

AB Bank TT

Armanitola JS, Inter Sports Club, Brothers Union and Biman Junior won their respective matches by straight sets in the AB Bank Metropolis Senior Division table tennis league at the NSC wooden floor gymnasium yesterday, reports UNB.

Armanitola JS overpowered Armanitola Junior as Mustafa beat Mahub 21-16, 21-16. Tuhin outplayed Nabi 21-16, 21-23, 23-21 and Manas defeated Abd 21-10, 21-6.

Inter Sports dumped Wari with Shahed beating Mithu 21-9, 21-14, Akhlaque defeating Tamim 21-19, 21-18 and Monir outplaying Taher 21-15, 21-13.

Brothers Union got the better of Swambagh Boys as Badal defeated Babu 21-8, 21-8, Rubel beat Anup 21-7, 21-14 and Babu outplayed Jewel 21-14, 21-14. Biman Junior disposed off Ajax SC with Edison beating Naushad 21-9, 21-11, Pappu defeating Shahin 21-12, 21-11 and Goutam outplaying Milu 21-1, 21-7.

In the First Division league, Swambagh TTS, Dilkusha SC, Mohammedpur Boys and Utara Club beat their rivals at the same venue today.

Swambagh TTS overpowered Angels Club by 3-2 sets. Mukta beat Sabuj 21-13, 21-12, Nasir lost to Shawkat 21-12, 21-16, Mushtaq defeated Bulbul 21-13, 21-16, Mukta lost to Shawkat 21-19, 21-11, 21-16 and Nasir outplayed Sabuj 21-7, 21-18.

Dilkusha SC trounced Purbachal Parisad by straight sets with Parag beating Sumon 21-5, 21-10, Mehedi overpowering Kamru 21-10, 21-10 and Tirha defeating Dhiman 21-9, 21-10.

Mohammedpur Boys dumped Mansur by 3-0 sets as Kajal beat Mosharraf 21-1, 21-16, Parag outplayed Mamun 21-4, 21-6 and Rafique overpowered Arif 21-15, 21-16.

Utara Club outwitted Bangladesh Sports Journalists Association (BSJA) by straight sets. Tuhin defeated Rumi 21-17, 21-12, Baban beat Shamim 21-10, 21-12 and Biplob outplayed Raihan 21-16, 21-19.

Crucial tie for Daily Star

Sports Reporter

It will be a do-or-die situation for The Daily Star when the popular English daily take on Nestle Bangladesh Limited in a JPLG Lights Professionals' Cup cricket match at the British American Tobacco (BAT)



ground today.

Going down fighting by two wickets in their opening match at the hands of SK+F last Friday, Daily Star will be desperately needing a victory against Nestle to rekindle their hopes for a passage into the next round of the eight-team meet. For Nestle, who won their opening match against BAT, a win will ensure them a place in the last four.

Darrell Hair withdraws

MELBOURNE, Dec 3: Australian umpire Darrell Hair has agreed not to officiate in any international cricket matches involving Sri Lanka this season, averting fears of a clash between the Australian and Sri Lankan cricket board, reports Reuters.

Australian Cricket Board (ACB) chairman Denis Rogers said on Wednesday that Hair no longer wanted to be considered for matches involving Sri Lanka during next year's limited-over series between Australia, Sri Lanka and England.

The issue had threatened to overshadow the series after Sri Lankan authorities complained at Hair's criticism of Sri Lankan off-spinner Muttiah Muralitharan.

Hair in his recently published book 'Decision Maker', described Muralitharan's bowling action as diabolical and said he would have no hesitation in balling him in the future.

The Sri Lankans called on the ACB to stand Hair down, from their matches but the ACB passed the matter on to the International Cricket Council which is yet to make a decision.

Hair said he made his decision to stand down after discussing the issue with other umpires.

'I've got no regrets about releasing a book however, the timing was probably unfortunate,' he said.

Div I chess from Dec 7

The First Division chess league organised by Bangladesh Chess Federation will begin on December 7, reports APB.

In all, 14 teams are taking part in the league which will be held at the NSC chess room.

The teams are: Leonine Chess Club, Bangladesh Biman, Titas Club, Kamalapur Samaj Kalyan O Krira Sangstha, Brothers Union, Anushilan KC, Narayanjan Chess Players Organisation, Mohakkhal Pradip Sangha, Dhaka University Chess Team, Farangjan SC, Naktalpara KS, Bangladesh Ansars, West Jatrabari KC and Sonali Bank.

Meanwhile, Leonine's Belarussian recruit Grand Master Uri Sulman arrived in the city on Wednesday.

Thon may miss rest of season

BONN, Dec 3(Reuters/Internet): Schaikie 04 captain Olaf Thon faces surgery on an injured

Achilles tendon and could be out of action until the end of the German season.



