

Div III qualifying cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

Four matches of the Third Division qualifying were held at different venues of the city yesterday.

Talent Hunt CA dumped Gulshan Youth CA by 90 runs at the Dharmoddi Club ground, Dhaka Cricket Academy beat Joarder Printers by 47 runs at the Utara Friends ground, ACC Blue won over Nawabpur Youth Club by 23 runs at the Residential Model School ground and Azam Wakar CC handed a 56-run defeat to Kafrul CC at the same venue.

ESPN-STAR

FROM PAGE 13
the money for title sponsorship from this particular series," added Mamun.

A BCB official said that at first ESPN-STAR Sports had asked the Board to name the title sponsors for the series but then made a complete U-turn by claiming that the BCB was contract-bound to declare it as the title sponsor.

"The BCB can not claim the full sponsorship money as there were some complicated clauses in the contract. The Board usually earns 150 thousand US dollars from selling title sponsorship but it stands to get half of that amount from the India series," he explained.

India are scheduled to arrive in Dhaka on December 7 to play two Tests and three ODIs against the Tigers.

Mamun also clarified that the title-sponsorship argument was not related to a proposed triangular series involving Bangladesh, India and another country by 2006. ESPN-STAR Sports will sponsor that tournament and Bangladesh as hosts will receive US\$ 1.2 million as bonus money when it takes place.

Sources said that the Board had already received lucrative offers from two leading Indian companies -- TATA and Videocon -- about title sponsorship.

ESPN-STAR Sports' five-year contact with the BCB worth 11.5 million dollars for telecasting rights of Bangladesh's home series' expires in 2006. The Board has reportedly received the whole amount in installments already.

Third defeat

FROM PAGE 13
Bangladesh went down 17-27 at breather against the World champions.

Bangladesh, who conceded a 28-44 points defeat in Ahmedabad on Tuesday and 39-44 points defeat in Ajmer on Thursday, will play their fourth match against the same opponents in Bhopal on Sunday.

Shamim returns

FROM PAGE 13
league match to encourage the players and Musa received a VCD player as recognition of his performance in the opener.

Earlier, title sponsor Green Delta Insurance Company Limited's chairman Nurul Absar declared the ten-team meet open in a simple ceremony.

Mohammedan Sporting Club will take on Wari Club in today's first match (1.15pm) while Mariner Youngs Club face Sonali Bank in the other match (3pm).

ICC withdraws

FROM PAGE 13
Siddhartha Shankar Ray by his side at a New Delhi hotel, participated in Thursday's three-hour teleconference with Castle, who conducted the meeting from his base in New Zealand.

Indian cricket board chief Jagmohan Dalmiya and coach John Wright joined in the hearing. Lloyd hooked in from the United States and ICC lawyer Urvashi Naidoo from London.

The Indian captain was happy at the decision and the whole process as such.

"I thank the Indian board for backing me and Mr. Castle for giving me a patient hearing," he said in Calcutta before the final Test.

"Winning this match is very important for the team as the first match was drawn. I am now looking forward to the Test with hope of winning the series," said India's most successful Test captain.

Ganguly would have missed the second and final Test against South Africa and also the first Test against Bangladesh in Dhaka from December 9 if his appeal had been dismissed.

Castle, a judge and arbitrator on the Court of Arbitration for Sport, had the power to increase, decrease or amend the penalty or otherwise substitute his own decision for that of Lloyd's.

Ganguly had been fined twice before this year in similar circumstances, in Sydney and Karachi.

His appeal cited frequent hold-ups caused by injuries to players and the ball getting wet because of excessive dew in the day/night match in Kolkata on November 13.



Scene from yesterday's Dutch-Bangla First Division Chess League engagement between Leonine Club and Titas Club at the federation hall room.

Magpies through

UEFA CUP

AFP, Paris

Newcastle United booked their place in the last 32 of the UEFA Cup on Thursday but the last round of group matches was overshadowed by another depressing outbreak of racism on European terraces.

Lee Bowyer, Shola Ameobi, Craig Bellamy and substitute Laurent Robert were all on target as Newcastle beat French side Sochaux 4-0 to register their third successive win in Group D.

