

Sheltech Div II
badminton
from Sept 9
Sports Reporter

The Sheltech Second Division badminton league begins at the NSC wooden floor gymnasium from Saturday.

Eight teams -- Sheikh Russell Maucha, Kathalbagan Badminton Club, Jagaran Juba Sangha, Utaran Kira Sangha, Shalbagh Badminton Club, Mirpur Badminton Club, Shutters Club and Victoria Sporting Club will take part in the league, being organised by the Bangladesh Badminton Federation.

A press conference was held yesterday at the NSC conference room with Bangladesh Badminton Federation (BBF) president Kutubuddin Alamed in the chair. Acting General Secretary of BBF Mariam Tareq and Dr Toufique M Siraj, the managing director of sponsor Sheltech Limited, were also present at the briefing.

The sponsor will provide Taka one lakh for the meet.

US OPEN
NOTEBOOK

NEW YORK, Sept 6 (AP): Fans are filling up at the US Open, ignoring the high price of concession food and beverages.

Concession sales were up 20.2 per cent for the first seven days of the tournament with the biggest sellers: 7.25 dollars hamburgers -- at about 50,000 dollars per day -- it followed by pizza-pasta and deli items.

SEE YA LATER

When No. 3 Magnus Norman lost the first match of the day against Nicolas Kiefer on Tuesday, some folks wondered if he would stick around to watch his girl friend, No. 1 Martina Hingis, play her quarterfinal match at night against Monica Seles.

"I'm going to go home to Monte Carlo as soon as possible and take a few days rest before the Olympics, try to recuperate," he said.

But if Hingis got to the finals...

"First of All," Norman said, "I have to take care of my own career, and second, you know..."

MAD NAVRATILOVA

Martina Navratilova and Arantxa Sanchez-Vicario lost their third-round women's doubles match to Anke Huber and Barbara Schett 6-3, 6-2. Afterwards, Navratilova was asked about being nostalgic as she left the court at Louis Armstrong Stadium.

"No," she said, "because I'm planning on being back. No reason to get nostalgic yet. Just (angry) that I played lousy. Really aggravated."

"I didn't let my body flow today. It really upset me. There were flashes of good stuff, but there were only flashes, unfortunately."

Navratilova and Rick Leach were beaten in mixed doubles on Monday by Anna Kournikova and Max Mirny.

French First Division
Marseille blank
Monaco

MONACO, Sept 5: Ten-man Marseille scored twice in the second half to beat French champions Monaco 2-0 at their Louis II Stadium in the French league on Tuesday, reports AFP.

Marseille, looking defensively much more solid this season, were rocked by the sending off of Zoumana Camara four minutes after the break.

Substitutes Jacques Abaranado and Djamel Belmadi however went on to score in the 77th and 90th minutes to inflict Monaco's second home loss after just six matches this season following a 5-2 thrashing by Nantes.

The April 7 fixture earlier this year between the sides at the Stade Velodrome had been a controversial affair with players exchanging verbal and physical blows.

None such trouble arose this time perhaps because of major changes in the Marseille side during the close-season.

Marseille coach Abel Braga said afterwards: "We were after this victory since the start of the championship. It was a special day because we were playing against a great team."

"We won because we went on to the pitch with a winning mentality and even reduced to 10 men we twice hit the woodwork. I'm happy for my players but not euphoric."

Premiership

MU toy with Bradford



LONDON, Sept 6: Sir Alex Ferguson may have changed his line-up but the result was still predictable as champions Manchester United thrashed Bradford 6-0 at Old Trafford on Tuesday to top the table for the first time this season, reports AFP.

Ronnie Wallwork, Jonathan Greening and Quinton Fortune, who all scored twice, made it into a United side captained for the first time by Teddy Sheringham.

Obviously inspired by wearing the captain's armband, Sheringham in the 11th minute created United's opening goal.

He played Andy Cole through on the right with a super slide-rule pass.

Cole took the ball in his stride before unleashing a shot, which came off the covering Peter Atherton and looped over the stranded Matt Clarke and into the Bradford net.

United were purring now and Nicky Butt, back after a four-match suspension, drilled a shot over from 20 yards out.

Butt tried his luck again with another stinging 20-yard effort, which Clarke could only parry.

It was all United now and Bradford, who deployed Benito Carbone and Dean Windass in attack, could hardly manage to get out of their own half.

United did not have to wait long for the second goal and it came in the 23rd minute courtesy of Quinton Fortune's left boot, although Bradford may feel aggrieved about Gary Neville's challenge on Windass in the build-up.

Neville appeared to barge Windass as he won possession and passed the ball to Sheringham.

Sheringham then fed Beckham on the right, who whipped the ball in from the right. Cole missed with a stooping header and Fortune came steaming in at the back post to give Clarke no chance from 10 yards out.

The strike was Fortune's third in the Premiership and each one has been against Bradford at Old Trafford.

Fortune scored his second of the match on the hour mark to add to the party mood.

Cole found him running down the middle of the pitch and the South African international let fly with a 25-yard shot which zipped past Clarke.

