

Sport

BCCP awaits Indian word on Asia Cup

KARACHI, Apr 27: Pakistan is waiting for India's reply on playing in the Asia Cup cricket tournament scheduled for here in October, the secretary of the Board of Control for Cricket in Pakistan (BCCP) said Monday, reports AFP.

Shaheed Rafi said, "The game of cricket between Pakistan and India has always generated tremendous interest and we are anxiously looking forward to fulfillment of India's obligation to play the Asia Cup at Karachi in October."

He said the Asian Cricket Council in its meeting at Sharjah had decided India was obliged to come.

As for former Indian captain Sunil Gavaskar's remarks that he would like to see the two countries resume Test series, Rafi said he was "encouraged by such statements, although we have not yet received any official invitation in this regard."

Gavaskar, in Pakistan to participate in a special ceremony to honour the World Cup-winning Pakistan team, also said officials of the cricket boards of the two countries were likely to meet next month to work out details.

Rafi declined to either confirm or deny the statement.

India came to Pakistan on an almost six-week tour in 1989-90, drawing the four-Test series.

The following year Pakistan was to visit India but the tour was called off amid a religious controversy in India which pitched Hindus and Muslims against each other. India is predominantly Hindu, while Pakistan is predominantly Muslim.

Lucky Kasparov

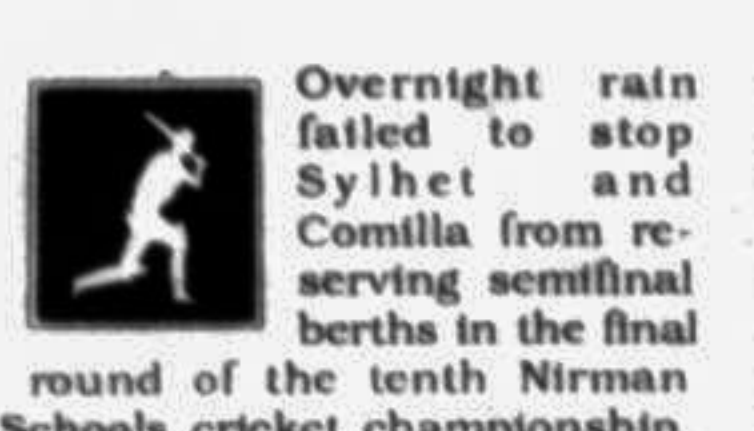
DORTMUND, Germany, Apr 27: World chess champion Gary Kasparov snatched a last-gasp joint first place in the Dortmund international tournament Sunday, winning his last game while the overnight leader Vasily Ivanchuk was held to a draw, reports AFP.

Kasparov beat his fellow Russian Valery Salov in 54 moves to achieve a 6-out-of-9 final score, tying at the last with Ukrainian Ivanchuk who was held by the Latvian Alexei Shirov.

The three other final round games, between Yevgeny Baryev (Russia) and Michael Adams (Britain), between Jeroen Piket (Netherlands) and Viswanathan Anand (India), and between Gata Kamsky (US) and Robert Huebner (Germany), were all drawn.

The final standings were as follows: 1. Kasparov, Ivanchuk 6 points; 3. Baryev 5.5 pts; 4. Anand 5 pts; 5. Kamsky, Salov 4.5 pts; 7. Huebner 4 pts; 8. Adams, Shirov 3.5 pts; 10. Piket 2.5 pts.

Nirman semifinals today



Overnight rain failed to stop Sylhet and Comilla from reserving semifinal berths in the final round of the tenth Nirman Schools cricket championship.

Yesterday at the Dhaka Stadium Sylhet Aided High School registered a 32-run victory over Gazi Memorial School of Khulna in a curtailed game. Sent in to bat in a match that got off to a delayed start because of the wet ground conditions following Sunday night's welcome drizzle the school from the eastern district of the country collected 106 for five wickets from their reduced quota of 20 overs.

Skipper Nasimul Huq Shakil top scored with 25 off 21 balls as three of his team mates were run out in search of quick runs. Utpal Singh Roy remained not out on 20 and Parvez chipped in with a useful 18.

Barat Hossain Sajal with one for ten and Ajmal Hossain Mithu with one for 21 were the successful bowlers.

With an asking rate of more than five per over Gazi Memorial High School made a heavy weather of a not-so-difficult challenge. The upper order batsmen slowed down the pace in an attempt to consolidate.

date their position and indiscretion crept in as the later batsmen attempted suicidal singles out of sheer frustration. Five batsmen were run out and the whole side was dismissed for 74 in 18.1 overs with Mizanur Rahman Sumon topscoring with 14. Karim was the other batsman to reach double figures.

