

Magura h'ball

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Magura

New Star Club and Eagles Club earned comfortable wins in the Econo Handball League at the local stadium here yesterday.

New Star trounced Amaresh Bose Degree College 18-1 and Eagles outplayed Babukhali College Ekadosh 30-7.

Tanvir Hasan Ekadosh will take on Magura Ekadosh while Abul Hossain Smriti Sangsad face Shaheed Mintu Sangha today at the same venue.

Rajib stays 2nd

SPORTS REPORTER

International Master Enamul Hossain Rajib shared point in the sixth round with a local player in the Dortmund Open International Chess Tournament in Germany.

Rajib however kept the second spot intact, securing 4.5 points while FIDE Master Talbur Rahman Sumon won his board against Rehberg of Germany to improve his tally to four points.

Lars Stark of Germany, Klyuser, Vyacheslav of Ukraine and Michail Saitaev of Uzbekistan are sharing the lead with 5 points each.

World cycling champ skips Olympics

REUTERS, Brussels

Belgian world champion mountain biker Filip Meirhaeghe has pulled out of the Olympics and quit the sport after admitting testing positive for a banned substance.

The 33-year-old, considered one of Belgium's best hopes for a gold medal at the August 13-29 Games in Athens, said on Thursday he was retiring after testing positive for the blood-boosting substance EPO (erythropoietin) last month.

"It was during a training camp in Austria, seven weeks ago, that I tried EPO for the first time," he told a news conference.

Div I h'ball

FROM PAGE 13 Suriyadage dumped Mansoor Sporting Club 26-14 after dominating the first half 15-8.

Orient also earned a convincing 24-10 win over Swatirha Club after dominating the first half 15-5.

Star WHIZZ KID COMPETITION 215

Tick the correct answers, post to

The Daily Star
Win attractive prizes

Competition closes at 8 pm
August 6, 2004 and draw
shortly afterwards

1. Who clinched the national tennis men's crown?
Pasta Amal Murad

2. How many Test wickets has Shane Warne taken?
519 527 434

3. Who won the Wimbledon men's title?
Agassi Federer Henman

4. Who lifted the Wimbledon women's crown?
Serena Sharapova Venus

5. Who are the Euro 2004 soccer champions?
Portugal Greece France

Name
Class Roll No.
School Address

Phone: (If any)

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

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Solution time: 25 mins.
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CREAT TEA TRAM
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Scene from the fourth round matches of the sixth Standard Chartered School Chess Tournament at the federation hall room yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

SA to start from SL

Cricket

REUTERS, Colombo

South Africa have identified their tour of Sri Lanka as a launching pad for their bid to challenge Australia for top spot in the world Test rankings.

England's recent run of Test victories has knocked South Africa out of second position but they will reclaim the spot if they defeat Sri Lanka 2-0 in the two-match series.

"We haven't been playing as good cricket as we are used to and capable of and that is reflected in the ranking," coach Eric Simons told reporters following the team's arrival in Colombo on Wednesday.

"Our focus will be to take each game and series as it comes and our bigger concern has been the big gap between us and Australia -- we need to close that gap," he added. "We don't want to be number two, we want to be number one."

Skipper Graeme Smith expects Sri Lanka to provide his team with a stern test before series against India and England later this year.

"A good tour here would give us a lot of confidence going forward," Smith told reporters. "It is a very

tough place for us to come and play but we are certainly looking forward to the challenge.

"We know we are talented cricketers, who can do a lot with the ball and the bat, but our confidence and mental strength needs to match our ability," he added.

"If we can get those two things to match our ability then we will be a powerful side."

South Africa, returning to international cricket after a two-month break, start the first Test on August 4 in Galle and only have one week to acclimatise to the sapping heat and humidity in Sri Lanka.

"Obviously, being winter in South Africa it is not that easy to work in similar conditions to what we are going to work in over here so our preparation before the first Test is going to be very important," Smith said.

South Africa kicked off those preparations with a light workout on Wednesday. Another practice is scheduled for Thursday morning before a three-day game against a Sri Lanka Cricket President's XI starting on Friday.

Five one-day internationals follow the second Test in Colombo.

Gibbs out of first Test

REUTERS, Colombo

South Africa opener Herschelle Gibbs will miss the first Test against Sri Lanka in Galle next week because of an ankle injury.

Gibbs sprained his ankle during a training session in Pretoria before the team's departure for Sri Lanka but travelled with the squad and is now undergoing intensive treatment with physiotherapist Shane Jabaar.

South Africa hope he will be fit for the second Test in Colombo which starts on August 13 and the five-match one-day series that follows.