However, racist taunting aimed at Partizan Belgrade's black players overshadowed the Serbian side's 2-2 draw against Lazio in Rome to plunge the game in Europe into another race shame.

Cameroun striker Pierre Boya, who scored twice in a bad-tempered Group E clash, came in for the worst treatment from a large section of Lazio's supporters with almost every one of his touches in the first half gettied with monkey-like grunting.

Our thoughts are with Sanchez Broto," joked Getafe midfielder David Cubillo.

"But this is a game we can have some say in. We've got much to win and little to lose so we might as well have a go. The key to having some success against Barcelona will be to neutralise Xavi."

Xavi Hernandez is having a stunning season for Barca and the playmaker is many pundits' early choice for the Spanish player of the season.

Barcelona will travel to Madrid's southern suburb fired up to show that they can find the net regularly after they were thwarted by Celtic's defensive tactics in their 1-1 draw in the Champions League on Wednesday.

Real Madrid's Champions League match against Bayer Leverkusen on Tuesday at the Bernabeu stadium was also marred by racist chanting with Bayer's Brazilian defenders Roque Junior and Juan the target of abuse from Real's Ultra San Roque element during the 1-1 draw.

Lazio have been fined before because of racist chanting from their supporters and could face sanctions from European football's governing body UEFA.

Boya gave Partizan a 2-0 half-time lead before Paolo Di Canio and Simone Inzaghi pulled Lazio level.

Inzaghi saw a first half penalty saved by Partizan keeper Ivica Kralj.

Rangers went top of Group F with a hard-fought 3-0 win at home over Austrian champions Graz AK.

Robbie Neilson's last-gasp goal against Basel in Switzerland gave Hearts' hopes of remaining in the tournament a huge boost.

Dennis Wyness gave the Edinburgh team the lead but Cesar Andres Carignano grabbed a late equaliser.

But the Group A match took another twist when Neilson grabbed the winner with just one minute remaining. Middlesbrough's hopes of making the next stage suffered a setback when they lost 2-0 in Spain to Villarreal in Group E.

Preview: Serie A

It's now or never for Inter

AFP, Rome

Anything but a victory at home to league leaders Juventus on Sunday will virtually extinguish Inter Milan's already slim title hopes.

"I started cramping just after lunch. That probably affected my concentration for a short period there," Langer said.

"I don't believe it was one of my best hundreds. It was more of a gritty innings."

"In terms of footwork and balance it was an excellent innings, but probably not as free-flowing as I've played before."

"Asked how he felt about reaching the milestone Langer said: "It means hopefully I'll get a game next week."

Windies

FROM PAGE 13
development of the Region, I felt it was essential to have this matter resolved in the most amicable way possible."

Ramnarine has received support for his stance against the WICB from Tim May, the chief executive of the Federation of International Cricketers' Association.

"It is ridiculous to suggest that players should agree to give away the right for third parties to use their image and attributes for advertising and promotional purposes without any financial consideration," he said.

"(They are) conditions that no group of players or player association could possibly accept."

Leonine take

FROM PAGE 13
points in their first round games, also swept their second round boards against their respective rivals to manage second and third position respectively.

Muktijoddah, featuring two GMs and one International Master, outplayed Rajshahi Daba Unnoyan Sangha to secure 7.5 points while the national flag carrier defeated Friend Chess Power to increase their tally to seven points.

In the other matches, Bangladesh Ansar beat Destiny 2000 3.5-1.5, Narayanganj City Chess Club beat Kalmepur SKKS 2.5-1.5, Farashganj SC beat Mohakhali Prodip Sanga 2.5-1.5, Star Vision Chess Team beat Anushilan DKG 3-1 and Dhaka University Chess Team beat Sonali Bank Sports and Recreation Club 2.5-1.5.

Earlier, State Minister for Youth and Sports Fazlur Rahman inaugurated the 17-team meet. Bangladesh Cricket Board president Ali Asghar, title sponsor Transcom Beverages Limited's general manager Khurshid Irfan Chowdhury and DMD Golam Morshed were also present.

Preview: Primera Liga

Barca frighteningly good

Football

AFP, Madrid

Getafe goalkeeper Sanchez Broto called in sick on the morning of last week's match against Albacete and few would blame him if he phones in again on Saturday with Barcelona the opponents later in the day.

