

Div I hockey

SPORTS REPORTER

Farashganj Sporting Club registered a 5-2 victory over Combined Sporting Club in yesterday's Green Delta First Division Hockey League at the MaulanaBhashani National Stadium. The winners led the first half 3-1. Faisal scored three goals while Sumon and Rubel added one each for the winners. Ramjan and Mamun reduced the margin for the losers. In the day's other match, Bachelor Sporting Club blanked Shishu Kishore Sangha 2-0 after leading the first half 1-0.

Magura cricket

OUR CORRESPONDENT

Shaheed Mintu Sangha defeated Huq Sporting Club by 74 runs in the opening match of the Econo First Division Cricket League at the Magura Stadium yesterday.

Winning the toss, Mintu Sangha batted first and scored 219 all out in the stipulated 40 overs. In reply, Huq Sporting were all out for 145 in 29.1 overs.

SCORES IN BRIEF

SHAHEED MINTU SANGHA: 219 all out in 40 overs (Firoz 41, Chanchal 27, Zico 25; Ekhlash 3/22, Litu 3/41, Masum 1/18). **HUQ SPORTING CLUB:** 145 all out in 29.1 overs (Litu 39, Masud 24, Rony 22; Mamun 3/26, Golam Rasul 2/12, Chanchal 1/5). **Result:** Mintu Sangha won by 74 runs. **Man-of-the-match:** Firoz **Today's match:** Dariaipur Cricket Club vs Moinuddin Smriti Sangsad.

Pepsi v'ball

SPORTS REPORTER

Chittagong and Munshiganj confirmed their semifinal berths in Zone Three of the Pepsi 17th National Men's Handball Championship qualifiers yesterday.

Chittagong handed Chandpur a 25-3 defeat Chandpur after dominating the first half 14-2 while Munshiganj overcame a first-half (10-13) deficit to edge past Kurigram 20-18 in the other match at the Dhaka handball court.

Both semifinals take place this morning while the third-place decider and final will be held later in the afternoon at the same venue.

Gaibandha cricket

OUR CORRESPONDENT

Cricket Coaching Centre defeated GKSP by 42 runs in the First Division Cricket League at the Gaibandha Stadium yesterday.

In reply to Cricket Coaching's 110 all out, GKSP were bundled out for 68 in 22 overs.



Did U Know?

Gymnasiums were introduced in 900BC and Greek athletes practised in the nude to the accompaniment of music. They also performed naked at the Olympic Games.



Jagmohan Dalmiya

(Former BCCI president) "I hereby declare and confirm that I neither had nor have any financial or other interest, in subject matters relating to sponsorships, including TV rights, direct or indirect, while serving the BCCI and in my endeavours to promote the game of cricket nationally or internationally."



India seek tax relief for 2011 WC



AFP, New Delhi

India would bid to host cricket's World Cup in 2011 provided the sport's showpiece one-day event was exempt from government tax, a leading official said Friday.

"We are planning to host the World Cup in 2011 but we can go ahead only if we get the nod on tax exemption from the government," said former Indian cricket chief Jagmohan Dalmiya.

The International Cricket Council (ICC) insists on a tax waiver for all

major events and the Indian government's tax-heavy policy has already created a hurdle for the country ahead of hosting next year's Champions Trophy.

Dalmiya was speaking after a meeting in New Delhi with federal sports minister Sunil Dutt and ICC president Ehsan Mani focusing on tax exemption for the Champions Trophy, the mini-World Cup held every two years.

"The minister gave us a patient hearing and has promised to take up the matter with the concerned authorities," said Dalmiya, also a former head of the ICC.

The ICC hopes to get the Indian

government's reply before its executive board meeting in New Delhi on March 17-18.

The ICC's tax waiver policy was not enforced when India co-hosted two World Cups in the past, in 1987 with Pakistan and in 1996 with both Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

The ICC last year warned that India, the world's largest market for cricket, was not the place to hold major tournaments because of the government's high tax rates.

India, with millions of cricket-crazy viewers, has the largest television audience for the sport in the world.

Kallis rested for Zim ODIs

CRICINFO, undated

South African batsman Jacques Kallis will be rested for the three one-day internationals against Zimbabwe, beginning on February 25 at Johannesburg. Kallis, who had a fairly decent one-day series against England, scoring 227 runs at 32, is likely to be replaced by Boeta Dippenaar.

