



The players and officials of the Bangladesh Railway team, which lifted the Acme Second Division cricket league title beating Orient Sporting Club in the final at the Dhaka Stadium yesterday. —Star photo

Acme Div II cricket Bangladesh Railway lift title

Sports Reporter
Bangladesh Railway lifted the Acme Second Division cricket league title with a 61-run win over Orient SC in the final at the Dhaka Stadium yesterday.

Sent into bat in the morning, Bangladesh Railway piled up an imposing total of 212 for six in their share of 45 overs with their skipper Harun hammering a dazzling half-century.

Harun, who opened the Railway innings, scored a breezy 64 to lay a solid foundation for his team. One-down Haris made 25 while lower middle-order bats Akbar contributed an unbeaten 26 off 34 deliveries.

In reply, Orient SC could manage only 157 before being bundled out in 43 overs. It could have been more humiliating defeat had not a defiant unbeaten 56 from AR Khan pulled them out of the mire to some respectability. Orient were at one stage reeling at 50 for six.

Sumon, the wrecker-in-chief, claimed three wickets for 39 runs in his eight overs while his new-ball partner Kabir took two wickets for only 17 runs in his quota of nine overs.

Nirman cricket BKSP emerge zonal champs

Sports Reporter
Bangladesh Krira Shiksha Protishthan (BKSP) emerged Dhaka Zonal champions of the 15th Nirman schools cricket championship, defeating Maple Leaf International School by 29 runs in the final on the eastern strip at the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium yesterday.

In a low-scoring affair, BKSP, sent in to bat, scored a not-so-impressive 150 before being all out in 38.3 overs. The BKSP total was built around a defiant 63-run stand for the eighth wicket between Moshir and Mizanur. The two lower-order bats, who waggled a long tail, rescued their side from a precarious 63/7 to an eventual match-winning total. Moshir, who later did one better with the cherry claiming three wickets, scored 20 while Mizanur contributed a priceless 26.

For Maple Leaf, new-ball bowler Rashed claimed four wickets for 31 runs while Zaved took three wickets for 24. Joy with two for 20 in his eight economic overs was the other notable wicket-taker for Maple Leaf.

In reply, Maple Leaf were shot out for 121 in 32.5 overs in the face of some accurate bowling from Nizam and Moshir, who evenly shared six wickets among them.

Among the Maple Leaf willow-wielders one-down Nafiz top-scored with a gritty 33 while Navid remained unbeaten on 26-ball 22.

Johansson's first

COPENHAGEN, Mar 17: Swedish fifth seed Thomas Johansson landed his first ATP Tour title when he beat second seeded Czech Martin Damm in the Copenhagen Open final on Sunday, reports Reuter.

Johansson's speed and superb double-handed backhand proved more than a match for Damm giving the Swede a 6-4, 3-6, 6-2 win.

The Swede showed signs of pressure only at 4-4 in the first set after serving four double faults. But the moment passed as he broke the Czech's serve, then secured the set.

Johansson remained outwardly calm and impassive as Damm took the second set, and the young Swede raced ahead in the third, building a 5-1 lead which Damm only managed to slim to 5-2 before Johansson wrapped up the match.

Johansson displayed powerful and consistent serves and his returns have been among the best in the tournament.

The Swede said: "I don't have any ATP ranking points to defend before Wimbledon, so my goal for this year is to get even higher than the top 50."

Bangladesh win first warm-up

Sports Reporter
Bangladesh cricketers began their Malaysia tour on a positive note when they defeated Scotland by a better run-rate in their rain-ruled first warm-up match at the Royal Selangor Club ground in Kuala Lumpur yesterday.

One of the favourites in the 22-nation ICC Trophy, scheduled to begin on March 24, Bangladesh, who will feature in another couple of warm-up matches before the commencement of the qualifying tournament for the next World Cup, scored 70 for the loss of four wickets in 23 overs in reply to the Scotland total of 103 before incessant rain enforcing a premature end of what could have been a one-sided affair.

One-down Sanwar Hossain scored an enterprising 34 off only 38 balls on a dicey wicket for a predictably resounding victory. But in a contrasting style opener Javed Omar Bellim got himself into snail's gear to score a painstaking five runs off 52 balls.

Javed, who opened the innings with Athar Ali Khan, was the last batsman out with Bangladesh tallying 65 in 19 overs. Bangladesh innings was disrupted twice by heavy shower. After the first inter-division of seasonal rain in the 18th over with the scoreboard reading 57/3, Bangladesh were given a revised target of scoring 88 runs in 35 overs.

