

India's clean sweep in badminton

SPORTS REPORTER

Indian shuttlers maintained their dominance in subcontinent when they bagged all five golds on the concluding day of badminton in the 11th South Asian Games at the newly-built Wooden Floor Stadium yesterday.

India started their campaign winning golds in both men's and women's team events and confirmed the remaining five golds yesterday making it an Indian clean sweep.

Chetan Anand and Sayali Gokhale won gold medals in the men's and women's singles respectively beating RMV Gurusaiddutt and Trupti Mugunde by identical 2-0 sets. Trupti, however, walked out after getting hurt in the second set where she led the way 7-3 at one stage.

Rupesh Kumar and Sanave Thomas won the men's doubles gold beating Chetan and Diju Veliyateti 2-0 as Diju retired hurt after the first set.

In the women's doubles, Aparna Balan and Sruti Kurien defeated Thulasi PC and Ashwini Ponnappa (India) while Ashwini Ponnappa and Diju Veliyaveeti defeated Aparna Balan and Sanave Thomas to win the mixed doubles gold.



Ashwini Ponnappa smashes the shuttle as Diju Veliyaveeti looks on during the all-India mixed doubles badminton final of the 11th South Asian Games at the Wooden-Floor Gymnasium yesterday. They won the gold defeating Aparna Balan and Sanave Thomas by straight sets.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Hosts keep hopes alive

SPORTS REPORTER



Bangladesh bulldozed Maldives to brighten their chances of playing the final of the 11th South Asian Games cricket at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

Maldives hit the low as they were bundled out for 26 runs in 15.5 overs after being put into bat and then the hosts took only 14 balls to overtake the total, scoring 30 runs for two wickets to secure an emphatic eight-wicket victory. The easy win, their second in three matches, helped the hosts to massively increase the run-rate to take the second position after Pakistan who maintained their all-win record with a six-wicket success over Sri Lanka in the other match at the same venue.

A win in today's match against Pakistan will confirm the final's ticket for the hosts as Sri Lanka will meet minnows Maldives, also today.

Back to the Bangladesh match, pacer Suvashish Roy was the wrecker-in-chief with four wickets for six runs in four overs while Nazmul Islam and Sabbir Rahman took two wickets each. Highest six runs

in Maldives innings came in as extras.

In reply, Bangladesh made 30 for two wickets in 2.2 overs. Jilwaz Rasheed captured two wickets for 18 runs.

In the other match, Sri Lanka were all out for 99 runs in 18.4 overs with Priyanjan making team highest 26 off 31 balls.

Rameez was the most successful Pakistan bowler with three for 23 in 4 overs.

In reply, Ali Asad hit 35 and Adil Amin added 26 as Pakistan reached the target of 100 losing four wickets in 18.5 overs.

BRIEF SCORES

MALDIVES V BANGLADESH
MALDIVES: 26 all out in 15.5 overs (Hasan Ibrahim 5 not out; Roy 4-6, Nazmul 2-5, Sabbir 2-0)

BANGLADESH: 30 for 2 in 2.2 overs (Rony 10 not out, Mithun 16; Rasheed 2-18)
Result: Bangladesh won by eight wickets.

Pakistan v Sri Lanka

SRI LANKA: 99 all out in 18.4 overs (Thrimanne 19, Priyanjan 26, Perera 19; Rameez 3-23, Jamil 2-21, Kamran 2-18)

PAKISTAN: 100-4 in 18.5 overs (Umar 15, Asad 35, Adil 26, Abbas 14 not out)
Result: Pakistan won by six wickets.

V'ball gold too India's

SPORTS REPORTER

India clinched gold in volleyball of the 11th South Asian Games with a 3-1 win over Pakistan in the final at Suhrawardi Indoor Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

India went down 23-25 in the first set but bounced back superbly to win the next three sets 25-23, 25-16 and 25-16 to win the gold medal.

Sri Lanka won the bronze beating Maldives in straight 3-0 sets in the third-place deciding match at the same venue.

Terry silent ahead of meeting

AFP, London

John Terry will discuss his future as England captain with manager Fabio Capello before making any public comment, the player's spokesman said on Wednesday.

The 29-year-old Chelsea skipper's position has been called into question following reports of an affair with the former girlfriend of international team-mate Wayne Bridge.

Now the defender is reportedly due to meet with England boss Capello later this week, with the Football Association having made clear any decision on the captaincy rests solely with the Italian manager.

Phil Hall, Terry's spokesman, said: "John Terry asked me to make it clear that he has made absolutely no statement about his future as England captain."

"He is keeping his own counsel until he speaks to England manager Fabio Capello and then Mr Capello will decide what announcement will be made."

Hall's statement was released after the BBC and Sky Sports reported Terry would not be resigning the England captaincy.

