

Column One SPORTS TALK



Sepp Blatter
(FIFA president)
It is vital that soccer should stop for a month.
Speaking on French television to call for an annual worldwide break.

Boost sports WHIZZ KID

COMPETITION FOR SCHOOL CHILDREN
Competition-126
Tick the Correct Answers
Post to The Daily Star
Win attractive prizes
Competition closes at 8 pm
Feb 4, 2000 and draw
shortly afterwards

1. How many centuries did Tendulkar score in the Tests series against Australia recently?	One	Two	Three
2. Who won the last ever European Cup Winners Cup soccer?	Lazio	Barcelona	Man United
3. Who was named player of the cricket World Cup?	Russner	S Waugh	David
4. Where did Maurice Greene break the 100m world record?	Athens	Seville	Toronto
5. Who lifted the National Cricket League title?	Chittagong	Sylhet	Khulna

Name

Class Roll No.

School Address

Phone: (if any)

S'nahar Hall sports on Friday

DU Correspondent
The annual sports competition of Shamsunahar Hall of Dhaka University will be held on Friday at the Central Sports Ground of the university.
State Minister for Textile A K M Jahangir Hossain will inaugurate the event in the morning as the chief guest. Pro-Vice Chancellor of DU Prof Shahad Ali will be present as the special guest.

St Gregory's annual sports

Sports Reporter
The annual sports of Saint Gregory's High School will be held at the school ground in Laxmibazar in the city next Friday morning.
Gregorian and Editor of Dainik Sangbad Ahmedul Kabir will attend the occasion as the chief guest.

M'singh Cricket

MYMENSINGH, Feb 1: Shapla Krishna Chakra defeated Asil Memorial club by 5 wickets in the Beg Rim Premier Division cricket league here today, reports UNB.
Batting first, Asil Memorial scored 187 for six in 38 overs with Mithu making an unbeaten 49 and Rabin 38 runs.
Sched captured two wickets conceding 41 runs.
In reply, Shapla reached 189 for five wickets in 35.5 overs with Nadim scoring 55 runs and Selim unbeaten 28.
Tutu took two wickets for 33 runs.

Kournikova's solid start

TOKYO, Feb 1: Russian Anna Kournikova eased her way past France's Anne-Gaëlle Sidot in the first round of the Pan-Pacific Open on Tuesday with a simple 6-3, 6-2 win, reports Reuters.
Number five seed Kournikova looked to be on top of her game as she opened the \$1.08 million tournament with a tidy display of strong groundstrokes from both sides of the court.
"I couldn't have wished for a better result," Kournikova said.

Managers in the dock



Observers of the International Cricket Council (ICC) privately expressed their concern over the management mechanism of the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) recently.

The world cricket's governing body is not at all happy with the way cricket is being managed here by the Board. The local authority was even told what it needed to do before considering itself as an eligible Test candidate, reliable sources said.

Recent course of events in cricket arena exposed BCB's sheer inefficiency in handling domestic matters and total lack of professionalism in co-ordinating international affairs. The Board is expected to maintain liaison round the year with international cricket administrators. But, the lack of proficiency, professionalism and dedication of local managers have rather brought this once-disciplined organisation into disrepute, raising doubts and disbelief in the mind of international executives.

Weaknesses of the Board in its present administration was highly evident when a three-member inspection team of the International Cricket Council (ICC) and an international cricket team, Marylebone Cricket Club (MCC), arrived in Bangladesh recently.

The ICC observers-- former Test players Nasimul Ghani of Pakistan, Andy Frycroft of Zimbabwe and Graham Dowling of New Zealand-- came to assess the latest state of overall cricket here before giving their verdict on Bangladesh's plea for Test status.

Needless to mention, this tour was a very significant one as far as Bangladesh cricket was concerned. As these ICC fact-finders were to submit an inspection report upon which

ICC, in its Management Committee meeting in Singapore early this month, would finalise its primary recommendation (for rejection).