United weren't finished yet and in the 71st minute Sheringham latched on to Mikael Silvestre's long pass to rifle home goal number four.

Bradford were run over. Ole Gunnar Solskjaer and David Beckham adding two goals in the 81st and 85th minutes respectively.

At White Hart Lane former

Dynamo Kiev star Sergei Rebrov's double strike inspired Tottenham to come back from 2-0 down to win 3-2.

In an error-strewn match Tottenham full-back Ben Thatcher gifted Everton the lead.

The defender's backpass to keeper Neil Sullivan fell helplessly short and Francis Jeffers was able to make amends for his earlier miss by rolling the ball under Sullivan and over the line despite Chris Perry's desperate attempt to clear.

Alex Nyarko piled on the misery for Spurs with a second goal driven inside Sullivan's near-post from 20 yards.

But after they claimed in vain for a penalty when Freund appeared to be tripped just inside the area, Spurs pulled a goal back through Rebrov who

of being completely over-run and Paul Gerrard had to make a flying save from Oyvind Leonhardsen after Steffen Freund had cut the ball back from the byline for the Norwegian to hammer at goal from the edge of the box.

Sunderland debutant Julio Arca could not secure victory for the home side despite marking his first appearance with a goal.

The Argentinian headed his side in front after 25 minutes, but Croatian striker Davor Suker levelled within seven minutes to ensure a share of the spoils for West Ham.

Manchester City heralded their return to the top flight with an amazing victory against one of the Champions League elite.

"City are back" chanted their

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Manchester United's Quinton Fortune jumps for joy after scoring his second goal against Bradford City in their Premiership clash at Old Trafford on September 5. --AFP photo

slotted in after Les Ferdinand's shot came back off a post following a Clemence free kick.

Tottenham levelled matters with Rebrov's second goal, thus time from the penalty spot in the 61st minute after referee Barry Knight spotted an Everton hand being used to keep out Sol Campbell's header.

And two minutes later Ferdinand beat David Unsworth to a Stephen Clemence cross to flick Spurs into the lead.

Everton were now in danger

delighted fans, few of whom could have expected a result anything like this after such a shaky start to the season.

Leeds are in Barcelona next week, but City refused to be overawed and turned in a stunning performance.

First half goals from Steve Howard and Gerard Wiersma put City in command, and although Lee Bowyer pulled one back, the Maine Road men battled for their lives to secure their first away win of the season.

It may generally discuss the resumption of cricket ties with Pakistan Board chief Lt Gen Tahir Zia who is also here. But a final decision will be subject to the views of the country," he told this news agency here.

Muttiah, who is here to attend the Asian Cricket Foundation (ACF) meeting, said if the government decided that we should not play against Pakistan we would abide by that. We had limited choice in the matter."

On the issue of Kapil Dev continuing as the national team's coach, Muttiah said that would be decided only after he returned to India after the ACF meeting.

"I will have one more sitting with Kapil Dev before taking a final decision on the matter," he said.

Former ICC president Jagmohan Dalmiya and Sri Lanka Board president Thiland Sugamphala are also attending the ACF meeting.

Last month in the southern Afghan city of Kandahar, the Taliban stronghold, a visiting Pakistani youth side was arrested mid-game, taken away to have their heads shaved and deported for wearing knee-revealing shorts.

But last week in the comparatively liberal capital, the local side were wearing normal but very baggy shorts, while the visiting Afghan team had obvious extensions to bring their shorts to the knee.

The Taliban's "Islamic" law

also has rules governing men's facial hair, which cannot be trimmed, so every player was sporting a full-length beard.

Fans said that despite the bizarre restrictions, football was actually a source of relief from the real burdens of daily life in a city shattered by more than 20 years of war and ruled since 1996 by the fundamentalist militia.

Shah Mahmoud, a driver, described the atmosphere in the stadium as "rather free."

"The football is good for the people in the absence of other fun opportunities in a rather free atmosphere ... it has reinvigorated the people's spirits," he said.

It was a high-spirited match, with the Kabul team eventually winning 4-0 thanks to two spectacular goals by striker Mohammad Haroon which sparked unrestrained celebrations.

Younger men, or those fast enough to escape, were seen taunting the turbaned police, sometimes throwing them on the ground in mock prayer before being chased away with wild swings of the strap.

No photographs were possible as the Taliban have banned all images of living things as idolatry. Journalists trying to enter the ground were questioned by gun-toting guards.

The game finally resumed after about 20 minutes and the last period of the first half was played out before both sides changed ends without the usual break.

They began circling the shell-cratered running track around, the bearded young recruits leaning out of the vehicles with their AK-47s exhorting the all-male crowd to gather on the field for afternoon prayers.

Within minutes the players

had left the field and thousands of skull-capped men were kneeling in lines at one end of the ground, while the Taliban

had the prayers over loud speakers mounted on their pick-ups.

At the other end, pandemonium was breaking out as police armed with thick leather clubs charged into the stands beating those not praying.

Some spectators tried to flee by running through the stands while others sought the open spaces of the field, where thousands were still on their knees

against women from the Taliban.

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