

Bashar scare for Tigers

 **Cricket**

SPORTS REPORTER

A training ground injury to his troubled right thumb will keep Bangladesh captain Habibul Bashar out of action for at least ten days.

Bashar was struck on the thumb while batting during yesterday's nets at the Bangabandhu National Stadium. It was a similar injury to the one the Tigers skipper had suffered while playing against England in Chittagong last year.

"There is evidence of fracture in the X-ray," Bashar told The Daily Star last night after he had consulted trainer Justin Cordy with the report.

"I will continue to train with the team but I will not attend the batting or fielding sessions," Bashar said adding that there was pain and swelling in the area where he was hurt.

Cordy however termed the fracture

as of "minor" proportions and was confident that the country's number one batter will be fit in time for the ICC Champions Trophy in England next



HABIBUL BASHAR

month.

"He will take ten days to recover and we might not risk playing him in Bangladesh's practice match in

Scotland prior to the Champions Trophy. But he is not a worry for the tournament," said Cordy.

All-rounder Manzarul Islam Rana complained of back pains after the squad's weight training session in the morning. Manzarul did not participate in the nets later. But Cordy, who himself had rejoined the camp on Monday after recovering from illness, said that there was nothing to be concerned about in Manzarul's case too.

Cordy has opted for a more relaxed fitness programme for the England tour compared to the tough physical workout the cricketers endured before the Asia Cup in Sri Lanka.

There were whisperings too that some players were not pleased with the 'excessive' load and had blamed the over-emphasis on fitness as a reason for their lacklustre showing in the regional event.

When asked about the criticism

Under-19s call the shots

SPORTS REPORTER

Having lost the first two Tests and the series, Bangladesh U-19 cricketers hit back in the third and final Test against England when the junior Tigers shot out the home side for 185 in the first innings on the opening day at Glamorgan yesterday.

The tourists wiped out 58 of those runs at tea losing the wickets of Shahriar Nafees and Aftab Ahmed. Opener Nafees Iqbal was batting on 39 and Shamsur Rahman on 4.

England elected to bat first and lost Joe Denly for a duck when the opener was run out with just one run on board. England never recovered from that early damage as paceman Rubaiyat Haque picked two wickets to reduce England to 23-3.

Captain Alistair Cook tried to steady the innings with a 66-ball 36, but gave in to the Bangladesh spin duo -- Ashim Chowdhury and Nadif Chowdhury -- who got on top to wrap up the England essay inside 50 overs.

Ashim went on to take 3-30 from 10.1 overs while Nadif and Rubaiyat also chipped in with a couple of wickets each.

Fiery paceman Shahadat Hossain, who joined the party late, was expensive and conceded 70 runs for his two wickets.

SCORECARD

Scorecard at tea on the first day of the third and final Test between Bangladesh Under-19 and England Under-19 at Cardiff yesterday:

ENGLAND UNDER-19: First innings

Cook lbw b Ashim	36
Denly run out	0
Ali c Mushfiq b Rubaiyat	8
Bopara c Mushfiq b Rubaiyat	0
Davies lbw b Nadif	6
Patel c Rubaiyat b Nadif	65
Smith b Ashim	1
Turner b Shahadat	13
Cusden b Shahadat	5
Griffiths c Aftab b Ashim	21

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Beijing bonanza

REUTERS, Beijing

China is in the grip of a gold rush. Olympic fever is keeping tens of millions of Chinese awake and watching television into the early hours as their sports heroes leap to the top of the medal standings, amassing 10 golds in just four days at the Athens Games.

Colour pictures of athletes fill the newspapers, sports writers pump out fulsome biographies and interviews with medal winners and television serves up a rich diet of Olympic programming, sweeping aside popular soap operas and game shows.

Every few minutes the Chinese national anthem rings out on one of the many state-run television channels along with yet another shot of China's red flag rising above a Greek stadium.

"Due to the five-hour time difference, millions of Chinese sports fans have to sit before their televisions sometimes until day almost breaks," said the China Daily newspaper on Tuesday.

