



Stars of the past from Bangladesh and India pose for a photograph before their football friendly at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

Biplab in last eight

UNB, Dhaka

Biplab Ram of Bangladesh moved into the boys' singles quarterfinal in Group-2 of the Mobil ITF Asian 14/Under Asian Championships...

Besides, Merzuki Mohammed Asri (Malaysia) beat Nakhle Roudy (Libya) 6-3, 6-3, ORN Sambath (Cambodia) defeated Ko One Ko (Myanmar) 7-5, 6-2, Reda Mohammed (Kuwait) outplayed Long Chomith (Cambodia) 6-1, 6-2...

In the girls' singles, Boey Adelle (Malaysia) beat Janahi Fatma Al (UAE) 6-4, 6-4 while Selvarajoo Theiviya (Malaysia) beat Abduraof2-6, 6-4, 6-2.

Zaker, Ibrahim going great guns

SPORTS REPORTER

SA Zaker and Ibrahim Hossain shared lead in the Metropolis Selection Chess Tournament with maximum five points after yesterday's fifth round matches at the federation hall-room.

Nasiruddin Mahmood, Shahjahan Kabir, Moniruzzaman Khan and Nahid Parvez were at second place with 4.5 points each. In the fifth round, Zaker beat Giasuddin, Ibrahim beat Karol, Moniruzzaman beat Mostafa and Nahid beat Salehin.

Juventus hunt

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drew Hamburg's wrath. Meanwhile, Werder's director of sport Klaus Alffo denied rumours of an approach from Juventus for their star who has already been targeted by Spanish giants Real Madrid. But Juventus coach Claudio Ranieri has long since voiced his desire to see Diego play at the Stadio Olimpico di Torino in Turin.

BFF at last

FROM PAGE 21 Due to international commitment at national and club levels, the B. League committee might readjust its tentative schedule of April-August.

The national team will take part in the AFC Challenge Cup and the SAFF Championship in March and May respectively this year while B. League holders Abahani are due to play in the AFC President's Cup in April.

The league committee has been advised to discuss the clubs on this issue because they will have to release the footballers for national duty.

The top footballers will get the chance to warm up for the B. League with the Swadhinata Cup to be held in March while the Federation Cup is due for September and the NFL from October-December.

Veterans fire blank

Football

SPORTS REPORTER

The former star footballers from either side of the border failed to warm a chilly winter day when they met in a friendly football match at the Bangabandhu National Stadium.

Sonali Otis Club of Dhaka and Veterans Sports Club of Kolkata shared a goalless draw on a dull and dank afternoon after the start of the match was delayed due to unexpected rain.

With the galleries all but empty, the aged players who dominated football pitches of Bangladesh and India in their youth hardly got any inspiration to show glimpses of their class.

Chances were created with the local boys having an edge but former Indian goalkeeper Shanti Majumder, a long serving Mohun Bagan booter, was the only one who was outstanding in the hour-long game.

The veteran made a series of saves as Sonali Otis failed to break the deadlock even after making frequent changes in their lineup.

The visitors, on the other hand, looked better on the fitness and did

not need to make many changes.

After Goutam Ghosh missed a sitter early, Krishnendu Roy came close to score in the second half after a brilliant solo that lacked finishing.

Nurul Haque Manik, one of the local midfielders apart from Satyajit Da Rupu who showed better stamina, was twice denied by Shanti's timely interception.

Although Maj (ret) Hafizuddin - captain of Sonali Otis who first played a football match after retiring in 1978 -- and his striking partner Salam Murshedi -- who still holds the record of scoring highest 27 goals in the Dhaka League -- made little impact, Badal Das almost scored with his first touch but for Shanti's brilliant save in the dying minutes.

For the home side, other noted players to kick the ball were goalkeeper Motaleb, Kaiser Hamid, Hasanuzzaman Babloo, Khorshed Babul and Shabbir.

The touring side featured ex-Indian internationals Samir Chowdhury, Kabir Bose, Alok Das, Krishna Gopal Chowdhury, Monojit Das and skipper Bishwajit Bhattacharya.

