



Chairman of BCB ticket and seating committee Khondokar Jamiluddin (2nd L) addresses a press conference at a local hotel yesterday.

Shakil keeps lead

SPORTS REPORTER

FIDE Master Abu Sufian Shakil maintained his solo lead in the Prime Bank 9th International Rating Chess Tournament when he drew his seventh round board with Monir at the federation hall-room yesterday.

Shakil secured 6.5 points while Chanchal Kumar Ghosh followed him with six points.

In the day's other seventh round games, Chanchal beat Sohel, Delwar beat FM Reza, Jamal beat Debaraj and Javed drew with Robin.

BCB reveals

FROM PAGE 17 Avenue, Uttara, Karwan Bazar, Gulshan, Mirpur and Tan Bazar in Narayanganj.

Replying to a question, chief executive officer Mahmudur Rahman said the BCB is yet to know which satellite channel is going to cover the home series, "Our marketing agent Nimbus (Nimbus Sports International) is dealing the matter and they are yet to inform us."

Managing director of The City Bank TH Chowdhury also spoke on the occasion.

RATE OF TICKETS

Twenty20 match: Gallery - Tk 50, ladies gallery - Tk 60, club house (east) - Tk 150, club house (west) - Tk 150, VIP - Tk 500, VIP stand - Tk 500.

First ODI: Gallery - Tk 80, ladies gallery - Tk 100, Club House (east) - Tk 250, Club House (west) - Tk 250, VIP - Tk 1000 and VIP stand - Tk 1000.

Second and third ODIs: Gallery - Tk 80, Club House - Tk 500, Special Enclosure (East) - Tk 200, VIP - Tk 1000, Non-AC Hospitality Box (3rd Floor) - Tk 1500, Non-AC Hospitality Box (Ground Floor) - Tk 1000, AC Hospitality Box - Tk 2000 and VVIP - Tk 1500.

Carlo cools

FROM PAGE 20 wins, four draws and four defeats. "We haven't won many matches and we've had a lot of injuries lately," added Ancelotti.

"We must win as many matches as we can between now and Christmas."

Milan started their Serie A campaign with minus eight points for their role in the Italian match-fixing scandal which rocked the world of football prior to the World Cup.

Poldi injury

FROM PAGE 20 "His recovery isn't making progress the way we had hoped," Magath said. Poldi's target was to return for Bayern against VfB Stuttgart in the Bundesliga on Nov. 18.

Poldi, who was named the best young player at this year's World Cup, moved from Cologne to Bayern before the season and after a poor start his form has been steadily improving.

Champions Bayern have been hit hard by injuries this season. Their England midfielder Owen Hargreaves and centre back Valerien Ismael are also on the long-term casualty list.

I'll deliver

FROM PAGE 20 The Nerazzurri lost their opening two games against Sporting Lisbon and Bayern Munich, but won their next three to reach the last 16.

Ibrahimovic also silenced his critics who maintain that he doesn't score enough goals as a striker.

"I don't need to net goals to play well," he noted. "I always try to score and sometimes I succeed, sometimes I don't."

ASIAN HOPMAN CUP

Hosts, Chinese Taipei reach final



AFP, Hyderabad

Favourites India and second seeds Chinese Taipei set up a title clash in the Asian Hopman Cup with easy victories in their last league outings here on Saturday.

India and Taipei scored identical 3-0 wins over Japan and Thailand, respectively, to top their three-team groups to gain places in Sunday's final.

The winner of the inaugural tournament will get a direct entry for the main Hopman Cup to be played in Australia next January.

India scored an expected win over Japan in Group A as Sania Mirza and Rohan Bopanna wrapped up their matches in straight sets and then ensured a clean slate by winning the mixed doubles.

Mirza, the highest-ranked player among both men and

women in this championship at 67, controlled her errors in time for a 7-5, 6-2 win over 245th-ranked Tomoko Yonemura in 75 minutes.

In a match replete with service breaks, Mirza tightened her game after serving to stay in the first set at 4-5.

"I stepped it up from that point but I could have cut down on my errors," said Mirza, who won her maiden WTA title here last year.

Serving for the match in the second set, 20-year-old Mirza double-faulted before firing an ace to clinch the outing.

"I did not go in with a plan but we have to watch out in the final tomorrow," said Mirza. "Taipei will be tough and we can't take things easy."

Bopanna, ranked 259th in the world, clinched the decisive lead for India with a 7-6, 6-2 win over 488th-ranked Yuichi Sugita.