Sanchez Broto will have the job of trying to stop the Spanish league leaders improving their scoring average of two goals a game, with African Player of the Year Samuel Eto'o topping the first division scoring charts with 10 goals.

"Our thoughts are with Sanchez Broto," joked Getafe midfielder David Cubillo.

"But this is a game we can have some say in. We've got much to win and little to lose so we might as well have a go. The key to having some success against Barcelona will be to neutralise Xavi."

Xavi Hernandez is having a stunning season for Barca and the playmaker is many pundits' early choice for the Spanish player of the season.

Saturday and then being held by 1-1 by Bayer Leverkusen in the Champions League on Tuesday.

"The dressing room is down at the moment," admitted Real's Ivan Helguera.

"The result in Barcelona was a big blow to our morale but we've still got options of winning the league and we are still in the Champions League so I don't think we can talk of chaos."

Levante, coached by former Real Madrid player Bernd Schuster, knows that the 29-times Spanish champions are often at their most dangerous when they seem to be in decline.

"Almost every player on their side can turn the game around. They are capable of scoring two goals in five minutes. Winning in the Bernabeu is more difficult than almost anywhere else," warned Levante striker Jesus Rivas.

Barcelona top the Spanish first division with 29 points from 12 games and have a seven point advantage over their bitter rivals Real Madrid, who play host to Levante on Sunday.

Real are desperate to get back to winning ways after going down 3-0 to Barcelona in the Nou Camp last



Barcelona's Brazilian superstar Ronaldinho (L) shakes hands with his Dutch coach Frank Rijkaard as his mother Miguelina watches in Barcelona, Spain on November 25 after he was handed over a trophy for being the best Latin American player in the Spanish Primera Liga.

If Zidane is unfit then Garcia Remon will not be confronted with the dilemma of whether he should drop the England captain David Beckham after three lacklustre outings for Real since he returned from injury after six weeks out with broken ribs.

Two other matches could have an effect on second place if Real Madrid do slip up.

Third-placed Sevilla are one point behind Real but face a tricky away trip to Osasuna, who have won four of their six games at home.

Espanyol are one place further back in fourth and can expect to have their hands full trying to contain Atletico Madrid.

FIXTURES

Saturday (kick off GMT): Athletic Bilbao v Racing Santander (1700), Getafe v Barcelona (1900), Espanyol v Atletico Madrid (2100)

Sunday: Real Betis v Villarreal (1600), Deportivo La Coruna v Real Sociedad (1600), Malaga v Albacete (1600), Numancia v Real Zaragoza (1600), Osasuna v Sevilla (1600), Real Madrid v Levante (1800), Valencia v Real Mallorca (2000)

Preview: Premiership

Fergie sniffs a chance

Football

AFP, London

Sir Alex Ferguson is a past master at sensing when his Premiership title rivals might be vulnerable to the psychological equivalent of a little off-the-ball dig with the elbow.

It is safe to assume that the bullish tone emanating from Old Trafford this week was not entirely unrelated to the way both Arsenal and Chelsea's form has dipped of late.

Manchester United are still nine points adrift of leaders Chelsea and seven behind Arsenal.

But Ferguson believes that gap could have been significantly reduced by the end of the year, provided his side make the most of the opportunity represented by a six-match run that starts with Saturday's trip to second-from-bottom West Brom.

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Portsmouth's first appointment followed up last weekend's draw with Bolton with a goalless draw with Paris Saint-Germain in midweek, the return of Didier Drogba from injury marred by a thoroughly lacklustre display from Jose Mourinho's men.

Arsenal are not in action until Sunday, when they face Liverpool at Anfield in an encounter that is shaping up as a battle of the walking wounded.

Liverpool could scarcely be in worse shape with injuries having deprived them of the striking talents of Djibril Cisse, Milan Baros, Vladimir Smicer and, since the midweek defeat in Monaco, Luis Garcia.

Winger Harry Kewell is almost certain to be drafted in as an emergency striker while Spanish defender Josemi will also miss the match through suspension.

The only consolation for Rafael Benitez is that Arsenal are facing similar problems as they seek to finally shake off the hangover that has blighted their performances since they lost 2-0 to Manchester United on October 24.

