

Biman golf held

Sports Reporter

The Biman Bangladesh Airlines golf tournament was held at the Kurmitola Golf Club yesterday. A record number of players took part in the day long meet, which was inaugurated by the club president Lt Gen M Mustafizur Rahman, says a press release.

Winners at the tournament are as follows:

Winner men's — Alok Azeem; Ladies winner — Mrs Rajini Ainalan; Senior Winner — A Rahim Chowdhury; Junior winner — Zohab Khan; Best gross — Sadia Quddus; Ladies best gross — Mrs Negumi Koreda; 2nd best gross — Chanc Lee; Runner-up — Rahib Bashar; Ladies runner-up — Mrs Ok Kyung Jang; 2nd runner-up — Maj Gen Sayeed Ahmed; Front nine winner — Woo Yon Lee; Back nine winner — Brig Imtiaz Ahmed Chowdhury; Nearest to pin — WH Soo; Longest drive — Alok Azeem.

Nat'l jr chess

Fifteen players jointly lead the points table in the 20th national junior chess championship after the second round at the NSC chess room yesterday.

The are — Rajib, Boby, Firoz Mustafa, Debraj, Fahim, Suprakash, Malek, Jewel, Mamun, Anwar, Bari, Mufazzal, Karbul and Aminul.

Meanwhile, eight players jointly lead the table in the 20th national women qualifying chess championship after the second round matches at the same venue.

The leaders are — Zakia, Eva, Masuda, Ava, Nira, Mahfuz, Ferdousi and Baby.

The third round matches will be held today (Saturday) at the same venue.

Diawara joins Arsenal tent

LONDON, Jan 29 (Reuters/Internet): Bordeaux striker Kaba Diawara completed his move to English champions Arsenal for an undisclosed fee on Friday and will be in the squad to face Chelsea on Sunday.

"I am delighted to be joining Arsenal, they are a big club, a famous club and when ..."

Arsene Wenger asked me to join, I said yes immediately," Diawara said on Friday.

Wenger, who has now signed eight French players since becoming Arsenal boss in

October 1996, added: "We have signed him to strengthen our strike force. He is technically gifted and will be an asset to the team."

Diawara, 23, played in the same France Under-21 team as Arsenal midfielder Patrick Vieira and moves to London after scoring five times in seven starts for Bordeaux this season.

Diawara adds to an already strong French contingent at Arsenal. As well as manager Arsene Wenger, the playing squad includes Patrick Vieira, Nicolas Anelka, Emmanuel Petit, David Grondon, Remi Garde and Gilles Grimandi and Christopher Wreh.

Media reports put the transfer fee at 4.95 million US dollars.

FIFA to probe into Zagreb's claim

GLASGOW, Jan 29: Celtic managing director Fergus McCann faces being hauled before world football chiefs over the non-payment of Mark Viduka's 3 million pound (4.7 million dollar) transfer fee from Croatia Zagreb, reports AFP.

FIFA confirmed on Thursday that he had received a letter from the Croatian football federation complaining that their club still hasn't received any money.

There has been a suggestion that Celtic could be deducted league points but a FIFA spokesman said: "I don't think we are in a position to do that at this instance."

"We have received a communication from the Croatian football federation and this will be forwarded to the Scottish Football Association.

"The basis of the complaint is that Croatia Zagreb haven't received any compensation for the transfer of Viduka to Celtic."

"FIFA have not been asked to arbitrate yet but that might happen if the matter is not resolved."

"Then both parties, by that I mean both clubs, could be asked to appear before the players' status committee and the background to the case explained."

Australian international striker Viduka returned to Celtic this week after a seven-week absence, saying he needed to be excused duties as he was suffering from emotional stress, caused by constant barracking he received from the Zagreb fans.

He is now back training with the Scottish champions but is unlikely to play for another month as he builds up his fitness.

Meanwhile McCann continues to stall on paying the fee apparently until Viduka is ready to make his debut.

FBI informed about Olympic cash

SALT LAKE CITY, Jan 29: Former City Councilman Tom Godfrey has told the FBI his tale of the nervous Salt Lake Olympics official with the large bag of cash, reports AP.

Godfrey told FBI agents Wednesday night what he had told reporters earlier in the week: A bid committee staff member's story of carrying 50,000 dollars in cash to Budapest, Hungary, in 1995 just before the 2002 Winter Games were awarded.

When Ranatunga went out to

Arjuna let off lightly



PERTH, Jan 29 (AFP/Reuters): Sri Lankan cricket captain Arjuna Ranatunga was given a suspended sentence of six one-day internationals and fined 75 per cent of his match fee at a disciplinary hearing here on Thursday.

The penalty was imposed on Ranatunga, 35, for his action in leading players to the edge of the field and causing a 12-minute hold-up after the team's controversial off-spin bowler, Muttiah Muralitharan, was no-balled for throwing by Australian umpire Ross Emerson in a one-day game against England in Adelaide last Saturday.