"He is out of the first Test (starting on August 4) but the physio is working hard to get him going for the second Test," skipper Graeme Smith told reporters.

Left-handed opener Andrew Puttick, 23, was called up before the team's departure and will have an opportunity to stake his claim for his first cap during a three-day, warm-up match against a Sri Lanka Cricket President's XI starting on Friday.

Miandad slams Woolmer

CRICINFO, undated

Former Pakistan coach Javed Miandad has come out strongly against his successor Bob Woolmer's slamming of the bonus-point system in the ongoing Asia Cup.

"There is no point in crying hoarse over the bonus-point system," Miandad said while speaking to a private news channel in Kolkata on Thursday.

Since all teams were informed of the rules and regulations prior to the tournament, Miandad felt that Pakistan should have played according to the situation.

"At least the people who are sitting in the dressing room should have intimidated the players and made them aware of the situation," and added, "rules like bonus points have their pros and cons."

About India's climatic victory over Sri Lanka, he zeroed in on two moments that made the difference. "First, Jayasuriya's dismissal at a very crucial juncture and secondly, Irfan Pathan's 49th over which was very economical."

Miandad also likened Sourav Ganguly's captaincy to Imran Khan's and said, "Sourav is a lucky captain like Imran Khan. During Imran's time, we had ended up on the winning side on number of occasions despite a number of tactical and on-field mistakes."

Saiful saves Mukti

FROM PAGE 13 Abahani Krira Chakra and Panchagarh Brothers Union on Wednesday, however saw only a couple of thousand fans to watch Mukti Joddha in action.

A local organiser said that the low turnout was due the Asia Cup cricket match between Bangladesh and Pakistan in Colombo on the same day.

But Kararchar stunned the star-studded Mukti Joddha eight minutes before the break when a Tajul cross found Mursheed only to beat country's number one goalkeeper Aminul. He did it in style sending Aminul in the wrong way.

Saiful came to his side's rescue after the break with another powerful right-footer from outside the box. But just before that Kararchar, which lost their first two first leg matches at Mymensingh by massive margins, had an easy chance to take the lead but Don misfired the ball in front of an empty net.

TEAMS

Mukti Joddha Sangsad KC: Aminul, Papal, Prodip, Ghansa, Belal, Tushar (Kabir), Biddut, Kabua, Moni, Saiful and Kanchan (Tipu).
Narsingdi Karar Char KC: Anwarul, Aowlad, Moloy, Sohel Rana, Wasim, Tajul, Najmul, Alamgir, Shobeb, Morshead, and Don.
Referee: Ramkrishna Gosh.

NATO to guard Athens Games

REUTERS, Brussels

A special forces battalion trained to defend against weapons of mass destruction has begun deployment in Greece for the forthcoming Olympic Games and Paralympic Games, says NATO.

Greece also has assurances that the alliance will assist in air and sea patrols and will command several US special forces units that will be on standby during the Athens games in case of a terrorist attack.

The weapons of mass destruction defence operation, known as Distinguished Games, is the first major mission of NATO's new Multinational Chemical Biological Radiological Nuclear Task Force, said NATO on Thursday.

The battalion expects to have a task force of troops, vehicles and equipment from Belgium, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Italy, Poland and Spain at its base in the northern Greek beach resort of Halkida by August 1.

The team is not a fighting unit, but a specialised group that helps protect civilians and public and military installations against weapons of mass destruction or leaks from chemical factories and refineries.

NATO did not disclose the battalion's size.

It will carry out surveillance and detection to protect the August 13-29 Olympics and September 17-28 Paralympics. If necessary, it will also oversee decontamination operations.

NATO ally Greece has drawn up the most expensive security plan in Olympic history to guard the first summer Olympics since the September 11, 2001 attacks on the United States.

The estimated cost of 1.0 billion euros (662 million pounds) is more than three times the amount spent to protect the Sydney 2000 Games.

Nadif brings

FROM PAGE 13

BANGLADESH U-19: First innings 230 all out in 77.3 overs (Nafees Ahmed 16, Aftab 6, Shamsur 68, Dhiman 11, Nadif 6, Mushfiqur 1, Sonnet 8, Nazmul 33, Enamul 36, Shahadat 4 not out; Cusden 4-64, Harrison 2-42, Wright 3-26, Bopara 1-31)

ENGLAND U-19: First innings (overnight 95-2)