A Rahman was the pick of the Sylheti bowlers with figures of two for four. Parvez with one for 12 and Imdadul with one for 17 were the other notable sharers of the spoils.

Parvez was named man-of-the-match for his 18 runs and one wicket.

Comilla Zila School carved out a 55-run victory over Syedpur Islamia High School at the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium to enter the semifinals.

Comilla won the toss and batted through their quota of 40 overs to make 161 for seven wickets.

Himu scored an enterprising 40 with the help of three fours while skipper Lipu made 37, inclusive of two fours. Sunny with 14 and Anis with 13 were the other notable scorers. The top-sided show by the Syedpur bowlers and fielders deposited 31 invaluable extra runs in the Comilla account.

Shahabat Ali bowled very well for the school side from the northern region of the country to finish with figures of three wickets for 30. K Ashraf with two for 22 and Saqib with one for 26 backed him up well.

Syedpur Islamia School got off to a good start but wilted under pressure as their opponents tightened their clasp at a vital stage of the game. Masum Badar upheld the challenge with a defiant 36 but none of his team mates, with the exceptions of Nadim and Shahabat Ali, could match his efforts. Nadim made 16 while Shahabat got 11 as the team were all out for 106 in 36 overs.

All the bowlers employed by Comilla skipper Lipu came good with Anis having the best figures of two for 13. Ahsanullah took two for 16, and Khokon two for 25. Sajidul Islam and Sujon claimed a wicket each.

Himu of Comilla was declared the man-of-the-match for his useful innings of 40.

Comilla play Nasirabadi High School from Chittagong in one semifinal at the Dhaka Stadium while Sylhet Aided School take on Dhanmondi Government Boy's High School today in the other at the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium.

Short closer to beating Karpov

LINARES, Spain, 27: British chess Grandmaster Nigel Short moved closer to a first ever appearance in the finals to find a contender for the world title when he drew the ninth game of his semi-final against Anatoly Karpov on Sunday, reports Reuter.

Short and Karpov, a former world champion, agreed a draw only two moves after resuming on Sunday. After six hours and 61 moves played on Saturday, the Russian was pawn up but without any real advantage.

The Briton now leads five points to four in the 10-match semifinal, and needs only a draw today to reach the world chess championship finals. Karpov, playing black, faces a huge uphill task to try and save the series.

If the Russian pulls a win out of the bag, the two players would have to play two more matches on reduced time.

The winner of the finals, to be played in Spain next January, will face world champion Garry Kasparov in Los Angeles in August 1993 with prize money of 4 million dollars at stake in the best of 12 game series.

Rifat leads in nationals



Reigning champion Rifat bin-Sattar led the table in the 18th national chess championship with two full points after the

Hamid and Nahid Mizaid were in joint second position with one and a half point from two matches each in the round robin competition. Former champion Syed Tahmidur Rahman, Syed Ruhul Kabir

plion Ziaur Rahman, who had received a walkover against last year's runner-up Ziaul Kader Tuhin on the opening day Sunday, also has one point. His second round contest with yet another ex-champion



Dhaka Metropolis team mates Abul Kalam and Anisur Rahman in action on the second day of the 18th nationals at the NSC chess room yesterday.

National Sports Council chess room yesterday. M R Hafiz, national women's champion Rani Shiplu, Neyamul Huq Niru, Abul Kalam and Anisur Rahman had one point from two successive drawn encounters each. Another former champion Jamiur Rahman was in progress at the time of filing this report last night. Jamiur had lost his opening encounter to Rifat Sunday.

Yesterday, the young defending champion Rifat of Bangladesh Biman checkmated Abul Khaleq of Jamalpur in 37 moves to score his second consecutive victory. Playing white, Rifat made a Scotch gambit opening, laying a trap by exchanging his knight for Khaleq's bishop in the 14th move, a strategy that by the 21st move left Rifat a piece up. The rest became easy with Rifat wrapping up the game with two queens on the board.

Khaleq has half a point from his drawn encounter with Rani Hamid in the first round. International Woman Master Rani Hamid posted her first win of the competition by beating Khandaker Kayes Hassan of Anars in 29 moves.

The sole lady in the fray, representing Biman, countered Kayes' opening e4 with a Sicilian defence. Kayes' queen-side castling made it a very keen contest but his mis-planning in the 14th move, e5, sacrificing a pawn to attack Rani's king, was brilliantly warded off by his opponent. After 29 moves Kayes was left with no other option but to resign.

