

JFA Cup football
Three more in final round

UNB, Dhaka

Three more teams -- Jamalpur, Sirajganj and Rajbari -- emerged zonal champions to reach the final round of the JFA Cup Under-16 Football tournament eliminating their respective rivals, all in tie-breaker, at the different zonal venues yesterday.

Earlier on Friday, four teams -- Feni, Meherpur, Borguna and Narsingdh -- booked the final round berth.

At the Jamalpur Stadium, hosts Jamalpur defeated Dhaka 6-5 in the tie-breaker as the match ended in a goalless draw in the regulation period.

At the Sirajganj Stadium, the host team earned a 4-3 victory over Nilphamari in the tie-breaker as the match was also locked in a goalless draw in the schedule time.

At the Rajbari Stadium, outsider Narayanganj beat hosts Rajbari 6-4 in tie-breaker as the encounter was ended in a 2-2 draw during the allocated time.

Besides, hosts Natore advanced to the zonal final eliminating Bogra 2-1 at the Natore Adhunik Stadium to play the zonal final against Rajshahi.

All Mamun and Surmon scored one each for the winners while Hannan netted the lone goal for the losers.

MSC lure

FROM PAGE 13

Abahani however stayed away from the first day's bourse at the Bangladesh Hockey Federation office. Another giant Usha recruited goalkeeper Zahid, hero of Bangladesh's penalty shootout victory over India. They also signed Mohammedan pair of Moksed and Tabib-e-Noor and Mariners' Yamin.

A total of 50 players including two in the First Division took part in yesterday's transfer.

Aussies need

FROM PAGE 13

| | | | | |
|-----------|------|---|----|---|
| Zaheer | 13 | 1 | 45 | 0 |
| Harbhajan | 30.1 | 5 | 78 | 6 |
| Kumble | 23 | 4 | 64 | 2 |

INDIA: Second innings
Chopra lbw b Gillespie 5
Sehwag lbw b McGrath 0
Dravid not out 47
Ganguly run out 5
Laxman lbw b Warner 3
Yuvraj c Gilchrist b McGrath 27
Patel lbw b Warner 4
Pathan not out 7
Extras: (b-2, lb-4, nb-1) 7
Total: (For 6 wickets in 49 overs) 105
Fall of wickets: 1-1, 2-7, 3-12, 4-19, 5-81, 6-86

To bat: Harbhajan, Zaheer, Kumble
Bowler O M R W
McGrath 12 8 9 2
Gillespie 10 4 18 1
Kasprowicz 6 1 12 0
Warne 19 4 60 2
Lehmann 2 2 0 0

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Bangladesh Cricket Board chief executive Macky Dudhia (2nd from L) and Rubel Aziz, managing director of Partex Beverage, exchange a sponsorship agreement during a ceremony at the Sonargaon Hotel yesterday.

Lankan mauling for Zim

Cricket

AFP, Rawalpindi

Sri Lanka crushed Zimbabwe by seven wickets here Saturday to virtually guarantee their place in the final of the triangular series against hosts Pakistan.

The Sri Lankans skilted the Zimbabweans for 104 and then romped home for 108-3 in just over 18 overs to leave the Africans needing a miracle if they are to progress to the October 16 final.

Zimbabwe, who have just one point from three matches, now must pull off an unlikely victory with a bonus point against Sri Lanka on Monday.

They must also hope Pakistan beat Sri Lanka with a bonus point when the two teams meet in their last league match in Lahore on October 14, to have any chance of making the final.

Sri Lanka had notched 56 by lunch, losing Saman Jayantha for 21.

After the interval, Sanath Jayasuriya hit Chigumbura for a six and two boundaries but the Zimbabwean avenged the assault by bowling Jayasuriya off the fourth delivery for 40.

Tillakaratne Dilshan, promoted to gain some practice, hit the winning boundary to finish at 26 not out.

"It was a comfortable win but we

are taking every game with the same level of intensity so we put in our best," Sri Lanka captain Marvan Atapattu said.

Earlier Sri Lanka's four-pronged pace attack shared two wickets apiece while leg-spinner Upul Chandana returned with best figures of 3-15 as the Africans collapsed in just 33 overs.

Stuart Matsikenyeri with 37 and Dion Ebrahim with 24 not out offered some resistance in an otherwise disappointing batting display.

Zimbabwe, weakened by the sacking of 15 white players who rebelled against their country's selection policies in April this year, lost their last nine wickets for just 50 runs in windy conditions.

