

Tahmidur closer to glory

Sports Reporter



India's Bipin Shenoy scored his first win of the United Insurance Chess Masters by beating the wireless local lad Ashraf Hossain yesterday at the NSC chess room. —Star photo

National champion, FIDE Master Syed Tahmidur Rahman earned a precious point to maintain his position at the top of the point table with eight points after completing the ninth round of the United Insurance International Masters chess championship yesterday at the National Sports Council chess room.

Tahmidur Rahman is now only 1/2 point away from acquiring his first norm to become International Master and has four games in hand to collect them.

Playing with white piece, Tahmidur overwhelmed FIDE Master Jamilur Rahman in 28 moves.

Three players — Pakistan's International Master Mahmud Lodhi, International Master TN Parmashwaran and Niroj Kumar Misra of India — were placed jointly with six points from eight matches.

Lodhi playing with white piece and Younus Hasan with black both opted for "kings Indian defence" and settled for a draw in 23 moves.

T.N. Parmashwaran playing black faced a tough competition from Almasur Rahman of Bangladesh and finally won in 40 moves. Parmashwaran started the match with the "Scilian defence".

Niroj Kumar Misra defeated Bangladesh's Rezaul Haque when the latter failed to complete his moves within the time limit.

This is the third match Rezaul has lost in the same manner.

International Master Zillur Rahman Champak beat Vishal Shaheen of India.

V. Koshi of India overcame Maroof Ahmed.

India's Bipin Shenoy recorded his first win against the bottom placed Ashraf Hossain Nannu who is yet to collect a point.

Neaz leaves for Havana

Sports Reporter

Grand Master Neaz Murshed leaves Dhaka today for Havana, Cuba to participate in the Capablanca Memorial International chess competition.

The tournament starts from May 8 and the competition has been rated as category nine.

Two former world champions Bobby Fisher of America and Vesely Sotnikov of Russia will also be taking part in the championship which ends on May 26.

Bangladesh beat Bahrain

MANAMA, May 5: Bangladesh beat Bahrain 3-2 when Sardar Iftekhhar beat Shehab Rashid Shehab of Bahrain in the reverse singles of the Davis Cup Asia-Oceania Zone Group Two first round here today, reports Reuter.

Iftekhhar won the match 6-3, 3-6, 6-1 and 7-5.

In the other reverse singles, Shovon Jamaly lost to Essam Abdul A'al of Bahrain 6-2, 3-6, 6-7, 6-1 and 13-15.

Earlier, the Bangladesh pair of Shovon and Iftekhhar won the doubles beating Essam and Shehab 6-2, 6-2, 6-4 Saturday.

In the opening singles Friday, Shovon defeated Shehab 6-1, 6-1 and 6-4 while Iftekhhar lost to Essam 2-6, 3-6 and 2-6.

Bangladesh will now play Sri Lanka in the second round, to be held in Dhaka.

Abahani KC bow out

Sports Reporter

Defending champions Abahani Krira Chakra of Dhaka bowed out of the Sait Nagjee soccer tournament yesterday, losing their semifinal to Calcutta Mohammedan Sporting Club by a solitary goal in the semifinal held in Kozhikode (Calicut), Kerala, according to a message received in Dhaka late last night.

Abahani had made the semifinals after finishing second in their Group "B" with five points from three games.

BKSP beaten 4-0

The Bangladesh pre-Olympic (under-23) football team beat the Bangladesh Krira Shikha Protsahan (BKSP) 4-0 in their first exhibition match played yesterday at the BKSP ground, reports UNB.

All the four goals were scored in the first half.

Samrat, Mamun, Ekram Rana and Sabir netted one each for the winners.

The match was postponed in the 20th minute of the last half due to heavy downpour.

The pre-Olympic team will play three more matches against the BKSP, Mohammedans and Abahani before they leave for South Korea on May 15.

BFF revise fixture

Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) has revised the fixture for the charity football tournament beginning at the national stadium here on May 7, reports BSS.

BFF has decided to organise the charity tournament to raise funds for the victims of the cyclone following a request from the Bangladesh Sports Journalists Association.

The three leading football teams of the country — Mohammedan Sporting Club, Abahani Krira Chakra and Brothers Union — and the national under-23 football team will take part in the first ever competition in the country.

According to the revised fixture, Mohammedan Sporting Club will take on the under-23 national team on May 7 at 6 pm and Brothers Union on May 9 at 6 pm.

