



Jubilant Bangladesh swimmers Shahjahan Ali (C), Niaz Ali (R) and Karar Samedul Islam show their medals after completing a clean sweep in the 50-metre breaststroke event of the Indo-Bangla Games at the Subhas Sarober swimming pool in Kolkata on Sunday.

Nat'l Bangla win by 452 runs

SPORTS REPORTER

National Bangla High School massacred Monikanon High School by 452 runs in the Standard Chartered School Cricket competition at the East End clubground yesterday.

Inexplicably put into bat first, National Bangla raised the bar of scoring for this season by scaling 491 runs in 48.4 overs. Monikanon only managed 39 runs before being bowled out in just 17.1 overs.

National Bangla batsman Imran struck a 74-ball 128 while Shumon missed a century by just two runs, finishing with 98.

When they bowled, Ashiquzzaman took six wickets for just 10 runs.

At the Dhanmondi Club ground, Scholastica beat Armanitola High School by 114 runs with Rakin hitting 78 and Safwan picking up three wickets.

In the other matches, Islambagh High School, National Bank Public School and Mirpur Sidhanta High School won their respective matches.

AFC secretary

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each matchday to the BFF according to agreement. It was learnt that the 11 clubs have already started printing tickets.

The home teams will also provide only practice facilities for touring teams.

The BFF has given one Nike Aero 90 football -- the official matchball for the tournament -- for practice to each club, who would be able to buy more footballs from the BFF if needed.

The home teams would also get four advertisement billboards at the ground on matchday for their own sponsors.

The eight Dhaka clubs, in the end, could consider themselves fortunate as the BFF has decided to take care of the Bangabandhu Stadium, the lone venue for all the capital sides.

With less than five days to go, preparation looked hectic and the pro-league officials were still reminding the clubs of their duties. The clubs will take part in the last seminar on event management organised by the federation today.

Players' or NSC

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It was learnt that the renovation works were handled by the younger brother of the PS of ex-sports minister M Fazlur Rahman.

"Also, we have places for advertising billboards inside our complex, which brought us about 5-6 lakh Taka per year. He (Pradhan) took it under the jurisdiction of the NSC and rented for a mere Tk 1.5 lakh. We have informed the NSC of this," added Sanaul.

The controversial NSC director, during his tenure as BTF secretary, also spent Tk 16 lakh for painting four tennis courts but sources said that the actual expenditure was less than Tk 50,000.

NSC secretary Aminul Islam Khan informed that the billboard rights have already been handed over back to the BTF.

"Yes, the tennis federation has informed us about this and we are looking at it. The sports adviser has also come to know about the incidents," Aminul told The Daily Star yesterday.

NSC's construction-happy director Pradhan, who has allegedly made a fortune misusing his post and as the right hand of M Fazlur Rahman, was not available for comments but he told a local news agency yesterday that he found no reasons for NSC employees living in the players' hostel.

"A few ball boys live there as far as I know but a few NSC employees might have moved there later," Pradhan was quoted by the news agency.

INDO-BANGLA GAMES Swimmers grab four golds

BSS, Kolkata

Jewel Ahmed brought the first gold for Bangladesh in the First Indo-Bangla Games, winning the 50-m butterfly at Subhas Sarobar swimming pool here yesterday.

Jewel took 26.85s to win his first international gold ahead of Sumanta Nath, who grabbed silver in 27.32s while the other Bangladeshi swimmer Rafiqul Islam finished in 27.63s for bronze.

Shahjahan Ali Rony awarded his country with the second gold when he easily beat his two senior compatriots in his pet event 50m breaststroke.

A BKSP student and 10th South Asian Games gold medalist last year, Rony took 30.46s, Niaz Ali finished in 32.82s while Karar Samedul Islam clocked 32.91s to

win silver and bronze respectively.

"I am happy to win gold but I should have timed better. I failed because I did not have a good start," Rony told reporters after his achievement.

Mahfuza Khatun also lifted gold in women's 50m breaststroke in 36.94s. Her teammate Doli Akhter, who completed in 37.70s, won bronze.

