

Sport

Magura cricket Akai Smriti emerge champs

From Our Correspondent MAGURA, Nov 3: Akai Smriti Sangha became champions in the Akai Smriti Laskar cricket tournament...

BRIEFScores

AKAI SMRITI SANGHA 94 all out in 19.2 overs (Haradhon 22, Gora 17, Ali 17, Sonon 5, Bapji 3, Firoz 4/14, Babu 3/12, Mousoor 1/13, Firoz 1/18) PATRIOT CRICKET CLUB: 74 all out in 19.4 overs (Monsoor 26, Firoz 17, Leun 8, Povel 5, Firoz 4, Ali 3/9, Haradhon 2/20, Rubel 3/22, Bapji 1/11) Result: Akai Smriti Sangha won by 20 runs.

Rajshahi v ball

From Our Correspondent RAJSHAHI, Nov 3: The qualifying round of men's volleyball tournament of the Bangladesh Games began today at the District Stadium here. Rajshahi beat Pabna 25-19, 25-18, 25-21 in the inaugural match today.

CRICKET

Mukti Sangha defeated MC Club by 18 runs in the Shaheed AHM Qamruzzaman Hena Smriti Cricket tournament at the Katakhal Adarsha College playground today. Winning toss, Mukti Sangha batted first and scored 109 runs for all in the stipulated 25 overs...

FOOTBALL

Rahanpur Football Club defeated Joint Brothers 2-0 in Chapainawabganj District football league today at the district stadium. Hadi scored both the goals.

Purabi b ball

Defending champions Dhaka Mariner Youngs Club lost to Dhumketa Club in the Purabi Insurance First Division basketball league at the Dharmonketa basketball gymnasium yesterday, reports UNB. Dhumketa tasted the first defeat to the holders 50-47 in five matches after leading the first half 30-27. Ayub caged 22 and Titas 11 for the winners while Shipul 17 and Evans 10 for the losers.

England in command

RAWALPINDI, Nov 3: All-rounder Craig White hit a sparkling century to help England take a commanding 196-run lead against Patron's XI on day three of the four-day game at the Pindi Stadium Friday, reports AFP. At close Patron's XI were 49-1, still 147 runs behind with nine wickets intact. Earlier, White hit his ninth first class hundred in 231 minutes to help the tourists gain first innings advantage. The home team made 237 in their first innings. The 30-year-old from Yorkshire played with guts and authority to hit 14 boundaries and two sixes during his 258-minute stay at the crease before being caught behind by Javed Gaefer off Mohammad Akram.

SCOREBOARD

Scorecard on Day Three of the four-day side game between England and Patron's XI at Pindi Stadium on Friday. Patron's XI: First innings 237 (Q Abbas 71, Hoggard 5-62). ENGLAND: (Overnight 212-41) Atherton c Shafiq b Sami 22, Trecothick c Abbas b Akram 8, Vaughan c Qadeer b Akram 3, Thorpe c Wasim b Abbas 88, Hick c Naveed b Sami 81, White c Qadeer b Akram 120, Nixon b Shafiq 31, Cork b Shafiq 0, Giles lbw b Abbas 39, Salisbury not out 17, Hoggard b Akram 24, Extras (lb-10, nb-14) 43, Total (All out in 120.5 overs) 433. Fall of wickets: 1-21, 2-33, 3-52, 4-195, 5-223, 6-306, 7-306, 8-389, 9-433. Bowler O M R W Akram 23.5 3 105 4 Sami 15 2 69 2 Shafiq 37 10 99 2 Salman 3 1 12 0 Ansari 22 2 90 0 Abbas 19 5 34 2 Naveed 1 0 14 0 Patron's XI: Second innings Naveed not out 23, I Abbas c Nixon b Salisbury 12, Kamran lbw 12, Extras (lb-1, nb-1) 2, Total: (For 1 wkt in 22 overs) 49. Fall of wicket: 1-26. Bowler O M R W Hoggard 5 1 10 0 Cork 5 2 9 0 Giles 6 3 10 0 Salisbury 6 0 18 0

De Silva offered money

COLOMBO, Nov 3: Sri Lanka's former vice-captain, Aravinda de Silva, has said he was approached by bookmakers with offers to fix matches but has denied accepting bribes, officials here said Friday, reports AFP. De Silva, who was alleged to have accepted 15,000 dollars in 1994 to lose a Test match in favour of India, flatly denied ever taking money, although he said he had been approached to fix matches, a cricket official said.

