

Tuhin breathing down Riffat's neck

Sports Reporter

With just two more rounds to go in the 17th national chess championship is really hotting up with Ziaul Kader Tuhin of Dhaka Metropolitan inching up closer to the leader Riffat bin-Sattar of Bangladesh Biman.

At the end of yesterday's 13th round encounters at the NSC chess room, Riffat who had looked the runaway winner by the end of the tenth round, now has only one point separating him from his nearest challenger Tuhin who has nine points to Riffat's ten. Tuhin is the only undefeated player in the meet.

While Riffat has been increasingly finding the going

tough ever since that eleventh round defeat at the hands of Tuhin — his first in the meet — last Wednesday, Tuhin's gantanking feat seems to have emboldened his resolve to push for the title the very end. Almost like the proverbial turtle, Tuhin has created for himself a realistic chance of pipping Riffat's rabbit to the post with some consistent late rallies.

For Riffat, the former national junior champion, it was another disappointing day. Although he managed to halt his sequence of two consecutive defeats — in the 12th round he surprised everyone by going down to Shabana Parveen Nipa of Faridpur on Thursday — he could only salvage half a point from his clash

against his teammate Syed Tahmidur Rahman, the defending champion. The two Biman stalwarts settled for a draw after only 13 moves to leave Riffat with ten points from 13 games while Tahmid, whose chances of retaining the title waned much earlier, now has eight points to share the third spot on the table along with Khandker Kayes Hassan of Bangladesh Ansars. Tahmid played white to Riffat's black.

And to add insult to Riffat's injury, Tuhin yesterday received a walkover against Biman's Rezaul Haq to give him another valuable point.

Kayes, playing with the black pieces, yesterday defeated Shahabuddin Qureshi of Sylhet in only 26 moves. Shahabuddin's Ivan's Gambit

opening saw Kayes sacrificing one of his bishops in the 15th move, a gambit that paid off handsomely with Shahabuddin finding all exits cut off by the 26th move. Shahabuddin now has seven points to his credit.

Anisur Rahman of Dhaka Metropolitan, who had a chance to widen the race at the end of Thursday's 12th round, yesterday suffered a serious setback at the hands of former national champion Jamilur Rahman of Ansars, resigning in the 25th move after having made a Dutch defensive opening with his white pieces. Anisur Rahman's points remain on 7.5 while Jamil's increased to seven.

Dhaka DSA's Sheikh Anwar Hossain increased his collection to 5.5 points with a victory over Dhaka Metropolitan player Mamuddin Mamoon in another game that lasted 25 moves. Mamoon has 4.5 points.

Mamoon's Dhaka Metropolitan teammate Shamsul Kabir Chowdhury was forced to split the point by bottom-of-the-table Sheikh Shahadat Hossain Ratna of Bogra who finally succeeded in adding to his total of a measly one point to make it 1.5.

The game between Biman's International Woman Master Rani Hamid and Dhaka Metro's Shahinoor Hossain, both of whom had 6.5 points going into the game, was in progress at the time of filing this report while the match between last year's runner up Younus Hassan and Shabana Parveen Nipa was adjourned.

TODAY'S MATCHES

Sheikh Shahadat Hossain Ratna vs Jamilur Rahman
Mamuddin Mamoon vs Anisur Rahman
Riffat bin-Sattar vs Sheikh Anwar Hossain
Younus Hassan vs Syed Tahmidur Rahman
Rezaul Haq vs Shabana Parveen Nipa
Shahinoor Hossain vs Ziaul Kader Tuhin
Khandker Kayes Hassan vs Rani Hamid
Shamsul Kabir Chowdhury vs Shahabuddin Ahmed Qureshi.

Iceland win Bermuda Bowl, US Venice Cup

YOKOHAMA, Japan, Oct 11: Iceland defeated Poland to win the Bermuda Bowl world bridge championship yesterday while the US (II) team beat Austria to take the women's title in the Venice Cup, reports Reuter.

Iceland outplayed pre-tournament favourites Poland in all areas. They took an early lead and had increased it by the end of the second set of the 160-board final to win the title.