Cook c Dhiman b Nadif 45
Denly c Dhiman b Nazmul 1
Bopara c Dhiman b Nadif 59
Hildreth c Dhiman b Nadif 27
Patel c Aftab b Nadif 0
Wright c Nadif b Enamul 78
New c Aftab b Nadif 0
Lawson c b Enamul 3
Harrison c Mushfiq b Sonet 33
Cusden not out 0
Stiff not out 0
Extras: (b-14, lb-3, w-5, nb-1) 23
Total: (All out in 81.4 overs) 269

Fall of wickets: 1-17, 2-86, 3-145, 4-147, 5-148, 6-148, 7-155, 8-269, 9-269

Bowler O M R W
Nazmul 18 5 66 1
Shahadat 12 3 35 0
Nadif 22 7 89 5
Sonet 7 1 22 1
Enamul 22.4 9 40 2

BANGLADESH U-19: Second innings

Nafees Iqbal not out 43
Nafees Ahmed lbw b Cusden 3
Aftab not out 4
Extras: (lb-2) 2
Total: (For 1 wkt in 12 overs) 52

Fall of wkt: 1-3

Bowler O M R W
Cusden 5 2 29 1
Harrison 3 0 14 0
Stiff 3 1 3 0
Patel 1 0 4 0

Umps to be wired

FROM PAGE 13 filming slow bowlers in a bid to assess their actions.

The second Test between England and West Indies that began at Edgbaston on Thursday marks the start of the process which will continue throughout the Champions Trophy held in England.

Life in Lanka

FROM PAGE 13 LAXMAN FEELING BETTER

Indian batsman VVS Laxman, who had to sit out the last two matches due to an knee injury, said yesterday morning that he was feeling better.

Having had his workout at the Taj Samudra Hotel's gymnasium, Laxman said that his condition has improved after resting and he is prepared to play in the final against Sri Lanka.

Team phiso Andrew Leipus said there was doubts over including the player for Sunday's final.

"He's fit enough for the final but not quite there yet."

"There's a bit of damage there with the bone getting bruised that is quite discomfiting," he added.

"It should normally take three to four weeks (to heal) but he should be 100 percent for the final."

Meanwhile, he said there is better news for paceman Zaheer Khan who was nursing a hamstring injury.

"Zaheer is a little bit stiff but he'll do a lot of training over the next two days and then we will have a full-strength squad for the final," Leipus added.

Tyson pumped up

Boxing

REUTERS, New York

Mike Tyson has turned his back on the past and is in upbeat mood for his fight against British heavyweight Danny Williams on Friday, when he climbs back into the ring for the first time in 17 months.

Tyson, who has not fought since a first-round knockout of Clifford Etienne in February 2003, meets Williams in Louisville, Kentucky.

"I let the past die. I can't dwell on the past," the 38-year-old Tyson told reporters on Wednesday.

"Most of my past was not euphoric. My future seems so much brighter than my past."

"I am ready. I'm just looking forward to fighting Friday night."

The self-proclaimed "baddest man on the planet", Tyson has amassed over 300 million dollars (165 million pounds) in purses throughout a turbulent career but is

now believed to owe 38 million dollars to various creditors, including the Internal Revenue Service and his ex-wife Monica Turner.

Friday's fight is the first of a proposed seven in the next two years, a plan developed by Tyson's lawyers to pay off his massive debts.

Once regarded as the most feared fighter of his generation, Tyson's fierce aura and savage skills have eroded through inactivity, fighting just twice in the last three years.

Since losing a re-match with Evander Holyfield in 1997, he has fought just eight times, compiling a record of five wins, one loss and two no contests.

The defeat was a brutal beating at the hands of Lennox Lewis, who sent Tyson to the canvas with a thundering right in the eighth round in Memphis in June 2002.

Tyson (50-4, 44 knockouts) refutes any suggestion that age is now against him.

"I am 38. I am not Moses," he said. "I am only three or four years

older than the world champions. Age is in the mind. As long as you are physically in good shape, age should not matter."

Williams, who is being given little chance against the former heavyweight champion, was also in bullish mood.

"I have been brought over here as a knockout fighter for Mike Tyson," the 31-year-old told reporters. "They've made a mistake."

"I feel relaxed. I am confident. Mike's best chances are in the first four rounds. After that, he is mine."

British bookmakers disagree. Williams is a 9-1 underdog with critics quick to point out he was knocked out in the fourth round by compatriot Julius Francis, who failed to last two rounds when he fought Tyson.

The fight will be televised on pay-per-view. Laila Ali is also on the card, but Kentucky boxing fans have been slow to snap up the tickets, with approximately 6,000 of the 20,000 seats available at the Freedom Hall.

6 more with Odumbe

Cricket

AFP, Nairobi

The estranged wife of former Kenya cricket captain Maurice Odumbe has implicated six other players in the corruption scandal involving her husband at an international Cricket Council (ICC) tribunal here Thursday.

