

**Agrani, Arambagh share points**

Sports Reporter

Agrani Bank and Arambagh Krira Sangha split points as the Premier Division football league match between the two teams ended in a goalless draw at the Mirpur Stadium yesterday.

In a sudden second match of the day, both teams appeared to be contented in remaining at their own half and quite expectedly finished the match without scoring.

With the draw, the bankers raised their points tally to six from as many matches while Arambagh remained just ahead of tail-enders having collected four points on completion of their sixth match.

Earlier, in the day's first match, Mirpur Chalanika recorded their third victory in the First Division defeating East End Club 2-1.

With yesterday's win, Mirpur Chalanika joined East End at the third spot of the ten-team league with each having mustered eleven points from seven matches.

There will be two First Division matches played today at the same venue. In the first match, Badda Jagarani Sangsad will meet Bangladesh Boys Club at 2:30 pm while leaders BRTC, who have 14 points from six matches, will pit against trailers Shantinagar Club in the other match.

**Div III cricket qualifiers**

Sports Reporter

Dilkusha Sporting Club, Islampur Cricket Club, Golapbagh Jubo Sangha and Abu Taher Smriti Sangha won their respective Lotus-Komal Third Division cricket league qualifiers held at different city venues yesterday.

**BRIEF SCORES**

**DILKUSHA SC:** 244 all out in 35 overs (Extras 66, extras 55, Rashid 35, Badshah 21; Sumon 2/46)  
**MILL BARRACK CC:** 52 all out in 22.4 overs (Extras 25, Pasha 15; Sumon 3/16, Babu 3/19, Mithu 2/5)  
**Result:** Dilkusha won by 192 runs at the Mirpur Outer Stadium.

**ISLAMPUR CC:** 167 all out in 32 overs (Extras 50, Tawfik 22, Rubel 19; Prince 19; Tuhin 4/36)  
**THE CRICKETERS:** 109 all out in 27.4 overs (Extras 39, Elahi 28, Gilman 16; Topu 3/17, Shimu 3/17)  
**Result:** Islampur CC won by 58 runs at the Mahakhali T&T ground.

**GOLAPBAGH JS:** 189 all out in 34.3 overs (Asit 48, extras 46, Raja 29, Hanif 26, Rafique 25; Hasan 4/23)  
**SHAPLA BS:** 136 all out in 28.2 overs (Extras 37, Bikash 28, Mainul 19, Enamul 18; Bipul 2/4)  
**Result:** Golapbagh won by 53 runs at the Dhanmondi Club ground.

**ABU TAHER SS:** 129 all out in 34.2 overs (Sumon 32, extras 32, Imon 18, Shoib 15; Munna 3/17, Nasim 3/28)  
**CHAWKBAZAR YMC:** 114 all out in 31.4 overs (Munna 43, extras 22, Apu 17; Rajan 3/14, Parvez 3/30)  
**Result:** Abu Taher Smriti Sangha won by 15 runs at the Uttara Friends Club ground.

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**BCB cancels NZ tour**

Sports Reporter

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) cancelled the New Zealand tour of the national team yesterday in the wake of a visa hassle by the High Commission office of the host country in New Delhi.

In an emergency meeting at the BCB office last night, the board president Saber Hossain Chowdhury took the sad-yet-just decision following the New Zealand High Commission's refusal to grant visas to three members of Bangladesh team including the tour manager Lutfar Rahman Makhan. Lutfar, who is also the chief selector, was declared *persona non grata* by the highly unfriendly New Zealand authorities along with seamer Monjurul Islam and batsman Azam Iqbal, the two young cricketers who were called up for the first time in the national team.

The New Zealand High Commission, which had been stalling the issuance of visa to the 21-member Bangladesh team for the last seven days, took the ungodly step for some unknown reasons. Although the New Zealand Cricket (NZC) sent the formal invitation letter and others necessary documents to the BCB, they were not received in New Delhi.

Player payments remained the crucial barrier in a dispute with the Australian Cricket Board on Wednesday, as both sides admitted major issues were left unresolved by a seven-hour meeting, reports AP.

The Australian Cricketers' Association and the ACB met following a three-week stand-off. However, the issues of player payments and ACA representation on the ACB will be discussed Thursday.

"We've only played the first nine (holes)," said ACA adviser James Erskine. "The big issue is going to be the money. They're taking a reasonably hard line on the money and so is the ACA, so if there is a clash tomorrow there is a clash."

Erskine said the ACA had still not ruled out strike action but said if the ACB was as cooperative tomorrow on the financial issues as they were on the non-financial issues, then such action would be avoided.

The major breakthrough Wednesday was the ACB allowing players to have a say in match schedules, while agreement was also struck over pension insurance, class of travel for matches and player career training.

ACA president Tim May was pleased his association would be involved in programming and said the board now had a better understanding of the ACA's role.