"We had a bonus last weekend with both Arsenal and Chelsea conceding goals in the last 10 minutes," the Scot reflected.

"Them dropping points is a big boost to us. We've still got a bit to go, but what we are trying to do at the

moment is get a consistent run of victories.

The Gunners boss is also down to the bare bones in midfield with both of his Brazilians, Edu and Gilberto Silva, out until the New Year.

Going head-to-head with Steven Gerrard and Xabi Alonso in the centre of midfield will no doubt accelerate Cesc Fabregas's learning curve, but Wenger admits he is asking a lot of the 17-year-old to maintain the form he has shown so far this season.

Portsmouth's first appointment following the departure of manager Harry Redknapp takes the form of a trip to Bolton while Norwich will be looking to build on last weekend's win over Southampton, their first of the season, when they travel to Birmingham.

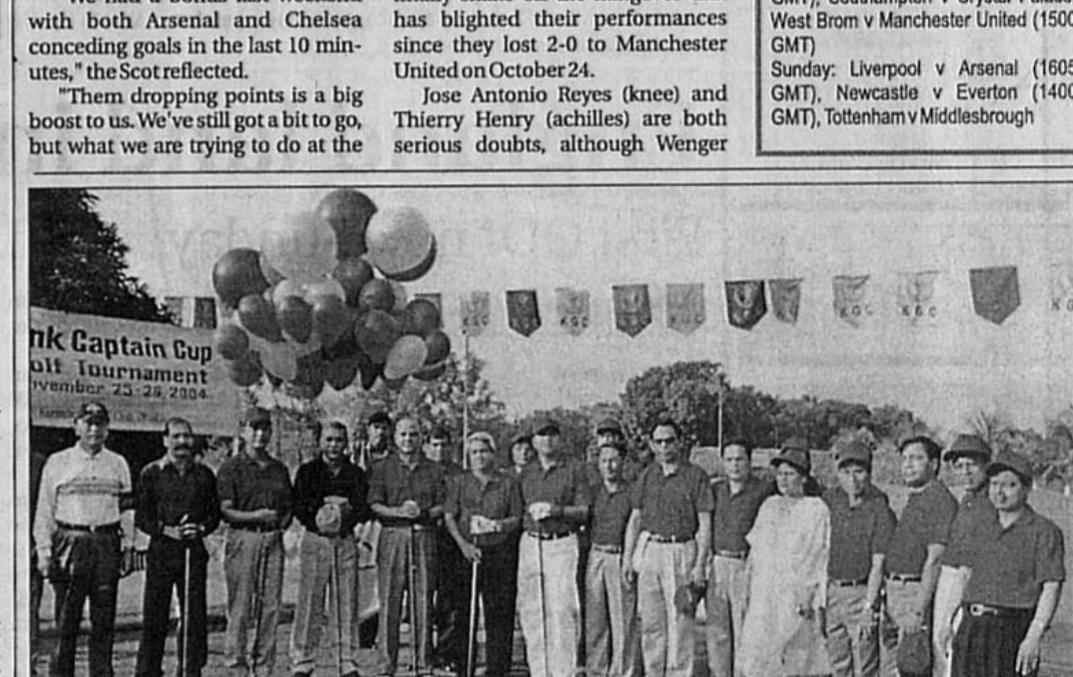
Southampton, whose caretaker boss Steve Wigley is widely expected to be the next Premiership managerial casualty, are at home to Crystal Palace while Fulham entertain bottom side Blackburn in Saturday's lunchtime clash.

FIXTURES

(1500 GMT unless stated)

Saturday: Birmingham v Norwich, Bolton v Portsmouth, Charlton v Chelsea, Fulham v Blackburn (1245 GMT), Manchester City v Aston Villa (1715 GMT), Southampton v Crystal Palace, West Brom v Manchester United (1500 GMT)

Sunday: Liverpool v Arsenal (1605 GMT), Newcastle v Everton (1400 GMT), Tottenham v Middlesbrough



Participants of the Prime Bank Captain Cup golf tournament are seen with the Chief of Army Staff and president of Kurmitola Golf Club Lt Gen Hasan Mashud Chowdhury (fifth from left) at the KGC course yesterday.