

## Army, Faridpur

FROM PAGE 13  
Maulana Bhasani Hockey Stadium  
yesterday.

Siddiqi and Shafuzzaman scored one goal each for Army after a barren first half.

Army emerged Group A champions with their second consecutive victory in the super-league, followed by Bangladesh Navy who also reached the last four.

In the day's other match, Faridpur defeated last year's runners-up Dhaka University 3-1 to become Group B champions.

Hamid, Prashanto and Sham-suddin Tuhin scored for Faridpur who led 2-0 at the breather.

Ariful Haque Prince scored the consolation goal for the vanquished.

Dhaka University reached the semifinal despite this loss.

Both the semifinals will be held today with Navy playing Faridpur (2.30 pm) and Army facing Dhaka University (4.30 pm).

## Our cricket team

FROM PAGE 13  
down the wicket and drive the ball to off and on, not necessarily for six.

Of the batsmen Khaled Mashud has adopted this technique admirably. Most of our front-line batsmen don't move their left foot and body sufficiently to the line of the ball while negotiating an outswinger, resulting in getting a snick.

I think we should be more careful before including a newcomer in the team. We must assess carefully his techniques and his capabilities and give him sufficient time to develop himself for any big encounters. In the last three or four years we have included a number of new players in the team only to find them dropping out later on.

When given a chance one must be given a sufficient period of time to develop so that he may continue to play for the team.

Lastly, I would say that to get a good consistent performance from a player we must develop our local cricket. In the eighties and nineties we had a number of very good cricketers who were the product of Dhaka Cricket League.

It was very competitive and lots of foreign cricketers participated regularly in the league. Some of the products of that period were Gazi Ashraf Hossain, Minhazul Abedin, Akram Khan, Aminul Islam, Athar Ali Khan, Faruque Ahmed, Saiful Islam, Golam Nowsheer Prince, Enamul Haque. Highly committed players like them are unfortunately no longer in the team anymore.

Former Sri Lankan cricket captain Arjuna Ranatunga while commenting on Bangladesh team's performance in Asia Cup said that the team he saw in his playing days was much more capable and committed than the present one.

The Dhaka League was very organised and competitive and staged regularly in eighties and nineties. Now it is absent. The idea of National League is a very impressive one but it cannot be a substitute for Dhaka League. Serious competitiveness is totally absent in the National League and it is staged mostly on under-prepared wickets, which does not serve the purpose at all.

True, hard and fast wickets are an essential element for proper development of cricket where a batsman and a bowler will get an equal advantage. We should remember that there are no shortcuts to success and the organisers must have a clear vision of the problems and how to sort them out.

I strongly urge the Bangladesh Cricket Board to publish a yearly cricket calendar and reintroduce the highly competitive Dhaka League. The BCB might also introduce another tournament (of three-day matches) on a regular basis with Bangladesh, Bangladesh 'A' and Under-19 taking part, which will definitely provide competitiveness among the teams and players and also be very helpful for the selectors.

The writer is a former chairman of selectors, Bangladesh Cricket Control Board.



Action from yesterday's ANAS Group National Hockey Championship encounter between Bangladesh Army and Dhaka at the Maulana Bhasani National Stadium.

## Athens starts countdown

APP, Athens



The ancient city of Athens was beginning the biggest week in its modern history as it prepared to welcome the Olympic Games back to their spiritual home.

After months of concerns that the venues would not be complete in time, almost everything is ready, excitement is mounting and the flame will be lit at a packed Olympic Stadium on Friday.

Rogge said: "The IOC is extremely pleased by the preparations and we are very glad to see that the promises that have been made to us by the organisers have been kept."

"We look forward to the Games. These Games will be very, very good."

The security arrangements for the first Summer Olympics to take place

4,500 sold daily in June.

The German coach of Greece's European Championship-winning football team, Otto Rehhagel, on Sunday carried the Olympic flame across a suspension bridge that was completed ahead of schedule in a symbol of the way Greece has speeded up its preparations in a bid to impress the watching world.

