



Zia Smriti cricket

From Our Correspondent

RAJSHAHI, Jan 13: Rajshahi Upashahar Housing Estate Club defeated Eleven Stars Club by six wickets in the second round of the 10th Shaheed Zia Smriti cricket tournament today at Rajshahi Government College playground.

Eleven Stars batted first winning the toss and collected 109 runs for six wickets in 22 overs.

Rashed scored 38 runs.

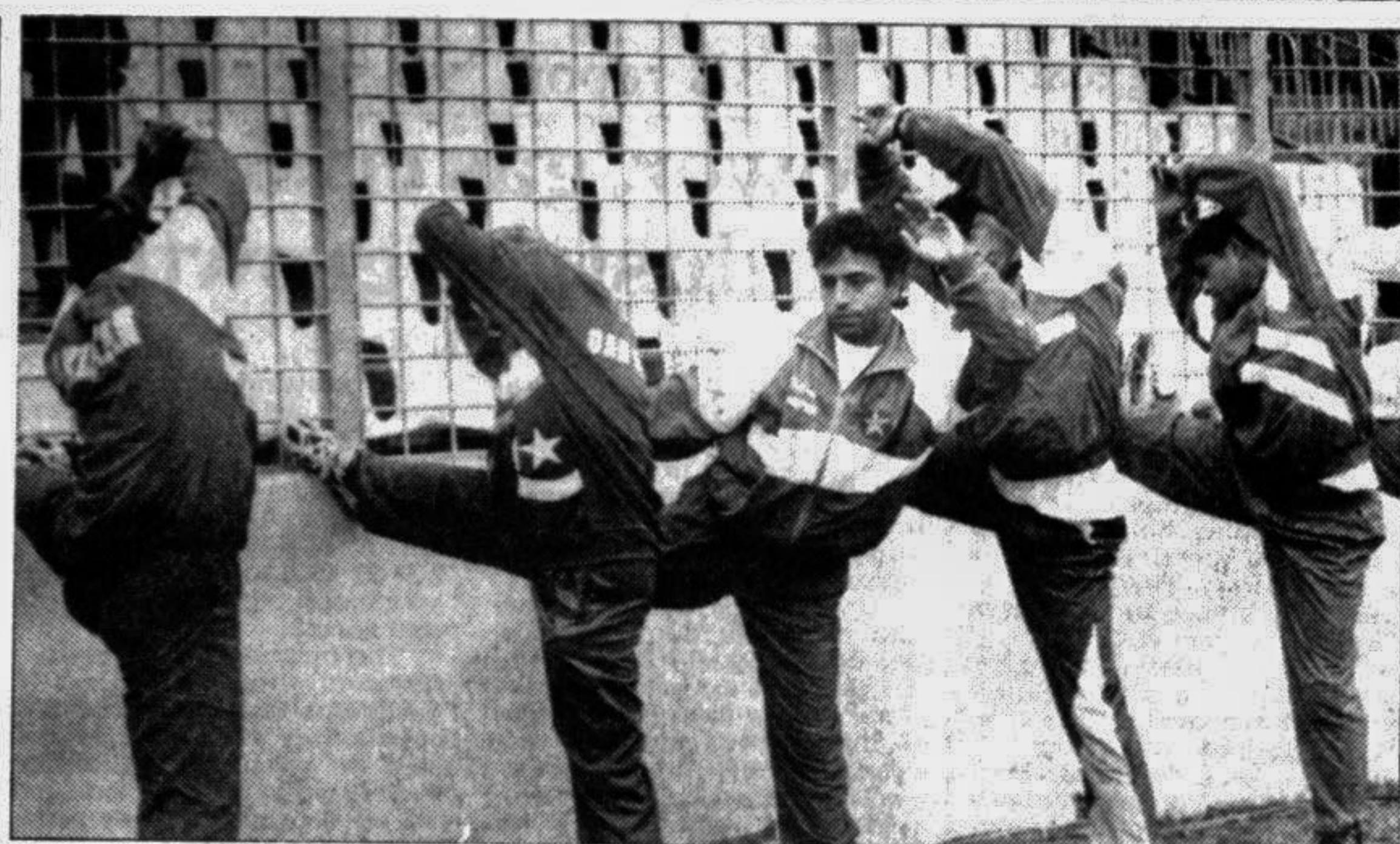
In reply, Housing Estate made 110 runs for four wickets in 20 overs.

Sony and Tomal bagged 38 and 23 runs.

In the second match of the day at the same venue, Vatapara Cricket Club defeated Shekher Chalk Sporting Club by five wickets.

Winning the toss, Shekher Chalk batted first and collected 112 runs for all in 24.2 overs.

In reply, Vatapara made 114 runs for five wickets in 18 overs.



LIMBERING UP: Members of the Pakistan team (L) led by skipper Rashid Latif (far right) do some stretching exercises while Indian captain Mohammad Azharuddin (2nd from left) fine tunes his reflexes at the Dhaka Stadium yesterday. The two sides meet in the first of the three-match Independence Cup finals today.

— Star photo

Facts on first final

Sports Reporter

TODAY'S PITCH
The first of the three-match Coca-Cola Independence Cup finals between India and Pakistan today will be played on the western strip of the Dhaka Stadium.

This is one of the four pitches which have been prepared under the guidance of South African Expert Philip Russell. Laying of these pitches began in June last year after the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) had earned the right to stage following it at the big bowl the ICC Trophy success.