Earlier, sent into bat in the morning, Scotland could muster only 103 before being all out in 42.5 overs with middle-order bat Williamson notching highest 31 runs for the vanquished.

Experienced Minhazul Abedin Nannu with three for 20 was the most successful among the Bangladeshi bowlers. But it was right-arm seamer Zakir Hossain who returned with fabulous figures of 5.5-4-2-2.

Bangladesh will play their second warm-up match against Holland at the same venue today.

SCOREBOARD

SCOTLAND
D Cowie c K Masood b Athar 16
L Philp c K Masood b Zakir 1
Lockhart b Saiful 3
J Smith b Saiful 0
Salmond c Enamul b Zakir 19
G Williamson b Zakir 31
Davies b Minhazul 2
Bevan run out 2

Result: Bangladesh won by a better run-rate.

Aussies wrap series up

Sports Reporter
Australia beat South Africa by two wickets in the second Test to clinch the three-match series 2-0 on the fourth day at Port Elizabeth yesterday.

The tourists, who needed 270 to win started their hunt on the overnight score of 145 for three and reached home losing eight wickets with dangerous Mark Waugh hitting 116 runs.

Earlier on Sunday, fine bowling by Jason Gillespie and solid batting from Mark Waugh brought Australia back from the prospect of defeat and left them close to victory in the second Test against South Africa.

First, Gillespie snapped up three quick wickets as South Africa collapsed in their second innings from their overnight 83 without loss to 168 all out.

Then, needing 270 to win and an unbeatable 2-0 lead in the three-Test series, Waugh stroked an accomplished 64 not out as Australia ended the third day on 145 for three, just 125 runs short of victory.

The Australia second innings began shakily as both openers, Mark Taylor and Matthew Hayden, were dismissed with only 30 on the board.

Taylor's run of bad form which has now seen him go 18 innings since his last Test 50, continued when he was trapped lbw for 13 by Brian McMillan.

Hayden, who made 14, was the victim of a farcical run out when both he and partner Matthew Elliott ended up sprinting for safety to the same end — leaving bowler Hansie Cronje with the simple task of removing the balls.

But that set up a spirited partnership of 83 between Elliott and Mark Waugh. Elliott was aggression personified as he struck eight boundaries in his 44 before pushing a full toss straight back to left-arm wrist-spinner Paul Adams just before the close.

Mark Waugh was then joined by his brother Steve and completed his 27th Test half-century from 87 balls with eight boundaries and a straight driven six off Adams.

Earlier, Gillespie, who took five for 56 in the first innings, turned the match upside down with his three-wicket burst.

First he bowled Gary Kirsten for 43 and then, after a superb piece of fielding from Greg Blewett had run out Jacques Kallis for two, he picked up the important wickets of Adam Bacher and Daryll Cullinan in successive overs.

Bacher, whose 49 spanned nearly three hours, top-edged a hook straight to Glenn McGrath on the fine leg boundary. In his next over, Gillespie beat Cullinan with a rapid off-cutter to remove him lbw for two. McGrath accounted for Herschelle Gibbs before the last five wickets fell to the spin combination of Shane Warne and Michael Bevan.

Bevan, bowling left-arm wrist-spin, removed Brian McMillan and Hansie Cronje either side of tea and later picked up the wicket of Allan Donald to finish with three for 18. Warne removed Shaun Pollock and Adams.

If Australia are successful with their run chase they will easily surpass the previous highest fourth innings total made to win a match at St George's Park — 215 for five by South Africa against New Zealand in 1953-54.

The highest fourth innings score in a losing cause was 273 by South Africa against New Zealand in 1961-62.