On May 11, Abahani Krira Chakra will play under-23 national team at 6 pm while the match between Abahani and Brothers Union will be held on May 13 at the same time.

The last match of the charity tournament will be held on May 15 in which the traditional rivals — Abahani Krira Chakra and Mohammedan Sporting Club — will face each other at 6 pm.

The BFF also announced the rates of tickets for different galleries and VIP seats. The rate of the gallery tickets will be Taka 10, VIP gate no two will be Taka 50, gate no two Taka 30 and gate no three (A and B) will be Taka 20.

No complimentary tickets will be issued for the tournament.

Zahurul Haque Hall sports held

The annual sports competition of the Zahurul Haque Hall of Dhaka University was held at the DU ground here yesterday, reports BSS.

Vice Chancellor of the University Prof. Moniruzzaman Mia inaugurated the meet in the morning.

Antsuzzaman Anis and Mohiuddin Ahmed became joint champions securing 15 points each while Khondakhar Showkat Ali was runner-up with 13 points.

Seventy students of the hall took part in 12 events of the meet.

Pro-Vice Chancellor of the University Prof. Wakil Ahmed distributed the prizes among the winners.

Earlier, one minute silence was observed as a mark of respect to the victims of the recent devastating cyclone.

Deng avenges Dortmund defeat



CHIBA, Japan, May 5: China's Deng Yaping demolished Li Bunchui of Korea to win the women's singles final while the formidable Swedes put two men through men's singles semi-finals at the World table tennis championship here Sunday, reports AFP.

Deng, who as a 16-year-old two years ago helped China to the women's team and doubles world title, beat fourth seeded Li, 21-13, 21-18, 21-14 in a rapid-fire 31 minutes.

The win wiped out the memory of her fourth round singles defeat to Li in the 1989 World championships in Dortmund, Germany. Li went on to lose that final too, against Chinese number one Qiao Hong, the top seed she eliminated in the semi-finals here earlier Sunday.

After smashing her way to victory Deng pumped her fist in the air and bounced for joy before saying "I took revenge and it feels great."

Meanwhile sixth-seeded Swede Jorgen Persson joined Jan-Ove Waldner, Sweden's reigning world champion, in the men's singles last four.

But not before Waldner came dangerously close to elimination in the quarter-finals.

He was taken to five games by French number one Jean Philippe Gattien and said: "He was 5-1 up in the fourth game and if he had won a few more points it would have all been over. It was as close as that".

Waldner, 25, beaten 3-2 by Gattien in the European championships quarter-finals last year, survived the scare and will meet Chinese number one Ma Wenge in Monday's semi-finals.

Ma eliminated South Korea's Olympic champion Yoo Nam-Kyu 3-2. Persson beat Poland's number three seed Andrezj Grubba 3-2 and will meet South Korean number two Kim Taek-Soo in the other semi-final.

There was no trace of a scare for Deng, the 18-year-old Chinese number two, whose systematic destruction of Li, 23, was chilling.

Li, North Korea's number one, was hoping to hand the unified Korean team a first gold in the individual competition to add to the women's

team title she helped them collect on Monday.

But Deng said: "I knew exactly what I had to do to beat her. We have played each other a lot and I know her style and tactics".

Her coach Zhang Zielin said Deng's strategy was plotted well in advance. "She had to get to the return early and launch the attacks first".

And so she did, blazing through the first game in nine minutes, smashing down Li's weaker backhand side.

Earlier in the day, the North Korean, seeded fourth, savoured vengeance over her Dortmund conquerer, Qiao, beating her 16-21, 21-16, 21-14, 18-21, 21-18 in a one hour 10 minute marathon.

After that battle the North Korean, part of a historic first Korean singles sporting team here, looked too tired to respond to Deng's shock assault.

Tuesday's other title feel to the Swedes, with third choice partnership of Peter Karlsson and Thomas Von Scheele, seeded 15, beating Wang Tao and Lu Lin of China, the ninth seeds, in the men's doubles final 16-21, 21-16, 21-14, 18-21, 21-18.

It was Sweden's second world title following their men's team triumph over Yugoslavia on Tuesday.

We weren't meant to win this, said Karlsson, 20. It's all a big surprise and it won't sink in for while.

But Waldner almost handed the Swede a second major upset following the elimination of world number two and second seed Mikael Appelgren by England's 25-year-old number three Alan Cooke in Thursday's fourth round.

Waldner was 2-1 down and Gattien went 5-1 up in the fourth game.