"But each gold medal Chinese athletes win comes as a prize for our loud shouts of 'come on' from thousands of miles away."

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THE FIRST GODS! Greece's Bimis Thomas and Siranidis Nikolaos (L) on their way to the gold medal in the three-metre synchronised diving competition in Athens on August 16. This was the first gold medal for the hosts in the Games.

PHOTO: AFP

Thorpedo hits Australia

AFP, Athens



Bleary-eyed Australians hailed swimmer Ian Thorpe on Tuesday after he won the 200 metres freestyle in Athens to become the sports-mad nation's greatest Olympian with five gold medals.

They had set alarm clocks and drunk coffee to stay awake through the night to cheer Thorpe as he took on the cream of world swimming in what was billed as the "race of the century".

Making a weary way to work Australians were greeted with front-page photographs of Thorpe punching the air and the words "I'm Not Done Yet", an ominous warning that the Australian is already eying the Beijing Games in 2008.

"Thorpe wins the race of his life" and "Thorpe stands alone in history", declared the newspaper headlines.

Talk radio burst with nationalist pride and Internet chat rooms were buzzing with discussion of Thorpe's Olympic feat.



IAN THORPE

all else, Thorpe was already a national hero after his three gold medals and two silvers at the Sydney 2000 Olympics.

His fifth gold, after earlier taking the

400 freestyle in Athens, places him at the top Australia's sporting pantheon, surpassing fellow swimmers Dawn Fraser and Murray Rose and runner Betty Cuthbert, who all won four.

Paul Bellotti, concierge at a Melbourne office building, said: "The man is a freak" -- an Australian compliment.

The Sydney Morning Herald said Thorpe would return "with the title of the world's best swimmer", no matter how many gold medals much fancied American teenager Michael Phelps wins.

At 21, Thorpe has seven Olympic medals in all, one short of the record held by Fraser and fellow swimmer "Madame Butterfly" Susie O'Neill.

"Ice man conquers in bloodless coup", gushed Sydney's Daily Telegraph tabloid, which devoted its first three pages to Thorpe's narrow win over Dutchman Pieter van den Hoogenband, Phelps and fellow Australian Grant Hackett.

"This was a heavyweight bout," it said, adding that the mild-mannered Thorpe had been out for

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Golden Greeks

REUTERS, Athens

Hosts Greece grabbed their first gold medal of the Athens Olympics on Monday when Nikolaos Siranidis and Thomas Bimis won the men's three-metre synchronised diving after the Chinese pair suffered a no-dive.

The Greek duo were lying fourth going into the springboard final round when leaders Bo Peng and Kenan Wang from China failed to execute their final dive properly and the judges declared a no-dive, awarding no points.

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Lovesick hubby!

AFP, Athens

A Canadian husband's love for his wife has led to a tightening-up of security in all Olympic venues, Greek organisers announced here on Tuesday.

The order to step up security was caused when a spectator at the synchronised diving, dressed in a tutu and clown shoes, mounted one of the boards and plunged into the

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Russel cruise, BU toil

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Ctg



The top two sides of last season's premiership secured contrasting wins in the Nitol-Tata National Football League here at the MA Aziz Stadium yesterday.

Murad Ahmed Milon struck twice as Premier Division runners-up Sheikh Russel Krira Chakra breezed into the super six with a thrashing 4-0 victory against Bangladesh Air Force in their final match of the four-leg first phase.

Premier League champions Brothers

Union on the other hand scored an unimpressive 2-1 win over Jhenidah Mohammedan Sporting Club in the day's other match at the same venue.

The victory, their fourth in as many games, however consolidated Brothers' position in Group B with maximum 12 points. The Oranges will play their final game against fellow Dhaka giants Mohammedan Sporting Club on August 21, which will also wrap up the Chittagong leg.

The Russel boys went into their final game knowing that they had to avoid a defeat against the airmen for a place in the super six. But at the end the new leviathans in domestic football won

comfortably.