With the recent completion of the long and tiring England series, Shaun Pollock and Makhaya Ntini are the other players who have opted out of the entire Zimbabwe series, in order to be fresh for the vital tour of the Caribbean next month.

Haron Lorgat, the convener of selectors, told news24.com, "I spoke to the four senior players -- captain Graeme Smith, Kallis, Shaun Pollock and Makhaya Ntini. I asked them if they wanted to be given a rest period for the entire tour or if they wanted to play in some matches. A decision was taken to rest Kallis in the one-day series, but he will play in the Tests. The others will play in some of the matches."

South Africa is also scheduled to play two Tests against Zimbabwe.

Harbhajan on target

CRICINFO, undated

Off-spinner Harbhajan Singh is likely to participate in the forthcoming series against Pakistan after a satisfactory stint with biomechanical analysts at the University of Western Australia.

Though the results of the biomechanical analysis are yet to be released officially, it is reliably learnt that Harbhajan's bowling action was found to be within the limits recently prescribed by the ICC. It is not immediately known if Harbhajan has significantly, if at all, remodelled his action.

The Indian had been reported for his action while bowling the doosra by the match referee, Chris Broad, during the series against Bangladesh in December. He subsequently went to Australia for testing and, if required, corrective measures.

Federer in qtrs

AFP, Rotterdam

World number one Roger Federer handed out a resounding tennis lesson to teenage Swiss compatriot Stanislas Wawrinka on Thursday with a 6-1, 6-4 victory to reach the last eight at the 782,250-euro Rotterdam Open.

Federer, attempting to restore his fearsome reputation after an unexpected semi-final setback against Marat Safin at the Australian Open, showed his world number one form in the 64-minute exercise.

Though the 19-year-old Wawrinka threatened by saving two match points, there was never any danger of an upset for the teenager.

RESULTS AT A GLANCE

UEFA Cup third round first leg collated results on Thursday:

At Heerenveen, the Netherlands Heerenveen (NED) 1 (Huntelaar 24) Newcastle 2 (Shearer 69, Bowyer 82)	At Athens Olympiakos (GRE) 1 (Okkas 29) Sochaux (FRA) 0
At Cologne, Germany Alemannia Aachen (GER) 0 AZ Alkmaar (NED) 0	At Basel, Switzerland Basel (SUI) 0 Lille (FRA) 0
At Istanbul Fenerbahce (TUR) 0 Real Zaragoza (ESP) 1 (Alvaro 72)	At Krasnodar, Russia CSKA Moscow (RUS) 2 (Corvalho 11, Love 60) Benfica (POR) 0
At Graz, Austria GAK 2 (Bazina 64, Kollmann 79) Middlesbrough 2 (Zenden 51, Floyd Hasselbaink 66)	At Kiev Dynamo Kiev (UKR) 0 Villarreal (ESP) 0

WEDNESDAY At Lisbon Sporting Lisbon (POR) 2 (Rogerio 22, Liedson 37) Feyenoord (NED) 1 (Goor 7)	At Valencia, Spain Valencia (ESP) 2 (Di Vaio 38, Aimar 55) Steaua Bucharest (ROM) 0
At Parma, Italy Parma (ITA) 0 VfB Stuttgart (GER) 0	At Amsterdam Ajax (NED) 1 (Maxwell 36) Auxerre (FRA) 0
At Athens Panathinaikos (GRE) 1 (Vintra 76) FC Sevilla (ESP) 0	At Belgrade Partizan Belgrade (SEM) 2 (Odila 12, 45) Dniproproetovsk (UKR) 2 (Nazarenko 28, Rusul 57)
At Donetsk, Ukraine Shakhtar Donetsk (UKR) 1 (Brandao 86) Schalke 04 (GER) 1 (Allton 7)	At Vienna Austria Vienna (AUT) v Athletic Bilbao (ESP) - postponed due to snow

PREVIEW: PRIMERA LIGA

Owen might get a start



AFP, Madrid

England striker Michael Owen may be handed a rare start for Real Madrid on Saturday after Brazilian World Cup winner Ronaldo returned from his high-profile Valentine's Day party in Paris with an injured toe.

Real coach Wanderley Luxemburgo was already fuming because Ronaldo, who staged a lavish party for his model girlfriend Daniela Cicarelli at Chantilly on Monday, arrived back in Spain late.