Duo extend contracts

AFP, Munich

Rising Bayern Munich stars Thomas Mueller and Holger Badstuber, two of the Bundesliga's brightest prospects, have extended their contracts until 2014, it was announced Thursday.

The pair, who are both 20, have earned regular places in the Bayern team this season under coach Louis van Gaal and Mueller has been called up to the full Germany squad having also played for the national Under-21 side.

Their contracts were due to expire in June 2011, but the pair have been rewarded with three-year extensions after proving themselves in both the Bundesliga and Champions League this season.

"Both have progressed in a satisfactory way," said Bayern chairman Karl-Heinz Rummenigge.

Batsmen rule Day 3



SPORTS REPORTER

Dhaka took a 196-run lead over Chittagong with five second innings wickets remaining at close on the third day in their first phase fourth round match of the National Cricket League at the Shaheed Chandu Stadium in Bogra yesterday.

Opener Gazi Salauddin scored 67 while Nazimuddin was batting on 53 with Arman Hossain on 20 as Dhaka recovered from four down for 104 to go to 197 for five when the stumps were drawn.

Earlier, Chittagong took their overnight score of 272 for eight to 351 as Shubhagato Hom remained unbeaten on 166. Hom's 223-ball innings contained 23 boundaries and three sixes.

At the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium in Chittagong, Rajshahi gained a massive 323-run lead over Khulna courtesy of two big centuries in the middle-order as Forhad Hossain, who was dismissed the previous day, hit 135 and his effort was surpassed by partner Anisur Rahman yesterday. The right-hander slammed an unbeaten 151 to pile up a mammoth 507 for six for Rajshahi before they declared.

Anis' mammoth knock came off 211 balls containing 21 boundaries and a six. Late-order batsmen Dhiman Ghosh and Farhad Reza too notched up half-centuries. Khulna started their

second innings badly when they lost opener Nazmus Sadat on 13 but recovered to post 104 for one by the end of the day's play. Taposh Ghosh was batting on 57. Khulna will start Day Four 219 runs behind with nine second innings wickets remaining.

The other match between Sylhet and Barisal was already decided on Wednesday at the Khulna Divisional Stadium as the latter raced to 31 to go past the target of 29 within 4.5 overs losing two wickets to post an eight-wicket victory.

However in our yesterday's paper, it was reported that Barisal would start Day Three needing 29 runs to win whereas the fact was Barisal had already attained the target by the end of Day Two. This inadvertent mistake appeared due to an erroneous scoresheet provided by the Bangladesh Cricket Board.

BRIEF SCORES

DHAKA V CHITTAGONG

DHAKA: First innings 350 (Faisal 154; Sharif 5-102)

CHITTAGONG: First innings 351 (Shubhagato 166 not out; Elius Sunny 4-64)

DHAKA: Second innings 197 for 5 (Salauddin 67, Nazimuddin 53 not out; Sharif 2-51)

KHULNAV RAJSHAHI

KHULNA: First innings 184 (Majumdar 57; Shajib 6-53)

RAJSHAHI: First innings 507 for 6 declared (Forhad 135, Anisur 151 not out; Ziaur 4-77)

KHULNA: Second innings 104 for 1 (Taposh 57 not out)

SL AWOL

SPORTS REPORTER

An unprecedented event took place in women's football event of the 11th South Asian Games when the Sri Lankan side caught a flight back home instead of appearing at the ground to play their last match against Pakistan. The Sri Lankans were scheduled to play against Pakistan at the Birshreshtha Shaheed Mostafa Kamal Stadium at yesterday 9am, but they never showed up. Later it was learnt that they had went straight to the airport to catch a flight back home.

The reason behind this could not be immediately ascertained, but it came as a shock to the organisers, more so for the fact that the match was taken forward by three hours at the request of the Sri Lankan team.

Shawkat Ali Khan Jahangir, convenor of the SA Games football committee and vice president of Bangladesh Football Federation said they would take necessary measures against Sri Lanka and will let inform the Asian Football Council (AFC) of this incident.

The second match of the day between India and Nepal, however, took place as scheduled where India thumped Nepal 5-0. Tababi Devi put India ahead in the first minute before Nepal conceded an own goal through Laxmik on the half-hour mark. Sasmita Malik made the margin 3-0 in the 37th minute before Tababi struck her second and team's fourth goal in the 55th minute. Naobi Chanu sealed the match scoring team's fifth goal six minutes from time.

Hiddink vows to see out Russia deal

AFP, Moscow

Russia head coach Guus Hiddink moved to quell speculation about his short-term future on Wednesday by saying that he intends to see out his contract with the Russian Football Union (RFU).

The Dutchman announced his decision after arriving in the Russian capital to meet newly installed RFU chief Sergei Fursenko.

"I'm happy to be back here," Hiddink said. "I will stay in Moscow for several days before attending the draw ceremony for the 2012 European Championship in Poland. After that we will start our preparations for the friendly with Hungary."