Russel's Moroccan hit-man Quati Younnes opened the account five minutes before break. The North African forward, adjudged man of the match, found the mark with an accurate header off a Nurul Islam's right flank cross.

Sheikh Russel looked more organised in the second half and doubled the lead in the 61st minute when substitute Apu nodded home a centre from the right flank.

Three minutes later, Milon netted his first goal with a placing shot and then sealed the fate of the match

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Brothers Union's ace national forward Alfaz Ahmed taking on the Jhenidah Mohammedan defence during their Nitol-Tata National Football League encounter at the MA Aziz Stadium in Chittagong yesterday.

PHOTO: RASHED MAHMOOD

ATHENS STREET TALK

AFP, Athens

Greek basketball player Nikolaos Chatzivrettas became a father on Monday when his wife wife, Dimitra, gave birth to a boy. Chatzivrettas a 28-year-old guard with the team, left the Olympic Village to visit his new son and will be hoping for a double celebration later Tuesday when his team faces the United States.

A GREEK BABY

US canoeist Matt Taylor's wife Kieran, eight months pregnant, arrived here from the United States with a back-up plan ready in case she goes into labour with their third child while at the Olympics.

"Then we've got a little Greek baby," Taylor said.

A hospital near Olympic Stadium would be the delivery site for the baby, whose sex is unknown to the parents. A special cool tent will be provided for Kieran to watch her husband compete.

"It's pretty monumental for her to be here," he said.

"I told her that she's the real Odysseus for making this journey."

PSALM GIRL HAS ALL THE LUCK

United States archer Jennifer Nichols believes she had a little extra help in her second round win against Tetyana Berezchna of Ukraine.

"Before I shoot the arrow, I always pray to God because I believe that without his help I could never reach this level. In my quiver, I always have pages of the Bible."

PEDRO ALL SMILES

America's Jason Pedro was all smiles after winning bronze in the judo 73kg class after deciding to come out of retirement after watching the 2002 Winter Olympics in Salt Lake City.

"I remember that I was sitting that night telling my wife that I needed to go to the Olympics again," said the 33-year-

old. My medal isn't gold but it still means a lot and when I get off the plane in Boston, I'll still be wearing it along with a huge smile."

FEARLESS ABBAS

Iraqi swimmer Mohammad Abbas realized a dream by competing in the Olympic Games on Tuesday, now he dreams of seeing US-led occupation forces leave his country.

"Yes of course, they must leave," said former soldier Abbas, 26, who competed in the Olympic 100m freestyle heats on Tuesday.

Abbas won his heat in 56.81sec, 63rd out of 69 finishers.

"It doesn't matter first or last," he said.

Now, says Abbas, his goal is to break the Iraqi record in the event.

Abbas, who swam at the World Championships in Barcelona in July of last year, is competing in his first Olympic Games.



THE TALLY				
Country	G	S	B	Total
China	10	4	1	15
Australia	6	2	5	13
Japan	5	1	1	7
USA	3	5	5	13
Russia	2	5	2	9
France	2	2	3	7
Italy	2	2	1	5
Turkey	2	0	1	3
Ukraine	2	0	1	3
Germany	1	2	1	4
South Korea	1	1	2	4
Hungary	1	1	1	3
Thailand	1	0	2	3
Greece	1	0	1	2
South Africa	1	0	0	1
Netherlands	0	2	3	5
North Korea	0	2	1	3
Poland	0	2	0	2
Slovakia	0	1	1	2
Austria	0	1	0	1
Georgia	0	1	0	1
Great Britain	0	1	0	1

(As of 9:30 pm BST)

What to WATCH

BTV

Nitol-Tata National Football League
Muktijoddha vs Dhaka Abahani
Live at 4:00 pm

Athens Olympic Games
Highlights
Live at 8:30 pm

ESPN

English Premier Football League
Liverpool vs Tottenham Hotspur
Repeat at 5:30 pm

Sportscentre
Live at 8:30 pm

England vs Ukraine
Int'l Friendly Soccer
Live at 12:30 am (Thursday)

STAR Sports

Sportslive
Live at 8:00 pm