Rubel Rana won gold in 50m backstroke. Rana, who won gold in this event in the 9th South Asian Games in 2004 in Pakistani capital Islamabad, finished in 29.40 seconds.

Earlier, Akbar Ali Mir of West Bengal won the first gold of the Games when he won the men's 400m freestyle in 4.30.67s, ahead of Bangladeshi contestant Mahfuzur Rahman. Saibal Banerjee

(WB) bagged bronze.

Akbar earned another gold for West Bengal in 200m individual medley, finishing in 2:21.12s, followed by Bangladesh's Rubel Rana and Kamal Hossain.

Triparna Paul of West Bengal became the first woman to capture gold in the Games, winning the 400m freestyle.

Bangladesh men's football team, an under-19 squad playing under the banner of Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) XI, lost 3-0 to their West Bengal counterparts at the Salt Lake Stadium.

After a barren first half Joel Raja found the net in the 63rd minute while Thomba Singh doubled the margin nine minutes later. Lal Ren Deka sealed the victory in the first of the best-of-three matches in the 87th minute.

Inzy being positive

BBC ONLINE, undated

Pakistan captain Inzamam-ul-Haq says he is "not thinking negatively" as doubts about Shoaib Akhtar and Mohammad Asif's involvement in the World Cup remain.

The premier pace pair have not yet taken a drugs test -- which the Pakistan Cricket Board says they must pass before flying to the Caribbean.

Shoaib (knee and hamstring) and Asif (elbow) are also nursing injuries.

Inzamam said: "I hope they overcome their injuries and that reports of their tests also come in our favour."

Shahid Afridi and the skipper himself are both awaiting the results of their own drugs tests.

All 11 results of the 15-man squad that have been returned have come back negative. Afridi and Inzamam's being conducted at a later date.

Shoaib and Asif had doping bans controversially lifted in December and face life bans if they test positive again.

They have until the end of February to submit themselves for a further test. Some experts have warned they could still have banned substances in their system.

The two fast bowlers produced positive tests for nandrolone in September, but their bans were lifted on appeal when it was accepted they had taken the drug unwittingly.

The World Anti-Doping Agency is in turn contesting that appeal.

Sport.

Inzamam said Australia were still the team to beat in the Caribbean despite their recent slump in form.

"Australia may have lost a few matches but for me they still are the World Cup favourites," he told reporters after a training session in Lahore.

"They have been winning for the last 10 years or so and they are a very consistent side but their recent defeats have given more chances to other teams."

Pathan cleared to play

REUTERS, Ahmedabad

India seamer Irfan Pathan was cleared on Sunday for the World Cup in the West Indies starting next month after proving his fitness and bowling form in a domestic one-day game.

The 22-year-old left-arm armer overcame a bad first spell to take two for 48 from 8.4 overs for West Zone against Central Zone in a Deodhar Trophy match.

"Irfan's trip to West Indies is certain," chief selector Dilip Vengsarkar told reporters after watching him in action.

"There is no alteration in the 15 players who were selected for the World Cup."

Vengsarkar asked Pathan on Friday to undergo a fitness test after a shoulder strain meant he played just one of eight games in the recent home one-day series against West Indies and Sri Lanka.

Hair drops case

CRICINFO, undated

Australian umpire Darrell Hair at the heart of the Oval controversy last year, has decided not to take legal action against the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) for racial discrimination.

"I have been told by our lawyer Mark Gay that Hair has withdrawn the case," Dr Naseem Ashraf, the PCB chairman, was quoted as saying in the Saudi Gazette.

Hair was sacked as an Elite Panel umpire by the ICC for his role in the forfeited Test between England and Pakistan at The Oval last year, during which he accused Pakistan of ball tampering. He was reinstated as an umpire for the World Cricket League in Kenya earlier this month and stole some of the spotlight when it emerged that he was considering legal action against the PCB for their alleged role in his sacking.

LOCAL SNIPPETS

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were crowned joint champions in the annual sports competition of the Fazlul Haq Hall at the Jagannath Hall ground.

Zoology student Mohammad Gausul Kabir became runner-up.

