

Selectors to get extension

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

It is all but confirmed that the Rafiqul Alam-led national selection panel will get another term as the five-member evaluation committee of the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) has voted against any change.

The committee, for forming the national selection committee which comprises Enayet Hossain Siraj, Gazi Ashraf Hossain, Jalal Yunus, Aminul Haq Moni and Dewan Shafiqul Arefin recommended after a meeting yesterday that the present body comprising of Rafiqul, Akram Khan and Naimur Rahman may remain unchanged until 30 June 2010.

The recommendation will be placed for approval at today's board of directors meeting at Mirpur and if approved the new term for the panel will be effective from September 1, 2009 as the Rafiqul-led three-member panel's two-year term expired August 31.

"They (the Rafiqul Alam-led panel) have performed admirably at times while there were some flaws as well in their work during the two-year tenure. But what we believe that there are problems in the terms and conditions, so we have decided to change it rather than changing the committee," BCB's cricket operations committee chairman Siraj explained the reasons behind the decision.

Rafiqul-led committee took charge in 2007 and had suffered a big jolt when few leading

cricketers left for the unauthorised Indian Cricket League (ICL) and they were sometimes criticised for the lack of innovation and courage in the selection, especially after the failure in the ICC World Twenty20 in England. But Siraj was not ready to focus on any particular issue while talking of the success and failures.

"We have recommended nine months extension because we want to see how they work under the new terms and conditions. We hope that the selection panel will be more accountable and transparent in their work when board approves the new terms and conditions," he said, stressing that continuation is very important in the selection committee.

BCB's media committee chairman Yunus said that the selectors job would be more specified this time in the new terms and conditions.

"As usual they will enjoy freedom in team selections but the activities will be monitored this time. We will also ask the board to continue the evaluation committee so that they can assess the work of the selection committee and accordingly place it before the board," Jalal said.

BCB is also thinking of bringing major changes in the team management and it will be discussed during today's meeting. A director, who has background of playing the game at the certain level, may play a major role in the team management in future while the terms and conditions will be changed for the team operations manager.

The board will also discuss on the coaching staffs in the meeting as most of their contracts will be expired by November this year.

Russians routed Oudin, Wozniacki roll on

AFP, New York

Powerhouse teen phenomena Melanie Oudin and Caroline Wozniacki rallied Monday to complete an ouster of Russian stars from the US Open and advance to their first Grand Slam quarterfinals.

The unseeded Oudin, who turns 18 on September 23, ousted 13th seed Nadia Petrova 1-6, 7-6, 6-3. It was her third triumph in a row after losing the first set to a seeded Russian rival.

"I didn't think I started off too well and Nadia served unbelievably, but I stayed in there with her in the second set and she gave me a few free points and I got my confidence and I believed I could do it and I did it," Oudin said.

Danish ninth seed Wozniacki blasted sixth seed Svetlana Kuznetsova 2-6, 7-6, 7-6, never trailing in either tie-breaker and keeping the pressure upon the 2004 US Open champion all night.

"She just played unbelievable the first set

and I didn't know what to do," Wozniacki said. "I needed to step into the ball because she was dictating the game. My tactic was to put pressure on her, be the first one to dictate."

The reigning French Open champion fired 59 winners but lost by making 63 unforced errors, 31 more than Wozniacki.

"It was my game and I lost it," Kuznetsova said. "I couldn't control my emotions. I wanted it so much. I was giving her some chances. I gave her the chance to come back, to believe she could win."

"Give her credit. She put the balls back in the court but I was beating myself. I was making too many unforced errors. I was missing easy balls and I can't do that."

The other quarterfinal will also feature Slam quarterfinal debutantes as Ukraine's 52nd-ranked Kateryna Bondarenko, who beat Argentina's Gisela Dulko 6-0, 6-0, faces 50th-rated Yanina Wickmayer, a 19-year-old Belgian that Bondarenko beat for her only WTA title in

SEE PAGE 18 COL 2



US teenager Melanie Oudin reacts after winning a point against Nadia Petrova of Russia during their 4th round match of the US Open at the Flushing Meadows in New York on Monday.

Black Monday for USA

AFP, New York

It was a bleak day for US tennis on Monday as for the first time in the 41-year Open era no American made it into the quarterfinals of the men's singles.

The last to fall was giant John Isner, who was toppled by Spain's Fernando Verdasco 4-6, 6-4, 6-4, 6-4.

