

CITYCELL B'BALL LEAGUE Shaons ride on Lincoln

SPORTS REPORTER The Shaons rode on the scoring spikes of Lincoln to post their second successive win in the Citycell First Division Basketball League yesterday.

Lincoln, who struck an impressive 28 points in Shaons' hard-fought 74-56 point win over Rangers on Wednesday night, returned to the Dhanmondi Basketball Gymnasium yesterday with the same vigour and caged an equally impressive 17 points for his side's easy sail against Old DOHS.

DOHS slumped to their third successive defeat when they lost the match 74-72 despite a valiant effort from Zihan, who struck highest 24 points in the match.

DOHS conceded their second straight defeat on Wednesday night despite staging a late rally against Wraiths, who led the first half 20-12 before eventually winning the match 44-36.

Nat'l kabaddi

SPORTS REPORTER Holders Tangail, runners-up Jessore, Rajshahi, Dhaka, Sylhet and Pirojpur won their respective matches on the opening day of the 13th Meizan National Youth Kabaddi Championship at the Kabaddi Stadium yesterday.

Holders Tangail beat Sylhet 39-21, runners-up Jessore defeated Pirojpur 42-35, Rajshahi beat Barisal 35-24, Dhaka beat Narail 62-27, Sylhet beat Manikganj 23-18 and Pirojpur thrashed Dinajpur 66-32.

Rajani, Matur

FROM PAGE 16 were chosen by Rubcic and we had nothing to say about it," said Hasanuzzaman Khan Bablu, a member of national team management committee.

Bangladesh's SAFF Championship-winning captain Rajani Kanta said he wants to give more time to his family as he has been representing the national team for long.

Munna, who struck the lone goal against India to take Bangladesh to the final of the 2003 SAFF Championship in Dhaka, echoed the sentiment of Rajani saying, "I have decided to avoid international football to give more time to the family as well as to make place for the upcoming youngsters since I have played a lot."

Midfielder Munna played his last international match in the Merdeka Cup in 2007 in Malaysia while Rajani played his last international match in the AFC Challenge 2009 in Bangladesh.

Sk Jamal

FROM PAGE 16 an unmarked Ayuk tapped the ball into the net from the six-yard box after Nasir had done all the hard work down the flank in the 36th minute.

Mohammedan, who saw a 16th minute grounder from their captain Enamul Haq Sharif denied by the woodwork, pulled one goal back when their Nigerian midfielder Nadi Victor fired in a 25-yarder past Sheikh Jamal goalkeeper Aminul Haque.

After resumption, Mohammedan controlled the game but they could not find the back of the opponent's net, even after Sheikh Jamal were reduced to ten men in the last 15 minutes.

Sheikh Jamal saw their Cameroonian midfielder Steve Thomas sent off following his off-ball foul on Mohammedan's Amani.

Mohammedan conceded a penalty two minutes from time when their defender Liton tackled substitute Atiqur Rahman Mishu badly inside the danger zone and Sujon smartly converted the spot-kick.



India's Virat Kohli drives through the off side during the fifth and final ODI against West Indies at the Sabina Park in Kingston yesterday. India reached 190 for 5 in 37 overs, with Kohli run out for 94.

Nadal plots Fed's fall

AFP, London



Defending champion Rafael Nadal is poised to end Roger Federer's lingering dream of a seventh Wimbledon title and reluctantly nip ahead in the race to be crowned the greatest player of all time.

World number one Nadal took his Grand Slam title tally to 10 with a sixth French Open win two weeks ago -- his fourth final win in Paris over Federer -- and is now only six majors behind the great Swiss.

The Spaniard will be chasing his third Wimbledon trophy, a feat which could sink for good Federer's hopes of a seventh title to match the record of Pete Sampras.

Crucially time is on Nadal's side. He is almost five years younger than Federer who, at 29, will be acutely aware that Sampras's seventh and last Wimbledon triumph in 2000 came two months before he reached the same age.