A hard-fought last game of the match saw 10 deuces but Bopanna managed his second service break

of the second set to ensure the match was not stretched beyond 77 minutes.

"I got breaks when I needed them and it was tough for him to break my serve," said Bopanna, 26, a last-minute replacement for Leander Paes in the Indian team.

Mirza and Bopanna won the mixed doubles 6-0, 6-1 against the Japanese pair, who had lost 2-1 to China on Friday.

In group B, Taipei's I. Hsuan Hwang (316) drubbed Nudnida Lauwanganj (321) 6-2, 6-1 while Ti Chen (310) won the men's singles 6-1, 6-4 against Weerapat Doakmaiklee (865).

The Taipei pair, who scored an easy 3-0 win over the Philippines on Thursday, enjoyed a walkover in the mixed doubles.

The six-team tournament is being played for the first time after a berth was reserved for Asia in the main Hopman Cup.

Zaheer missed India



CRICINFO, undated

One of the few positives to emerge from the debacle at Kingsmead was the return of one of Indian cricket's prodigal sons. Zaheer Khan may only have impressed in patches, but the manner in which he nipped out Graeme Smith and Loots Bosman suggested that he may yet have a big role to play on this tour.

"We are very positive," he said, speaking after India had finished a training session in the indoor nets at the University of Cape Town. "The conditions have been tough, we have had a lot of indoor practice. It's a long tour, there's a lot of cricket to play. We are looking to improve as the series progresses."

The Durban game was Zaheer's first for India since February, when he had an appalling one-day series in Pakistan. Fat, allegedly lazy and with a poor attitude, it could have marked the end of the road for him. But to the man's credit, he went away and worked on what needed to be done to push himself back into the selectors' thoughts.

"For any player, playing at the highest level is most important," he said. "I was missing playing for India after being dropped. I sat down and analysed what had gone wrong." One of the answers he came up with was county cricket, and a stint with Worcestershire that reaped rich rewards. "A lot of senior players also advised me to go and play County cricket, and I decided to give it a shot."

He took 78 wickets there, and by the time he returned, he had also toned up his physique so that he once again looked like a fast bowler, and not some rugby prop forward. "Even when I was out of the side, I had faith in my ability," he said. "I backed myself to come back to the Indian side. I knew it was essential that I take my game forward, and playing county cricket was the right decision. Once I took those many wickets and got that many overs under the belt, a recall was certain. I now want to focus totally on my game and cement my place in the side."

When asked what specific gains he had observed as a result of the county sojourn, Zaheer said, "It helped me in terms of match fitness, and in finding my rhythm. Picking up wickets consistently meant my confidence was back -- it gave me a huge mental boost and a sense of stability. I feel I have grown as a cricketer and as a bowler, I have improved a lot after the stint with Worcester (shire)."

South Africa's bowlers were hugely impressive in the rapid dismantling of the

Indian batting line-up on Wednesday, and India's pace attack will need to conjure up similar performances to keep the likes of Jacques Kallis and Graeme Smith at bay. The likes of Munaf Patel and Sreesanth are relatively new to the game, and even Irfan Pathan has never bowled in these conditions before. Zaheer, who has, reckons that the secret to success is not to get carried away by the pace and bounce.

"It helps that I have been here earlier," he said. "You have a fair idea of what lengths to bowl here, especially when you have played here in the past. I spent a fair amount of time in the nets working out the lengths, and I have shared my past experiences with the other quick bowlers in the side as well."

Though India couldn't build on their bright start to the Durban game -- they had South Africa 63 for 3 at one stage, before Kallis and AB de Villiers took the game away -- Zaheer said that providing the initial strikes had done wonders for his confidence. "It was my comeback game, and to get that early breakthrough calmed my nerves," he said. "The pressure was always there, and I was a bit tentative to start with, but Smith's wicket helped. In future, I need to build on this performance."

After so many false starts over the course of a career that started up in Kenya in 2000, you'd like to believe that he will.

Harmison c Gilchrist b McGrath 0 Anderson not out 2 Extras: (b-2, lb-8, w-2, nb-6) 18 Total: (All out in 61.1 overs) 157 Fall of wickets: 1-28, 2-28, 3-42, 4-78, 5-79, 6-126, 7-149, 8-153, 9-154, 10-157.