Syed Tahmidur Rahman, another Biman player whom Rifat dethroned last year, settled for his second draw in a row, this time against Syed Ruhul Kabir Shiplu of BTMC.

Tahmid opened with d4 to which Shiplu replied with the fianchetto variation. But Shiplu then made a series of blunders in the 15th and 25th moves, giving Tahmid a slight advantage but the latter, facing time trouble, too faltered in his 39th move, a Nc6 — when a c4 looked more like a winning gambit. The mistake forced Tahmid to accept Shiplu's offer for a draw despite being two pawns up. The stalemate became confirmed in the 57th move when both had opposite colour bishops left.

Nahid Mizaid of Chittagong, playing in his first nationals, scored his maiden victory of the meet yesterday when he outplayed Amir Hossain of Dhaka Metropolis after 28 moves.

The match, which turned into an irregular Dutch variation, saw Amir wrongly sacrificing his bishop in the 20th, a mistake that forced him to resign eight moves later. Mizaid now has one and a half points.

Neyamul Huq Niru of Anars, who topped the qualifying meet for the nationals, drew with Iqbal Rakib, allowing the latter to open his account with the half point. The draw came after only 16 moves after Rakib, playing white, had turned the game into one of the orthodox variation.

Anisur Rahman of Dhaka Metro, playing with black pieces, and his team mate Abul Kalam agreed on the quickest result of the meet so far — and it will need some beating in the course of the remaining rounds — when they agreed to a stalemate after only three moves.

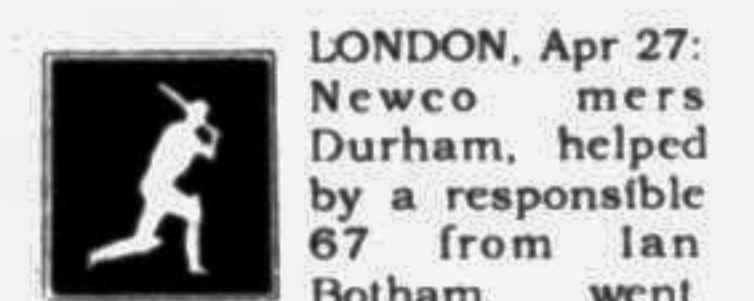
Ziaul Kader Tuhin of Dhaka Metro, who unfortunately had to concede a walk-over to former national champion Ziaur Rahman in his opening match last Sunday owing to indisposition, drew his game against M R Hafiz yesterday. Playing white, last year's runner-up made an e4 opening to which Hafiz replied with the Carokann defence. A draw became inevitable after 21 moves.

Third round matches are scheduled for today.

Riders killed

LE MANS, France, Apr 27: Mine motorcyclists who came to watch the 24-Hour Le Mans Motorcycle race were killed late Saturday in three sets of accidents that a French government official said amounted to "hooliganism," reports AP.

Botham feat takes Durham to the top



LONDON, Apr 27: Newcomer Ian Botham, helped by a responsible 67 from Ian Botham, went joint top of the Sunday cricket league with an eight-run victory over Leicestershire, reports Reuter.

After last week's historic win over Lancashire in their opening game as a first class county, Durham were again in fine form with the bat totalling

reduced by rain to 10 overs a side, John Stephenson confirmed his growing reputation as an all-rounder, inspiring Essex to a 10-wicket victory over Surrey.

Stephenson, who surprisingly emerged as the top wicket-taker during England's winter tour of the West Indies, collected three for 10 in his permitted two overs of gentle medium pace.

Essex scorched to victory with eight deliveries to spare, finishing on 88 without loss after Surrey made 84 for nine.

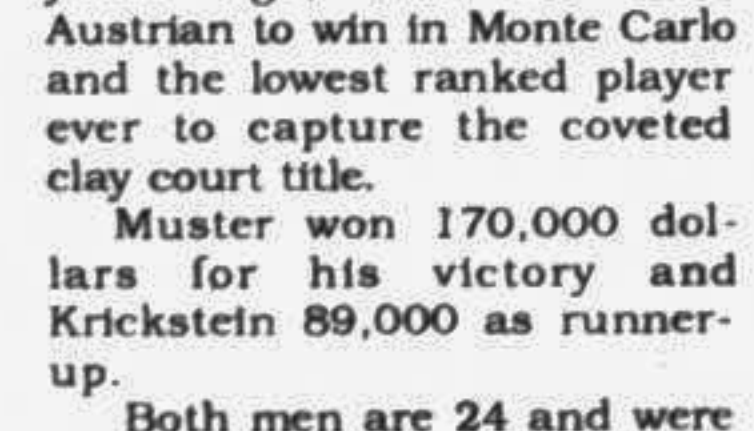
Captain Graham Gooch, following two ducks earlier in the week, made 48. Stephenson kept him company with 38.