Galatasaray's Romanian midfielder Gheorghe Hagi makes an abortive attempt to sneak the ball over the Juventus wall during their Champions' League match in Istanbul on December 2. The match ended 1-1. — AFP photo

Galatasaray scrape tense draw with Juventus

ISTANBUL, Dec 3 (Reuters/Internet): Turkey's Galatasaray snatched a last minute goal to secure a 1-1 draw against Italy's Juventus in a tense European Champions' League Group B match in Istanbul on Wednesday.

The draw was a fair reflection of a cagey game played under intense security in chilly drizzle. Neither side had excelled and the offside flag dominated.

Nicola Amoroso put Juventus ahead with a 76th minute goal driven between Galatasaray's Brazilian international Claudio Taffarel and his near post. Amoroso's strike shocked the Turks who were reforming after a double substitution.

Juventus responded to their goal by bringing on defender Igor Tudor for striker Filippo Inzaghi, hoping to return the game to the stalemate of the first half.

But, galvanised by the goal, the Turkish side squeezed through the reinforced defence and were rewarded when Suat Kaya headed a goal from a Gheorghe Hagi freekick just before the final whistle.

'We conceded an unnecessary goal...but it had a shock effect and after that we created four or five chances,' Galatasaray coach Fatih Terim told reporters after the match.

The result puts the Turks top of the group on goals scored over Rosenberg, both on eight points, and leaves Juventus in third with five points and one match to play.

'We are sorry, we wanted to win and say hello to a place in the quarter-finals,' Terim said. 'But the goal was very pleasing because our challenge continues.'

For Juventus, mounting a challenge is a more remote possibility. 'Now we have to beat Rosenberg and Galatasaray must lose

against Athletic Bilbao,' Italian coach Marcello Lippi said.

Wednesday's match was played under heavy security after being delayed for a week amid safety concerns caused by a diplomatic row between Ankara and Rome.

Some 21,000 police and troops were on duty for the game.

Anti-Italian sentiment is running high in Turkey after an Italian court refused to extradite Kurdish guerrilla leader Abdullah Ocalan to Turkey where he is wanted for treason and murder.

An exhausted-looking Terim thanked his team's supporters for their good behaviour.

'I want to thank everybody for their calm and support in this unbelievable atmosphere,' he said.

Lippi rebuffed questions on the game's political aspect.

'It was a good game. That is what it was about, and nothing else,' he said.

Moloto, surprise choice as SA coach

JOHANNESBURG, Dec 3(Reuters/Internet): South Africa named unheeded Trott Moloto as their new national soccer coach on Thursday, ending months of speculation and controversy.



The 42-year-old was assistant to Frenchman Philippe Troussier at the World Cup in France and had also acted as caretaker coach when South Africa started their African Nations Cup qualifying campaign against Angola in October.

He has been given a contract until March 2000, which incorporates the next Nations' Cup finals in Zimbabwe.

The announcement, made by the South African Football Association (SFA), ends a long-running saga which has seen South Africa chase Rudi Gutler, Ron Atkinson, Bert Vogts and Carlos Alberto Parreira for the position, vacated by Toussier after the World Cup.

The SFA have been widely criticised for their failure to entice a leading international coach to take on the position and for a series of botched discussions with potential candidates.

Parreira visited South Africa last week for discussions but turned the job down at the weekend.

Moloto's first match will be a friendly international against Egypt in Johannesburg on December 16 -- a repeat of this year's Nations Cup final won by Egypt.

He told reporters on Thursday that he was confident he would be able to bring success to the team and said he would name his coaching staff in early January. Moloto also said he would reveal an 18-man squad for the Egypt match on Monday.

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Mahdavia on way to Wanda

BEIJING, Dec 3: Iran's Mehdi Mahdavia, who scored the winning goal in his country's World Cup group encounter against the United States in June, will be joining Chinese First Division champions Dalian Wanda, the club sources said today, reports Xinhua.

Wanda has been chasing the 21-year-old striker since the beginning of the year and had reached a basic transfer agreement with his Iranian club Pirouz later, but the deal fell through after Mahdavia became a major target of some European big names reportedly such as German's Dortmund and English Premier league side Tottenham Hotspur since his World Cup success.

But a car accident in August turned his European dreams sour and the Asia's young player-of-the-year once lost his first line spot in the national squad because of wounds.

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Bangkok Asian Games

Participants not worried about air pollution!

BANGKOK, Dec 3 (AP): Where there's bad traffic, there's bad pollution, so athletes taking part in the 13th Asian Games beginning Sunday in Bangkok ought to be worried, right?