162-page report and relevant authenticated transcripts of evidence," said Sri Lanka's cricket chief Thilanga Sumathipala in a letter to his Indian counterpart, A C Mutiah. Sri Lanka's Ranatunga, 36, who retired from international cricket in August, said he had never had any dealings with bookmakers nor was he ever offered money to throw matches.



DE SILVA

He said De Silva had gone on two local television stations late Thursday to personally deny the allegations. The former player was not immediately available for comment Friday. The Board of Control for Cricket in Sri Lanka (BCCSL) has asked India to help probe allegations that World Cup-winning skipper Arjuna Ranatunga and his deputy, De Silva, were involved in match-fixing. The BCCSL asked its Indian counterpart for copies of a report published Wednesday by the Indian Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) that probed corruption in cricket. The BCCSL requires to obtain immediately a copy of the

Stewart has suffered

RAWALPINDI, Nov 3: Former England captain Alec Stewart on Thursday maintained he had never taken money from a bookmaker and claimed match-fixing allegations levelled against him had tainted his image, reports AFP. "These allegations have tainted my good reputation and have come as the greatest shock of my life," Stewart told a packed press conference in Pakistan. Stewart is among nine foreign players named in an Indian match-fixing report published on Wednesday. "I have categorically denied all such allegations when I talked to England and Wales Cricket Board officials on Wednesday and I maintain that," he said.

game is a good one. I have played over 100 times for England in both forms of the game and I have a strong character and will come out from this," he said. "I am sure I will be remembered as a good cricketer not only in England but throughout the world," he added. Stewart said he would cooperate with any inquiry. "If former British police commissioner Sir Paul Condon inquires into this matter I will be ready to co-operate," he said. The England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) had said it would ask the International Cricket Council's anti-corruption head Sir Paul Condon to



ALEC STEWART

inquire into the matter. "It's my words against Gupta and I know I am telling the truth," Stewart said. "I have no sinister memories of that tour and never knowingly met any Mr Gupta." Stewart, 37, was accompanied by England's media relations manager Andrew Walpole. He looked tense as he arrived but tried to relax with a few laughs and smiles. "You get hundreds of people on tour who want to talk to you, like to have your autograph and I am brought up to be polite so obliged," he said. "People have their opinion but I have served England to the best of my abilities and never done anything wrong," Stewart said, adding that allegations and rumors had been swirling around for several years, but not against England players. Asked if he was ready to face the lie detector, he said he would co-operate with Condon's inquiry. Stewart said his team members, including captain Nasser Hussain, family members and friends had supported him to the hilt. "I have spoken to my father and stand by my words," he said. The name Stewart has been mentioned in newspapers and media in a wrong time and its not pleasant for the family."

Premiership preview

Robson faces stern test

LONDON, Nov 3: Premiership big-hitters Arsenal can pile the misery on beleaguered Middlesbrough boss Bryan Robson Saturday when the teams come face to face at the Riverside Stadium, reports AFP. After 11 games the Gunners are neck and neck with Manchester United at the top of the table and only trail the title-holders on goal difference. Middlesbrough, meanwhile, have yet to win on home soil this season and the Gunners are unlikely to be in charitable mood as they look to leapfrog Sir Alex Ferguson's Red Devils. Paradoxically Robson's struggling side have won twice as many games away from home than Arsenal who have dropped nine points on their travels. This may offer some hope to the former England captain who is in desperate need for some relief from the Riverside boo-boys. Hundreds of fans have been calling for Robson's resignation with the club lying fourth from bottom with just 10 points from a possible 33. And Robson's cause suffered a further setback on Wednesday night when First Division Wimbledon dumped them out of the League Cup. Yet despite the pressure, the former Manchester United star believes he can turn things around and bring success to the North East club. "With the support and the backing that I get from the chairman (Steve Gibson) and all the staff at this club, we need to be achieving things and that's

