. Even if he'd been able to see Solodar's hand before bidding, it would not have been clear cut to defend 5♠ — it might have been making. Having driven the Americans to the five level, Fazli gave up, hoping to have a shot at setting the contract which was, after all, reached with no certainty.

Munir guessed to lead the ♠A and he continued the suit at trick two. Solodar ducked in dummy and ruffed out South's queen. He drew trumps, took his heart pitch on the ♠K, ruffed dummy's last diamond and led a club. Fazli won and put down

the ♥K Solodar smiled and showed his hand, making five. Score. U.S.A. (E-W) + 650

Closed Room

Rodwell's 2♣ implied a Six-card suit and Masood contented himself with 2♣, the "let's go slowly and not miss a slam, etc." school in action. Meckstroth had a nice leap to 5♠ available with an assist from the system (limited opening with a long suit) and Zia was under tremendous pressure. Unlike Levin, Zia did not know of Masood's extra spade length and theoretically minimal defense. Masood might have held a 5-3-3-2-17-count, for example. Thus his decision to bid 5♠ was an exceptionally difficult one. He then had to sweat out while Masood tried to make it.

Rodwell won his ♠K and switched to a trump. Masood won the ♠K and cashed the ♠Q to test the air. Resignedly he led the ♠J. Meckstroth produced the ♠A ("better," though Masood) and got out with a diamond. Masood went about his business and finally broached the hearts with a finesse for the king. It won. "Better still," thought Masood. No swing.

Score. PAKISTAN (E-W) + 650
Net Score: 0 (0 IMPs)
Score Carried Forward: PAKISTAN 95 1/2 U.S.A 99