But Nadal, the 2008 and 2010 Wimbledon champion and runner-up in 2006 and 2007, is not prepared to write off his great rival, who he has faced 25 times, just yet.

"When you talk about these statistics, when you try and make these comparisons, really it's not very interesting to me," said Nadal, who will head to Wimbledon with his batteries recharged following an early defeat at Queens.

"I'm very happy with what I have, with who I am. I'm not the best player in the history of tennis. I think I'm amongst the best. That's true. That's enough for me."

Federer, now without a Grand Slam title since his 16th major at the 2010 Australian Open, was stunned by the Czech Republic's Tomas Berdych in the quarterfinals at Wimbledon last year.

It was his earliest exit at the All England Club since his first round loss to Mario Ancic in 2002.

But he has been buoyed by his run to the French Open final, ending Novak Djokovic's 43-match winning streak in the semifinals.

Wimbledon is his second home. "This is where it all started for me back in 2003; or even with beating Pete Sampras earlier in 2001. So that's why I always really enjoy coming back," said Federer.

"The huge priority is to win Wimbledon. That's always, for me, the No. 1 goal of the season."

Djokovic, the Australian Open winner who is poised to depose Nadal as world number one, has yet to make a Wimbledon final, losing in the 2010 semifinal to Berdych in straight sets and to Nadal, also in the last four, in 2007.

But the world number two Serb, who skipped the traditional Wimbledon warm-up at Queen's Club because of tendinitis, has been tipped to finally succeed at the All England Club by Andre Agassi.

"I think he will be even better there and hungrier for success," said 1992 champion Agassi.

Djokovic goes into Wimbledon insisting that the end of his winning streak will not be a burden.

"It was the best five months of my life, my tennis career," said the Serb.

"I cannot complain. It was definitely an incredible period. It had to end somewhere. I knew it was coming. But it's sport. I will keep on working hard."

World number four Andy Murray, bidding to become Britain's first Wimbledon men's champion since Fred Perry 75 years ago, made the semifinals in 2009 and 2010.

His 6-3, 6-1 win over three-time All England Club finalist Andy Roddick in the semifinals at Queen's gave every indication that the ankle injury he suffered at the French Open is not as worrying as it was in Paris.

"It was one of those days where I hardly missed a ball," said Murray.

Roddick added: "Everything he touched turned to gold. He was too good for me. Certainly it does nothing to my confidence level going into Wimbledon."

Roddick will be a sentimental favourite to do well at Wimbledon having been runner-up to Federer in 2004, 2005 and 2009.

That final two years ago is widely regarded as one of the finest of all time with Roddick edged out 16-14 in an epic final set.

Sri Lanka

FROM PAGE 16 has often struggled in England.

And on Thursday he only made two before, trying to drive an Anderson delivery that cut away off the pitch, he was caught behind by Matt Prior.

It took Sangakkara's tally for the series to a meagre 65 runs at an average of 13.

SCORES IN BRIEF

SRI LANKA: First innings 29 for 3 at tea (Paranavitana 11, Thirimanne 10, Sangakkara 2, Jayawardene 3 not out; Anderson 2-12)

Oblivious fans

FROM PAGE 16 Jamal caught regularly.

"See, all the boys who came here to watch the match are educated. They are not street children," said Kader, whose club was recently hit by match-fixing allegations.

However, it was found by talking to the supporters that a lot of them did not even know who the participating teams were, and many had not watched a single Bangladesh League match thus far.

Top six for

FROM PAGE 16 would finalise the prize money of the champions and the participation fees after discussing with BFF president Kazi Salahuddin, who had earlier confirmed that champions will win Tk 1 crore like in the first edition held in 2009.

Gayle likely to miss Test series

AFP, Kingston

Chris Gayle has failed to settle differences with West Indies officials, and could miss the three-Test series with India, starting next week, according to reports on Thursday.

Media reports indicate the two sides failed to reach an amicable solution at a meeting, which took place on Tuesday in the Jamaica capital.

