

Int'l jr tennis from Jan 12

BSS, Dhaka
The 17th Bangladesh International Junior Tennis Championship will be held over January 12-17 at the National Tennis Complex at Ramna here.

In total 55 boys and 36 girls from 14 countries confirmed their participation in the competition, a Bangladesh Tennis Federation press release said yesterday.

The participating countries are Austria, Chinese Taipei, Great Britain, India, Japan, Korea, Kazakhstan, the Maldives, Portugal, Rumania, Thailand, Ukraine, Uzbekistan and hosts Bangladesh.

Gaibandha cricket

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha

Anirban Krira Chakra yesterday defeated Shareer Charcha Club by one run in the Dr. Jogesh Chandra Dev Smrity cricket tournament that began at the Gaibandha Islamia High School ground on December 25.

Anirban made 86 before being all out in 20 overs. In reply, Shareer Charcha were bundled out for 85 in 17.3 overs.

Earlier in the inaugural match on Wednesday, Trisha Smrity Sangsad defeated Pony Smrity Sangsad by one wicket.

Pony Smrity scored 70 for eight in 20 overs after batting first. Trisha Smrity reached 71 in 17.4 overs losing 9 wickets. Sujet of Trisha Sangsad was declared man-of-the-match.

Tribal football begins today

BSS, Dhaka

The first ever Tribal Football Championship begins at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium at Mirpur in the city today.

Bandarban district will take on Rajshahi district in the inaugural match at 3pm while Khagrachhari district meet Sylhet district at 5pm in the next game.

Deputy Minister for Chittagong Hill Tracts Affairs Moni Swapan Dewan is expected to open the competition as the chief guest.

Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) is organising the tournament in which 11 district teams are taking part in four groups. Four group champions will proceed to the semifinals, both matches are on January 1, while the final is slated for the next day.

TEAMS
GROUP KA: Bandarban, Rajshahi and Mymensingh.
GROUP KHA: Khagrachhari, Sylhet and Sherpur.
GROUP GA: Netrakona, Barguna and Cox's Bazar.
GROUP GHA: Rangamati and Dinajpur.

Battered

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almost feels like a one-day game, so that session after lunch we basically went with the flow of it," Hayden said.

Hayden shared in a 195-run stand with Langer, the highest by an Australian opening pair against England at the MCG in 95 years.

The pair expunged the previous best of 126 from the record books scored by Victor Trumper and Monty Noble here in 1907-08.

It was two left-handers' eighth century partnership since coming together at The Oval, London, 16 months ago. Their stand came up off 268 balls in 189 minutes.

Ricky Ponting played on and was bowled by Craig White in the last over before tea for 21 and Damien Martyn, dropped on four, was picked up by Marcus Trescothick at slip off White for 17.

Hayden and Langer added a whirlwind 99 runs in the hour after lunch with England skipper Nasser Hussain at his wits' end attempting to staunch the flow of runs.

The Australians added 147 runs off 26.5 overs in a breathless two-hour post-lunch session.

At one stage they pounded the English attack taking 24 runs off eight balls and then slamming 15 runs off one White over.

Hayden and Langer as an opening pair have now scored 1,991 runs in 26 innings averaging 79.

SCOREBOARD
Scoreboard on the opening day of the fourth Ashes Test between Australia and England at the Melbourne Cricket Ground on Thursday.

AUSTRALIA: First innings
Langer not out 146
Hayden c Crawley b Caddick 102
Ponting b White 21
Martyn c Trescothick b White 17
Waugh not out 62
Extras: (lb-3, w-1, nb-4) 8
Total: (for 3 wks) 356
Fall of wickets: 1-195, 2-235, 3-265

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Caddick	24	5	89	1
Harmison	26	5	86	0
White	21	4	77	2
Dawson	14	1	67	0
Butcher	5	1	34	0

Umpires: David Orchard (RSA)
Russell Tiffin (Zim)



PHOTO: STAR
Biman's IM Reefat-bin-Sattar (R) makes a move against GM Niaz Murshed of Titas Club during their First Division Chess League engagement at the National Sports Council Chess Room yesterday.

Butcher, cricket's ambassador

AFP, Melbourne

Mark Butcher's sportsmanship in turning down a catch that could have dismissed Steve Waugh in the fourth Ashes Test has been acclaimed by members of the Australian team here Thursday.

Waugh, who batted courageously under pressure to be unbeaten on 62 in Australia's 356 for three at stumps, had a scare on 56 when he edged the second new ball to Butcher in the slips off Andy Caddick.

But Butcher sportingly conceded that he was not sure of making the catch and Waugh batted on. "That showed good sportsmanship and showed how the game should be played," Australian century-maker Justin Langer said after Thursday's play.

"Straight away he said he didn't catch it and he told Stephen (Waugh) he didn't catch it.

"When a player shows that it's very important for the game that sort of things occur and to his great credit he reacted exactly the way every professional cricketer should react."