Zimbabwe captain Tatenda Taibu said he was disappointed at his team's batting.

"It was terrible, disappointing. We are taking two steps forward and one step backward so it's not on and we must not commit the same mistakes," said Taibu.

Pacer Nuwan Zoysa forced an edge from opener Brendon Taylor for wicketkeeper Kumar Sangakkara to take a straightforward catch in the fourth over.

SCOREBOARD
Scoreboard of the fourth tri-series match between Sri Lanka and Zimbabwe in Rawalpindi on Saturday:

| | | |
|-----------------|-----------------------------|----|
| ZIMBABWE | Matsikenyeri b Maharoo | 37 |
| | Taylor c Sangakkara b Zoysa | 3 |

Another gold for Sabrina

SPORTS REPORTER

SAF Games gold medalist Sabrina Sultana clinched gold in the 50m rifle three position in the National Shooting Championships at the Gulshan Shooting Range yesterday.

A gold medalist in the 1997 SAF Games in Kathmandu, Sabrina faced little resistance to add another gold to the accounts of Dhaka Rifle Club scoring 563 points. She won a gold medal in the 50m rifle prone on Friday.

Chittagong Rifle Club's Sabrina Rahman (547 points) won silver and Shamin Rahman (531) of Kushtia Rifle Club took bronze.

Narayanganj Rifle Club's Toufiqur Rahman maintained his supremacy in the pistol events, adding a second gold in as many days.

Toufiq, who clinched the 10m air pistol gold on Friday, shot 530 points to win the 25m standard pistol gold yesterday, just ahead of Gulshan Shooting Club and country's prodigal marksman Asif Hossain (528). MA Gaffar of Ansar and VDP Shooting Club settled for silver with 495 points.

The remaining two golds out of 13 events will be decided today, the last day of the championships.

Women's football
Dhaka, Ansar win big

SPORTS REPORTER

Dhaka and Bangladesh Ansar recorded identical victories in the women's football tournament at the Bir Shreshtha Shaheed Mostafa Kamal Stadium in Kamalapur yesterday.

Farhana struck twice while Lubna, Shrabane, Hasina and Khurshida scored one goal each for Dhaka who crushed Khagrachari 6-0 while Kamrun and Maleka netted twice in Ansar's 6-0 defeat of Khulna.

BCCI to dispute court ruling

AFP, New Delhi

India's cricket board has decided to appeal against a court ruling that barred its newly-elected officials from taking office, reports said Saturday.

The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) sought a stay from the Supreme Court on the lower court's order that appointed a retired judge to run its affairs.

A two-judge bench of the Madras High Court on Friday appointed S Mohan to head the board after accepting an appeal by a private club to put on hold the results of last month's controversial elections.

The BCCI said in its petition that the lower court had committed a "gross error" by entertaining an appeal from the private club as it had not violated any undertakings.

It said the game of cricket at the national and international level involving India would come to a standstill if the lower court order was implemented.

The dispute over the elections erupted after a representative of the regional Maharashtra Cricket Association was barred from voting and outgoing president Jagmohan Dalmiya used his casting vote to decide the winner.

Dalmiya's candidate, Ranbir Singh Mahendra, was declared victor over political heavyweight Agriculture Minister Sharad Pawar. The election results had been tied 15-15 before Dalmiya's decisive vote.

The job of running the hugely rich board is keenly sought in the cricket-crazy nation and is the most influential sporting post.

Sharapova retains crown

Tennis

AFP, Tokyo

Wimbledon champion Maria Sharapova crushed Mashona Washington in straight sets to successfully defend her Japan Open tennis title here on Saturday.

The 17-year-old Russian started, who captured her first career WTA singles and doubles titles a year ago in Tokyo, retained the women's crown with a 6-0, 6-1 victory over the outclassed American.

"I feel very good. There is nothing else I can say," said Sharapova.

"I am so happy that I could defend my title in Tokyo. I played some really great tennis this week. I really showed my fans that I am the Wimbledon champion. It's just a great feeling to win here."

Coming into the final, Sharapova had a 2-1 win-loss record against Washington, all in three sets with the latest loss at New Haven in August.

But once the final started, Sharapova showed the difference between world number 10 and 61.

Sharapova dropped only one point on her serve in the first set, while Washington managed only one winner with an ace on her serve and was dependent on an error from Sharapova to give her a point.

Leading 4-0 in the second set, Sharapova seemed to lose her concentration hitting two double faults and had to save one break point in the fifth game before taking a commanding 5-0 lead.

