

CCDM plans one-day tourney

Sports Reporter

The Cricket Committee of Dhaka Metropolitan (CCDM) is all set to introduce a limited-over tournament involving all the twelve Premier League outfits as well as a number of foreign teams.

The tourney, first of its kind, is likely to start immediately after the League.

"We have already got the permission from the BCB to organise the meet," said the CCDM secretary Mahmud U Haque yesterday, adding that the tournament will be a day-night event.

While elaborating, Mahmud, who is also a joint-secretary of the BCB, said: "We are working hard to bring a few club sides from neighbouring India and Pakistan to make the tournament more colourful."

But Mahmud said that the final decision regarding the tournament will be made after the CCDM meeting to be held on February 11.

Replying to a query, the CCDM secretary said that they will also hold the Damal Smriti cricket tournament sometime in March. The season's curtain-raiser and an annual event in the domestic calendar was earlier postponed by the BCB for a smooth completion of the League this season.

2nd Mayor Cup vball begins Feb 12

RAJSHAHI, Feb 2: The second Mayor Gold Cup volleyball tournament will begin at the Rajshahi Collegiate School ground on February 12, reports UNB.

City Mayor Mizanur Rahman Minu will inaugurate the tournament organised by Rajshahi City Corporation.

Five teams including the Dhaka league champions Bangladesh Rifles and runners-up Titas Club, will take part in the five-day meet.

Other teams are: Bangladesh Army, Bangladesh Navy and a local team.

The local side will selected through a group match, beginning on February 6.

Rajib stays on top

Enamul Hossain Rajib of Titas Club maintained his solo lead in the 20th national junior chess championship securing full six points by beating Ruhul Islam Boby in the sixth round match at the NSC chess room yesterday, reports UNB.

He was followed by Debraj Chatterjee of Barisal, who bagged five and a half points after defeating Abdul Bari of Tangail in the round, while Firoz Ahmed earned five points beating Khaled Mahmud.

The seventh round matches will start today at the same venue.

WOMEN'S CHESS

Meanwhile, Zakia Sultana, Masuda Begum and Afana Parveen Nira, jointly led the points table of the 20th National Women's qualifying chess championship securing five points after yesterday's sixth round at the same venue.

Three players — Nazrana Khan Iva, Farzana Khan Ava and Fayzunnisa Polly — followed the leaders with four and a half points.

In the round, Iva drew with Zakia, Masuda shared points with Ava, Nira outplayed Ferdousi and Polly overpowered Mahfuza.

The seventh and last round matches will be held today at the same venue.

Kournikova tames Huber

TOKYO, Feb 2: Russian teenager Anna Kournikova came through a tough first round match against Germany's Anke Huber on the opening day of the Toray Pan Pacific Open tournament today, reports AFP.

The sixth seed, fresh from her doubles victory at the Australian Open, with Martina Hingis, just won a nifty first set packed with double faults and service breaks to score a 7-6, 6-0 win.

"Of course, I gained a lot of confidence, we beat a lot of good players with Martina, I feel great, it definitely helps a lot," Kournikova said on her victory in Melbourne.

Kournikova, who achieved notoriety with her double faults at the Australian Open, committed two double faults in each of her first two service games and neither woman could hold serve until the Russian kept hers for 4-2 lead.

Huber held her own in the seventh game, but it appeared to be her only game the German held throughout the 70-minute match.

Kournikova, although she lost her serve in the eighth and 10th games, stopped double-faulting and held her rhythm after taking the tie-breaker 7-4 as Huber continued to struggle with her own serve.

"It's my first time to play on this (fast, indoor) surface and it's difficult to hit an overhead and a high ball because of the lights, so I had to get used to it. But other than that, I served very, very well," said Kournikova.

"Anke played fast, so you have to go for a shot. Otherwise, she'll hit a winner. I was feeling great out there, I was really relaxed, not nervous at all. I was just going for the shots," added the Russian, 17.

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"It's out of question if I can not play my 100 per cent against Martina," Sugiyama said of her match against Hingis.

"So I'm going to play aggressive, not being on the defensive, because you have to hit a winner first on this surface," she added.

Hingis, the second seed, and the other top three seeds — America's world number one Lindsay Davenport, Wimbledon champion Jana Novotna of the Czech Republic and Monica Seles received first-round byes.

American Lisa Raymond breezed past Sylvia Plischke of Austria, 6-1, 6-2, while qualifier Els Callens of Belgium outclassed Kimberly Po of the United States 6-3, 6-1.

Sarah Pitkowski of France was a 3-6, 6-2, 6-1 winner over Larisa Neiland of Latvia.

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Stubborn Stewart

SYDNEY, Feb 2: England chairman of selectors David Graveney says he'll try to persuade captain Alec Stewart not to play in Wednesday's tri-series cricket match against Sri Lanka, but isn't optimistic he'll succeed, reports AP.