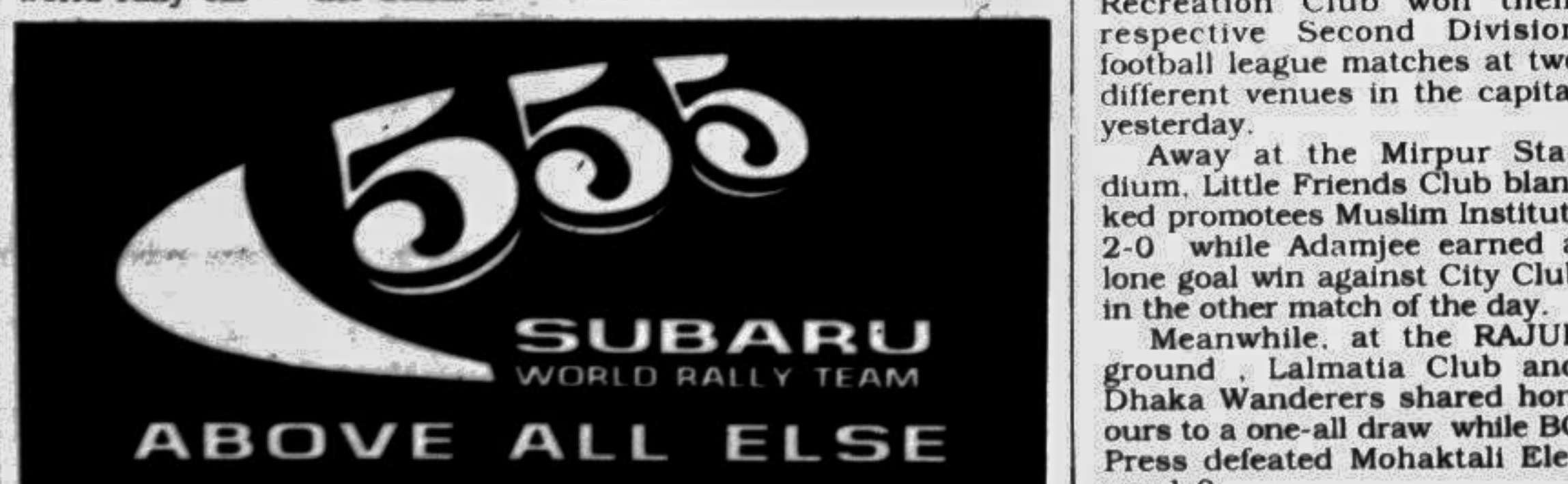
Subaru reaping rich

Impreza 555 WRC97.
With only two cars registering for points in the Manufacturers' Championship in 1997, this season-long commitment by all three drivers, to testing as well as events, is providing a critical platform for Subaru to bid for their third consecutive Manufacturers' title.

"The tactics of using all three drivers not only strengthens our performance on the events, but is a great asset when it comes to testing," commented David Richards, Team Director of the 555 Subaru World Rally Team.

The official driver line-up for the next five World Championship rounds will therefore be as follows, with the remaining rounds issued as the season progresses.

Rally of Portugal: Colin McRae & Kenneth Eriksson Rally of Spain: Colin McRae & Piero Liatti Rally of Corsica: Colin McRae & Piero Liatti Rally of Argentina: Colin McRae & Kenneth Eriksson Rally of Greece: Colin McRae & Kenneth Eriksson



Pushkin resigns, Bari to follow

Sports Reporter
The general secretary of the Bangladesh Hockey Federation (BHF) Shamsul Bari made up his mind to quit the office while one of his deputy Jahidul Islam Pushkin had already tendered his resignation last night following a disgraceful incident at the second semifinal of the Karnaphuli Garden City Club cup hockey tournament yesterday.

An umpire was mercilessly beaten up by the players in the second semifinal between Abahani Krira Chakra and Mariner Young's, enforcing an injunction on play after only 25 minutes of the match. The unholy practice took place following the hooliganism in the first semifinal between Mohammedan Sporting Club and Usha Krira Chakra on Sunday.

After citing the happenings of the last couple of days it seemed that there were hardly any control over the unruly players and spectators, who in a fatal exhibition of swooping on the umpires left Ramiz and Mir Monwar injured. Among the two, Monwar was severely beaten up by the players of Mariners and immediately taken to hospital on critical conditions.

"This is unbelievable. I have never seen such horrible thing in my life", said Shamsul Bari to this reporter late last night. While confirming the resignation of Pushkin, a joint-secretary of BHF, the long-standing general secretary of BHF added that he had already prepared his own and would submit it to the president today.

"I had a firm belief that hockey in this country will be profited most with the installation of the artificial turf, but to my sheer disappointment the evil has gripped the arena", said Bari. Besides, he added that temporary solution like penalising a player for his wrong-doing was not enough to save hockey in our country.

"Where supporters throw stones in sensitive areas like the artificial turfs and the officials along with their players do whatever hell they like to do, you simply cannot expect a single day without trouble", remarked Bari with a tinge of resentment.

"Anyway, I deemed it as our failure that we could not ensure the security of umpires and refrain the players from this sort of distasteful and disgraceful act", said Shamsul Bari.