Katherine Maloney told the hearing that the group of six had received 5,000 dollars from Jagdish Sodha, the same Indian bookmaker who is alleged to have had links with Odumbe.

"Maurice said he had been approached by a middleman of a bookmaker to throw away a match. He had invited five or six members of the team because he could not do it alone," Maloney said in her testimony, recorded by the ICC Anti-Corruption and Security Unit investigators.

Maloney, who was summoned as a witness to the case by presiding judge Ahmed Ebrahim of Zimbabwe, said his client would not be giving

said the players' relationship with Sodha had led to a breakdown in her two-year marriage with Odumbe.

The couple, who have two children, are currently involved in a bitter divorce settlement in Kenya.

"I was very unhappy about the relationship because Maurice has said Sodha was a gangster and I did not want any friendship with Sodha because I disapproved of this match-fixing business," said Maloney, who recounted one occasion in 2002 when Odumbe sent her to collect 10,000 dollars from Sodha at his Nairobi hotel room.

"He handed me a roll of American dollars. I was uncomfortable and expressed concern about all this money. I was worried I was participating in something I did not know, but he said the money was for a pharmaceutical business," she added.

"This is no business I am aware of. The only pharmaceutical was medicine for Maurice's mother who was ailing with hypertension," Maloney said.

Odumbe's lawyer Ishan Kapila said his client would not be giving

evidence in the tribunal, as he had a strong case derived from the preliminary objections and the cross-examinations by the witnesses.

"There is nothing to be gained by Odumbe giving evidence, but there is need to do so on the evidence presented in this tribunal," Kapila said.

He said he would prepare his written submissions, to be presented on Friday, which would "outline the contents of our defence."

Earlier on Wednesday, the ICC tribunal was told that Odumbe made four trips to an Indian bookmaker in Mumbai before last year's cricket World Cup.

The claim was made by Martin Hawkins, one of the ICC's Anti-Corruption and Security Unit officers who gave evidence at the hearing.

Hawkins said he investigated Odumbe's telephone calls, travels and hotel accommodation between January and December 2002.

He told the inquiry he interviewed the player in his hotel room in Johannesburg during the World Cup in South Africa over his friendship with the bookie, Sodha and his trips to Mumbai.

Poor the Tigers remain

FROM PAGE 13

second slip after scoring only one. The tall right-arm paceman also took two more wickets to finish his first spell with 7-2-16-3.

Makeshift opener Rajin Saleh, who had been a total failure in the tournament, played for survival and crawled to 23 from 48 balls before he edged Abdul Razzak to Younis Khan at slip. He hit two fours.

Rajin shared 33 runs for the sixth wicket with Mashud.

Mashed also added 38 runs for the seventh wicket with Mushfiqur Rahman (21 off 65 balls) to take the total past 100. The partnership was broken when Mushfiq was adjudged lbw off Shoaib Akhtar. It was the fourth leg before decision against Bangladesh and Mushfiq could claim to be a bit unlucky as television replay later showed the ball was missing his leg stump.

Tapash Baisya played a few confident shots to rattle 14 off 22 balls but he became the fifth lbw victim in the Bangladesh innings.

Having led an all-too-familiar fightback by the tail for over two

hours, Mashud -- the only Bangladeshi cricketer to have scored over 1,000 ODI runs -- gave away his wicket when he mistimed a wild pull off Sami and was clean bowled.

SCOREBOARD
Scoreboard of the Asia Cup super league match between Bangladesh and Pakistan at the Premadasa Stadium on Thursday:

PAKISTAN
Hameed c Manjarul b Baisya 11
Nazir c Faisal b Aziz 27
Malik b Razzak 48
Youshan c Mushfiq b Manjarul 39
Younis not out 16
Razzak not out 16
Extras: (b-2, lb-1, w-4, nb-3) 10
Total: (For 4 wkt in 41) 167

Did not bat: Moin, Inzamam, Sami, Akhtar, Shabbir
Fall of wickets: 1-35, 2-52, 3-118, 4-137

Bowler O M R W
Manjarul c Moin b Shabbir 0
Mashed b Sami 54
Baisya 10 1 42 1
Aziz 7 1 32 1
Mushfiq 6 0 26 0
Razzak 10 1 29 1
Manjarul 8 1 35 1

Result: Pakistan won by 6 wickets.
Toss: Bangladesh.

Umpires: Billy Bowden (New Zealand) and Peter Parker (Australia)

THE SECURITY PRINTING CORPORATION (BANGLADESH) LTD

Gazipur

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