Luckily for Real, Owen, who has eight goals to his name this season, is waiting in the wings should the three-times World Player of the Year fail to be fit in time for the visit of Athletic Bilbao on Saturday.

Speculation over the future of Owen has not stopped since the former Liverpool player suggested to British newspaper reporters last week that he was prepared to leave Real in the summer if he did not get to play more often.

Owen has since tried to smooth over the situation by suggesting he is happy at Real after all, and starting against the Basque visitors may temporarily ease the pressure on all parties.

Equally happy to see Owen starting will be the Real supporters.

Several banners among the Santiago Bernabeu spectators two weeks ago proclaimed, "Owen -

titular' which broadly translates as Owen Must Start.

Owen pressed his claims by getting the crucial equaliser in Real's 2-1 win at Real Zaragoza last Sunday, a header with his first touch of the game and after only being on the field three minutes.

Regardless of who is the target man, Real are on a high at the moment, having won all their seven league games since Luxemburgo took over in December.

Beating Athletic would earn the former Brazil boss a place in the Spanish first division history books as no coach has ever won his first eight games upon his arrival at a club.

"Winning seven games in a row isn't a matter of luck. Everyone can see we have we have improved considerably since he (Luxemburgo) arrived. He is a winner and he's made us into winners again," said Real's Spanish international Ivan Helguera.

Real are still in second place though, with 54 points from their 23 games but still four points behind season-long league leaders Barcelona.

Madrid will also have to try to keep up the pressure on the Catalans without suspended left back Roberto Carlos. Either Raul Bravo or Santiago Solari will replace the Brazilian.

Barcelona will try to maintain their grip on pole position against

Real Mallorca on Saturday.

Coach Frank Rijkaard has told his players that only a win will do, especially after Barca icon Johan Cruyff warned the club against losing its concentration after two losses in their last six games.

"For the first time this season, I've got got a bad feeling. Barca could easily throw away this league title," said Cruyff.

Rijkaard will have to reshuffle his defence as Oleguer Presas is out with a back injury.

The match also brings Barca's Samuel Eto'o, the Spanish first division's leading scorer, face-to-face with many old friends.

The two-times African Player of the Year spent five-and-a-half seasons at Mallorca before moving to Barca in the summer and scored for his old club in last season's fixture when Barca beat Mallorca 3-2.

FIXTURES

Saturday (kick off times in GMT): Barcelona v Real Mallorca (1900), Real Madrid v Athletic Bilbao (1900), Real Sociedad v Sevilla (2100) **Sunday:** Albacete v Numancia (1600), Real Betis v Deportivo La Coruna (1600), Getafe v Osasuna (1600), Levante v Real Zaragoza (1600), Malaga v Espanyol (1600), Racing Santander v Valencia (1800), Villarreal v Atletico Madrid (2000)

PREVIEW: SERIE A

First things first



AFP, Rome

Juventus midfielder Emerson has insisted he will not allow next week's mouth-watering Champions League tie against Real Madrid to distract him from Saturday's crunch league match away to Messina.

Juve face Spanish giants Real in Madrid next Tuesday for the first leg of their eagerly-anticipated last 16 clash, but the Serie A leaders can ill afford to let their minds wander this weekend with AC Milan just two points behind them.

"I can understand there is a lot of excitement about the Real game, but to tell you the truth I'm only thinking about Messina at the moment," said the 28-year-old Brazilian, who is nicknamed "Puma" in Italy because of the way he covers so much ground in matches.

"Our two recent defeats (against Sampdoria and Palermo) have shown us that we cannot afford to take anything for granted, especially when you find yourselves up against difficult opponents like Messina.

"They are a team we will have to pay particular attention to because they have such dangerous strikers. It won't be an easy game."

Emerson's team-mates would be wise to heed his warning given the

scalps Messina, who were promoted to Serie A last summer after a 39-year absence, have already taken.

They beat AC Milan 2-1 earlier in the season at the San Siro after going a goal down, and they have only lost two of their 11 matches at their intimidating San Filippo stadium.

Title-holders AC Milan, who have cut Juve's lead from eight points to two this month, will be looking for their fourth win on the trot at home to Cagliari on Saturday.

They too must stay focused and not lose sight of their domestic goal ahead of their equally fascinating Champions League match against Manchester United.

Milan's Georgian defender Kakha Kaladze insisted Cagliari and not United were occupying their thoughts this weekend.

"Now the crucial part of the season starts, considering the number and the importance of the games we have to play, but we are all focused on Cagliari," he said.