why I came to Middlesbrough," said Robson defiantly. "That's why I did say if things haven't improved and we don't have a good season, then I might have to look at the situation and see if the chairman might be better off looking elsewhere to improve the club. "But there's still a long way to go in the season and I look at that sixth position and I feel that, with my strongest team out, we are capable of getting up there." Table-toppers Manchester United travel to Coventry who like Middlesbrough have had little joy in front of their own fans, with just one win at Highfield Road in the league this campaign. However, Coventry boss Gordon Strachan can take some solace from the fact that United are vulnerable away from Old Trafford, having lost three of their last four matches on the road - two of those in the Champions League. But the title holders are having no problems finding the net. United have scored 31 Premiership goals in 11 games and with striker Teddy Sheringham in the form of his life with 11 goals in 11 games, a home victory seems unlikely. Coventry have scored just three goals in five home games and conceded nine. Third-placed Liverpool visit

Leeds in Saturday's early morning match at Anfield. David O'Leary's young guns, tipped by many to challenge for the title, find themselves nine points adrift of the top two and have not tasted success in six matches in all competitions. On Tuesday they took a two-goal lead at First Division Luton in the League Cup but eventually went out after losing 3-2. Liverpool, however, are in good shape. Gerard Houllier's side have won their last three league games and have been boosted by the emergence of Emile Heskey as a top class goal scorer. The England striker, who has found the target six times in the Premiership, will partner Robbie Fowler in attack in the absence of the injured Michael Owen. Fixtures: kick-off 1500GMT unless stated: Saturday Charlton v Bradford, Coventry v Manchester United, Leeds v Liverpool, Manchester City v Leicester, Middlesbrough v Arsenal, Newcastle v Ipswich, Southampton v Chelsea, Tottenham v Sunderland Sunday Everton v Aston Villa (1600GMT) Monday Derby v West Ham (2000GMT)

Spartak's eighth

MOSCOW, Nov 3: Spartak Moscow clinched their eighth domestic league title in nine years, winning Thursday's crucial match 1-0 against Rostov, reports AFP. The match left Spartak with an unbeatable eight-point lead from their closest rivals Lokomotiv Moscow with two matches left in the championship. The new Russian champions' winning goal in this fixture brought forward from Saturday came from their rookie midfielder Maxim Kalinichenko.

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Dutch Sjeng Schalken is about to make a backhand return against Yevgeny Kafelnikov of Russia at the Masters Series in Stuttgart yesterday.

Sir Elton to sing Wembley song

LONDON, Nov 3: Wembley stadium may have bid farewell to football but the famous twin towers are having a musical swan-song Thursday night as Sir Elton John hosts a star-studded charity concert, reports AFP. The bulldozers will move in to demolish Wembley within days as work gets underway on a new 475-million-pound (665-million-dollar) stadium, due to open in 2003. The charity organisers and FA Cup sponsors AXA, the French insurance company, are hoping to raise one million pounds (1.5m dollars) for children's charities. Singer-songwriter John will be joined on stage by singer Chris De Burgh and British soprano Lesley Garrett. Brazilian soccer legend Pele, who never had the chance to play at Wembley, will kick the final ball on the famous Wembley pitch. 1966 England World Cup winner Sir Bobby Charlton, former heavyweight boxing champion Frank Bruno, Live Aid organiser and former Boomtown Rat Bob Geldof and five-times Olympic rowing champion Steve Redgrave will also be among 2,000 guests celebrating Wembley's past.



British pop icon Sir Elton John (L) and football legend Pele show a trophy after a charity concert at the Wembley Stadium in London on November 2. Singer and songwriter John hosted a star-studded concert to commemorate the final event at the famous playground. Pele, who didn't have the opportunity to play here ever, was there to kick the final ball on the Wembley pitch. —AFP photo

Cronje ruling now official

CAPE TOWN, Nov 3: South Africa's United Cricket Board (UCB) officially banned former captain Hansie Cronje on Thursday for life — but said it might overturn the ruling at some point in the future if the disgraced star repented, reports AFP. The UCB's general council last month passed a resolution to ban Cronje for life from all aspects of the game, while giving him seven days to respond. Cronje's lawyer, Leslie Sackstein, had threatened to sue over the resolution, but no representation was made before the deadline expired, a board source told the SAPA news agency. "Pursuant to our resolution on October 4 and with immediate effect, W.J. Cronje is banned for life from membership or participation in the UCB, its structures or activities," UCB president Percy Sonn said in a statement. But he offered a glimmer of hope for Cronje to return to the sport at some point in the future. "We acknowledge that, with effort, people are able to rehabilitate themselves over time and there may be an opportunity for the UCB to take cognisance of this possibility in the future," he said. Cronje's ban comes a day after he was named along with several leading international players in a damning report on match-fixing in India. Among his co-accused are former skippers Mohammad Azharuddin (India), Brian Lara (West Indies), Alec Stewart (England) and Salim Malik (Pakistan).