**CHALLENGE CLUB CUP**

KKSP crushed NWA by ten wickets in the inaugural match of the Khulna leg of BCB Challenge Club Cup competition at the Shaheed Birshreshtha Flight Lieutenant Matlur Rahman Stadium.

NWA were bowled out for 45 runs in 15.1 overs. KKSP went past the total in only 10 overs.

**BISATHLETIC MEET**

Faria Ahmed was adjudged the best athlete in the senior group while Zerin Khan won the junior group in the annual athletics meet of Bangladesh International School (BIS) at the school premises.

A host of teachers, parents and other officials were present during the competition.



Participants of the Square Golf Tournament pose with Sports Adviser to the caretaker government Tapan Chowdhury and senior vice president of Savar Golf Club Major General Masud Uddin Chowdhury during the opening ceremony of the two-day meet that concluded on Saturday.

Sanjay blitz sinks CCS

SPORTS REPORTER

A marauding 123 by opener Sanjay Chakrabarty gave Gazi Tank a massive 110-run win over CCS in the Kai-Altech First Division League at the City Club yesterday.

Sanjay struck 14 boundaries and a six as Gazi Tank posted 283-8 in 50 overs. CCS were bowled out for 173 in 41.4 overs.

Zahidul Islam (62) supported Sanjay during a 146-run third wicket stand that took the game away from CCS but occasional off-spinner Shahid Adnan bowled a superb little spell to take five wickets. He followed that up with a stylish 74 off 93 balls. Shamim took four for 25.

At the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium, Lalmatia beat Sadharan Bima by two wickets.

Batting first, Bima were bowled out for 187 runs in 49.1 overs with Abul Hasan scoring a slow 51. Lalmatia captain Adil Ahmed stroked 55 to make sure his side won with 29 balls to spare.

Dastagir new CCDM boss

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) on Sunday confirmed the appointment of its vice-president Gazi Golam Dastagir as chairman of the Cricket Committee of Dhaka Metropolis (CCDM).

On the other hand, vice chairman of game development committee Shaheen Aftabur Reza Chowdhury will look after the game development committee activities temporarily.

"Khondoker Jamil Uddin has submitted his resignation as chairman of CCDM, chairman of BCB game development committee and as members of Mirpur Project Steering Group and the BCB performance evaluation committee. BCB president has accepted his resignation," said a board press release issued yesterday.

England A win

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right-hander, who was ultimately outfoxed by a Loudon delivery, scored 62 off 103 balls with the help of ten boundaries. Sharif contributed an 82-ball 26 but his efforts were not enough to bat England A out of the game.

"We fulfilled our first target by batting two sessions on the final day but I think we were few runs short because of slow batting. I don't want to blame my boys because it was not easy to bat on a rough pitch with Loudon exploiting with his wrong ones. You all know how good the English cricketers is in Twenty20 cricket," said Tushar after their loss.

Yardy said that they never lost their confidence to chase down the total.

"The wicket was slow but we were very much optimistic about winning. We went for a win. But I must say Bangladesh batted well and it was a good match," said Yardy.

The second match starts on March 1 at Bogra.

**SCORES IN BRIEF**

**BANGLADESHA:** 209 and 279 all out in 130.5 overs (overnight 137-1 in 63 overs) (Jahurul 87, Mehrab 41, Mosharrar 6, Faruque 17, Tushar 62, Marshal 0, Nadif 7, Sahagir 0, Sharif 26, Dollar 10, Enamul 0 not out, extras 21; Onions 2-65, Bresnan 2-23, Loudon 5-76).

**ENGLAND A:** 359 and 130-5 in 19.4 overs (Jefferson 2, Prior 50, Compton 25, Yardy 27, Carberry 7, Davies 2 not out, Loudon 8 not out, extras 9; Enamul 2-39, Mosharrar 2-36, Sharif 1-24).

**Result: England A won by five wickets.**

Mijatovic wants

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gested otherwise.

"It was about time refereeing decisions started going our way because in recent games everything they have done has gone against us, and we have lost quite a few points as a result. The referee was very good," said Salgado.

However, Atletico's players vented their frustrations after an opportunity missed for their first win at home over Real since the 1998-99 season.