Some of the gentlemen even took the trouble of sending as many as six faxes to the BCB asking for an itinerary of their seven-day tour. As per the normal custom, it is the host Board which should provide itinerary and do the groundwork beforehand. Much to their utter surprise, none of the Board officials concerned did even bother to reply to any one of those faxes, let alone seeking apologies. Two of their important days went down the drain as the self-busy BCB officials could finally come up with an itinerary two days after their arrival in the capital.

MCC's chief of cricket Tony Dodemaide had had the similar experience. As fax communication proved useless with the BCB, Dodemaide had to come over here to confirm the MCC tour all by himself.

However, these tourists would have found some consolation had they known that the BCB also does not even bother to prepare any work schedule for its Director of Development.

On completion of their trip, ICC inspectors however expressed their satisfaction over the infrastructure and the playing standard of Bangladesh. Although they assured that they were going to submit a positive report, but the team seemed pretty upset with the administrative set-up and the operation of the Board.

They were also found particularly unhappy with the way the Board dealt with cricketers during the last couple of months (which was marked by cricketers' boycott). Caring the national cricketers should be the prime objective of the Board, they observed. What worried them more was the insouciant influence of the clubs over the Board.

Meanwhile, the ICC observers also asked the Board to part ways with club cricket. They felt the club associations should run the club cricket and the Board has got nothing to do with that. Club representation in the Board must have to be stopped for the sake of national interest. They are alleged to have advised the Board only to run cricket at national levels with the help of six regional headquarters. BCB was also asked to bring the national cricketers under pay role, thus not allowing them to play cricket at club levels.

Hasan Masood

According to a knowledgeable source, the ICC fact-finders made some vital suggestions to BCB boss Saber Hossain Chowdhury regarding the needed reformation of the BCB to bring more professionalism and dynamism in its activities.

The team is reported to have asked Saber to overhaul the Board, keeping fewer but efficient members to run the show. A few standing committees-- Management, Marketing, Selection and Development, with the help of a chief executive officer should run the Board, they opined.

Interestingly, the Board did have the suggested set-up previously with Tanjib Ahsan Saad operating as a paid executive secretary. Saad was then performing commendably but decided to quit the job under the pressure of some vested quarters led by non-cricketers and few opportunists. Presently, two BCB joint secretaries-- Mahmud Ul Haq and former national footballer Dewan Safiul Arefin, have been 'managing' all sorts of crucial cricket affairs.

The other match between defending champion Rani Hamid (3.5) and Syeda Afzana Parveen Nira (2) was going on till filing of this report.

No matches will be played today or tomorrow. The seventh round will begin on Friday at 2:30 pm.

More longer cricket on the cards

Sports Reporter
Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) plans to hold a three-day and a four-day match this month among the leading cricketers of the country in a bid to continue with the process of acclimatising them with the demands of the longer version of the game.

The three-day will be held at the Bangabandhu National Stadium from February 7 while the four-day game will start at the same venue from February 11.

The teams for the three-day match will be announced next Friday while the teams for the four-day match will be announced later.

The process will continue after the Premier Division cricket league which starts in the city from February 17.

The national selectors will, however, keep on watching their performances during the league.

Khagrachhari sports end

From Our Correspondent
KHAGRACHHARI, Feb 1: The four-day National Schools and Madrasah Championship ended at the local stadium here on Sunday.

The events included cricket, volleyball, badminton and athletics.

Khagrachhari Government High School lifted the inter-school cricket title defeating Dighinala thana team in the final.

Mahalechhari thana team clinched the boys' volleyball event beating Khagrachhari sadar team. The Khagrachhari Girls' High School were declared winners unopposed.

Tanima takes solo lead

Sports Reporter

Title aspirant Tanima Parveen earned a solo lead in the 21st National Women's Chess Championship despite being forced to a draw by Masuda Begum in the sixth round yesterday.

In a marathon six-hour long encounter, Tanima, the former two-time champion, played white against the Modern Defence of Masuda and accepted the draw after 61 moves.

With the draw, Tanima raised her tally to five points, half a point more than Syeda Shabana Parveen Nipa who was also at the top with Tanima before the start of the round.

