

Acme Youth Hockey
Kutubuddin stars in BKSP win

Sports Reporter
Defending champions Bangladesh Krira Shikkha Protisthan (BKSP) got off to a flying start in the Acme 17th National Youth Championship with a 5-0 thrashing of Chittagong DSA in the inaugural match at the Maulana Bhasani Hockey Stadium yesterday.

The winners led the first half 2-0.

Centre forward Kutubuddin, who opened the flood-gate in the 15th minute, scored three goals. Maksud and Mazarul Islam shared the other two to complete the Chittagong rout.

With this win the country's lone sports institute strolled into the quarter-finals of the knock-out meet involving 16 teams.

Earlier, Harun-ur-Rashid, MP, who is also the General Secretary of the Bangladesh Football Federation inaugurated the meet in a simple ceremony.

Long distance swimming in Dhaka

BANGKOK, Dec 10: The first Asian Open long distance swimming championship will be held in Dhaka in December 1999, reports UNB.

The decision was taken at a meeting of Asian Amateur Swimming Federation (AASF) held in the Thai capital on December 6.

Twenty teams, including swimming giants Japan, China, South Korea, India and the Philippines are likely to participate in the four-event winter meet.

Inter-varsity sports end

The 3-day inter-varsity swimming and water polo championships concluded at the Dhaka University swimming pool yesterday, reports APB.

In water polo, Dhaka University emerged champions while Rajshahi became second.

Rajshahi became champions in swimming claiming 10 gold medals and Dhaka runners-up capturing 3 gold.

Vice-Chancellor of DU, Prof A K Azad Chowdhury distributed prizes as chief guest.

Arsenal skipper faces surgery lay-off

LONDON, Dec 10 (Reuters/Internet): Arsenal captain Tony Adams, who aggravated a back injury in a Champions' League game last month, has had surgery and faces a long layoff.

The England international defender, currently resting in Florida, said in a prepared acceptance speech for a television award that the operation had been carried out.

"I've had a busy week. My father's had a heart attack; I've been looking after him and my three children and also having an operation on my back, which has gone very, very well."

Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger hoped late last month the 32-year-old Adams could avoid surgery after the player was told by a specialist that six weeks of rest would cure a chronic career-threatening inflammation.

Adams told the London Evening Standard in an interview published on Thursday, but given before his operation, that retirement at the end of the season was an option.

"I'll try everything -- anything -- before I call it a day," he said. "Retirement is my very last option but the reality of it is that it is an option I must consider."

Arsenal can ill afford to lose Adams, who may be out until February. The north London club is already wrestling with injuries to French World Cup winner Emmanuel Petit, and Dutchmen Marc Overmars and Dennis Bergkamp.

PSV to change its coach?

BRUSSELS, Dec 10 (Reuters/Internet): Club Bruges coach Eric Gerets said on Thursday that he would coach PSV Eindhoven from next season.

"PSV have my word," Gerets said the former Belgian newspapers. They said the former

Belgium and PSV defender would officially announce the move on December 20.

Belgian and Dutch media have said PSV tried to sign Gerets last season, but had to hire former England manager Bobby Robson for one season as Gerets insisted on serving out his contract with Bruges.

German side VfB Stuttgart were also keen to sign Gerets, who won the Belgian league title with Lierse in 1997 and in 1998 with Bruges, who are also runaway leaders this season.

"VfB Stuttgart have called me. I said politely that it was not possible and every other club will get the same answer. They don't have to worry in Eindhoven," said Gerets.

But he noted his move still depended on him gaining a Dutch coaching certificate.

Gerets, 44, has been on a training course in the Dutch town of Zelst this year and will obtain the certificate in April if he passes his tests.

Gerets, who played for PSV from 1985 to 1992, added he planned to quit coaching at the age of 53.

"I'm experiencing soccer so intensively that it would be best for my health to quit in time," said Gerets, who won 84 caps for Belgium and also played for AC Milan.

Osaka gets government's backing

TOKYO, Dec 10: Top Japanese government officials agreed Thursday support a bid by the nation's third-largest city of Osaka to host the 2008 Olympics, the Foreign Ministry said, reports AP.

Cabinet ministers are expected to formally endorse the decision Friday, paving way for financial support for the city's preparation for the event.

Osaka, about 450 kilometers (280 miles) southwest of Tokyo, will formally file its candidacy with the International Olympic Committee in early 2001.

Paris, Beijing and Kuala Lumpur have also expressed hopes to host the 2008 summer games. The host will be decided at an IOC meeting in Moscow in 2001.