According to Wahidul Ghani, a senior groundsman, the pitch is expected to behave more or less similar to those which have been used so far. He hoped there would be plenty of runs given the weather condition remain same as on Tuesday.

MEN IN WHITE

Doug Cowie of New Zealand and Russell Tiffin of Zimbabwe will act as umpires for the game.

Rudi Koertzen of South Africa, the other official designated for the tourney by the International Cricket Council is



TENDULKAR WILL OPEN

Sachin Tendulkar will open the Indian innings.

According to skipper Azharuddin, Sachin, who hammered a swashbuckling 67 off just 44 balls against Pakistan Sunday,

will open along with left-handed Sourav Ganguly.

GANGULY LOOKING FORWARD

Saurav Ganguly, the Prince of Calcutta who did not score runs in their two previous matches, wants to entertain the Dhaka crowd with his brilliant drives today.

Talking to this correspondent during a practice session at the Dhaka Stadium, he said, "I will obviously try my best because I know the people here want to see me batting which I have not done in the two games."

CONTRASTING

When all the other Pakistan players were jogging together at the Dhaka Stadium yesterday afternoon before going to the nets, two of their illustrious teammates Mushtaq Ahmed and Inzamamul Haq were far behind.

It was interesting to observe the combination of the tallest and the shortest players of the team running together having apparently the same attitude of dodging the physical hardship.

Young Pegasus Club and Kalindi Krira Chakra won their respective Acme Second Division cricket league matches played at different city venues yesterday.

Young Pegasus recorded a seven-wicket victory over East End Club at the Uttara Friends Club ground while Kalindi Krira Chakra beat Dhanmondi Pragati Boys Club by four wickets at the Mahakali T&T ground.

Khulna cricket
KHULNA, Jan 13: Panchabithi Krira Chakra defeated Padmalot Krira Chakra by 59 runs in the Second Division cricket league played at Khulna University ground here today.

It was a one match team

Rubab A Khan

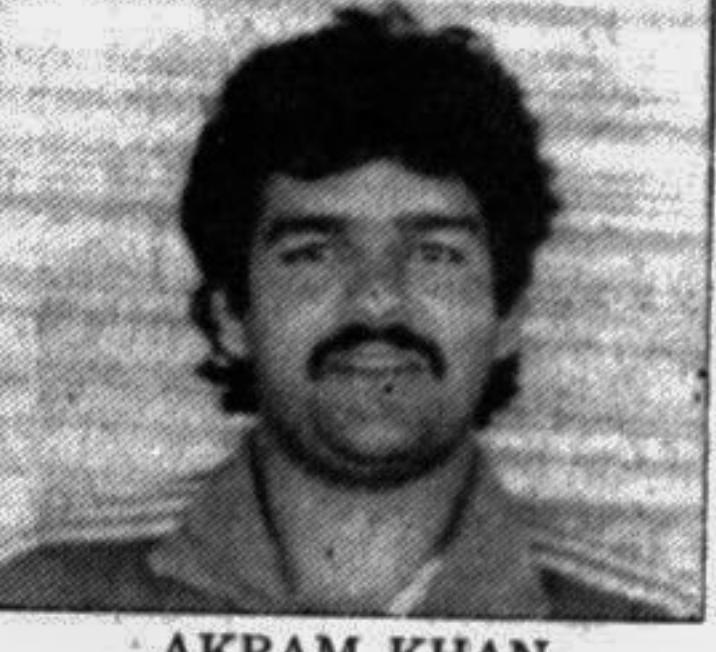
Bangladesh cricket team once again proved that it was a one match team, coaching and goading notwithstanding.

How many times the team did it with aplomb was a matter of guess and judging by its recent performances it can safely be said in near future the record keeping computer will have to be upgraded with more powerful Ram and added megabyte to keep track with the happenings.

The recent disasters in Colombo, Kenya and New Zealand did not work as eye-openers as the eyelids were too heavy with dreams that normally did not have any resemblance with reality. In some matches 50 overs turned out to be overburdened, four days a drag and a chasing total of 200 runs as tall as the Sears Tower. The most fanatic of supporters turned purple as he discussed national cricket in any circles. It was one thing to play Papua New Guinea (PNG) and another to play Pakistan, it was one thing to play Ireland and another to play India. But who was going to tell them? Who was going to convince them? Who was going to keep track with the happenings?

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AKRAM KHAN

this noble game, they obviously took the thousands of cricket lovers to be fools of the highest order. With this quality of cricket no amount of lobbying or receptions or cocktails for Dalmiya and company was going to take us anywhere. On the contrary, they might have a second thought about our status if we did not improve but continued to behave like the sick team of international

cricket.

Once we thought our strong point was our batting. But look at the two scoreboards. It was absolutely proven that it was not so. The top batsmen performed miserably against the medium pacers of India and then against the Pakistani spinners. On both occasions the captain, who was supposed to lead from the front, failed abjectly on home soil. Was he going to do better in front of an unfriendly (if not hostile) crowd on foreign soil? Much to the surprise of the fans the team did rather well in bowling and fielding, for a change.

True, we played against two top teams of world cricket against whom we did whatever we could but that was not going to take our cricket anywhere. We should consider ourselves lucky to have played against these giants, but if we could not at least match them, if not surpass them, then possibly we would be doing harm to our cricket in the long run.

The cricket bosses should keep their eyes open, analyse everything logically and chart their future course of action accordingly. Simply playing to the gallery or acting on emotion was not going to improve the game of cricket in Bangladesh.

The writer is a contributor to The Daily Star.

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