The Kolkata veterans, who will play two more matches in the tour, move to Chittagong next to take on local Sonali Otis on January 26.

2ND BANGLA GAMES Grand opening ceremony on the cards

UNB, Dhaka

A meeting of the ceremonies committee of the 2nd Indo-Bangladesh Bangla Games was held at the Bangladesh Rifles Headquarters conference room yesterday with committee chairman and DG of BDR Maj Gen Shakil Ahmed in chair.

The meeting discussed various aspects of the opening and closing ceremonies of the five-day Games, which will begin in Dhaka on February 22.

After the meeting, Shakil Ahmed said they were hoping to stage the Games successfully like the first edition and develop the relationship between the two countries.

Replying to a query, he said there would be an attractive opening ceremony where various aspects of "our culture will be shown".

Admitting that such sports carnivals need lot of preparations, the DG of BDR said all the necessary measures will be taken to make the competition a success.

The second version of the Indo-Bangla Games will have nine events -- athletics, swimming, shooting, basketball, volleyball, kabaddi, kho kho, football and cricket, which makes its debut.

Earlier, the first Indo-Bangladesh Bangla Games was held in Kolkata in February 2007.

Bowden (NZL)

Third umpire: Steve Davis (AUS)

Match referee: Mike Procter (RSA)

Amicus Jr tennis from tomorrow

UNB, Dhaka

The Amicus 6th International Junior Tennis Championships, organised by Bangladesh Tennis Federation, begins tomorrow at the BKSP Tennis Complex in Savar.

A total of 141 players -- 92 boys and 49 girls -- from 21 countries will take part in the meet, sponsored by Amicus Property and Development Ltd.

Participating countries: Australia, Canada, China, Chinese Taipei, Czech Republic, France, Great Britain, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Korea, Netherlands, New Zealand, Philippines, Portugal, Russia, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Uzbekistan, Vietnam and hosts Bangladesh.

The formal inauguration of the meet, however, will be held on Monday with Managing Director of Amicus Abu Mohammad Masum as chief guest.

The sponsors will provide Tk 3,00,000 to run the event. Bangladesh Tennis Federation general secretary Sanaul Haq disclosed the details at a press conference at the federation conference room yesterday.

BKSP director (training) Farukul Islam, tournament committee chairman Shamima Sattar Mimu, Amicus director Akhlaq Ahmed and assistant general manager Jahurul Islam were present.

JFA Cup entry till Jan 31

SPORTS REPORTER

The tournament committee extended the entry time for the 4th JFA Cup Under-15 Football Championship after poor response within the deadline.

The decision was taken at a meeting on Wednesday after only 40 teams including BKSP confirmed their participation in the qualifying rounds, which start on February 10.

The Japan Football Association (JFA) has been sponsoring the youth tournament since 2004.

Draws

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ill-tempered quarterfinal. Four years on and Issam Jemaa gave the north Africans an early lead they held until first-half stoppage time when Bayal Sall equalised and a fierce Senegalese onslaught paid dividends when Diomansy Kamara put them ahead on 66 minutes.

But the Teranga Lions' were punished for a host of missed chances when Traouli produced the equaliser seven minutes from time.

All to play for then in Group D with the next instalment coming on Sunday when South Africa take on Tunisia and Angola up against Senegal.

Third win for Youngmen's

SPORTS REPORTER

Sabuj scored one and set another goal to power Youngmen's Club Fakirpool thrash Sunrise KC 3-0 in yesterday's lone Senior Division Football League match at the Birshreshtha Shaheed Mostafa Kamal Stadium in Kamalapur.

Mid-table Sunrise fought neck and neck with title contenders Youngmen's in a keenly contested first half that was locked 0-0.

Youngmen's, however, established their supremacy after the break when Baten broke the deadlock with a sublime shot outside from the penalty area in the 52nd minute.

Once the Sunrise resistance was broken, Youngmen's found it easier and Rony headed home a cross by Sabuj to double the lead in 74th minute.