Butcher took the ball near the ground and didn't appeal -- but his teammates did, especially bowler Caddick and wicketkeeper James Foster.

Waugh, batting for his cricket life after selectors said he would not be guaranteed future selection beyond next week's final Sydney Test, carved up the attack with 12 vintage boundaries and reached his 46th Test half-century off 49 balls in just under an hour.

Butcher didn't appear at the post-day press conference but team assistant coach Graham Dilley said there was an element of doubt over Butcher's catch and the benefit should go to the batsman.

"Everybody's happy with that, I don't think anybody's got a problem with the fact that Butcher's a honest guy and he immediately turned around and said he didn't know if he had taken the catch," Dilley said.

"Once Butcher had indicated that he wasn't sure, then you have the right decision if they turn around and say not out."

The decision was referred to the video umpire Darrell Hair but before the not-out ruling was shown, Waugh and Butcher shook hands, agreeing the Australian skipper should stay at the crease.



MARK BUTCHER

Eng selection suffered

AFP, Melbourne

England's decision to go into the fourth Ashes Test with just four bowlers rebounded Thursday with Australia notching up the highest total ever seen at the Melbourne Cricket Ground in a day's play.

At stumps Australia were a formidable 356 for three, bettering the 355 for eight Australia scored against India in 1948.

England decided to choose only four bowlers -- Andy Caddick, Steve Harmison, Craig White and Richard Dawson -- after experienced wicketkeeper Alec Stewart was unavailable with a bruised hand.

"Alec not playing affects the balance of the team," England assistant coach Graham Dilley said at a post-day's play press conference.

"It wasn't a surprise about the extra workload on the bowlers when we knew that we were almost certainly going in with just the four bowlers."

"You know what you have to do and it's just one of those things, it's hard work, but if you consider that to be the best way for your team to go forward you put up and shut up and get on with it."

Dilley conceded that either bowlers Alex Tudor or Matthew Hoggard would have been in line for selection in the Test match if Stewart had been fit to play.

"You have to look at it in total balance of the side," he said. "There's no point going out bowler-heavy or batsman-heavy, the balance of the side is absolutely vital and without your allrounder you have to make some sacrifices."

Australian centurion Matthew

Hayden said that England bowled their best of the series in the first session of Thursday's play, restricting Australia to 88 for no wicket at lunch.

"If you look at the (stumps) score and there doesn't seem to be that much different, but my impression was that we bowled with more discipline most of the time," Dilley said.

"But they (Australia) are great players, they are going to have spells where they are going to take the game away from you."

"What was encouraging for us was when we bowled well in spells and we came back with discipline again."

"356 looks as if it's just been a normal day in Australia, but I think there are some good things we can take out of it."

Ctg claim top spot

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SCOREBOARD
Final scoreboards of three Ispahani Mirzapore National Cricket League matches held at different venues yesterday:

Chittagong v Sylhet
Venue: BNS
Toss: Sylhet.

CHITTAGONG: First innings 372 all out in 100 overs (Nizamuddin 140, Akram 105; Parvez 3-39, Enamul jr 2-89)

SYLHET: First innings 253 all out in 82.4 overs (Rajin not out 107, Hasibul 32, Ejaz 30; Safiuddin 5-84, Ahsanullah 2-58)

CHITTAGONG: Second innings 155 all out in 53.1 overs (Akram 45, Aftab 39; Enamul jr 5-41, Rezaul 3-37)

SYLHET: Second innings (over-ning 17 for four in 14 overs)
Sishir lbw b Minhazul 16
Parvez lbw b Minhazul 3
Imtiaz b Safiuddin 0
Ejaz run out 0
Rezaul b Sabbir 0
Rajin lbw b Sabbir 36
Nasirul c Aftab b Safiuddin 56
Hadi lbw b Sabbir 19
Rana c Hasan b Minhazul 53
Hasibul c Aftab b Sabbir 17
Enamul not out 6
Extras: (b-4, lb-2, nb-1, w-15) 22
Total: (All out in 79.5 overs) 228
Fall of wickets: 1-11, 2-12, 3-13, 4-17, 5-40, 6-88, 7-132, 8-152, 9-207

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Safiuddin	18	4	48	2
Minhazul	10.5	5	27	3
Ahsanullah	13	2	38	0
Sabbir	30	3	90	4
Waseluddin	8	1	19	0

Result: Chittagong won by 46 runs.

Man-of-the-match: Nazimuddin (Chittagong)
Result: Match drawn.
Man-of-the-match: Manjarul Islam (Khulna).