It means that the home winless streak will stretch to six years, making it the worst for American men since the Open era started with a win for Arthur Ashe in 1968.

Top seed and defending champion Roger Federer, meanwhile, moved a step closer to a record-equalling sixth straight title with a routine 7-5, 6-2, 6-2 win over outclassed Tommy Robredo of Spain.

In the last eight, he will play the man he beat in Paris to end his French Open jinx, Robin Soderling, who moved on when Nikolay Davydenko abandoned with a thigh strain when trailing 7-5, 3-6, 6-2.

Verdasco will go up against fourth seed Novak Djokovic of Serbia who eased past Radek

Stepanek of the Czech Republic 6-1, 6-3, 6-3 in a disappointing night-time session match on the Arthur Ashe Stadium court.

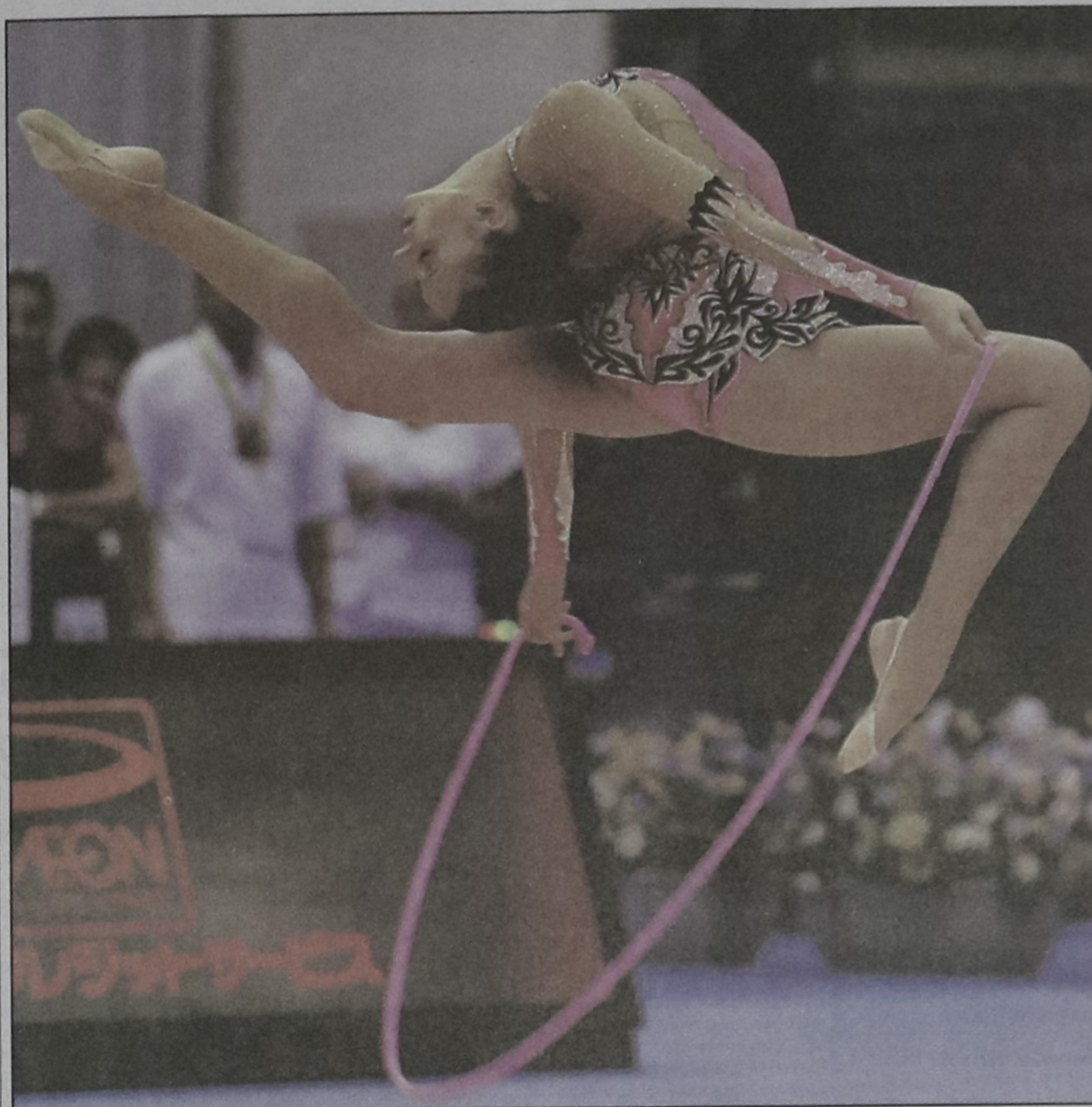
Isner, at 6 foot 9 inches (2.03m) the second-tallest player in world tennis, in the previous round had ended the hopes of Andy Roddick, who had been regarded as the best American hope of ending a home winless drought dating back to 2003. Roddick himself was the winner on that occasion.