In the playoffs for third and fourth placings, Sweden defeated Brazil in the Bermuda Bowl and China beat US (I) in the Venice Cup.

Final scores for Bermuda Bowl: Iceland defeated Poland 416-377 (169 boards)



IWM Rani Hamid (L) in action against Dhaka Metropolitan's Shahinoor Hossain in the 13th round of the 17th national championship at the NSC chess room yesterday evening. — Star photo

Chiburdanidze retains lead

MANILA, Oct 11: Soviet holder Maya Chiburdanidze retained her one-point lead over Chinese challenger Xie Jun with a hard-fought 19-move draw on Thursday in the seventh game of their battle for the women's world chess title in Manila, reports Reuter.

Chiburdanidze leads the 16-game series by four points to three. Playing white in a Ruy Lopez opening, Xie offered the draw after a battle with Chiburdanidze that left both players with just over an hour to complete 21-moves within the regulation five hours of play.

"They reversed roles. Maya initiated complications and Xie chose a quiet line and obtained some pressure, but nothing more," said Filipino Grandmaster Eugene Torre.

Xie lost momentum in her bid to build up an attack with a weak queen push on the 11th move instead of her bishop, allowing the Soviet holder to quickly equalise the position.

Torre added. The first player to score 8.5 points wins. A victory counts for one point and a draw for half a point. Chiburdanidze retains the title in case of an 8-8 tie.

The eighth game will be played on Saturday.

MOVES

Move by move account of the seventh game: Ruy Lopez Xie (White) Chiburdanidze (black)

1. E4 E5
2. Nf3 Nc6

3. Bb5 F5
4. D3 Fx E4
5. D x E4 Nf6
6. O-O Bc5
7. Nc3 D6
8. Bb3 Bb6
9. Nd5 O-O
10. Bg5 Bb6
11. Qd3 Kf8
12. Bx F6 Gxf6
13. Ng4 Nd4
14. Bc4 Bx D5
15. B x D5 O6
16. Bb3 D6
17. C3 F5
18. C x D4 Q x H4
19. E x D5 Drawn.

Karpov, Kasparov for Paris meet

PARIS, Oct 11: World chess champion Gary Kasparov and his long-time rival former champion Anatoly Karpov will be the leading lights in a million-franc (180,000 dollar) four-day tournament in Paris, the organisers announced Thursday, reports AFP.

The Soviet Grandmasters will compete with 14 other leading world players in a rapid-play knockout competition at the Theatre Des Champs-Elysees. Each round will comprise two games, with

a blitz finish in the event of drawn matches.

Other competitors are Joel Lautier (France), Viktor Korchnof (Switzerland), Nigel Short and Jon Speelman (Britain), Jan Timman (Netherlands), Arthur Yusupov, Yevgeny Baryev, Alexander Belyavsky, Alexander Khalifman, Boris Gelfand and Valery Salov (All Soviet Union), Vishanathan Anand (India), Gata Kamsky (United States) and Mikhail Gurevich (Belgium).

London hosts first-ever sumo wrestling outside Japan

LONDON, Oct 11: The hotel toilets have been individually weight tested and the beds reinforced. The sumo wrestlers have rumbled into town, reports Reuter.

For five days this week, the Royal Albert Hall in West London is hosting the first official sumo wrestling 'Basho' held outside Japan in the 1,500 year history of the sport.

The top 40 ranked Rikishi (wrestlers), flown in on two Boeing 747 jumbo jets with widened seats and copious supplies of food, are the big attraction in every possible sense.

So, big that their hotel has had to modify showers, reinforce toilets and order food in

bulk for their brief stay. Sending the scales spinning at 233 kilos, the Hawaiian-born Konishiki, 'The dump truck' to his fans, is the biggest man ever to compete in sumo.

Nicknames are as awesome as their stature — Akinoshima 'the Killer Whale', Terao 'The Typhoon' and Hokutoumi 'The Bulldog' — and all boast gargantuan appetites.

"The amount they eat is almost beyond comprehension," said awe-struck head chief David Nicholls.