Osaka has asked the central government to shoulder about half of the costs to prepare for the games, following the example of the Nagano Olympics held in central Japan in February.

An estimated 80 billion yen (680 million dollars) will be needed to build an Olympic stadium and a swimming pool if the city wins the bid, said Osaka City spokesman Yoshimitsu Yorise.

Pakistan rule the day



LAHORE, Pakistan, Dec 10 (Reuters/Internet): Saqlain Mushtaq snapped up his Test-best of five for 32 after Waqar Younis made inroads with four wickets to give Pakistan the upper hand in the second Test against Zimbabwe on Thursday.

An eventful first day ended 16 minutes early due to fading light after Zimbabwe were dismissed for 183, leaving Pakistan to begin their reply on Friday.

Zimbabwe, put in to bat on a grassy pitch by Pakistan's stand-in captain Moin Khan, were reduced to 55 for five but recovered through a resolute innings by vice-captain Andy Flower, who made an unbeaten 60.

The match began on a dramatic note when Pakistan captain Aamir Sohail pulled out at the last minute on medical grounds and the selectors recalled former skipper Salim Malik for his 100th Test, the second Pakistani to achieve the milestone after Javed Miandad's 124 Tests.

Pakistan awarded a first Test cap to opener Mohammad Naveed, who replaced Sohail, one of five changes from the side beaten in the first Test of the three-match series at Peshawar.

Waqar took full advantage of a seaming pitch to rip through Zimbabwe's top order, reducing the touring side to 28 for four at one stage. He took the first four wickets and finished with four for 54 from 18 overs.

Off-spinner Saqlain, playing in his 17th Test, pressed home the advantage and steadily worked through the lower order with guile and immaculate length. **He beat his previous best of five for 54 against West Indies at Karachi last year.**

Andy Flower remained the only batsman to play the Pakistani bowlers with any degree of confidence, batavating 260 minutes, facing 147 balls and hitting seven fours.

