

StanChart school chess from today

SPORTS REPORTER

The Standard Chartered 8th School Chess begins today in Dhaka with more than 200 students from 56 institutes expected to take part in the tournament.

Top-seed and national sub-junior champion Rezaul Islam Babu (rating 2154) of Rajbari will face hard contest from Sandipan Chatterjee of India, the only other player to have more than 2000 rating.

A total of ten players from India, eight from Kolkata and two from Tripura, will participate in all the categories -- Kindergarten-Class V, Class VI-X and girls -- of the Swiss League competition, told Bangladesh Chess Federation general secretary Jamilur Rahman at a press briefing at the yesterday.

M Aminul Huque, Head of Human Resources of Standard Chartered Bank was also present.

The sponsors will give Tk 5 lakh for the tournament, which will also be held in the divisional headquarters.

"We have already staged the meet in Barisal last June and the tournament will go to Chittagong and Khulna in August," Jamil told.

The federation will offer a total of Tk 65,000 prize money in the three categories.

Rani, Shamima keep winning

SPORTS REPORTER

International Women's Master Rani Hamid and Shamima Akhter Liza continued their winning run in the Prime Bank First Women's FIDE Rating Chess Tournament as they won their respective third round boards at the federation hall-room yesterday.

Rani beat Zakia Sultana and Liza defeated Tanima Parveen to share the lead with three full points.

In the other games, Masuda Begum beat Sharmin Sultana and Mahmuda Haque beat Nushrat Jahan.



Action from yesterday's services' zone match between Army and Navy in the Jubok Phone National Football Championships at the Army Stadium yesterday. PHOTO: STAR

Services teams fire blank

Football

SPORTS REPORTER

There were no goals on the opening day of the Services zone qualifiers of the Jubok Phone 23rd National Football Championship in Dhaka yesterday.

Bangladesh Navy held zonal favourites Bangladesh Army in an exciting first match while Bangladesh Air Force shared points with Bangladesh Police later at the Army Stadium.

Dhaka set a semifinal clash with Manikganj in Padma zone when they brushed aside Madaripur 3-0 at the Shariatpur Stadium.

An own goal by Madaripur's Afzal

saw Dhaka go ahead after 28 minutes while goals by Mostafa Mahub and Mohammed Gafur either side of the break sealed Dhaka's victory.

Kushitia edged Jessore 1-0 at the Magura Stadium in the opening match of Surma zone as Comilla beat neighbours Brahmanbaria 1-0 play. They have advanced to the Kapotakhya zone semifinal but Jessore looked like the team to win. However, having created several clear cut chances, Jessore paid for the inaccuracy of their forwards to bow out of the meet.

In the Meghna zone, Barisal face a date with hosts Perojpur in the semifinal after knocking out Barguna 2-1 at the Perojpur Stadium with a brace from Masud Parvez in the 29 and 55 minutes.

Moniruzzaman had raised hopes of a revival for Barguna with a 36th minute equaliser but in vain.

Striker Pintu Das separated the two sides on the hour at the Habiganj Stadium in the opening match of Surma zone as Comilla beat neighbours Brahmanbaria 1-0 play. They have advanced to the zonal semifinal where they meet the hosts.

Today's matches

Shariatpur v Rajbari (Shariatpur), Chuadanga v Satkhira (Magura), Khulna v Jhalokathi (Perojpur), Narsingdi v Sunamganj (Habiganj), Gazipur v Kishoreganj (Tangail), Jahangir-nagar University v BKSP and Dhaka University v Islamic University) at Army Stadium.

Sanjay vilified over Sachin article

PTI, New Delhi

Former cricketers on Sunday flayed Sanjay Manjrekar for his controversial remarks on Sachin Tendulkar's injuries and said such uncharitable comments could dent the batsman's confidence ahead of the tri-series in Sri Lanka.

However, while the majority of the former players threw their weight behind Tendulkar, former India opener Chetan Chauhan said star players should be able to take criticism in their stride.

Manjrekar had written in a column recently that Tendulkar should play even if he was not 100 per cent fit since he brought in a lot of experience to the side, and that the timings of his injuries were dubious.

Former wicketkeeper and Selection Committee Chairman Syed Kirmani said it was unfair to make comments without ascertaining the facts.

"Be it senior cricketers or commentators, it is wrong on their part to write without going into the fact of the matter."

"It is unfair that people write columns on assumptions and presumptions. If one knows for fact that Sachin faked injuries, he can write with authority. Without knowing the reality, one should not express his opinion or views to the extent of hurting one's feelings," he said.

Former coach and all-rounder Madan Lal said Tendulkar is criticised either way.

"It is said that Tendulkar is criticised if he does not play when he is injured and also when he plays with an injury," he said.