Sidhu's maiden double ton

Sports Reporter
A slow but steady 201 by opener Navjot Singh Sidhu helped India to reach 436, a lead of 140 runs, in their first innings of the second Test against West Indies at the Queens Park Oval, according to Star Sport monitored here last night.

The hosts started their second innings shortly after lunch and were 18 without loss when this report was filed.

Nat'l women's qualifying chess

Sports Reporter
Nazrana Khan Eva joined the other three in the crowded top slot in the qualifying round of the national women's chess championship on completion of the third round at the chess room of the National Sports Council yesterday.

Eva, smarting under her disappointing draw in the preliminary round, returned to winning ways at the expense of Faizunnesa Pali for her second win. With this win, Eva joined Masuda, Jahanara Haq and Zakia Sultan atop the table—all having collected two and a half point.

Masuda and Jahanara, who had earlier won their previous two games, settled for a draw while Zakia lost her first half point when Afsana parveen Nira forced her to accept a draw.

DU football

Sports Reporter
Department of Geology trounced Applied Chemistry by three goals to nil in yesterday's Dhaka University inter-department soccer championship clash at the Central Sports Ground.

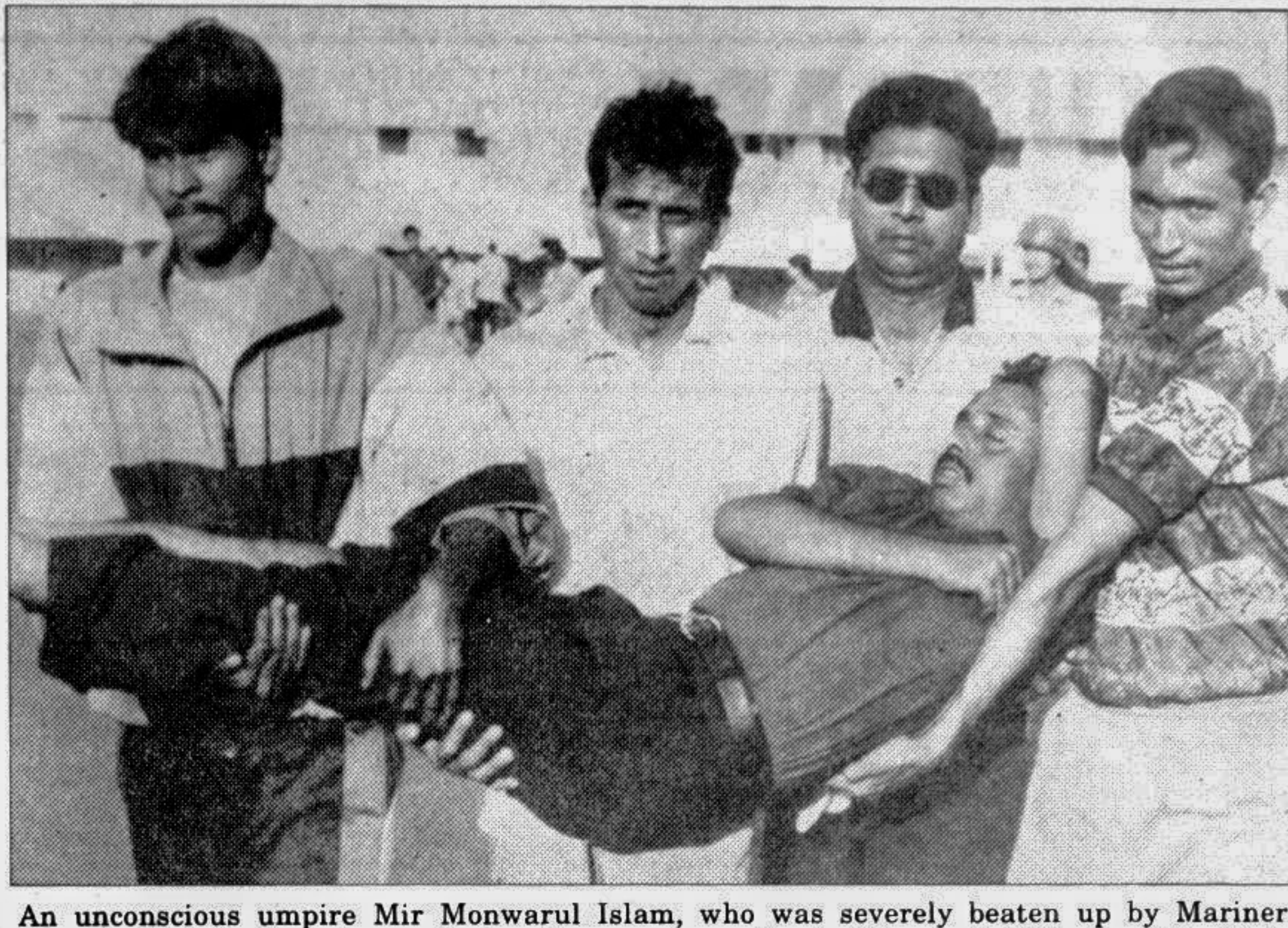
For the winners Nolo Chandra Ghosh scored twice while Ashfaq added one.

