

A Wanjiru surprise

AFP, Beijing



Samuel Wanjiru made it a full house of Olympic titles in middle distance races for Kenya's men here on Sunday as he ended their title drought in the event and broke the long-standing Olympic record as well.

The 21-year-old timed 2 hours 6 minutes 32 seconds, breaking the 24-year-old Olympic record set by Carlos Lopes.

He beat home Morocco's two-time world champion Jaouad Gharib (2hr07:16) for the gold while Tsegay Kebede of Ethiopia took the bronze.

France outclassed Iceland 28-23 to win the men's handball gold medal here Sunday, shattering their opponents' dream of snaring its first ever Olympic gold in any sport.

In the last gold medal event of the Beijing Games, tournament favourites France's finesse was too much for the gutsy Icelanders, who equalled their nation's greatest Olympic achievement simply by winning the silver medal.

The bronze medal went to Spain, who defeated Croatia 35-29 in the playoff for third place.

China won two boxing gold medals on a historic day not only for the Asian powerhouse but also

for Mongolia.

Zou Shiming won China's first ever Olympic boxing title at light-flyweight before Badar-Uugan Enkhbat repeated the feat for Mongolia at bantamweight.

Zhang Xiaoping then added a second gold for the Chinese at light-heavyweight to ensure they topped the boxing medals table, ahead of traditional powers Cuba, USA and Russia.

Alexey Tishchenko's gold at lightweight meant Russia were the only other nation to win more than one title while Cuba incredibly failed to win a single gold medal and the US had a miserly one bronze medal to show for their efforts.

China had a third finalist in Zhang Zhilei at super-heavyweight but he was never at the races against world champion Roberto Cammarelle of Italy.

Kobe Bryant provided a vital late spark as the United States reclaimed Olympic basketball supremacy Sunday, defeating world champion Spain 118-107 to bring the Americans their 13th gold medal.

The United States, led by the tournament's best player Clayton Stanley, won the Olympic men's volleyball gold on Sunday beating defending champions Brazil by three sets to one in the final.

The defending champions took the first set 25-20, but the United States came back to narrowly win the next three sets 25-22, 25-21, and 25-23.



Russian gymnasts take part in the group all-around final of the rhythmic gymnastics at the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing on Sunday.

Russia rule rhythmic

AFP, Beijing

Russia wrapped up their third straight Olympic rhythmic gymnastics group all-around title Sunday, with China finishing second for their first medal ever in the crowd-pleasing discipline.

Russia, the reigning world champions, bounced back after a mistake-marred qualification round with a polished performance in two routines - one using five ropes and one using two clubs and three hoops.

Russia took the lead with their folk-themed ropes routine and secured the gold with their clubs and hoops effort.

"I'm very excited and I almost cried," said Russian Elena Posevina. "It's not easy to win the gold medal. We've worked very hard."

China couldn't match the high degree of technical difficulty in Russia's routines, but they were thrilled to improve on their sixth-place finish in Athens.

"It's the most glorious day for rhythmic gymnastics in China," said Zhang Shuo.

The Chinese team's use of Peking Opera themes was big hit with spectators as well as judges.

"I knew the Russian and Belarusian teams are at a higher level, but we have our style," Zhang said. "We used Peking Opera music, which creates a nice atmosphere for the spectators. They understand our background."

Belarus, the top qualifiers, produced the most difficult routine of the finals but settled for bronze.

Athens silver medalists Italy were disappointed that their creative effort left them in fourth.

Sahagir salvages Academy pride

SPORTS REPORTER

Sahagir Hossain slammed 94 as GP-BCB National Cricket Academy finished the tour with an exciting two-wicket victory against their South African counterparts in the third and final one-day match at Lenasia in Johannesburg yesterday.

Chasing a target of 273, the tourists reached home with five balls to spare at the loss of eight wickets to secure the consolation victory after losing the first two games.

South African Academy were all out for 272 in 49.3 overs.

Marshall Ayub claimed three wickets for 32 runs in 8.3 overs while Mahbubul Alam and Delwar Hossain bagged two wickets each.

Tigers play 4th warm-up today

SPORTS REPORTER

With an attempt to salvage pride Bangladesh take on Australian Institute of Sports (AIS) in the fourth practice match at the Garden's Oval in Darwin today.

On the batsmen dominated surface, Mohammad Ashraful's men lost two games out of three against the institute side at the same venue.

Before going into the three-match ODI series, Bangladesh will play another practice match against Northern Territory Chief Minister XI on August 27 also at the same venue.

The first one-day international will be held on August 30 while the second and third games are scheduled for September 3 and 6.

Nat'l kabaddi begins today

UNB, Comilla

The 28th National Kabaddi Championship begins today at the Comilla Stadium.