Bowler O M R W Lee 15 3 51 1 McGrath 23.1 8 50 6 Clark 14 5 21 3 Warner 9 0 25 0

AUSTRALIA: First innings 602 for 9 declared (Ponting 196, Hussey 86, Langer 82; Flintoff 4-99) ENGLAND: First innings (53 for 3 overnight) Strauss c Hussey b McGrath 12 Cook c Warner b McGrath 11 Bell c Ponting b Clark 50 Collingwood c Gilchrist b Clark 5 Pietersen lbw b McGrath 16 Flintoff c Gilchrist b Lee 0 Jones lbw b McGrath 19 Giles c Hayden b McGrath 24 Hoggard c Gilchrist b Clark 0

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ASIAN GAMES

Booters first to leave capital

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh football team left here for Qatar yesterday to take part in the 15th Asian Games.

The football competition will begin on November 28 although the mega regional event will formally be declared open at a gala ceremony on December 1 in Doha.

Bangladesh, which features in tough Group B, will launch their campaign against Asian giants South Korea in one of the opening day matches at the Al Gharafa Football Stadium.

They will play their second match against Bahrain on December 2 and meet Vietnam in the last group match on December 5.

The football team was the first batch of a 100-member Bangladesh contingent that left for Doha to participate in the mega sports festival.

Bangladesh will compete in 12 disciplines of sports -- athletics, swimming, football, hockey, kabaddi, shooting, weightlifting, chess, cue sports (billiard & snooker), judo, taekwondo and golf -- in the ensuing Asian Games.

The second and largest batch of Bangladesh contingent, except taekwondo and golf, will fly for Qatar on November 29.

SQUAD

Arman Aziz (captain), Shakil, Mazharul Islam Himel, Rajani Kanta Barman, Nazrul Islam, Firoz Mahmud Tito, Anifur Islam, Arifat Ali Ronny, Wali Faisal, Zahurul Islam, Mohiuddin Ibnul Siraji, Abul Hossain, Motiur Munna, Enamul Haque Sharif, Faisal Mahmud, Zahid Hasan Emily, Mohammad Robin, Mithun Chowdhury and Mehdi Hasan Ujjal.

Zia closer to table-top

SPORTS REPORTER

Grand Master (GM) Ziaur Rahman won his fifth round board against Indian Arjun Tiwari in the Commonwealth Chess Championship in Mumbai on Friday.

Zia raised his tally to 3.5 points while another Bangladeshi GM Niaz Musher drew his board with FM KV Shantharan of India to improve his collection to three points.

GM Nigel Short of England, IM Kidambi, IM Venkatesh and Arghyadip of India were sharing the lead securing 4.5 points each.

Rogge not a cricket fan

REUTERS, Karachi

President of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) Jacques Rogge said he did not see cricket being included in the Olympic Games in the near future.

On his first visit to Pakistan, Rogge told reporters in Lahore that although cricket was a popular sport he did not see it becoming part of the Olympic family.

"Neither has the International Cricket Council approached the IOC for consideration," he said.

Rogge, however, said that the issue of squash being included in the Summer Games would be discussed in 2009 when the host city for the 2016 Olympiad are decided.

Glenn licking

FROM PAGE 17 you're going well your confidence is up and everything seems to be going your way, but when your confidence is down it seems a pretty big hill in front of you and you really have to work hard to get out of it."

McGrath captured his 29th five-wicket haul in Tests and 10th against England to as the tourists folded in their first innings.

"I'm obviously very happy, to get a five-for at any time is great," he said.

"To get that five-for after having so much time out of the game, I couldn't ask for a better comeback in respect to Test cricket."

Test cricket's greatest wicket-taking paceman spent eight months this year caring for his ill wife.

Wise-cracking McGrath poked fun of pre-Test claims that he was past his best by imitating a geriatric hobbling off the field to the amusement of the crowd.

Pitch may suit

FROM PAGE 17 game for anyone with a license to speed back home.

TEAMS

SOUTH AFRICA (likely): Graeme Smith (captain), Loots Bosman, Jacques Kallis, Herschelle Gibbs, AB de Villiers, Mark Boucher, Justin Kemp, Shaun Pollock, Robin Peterson, Andre Nel, Makhaya Ntini.

INDIA (likely): Virender Sehwag, Sachin Tendulkar, Mohammad Kaif, Rahul Dravid (captain), Mahendra Singh Dhoni, Suresh Raina, Irfan Pathan, Harbhajan Singh, Ajit Agarkar, Anil Kumble, Zaheer Khan.