Div II soccer

Sports Reporter
Little Friends Club, Adamjee SCC, BG Press Sports and Recreation Club won their respective Second Division football league matches at two different venues in the capital yesterday.

Away at the Mirpur Stadium, Little Friends Club blanked promotees Muslim Institute 2-0 while Adamjee earned a lone goal win against City Club in the other match of the day.

Meanwhile, at the RAJUK ground Lalmita Club and Dhaka Wanderers shared honours to a one-all draw while BG Press defeated Mohaktali Eleven 1-0.



An unconscious umpire Mir Monwarul Islam, who was severely beaten up by Mariner Young's Club hockey players during the second semifinal of Karnaphuli Garden City Club Cup tournament yesterday, being carried off the ground by federation officials. —Star photo

Hooliganism humbles again

Sports Reporter
It took 20 minutes for the other umpire, Maksudur Rahman, to step in and stop the match prematurely with the help of the police.

Talking to the press at the dressing room, a frightened Maksudur Rahman said, "We blame Mariners for the incident because they rescued Monu. After this episode umpires have to think about their own safety before setting foot here."

Rehanul Karim Babul, the secretary of the tournament committee, was found more worried about the future of the tournament. "I don't know how to condemn this incident. The tournament cannot go on," he said.

Meanwhile, umpire Mir Monwarul Islam was admitted to a clinic in Mirford last, according to Bangladesh Hockey Federation officials.

Earlier, Mohammedan Sporting Club beat Usha Krira Chakra 3-2 in the day's first match.

In the remaining 31 minutes of the match, which was postponed on Saturday after 39 minutes of play with Mohammedans leading 2-1, strikers Siam-e-Noor of Mohammedans and Kamal of Usha netted one goal each in the 42nd and 54th minutes respectively.

USA crush Canada

PALO ALTO, California, Mar 17: Eddie Pope nodded home a deflected corner kick and Eric Wynalda converted a penalty chance, sparking the United States past Canada 3-0 here Sunday in a World Cup qualifying match, reports AFP.

The result ended a seven-game winless streak by the US team, including their goalless draw at Jamaica two weeks ago in their Confederation of North and Central American and Caribbean Football final-round opener.

"We played some brilliant soccer early on, then we let them get into their game," US coach Steve Sampson said. "We got out rhythm in the second half."

Wynalda, the leading US scorer, converted the penalty in the eighth minute and Pope, coming back from an injury after missing the Jamaica trip, headed home the second goal six minutes later to solidify the advantage.

Ernie Stewart finished the scoring in the 89th minute, racing down the right side, taking a pass from Michael Mason and flicking home a shot into the lower left corner of the goal.

Canada's twin defeats puts them at an early deficit in the chase for three positions in the finals field for the 1998 World Cup in France.

"We knew these two games would be tough. We wanted to provide a base for us to build on," Canadian coach Bob Lenarduzzi said.

The United States matched Mexico atop the group with four points. The Mexicans opened by blanking Canada 4-0 and followed with a goalless draw against Costa Rica.

The squad had lost four and drawn three in its past seven starts but snapped its skid before heading to Costa Rica next week.

"You will see a more cohesive unit next week in Costa Rica," Sampson said. "We will have more time together. That's what I will take for us to get better."

Stewart will miss the Costa Rica game after a second yellow card in as many games.

Shooters earn distinction

Bangladesh shooting team bagged 23 medals, including nine golds, eight silvers and six bronzes in the just concluded second South Asian Championship held in New Delhi, reports BSS.

Sabrina Sultana and Saiful Alam Rinki clinched four and three golds respectively both in individual and team events.