Akhtar admits own mistake

PTI, London

Pakistan speedster Shoaib Akhtar says the recurrence of his knee injury, which has forced him out of the early part of the crucial England tour, was a result of his over enthusiasm.

Akhtar said his desperation to return to international cricket prompted him to start training before he had fully recuperated from an earlier injury.

"Missing the start of the England tour is disappointing but it is my own fault. I was so keen to make the tour that I bowled too early at the training camp and opened up my fracture again," the bowler said.

"It was a case of too much too soon. I worked so hard then to make the tour, I pushed myself too much. These things happen in cricket," he said.

The 'Rawalpindi Express', however, said now he just could not wait to take on England.

"I'm pleased to report that I'm feeling good, my stress fracture has healed and I'm back in the squad."

Tigers land in Africa

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

After a long thirty-one hour journey the Bangladesh cricket team landed in Harare yesterday to play five one-day internationals against the southern African nation.

Habibul Bashar's men left Dhaka on Sunday morning and had a small matter of a 12-hour transit in Doha to deal with before getting to the Zimbabwean capital via Nairobi. That stay in the Qatari capital got extended by an hour due to a flight delay.

Bangladesh Cricket Board's (BCB) official website reported that the cricketers were not complaining about the long stop-over, rather it was time for a session at the swimming pool and a bit of beach volleyball. Just a reminder that for professional sportsmen there are very few off days.

The tour party also ventured into the heart of petite and orderly Doha in the afternoon and most of them went to the City Centre, the massive shopping complex that never sleeps.

And at the airport and the Marriott Hotel the team met compatriots who were pleasantly surprised to see their heroes passing through and were visibly excited.

And what was most important the mood of the team has been relaxed, confident and it has been like that for a while.

There were a reason for that frame of mind as Tigers are relishing on the prospect of recording their first-ever away series victory but coach Dav Whatmore expected a good contest from the home team despite the fact that they are under strength following the departure of the leading players.

"I have noted that the Zimbabwean team are also keenly looking forward to this visit and they have sent their players to South Africa for three practice matches before Bangladesh come and I get

the feeling that they are really keen to even up the score from when they played in Bangladesh last year. So it'll be a hell of a contest," stated Whatmore in his regular column in the website.

"Most judges would say that Bangladesh would start favourites and I would agree despite our ICC ranking in one-day format. Bangladesh have played some good cricket and are probably in all honesty are a little bit better than Zimbabwe but the conditions might put us back on a level playing field. I think both teams would feel that they have a chance of winning," he added.

The Sri Lankan-born Australian heaved his praise on his bowling attack and said that he was waiting a healthy competition from his young pace bowlers in the tour.

"I have to say a few things about our pace bowlers. We've got a battery of three and they are no fools. Depending on the conditions in Africa they all want to play. They may not always get a chance so there is a very good healthy competition within Mashrafeez Mortaza, Syed Rassel and Shahadat Hossain to win two places in the final ODI team," Whatmore said.

"They are all very different. Shahadat is the old-fashioned tearaway who just loves to bowl fast. Mashrafeez has got the potential to be quick but he is a little bit smarter and is able to put the ball in the right areas. Rassel being a left-arter is something different and swings it nicely. So here is how they bring all these different skills into the team," he elaborated.

Whatmore also said that he would be careful about handling his leading paceman Mashrafeez in the series.

"Mashrafeez has a very competitive nature. Unfortunately he has had his fair share of injuries ranging from two major knee reconstructions to back problems and ankle problems. So he has to be very careful and we are also careful with him in terms of his work load," he explained.

"During the Bangladesh A tour of Zimbabwe our spinners have done well but if you are good enough as a quick then it is better to bowl there than here. I think we have the pace attack and if we need to lean towards the slower bowlers then we have the manpower to do that as well," Whatmore said.

WB minister stands by Dalmiya

PTI, Kolkata

Dismissing insinuations by Sourav Ganguly that Jagmohan Dalmiya had leaked coach Greg Chappell's controversial e-mail, West Bengal Sports Minister Subhas Chakraborty Monday claimed that those being targeted by the former Indian captain were innocent.

"Ganguly's allegations are not correct. I can say with full responsibility that those, against whom he has made the allegation, did not leak the mail," Chakraborty told newsmen in the assembly lobby. In a sign of revolt against Dalmiya, Ganguly had sent an e-mail on Friday, making allegations against his longtime mentor and his group in the Cricket Association of Bengal.

The former Indian captain chose the upcoming elections for presidency of CAB to hit out at Dalmiya, facing a challenge for the post from Kolkata Police Commissioner Prasun Mukherjee.