Sabuj then sealed the Fakirpool outfit's third win in four matches in the 84th minute after taking a pass from Pritam.

Youngmen's, one of the two unbeaten teams in the 13-team fray, reached third place with 10 points after four matches.

Jatrabari led the table with 13 points while second-placed Victoria have 12 but both have played five games each.

After five outings, Sunrise's collection remained six.

The league moves to Bangabandhu National Stadium from today with Badda pitted against Mohakhali while Arambagh play Wari at Kamalapur in the day's other match.

Shahrukh and Ambani the winners

AFP, Mumbai

Bollywood star Shahrukh Khan and industrialist Mukesh Ambani won bids Thursday to own teams in the star-studded Twenty20 Indian Premier League, organisers said.

Liquor baron Vijay Malya, film actress Preity Zinta and four companies also earned the right to own franchises for the IPL to be played across India in April-May.

The tournament, featuring eight franchised city-based teams drawn from a star cast of cricket's top players, will be held over 44 days in 12 Indian cities from April 18, Modi said.

Shahrukh will own the Kolkata team for the next 10 years, while Zinta got Mohali, Ambani has Mumbai and Malya heads Bangalore.

Reliance's Ambani paid the highest bid of 111.9 million dollars to bag the Mumbai team, Malya secured Bangalore for 111.6 million dollars, while Shahrukh got Kolkata for 75.09 million dollars.

GMR Holdings paid 84 million dollars for Delhi, India Cements secured Chennai for 91 million dollars, and the Deccan Chronicle newspaper got Hyderabad for 107.01 million dollars.

Zinta bagged Mohali for 76 million dollars and Emerging Media paid 67 million dollars for Jaipur.

Each of the franchises will now take part in an auction for players next month.

Test captains Ricky Ponting of Australia, Graeme Smith of South Africa, Daniel Vettori of New Zealand and Shoaib Malik of Pakistan are among the 80 international cricketers contracted for the IPL.

The entire Indian team, which won the inaugural Twenty20 World Championship in South Africa in September, will also play.

The top two sides in the tournament, boasting prize money of three million dollars, will qualify for an international Champions Twenty20 League, which will be held at an undecided venue in October.

Earlier this month, a consortium of India's Sony Television network and the Singapore-based World Sports Group bought the media rights for the next 10 years for a whopping one billion dollars.

The IPL, the brainchild of the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI), is backed by the International Cricket Council and supported by cricket boards around the world.

Nepal no match

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at 35-2, took the match away from the tourists with a mammoth stand for the third wicket.

Nadimuddin's 134-ball 118 was laced with 13 boundaries. The visitors, in reply, batted their full quota to reach 191-8. Opener Anil Mandal scored 48 and Paras contributed 36.

The second match between the two sides will also be held at the same venue tomorrow.

BRIEF SCORES

BD U-19s: 302-4 in 50 overs (Mithun 142, Nadimuddin 118, Paras 2-40, Amrit 2-53). Nepal U-19s: 191-8 in 50 overs (Anil 48, Paras 36, Gyanendra 27, Saikat 1-18, Kibria 1-18, Dollar 1-24).

A day of everything

Cricket

CRICINFO, undated

The best thing about the play on Thursday was that it left viewers tingling with anticipation. As a first day's play, it was as good as it could get: there was a masterful hundred from the master himself; a couple of contrasting fifties; some skilful and spirited bowling from the world's premier fast bowler; a much improved performance from a fast-learning left-armer and even a couple of spills. And now India's first innings remains full of possibilities. Friday can't come sooner.

It was a day both teams will look back on with satisfaction as well as regret. Having won the toss on a pitch full of runs, India might feel they didn't capitalise on the starts and lost a wicket too many to ill-chosen shots. Both teams scored over 500 in the first innings when they last played here, and England scored more than 550 here last year, and still lost. Anything under 450 would be a below-par score here, and India could have done without losing VVS Laxman's wicket in the last hour. That said, though, they recovered well after a mid-innings totter had threatened to derail the innings.