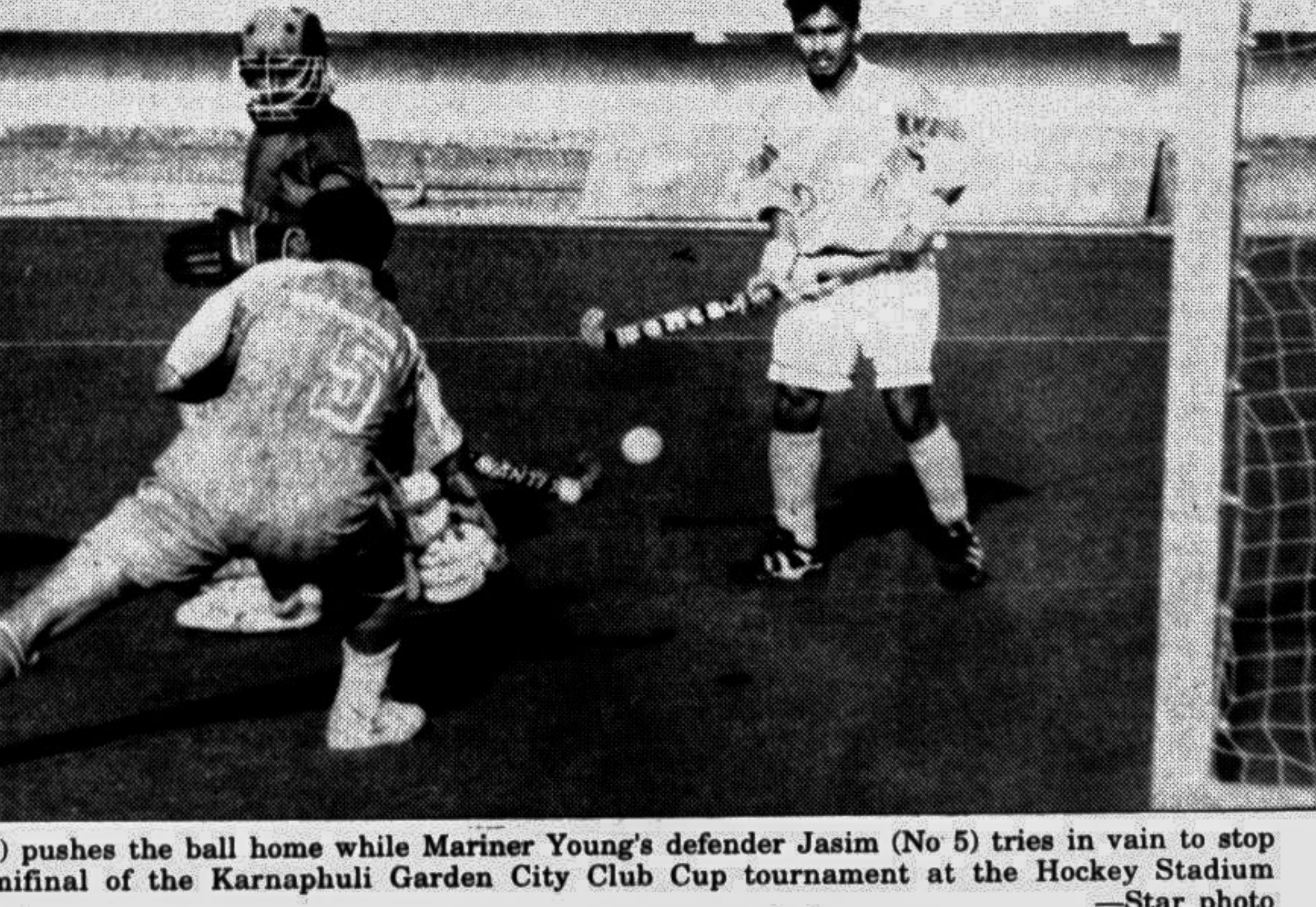
This is for the first time Bangladesh earned such honour.

The team participated in 11 events.

Boat race on March 26

Bangladesh Rowing Federation will organise a boat race on March 26 at Pagla Ghat of the river Buriganga on the occasion of the Independence Day, reports BSS.

The teams who are interested to take part in the race have been requested to enlist their names at the rowing federation office at the National Stadium No-1 by March 20.



Abahani forward Khokon (L) pushes the ball home while Mariner Young's defender Jasim (No 5) tries in vain to stop him during the second semifinal of the Karnaphuli Garden City Club Cup tournament at the Hockey Stadium yesterday. —Star photo