Hiddink added that he was set to meet Fursenko on Thursday to discuss his future with the national side.

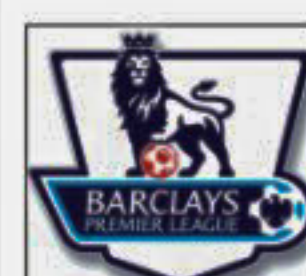
"My contract expires in July. Let's wait and see what happens after that," he said.

"In December I took a small vacation to rehabilitate after our failure in the (2010 World Cup) qualifying campaign. Now the time for a comeback has arrived."

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More misery for Pompey

AFP, London



Cash-strapped Portsmouth remained rooted to the bottom of the English Premier League after Jonathan Greening scored the winner for Fulham in a 1-0 victory at Craven Cottage here on Wednesday to end the hosts run of five successive league defeats.

Portsmouth, as has been the case in recent matches, created several good chances but could not finish and they were made to pay the price when Greening scored his first goal for Fulham 16 minutes from time to nudge the visitors nearer relegation.

Now Pompey, who are battling off the field against a winding up order from British tax authorities and have paid their players late several times this season, travel to Old Trafford to play champions Manchester United on Saturday with the south coast side five points adrift at the foot of the table.

Kevin Prince Boateng got Pompey off to a bright start against Fulham, testing Australia goalkeeper Mark Schwarzer with an angled drive. Frederic Piquionne then threatened and had a fine chance in the 12th minute only for Schwarzer to make the save.

Prince Boateng then saw a shot from 20 yards fly just wide of Schwarzer's right post.

But Pompey are not where they are for no reason and it needed a fine one-handed save from their England goalkeeper David James to prevent a header from Aaron Hughes crossing the line following a

Fulham corner.

Stefano Okaka them missed a fine chance to score on his Fulham debut when the on-loan Italian somehow missed at the far post from Greening's header back across goal.

In the second half, Pompey nearly took the lead when Ivory Coast international striker Aruna Dindane's far-post header was turned away by Schwarzer.

Midfielder Greening, who

made his name at Manchester United, finally ended the stalemate in the 74th minute when he turned in Damien Duff's centre across the six-yard box after the winger had dispossessed Algerian international Nadir Belhadj.

Pompey kept pushing forward but the 2008 FA Cup winners could not equalise as they suffered their 16th defeat in 23 league games so far this season.



Fulham winger Johnathan Greening (R) celebrates his all-important goal against Portsmouth during their Premiership encounter at Craven Cottage on Wednesday.

PHOTO: AFP

Inter ride on Milito



AFP, Rome

Diego Milito scored the only goal of the game to give Inter Milan a 1-0 win over Fiorentina and a slight advantage in their Coppa Italia semifinal after the first leg at the San Siro on Wednesday.

However, they will have a long wait to see if they make the final or not as the second leg will not be played until April 14.

Milito scored in the 34th minute after he was set up by Mario Balotelli, although Inter had chances to make the victory more emphatic.

In a competition often shown little respect by teams, Inter coach Jose Mourinho had said before the game that he wanted to make the final and that was demonstrated by his selection which was as good as his first choice XI, with only goalkeeper Julio Cesar rested.

In a low key opening Inter created the only recognisable chances in the first half hour with shots from Maicon and Milito causing no problems for Sebastian Frey.

But in controversial circumstances the hosts went ahead as Balotelli got behind Cesare Natali with the Fiorentina defender stopping to protest but the teenage forward continued and laid the ball on a plate for

Milito to fire Inter in front.

Fiorentina were angered by that and came out firing with Peru international winger Juan Vargas firing two efforts wide.

But on the stroke of half-time Inter almost doubled their lead as Manuel Pasqual had to clear a Balotelli header off the line with Frey well beaten.

Veteran Inter goalkeeper Francesco Toldo had to be alert to deny Mario Santana early in the second period before Milito had the ball in the net a second time after Frey saved substitute Goran Pandev's effort, but the Argentine's strike was ruled out for offside.

Fiorentina substitute Stevan Jovetic had a great chance to restore parity from Pasqual's cross but he headed straight at Toldo.

Balotelli's eventful game, in which he also bled from a kick to the head in the first half, came to an end midway through the second period as Mourinho replaced him with Thiago Motta.

And the impetuous youngster will likely find himself in hot water on Thursday after failing to hide his displeasure and storming off straight to the changing rooms.

Inter came close again as Wesley Sneijder sent a free-kick from out wide just over the bar.

And they should have wrapped up the victory deep into injury time but Pandev fired wide on the break.



Inter Milan striker Diego Milito (L) celebrates his goal with teammate Mario Balotelli during their Coppa Italia clash against Fiorentina at San Siro on Wednesday.

PHOTO: AFP