"Then I got lucky and picked up a few quick points but I had to play very well to scrape through," he said.

He will meet Ma, the top Chinese player who eliminated Yoo, seeded fifth, 21-23, 21-15, 21-18, 18-21, 21-12.

Kim, 20, the South Korean champion though seeded below Yoo here, came through an all-Korean quarter-final beating 19-year-old rising star Lee Chul Seung, a newcomer to the Korean side who came through the qualifier to reach the main draw.

Indonesians set to retain cup



BRONDBY, Denmark, May 5: Indonesia targeted their second successive Sudirman Cup here on Saturday when they ruined hopes of a home win in the world mixed team championship with a hard-fought triumph over Denmark, reports AFP.

The holders' 3-2 victory matched South Korea's earlier success by a similar margin against China and so set up a repetition of the inaugural final two years ago in Jakarta.

But Indonesian team manager M. F. Stiegar is not optimistic about holding on to the magnificent trophy crafted in memory of Dick Sudirman, a former president of their association.

"I think we may lose 3-2 because although I think we'll win both singles, we've got no chance in the men's doubles and mixed doubles, and only a slight chance in the women's doubles," he said.

It was the women's pairing of Erma Sulistyaning and Rosiana Tendean who finally doused the Danish challenge on Saturday with a 17-16, 15-4 win over Drote Kjaer and Nettie Nielsen.

Thomas Lund and Pernille Dupont had given the host nation a great send off by holding out 18-14, 17-18, 15-12 against Rudy Gunawan and Rosiana Tendean in the mixed.

But the Indonesians hit back in devastating fashion in the singles, with world Grand Prix leader Susi Susanti demolishing 17-years-old Camilla Martin 11-6, 11-2 and Joko Suprianto maintaining his superiority over Poul-Erik Hoyer-Larsen with a thrilling 10-15, 15-12, 15-8 triumph.

The dunes' second victory came in the dead rubber of the men's doubles, with Lund and Jon Hilst Christensen easing past Eddy Hartono and Gunawan 15-11, 15-8.

Koreans pip Chinese

Earlier, the Koreans repeated their 19-9 Sudirman Cup semi-final scoreline against China thanks to their amazing strength in depth at double.

World mixed champions Park Joo-Bong and Chung Myung-hee sealed the Korean passage into the final by outclassing Yu Yong and Nong Qunhua 15-7, 15-4 in the last match.

The Koreans had also claimed the opener, Park combining with Kim Moon-Soo to avenge their All-England final loss to world men's doubles champions Li Yongbo and Tian Bingyi with a 15-10, 15-2 triumph.

The Koreans then notched the second leg of a double clean sweep when world women's Grand Prix leaders Chung So-Young and Hwang Hye-Young thrashed the game's number one pairing - Yao Fen and Lai Caijin - 15-3, 15-4.

However, China twice pulled level with predictable singles successes, Tang Jinhong outgunning Bang Soo-Hyun 11-3, 11-6 and world number one Wu Wenkal overwhelming Kim Hak-Kyun 15-6, 15-7, to set up the decider.

"We knew we would win the match after the men's doubles because we're so strong in the women's doubles and mixed doubles," said Kim Hak Suk, chairman of the Korean Badminton Association.

He was not so certain about the final, though. "We're sure to win the mixed doubles, but apart from that it is hard to say," he added.

Japan relegated

While the Indonesians and South Korea were lining up another tussle for the cup, Japan were sliding out of the sport's top flight with a 4-1 drubbing by Sweden.

Their dismal performance in the world mixed team championship was completed when they lost the first three rubbers of the relegation play-off without winning a game.

Tomomi Matsuro and Fumihiko Machida crashed 4-15, 7-15 to Par Gunnar Jonsson and Maria Bengtsson in the mixed doubles, Hiroki Etoh went down 16-17, 3-15 to Jens Olsson in the men's singles and Harumi Kohara slumped 6-11, 8-11 to Catrin Bengtsson in the women's singles.

Kimiko Jimnai and Hisako Mori, listed second in the world, salvaged some respect by lifting the women's doubles 15-8, 17-14 against Maria Bengtsson and Christine Magnusson.

Japan were narrow losers in the men's doubles, though, Shuji Matsuno and Shinji Matsuuru succumbing 15-4, 10-15, 11-15.

Dixon sinks Liverpool

LONDON, May 5: Chelsea gave London rivals Arsenal a huge helping hand in the English First Division title race on Saturday by beating Liverpool 4-2, reports AFP.