Gayle attended the meeting accompanied by Dinanath Ramnarine, president and chief executive of the West Indies Players' Association, and Wavell Hinds, vice-president of WIPA.

Chief Executive Officer Ernest Hilaire, Chief Cricket Operations Officer Tony Howard, West Indies coach Ottis Gibson, and West Indies team operations manager Richie Richardson represented the West Indies Board.

The meeting lasted close to four hours, with reports of high tensions, particularly between Hilaire and Ramnarine.

Both sides have declined to comment officially on the outcome of the meeting, but confirmed that there were no conclusive outcomes.

The players wanted the WICB to sweep Gayle's recent controversial comments in an interview with a Jamaican radio station under the carpet - and unconditionally reinstate him to the side.

During the interview, Gayle was highly critical of the WICB, as well as Hilaire and Gibson. He also questioned whether West Indies captain Darren Sammy was the right man to lead the Caribbean side.

The WICB felt the comments were highly inappropriate, and demanded an explanation from Gayle at the meeting, but he was reticent.

No further meeting between Gayle and the regional cricket governing body is scheduled for any timesoon.

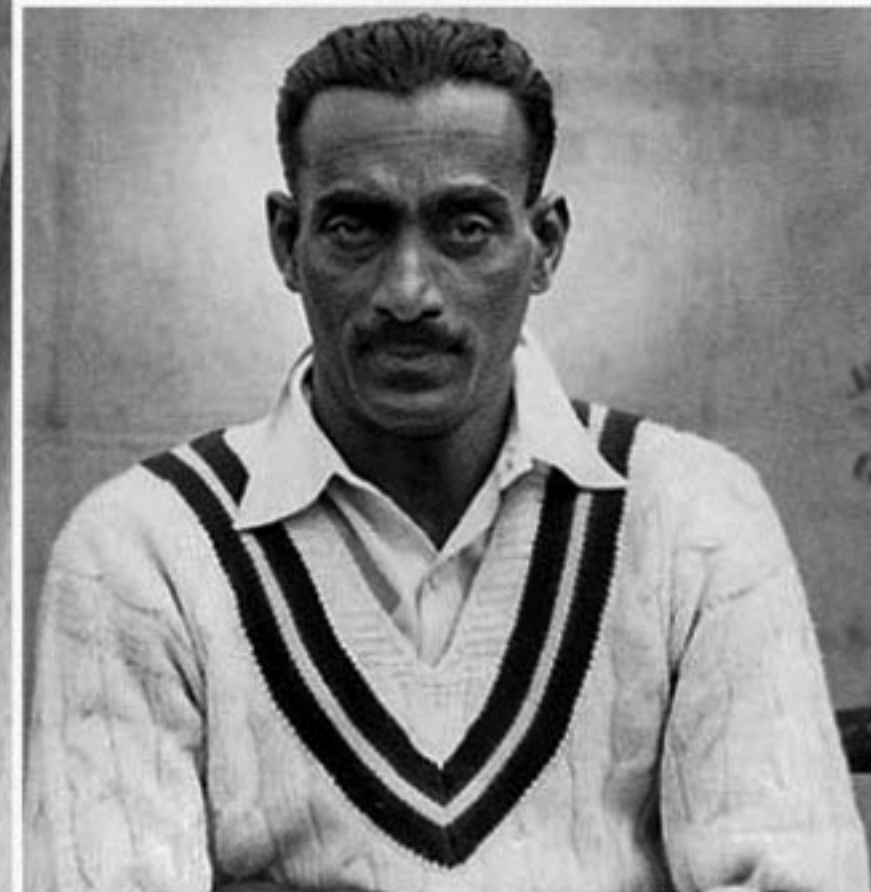
Soccer can't

FROM PAGE 16 practice venues.

"First of all we are yet to get any official offer, so it will not be wise to make any comment right now. But I think practically it's not possible to hold football practice sessions at cricket venues because the surfaces are very soft and you know we have a home series against West Indies in the first week of October," explained Manzur.