But Isner found in Verdasco a very different prospect with the match an exercise in contrasts between the towering American who relies on his big serve and staccato rallies and the tough Spaniard, more accustomed to grinding it out from the baseline.

Isner grabbed a one set lead with two breaks to one, but he was gradually worn down by the relentless pressure applied by Verdasco and when his serve started to waiver midway through the third set there could only be one winner.

"We got a lot of people to the round of 32 then I played Andy and one of us moved on. But after that we didn't do too well. But we had tough draws," Isner said.

SEE PAGE 18 COL 8



Evgenia Kanaeva of Russia performs spectacularly during the rope individual apparatus final at the Rhythmic Gymnastics World Championships in Ise, Japan on Tuesday. Kanaeva captured gold medal at this event with a total of 28.350 points.

Football fans face La Liga blackout

SPORTS REPORTER

Football fans in Bangladesh will be left cursing their luck after popular satellite sports channel ESPN-STAR SPORTS (ESS) confirmed that they would not be broadcasting the Spanish Primera Liga in the sub-continent this season.

ESS, which has held the media rights of the Spanish League since the time the network launched, seems to have decided that with a packed sports calendar, it can manage its programming inventory without action from, what is now presumed to be, the most high-profile league in the world.

It will mean that fans across the country will miss out on the exploits of Lionel Messi, Kaka, Cristiano Ronaldo and Zlatan Ibrahimovic in what is set to be a landmark season in Spanish football.

ESS has been paying about \$1 million a year for the La Liga rights. But the deal, which was up for renewal this year, reached a deadlock when La Liga hiked up the price due to its new-found star value.

ESS backed out of the deal because it meant no sense to pay such high premiums for a property that is to be aired late at night, an industry insider stated.

The state of affairs now mean that SuperSports is the

SEE PAGE 18 COL 8

Rajib & Zia lose again

SPORTS REPORTER

Grand Masters Enamul Hossain Rajib and Ziaur Rahman suffered their second successive defeats in the fourth Kolkata Open International Grandmasters Chess Tournament's seventh round held at Gorky Sadan in Kolkata on Sunday.

Both Rajib and Zia stuck to their previous four points after losing to Israeli GM Ivgany Postny and Indian IM RR Luxman in their respective games.

Minhazuddin Ahmed Sagar drew with IM Saptarashi Roy Chowdhury to secure 3.5 points while Reefat Bin Sattar defeated Indian Phadke Sohan to earn three points, equal with FM Abu Sufian Shakil, who also won his game against Indian Rishpal Singh.

GM Le Quang Liem of Vietnam leads the table with six points from seven outings.

Academy in Sylhet

Ministry ready to meet half of BFF demand

Football

SPORTS REPORTER

The government has finally responded to Bangladesh Football Federation's (BFF) appeal to allocate the Sylhet Kriya Shikha Protisthan of Sylhet for football, but wished to lease only a part of the sports institution.

The governing body of local football had earlier wanted the Sylhet BKSP exclusively to run a 100-player football academy headed by a technical director after a local reputed company showed their interest in spending at least 24 crore taka for football over a period of eight years.

Explaining the reason behind not to lease the full institute, the youth and sports ministry stated that the BKSP was an autonomous organisation whose goals were to develop local athletes in the Sylhet region. And its goals would be hindered if it was leased completely. But considering the popularity of football in the country, a part of the institute will be leased to the BFF, subject to the approval of the board of directors of the Bangladesh Kriya Shikha Protisthan.

The letter, which was received by the BFF on Monday, also said that the terms and condi-

tions of the lease would be described in details in the Memorandum of Understanding between the BFF and the BSKP.

The ministry offered to allot only 18 three-seated rooms for footballers, two rooms for coaches and a floor that includes class, office and conference rooms.

The federation wanted at least 100 seats for the players and an additional 30 to 35 seats for its staff so that they could run the academy without facing any problem.