Nipa suffered her first defeat of the championship to Zakia Sultana and remained stuck to her previous collection of four and a half points.

Playing with black pieces against the Queen Pawn opening of Zakia, Nipa surrendered after 41 moves. Zakia, with yesterday's win, joined Nipa in the second position with the same number of points.

In the day's other matches, Nazrana Khan (4 points) defeated Afroza Haque Chowdhury (0) and Jaharana Haque Runu (3.5) beat Firoza Haque Chowdhury (5).

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Asif active in the city

Sports Reporter

Asif Iqbal, a high profile official of the International Cricket Council (ICC), arrived in the city yesterday to work out the details of a day-night limited-overs match between Asia Eleven and the Rest of the World Eleven.

The game, expected to present a galaxy of stars, will be held at the Bangabandhu National Stadium on April 8 to mark 'ICC Cricket Week' across the world for the year 2000.

The former Pakistan captain, who is also the event manager of the one-off extravaganza, had a detailed discussion with State Minister for Youth and Sports Obaidul Quader yesterday.

A representative of the TransWorld International, Miss Issywood, is accompanying Asif during his two-day visit in the city.

The renowned America-based broadcasting company won the right to cover the

Schools Cricket

MYMENSINGH, Feb 1: Mymensingh Zilla School and Sherpur GK Pilot School reached the final of the inter-school cricket competition here today, reports UNB.

Sherpur Pilot beat Netrakona Anjanam School by 31 runs in the first semifinal.

Batting first, the winners made 107 all out and in reply, Anjanam School were bowled out for 76 runs.

In the second semifinal, Mymensingh Zilla School outplayed Kishoreganj Karimganj High School by nine wickets.

Smith stays at Hampshire

Sports Reporter

LONDON, Feb 1: Hampshire's veteran batsman Robin Smith on Monday agreed to sign a new four-year contract which could keep him at the county club until he is 40, reports AFP.

Smith, who made his first class debut for Hampshire in 1982, has scored over 16,000 runs for the club and became captain two seasons ago as a replacement for John Stephenson.

Hampshire's director of cricket Tim Tremlett said: "We're delighted Robin has agreed to sign a new contract at the end of some recent negotiations. He has been an outstanding servant for this club."

Smith will work with Tremlett and new Hampshire coach Jimmy Cook, the former South African batsman, who was appointed earlier this month to replace the late Malcolm Marshall.