The event, staged at a cost of around two million pounds sterling (3.4 million dollars), is one of the top attractions in a six month long Japanese cultural festival in Britain.

strengthened floor of the 19th century hall to make a holy ring under the close supervision of Japanese sumo officials.

Once complete, no man in shoes and no woman under any circumstances is allowed to enter the area. Should they do so, the tournament must be immediately called to a halt.

The rules of Sumo are simple and there are no weight divisions. The ideal recruit is a teenager with a liking for heavy stew and the ability to put on weight steadily.

Big feet and a pear shape, gained after several years of force feeding, are ideal for a low centre of gravity.

Konishiki may have exceeded the ideal a couple of years back but he remains at the heart of the media attention.

It has not all been flattering for the 27-year-old, who says his original ambition was to become a lawyer. He lists disco dancing and trumpet playing among his hobbies.

The Japan Sumo Association, who have some made sure the tournament is as authentic as possible and have flown in the ceremonial 'Yakata' canopy from Japan, classify him as an Ozeki (Champion), one grade below the top rank of Yokozuna.

He is treated as a superstar in Japan but, while the organisers of the tournament try to stress the cultural complexities of one of the world's oldest organised sports, the popular press have stuck firmly to their own ideas.

To them, sumo is about fat men and food and none rather than the man they have dubbed 'The Incredible Bulk.' Sumo and sex appeal also hold a considerable fascination. "Could 37-stone dump truck make the earth move for our Suzanne," wondered the Daily Mirror newspaper, sending a petite reporter on a mission to 'Get to grips' with Konishiki.

The attempt, while revealing that 'Dump' loses count of how much beer he drinks after his 20th bottle, failed.

"I'm too sexy for my sumo — Japanese hippos just leave pennycold," declared another report by a female reporter in the daily Tabloid newspaper today on sumo sex appeal.

It is no wonder if Konishiki sometimes appears fed up. Despite the preoccupation with food and fat, the tournament organisers are delighted with the public response.



Fakirerpool YMC's Masih (R) does everything but score as Dhaka Wanderers goalie Arun tries to block him in yesterday's Federation Cup soccer match at the Dhaka Stadium. Fakirerpool won 2-1. — Star photo

Edberg, Lendl in Tokyo semis

TOKYO, Oct 11: Stefan Edberg and Ivan Lendl manoeuvred into the semi finals with straight-set wins, but Boris Becker and Andre Agassi crashed out in the one million dollar Seiko Super men's tennis tournament here Friday, reports AFP.

World number one Edberg of Sweden, fresh from his victories in the US Open and the Australian Indoor last week, breezed past Michael Chang of the United States 6-2, 6-2 while defending champion Lendl notched up a narrow 7-6 (7/5), 7-5 win over another American, David Wheaton.

Becker of Germany came back into action this week after a third-round loss in the US Open due to injuries, but failed to keep his victory hopes alive going down 6-7 (4/7), 6-4, 3-6 to American Derrick Rostagno, who will now face Lendl.

Meanwhile, Goran Ivanisevic of Yugoslavia, who created a sensation by firing 27 aces in two sets to beat Agassi in Sydney last week, claimed yet another scalp by eliminating the same opponent 6-3, 6-4.

"To be able to beat him (Ivanisevic), I have to serve really well to keep the pressure on him. He's got great first serve and he's playing well at this moment," said Edberg, who defeated the Yugoslav 4-6, 7-6 (7/2), 7-6 (7/5) in the quarter-finals last week in Sydney.

"I'm not gonna get many

chances to break him. So if we both play well, it would be a very tight match tomorrow, he added.

Chang, who hasn't beaten Edberg since overcoming him to become the youngest-ever French Open champion in 1989, had planned to play "something different" from his normal game.

But whatever that was, it was no help against the stylish serve and volley game of the 25-year-old Swede, who broke the Chinese — American five teams in match and allowed Chang to capitalize on only one

of his three break points.