Graveney will have his work cut out for him, with Stewart stubbornly determined to play despite a nagging right thumb injury and his heavy workload as leader, opening batsman and wicketkeeper starting to take its toll after nearly four months on tour.

England's officials are hoping to rest their injury-worn captain and give some of their less-experienced players a run in the remaining two meaningless qualifiers with England and Australia already through to next week's finals.

"I'm only one of three selectors, if it comes down to 2-1, then I lose," Stewart said Tuesday. "I will be voting the one."

"I don't like missing games at all. You can't play international cricket every day of your life, so if you've got the opportunity, go for it."

"If I'm told not to play for medical or other reasons, you might find me carrying the drinks, but personally I'm not looking to do that."

Batsman Neil Fairbrother is still carrying a left hamstring strain he re-injured during his unbeaten 81 in last Friday's 128-run win over Sri Lanka in Perth and Ben Hollister injured a knee when he crashed into the boundary fence.

Sri Lanka also has injury worries, with opener Sanath Jayasuriya out for up to six weeks after having successful surgery on his broken arm in Melbourne on Monday.

Spinner Muttiah Muralitharan (groin) and batsman Aravinda de Silva (calf) will have fitness tests Wednesday morning before both sides name their teams for the day-night clash at the Sydney Cricket Ground.

Juninho all set to rejoin Boro?

MIDDLESBROUGH, England, Feb 2 (Reuters/Internet): Bryan Robson said on Tuesday he was confident Brazilian midfielder Juninho would rejoin the English premier league club in a 10 million pounds (\$16.45 million) deal.

Robson was optimistic after talks in Madrid that he had won the tug-of-war with Aston Villa over the Atletico player he introduced to English football four years ago.

"Atletico Madrid have been fair to us and kept their word," he said. "They always promised to keep us informed of developments."

As soon as they gave us an indication that Juninho might be available we got on a plane to Madrid for talks with the player.

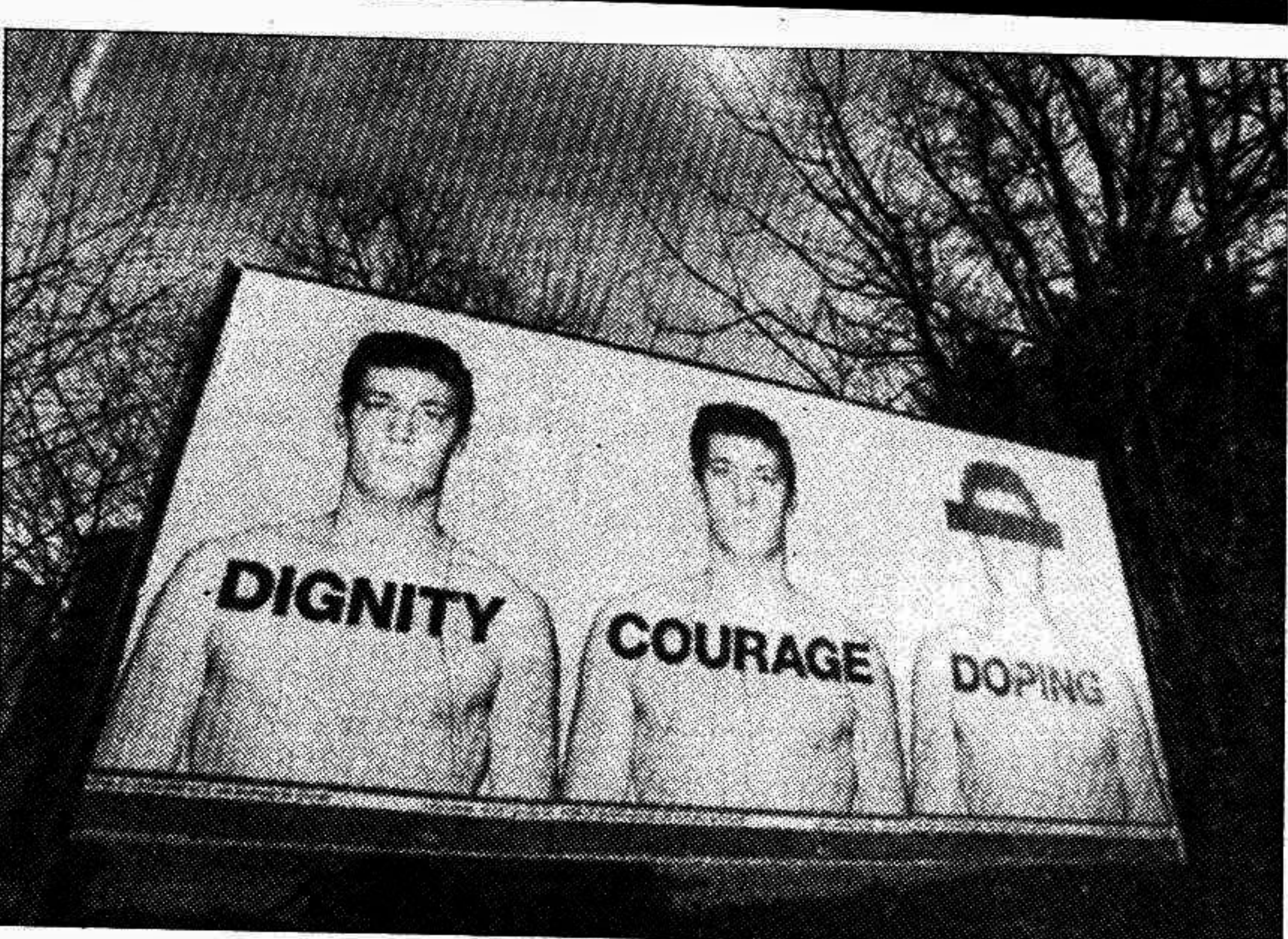
"The talks went well. There are still a few things to resolve but we are very hopeful that these will be resolved."