Inter Milan can strengthen their position in third place with a victory at fourth-placed Udinese on Saturday. Inter are still unbeaten this season, but their title challenge has been hampered by 15 draws in their 24 matches played.

However, Inter's Uruguayan striker Alvaro Recoba believes his

team should not be counted out of the championship race, despite the gap between themselves and pacesetters Juventus.

"Eleven points is a lot to make up, but a team that hasn't lost a league match has no reason to fear anyone," he said. "It should not be considered impossible. A lot hinges on the direct confrontations and we still have to play Juve and Milan."

Inter have won three out of their last four matches, while Udinese have lost four of their last six games.

Udinese will welcome back striker Vincenzo Iaquinta, who missed last week's 2-1 defeat at Juventus because of flu.

Down in the basement, fourth-from-bottom Parma and third-from-bottom Brescia, who are both level on 23 points, one ahead of Siena, meet in a crunch relegation battle on Sunday.

FIXTURES

(all 1400 GMT unless stated) **Saturday:** Messina v Juventus (1700), AC Milan v Cagliari (1930), Udinese v Inter Milan (1930) **Sunday:** Atalanta v Bologna, Chievo v Lazio, Palermo v Lecce, Parma v Brescia, Roma v Livorno, Sampdoria v Reggina, Siena v Fiorentina

PREVIEW: FA CUP

History Everton's worry



AFP, London

Everton may have beaten Manchester United in the FA Cup final 10 years ago but the memory of that match is unlikely to count for much when the teams meet in the fifth round of this season's competition at Goodison Park on Saturday.

Since 1995 Everton have failed to beat United in 19 attempts and lost eight of the sides' last nine matches at the Liverpool club's home ground.

But the Toffees have surprised many this season with their impressive league form and skipper Alan Stubbs said: "This is the way it should be for Everton."

"We are still fourth in the table, fighting for a Champions League slot, and now we are facing Manchester United for a place in the last eight of the FA Cup."

"Back in the 80s people came here expecting us to be challenging for honours, and it would be fantastic if we could achieve something this season. This season is still very much alive."

Saturday's match will see England striker and lifelong Everton fan Wayne Rooney return to Goodison for the first time since his 29 million pounds transfer to Old Trafford.

Elsewhere in the Cup holders' attack, Dutch international Ruud van Nistelrooy is set to return for the first time since being sidelined with an Achilles injury in November.

Meanwhile United players and fans alike received a boost when skipper Roy Keane said he was reconsidering his decision to retire

at the end of next season.

United to Highbury.

Sol Campbell is still sidelined with an ankle injury which is also expected to keep him out of the Champions League tie at Bayern Munich next Tuesday.

Campbell's fellow England defender Ashley Cole has yet to overcome a bout of flu, making him doubtful for the trip to Germany, while Justin Hoyte missed the Palace game through injury.

Star striker Thierry Henry and club captain Patrick Vieira could be among those rested.

Premiership leaders Chelsea, still pursuing an unprecedented four major trophies in the one season, travel to Newcastle United where the home side have not won an important piece of silverware since claiming the now defunct European Fairs Cup way back in 1969.

The Magpies are hoping this season, which skipper Alan Shearer has insisted will be his last, will be the one where they end that trophy-less run and they received a boost Thursday with a 2-1 UEFA Cup third round first leg win away to Dutch side Heerenveen.

Newcastle are hoping to have Nicky Butt and Kieron Dyer back after the pair missed the trip to the Netherlands.

FIXTURES

(1500GMT unless stated) **Saturday:** Bolton v Fulham, Tottenham v Nottingham Forest, Everton v Manchester United (1730GMT), Charlton v Leicester, Southampton v Brentford, Arsenal v Sheffield United (1230GMT) **Sunday:** Burnley v Blackburn (1340GMT), Newcastle v Chelsea (1600GMT)

Wayaskarani waltz

FROM PAGE 13 against the hosts. Resuming on 267 Rajshahi were all out for 292 as Ziaur Rahman took two wickets including the scalp of skipper Khaled Mashud (42).

Khulna's pace duo Zia and Dollar Mahmud both chipped in with three wickets.

Khulna, the only team to record an outright win in the first round, were 155-4 at stumps with Sazzadul Hassan batting on 62 and Alamuddin Babu on 29.