"The score was probably easier than the match itself," the Swede said. "I managed to come up with a right shot at the right moment. I played aggressive and I took chances here and there, coming to the net. That's the way to beat him," he added.

An earlier report said Edberg coasted to a straight-sets win, while Ivan Lendl hit trouble on his way to the quarter finals of the tournament on Thursday.

Top-seeded Edberg of Sweden, fresh from his victo-

ries in the US Open and in Sydney last week, eliminated 15th seed Frederic Fontang of France 6-2, 7-5 in the third round.

Second-seeded Becker also had to brave a vocal sell-out home crowd to beat Shuzo Matsuoka of Japan 2-6, 6-3, 6-4 in the third round.

The 6,880-crowd were so loud in their support for Matsuoka at the Tokyo Metropolitan Gymnasium that Lendl and Wally Masur of Australia, playing on a neighbouring court, had to suspend their match temporarily at 3-1 in the first set.

Lendl said: "It was difficult to play because when I was ready to serve, people would clap hands for the Centre Court," where Matsuoka and Becker were playing.

"The same thing happened when I was about to return, too. Wally felt the same way, so we talked to the supervisor and decided to wait till they finish their match. That was very distracting."

The 31-year-old Czech took the set when the match resumed but lost the second on the tie-break after going through it 6-4, 6-7 (5/7), 6-2.

In the last eight Friday Lendl, whose 1991 Wimbledon dream was dashed by David Wheaton of the United States in the third round, meets his fifth-seeded nemesis, who trounced Gianluca Pozzi of Italy 6-0, 6-2, earlier in the day.

"If I can return his serves, I think I have a good chance," Lendl said.

Rostagno ruins Becker

TOKYO, Oct 11: Germany's Boris Becker's comeback trial ended here Friday when he went down in three sets to Derrick Rostagno of the United States in the quarter finals of the one million dollar Seiko Super men's tennis tournament, reports AFP.

Becker, the world number two, was playing his first tournament since his third-round defeat in the US Open last month due to injuries.

It was his first-ever defeat by the 22nd-ranked American in their three encounters in major tournaments. He went out 6-7 (4/7), 6-4, 3-6.

Two years ago in the US Open, Becker took match point against Rostagno when his forehead shot hit the net cord and hurtled over his opponent's head to clinch a five



BORIS BECKER

stump when he double faulted on an advantage point for Rostagno to go down 3-5 in the final set.

The American completed the two-hour 18-minute match with a flawless love game.

Connors says no to Grand Slam Cup

NEW YORK, Oct 11: Jimmy Connors is saying no to a possible two-million-dollar payday at the Grand Slam Cup tennis tournament in Munich this December, reports Reuter.

"I better spend some time at home and I've got some things planned with the family," Connors said in an interview on Thursday about his decision to skip the six-million-dollar tournament, which boasts the game's largest winner's prize of two million dollars.

Connors, the father of two children, qualified for the 16-player tournament December 10-15 by his remarkable climb to the semifinals at last month's US Open.

Qualifying for the Grand Slam Cup is based on players' results at each of the year's four grand slam tournaments — Wimbledon and the Australian, French and US Opens.

Though players have until October 31 to formally accept

a berth in the tournament, Connors does not appear to be wavering in his decision.

"December has always been a bad time for me and I've got to give myself a little bit of rest," Connors said.

The 39-year-old Connors' phenomenal US Open effort, which started with a five-set victory against Patrick McEnroe after the loss of the first two sets, capped an extraordinary comeback from career-threatening wrist surgery a year ago.

"My goal was to play well at the Open, but do you ever expect anything like that?" said Connors, who had returned in February buried in the world rankings at number 990. "It was really quite something."

Connors, now number 55, is determined to use the US Open as a springboard to end the year on a winning note.

"To take advantage of that US Open run and to go out and continue is a must," said Connors, who reached the semifinals in Basel, Switzerland, 10 days ago.

On Monday Connors starts a four-week tournament stretch in Lyon, France.