"The one good thing is that Juninho is keen to come back to the club."

Atletico president Jesus Gil was angry when Juninho paid a cloak-and-dagger visit to Aston Villa last week.

Gil made his feelings quite clear: "The appearance of the player in England last week was proof that he and his father acted in a sneaky way."

Within 24 hours Robson and Middlesbrough chairman Steve Gibson were on the way to Spain to negotiate a transfer deal which would thrill fans who hero-worshipped Juninho in his two years at the Riverside Stadium.



One of the several anti-doping posters which were seen in the Swiss city of Lausanne yesterday on the eve of IOC conference.

IOC's biggest test yet

LAUSANNE, Switzerland, Feb 2: The International Olympic Committee's (IOC) much-heralded conference into sports drug cheats which opens here today threatens to be submerged by ever-growing sleaze allegations surrounding IOC members, reports AP.

When IOC president Juan Antonio Samaranch announced late last year the three-day world conference on doping in sport in a bid to get international agreement on how to stop the drug-takers, there was no hint of the scandal that was to engulf the IOC and call into question the very people who were supposed to be the protectors of the Olympic ideal.

Now the embattled 78-year-old Samaranch is fighting off calls for his resignation and for a wholesale clean-up of the tainted movement.

With new allegations appearing almost daily in the world's press, the IOC is finding itself distracted from the conference.

When Samaranch met the world's top news agencies on Sunday, the forthcoming conference was secondary. It was the corruption scandal that was number one on the agenda.

"The leadership has become consumed with the scandal. Some members are fighting for their very survival, others are trying to use the affair for their own ends," said one senior IOC member on Monday.

It was supposed to be a message to the world that the IOC leadership was in control and ready to clean up its affairs.

But only days later IOC vice-president Dick Pound, who led the sleaze inquiry that named 13 members, admitted that an "indefinite number" of names had been added to the inquiry list since its initial report eight days ago.

"I am scared to look at these papers now. Every day there seems to be something new. I don't know how much longer we can go on like this," said one IOC member on Monday.

Samaranch has ruled out resigning, insisting that the movement needs him more than ever.

The former Spanish diplomat will leave the IOC in 2001 at the session in Moscow and he is determined to hand over a clean movement to his successor.

A successful outcome to the doping conference would give the movement a much needed breath but on the eve of the meeting there was growing fears that the whole affair would end up deciding very little.

With the international sports federations deeply divided on what sanctions to impose on guilty athletes, the conference will be hard pressed to come up with a compromise.

While everyone agrees that doping in sport must be ended, no one can agree what punishment can be handed down to athletes caught cheating.

Both FIFA, football's governing world body, and the International Tennis Federation (ITF) are firmly opposed to the bid to push for an automatic two-year ban on any athlete caught taking performance-enhancing drugs.

Other federations, such as the International Amateur Athletics Federation (IAAF), insist on the two-year ban.

In a move to find a compromise, IOC medical commission supremo Prince Alexandre de Merode floated the idea that athletes should simply be suspended from certain events if they test positive.

"We are going to propose a number of sanctions, among which will be the suggestion that an athlete who tests positive will not be able to take part in the major events where there is the most money and fame for them," said De Merode.

Under the De Merode plan, a tennis player who tested positive would be barred from the Grand Slam events.

De Merode's plan is aimed at preventing athletics taking legal action, claiming restraint of trade, if they were banned for two years.

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Only a week ago the IOC executive board announced that six members were to be expelled in the votes-for-gifts scandal, one later resigned, three others were under investigation and another member given a warning, three others resigned before the inquiry completed its report."

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