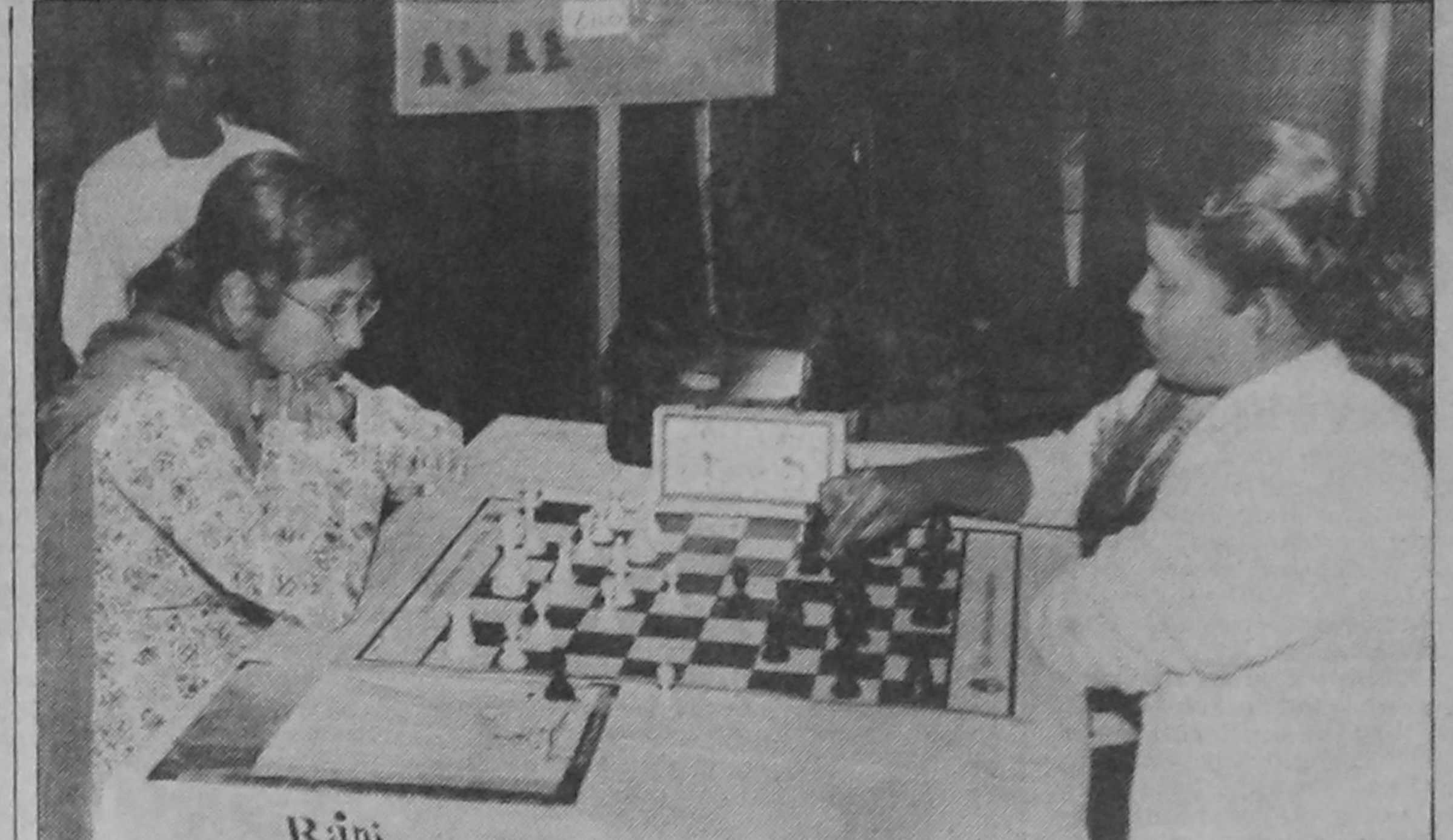
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Scene from the 21st national women's chess championship yesterday. — Star photo

First final at MCG today

Pakistan seek revenge

MELBOURNE, Feb 1: One-day kings Australia are set for a rousing showdown against gussy Pakistan when the first game of the tri-series final is played here on Wednesday, reports AFP.

The replay of the World Cup final last June promises a cricketing feast as the unpredictable but brilliant Pakistanis attempt to halt the Australian juggernaut.

Steve Waugh's home team are clear favourites to wrap up the best-of-three finals after winning seven matches in a row in the preliminary league that also featured India.

But Pakistan, eager to avenge the humiliating eight-wicket loss in the World Cup final at Lord's, will not be short

Alam rated the present team a stronger bowling side, and predicted a few surprises were in store for Australian supporters.

The way these boys have started batting and the way they have played in the series makes me confident we can win the finals," Intikhab said.

Pakistan, blanked 3-0 in the Test series in October-November, beat Australia in their opening one-day clash at Brisbane on January 9.

But Akram's men lost their next three games against the hosts, reaching the finals with a 3-1 record against arch-rivals India.

The tourists have been boosted by the return of in-form allrounder Abdur Razaq, who missed the game against India at Perth last Friday with a thigh injury.

Razaq will replace either Azhar Mahmood or Waqar Younis, while off-spinner Saqlain Mushtaq will dislodge his understudy Shoaib Malik from the side that played in Perth.

Australia, meanwhile, find themselves burdened with an embarrassment of riches as they strive to increase their 20-match winning streak from the last 22 one-dayers.