Australia's bowlers can be happy they didn't let the batsmen run away with the match, and with India's batting ending with Mahendra Singh Dhoni, there remains the prospect of a swift strike with the new ball tomorrow. Yet Australia will rue those dropped catches, which would have got them into the tail in the last hour, and perhaps the absence of a fourth bowler who could keep it tight.

Of course, the day belonged to Sachin Tendulkar. He spent the whole of last year smelling centuries but unable to taste them. Cricketers are a superstitious lot, and he would think his luck has turned this year. Today he galloped to his 39th hundred with a six and four. He admitted to being twitchy while approaching the hundred in Sydney, so what better way to banish the nervous nineties.

As in Sydney, though, this was a

masterfully constructed innings. It was not until the 19th ball that he got off the mark but, when he did, he was away. He spoke of that stroke after the day's play -- a glorious straight drive off Brett Lee that was executed with minimum fuss -- and that was the moment he knew it would be his day.

Three fours came from successive balls in the next over from Mitchell Johnson -- one streaky, two gorgeous drives through the off side -- but Tendulkar didn't gallop away. He concentrated hard against Lee and Stuart Clark, who bowled tight, and after a few cheeky shots against Brad Hogg, Tendulkar got around to building the innings in the company of Laxman. He has looked sublime from his first Test innings in the series, but each of his innings has had a different tempo and texture. In Melbourne he seemed determined to dominate, in Sydney it was about consolidating, in Perth, he had worked out he would cut hard at anything short; here as the Indian innings lurched on the edge, he played an innings of calculated brilliance, a perfect blend of defence and attack.

But it wasn't a lone hand. Virender Sehwag's selection was a gamble that could have gone to waste if he hadn't been played at all. After a nervy start in Perth, where he went hard at every ball, he has settled down to provide India the starts they were missing in the first two Tests. His innings ended with an impatient stroke, which was an irony because until then it had been one of maturity and restraint. His first 33 came off 41 balls with five fours, but following that he was made to work hard by Clark and Johnson and he was willing to knuckle down. He has got better with every innings and clearly is a man who belongs in Test cricket; if his selection had been dependent on his performance, he would perhaps have never made it.

Laxman wouldn't like to see a replay of his dismissal today -- for a batsman of his calibre he gets out taking his eyes off a bouncer far too many times -- but till then he had batted as if he was carrying on from his previous innings in Perth. Languid and unhurried, he pro-

vided the assurance Tendulkar needed to go about his game.

Once again, Lee was exceptional. His first spell didn't yield a wicket, but he returned after lunch to remove Sehwag by probing away around his off stump. Denied width and length, Sehwag could no longer resist a waft at one that was thrown just a fraction wide. But Lee's best came in the last session when he got the old ball to reverse-swing either way, a skill last displayed by Andrew Flintoff during the 2005 Ashes. Adam Glicker denied him Laxman's wicket once, but Lee bowled a shorter to ensure it didn't cost Australia more than 13 runs.

And in Johnson, Lee had an enthusiastic partner. It's easy to see why Ricky Ponting likes to have Johnson in the team. Apart from his left-hand variation, he is willing to be the workhorse without ever losing pace and intensity. And he has got better with each Test. In Melbourne and Sydney, he bowled too wide outside the off stump to be threatening. But a strong spell in the first innings in Perth kept the Indian total under manageable proportions and today he bowled better than he has ever done in the series by adding a ball that was missing so far: the inswinger to the right-hand batsmen.

A left-arm fast bowler stops being predictable the moment he starts producing the ball that swings back in to the right-hander and Johnson was unlucky with two lbw appeals against Rahul Dravid and Sehwag. Asad Rauf, who has got plenty of lbws wrong in the series, compensated Australia somewhat by gifting them Sourav Ganguly's wicket -- but it is the indecision induced by those balls that earned Johnson Dravid's wicket via an edge to second slip.