Serie A preview

Juventus hold the key

MILAN, Nov 3: Juventus visit Reggina on Sunday as they face the first of two fixtures that could determine their season — and quite possibly the future of coach Carlo Ancelotti, reports AFP. The match at Reggio Calabria may not carry the same significance as next week's do-or-die Champions League clash with Panathinaikos in Athens but failure to win will increase the sense of malaise that is suddenly afflicting the Stadio delle Alpi side. Wednesday's 2-1 home defeat by Udinese, who now top the Italian Serie A, brought the first signs that supporters are losing patience with Ancelotti with Gianluca Vialli, the former Juventus player and erstwhile Chelsea manager. And Ancelotti, who denied talk of a crisis, is nonetheless well aware that Reggina's only win of the season so far - 2-1 at home to Inter Milan - was the final nail in the coffin of his predecessor as Juve boss Marcello Lippi, sacked afterwards by the San Siro club. "If (the Reggina match) is becoming a decisive game - if the one at Athens already is, then at the same time so is the one at Reggio because it would be serious to go to Greece with two consecutive defeats in the Championship," said Ancelotti. The European crisis has been brought about by the dismissals of midfielders Zinedine Zidane and Edgar Davids that cost them the match with Hamburg SV of Germany and ruled them out of the Panathinaikos match - in Zidane's case he picked up a five-game ban. More worrying still for Ancelotti is the defence that is leaking goals at an alarming rate. Under-fire goalkeeper Edwin van der Sar has been scape-

goated by some for a catalogue of bumbles but the club's director general Luciano Moggi stood by the Dutchman Thursday, saying "He was and remains a member of the starting line-up." Moggi, who nonetheless confirmed that Uruguayan keeper Fabian Carru will join the Turin giants in January, also dismissed rumours of a crisis, saying it was a word he did not like to hear. Reggina, meanwhile, have slumped to three consecutive defeats since that Inter victory but with Juventus minds already fixed on Athens it could provide the perfect opportunity to get back on track. There are no such worries for Udinese, whose trip to Lecce could be an ideal opportunity for them to stretch their advantage. Another coach who is smiling again is Parma's Alberto Malesani who was delighted by his side's 2-0 victory over AC Milan, saying it was the best he had seen them play since they beat France's Marseille 3-0 in the 1999 UEFA Cup Final in Moscow. Malesani will be particularly encouraged by the form of three summer signings Portuguese ace Sergio Conceicao, Frenchman Johan Micoud and Cameroonian Patrick Mboma who were superb against Milan with Mboma bagging both goals. Victory at Bari would be the ideal follow-up. There are two matches Saturday. In the evening defending champions Lazio host Bologna whose three consecutive wins have lifted them level on points with third-place Roma. The other match in the afternoon sees Fiorentina host Perugia in Florence. Fixtures (14:00 GMT unless stated): Saturday: Fiorentina v Perugia, Lazio v Bologna (19:30) Sunday: Bari v Parma, Brescia v AS Roma, AC Milan v Atalanta, Napoli v Vicenza, Reggina v Juventus, Udinese v Lecce, Verona v Inter Milan (19:30)

German Cup Bayern baffled

BERLIN, Nov 3: Defending champions Bayern Munich were licking their wounds Thursday after the reigning league champions and cup holders endured a German Cup humiliation by losing on penalties to Fourth Division FC Magdeburg, reports AFP. Wednesday night's second round match was looked at 1-1 at the end of extra-time and eastern German side Magdeburg won 4-2 on penalties in a battle of two sides who once ruled Europe. Bayern won the European Cup from 1974 to 1976 and Magdeburg won the now defunct European Cup Winners Cup in 1974. But while Bayern remain one of Europe's top sides Magdeburg are a far cry from their 70's team and have slid into amateur football since the demise of the old East Germany. Under-fire goalkeeper Edwin van der Sar has been scape-