"Ending up with a draw is a tough blow. The team put in a huge effort and were better than Real," said Atletico winger Luciano Galletti.

"We were frustrated with the refereeing. No one understands why Perea's goal was disallowed."

Can't win

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beat Mark Taylor's Australians in the day-night final at Lahore.

England's worst as hosts came in 1999 when they were eliminated after the group matches. The same fate was in store for hosts South Africa in 2003 when they failed to qualify for the Super Six stage.

It was not a gem of a knock, but a miscalculation that led to South Africa's elimination.

They apparently thought they had won the rain-hit group game against Sri Lanka when they levelled the scores with one ball to spare. In fact, they needed one more run to win.

Sehwag to go un-Sehwag

REUTERS, New Delhi

Indian opener Virender Sehwag is prepared to tone down his explosive batting style to regain form and make an impact at the World Cup starting next month.

The 28-year-old Delhi batsman goes into the tournament starting in the Caribbean on March 13 following a prolonged form slump which almost cost him his World Cup spot.

Sehwag said the poor run, scoring just one fifty in 13 innings since August, had dented his confidence. He was also replaced by Sachin Tendulkar as skipper Rahul Dravid's deputy.

"I'm practising hard, on fitness and batting and bowling," he told Reuters on Sunday. "Hopefully, I will get better before the World Cup and get some confidence and perform consistently." His fast

starts would be crucial for the 1983 champions, but he failed on the South Africa tour late last year and was left out of the recent home one-day series victory over West Indies.

Sehwag regained form in the series-clinching win over Sri Lanka this month, scoring 46 off 44 balls before he was run out as he walked across to complete a single.

"I've changed a little bit in my shot selection," he said. "It's important you are careful with your shots, especially when you are not getting runs."

"I will restrict one or two of my shots, spend some time at the wicket and then play them," he said. "Before that maybe I was playing too many shots initially and getting out."

Chief selector Dilip Vengsarkar has asked him to settle down and see off the early overs when the white ball swings a lot.

Sehwag backed his natural aggression, pointing to his strike rate of 96.04, having scored 4,833

runs in 167 one-dayers. He has also taken 72 wickets bowling off-spin. "If you start hitting the ball, the bowler will also be a little scared," he said. "You put pressure on him so he will give one or two balls to hit to the boundary."

Sehwag admitted to feeling extra pressure following the poor run in South Africa.

"This was for the first time my form was bad in both tests and one-dayers," he said.

"It happens sometimes, the bad patch comes in your cricketing life. Maybe I've passed through that phase. Hopefully, I will play some big innings in the World Cup." Sehwag was confident India would do well on pitches he said could play slow with low bounce like in the sub-continent. "It could be difficult for (champions) Australia also," he said. "They are used to bouncy and fast tracks. So the team which plays well on a given day will win."

"My goal is to give a good start to the team and if I get that, to just carry on and get a big one."

Henin retains Dubai crown

Tennis

AFP, Dubai

Justine Henin justified the seedings but defied the odds when she retained her Dubai Open title with a 6-4, 7-5 win over Amelie Mauresmo in a fine, colourfully varied final.

It gave the Belgian revenge for her loss to the French woman in the Wimbledon final and maintained Henin's unbeaten record in the Gulf tournament to 16 matches over four tournaments - but plenty of people would have bet against all that at the start of the week.

Then she struggled to survive against a 16-year-old qualifier, Tamira Paszek; now she was slightly too good for her arch-rival who had set her mind on the physically difficult achievement of winning back-to-back titles on different continents.

"I said at the beginning of the week it would be difficult to get through it," said Mauresmo, a last-minute replacement at the tourna-

ment following the withdrawals of Maria Sharapova and Serena Williams.

"I almost did. It was only by a point here and a point there that I failed, and I am proud to have come here at the last moment to support the tournament."

Henin can be proud of overcoming her shaky, nerve-ridden start and of building her mental strength in only her second tournament since the break-up of her marriage.

"I could deal with my emotions better on the last two days," said Henin. "But I still need to improve and find some stability."

Mauresmo, however, made it clear that she did not think there had been any difference in Henin since the start of her personal problems.