On these two men lies Australia's hope for an early end to the Indian innings. But they will need more catching support from the men behind. Gilchrist's drop was his fourth of the series, and even Matthew Hayden failed to pouch a routine one at first slip. This is not the first time India have lost to Australia; they did so on their last tour, too, when they drew the series.

Sohail, Nasir

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space of 10 runs. Younis failed to regain his ground after he was sent back, while Malik was stumped off left-arm spinner Ray Price.

At 139-4, Mohammad Younis (38 not out) and Misbahul Haq (20) steadied the run-chase with an uncharacteristically slow 39-run stand for the fifth wicket. It was Misbah's wicket which again raised Zimbabwé's slim chances of causing an upset.

With 41 needed off the last nine overs, Chamu Chibhabha dropped Younis off Masakadza to end tourists' hopes of an unlikely win as Shahid Afridi (43) hit four boundaries and two sixes off just 27 balls to seal the win.

Earlier the 23-year-old Tanveer dismissed opener Vusi Sibanda (nine) caught behind in his third over and then had Chibhabha (nought) caught at slip in his fourth over to derail the tourists' innings.

Masakadza and Taibu repaired the early damage during a sedate 137-run stand for the third wicket. Masakadza was more aggressive, hitting 10 boundaries during his 103-ball knock.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard in the second one-day international between Pakistan and Zimbabwe at Niaz Stadium here on Thursday:

ZIMBABWE Sibanda c Akmal b Tanveer 9 Masakadza b Afridi 87 Chibhabha c Misbah b Tanveer 0 Taibu c Akmal b Tanveer 81 Taylor c Malik b Tanveer 26 Chigumbura c Younis b Malik 1 Williams c sub (Fawad) b Iftikhar 3 Matsikenyeri b Iftikhar 1 Ugeya not out 6

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Tsunami Tsonga

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so I know it's going to be difficult to beat me," Tsonga said. "Now I'm in final and I can win. We are both on the court, so one of us will be the winner."

Tsonga becomes the eighth unseeded player to reach the Australian Open final since the ATP rankings began in 1973, and is projected to climb from his current 38 to 27 when the new rankings come out next week.

He exploded out of the blocks and broke the second seed's opening service with a sweet backhand crosscourt volley.

The Frenchman then broke the non-plussed Nadal a second time with a booming forehand to take the opening set in 32 minutes. It was the first set he had dropped at the tournament.

PAKISTAN Butt c Taibu b Chigumbura 17 Janshied run out 74 Younis Khan run out 35 Younis not out 38 Malik st Taibu b Price 4 Misbah c Taylor b Masakadza 20 Afridi not out 43 Extras: (lb-2, nb-1, w-5) 8 Total: (For five wkts in 46.2 overs) 239 Did not bat: Akmal, Tanvir, Iftikhar, Niaz.

Fall of wickets: 1-34, 2-129, 3-131, 4-139, 5-178.

Bowler O M R W Chigumbura 9 0 56 1 Brent 10 2 46 0 Chibhabha 5 0 41 0 Price 10 1 21 1 Masakadza 8 0 42 1 Williams 4 0 29 0 Matsikenyeri 0 2 0 0 Result: Pakistan won by five wickets and lead 5-match series 2-0.

Man-of-the-match: Sohail Tanveer.

Toss: Zimbabwe Umpires: Asoka de Silva (SRI), Nadeem Ghouri (PAK) TV umpire: Riuzzuddin (PAK) Match referee: Chris Broad (ENG)

Iran name

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on experience.

"We had three criteria in mind: the coach must have managed a team in the World Cup, secondly coached a high-ranking national team and thirdly a world-class club. Clemente has all three qualifications."

In addition to having coached Serbia, Clemente led his former club Athletic Bilbao to two Spanish La Liga titles and manager of Spain during both the 1994 and 1998 World Cups and during Euro 1996.

Iran have been in lacklustre form since being bundled out of the 2006 World Cup in the first round, despite boasting stars who play in European leagues.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

Crossword puzzle grid with clues for Across and Down words.

Cryptoquip puzzle grid with a 10x10 letter grid and a key for deciphering the message.