"I have no fear, the more better players I play, the faster I go to top if I win. I'm just going to swing from the hip. Like people have done against me throughout my career"

Stich subdues Siemerin

BERLIN, Oct 11: Wimbledon champion Michael Stich of Germany overpowered Jan Siemerin of the Netherlands 6-2, 6-3 Thursday to advance to the quarterfinals of the dollars 300,000 ATP men's tennis tournament in Berlin, reports AP.

The top-seeded 22-year-old dominated with powerful serves and smartly placed volleys, taking the first set in 36 minutes and winning the match after 68.

Still, he seemed dissatisfied with his technique, cursing and repeatedly shaking his head as he played.

promised Connors, who goes on from Lyon to Stockholm, Paris and London.

"This is a great position I'm in. If I can't like this, then something is wrong."

Finishing up his 20th professional season, Connors attributes his longevity to guidance from his mother Gloria at the start of his career.

"She said she never wanted to burn me out to the point that I had played myself into the ground tennis-wise," said Connors. "I would play two, three weeks and then take a week or two weeks off, even when I was 20."

Connors has won a men's record 109 career singles titles, capped by five US Open crowns and two Wimbledon championships.

"I was not burned out like (Bjorn) Borg and even like (John) McEnroe was for a while," said Connors, remembering his mother's good advice. "That was the biggest thing. She understood that and that is why I love it so much now."

Gary Player leads SA back into int'l fold

ST. ANDREWS, Scotland, Oct 11: Gary Player leads South Africa out of golf's wilderness and back into the international team arena at the Dunhill Cup tournament over the famous Old Course at St. Andrews this week.

Player, one of only four men to have won all four of golf's major championships, captains a team which also includes John Bland and David Frost at the million sterling (£1.73 million dollars) tournament.

While South Africans have played internationally as individuals over the years, their last team event was the 1978 World Cup.

When the Dunhill Cup organisers decided last month that Japan could not field a team this year because of a direct conflict with the Japan Open, South Africa were invited to fill the gap.

The organisers decided that with apartheid being dismantled in South Africa, the time was right.

Player, 55, is delighted — and typically pugnacious about the situation. "I'm obviously very excited to be back. It is a shame that athletes of all colours have had to suffer because of a couple of politicians who decided that segregation was the way things were going to be," he said week.

Player has also had to weather criticism from other South African golfers about being named as captain.

Gavin Levenson, outgoing president of the South African PGA, questioned Player's qualifications over others.

Jaff Hawkes, a full-time European Tour player who won the European Masters last month, said Player's nomination was "a despicable decision. I'm appalled by it."

Player, who features mainly on the lucrative US Seniors Tour, dealt brusquely and wittily with the critics. "There is only one way to answer people like Hawkes," he said.

"The eagle is never really concerned about the sparrow."

Despite their credentials, South Africa are unlikely to be among the eight seeded nations when they are disclosed at the draw on Wednesday, ahead of Thursday's start.

Organisers are, however, reconsidering the seeds because some nations are fielding weaker teams than anticipated.

Spain, for example, has neither Seve Ballesteros nor Jose Maria Olazabal and their three-man team of Jose Rivero, Miguel Martin and Santiago Luna may not be seeded.

Defending champions Ireland, led to victory by Ryder Cup player David Feherty's magnificent approach to the "Road Hole" 17th green last year, are strong again with Feherty joined by Ronan Rafferty and Fannonn Darcy.

But Strange, once the strongest American player, has had a dismal year by his standards and may need all the help he can get from team mates Fred Couples and Steve Fates. Ryder Cup players who are second and fourth on the US money list.

Officials have tightened, though not changed, the rule which led to confusion last year when Japan thought they had beaten England in the semifinals after a win and two halves in the three matches of their tie.

The rule states that two victories from the three matches are required for a team to claim victory. This year the organisers have ensured that all teams are aware that no matches will be halved unless the result of the tie has been decided.

Otherwise, the matches will go to sudden death. If the third match is halved, the score of the tie will be recorded as 2-0, instead of 2-1/2 to 1-2.



Shooters bidding for a place in the Bangladesh squad to the 5th SAF Games in Colombo next December practising at the Gulshan range yesterday. — Star photo