One of the all-rounders Andrew Symonds and Shane Lee may have to sit out to accommodate a three-pronged pace attack of Glenn McGrath, Damien Fleming and Brett Lee.

If both Symonds and Shane Lee play, then either Fleming or Brett Lee will be dropped.

It's a scenario that pleases captain Steve Waugh. "It's a dream to have so many in-form people to choose from," he said.

Waugh said, reminded of a similar psychological ploy by the Pakistani captain before the World Cup final.

"We have done better than Pakistan over the last year, so I am not worried.

"Each game is important to us. What we have done in the last seven matches counts for nothing if we lose the next two or three.

The second final will be played at the Sydney cricket ground on Friday, and the third, if necessary, at the same venue on Sunday.

TEAMS

AUSTRALIA (from): Steve Waugh (capt), Adam Gilchrist, Mark Waugh, Michael Bevan, Damien Martyn, Shane Lee, Brett Lee, Glenn McGrath, Shane Warne, Damien Fleming.

PAKISTAN (from): Wasim Akram (capt), Saeed Anwar, Shahid Afridi, Abdur Razaq, Ijaz Ahmed, Inzamam-ul-Haq, Yousuf Youhana, Azhar Mahmood, Moin Khan, Saqlain Mushtaq, Waqar Younis, Shoaib Akhtar.

FA Cup

Birthday boy Shearer shines bright

LONDON, Feb 1 (AFP/Internet): England striker Alan Shearer came back to haunt his former club by scoring twice, the second his 250th career goal, in Newcastle United's 2-1 win at Blackburn Rovers in an FA Cup fifth round tie at Ewood Park on Monday.

The former Rovers star put United in front after 20 minutes with his 20th goal of the season before former Crystal Palace forward Matt Jansen equalised for Rovers five minutes later.

But Shearer scored his and United's second 11 minutes from time to seal victory for Bobby Robson's side against the Division One play-off hopefuls.

The 29-year-old England star, who has come under fire on the international scene for several lacklustre performances, admitted that the frosty reception he got from the Rovers fans, who only five years ago cheered him to the rafters when his goals inspired them, had fired him up.

"Tony Parkes (the Blackburn coach) asked them to be civil but they obviously ignored him and if they want to behave in that manner that's their problem," he said.

"Anyway there's nothing I'm keener on than getting my own back and I certainly achieved that tonight. I did my talking where it matters ... on the pitch," he added.

Shearer silenced the Blackburn jeers in the best way possible when he fired Newcastle ahead with a well-taken goal.

Newcastle's Portuguese defender Helder made a great tackle to deny Jansen and

launched a superb through ball to Jansen who fired past the on-rushing Harper from just outside the area.

Play became scrappy in the early exchanges of the second half until the half hour mark when Rovers almost sensationally took the lead.

Republic of Ireland international Jason McAteer spotted the keeper off his line and as his audacious 40-yard chip headed for the top right hand corner, Harper managed to back-pedal to his goal-line before palming the ball away.

Blackburn started to dominate as United defended deep and Jansen spurned an excellent chance moments later when his effort, which rounded off an excellent exchange of passes between Frandsen and Nathan Blake, was blocked by Harper.

But for all their possession in the second half, United had the last laugh after 79 minutes and again it was Shearer who rescued United.

McAteer gave the ball away on the halfway line and the ball fell to substitute Frenchman Didier Domi who raced clear of the Blackburn defence before driving in a low cross for Shearer to slide home.

Div II Cricket

Rupali Bank, Nabin Sangha and Gandaria Cricketers won their respective matches in the Acmec Second Division cricket league at different city venues yesterday, reports UNB.

Rupali Bank defeated Kathabagan GCC by 20 runs at Mirpur Outer stadium.

At the Uttara Friends Club ground, Nabin Sangha crushed GMCC by 62 runs.

Gandaria Cricketers beat Udit Club by six wickets at UPL Ground.

Argentine U-23 booters jog during a practice session in Londrina on January 31. Argentina take on eternal rivals Brazil in a second round match of the Sydney 2000 Olympics qualifying today. — Internet photo