Essex and Durham were joined at the top on eight points by Middlesex, who beat Glamorgan by eight wickets at Lord's, with Mark Ramprakash, in recent disciplinary trouble, striking a cavalier, unbeaten 88 from only 86 balls.

His third-wicket stand of 150 Mike Roseberry (71 not out) in just 25 overs was a Middlesex one-day record.

Glamorgan's bowlers were put to the sword as the pair overhauled the Welsh county's testing 181 for five with nine balls to spare in a contest reduced to 33 overs by rain.

Ramprakash was fined a maximum two weeks' wages on Wednesday for verbal abuse of a Cambridge University cricketer.



IAN BOTHAM 232 for seven.

When the visitors looked as if they might win, Botham bowled Phil Whitticase, ran out Tim Boon for 49 and then took a catch at mid-on to dismiss Gordon Parsons.

Chinese divers bag more golds

HIROSHIMA, Japan, 27: Lu Haisong and Chen Lixia confirmed China's supremacy in the diving competition by taking the top two places in the women's three-metre springboard at the Asian swimming championships here Monday, reports AFP.

Lu, an 18-year-old from Jiangsu province, collected 516.75 points, beating Chen into second place with 508.62 points.

Yuki Motobuchi of Japan finished third with 492.30 points, despite being top after the first five dives.

"Although I couldn't perform well in the ninth dive due to a bad take-off, I'm very happy to win the gold medal, because it was my first-ever victory in an international competition," said Lu.

"I hope to compete in the Barcelona Games and I'm confident of taking a medal if I take part. But first of all, I'll do my best to qualify for the national team."

In the absence of women's world champions Gao Min and Fu Mingxia, China has already won gold here through Yi Hong in the women's platform Saturday and Tan Liangde in the men's three-meter springboard Sunday.

Matsuoka lifts Korean Open title

SEOUL, Apr 27: Japan's Shuzo Matsuoka defeated Australia's Todd Woodbridge in a hard fought match for the singles title at the Korea Open tennis championships here Sunday to take home 20,800 dollars in prize money, reports AFP.

Matsuoka, seeded fifth, took advantage of his strong serve and power-packed forehand to hold the edge over his opponent throughout most of the match, winning it 6-3, 4-6, 7-5.

But the rangy Woodbridge, seeded third, combined strong passing shots and accurate volleying to keep his opponent on his toes, although the Australian frequently lost his composure and committed a number of unforced errors.

Basuki's title

KUALA LUMPUR, Apr 27: Yayuk Basuki of Indonesia strolled past Andrea Strnadova of Czechoslovakia 6-3, 6-0 to take the singles title in the Malaysian international women's tennis championships here Sunday, reports AFP.

The 21-year-old faced initial resistance from Strnadova in the first set but Basuki, who was in top form, displayed tremendous skill, spraying shots all over the court and forcing her lanky opponent to scramble for her returns.

The second-seeded Indonesian quickly wore down Strnadova with the sharp first set in 6-3 in 40 minutes.

Badal Farashganj's hero



Farashganj Sporting Club earned full points by beating Adamjee Sports Club in the First Division Football league yesterday at the Dhaka Stadium. The winners, who raised their points tally to 16 from 16 matches, led the first half 1-0.

Lithuania returns to World Cup

BELFAST, Apr 27: Lithuania returns to international soccer competition Tuesday after 55 years when it plays Northern Ireland in a World Cup qualifying game, reports AP.

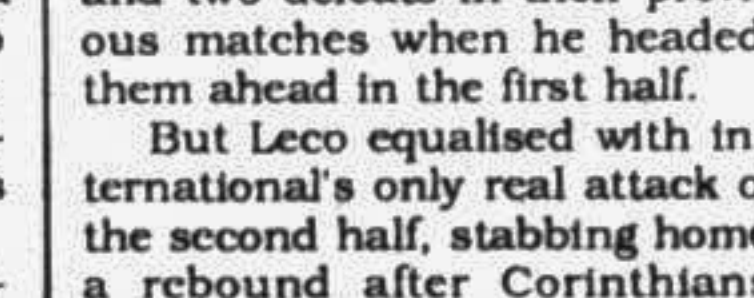
Soccer's world governing body revived the Baltic republic's independent status after the breakup of the Soviet Union, and Lithuania just beat the deadline to file for the 1994 World Cup.