Craig Wighton was the other notable contributor, making 28

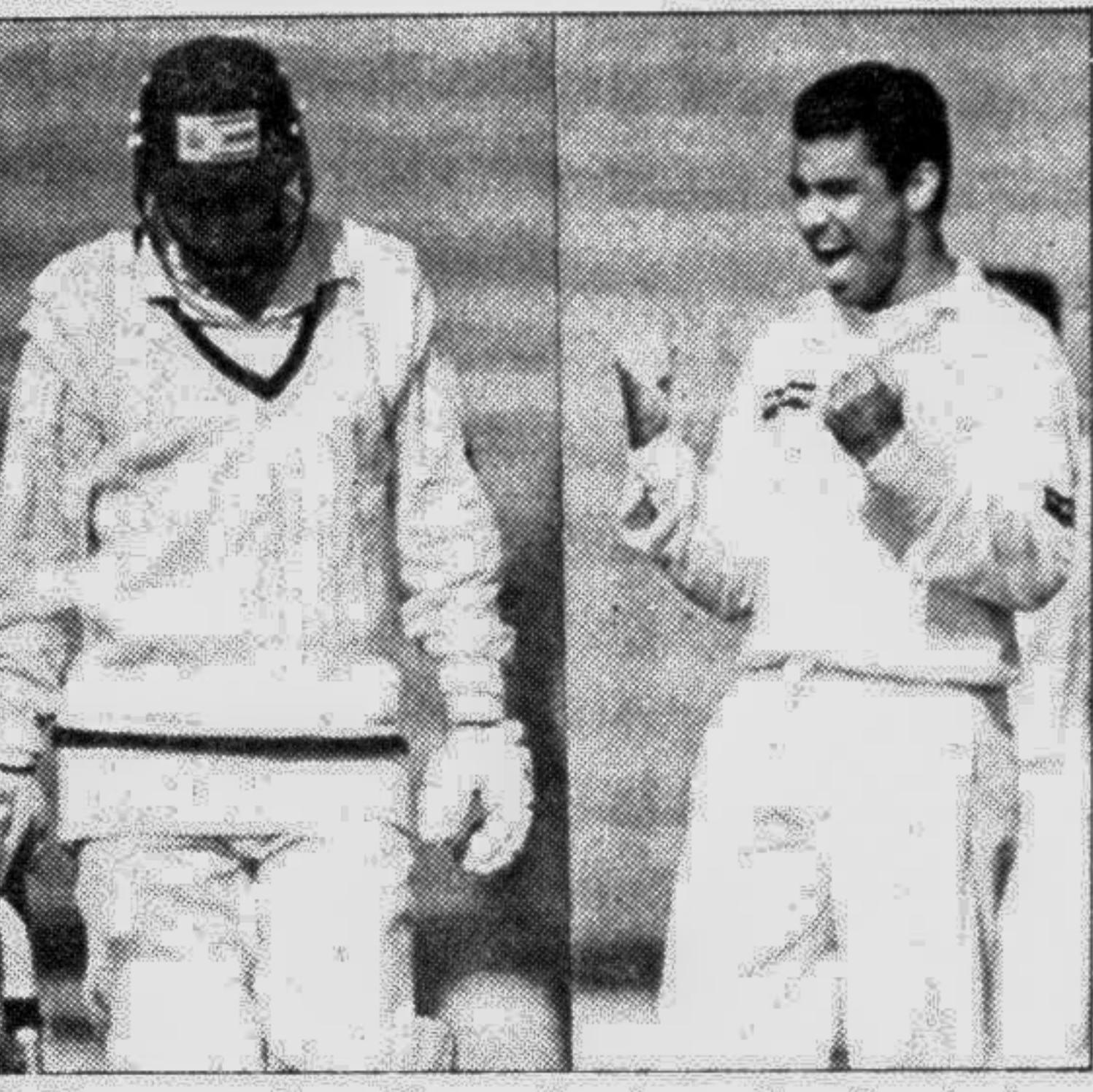


SAQLAIN ... 5 FOR 32
in a sixth wicket stand of 49 with Flower.

SCOREBOARD
Scoreboard at stumps on the first day of the second cricket Test between Zimbabwe and Pakistan on Thursday:

ZIMBABWE: First innings
Rennie c Jiaz b Waqar 3
G Flower lbw b Waqar 7
Goodwin c Moin b Waqar 10
Campbell c Yohanna b Waqar 5
A Flower not out 60
Johnson c & b Shoab Akhtar 14
Wishart c Malik b Saqlain 19
Streak c Wasim b Saqlain 28
Olonga c Shoab Akhtar b Saqlain 13
Huckle c Anwar b Saqlain 19
Mabangwa c Jiaz b Saqlain 2
Extras: (b-4, lb-3, nb-12) 19
Total: 183
Fall of wkt: 1-3; 2-16; 3-22; 4-42; 5-55; 6-104; 7-136; 8-140; 9-170.

Bowler: O M R W
Wasim 20 6 42 0
Waqar 18 3 54 4
Akhtar 15 1 48 5
Saqlain 13.5 3 32 5



Pakistan speedster Waqar Younis exults after having Zimbabwe captain Alistair Campbell during the first day's play of the second Test in Lahore yesterday.

Division I Chess Leonine floor Farashganj

Sports Reporter

Holders Leonine Chess Club maintained their sole lead in the First Division chess league when the star-studded outfit blanked Farashganj 4-0 in the fourth round at the chess room of the National Sports Council yesterday.

It was Leonine's third consecutive win by the same margin after their disappointing drawn opening encounter with last year's runners-up Bangladesh Biman.

The smooth sailing of chess circuit's new force was once again a compliment of their two Grand Masters -- Latvian GM Igors and Belorussian GM Suleiman, who recorded their fourth consecutive victories with consummate ease.

Khandaker Kayes Hasan and Abu Sufian were the other winners for Leonine on the day.

In another match, Bangladesh Biman beat Kamalpur SKKS by 3.5-3.5 points to move into second position.

Zia, Reefat and Rakib -- the three Biman stalwarts -- won convincingly while Tahmid drew with Parag Biman now have 12 and a half points.

On the other hand, Titas Club slipped to third position after they drew 2-2 with Anushilon Daba KC. They are now trailing Biman by half a point.

Injured Thorpe reaches home

LONDON, Dec 9: Forced to pull out of the Ashes series because of a back injury, England batsman Graham Thorpe may struggle to be fit for the World Cup in May, reports AP.

The Surrey lefthander returned home on Wednesday for long-term treatment of back pains which have bothered him since July, when he had a cyst removed.

"My back just isn't fit for cricket at the highest level," he said on arrival at Heathrow airport after a 12,000-mile flight which did little to ease the pain.

The only sensible thing was to come home and sort it out.

"It's unfortunate and it's bad luck for me but life goes on," Thorpe said. "I'm not setting any targets for when I want to be back although it would be nice to be ready for the one-day tournament in Sharjah in April."