International Cricket Council (ICC) referee, Peter van der Merve, announcing his decision, said, "Ranatunga expressed regret at the embarrassment he caused his opponents, the public, and officials."

"He has been warned that his every action will be very closely monitored over the next 12 months."

The sentence means Ranatunga is free to continue playing immediately and the penalty will not be applied unless he offends again in the next year.

Ranatunga learned his fate after a four-hour hearing at the Western Australian Cricket Association headquarters where the man who led Sri Lanka to the one-day World Cup in 1996 and the ICC were both represented by senior lawyers.

The suspended penalty means he will be able to play in Sri Lanka's two crucial Perth games this weekend against England on Friday and Australia on Sunday.

As captain, however, I wish to publicly state that I do acknowledge that my responsibilities extend to upholding the spirit of the beautiful game I

RANATUNGA APOLOGISES

Ranatunga says he was only following orders when he led a walk-off protest.

Ranatunga apologised for his bad behaviour.

However, he defended his actions with the release of a statement today saying he was

play, as well as its laws.

"It is my absolute commitment that I will be seen as upholding those principles for so long as I have the privilege to play the game of cricket at any level."

Ranatunga, who also had a heated, finger-pointing exchange with Emerson, said he was sorry for the embarrassment he had caused but said he felt it was his duty to defend Muralitharan.

"My actions following the no-balling of Sri Lanka's great bowler Murali during the match were motivated by my responsibility to demonstrate support for Murali in this difficult situation," Ranatunga said.

"I believe Murali is a player who possesses talent which should be the source of celebration for cricket lovers the world over."

"I was not motivated to cause embarrassment to anyone. However, I recognise that my actions during the game did cause embarrassment to the opposition team, to members of the public and to officials."

Ranatunga added: "As captain of the Sri Lankan team, I acknowledge and understand my responsibility to uphold the spirit as well as the laws of the game."

"Cricket is an emotional game which is of immense importance to the people of many different nations."

"It is a game that tests the character of those who play it, particularly at international level where the happiness of millions can be affected by the outcome of a particular match or the batting or bowling performance of an individual player."

"The spirit of cricket invokes not only the wonderful characteristic of sportsmanship, but also the virtues of team work and loyalty to one's team matches and superiors."

"Sometimes these qualities can find themselves in competition."

A dejected Arjuna Ranatunga is on his way to the dressing room at the WACA ground. — AP/UNB photo

only following orders from the Board of Control for Cricket in Sri Lanka (BCCSL) when he led his team to the boundary after Emerson no-balled Muttiah Muralitharan for throwing.

The implications of the decision of umpire Emerson were potentially far reaching and beyond my authority as captain of the Sri Lankan team, where my responsibilities are limited to the team's on-field performance.

He will also be able to play in his country's final two qualifying games — against England in Sydney next Wednesday and against Australia in Melbourne four days later.

For & against the penalty



PERTH, Jan 29 (AFP/Reuters/Internet): Former Australian cricket captain Kim Hughes today led a scathing attack on the International Cricket Council's (ICC) lenient treatment of Sri Lankan captain Arjuna Ranatunga.

"The ICC are pathetic ... absolutely useless," said Hughes following the suspended six-match sentence handed out to Ranatunga, 35, Thursday by ICC match referee Peter van der Merve of South Africa.

Former top Australian umpire Max O'Connell also branded the penalty "ridiculous."

Some of Australia's most distinguished umpires have criticised the ICC over its decision not to suspend Ranatunga.

"With Ranatunga it wasn't just one incident, he was telling Ross Emerson that he was in charge of the game, jabbing him in the chest, threatening to take his team off the field," O'Connell said.

"It was easily the worst behaviour I've ever seen on a cricket field."

New South Wales umpires director Dick French said the result could deter young people from becoming umpires.

The behaviour of the Sri Lankan captain was inexcusable — to prod, point and to not accept the umpire's ruling was really disgraceful," he said.

"And to hear the punishment really leaves a sour taste in your mouth because I believe a suspended sentence doesn't

mean anything."

Former Test umpire Lou Rowan said the ICC and the Australian Cricket Board (ACB) should be condemned for the way they handled the situation.

"I feel the umpires have been abandoned at the highest level," Rowan said. "Umpires throughout the world can now expect no support at all from administrators."

"It's a very disappointing decision," former international umpire Len King said. "There's certainly been a lack of support for the umpires."

Len King, described as the Ranatunga outcome as "a sad day for the umpiring fraternity."

Hughes said: "They may as well get rid of the match referee system... they may as well pack up and go home. It's a sad day for cricket."

Ranatunga should have been suspended immediately for four, five or six one-day internationals," Hughes said.

O'Connell, the umpire at the centre of the Dennis Lillee aluminium bat-wielding incident 19 years ago, said Ranatunga's behaviour was the worst he had ever seen on a cricket field.

"The sentence was ridiculous," he said.

The best remembered incident in which O'Connell was involved during his long career came in the 1979-80 Test against England in Perth, when Lillee was told by the umpires he could not use an aluminium bat.

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