A total of eighteen teams split into six groups will compete in the first round.

The teams are Mymensingh, Sylhet, Chandpur, Dinajpur, Jhenidah and Satkhira, Khulna, Kishoreganj and Meherpur, Rajshahi, Patuakhali and Jamalpur, Tangail, Rangpur and Kushtia, Dhaka, Jessore and Kurigram.

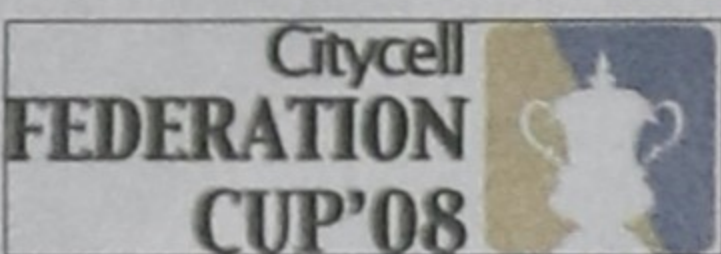
Defending champions Bangladesh Rifles, hosts Comilla, two services zone teams -- Bangladesh Police and Bangladesh Army -- and six group champions will play in the final round.

President of Bangladesh Kabaddi Federation and Inspector General of Police Nur Mohammad will inaugurate the meet in the afternoon.

Notice

Star City could not be printed today due to unavoidable circumstances. We are sorry for any inconvenience.

BKSP, Russel in last 8 Holders Brothers bow out



SPORTS REPORTER

BKSP broke the monopoly of the B. League teams to enter the knock-out stage of the Citycell Federation Cup while defending champions Brothers Union crashed out of the competition on a tense final day of the group stage yesterday.

BKSP emerged Group C champions with seven points when a brace by Sabuj ensured the Savar sports institute's 2-1 win over Victoria Sporting Club at Gazipur Stadium.

Sheikh Russel joined BKSP as runners-up with six points when they edged Brothers by a solitary goal at the Bangabandhu National Stadium.

Brothers, who began the group finale with four points -- one ahead of Russel -- and needed only a draw to qualify for the quarterfinals, were shocked by a 52nd minute freekick by Moroccan midfielder Ezzanzoun Said.

The last eight lineups pitted four Dhaka giants against each other while BKSP drew Chittagong Mohammedan. Farashganj and Arambagh will battle it out in today's first quarterfinal clash.

Although it was expected of the Bangladesh Football Federation to hasten the start of the games, everyone was surprised by the 6pm kick-offs.

BKSP, who upset Russel 1-0 in the group opener after qualifying with an unbeaten record, held Brothers 0-0 to all but ensure their place in the quarters.

In the final game, the students of country's lone sport and educational establishment lived up to their billing by taking a 2-0 lead against the Senior Division side.

Sabuj opened the scoring after ten minutes and sealed the victory four minutes before halftime. Ripon reduced the arrears for all-losing Victoria in the 85th minute.

In Dhaka, Brothers and Russel spent a lacklustre first half but as soon as they heard the news of BKSP's win away in Gazipur, the match became alive.

Farhad miskicked a chance in the 48th minute after being set by Arup, giving Russel custodian Titu no trouble at all. Manju headed home three minutes later but the Brothers striker's effort was disallowed for offside, only to inspire the rivals to win a freekick at the right side in the very next minute.

Said took a curling shot from a tight angle which beat his stretching teammates and the struggling Brothers backline to stun goalkeeper Zia for the match winner.

Brothers went all out but their

ageing defence often gave away on counter attacks.

Touati Youness came close to double the lead in the 65th minute but the Russel's Moroccan captain lost possession after Mobarak's dashing run on the break.

Farhad was in the centre of the Oranges attacks but he failed to meet a cross by Manju and fired the ball onto a defensive wall inside the next ten minutes.

Substitutes Abdullah Parvez and Zahid Hossain kept Wasim Iqbal's side alive but luck was not with the 2005 champions.

Parvez drove a 30-yard freekick just wide while Zahid's brilliant run down the right was wasted as his accurate pass was fluffed by Mishu, whose first time effort from five yards went straight to the keeper's hands with ten minutes remaining.

Alfaz should have done better when Tanvir cut the ball back from left but the veteran former international striker made a mess off the opportunity.

Russel's defensive shell proved too tight in the dying minutes when Brothers survived two certain send-offs. Skipper Shuvra committed his second bookable offence inside one minute after being cautioned but referee Abdul Hannan Miron overlooked a tackle by the defender who was the last man. Then goalkeeper Zia was given only a yellow when he handled the ball outside his area to stop a solo run by Youness.