Kerry Dixon was the man who gave Liverpool the Chelsea Blues, scoring twice in the tense encounter.

Chelsea's win left the champions needing Sunderland to produce a shock win over Arsenal later in the day, or a mathematical miracle, to hope to hang on their crown.

Dixon headed Chelsea ahead after only six minutes from a Gordon Durie cross and Liverpool suffered a new setback on the half hour. This time Durie was brought down by Republic of Ireland International Ray Houghton.

Dennis Wise, England's goalscorer in midweek, shot



KERRY DIXON

Liverpool came back with a vengeance in the second half to level the score and search for a possible winner.

David Speedie, pulled one back for Liverpool early in the second period. Put clear by Ian Rush, Speedie drove a determined right foot shot into the Chelsea goal.

Liverpool super-sub Ronnie Rosenthal got the equaliser with a superb individual effort 20 minutes from time. Taking the ball halfway in the Chelsea half, he beat a clutch of defenders before scoring with a relatively weak shot.

But Liverpool were then shocked themselves when Dixon got his second.

Grobelaar failed to get to a high corner and Dixon hit in off the bar into an empty net.

Speedie hit the post with a powerful header but Liverpool failed to come back and five minutes from time Durie hit a shot high into the net to make the victory definitive.

French lead Aussies 2-1

NIMES, France, May 5: France took a 2-1 lead over Australia in their quarter-final Davis Cup tie on Saturday with a thrilling five-set doubles victory, reports Reuter.

France's Guy Forget and Henri Leconte beat Todd Woodbridge and Mark Kratzmann 6-7, 7-5, 5-7, 7-6, 6-4 after a four-hour battle appropriately set in a Roman arena usually used for bull-fights.

India enter World Zone

NEW DELHI, May 5: India entered the World Zone qualifying round of the Davis Cup Sunday, winning the doubles and two singles matches against South Korea in the Asia Oceania zone second round tie, reports AP.

Lankans make a clean sweep

COLOMBO, May 5: Sri Lanka made a clean sweep in the Davis Cup Asia-Oceania Zone Group 11 first-round clash against Syria, winning the second reverse singles here Sunday to post a 5-0 win in the tie, reports AFP.

Umesh Walloppillai thrashed Jehad Sheet 6-0, 6-0 to win the second reverse singles after captain Arjun Fernando beat earlier in the day beaten Samer Mourad by the same score in the first reverse singles.

Leconte wept with joy when Woodbridge ended the match by firing a forehand into the net. The partisan home crowd erupted.

With two rubbers remaining, Forget, ranked fifth in the world, could clinch victory over last year's losing finalist when he meets Australia's Richard Fromberg today.

The prize for victory would be a semifinal against Yugoslavia in September.

The young Australian pair, who look sure to become a powerful doubles team, came close to upsetting the experienced Frenchmen, taking a 2-1 lead before Leconte and Forget exploded into action in the fifth set.

The game seesawed dramatically from start to finish. All four players held serve until Woodbridge's was broken in the 24th game.

The players tested each other in the first set, with the two Australians coming to grips with driving baseline shots from Leconte and Forget.

Woodbridge and Kratzmann crushed through the first set tie-break, much to the displeasure of the disappointingly small 6,000-strong crowd scattered around the 2,000 year-old arena.

The blustery winds that upset players on Friday subsided on Saturday, although occasional gusts sent clouds of red clay into the players' eyes.

Woodbridge, ranked fifth worldwide in doubles, was the first to crack when he lost his service in the second set.

Forget, brought in to the doubles team by captain Yannick Noah in place of newcomer Cedric Pioline, showed uncharacteristic nervousness in the third set, losing his serve twice.

France took a 4-2 lead in the third set after Kratzmann lost his serve but the gritty Australians, playing together for the first time, fought back to take the set 7-5 after saving three set points.

Awards for Indian Asiad medallists

NEW DELHI, May 5: P. T. Usha and 13 other sports persons who did the country proud at the 1990 Asian Games, will be honoured by Hinduja Foundation Sports Welfare Fund, reports PFI.

The awards, to be presented on May 7 by Prime Minister Chandra Shekhar, will also be given to 14 up-and-coming youngsters, a Hinduja Foundation press release said here yesterday.

P.T. Usha, who bagged a silver in the games, will get a monthly stipend of Rs. 750.00 for four years. Apart from the stipend, Usha will also be presented with a silver sash for her significant contribution in the 1990 Asian Beijing Games.