"People who leak e-mails and sacrifice players' careers should be heavily punished. There are people in CAB who are playing with players' careers to suit them. They should not be allowed to go scot-free as it takes years of hard work to reach a certain level in sports," Ganguly said in the e-mail.



Did U Know?

The most common injury in bowling is a sore thumb.



TALK TURKEY



Sourav Ganguly

(Former India cricket captain)
"People who leak emails and sacrifice players' careers should be heavily punished. There are people in the Cricket Association of Bengal (CAB) who are playing with players' careers to suit themselves. They should not be allowed to go scot-free as it takes years of hard work to reach a certain level in sports."
While blaming mentor Jagmohan Dalmiya for forcing him out of the national team, saying the former world cricket boss 'played' with his career.

Kevin looks on the bright side

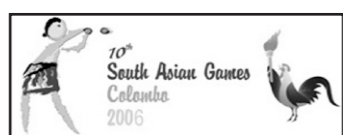
AFP, London

England batsman Kevin Pietersen said the positive side of losing talismanic all-rounder Andrew Flintoff this summer meant other players had a chance to show what they could do.

Hampshire batsman Pietersen, who was in Manchester on Monday helping to promote the "Urban Cricket" initiative, has been as shocked as the rest of the country by the news Flintoff needs a second operation on his troublesome left ankle.

Pietersen heard the news when

Bronze will suffice



SPORTS REPORTER

Hockey makes a comeback to the SA Games after 11 years but the long gap has not changed Bangladesh's position or target.

Bangladesh won the bronze medal at the 1995 Madras Games -- the biennial event of the SAARC region then known as the SAF Games -- and this time in Colombo, the stick wielders would be happy if they can retain the third place at the tenth edition.

It needs at least four participating

teams to host a discipline and four teams it would be competing for three medals. Two will certainly go to archivals and Asian giants India, the gold medallist, and Pakistan, leaving Bangladesh to fight it out with hosts Sri Lanka.

SQUAD

Rasel Khan Bappi, Zahid Hossain, Issa Mia, Mashiur Rahman Biplab, Mamunur Rahman Chayan, Shamsuddin Tuhin, Yamin Hossain, Hedayatul Islam Rajib, Musa Mia, Shahidullah Titu, Ashiquzzaman, Mahub Ehsan Rana, Khondokar Hassan Ahmed, Russel Mahmud Jimmy, Zahidul Islam Rajan, Mazharul Islam Moksed, Maksud Alam Habul, Ariful Haque Prince.

"Our target is bronze. We don't see anything beyond that," Bangladesh Hockey Federation general secretary Shamsul Bari told The Daily Star.

"With India and Pakistan playing, it is obvious what could be the target for a team like us. We have beaten the Sri Lankan national team at home recently and we are confident that we can beat them again," told Bari referring to Bangladesh's 2-0 win against the islanders in the Asian Games qualifiers in Dhaka a few months back. Bangladesh also won the title in the qualifying tournament remaining unbeaten.

In 1995, five teams took part in the

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Bangladesh hockey team stretches during a training session at the Maulana Bhasani Hockey Stadium yesterday, ahead of SA Games in Colombo next month. PHOTO: STAR



Indian all-rounder Irfan Pathan bats during a practice session at the National Cricket Academy (NCA) in Bangalore on Monday. PHOTO: AFP

England alter Ashes plan

Cricket

AFP, London

England are considering arranging more matches to allow their injured players, and Andrew Flintoff in particular, to get match-fit before the winter's Ashes series.

Already without captain Michael Vaughan, who is hoping to make his return from knee surgery in January, England fear the comeback of inspirational all-rounder Andrew Flintoff could be delayed by a lack of available action.

Flintoff is due to have a second operation on his troublesome left ankle this week which will sideline him for

three months, ruling him out of the Pakistan Test and one-day series and establishing him as a major doubt for October's Champions Trophy tournament in India.

But without playing in the Champions Trophy, Flintoff will be desperately short of match action before England arrive in Australia for a one-day match and two three-day games prior to the opening Test in Brisbane on November 23.

Chairman of selectors David Graveney has admitted to being "mischievous" when he suggested Cricket Australia may want to help arrange practice matches, but it is an avenue England may consider anyway.

"I was being a little mischievous

when I said that, but there are a couple of areas we may look at," he explained.

"We know (former Hampshire batsman) Paul Terry has a set-up in Perth and we could look at setting up matches in India, so there are a couple of places we could go to if we felt it would help."

Cricket Australia (CA) said Monday any decision to send Flintoff to an Australian club side would be between the England and Wales Cricket Board and the relevant state association.

"It's a hypothetical situation. We haven't been approached and it's an area that would be looked at"

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