Lithuania's last World Cup game was in 1937. It was trounced 5-1 at home by neighboring Latvia and failed to qualify for the finals.

Ironically, Lithuania could have a shot at a grudge match against Latvia. They were readmitted to world play at the same time and assigned to the same qualifying group, along with Albania, Denmark, Ireland, Spain and northern Ireland.

Two teams from the group will play in the finals.

Botafogo lead Brazilian league



RIO DE JANEIRO, Apr 27: Crisis-hit Corinthians were booted off the pitch by their own supporters after gifting International a point in a Brazilian soccer championship match at the weekend, reports Reuter.

Corinthians, who at one stage looked certain to make the last eight of the championship, saw their chances slip away as they drew 1-1 against a team who barely mustered a decent attack during the entire 90 minutes.

Neto gave Corinthians a chance to escape from a crisis caused by a run of one draw and two defeats in their previous matches when he headed them ahead in the first half.

But Leco equalised with international's only real attack of the second half, stabbing home a rebound after Corinthians goalkeeper Wilson failed to hold Gerson's shot.

US beat Mexico

BETHLEHEM, Pennsylvania, Apr 27: The United States beat Mexico 3-0 (halftime 2-0) to qualify for the Barcelona Olympics in a Concacaf zone fourth-round qualifying soccer match on Sunday, reports Reuter.

Scorers: Steve Snow (32nd minute, 80th), Chris Henderson (36th).

Barda bridge from May 14

The 10th Mohiuddin Ahmed Khan (Barda) memorial duplicate bridge tournament sponsored by the Victoria Sporting Club will begin on May 14 (Thursday), says a press release.

Interested teams have been requested to enroll their names with the club office together with an entry fee of Tk 200 per team by May 10.

Muster triumphs in Monte Carlo



Austrian tennis player Thomas Muster comes to the net during his final match against American Aaron Krickstein at the Monte Carlo Open in Monaco on April 26. Muster beat Krickstein in straight 6-3, 6-1, 6-3. —AFP photo

MONTE CARLO, Apr 27: Unseeded Austrian Thomas Muster came straight off the message table to turn in a devastating performance as he beat American Aaron Krickstein 6-3, 6-1, 6-3 to win the Monte Carlo Open on Sunday, reports Reuter.

Muster, ranked 37th in the world, started the final as the underdog against the 16th-seeded Krickstein, who had not lost a set before in the 1.27-million tournament.

Afterwards Muster confessed he was as surprised as anyone by the ease of his win because he had almost been forced to pull out with a back strain.

"Five minutes before the match I was on the message table and I wasn't sure I would play," he said with a big smile. "I could hardly walk this

morning because of my back. But I did some stretching and the doctor helped me a lot to get ready for the match."

"I was very relaxed. I was feeling — well, what can happen? I had no pressure and so I played fantastic."

Muster, losing finalist two years ago, was the first Austrian to win in Monte Carlo and the lowest ranked player ever to capture the coveted clay court title.

Muster won 170,000 dollars for his victory and Krickstein 89,000 as runner-up.

Muster had a chance to win the French Open which starts next month.

If he did, he would be the first Monte Carlo champion since Bjorn Borge in 1980 to go on to win in Paris.

"It's too early to talk about Paris," Muster said. "If I carry on playing like this, I'll be tired by then. I would probably have to drop out of a tournament."

The Austrian said it was the biggest win of his career, along with the Rome clay court title he won two years ago.

Konishiki retracts allegation of racism

TOKYO, Apr 27: Japan's top foreign sumo wrestler on Monday denied ever saying that racism was blocking his elevation to the sport's highest rank, adding he knew he had not yet earned promotion, reports Reuter.

Konishiki, a 262-kg (557-lb) man-mountain born Salevaan Aitanosano in Hawaii, was meeting the press for the first time since a storm erupted last week over racism charges attributed to him by the New York Times.

"If I was Japanese I would have been there already," the US daily quoted him as saying in a telephone interview. "I would already be a Yokozuna (grand champion)."

To become a Yokozuna, a sumo wrestler must win two consecutive 15-day championships or achieve comparable results. Although Konishiki has won two of the last three tournaments, he has not taken back-to-back titles.

The American said on Monday he had been told by stable master Takasago that even his most recent victory, in March, was not enough to clinch his promotion as the first foreign Yokozuna.

"I myself knew I could not be elevated," he said in Japanese. "So I had never thought [about it]."

I don't know why such a fuss was made... I didn't even know the word 'Jinshu-Sabeisu' [Japanese for racial discrimination]. I did not make such a comment in English or Japanese."