Other Asian Games silver medallists — Dina Ram (athletics), Bharti Singh (weightlifting), Jyoti-na Dutta (weightlifting) and Ombrir Singh (wrestling) will also get the same amount every month.

Beijing Asian Games bronze medallists Rosa Kutty (athletics), S.D. Eshan (athletics), Gopal Dewang (boxing), N. Kunjaram and Chhaya Adak (both weightlifting), Subhash Verma (wrestling), Soma Dutta (shooting), Dalbir Singh (rowing) will receive a monthly stipend of Rs. 600.00.

The talented young sports persons in the making, who will also receive their stipends are Anuradha Biswal, Bobby Aloyath, Lekha Thomas, Poomam Singh, Jaspreet Bajwa, P.V. Leena, Anusya Roy, Kuljit Singh, Geetanjali, Ranjit Randhawa and Jincy Philip (all athletics), Vikram Singh Padwal (boxing), Firoza Batiwal (badminton) and wrestler Balwan Singh.

Graf, Seles in Hamburg final

HAMBURG, May 5: Monica Seles of Yugoslavia and a rejuvenated Steffi Graf breezed into the final of the 350,000 dollars women's tennis tournament here on Saturday, reports AFP.

Seles, the top seed, beat third seed Arantxa Sanchez-Vicario 6-2, 6-4, to set up a meeting with her arch-rival.

And Graf, the deposed world number one, indicating that she is on her way back to her formidable best with a crushing 6-0, 6-1 dismissal of Australia's Judith Wiesner, seeded eighth.

After all the off-court problem Graf has had to face and a subsequent loss of form, the sight of her in full cry just weeks before the French Open will send a timely reminder through the world of tennis that she cannot be written off.

Sabatini—crowd's darling

ROME, May 5: If the highly emotional fans at the Italian Open could pick a queen, chances are Gabriela Sabatini would be their choice, reports AP.

The dark-haired Argentine tennis star of Italian ancestry is so popular here that her opponents are put off by the partisan roars from the stands at the Foro Italico.

She won Italian titles in 1988 and 1989 and has been on a roll since gaining confidence in last year's US Open, her first Grand Slam title.

The extra edge from the crowd have to make Sabatini a favourite in the 500,000-dollar women's event that, opens Monday, followed a week later by the 1.2-million-dollar men's tournament.

Leading the 54-player women's draw and back to defend her title on the red clay is Monica Seles, who took over the world's No.1 ranking from Steffi Graf, one of the few leading women's players missing from the field.

Seles has the distinction of winning the shortest women's final with her trouncing of Martina Navratilova in 14 games, 6-1, 6-1, last year.



GABRIELA SABATINI

Sabatini is seeded second behind Seles, possibly setting the stage for a final between two women now playing at the top of their games.

The Argentine, who now goes to net rather than being anchored at the baseline, is 29-2 for the year, having won four of six tournaments. She has beaten Graf four straight times.

Her only losses have been to Arantxa Sanchez Vicario in the quarterfinals of the Australian Open and to Seles in the final of the Lipton Players Challenge.

The Yugoslav, playing in the German Open over the week-

Arrese beats Novacek

MADRID, May 5: Spain's Jordi Arrese, who made a name for himself by humbling Bjorn Borg last month, beat fourth seed Karel Novacek on Saturday to reach the final of the 500,000-dollar Madrid International ATP tournament, reports Reuter.

Borg may skip Italian Open

ROME, May 5: Bjorn Borg, who was beaten in his first comeback match last month, is doubtful for the Italian Open in Rome this month, reports AFP.

Borg, a five times Wimbledon winner, was to have made the Italian clay court championship his second appearance as a wildcard entry.

But organisers said the 34-year-old Swede had not applied for his wildcard. Reports suggest he might skip Rome to enter a smaller tournament in Bologna one week later.

He was beaten by Jordi Arrese of Spain 6-2, 6-3 in the Monte Carlo Open on April 23.

The next day his Italian rock singer wife Loredana Berté was rushed to hospital in Milan after swallowing barbiturates.

—AFP photo

Dele retains title

PARIS, May 5: Gilbert Dele of France retained his World Boxing Association super-welterweight title Saturday night with a unanimous 12-round decision over South Korean Hwang Jun-suk, reports AP.

It was Dele's first defense of the title he won in February over Carlos Elliot, an American based in Japan.