"I think we've clarified our stance today and they took that in good faith," May said.

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**ACB versus ACA Dispute yet to be dissolved**

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**Saudis book WC berth**

Sports Reporter

Saudi Arabia joined South Korea on road to France as the Arabians qualified for their second consecutive appearance in the World Cup finals.

The ticket to France '98 for the desert kingdom was confirmed yesterday when they beat hosts Qatar by a lone goal to emerge Asian Zone Group A champions in Doha.

Substitute Al-Shirwani struck the glorious goal early in the second half to help the Saudis record their fourth win and take an unassailable lead in the group with highest 14 points from eight matches.

The result left second placed Iran to lock their horns for a play-off match against Japan in Malaysia on November 16. The winners will earn the third available berth from Asia for the 32-team final.

**GROUP A STANDINGS**

Team	M	W	D	L	GF	GA	PTS
Saudi Arabia	8	4	2	2	8	6	14
Iran	8	3	3	2	13	8	12
China	8	0	2	3	7	10	11
Qatar	8	3	1	4	11	14	10
Kuwait	8	2	2	4	7	8	8

Saber however promptly sent a letter to the chairman of NZC stating that Bangladesh would not avail the tour even if the whole team members are allowed. "It has been a very sensitive issue indeed and we are very much embarrassed the way we were treated," Saber is reported to have mentioned in his faxed message last night.

Bangladesh was scheduled to leave today for a month-long tour to feature in a series of first class matches against different local selections. The first of which was slated for November 16.

**Nat'l TT Dec 18**

Sports Reporter

The six-day long United Commercial Bank Limited (UCBL) 22nd national table tennis championships, organised by Bangladesh Table Tennis Federation (BTTF), will begin in the capital from December 18, says a press release.

Interested districts and other organisations have been asked to complete their entry formalities by December 10.

**IU cricket**

From IU Correspondent

KUSHTIA, Nov 12: Dawah and Islamic Studies and Applied Science and Technology departments won their respective inter-department cricket tournament matches of the Islamic University here today.

Department of Dawah and Islamic Studies registered a 3-wicket victory over Al-Quran and Islamic Studies.

In the other match, Applied Science and Technology beat Arabic Language and Literature Department by 12 runs.

**WACA left in the lurch**

PERTH, Nov 12: The curator (groundsman) at the WACA Ground here dropped a bombshell Tuesday when he walked out only nine days before the second cricket Test between Australia and New Zealand, reports AFP.

The resignation of David Crane, 54, was confirmed by Western Australian Cricket Association (WACA) chief executive Chris Smith, a former England Test batsman.

Smith said preparation of the Test pitch would be taken over by assistant curator Jack Lewis, 51, and another ground staff member, Rowan Matthews, 33, a wicket specialist.

**Div II h'ball**

Sports Reporter

West Jatrabari Krira Chakra registered a huge 26-9 victory over Mansoor Sporting Club in one of the two Ashraf Real Estate Second Division handball league matches played at the court adjacent to Dhaka Stadium yesterday.

In the other match, Bani-anagar Sports Club defeated Azampur Samaj Kalyan Sangha 24-12.

**TODAY'S MATCHES**

Bani-anagar SC vs Mansoor SC (2:15 pm)  
 West Jatrabari KC vs Azampur SKS (3:15 pm)

**President's Cup snooker**

The Dhaka Club President's Cup snooker championship reached the quarter-final stage, with four matches being decided yesterday, says a press release.

Dhaka Club's Syed Mahboob comprehensively outplayed his teammate J Karim Shipar 4-1.

A B Chowdhury of Engineers Club defeated young A K Chowdhury of Dhaka Billiards Centre 4-2.

**Inter-college & hall women's h'ball from today**

Sports Reporter

Shamsunnahar Hall of Dhaka University take on Badrunnissa College in the inaugural match as the Delta Life Insurance inter-college and hall women's handball tournament begins at the Sultana-Kamal Women Sports Complex in Dhanmondi this afternoon under the auspices of Bangladesh Handball Federation (BHF).

A total of 16 teams, split into four groups for the first round, are participating in the meet sponsored by Green Delta Insurance Company.

The winners of each group will qualify for the semifinals scheduled for November 20 with the final for the following day.

A press briefing was held at the NSC conference room yesterday in this connection.

BHF vice president and chairperson of the tournament committee Mrs Hamida Ali, tournament secretary Mousum Ali, BHF general secretary Asaduzzaman Khan, and Azadur Rahman Khan, vice-president of Green Delta Insurance Company, were present.

**33 refs for France '98**

ZURICH, Nov 12: The number of referees officiating at next year's World Cup will increase from 28 in 1994 to 33, FIFA said on Tuesday, reports Reuters.

They will handle 64 matches, compared to the 24 of officials who were in charge of the 52 games in USA '94.

The names of the referees along with 34 linesmen will be announced on February 2.