Argentina and Nigeria are coming to Bangladesh on September 3 to play the match at the Bangabandhu National Stadium on September 6.

TESTS THROUGH TIME



CK NAYUDU

An Indian innings

The Indian subcontinent today is cricket's lifeblood. Passion for the sport across the countries of India, Sri Lanka, Pakistan and Bangladesh is unparalleled. It was not always thus, and it was left to England, the inventors of the great game and our former colonial masters, to introduce cricket to our shores.

Cricket was first played by Indians in Bombay in the early part of 19th century, when Parsi boys imitated the activities of European cricketers on a large stretch of open space in the southern end of Bombay (now known as the Bombay Gymkhana). The first Parsi cricket club was founded in 1848, the Oriental Cricket Club.

What the Parsis started was soon followed by other Indians, and in the 1889-90 season, an English team led by George Vernon was the first foreign team to tour India, although none of the matches were given first-class status. First-class cricket in India began in 1892-93, when two matches were played between the Europeans and the Parsis. The Parsis drew the first and won the second.

As cricket began to gain popularity, the deeds of two Indian cricketers gave impetus to India's elevation to a proper Test side. The first of them is largely forgotten -- Palwankar Baloo, who is regarded by Ramachandra Guha in his famous book 'A Corner of A Foreign Field' as the first great Indian cricketer. A slow left-arm bowler who first worked as a sweeper at a Pune cricket club run by Parsis, then in a European club where he was paid to bowl to the best British batsman in India, JG Greig, which had the unintended consequence of Baloo honing his technical skills.

Being of the Chamaar caste, he had to battle prejudice from his countrymen and foreign rulers alike, but he came out the other side to lead the Hindus in some famous victories over the Europeans in Bombay. He was also part of the first All India tour of England in 1911, when he showed his obvious class by taking 100 wickets. Because of these feats, as Guha argues, he was a pioneer in the emancipation of the Untouchables. Already cricket was more than a sport in India.

The other early Indian great is somewhat better known and remembered. Cottari Kanakaiya Nayudu is author of probably the most important Indian innings. And it wasn't even in a Test match. The MCC side, led by Arthur Gilligan and containing cricketers such as Maurice Tate, Andrew Sandham and Bob Wyatt, came to tour India in 1926-27, and like they had done in the United States previously, expected to steamroll all opposition. They had their way until they arrived in Bombay.

At the Bombay Gymkhana ground on December 1, 1926, 25,000 spectators watched the Hindus slip to 84 for 3 against the might of the MCC. Then, a certain Colonel CK Nayudu changed Indian cricket over the course of 116 minutes, hitting a world-record eleven 6s and fourteen 4s to score 153. To this shining gem of Indian cricketing accomplishment was added the 148 scored by DB Deodhar a few days later that gave India the lead in the first unofficial Test.

MCC captain Gilligan, an influential figure in English cricket, then lobbied for India's elevation to Test status, which led to the formation of the Indian cricket board in 1928 and their first Test match in 1932.

- Sakeb Subhan

Royals steal

FROM PAGE 16 The Royals are currently placed in 4th position on the North Group table with six points from six games.

Nottinghamshire, the county that has all but signed another Bangladeshi cricketer in Tamim Iqbal, sit atop the table with nine points from six matches.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

Crossword puzzle grid with clues for Across and Down words.

Cryptoquip puzzle grid with letters and numbers.

CRYPTOQUIP

X K Q J L I V Q G R V G Y B B W Y X V X L V Q L H C R V R Y K B Q Q W X V J U U Q V R Q L R N Q J B I N Y B B H C R G Q N R Y L N J W W Y L H V

Saturday's Cryptoquip: WE BOTH TRIED FIGURING OUT HOW TO PREPARE THE POTATOES, BUT THE OUTCOME WAS MASH CONFUSION. Today's Cryptoquip Clue: Q equals O