We aim to level series



AFP, Karachi

West Indies were hoping to give Pakistan another tough fight and register a series-levelling win in the third Test which starts here from Monday.

The tourists dominated Pakistan and pressed hard for a win before the home team salvaged a creditable draw in the second match of the three-Test series at Multan on Thursday.

West Indian coach Bennett King said his team was determined to win the final Test.

"We certainly had our opportunities and were in a strong position. I am very encouraged by the performance of the last game and we expect to go from strength to strength for a series-levelling win," King said on Saturday.

West Indian captain Brian Lara led from the front with a magnificent 216 to give his team a healthy 234-run lead over Pakistan in the first innings.

Pakistan were just 74 ahead with their last five wickets in hand at lunch on the fifth and final day before Mohammad Yousuf (191) and Abdul Razzaq (80) put on a match-saving 152-run sixth wicket

stand to help Pakistan escape.

Pakistan won the first Test by nine wickets in Lahore.

King praised his team's effort to push a higher-ranked Pakistan hard.

"We have been on the road for three months and the boys played some of the best cricket on the fifth day when most sides probably start to feel the effects of long tour, but these boys have shown mental fortitude," said King.

The 42-year-old Australian, who took over as the West Indies coach two years ago, said his team needed to improve their fielding.

"I wouldn't say it was disappointing to let Pakistan off, but we only got ourselves to blame for the result and need to raise our fielding," said King, whose team let off Yousuf on 108 on the fifth day.

"I think we created enough opportunities and (Corey) Collymore bowled exceptionally well and had people edged the ball instead of missing it, as often as they did, the result would have been different," said King, who expects a slow turner in the third Test.

"There is grass but we expect it will be taken off in the next couple of days, its a pretty good batting track and can take spin as it gets along, but I certainly think that we extracted as much as we can out of

the wickets we have played in this series."

King praised Lara and said he hoped that he would carry on his good form in the final Test.

"In the last two years he has got eight hundreds and its a good record, but he expects to do better and keep challenging himself which is a sign of a good player," said King about Lara, who scored century off just 77 balls in Multan.

Pakistan coach Bob Woolmer agreed Lara was exceptional.

"Lara is without a peer and I know what he can do if you let him off so we need to check him," said Woolmer, who believed both teams can take confidence from the second Test performances.

"We played exceptionally well after being bowled out for 357 and conceding a lead. Now the West Indies have to win to level the series, we can still win if we draw the third one, so it will be a dogfight in this match," said Woolmer.

West Indies are likely to bring back batsman Ramnaresh Sarwan after dropping him for the second Test. Pakistan brought in paceman Mohammad Sami in their 15-man squad in place of left-arm spinner Abdul Rehman.

Ian doesn't buy Ian talk



AFP, Brisbane

England batsman Ian Bell on Saturday rejected suggestions his side was "undercooked" going into the Ashes series, as the tourists teetered on the brink of a first Test thrashing by Australia at Brisbane's Gabba.

Bell, whose half-century was the England batting's sole source of resistance to another Australian onslaught on day three of the one-sided opening Test, conceded the tourists faced a massive task to salvage a draw in Brisbane.

He admitted surprise at Australia's decision not to enforce the follow-on after England managed just 157 runs in reply to the home side's 602 for nine declared and said his team could only chip away at a lead that had ballooned to 626 by stumps.

"There's still a lot of cricket to be played and we're going to have to bat really well in the next two days to get anywhere near saving this game," he said.

Bell said he did not think a lack

of preparation was a factor in England's poor performance, saying most of the touring party played in the ICC Champions Trophy in India last month.

"It wasn't that long ago since we were in the ICC tournament, so I don't see how we could have squeezed more preparation in," Bell said. "Probably 10 of the 16 of us over here were in the ICC Champions Trophy."

His remarks came after England legend Ian Botham said the tourists' lack of game time Down Under and defensive selections had left them "ill-prepared for a gruelling Ashes defence" in Australia.

England played only three matches on tour before facing Australia, a one-dayer against the Prime Minister's XI, a 14-a-side game against New South Wales and a three-day match against South Australia.

Botham said only the South Australian match counted as serious preparation as it was the tourists' sole first-class outing. "I think they're undercooked," England's former champion all-rounder told Channel Nine.

"They only played one warm-up game and then a 14-a-side game. I just don't think it's enough."

Botham also took aim at England coach Duncan Fletcher for his conservative response to the absence of star players, Michael Vaughan, Simon Jones and Marcus Trescothick.