Yes and no. The harmful effects of pollutants such as ozone, carbon monoxide, fine particles, sulfur dioxide, nitrogen dioxide and lead are well known. Air pollution contributes to lung disease, including respiratory tract infections, asthma and lung cancer.

A person taking rigorous exercise increases his intake of air by as much as 10 times over his intake at rest. For endurance athletes, such as marathon runners and cyclists, the increase is even higher.

At the same time, breathing through the mouth bypasses the nose's natural filter against impurities in the air.

All of which means that if there are nasty things in the air, an athlete will get more than his or her fair share.

Children at play breathe more and faster than adults, and are generally more at risk. Some cities ban school sports when there are heavy smog levels, as happened in January last year in Lyon, France.

When it comes to major international sporting competitions, however, air pollution seems to be a minor concern.

Pollution levels don't seem to be a big consideration when it comes to selecting competition sites — witness the choice

of past and future Olympic cities such as Mexico City, Los Angeles, Atlanta and Athens, Greece, none of which would win any clean-air awards.

Statistically, Bangkok's pollution levels don't fare particularly better or worse than other megacities, an observation supported by the comments of some visiting teams.

Dr Raul Alcantara, a sports doctor accompanying the Philippine team, is bringing asthma drugs just in case his athletes suffer any pulmonary problems.

'If the pollution in Bangkok will just be the same level as in Manila, I don't think that will pose much of a problem for our athletes,' Alcantara said.

Air pollution is not a concern of the Japanese team, said Hitomi Kurokawa, a spokeswoman for the Japan International Olympic Committee.

Members of the Chinese basketball team were similarly unfazed. China's cities suffers from some of the worst air pollution in the world.

'Pollution is pretty terrible in Beijing these days too,' said player Wang Zhizhi.

Team leader Kuang Lubin put a better face on it.

'The Asian Games Village is in the suburbs of Bangkok so I think the air there should be quite good,' Kuang said.

His opinion is shared by many people, including at least one member of the Bangkok Games medical subcommittee.

Pollution levels at the competition sites are apparently not known. An official at the Pollution Control Department of Thailand's Ministry of Science, Technology and the Envi-

ronment said Wednesday they had taken no measurements at the venues.

Pollution and environmental issues have barely been addressed by the Bangkok Games organisers. Serious efforts are being made to curtail traffic, but this is more to facilitate travel between venues than out of explicit concern for air quality.

Atlanta, which hosted the 1996 Olympics, has yet to meet US federal clean air standards for ozone that were set in 1990.

But in an effort to curb pollution at the games, it organised a 'Clean Air Team' transport fleet of 700 trucks, vans, sedans and buses operating on alternative fuels such as natural gas, electricity and propane.

Athens, picked last year to host the 2004 Olympics, has some of the highest pollution levels in Europe. For several years the government has mandated staggered working hours, and during periodic smog emergencies, it places limits on traffic in the city centre. It has a plan to reduce smog by 25 per cent by the time the games roll around.

Thailand has successfully tackled some of its air pollution problems in recent years, most notably bringing down the levels of lead and carbon monoxide.

Particulates remain a major problem, however, and the Pollution Control Department's most recent available daily reading, for Tuesday, showed the amount of fine particles in the air around the capital to be on the cusp between 'moderate' and 'unhealthy' levels, still a long way from the worst category of 'hazardous.'

Ammo alert!

BANGKOK, Dec 3(Reuters/Internet): Japanese and United Arab Emirates Asian Games shooters had their ammunition impounded by Thai customs on Thursday.

Games officials said the mini-shootout between marksmen and customs officials broke out when the two teams sent ammunition ahead of them by air cargo rather than following instructions to have it travel on their flights.

Thai customs officials, always on the alert for illegal weapons imports because of the civil war in neighbouring Cambodia, briefly suspected the Asian Games ammunition consignment was a ruse to get round import rules.

However, salvos fired by Games officials sorted out the problem and the ammunition was released within 24 hours.

'We appeal to all teams to follow the rules and have their ammunition travel with their shooters,' a Games official said.



Chief of Air Staff Air Vice Marshal Jamal Uddin Ahmed (2nd from right) giving away the Air Force annual athletic champions trophy to the winning captain of Base Zahurul Haque in Chittagong on December 2.

English League Cup

Spurs show MU the way out

LONDON, Dec 3: Tottenham Hotspur knocked Manchester United out of the English League Cup quarter-finals 3-1 on Wednesday with two headers by Chris Armstrong and a blistering long-range shot from David Ginola, reports Reuters.

In the night's other clash, 1997 winners Leicester City

made sure of their semifinal berth by beating Premier League tailenders Blackburn Rovers 1-0 at Filbert Street.