"We will have to think over it again as the government's offer met just half of our demands, but there is a scope of negotiation and I think it is still possible to increase some facilities through discussion," said BFF general secretary AI Musabbir Sadi.

However, Sadi said that they would soon hold talks with the authorities concerned to know their decisions.

On August 11, the BFF put forward an outline of the proposed academy after Sports Minister Ahad Ali Sarker asked them to place the detail plan.

According to the plan the football academy, headed by a technical director, will be run with one hundred 10-year-old players in four separate groups for an eight-year cycle and the contract will be renewed after every 10 years.

Thilan lifts Lanka

Cricket

AFP, Colombo

Thilan Samaraweera hit a maiden century under pressure to help Sri Lanka post a competitive 216-7 against

New Zealand in a tri-series match here on Tuesday.

The hosts were struggling at 69-5 after electing to bat on a slow pitch before Samaraweera (104) led the fightback with a vital 127-run stand for the sixth wicket with Angelo Mathews (51).



New Zealand keeper Brendon McCullum (L) looks on as Sri Lanka's middle order batsman Thilan Samaraweera lifts one over the mid on region during his 104-run knock in the opening match of the tri-series at the R Premadasa Stadium in Colombo yesterday.

Middle-order batsman Samaraweera, 32, smashed 10 fours in his 124-ball knock to become the oldest Sri Lankan to score a maiden one-day hundred, while Mathews hit four boundaries in his second half-century.

India are the third team in the competition. Each side will play two league matches before the top two qualify for the final on September 14.

New Zealand pacer Shane Bond marked his return to one-day cricket with an impressive 3-43 performance off 10 overs.

The fast bowler, who played his last one-day international in April 2007, denied Sri Lanka a sound start with two wickets in his opening five-over spell in the day-night match.

Bond, who became eligible to play after severing links with the unauthorised Indian Cricket League (ICL), struck in his first over when he had former captain Mahela Jayawardene caught by Ross Taylor in the slips.

Bond then dismissed hard-hitting opener Sanath Jayasuriya (seven) to reduce the hosts to 22-3. He conceded just nine runs in his opening five overs.

Sri Lanka suffered a setback in the opening over when in-form Tillakaratne Dilshan inside-edged a Daryl Tuffey delivery on to his stumps after contributing just four runs.

Tuffey, who also snapped

SEE PAGE 18 COL 4



Did U Know?

Andy Roddick picked up his first racket at the age of 4 and became pro at age 18 in 2000.



Talk Turkey



Tamim Iqbal

(Bangladesh opener)
"What I thought was that there was no point of changing mind for this small sum of money. But they increased the amount and there is a big difference between Tk 15 lakh and 18 lakh."
Why he took a U-turn to join Mohammedan instead of Abahani.



What to Watch

- STAR Cricket**
England v Australia
Third ODI
Live from 8:30pm
- TEN Sports**
US Open Tennis
Quarterfinals
Live from 10:30pm
- ESPN**
Sportscenter India
Sports News
Live at 9:30pm

Shakib avoids surgery

SPORTS REPORTER

Shakib Al Hasan will not need surgery at the moment to overcome his groin injury.

The injured all-rounder saw physiotherapy expert Dr Steve Saunders and surgeon Dr. Peter Malycha at the Saunders Sports & Spinal clinic in Adelaide, Australia yesterday and the experts suggested physiotherapy treatment.

"I have to continue the therapy for five to six weeks and during this time we will be able to assess how the groin is responding to the treatment. For the first couple of weeks I will be working with Dr. Saunders before I return to Dhaka for Eid," Shakib informed the board yesterday.

"I will continue to treat the injury as per the doctor's instructions at home and I am confident that I will be fit for the series against Zimbabwe. Dr. Saunders and Dr. Malycha are very optimistic that I will be able to start playing soon," he added.

Zimbabwe will arrive in Dhaka on October 21 to play

SEE PAGE 18 COL 7

Nations Cup postponed

SPORTS REPORTER

The 2009 Danone Nations Cup has been postponed in the face of the outbreak of swine flu and the tenth edition has been shifted to next year.

The boys from Khulna, the winners of the Bangladesh Grameen Danone Nations Cup, were supposed to represent Bangladesh in the 40-nation meet in Sao Paulo of Brazil from October 7 to 12.

Bangladesh Football Federation, on recommendations from Group Danone and Grameen Danone Foods Limited, took the decision, said a press release.

The organisers, however, decided to hold the 2009 meet and the 2010 meet together and two teams from Bangladesh will represent the country.