QUARTERFINAL LINEUPS

Aug 25: Farashganj v Arambagh
Aug 26: Muktiyoddha v Mohammedan
Aug 27: Abahani v Russel
Aug 28: City Mohammedan v BKSP

Liverpool atop

AFP, London



Steven Gerrard capped a sensational fightback by Liverpool as the England midfielder's stoppage time strike snatched a 2-1 win against Middlesbrough on Saturday.

Rafa Benitez's side looked to be heading for a first league defeat at Anfield since December when Egyptian forward Mido scored in the 70th minute.

But, with just four minutes left, Middlesbrough defender Emanuel Pogatzet deflected Jamie Carragher's shot into his own net.

That set the stage for Liverpool captain Gerrard to conjure up another moment of last-minute magic as he slammed a superb shot into the top corner to send Liverpool top of the table with two successive wins.

"It was a fantastic finish. It's always important to win but to win in this way with the passion and commitment of the players is much better," Benitez said.

"Last season we were drawing these games. This season we haven't played really well but we've won two games and have six points."

Arsenal's title challenge suffered an early blow as Brede Hangeland gave Fulham a 1-0 win over the

Gunners at Craven Cottage. Norway defender Hangeland stunned Arsenal Wenger's side in the 21st minute when he stabbed home Jimmy Bullard's cross to net his first goal for the Cottagers.

With injured midfielder Cesc Fabregas absent again, Arsenal struggled to find their rhythm and only Emmanuel Adebayor, whose first half header hit a post, came close to salvaging a point.

Djibril Cisse made an instant impact for Sunderland as the France forward's late strike on his debut sealed a 2-1 win at Tottenham.

Cisse, who joined on loan from Marseille this week, scored 18 minutes after coming on at White Hart Lane after Jermaine Jenas had cancelled out Kieran Richardson's opener for Roy Keane's side.

It was another disappointing day for Spurs boss Juande Ramos, who dropped Dimitar Berbatov because he believes the Bulgarian striker has not been focused enough since asking for a transfer in an attempt to force a move to Manchester United.

Richardson broke the deadlock in the 55th minute with a fierce long-range effort. Jenas levelled in the 73rd minute but Cisse condemned Tottenham to a second successive defeat in the 83rd minute.

"It's good to look over my shoulder and see a scoring option like Cisse on the bench," Keane said. "He's got good presence and pace. When that cross came in, some-

times it's written in the stars."

Michael Owen celebrated his return to fitness in style as the Newcastle striker clinched a 1-0 win over Bolton.

Owen, who contracted mumps during pre-season, missed Newcastle's opening weekend draw with a calf injury, but the England star was back on the score-sheet 18 minutes after coming off the bench at St James' Park.

Bolton had a glorious chance to go ahead when Steven Taylor handled a cross midway through the second half, but Shay Given saved Kevin Nolan's spot-kick.

Owen made Nolan pay with a typically predatory header from Geremi's cross in the 71st minute.

Stoke claimed their first top-flight victory since 1985 as Mamady Sidibe's stoppage time strike beat Aston Villa 3-2 at the Britannia Stadium.

Tony Pulis's side took the lead in the 30th minute when Liam Lawrence stroked home a penalty.

John Carew equalised in the 63rd minute before Ricardo Fuller restored Stoke's lead in the 80th minute.

Laursen struck for Villa with six minutes to play, but Sidibe had the last word when he steered home to send the Stoke fans wild.

Leon Osman lifted the gloom around Everton as the midfielder's goal set up a 2-1 win at West Bromwich Albion.

Premier handball

SPORTS REPORTER

Old Ideals Club beat Dhaka Mariner Youngs Club 32-25 in the 14th CUTE Premier Division Handball League at the Outer Stadium handball ground yesterday.

The winners led the first half 13-11.

Mamun netted eight goals for the Ideals while Faruque scored seven for Mariner Youngs. Mamun was adjudged man-of-the-match.

In the day's other match, Victoria Sporting Club and Surjodoy Kiria Chakra ended with a tight 28-28 draw at the same venue. The match was also locked at 9-9 in the first session.

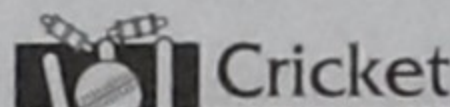
Jhantu scored seven goals for Victoria while Nishan netted 12 goals for Surjodoy KC. Nishan was named man-of-the-match.

Div II soccer kicks off today

SPORTS REPORTER

The Metropolis Second Division Football League kicks off today with Dhanmondi Club taking on Friends Social Welfare Organisation in the opening match at the Birshreshtha Sepoy Mohammad Mostafa Kamal Stadium in Kamalapur.

India take 2-1 lead



BBC ONLINE, undated

Mahendra Singh Dhoni and Suresh Raina made half centuries as India beat Sri Lanka by 33 runs in Colombo to take a 2-1 lead in their one-day series.