Bundesliga preview

K'slautern's opportunity

BERLIN, Nov 3: Fourth placed Kaiserslautern will attempt to leapfrog Schalke 04 to go third at the Fritz Walter Stadium on Saturday afternoon in what should be the pick of the Bundesliga ties this weekend, reports AFP. Current champions go into the match off the back of three victories since Andreas Brehme took over from Otto Rehhel as coach. Brehme's side has won away at both Borussia Dortmund and Munch 1860 and at home to Werder Bremen, scoring eight and conceding one during that period. Brehme should bag his fourth consecutive victory against off-form Schalke 04, who have won only four points from as many league matches of late and needed extra time to get past second division St Pauli in mid-week. Hertha Berlin went top last weekend beating 1860 Munich toppling giants Bayern Munich who could only draw at Werder Bremen who this week travel to Hertha. Improving Bremen have drawn three and won one of their last five but the trip to the capital, with Hertha 11 points above them, could be a step too far. Champions Bayern Munich host Borussia Dortmund, who floored on the stock market on Tuesday and had a borrowing time of it as their share price dropped 13 percent on the first day.

Top seeds sent packing

STUTTGART, Nov 3 (AP): Black Thursday claimed Andre Agassi as well. Not even the former No 1 in the world could save the day for top-seeded players at the Stuttgart Masters Series. One by one, No 1 Marat Safin, No 2 Gustavo Kuerten, No 3 Magnus Norman went out in the third round, to be followed by No 4 Agassi. Agassi lost 6-3, 6-4 to Andrei Pavel, a Romanian who had lost all four of their previous four matches. Agassi dropped his opening service games in each set and never came close to breaking Pavel's. The defeat interrupted Agassi's comeback after a two-month break following his second-round loss at the US Open. Agassi hasn't had much success after winning the Australian Open, the first Grand Slam of the year. He's also been distracted by the illnesses of his mother and sister, who are battling breast cancer. Kuerten the French Open champion and Safin, the US Open champion, are battling for the No 1 world ranking, and both missed opportunities to make ground. Safin, the top seed, lost 7-5 (2), 6-4 to Greg Rusedski. Kuerten, who was seeded second, lost 7-6 (9), 6-3 to Sebastian Grosjean.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

Crossword puzzle grid with clues. ACROSS: 1 Mis-erables, 4 Little Women, 7 End character, 12 Napoleon or Nero, 13 Pink-slip, 14 Knights' wives, 15 Expert, 16 Brits call it a sleeping policeman, 18 The Red or the Black, 19 Firetruck, 20 Flavor enhancer, 22 Cath. or Prot., 23 Masticate, 27 Jennifer Lopez film, 31 VCR button, 34 Lost cause, 35 Hun bigwig, 37 Swab, 38 Reggae-like music, 41 Counterfeit, 45 Burn a bit, 47 Weapon, 48 It'll give you that sinking feeling, 52 Skeddadle, 53 Boredom, 54 What couch potatoes do, 55 Raw mineral, 56 Ate in style, 57 Summer (Fr.), 58 Nancy Drew's beau, 59 Firetruck equipment, 2 Host, 3 Asparagus serving of stock, 4 Long-popular sitcom, 5 GNP factor, 6 Gaggle members, 7 Probability, 8 Queen of the fairies, 9 Ostrich's cousin, 10 Prized possession, 11 Snake, 17 Silvery ones, 21 Foundation, 23 Sounds of, 24 Biddy, 25 Compass pl., 26 Milieu of 4-Drows, 28 Brooks or Blanc, 30 "I trouble, 31 Crony, 32 Nashed, 33 Salt Lake athlete, 36 Un-repaired, 37 It's attractive, 40 Jack, 42 Great Lake, 43 Blue hue, 44 Sought, 45-Pallet, 46 Move sideways, 48 Prof. abbr., 49 Numerical prefix, 50 B&B, 51 Prompt

Cryptoquip puzzle. GEZ' O GO PDKGDFSPKD OISO SJCEGNGSZ'E YSFBXGOD YGKJ GE 'PSNI OB OI D YCOCKD' ? Yesterday's Cryptoquip: THE KNIFE MANUFACTURER WHO LIKED TO PLAY PRANKS WAS DEFINITELY SOME CUP. Today's Cryptoquip Clue: Y equals F. 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.