Rajshahi pacer Alamgir Kabir claimed three early wickets including that of Khulna captain Habibul Bashar (10) as the hosts were reduced to 37-3.

But Sazzad dug in and saw off 235 balls in a painstaking knock. He added 62 for the fourth wicket with Asadullah Khan and a further 56 for the unbroken sixth wicket with Jamal.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboards of the second round matches of the National Cricket League at the end of third day's play yesterday:

CHITTAGONG-SYLHET

SYLHET: First innings 216 **CHITTAGONG:** First innings (over-night 334-7)

Tamim lbw b Nayeem	22
Salahuddin c Mabud b Hasibul	0
Nazimuddin c Parvez b Nayeem	204
Ehsanul c Sadikiur b Sirajullah	3
Azam c Hasibul b Nabil	58
Faisal st Mabud b Nabil	18
Rabi c Himel b Nabhil	18
Sunny lbw b Nabil	0
Nayeem c Rabi b Wayaskarani	16
Sadikur c Arafat b Wayaskarani	7
Parvez lbw b Ehsanul	14
Moniruzzaman c Tamim b Wayaskarani	5
Mabud b Wayaskarani	2
Nasirul c Rabi b Wayaskarani	4
Tushar c Rabi b Wayaskarani	4
Sirajullah c Rabi b Ehsanul	9
Nabil not out	30
Hasibul b Arafat	1
Extras: (b-1, lb-1, w-1)	3
Total: (All out in 34 overs)	91

Fall of wkts: 1-0, 2-23, 3-28, 4-43, 5-43, 6-49, 7-49, 8-54, 9-62, 10-91.	
BOWLERS	O M R W
Alamgir	12 3 24 1
Wayaskarani	13 1 52 6
Ehsanul	7 3 8 2
Arafat	2 0 5 1

Result: Chittagong won by an innings and 64 runs. **Man-of-the-match:** Nazimuddin.

DHAKA-BARISAL

DHAKA: First innings 355 **BARISAL:** First innings (overnight 57-1)

Humayun lbw Mahbubul	35
Sakib c sub (Anwar) b Mahmud	1
Hannan c b Mahbubul	26
Shahin lbw b Arafat	5
Salahuddin c Mehrab Jr b Mahbubul	0
Nasiruddin st Sajjad b Mehrab Jr	22
Mosharraf lbw b Mahbubul	79
Nadif c Sajjad b Mahmud	26
Sonnet c Mehrab Jr b Arafat	24
Anis not out	6
Tariqul b Mahmud	1
Extras: (lb-17, lb-18, nb-1, w-2)	38
Total: (All out in 105.3 overs)	263

Fall of wkts: 1-8, 2-67, 3-76, 4-76, 5-76, 6-169, 7-209, 8-251, 9-253, 10-263.	
BOWLERS	O M R W
Mahbubul	21 5 46 4
Mahmud	23.3 6 14 1
Ashraful	9 2 22 2
Sunn29	14 57 2
Mehrab Jr	19 9 37 1
Neeaymur	4 1 7 0

DHAKA: Second innings 11 **Mehrab Jr** batting **Rashedul** batting **Extras:** (lb-1) 1 **Total:** (For no loss in 11 overs) 25

BOWLERS	O M R W
Anis	5 1 12 0
Sonnet	5 1 7 0
Mosharraf	1 0 5 0

KHULNA-RAJSHAHI

KHULNA: First innings 273 **RAJSHAHI:** First innings (overnight 267-7)

Jahurul c Dollar b Manjurul	0
Forhad c Salim b Dollar	36
Anisur c Salim b Dollar	7
Mashud b Zia	42
Rosel lbw b Zia	109
Shamimul run out	25
Rezwanaul lbw b Jamal	9
Shuvo c Salim b Manjurul	6
Alamgir c Salim b Dollar	3
Saifullah not out	4
Sumon lbw b Zia	0
Extras: (b-21, lb-10, nb-13, w-7) 51	
Total: (All out in 121.4 overs)	292
Fall of wkts: 1-0, 2-14, 3-76, 4-135, 5-156, 6-187, 7-261, 8-283, 9-292, 10-292.	
BOWLERS	O M R W
Manjurul	25.5 10 53 2
Dollar	15.1 3 46 3
Zia	14.4 3 45 3
Jamal	26 8 55 1
Sadat	2 0 15 0

Aus, NZ get

FROM PAGE 13

conditions a little bit. "But there's not any psychological edge we can take out of the game."