Dhoni hit 76 off 80 balls and Raina made 53 as the tourists reached 237-9 after choosing to bat first.

It all looked plain sailing as Sri Lanka slumped to 94-7 in reply.

Mahela Jayawardene responded with 94 but he fell in the 46th over and Zaheer Khan and Munaf Patel took three wickets each as Sri Lanka were all out for 204.

India made a stuttering start to the game after choosing to bat first as Nuwan Kulasekera removed Gautam Gambhir and Yuvraj Singh cheaply and teenager Virat Kohli was run out for 25 by Chamara Silva's direct hit at the bowler's end from mid-wicket.

The introduction of spin saw the end of Subramaniam Badrinath, who charged down the pitch at Ajantha Mendis but only succeeded in giving a catch to mid-off.

India needed to consolidate and Raina rose to the challenge with a 75-ball half-century which included a towering six off Mendis.

He was eventually run out by Tillakaratne Dilshan in the 35th over, but Dhoni took on the senior role for his team as he and Rohit Sharma (32) added 67 in 11 overs.

Dhoni struck eight fours and was there until the penultimate over as India left Sri Lanka with a far from easy target under lights.

The home side soon found out how difficult a task it would be as Praveen Kumar had veteran

CRICINFO, undated



The ICC has postponed the Champions Trophy, which was due to begin in Pakistan in 19 days' time, to October 2009, after five of the eight participating nations confirmed during a teleconference on Sunday that they would not send their teams for the event due to security concerns.

South Africa had on Saturday pulled out of the tournament, which was originally scheduled to be held from Sept 12-28 in Karachi and Lahore, and the ICC was informed on Sunday that Australia, England, New Zealand and West Indies, too, would not be participating.

The ICC will now meet in September to finalise a window for the tournament in 2009 and, while Pakistan will be given "first preference" to host it, a decision on the venue may be taken only after a security assessment of the country is done around February, after the India tour.

Sources who attended the ICC's

teleconference said there was the option of the tournament being relocated to Sri Lanka, the official alternate venue, but India and Pakistan remained adamant against a change.

India, the sources said, were not willing to sacrifice Pakistan. The Sri Lankans too didn't press their case, as they supported the Pakistan view that a venue change could not be made on security grounds. The meeting was held in an amicable atmosphere because most of the issues had been thrashed out among the members beforehand, rendering the final discussions a mere formality.

"There was unanimity in the decision to postpone the event until October next year," David Morgan, the ICC president, told Sky Sports. "India is very influential but so is Giles Clarke (ECB chief executive), Australia, New Zealand - they all bring their influence to bear."

"The vote was totally in favour of the postponement until October next year. And India were quite influential in persuading some other nations that that was the right course of action."

Sanath Jayasuriya caught behind for 13 and Zaheer Khan trapped Kumar Sangakkara lbw for nine in

the following over.

The India seamers continued to exploit the conditions with Zaheer,



India captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni cracks the ball off the back-foot during a proficient 76 in the third one-day international at the R Premadasa Stadium in Colombo on Sunday.

in particular, bowling superbly for figures of 3-23 from his 10 overs.

It looked like Sri Lanka would struggle to play out their overs when Kulasekera became the seventh man out, trapped leg-before by Yuvraj's left-arm spin.

But Jayawardene refused to give up the chase and found an unexpected ally in Thilan Thusara, who contributed 30 to an 81-run partnership.

He was eventually bowled by Patel and Jayawardene followed when, with an 11th one-day century in sight, he attempted to paddle a ball from the same bowler towards fine leg and only succeeded giving a running catch to Kumar.

Patel completed the job three overs later by bowling last man Muttiah Muralitharan to leave India needing one win from the two remaining matches to clinch the series.

BRIEF SCORES

INDIA: 237-9 in 50 overs (Kohli 25, Gambhir 8, Yuvraj 12, Raina 53, Badrinath 6, Dhoni 76, Rohit 32, Harbhajan 2, Praveen 2*, Zaheer 1, extras 20; Kulasekera 2-32, Thushara 2-36, Mendis 3-56).

SRI LANKA: 204 all out in 49 overs (Jayasuriya 13, Sangakkara 9, Kapugedera 12, Jayawardene 94, Chamara 1, Dilshan 16, Vaas 0, Kulasekara 11, Thushara 30, Mendis 6*, Muralidaran 6, extras 6; Praveen 2-62, Zaheer 3-23, Patel 3-42, Harbhajan 1-29, Yuvraj 1-37).

Result: India won by 33 runs. Man-of-the-match: Mahendra Singh Dhoni.

Notice

Due to unavoidable circumstances, the regular crossword could not be printed today. We regret your inconvenience.