He said Fletcher had been "defensive" in selecting spinner Ashley Giles over the more attacking Monty Panesar and including wicketkeeper Geraint Jones to shore up the batting line-up ahead of in-form gloveman Chris Read.

"Chris Read is unlucky. He averaged 42 in Test cricket last year and has been left out in the cold," Botham said.

"They've said he didn't play very well in the ICC Trophy but unless I'm mistaken England didn't play very well in the ICC Trophy."

"And Monty Panesar I believe is the best finger spinner in world cricket."

"He gets turn, he gets massive bounce and to win Test matches, yes you need to get runs, but at the end of the day you have to take 20 wickets."

Media foresee calamity



AFP, Brisbane

England stand on the brink of a cricketing calamity after just two days of their Ashes series with Australia here, local media said Saturday.

England's inept display on the opening two days of the first Test at the Gabba has them battling to avoid a heavy defeat as they go into Saturday's third day needing 350 runs to avoid the follow-on with seven wickets in hand.

The Australian press praised the performance of ageing fast bowler Glenn McGrath to initiate the early batting tremors with two wickets that left England lurching at 53 for three at stumps on Friday.

"England stand on the brink of a cricketing calamity. Australia have plenty to smile about," The Sydney Morning Herald said.

"(Captain) Ricky Ponting and his players have won the opening two rounds of this contest decisively.

"His batsmen have put runs on

the board, a task carried out at a pace that gives their colleagues time to take 20 wickets. His bowlers have taken early wickets, thereby reducing their opponents to a wretched state."

The Australian newspaper pointed to the contributions of two of Australia's senior players, McGrath and opening batsman Justin Langer, for putting the Australians in such a commanding position after just two days' play.

"All the questions about the future of these two 36-year-old champions have come to nothing. Langer smashed a belligerent 82 on the opening day and now McGrath, playing his first Test in 11 months, has brought England to its knees," the national daily said.

"Just what grief Shane Warne (at 37), the oldest player on the ground, can cause the downcast tourists will unfold in the coming days."

The Age in Melbourne reflected on the Ashes pendulum and momentum swinging back Australia's way after England won the series last year.

"Last year, all that could go wrong did for Australia, which is not to deny England its deserts. This time, the misfortunes have all been England's."

"Three matchwinners last series -- Michael Vaughan, Marcus Trescothick and Simon Jones -- are not here and a fourth, (fast bowler) Steve Harmison, has become a liability.

"Not for the first time, a touring team is finding Australia to be a damnably wilderness. Australia, by contrast, has had a Midas touch in all its endeavours."

The Australian newspaper said the disintegration of Harmison as a bowling force was presenting huge problems for the under-fire tourists.

"England's pace attack continued its beleaguered and confused approach, with (captain) Andrew Flintoff again showing a lack of faith in his underdone and out of sorts spearhead, Steve Harmison," the newspaper said.

"The pair may be great mates but if there was ever a point where relations were to become strained this was it."

Trouble follows Barmy Army



AFP, Brisbane

England cricket chiefs Saturday accused the Barmy Army of infringing copyright, creating another problem for the cheer squad reeling from their team's woeful form and upset by tight security.

England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) spokesman Colin Gibson said his organisation had written the Barmy Army questioning use of the ECB logo and the term "Ashes" on merchandise.

Gibson denied a report the ECB had taken legal action over the issue, but refused to rule it out if the situation was not resolved.

"We have written to them pointing out breaches of our IP (intellectual property) and are waiting for their response," he told AFP.

"No one wants legal action if possible."

The Barmy Army's Australian equivalent, the Fanatics, had its own copyright problems in the lead up to the series when recording

giant EMI complained about the use of several of its artist's tunes in a group songbook.

However, EMI dropped its objections after being accused of being "un-Australian" by the Fanatics.

Meanwhile, threats of a Barmy Army Ashes boycott proved unfounded Saturday when England's long-suffering fans again turned out to watch their team get whipped at Brisbane's Gabba stadium.

The supporters' group had threatened to shun the series after complaining that heavy-handed treatment from Brisbane's "fun police" was ruining the atmosphere of the series opener.

Barmy Army organiser Paul Burnham was particularly incensed by the eviction of his group's trumpeter during the first day's play and said many fans were avoiding the ground and watching the game on television in protest.

He also raised the prospect of the Barmy Army cancelling events at the upcoming Melbourne and Sydney Tests if the security crack-down continued.