"I didn't really see a difference," she claimed.

The two still do not speak, following last year's controversial Australian open final in which Henin retired, and the edge between them may have contributed to a spirited, well-contested

match between the two most attractive stroke players in the women's game.

Henin continued where she left off in her final set against Sevltana Kuznetsova, attacking any vulnerable second serves with venom, taking risks in getting forward and asserting herself more stridently than she used to when she first entered the limelight.

It helped her to break serve at once, and with Mauresmo looking a little sluggish Henin broke serve again to reach 4-1. She was close to reaching 5-1 before Mauresmo made a big effort, skipping a little between points, trying to get her footwork going and finding the mark with some wonderfully well disguised topspin drives, especially down the line.

She fought back so well than she had three break points at 0-40 on Henin's serve to reach 4-4. Had Mauresmo done so the match may have been different.

But Henin landed five first serves in a row, two of them with forceful follow-ups and three of them unreturned. She herself said that was the turning point of the first set and possibly even the match.

Thereafter it became clear why she does so well on the Dubai hard courts, which are too slow for the big hitters to pound their way through her, but just fast enough for her to build up patterns of attack with her all-court game.

One wobble in the penultimate game, concluded by a double fault, effectively cost Mauresmo the match.

The biggest doubt then was whether a prolonged Mexican wave, which made Henin wait for a minute before she served for the match, would affect her. It didn't.



Justine Henin of Belgium jubilates after beating French woman Amelie Mauresmo at the Dubai Open final on Saturday.

1979: Viv Richards's

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took charge from the moment he arrived and made 86 out of 139 put on the fifth wicket in only seventy-seven minutes. Many of these runs came from England's three fill-in bowlers as King struck three 6s and ten 4s in an amazing display. He drove, hooked and pulled with astonishing power and accuracy, so confirming the remarkable form he showed when he toured England with the West Indies team of 1976.

Richards, at first, was subdued by Edmonds, but he completed his hundred in the over (the 52nd) following King's dismissal, the result of a well-taken catch by Randall at deep square leg. Pressing for runs, West Indies lost their next four wickets for 48 runs. Richards remained unbeaten, having hit his 138 in just under three and a half hours as it contained three 6s and eleven 4s. The shot of the tournament was when Richards stepped across his stumps and lifted a low full toss from Hendrick from milled stump into the mound stand. That too of the last ball of the innings, it was the ultimate statement of disdain from a batsman in supreme form.

England had the better batting conditions in brilliant sunshine and Brearley and Boycott gave them a sound start by staying together for two hours ten minutes, although

they never managed to take the West Indies' pace bowlers apart. Boycott occupied seventeen overs to reach double figures, and when Brearley went England wanted 158 from the last 22 overs. This looked to be out of the question, and so it proved. Randall and Gooch made a brief assault, but between them Garner and Croft swept through the remainder of the innings. The 6ft 8in Garner took five wickets for four runs in eleven balls and was twice on a hat-trick as the West Indian supporters made the evening a Caribbean carnival. They lifted the trophy for the second time, with consummate ease. No late dinners for Prince Philip this time around.

Rijkaard allays

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Rijkaard is confident Ronaldinho, who has been linked with a move away from the Nou Camp in the summer, can rediscover his best and has hit out at critics.

He added: "It is such a pity to see how people change opinion so easily about a player who has given so much to this club."

"Thanks to his strength of mind Ronnie has got where he is today, winning titles and prizes on the way."

L'pool thrash

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home win against Reading.

Garth Southgate's side went ahead after seven minutes when Emanuel Pogatzetz flicked on Stewart Downing's cross and Viduka pounced to score with a smart back-heel from close range.

Viduka was involved again when he played in Yakubu and the Nigerian smashed a fierce shot past Marcus Hahnemann. John Oster's 87th minute goal for Reading was too little too late.

Watford missed a chance to climb off the bottom of the table when they were beaten 3-0 by Everton at Vicarage Road.

Manuel Fernandes gave Everton the lead in the 23rd minute before Andrew Johnson increased Everton's advantage two minutes later with a penalty. Leon Osman's superb stoppage time strike made in three.