And when Washington finally managed to keep her serve in the six, thanks to Sharapova's four errors, she stuck her arms into the air in triumph -- only to see Sharapova calmly serve out for the title two

minutes later. It was Sharapova's second straight victory in two weeks, following her debut victory in Seoul, and sixth title overall.

After her Japan victory last year, Sharapova collected titles at Quebec City and Birmingham

before beating former world number one Serena Williams to take Wimbledon.

Sharapova, who received the winner's check of 8,000 dollars, also won her first professional title in the ITF Circuit series in Gunma, north of Tokyo, two years ago.



A smiling Maria Sharapova of Russia displays the Japan Open tennis trophy in Tokyo yesterday.

Glazer steps up MU bid

Football

REUTERS, Dublin

Representatives of US sports tycoon Malcolm Glazer have made an unsolicited approach to Manchester United's biggest investors, Irish tycoons John Magnier and JP McManus, sources told Reuters on Friday.

The world's richest soccer club said on Monday it had received a bid approach but was not sure whether it would lead to a formal offer. Industry sources indicated Glazer was behind it, but he did not confirm this.

"It is understood that an unsolicited approach has been made by the Glazer camp to Cubic Expression," said the source, adding that there were no further details at this stage.

The source reiterated that Cubic Expression, the investment vehicle of racing magnates Magnier and McManus, viewed its 28.9 per cent holding in the club as a long-term

investment. Glazer holds 19.2 per cent.

Manchester United's shares jumped 2.3 per cent immediately after the news Glazer had made contact with the Irish investors, but then retreated to stand little



MALCOLM GLAZER

changed at 272 pence by 1535 GMT, valuing it around 713 million pounds (1.3 billion dollars).

The British club has said the approach contained a number of "significant conditions" and that it was seeking more details.

News of the possible bid drew an angry reaction from United fans this week who feared for the club's future if Glazer borrowed heavily to fund a takeover.

About 30 supporters from a group called the Manchester Education Committee (MEC) staged a pitch invasion at a reserve team match on Thursday carrying a "Not for Sale" banner.

Supporters opposed a planned buy-out of United in 1999 by BSKyB, the owners of Sky Television. Their protests prompted the government to refer the matter to the competition authority, which blocked the takeover.

The latest takeover approach came a week after the club warned of a 14-million-pound hit to profits this year due to lower TV revenues and less money from European football after it finished third in the Premier League in 2003-04.

SOCCER-SCOPE

REUTERS, Tokyo

Japan's national side had to postpone their departure for next week's World Cup qualifier with Oman when their flight was grounded by a typhoon on Saturday.

Japan take on Oman in Muscat on Wednesday in a match they cannot afford to lose if they are to progress to the next round of Asian qualifiers.

Typhoon "Ma-on" has caused havoc to both domestic and international airline schedules as well as disrupting rail services in central Japan.

The storm also forced the postponement of Saturday's qualifying at the Japanese Formula One Grand Prix in Suzuka.

Japan lead Oman by three points in Group Three of the Asian 2006 World Cup qualifiers. The Asian champions struggled to beat the Gulf side 1-0 at home in February.

Japanese officials said the team would fly on Sunday.

SMICER EYING JAN COMEBACK

REUTERS, London

Liverpool midfielder Vladimir Smicer is targeting a January comeback for the Premier League club following knee surgery.

The Czech international had the operation last July after injuring his right knee during Liverpool's pre-season tour of the US.

"If all goes well I'll be running at the start of December and then playing again in January," Smicer was quoted as saying on Liverpool's website on Saturday.

WOODGATE LOOKS ON BRIGHT SIDE

REUTERS, Madrid

Real Madrid defender Jonathan Woodgate is confident he will recover from a long-standing thigh injury and perform at the highest level for his new club.

The 24-year-old central defender, who was set to make his debut for the club next week after five months on the sidelines, suffered a recurrence of the injury during training on Thursday and will now go to the United States for specialist treatment.

ORTEGA CAN PLAY FOR NEWELL'S

REUTERS, Buenos Aires

Argentina's World Cup forward Ariel Ortega has been granted a permanent licence to resume his career following his acrimonious departure from Turkish club Fenerbahce.

His agent Juan Berros told the website of the daily newspaper Clarin on Friday that Ortega's new club Newell's Old Boys had reached a final agreement with Fenerbahce for the transfer of the player.

"Everything went as plan and now (Ortega) is free to continue his career with Newell's," Berros was quoted as saying.

Libya upset Egypt