Armstrong struck after a goalless first half, his opener for Spurs coming in the 48th minute when Allan Nielsen chipped the ball in for Ruel Fox to nod on to Armstrong's head.

The forward doubled his tally in the 55th after a moment of individual brilliance by David Ginola on the wing. The Frenchman skipped around the ball before sending a left-footed cross straight into the box for Armstrong to bang in.

Former Spurs favourite Teddy Sheringham, jeered by the crowd, pulled a goal back for United in the 70th minute with a twisting header off a cross from Phil Neville.

Ginola, outstanding throughout, wrapped up victory in the 86th with an unstoppable left-footed rocket shot past the despairing goalkeeper.

United, who made nine changes from the weekend, were without Danish goalkeeper Peter Schmeichel and other first team players but still had the likes of Ryan Giggs, Norwegian Ole Gunnar Solskjaer, Nicky Butt and Sheringham.

Ned Leno scored Leicester's winner in the 67th minute, rising unmarked to head in against the run of play shortly after striker Emile Heskey went off injured.

Holders Chelsea went out on Tuesday, losing 2-1 at London neighbours Wimbledon, while

First Division Sunderland reached the semifinals by beating Second Division Luton Town 3-0.

Johnson's prayer

TORONTO, Dec 3: Ben Johnson has filed an application for reinstatement with Canada's track and field federation, the Toronto Star reported Thursday, says AP.

Athletics Canada, the governing body, will discuss Johnson's request at their general annual meeting in Ottawa this weekend. Johnson was banned for life after twice testing positive for drugs — including at the 1988 Olympics in Seoul.

Johnson tried to win reinstatement through the Ontario courts by saying his lifetime ban is a restraint of trade, but lost that case and a subsequent appeal in September.

'I now feel that dialogue can take place now that the court case is behind us,' Athletics Canada president John Thresher told the Star.

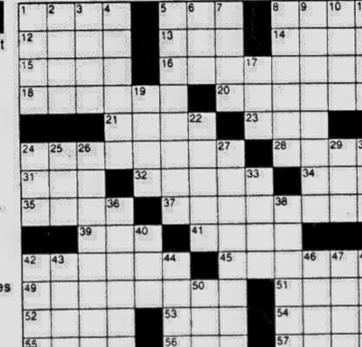
If Athletics Canada agrees to put forward Johnson's application, it would go before the Canadian Center for Ethics in Sport, which would appoint an independent arbitrator to hear the sprinter's case.

If successful in Canada, Johnson would still have to appeal to the world governing body of track and field (IAAF) to compete internationally.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS 42 Final touch 2 —erectus 17 Dead heat 1 Emeril La- 45 Botan's 3 Satan's 19 "I Never gasse, e.g. before specialty Promised 5 Haul Jeremiah 4 Playwright — Rose Garden" 8 Kyoto cum-49 Volcanic merbudsns glass 5 Kate's 22 Type of "Titanic" 12 Peregrinate 51 Olympic skier Mit-termaier 6 City, jocularly 25 Family mem. 13 Paleozoic, for one 52 Wading bird 7 React in horror 26 Summary 15 Eastern 53 Raw rock potentate 54 Nest piece 8 Wise 16 Hindrance 55 Survive utterance 18 Her hubby 56 Young Mr. Lincoln 9 In-box pileups 29 Born 30 Turf she should 57 Pageant adornment 10 Capri or Wight 33 Old Oldies 36 Key worker? 20 Ale daintly DOWN 11 Exceeded 21 Linguist 1 Grouch 55 38 Intelli-ge 39 Chomsky additic 40 Went first 42 Spring wind? 24 Made dim 28 Illusions 43 Disco music group 31 Young fish 32 Psychologist Alfred 34 Earthy prefix? 35 Type style 37 Haunted 39 Popeye's 41 Teensy bit

Solution time: 26 min. ANTIUS CIGARIS UNITER SURELY IITLL AFAR NEA EMILL EETA AHA AGED DEBIT SOMEWHE RELEISE SHW M TIS ELL CUR NAPS AMBO SPA ENGH AMBO CABBLE IMPURE ARLENE LOTTER REELLED VOIDER



CRYPTOQUIP X B Y P J T O I Y C K T K O Y Q X M J X O I J O O I Y C Z B Q K O Y H J Y M O A B P B T U V P O Y U I K H Y M Q C Z B Z Y A Q X Saturday's Cryptoquip: DID YOU SEE THE NICE MUSICAL FOR PACHYDERMS, "ELEPHANT OF THE OPERA"? Today's Cryptoquip clue: Z equals P The Cryptoquip is a substitution cipher in which one letter stands for another. If you think that X equals O, it will equal O throughout the puzzle. Single letters, short words and words using an apostrophe give you clues to locating vowels. Solution is by trial and error.