"But if that doesn't happen then I will just try to make sure I am ready for the summer."

If Thorpe doesn't make it for the one-day series, it's unlikely he'll be able to endure the stresses of the month-long World Cup the following month and England will hope he's fit in time for the Test series against New Zealand.

Thorpe played in the first, drawn Test at Brisbane but was ruled out of the second at Perth, which England lost heavily.

Trouble flared up again on the flight from Brisbane, Thorpe said. "I don't know if it was the flight itself or the fact I had been batting for a long time that caused it to go."

Thorpe's place in the team has gone to Graeme Hick, who was originally called into the squad because of a back injury affecting Mike Atherton. Opener Atherton has since recovered.

"Although we are 1-0 down the mood in the camp is good," Thorpe said. "When you lose you just want to turn it around as quickly as you can and the boys are still right in."

Milan fined a hefty sum

MILAN, Dec 10: A court ordered Italian League club AC Milan on Wednesday to pay 115 million lire (70,000 dollars) in damages to a fan hurt at a match, a groundbreaking ruling, reports AP.

The fan suffered an eye injury in the stands at Milan's home game against Sampdoria in Genoa in October 1990.

The court ruled that soccer games "have become dangerous activities" because of brawling by fans and said home teams must compensate injured spectators if the clubs cannot prove they took all possible security measures.

Wednesday's ruling "contains contradiction," Milan club lawyer Leandro Cantamessa told the ANSA news agency. "It goes against the jurisprudence of recent years, which has always held that a soccer game is not a dangerous activity."

The court made reference to "the series of incidents, some even fatal, that ruin each sports season."

Italian major and minor league soccer is often marred by clashes involving "ultras," the equivalent of English hooligans.

The most recent example came Nov 3, when an explosive device was tossed onto the field during a UEFA Cup match between Italy's Fiorentina and Switzerland's Grasshoppers. An official was injured, and Fiorentina was kicked out of the competition.

In 1995, a 25-year-old Genoa supporter was stabbed to death in a fight between rival fans outside the stadium before a Genoa-AC Milan Serie A match. In response, Italian authorities cancelled the following Sunday's league schedule and other professional sports events -- the nation's first game day without soccer in a half-century.

"It is a very dangerous precedent," Juventus club president Vittorio Chiusano, a lawyer, said of Wednesday's court decision. "Anything suffered by a fan at the stadium, regardless of the circumstances, could lead to asking for damages."



Bangladesh Biman's IM Ziaur Rahman (L) contemplating his next move against Enayet Hossain of Kamalapur SKKS in their First Division chess engagement at the NSC yesterday.

— Star photo

Central win at a canter

Rain doesn't save India



NAPIER, New Zealand, Dec 10 (AFP/Reuters): India suffered a dispiriting seven-wicket defeat there today at the hands of a provincial team which last defeated an international side 25 years ago.

The match against a Central Districts XI was the opening event of India's three Test tour of New Zealand.

Central captain Craig Spearman guided the victory by scoring 86 and supported by Jarrod Englefield (40 not out) as Central reached their target of 158 halfway through the middle session on the fourth and final day.

Central began the day at 73 for two but rain momentarily threatened to prevent them from grabbing a deserved victory when only two overs were possible in the morning session.

The rain cleared during the lunch break and they could press on to claim victory.

Pakistan were the last international team beaten by Central Districts in a first-class game in 1993.

After making 85 in the first innings, Spearman was determined to reach three figures in his second knock and be there

at the end to celebrate Central's epic win.

However, after taking two boundaries off Robin Singh he gloved an attempted hook shot to wicketkeeper Nayan Mongia.

The win was the important thing and I'm absolutely thrilled we have pulled a victory over an international side of the calibre of India," Spearman said.

"I was happy with my batting. I'm always happy to score 80 but it would have been nice to kick on and get the hundred. The ball was there to hit but for some reason I gloved it."

Spearman said his non-selection in the New Zealand first team to play India had not been a factor in his outstanding batting double.

With new Test opener Matthew Bell assured of an extended chance to prove himself, Spearman's immediate Test prospects look slim.

However, he did not dismiss the prospect of batting down the order.

Indian captain Mohammad Azharuddin said while the result was disappointing the game had been very beneficial to his

team.

Azharuddin said his batsmen would be better for the experience and he was confident they would perform better in

the four-day game against Wellington, starting on Saturday.

"We play a lot of cricket and sometimes we have an off day or so. We should play better in Wellington. We just need to apply ourselves a bit better," he said.

SCOREBOARD