"We believe that they've put enormous resources into it," Rice told CNN. "In fact, we've been in very close cooperation with them for now a good deal of time. They have gone to NATO for some help. They really, I think, are doing everything that they can to make this safe Games," she said.

Some of the security measures have met opposition from civil rights groups. A Greek judge was to rule Monday on whether a high-tech surveillance zeppelin should be allowed to remain airborne above Athens after it was alleged it invades people's privacy.

The Democratic Rally rights group last week asked an Athens court for a restraining order to ground the blimp.

"Our sources tell us that the zeppelin registers in detail our private life and can record telephone and private conversations," said Stratis Korakas, a former lawmaker for Greece's Communist Party (KKE) and a member of Democratic Rally.

The Olympic movement will be hoping it has already weathered its worst storm, after a stormy weekend in which corruption again raised its ugly head.

Bulgarian IOC member Ivan Slavkov was suspended after being captured by a BBC programme claiming that he was ready to help London win the battle to host the 2012 Games in return for a payment.

An emotional Rogge could not hide his anger that the IOC had once again become embroiled in scandal.

"You see in front of you an angry man. Angry at the behaviour of some people within and without the IOC. I'm angry because the behaviour of some is tarnishing what is a wonderful movement. It's also very sad to see some people don't respect the rules," he said.

Ten IOC members were expelled or forced to resign after the Salt Lake City scandal in 1999 when members were caught selling bids to back the American city to host the Winter Games.

Referee: Mansoor Azad

## 'Eric The Eel' will be missing

APP, Sydney



A bureaucratic bungle will keep Eric 'The Eel' Moussambani, who won hearts at the Sydney Olympics with his slow but dogged performance in the swimming pool, from a repeat Olympic performance in Athens.

The Sydney Morning Herald reported Saturday that Moussambani was devastated after the Equatorial Guinean Olympic Committee failed to submit his accreditation to Athens, making him ineligible to compete.

The committee had been unable to find his passport photo, the paper reported.

"I don't know what to do, there is a point now," Moussambani told the newspaper.

Moussambani had been training in Spain when he was told to return home.

"They told me I have to come back to my country so I can go with the other athletes to Athens. Now they say I can't go. It cost me a lot of money to fly from here to Spain."

Moussambani shot to international fame as a wildcard entrant in the 2000 Sydney Olympics, where he failed his way to last in the 100 metre heats in a time eight seconds slower than Australian Ian Thorpe's effort

over 200 metres.

He had taken up swimming just nine months before the Games in a nation with just two pools and the Australian crowds cheered his plucky performance with enthusiasm rivaling that for a world-record swim.

Swimwear company Speedo promptly sponsored him and over the next 12 months Moussambani was flown around Europe doing interviews and launching products.

Moussambani, who claims to have almost halved his 100 metre time, had hoped an improved performance in Athens would reignite his career and allow him to pursue his dream of studying engineering in Florida, the Herald reported.

But it said he was now considering retirement.

"I would like to continue swimming, but I don't know if I can right now," he said.

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ERIC MOUSSAMBANI

Solution time: 25 mins.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS 1 Post-bath 33 Oodles 53 Pantheon 19 Dawn 54 Foul up 21 Invite 23 Whodunit 24 100 26 South 27 Ford or Lincoln 28 Having a taste 32 Refer (to) 33 Art houses? 35 Street address? 36 Make up your mind 38 Borders 39 AMPAS 42 Big story 43 Passenger 44 Nose-in-the-air sort 45 Carry-on 46 "I" 48 Neither's mate

DOWN 8 Valhalla 36 Top 37 Anti-DOWN 12 Asian nursemaid 13 Scrooge's cry 14 Long (for) 41 Takes the helm 45 "Wozzeck" 47 Biz 49 Read — (study) 50 Author 51 Downy accessory 52 Soybean paste 55 Ambassador 56 Odors 57 Plush 58 Solution time: 25 mins.

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