Barisal v Rajshahi
Venue: DCS
Toss: Rajshahi

BARISAL: First innings 221 all out in 80.1 overs (Prosenjit 55, Sabbir 25, Ali Arman 28; Shafaq 3-41, Nuruzzaman 3-22, Aminul jr 2-69)

RAJSHAHI: First innings 198 all out in 73.5 overs (Jamal 92, Nuruzzaman 43; Anisur 6-38, Pijush 3-36)

BARISAL: Second innings 315 all out in 113.2 overs (Ali Arman 109 not out, Imran 93; Aminul jr. 3-71, Nuruzzaman 2-34)

RAJSHAHI: Second innings
Zahurul c Anis b Nadif 86
Jamal c Nahidul b Debabrotto 4
Rafiqul b Pijush 87
Nuruzzaman c Nayan b Pijush 16
Anisur c Nahidul b Imran 10
Hasan run out 14
Shamsul not out 52
Mahabub st. Shahin b Nadif 52
Mustadir not out 1
Extras: (b-8, lb-1, nb-8) 17
Total: (For 7 wickets in 83.2 overs) 339
Fall of wickets: 1-4, 2-153, 3-173, 4-186, 5-212, 6-237, 7-331

Bowler O M R W
Anis 13 2 60 0
Nadif 27 0 97 2
Pijush 24 4 94 2
Imran 4 0 18 1
Nahidul 2 0 8 0

Result: Rajshahi won by 3 wickets.
Man-of-the-match: Ali Arman (Barisal)

First Division Chess Biman continue flying

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Biman registered yet another win in the First Division Chess League with a 3.5-5 victory over Titas Club in their penultimate match at the NSC chess room yesterday.

Biman's International Master (IM) Abdullah Al-Rakib, IM Enamul Hossain Rajib and Fide Master Rezaul Haque won their respective boards against Safiuddin Lovel, Arman Monir and Monir Hossain while IM Reefat-bin-Sattar drew with Grand Master Niaz Murshed of Titas Club.

Biman now have 52 points from 14 matches.

Titas have 39.5 points, a point behind second placed Ansars (40.5 points).
In yesterday's round, Ansars blanked Progoti Samaj Kalyan Sangstha 4-0.

In the other matches, Kamalapur Samaj Kalyan Sangha beat Anu Memorial 3-1, Anirban Chess School defeated Leonine Chess Club 2.5-1.5, Narayanganj City Club beat Dhaka University 3-1, Sonali Bank posted a 2.5-1.5 win over Nakhhalpara Jubo Kalyan Sangha while Anishilon Daba Krira Chakra beat Monipur Chess Club also by 2.5-1.5 points. The match between Mahakhali Prodeep Sangha and Farashganj Sporting Club ended in a 2-2 draw.

The final round will start at the same venue today from 3:30 pm.

Today's matches: Titas v Monipur, Sonali Bank v Anushilon, Prodeep Sangha v Nakhhalpara, Narayanganj v Farashganj, Kamalapur v Dhaka University, Ansars v Anu Memorial, Anirban v Bangshal and Biman v Leonine Chess Club.

Sachin recovering

INTERNET, Auckland

India hope that Sachin Tendulkar will recover from a knee injury for Saturday's second match in the one-day series with New Zealand, after an opening loss in Auckland.

Tendulkar was one of three Indian players to miss the three-wicket defeat, along with off-spinner Harbhajan Singh and all-rounder Sanjay Bangar.

Physiotherapist Andrew Leipus said that Tendulkar stepped in a hole and sprained his right ankle while bowling in the nets.

"It's quite swollen at the moment but he is walking around and that's a positive sign," Leipus said.

"I will try and get him ready for the next match, but if necessary we will rest him for that one as well."

India refuses visa to Pak delegate

AFP, Karachi

A Pakistan delegate said he was refused an Indian visa on Thursday to attend an Asian Cricket Council (ACC) Development Committee in Calcutta this month.

"The Indian High Commission told me that I am not cleared by their home ministry and this means I can't attend the ACC Development Committee meeting in Calcutta on December 28 and 29," ACC Development Manager Zakir Hussain Syed told the news agency.

"It's disappointing because I have never been refused a visa earlier and I don't see any political link to it."

President of Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) Jagmohan Dalmiya, who is also president of the ACC's financial wing, was due to chair the meeting.

"I had submitted the visa request with Dalmiya's invitation on December 13 but on Thursday I was told I am not cleared," Syed said.

Syed said the Calcutta meeting was due to discuss important matters such as the finalising of the ACC budget and details of its development programme.

"The ACC has to deliver a budget to the International Cricket Council to get the money and putting off the meeting would delay the matters."

The ICC has allocated a budget of 6.5 million dollars for the ACC to complete its development programme.

"This amount is to be spent on the development of the game among the associate and affiliate member countries like the United Arab Emirates, Hong Kong, Malaysia, Singapore and Malaysia," he said.

Brief respite

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However, despite agreeing to the deadline, the Indian board decided on Wednesday to back its players in the ongoing row.

"We've decided to stand by our players on the ICC World Cup contracts issue," president Jagmohan Dalmiya said.

"Certain restrictive clauses in the proposed ICC contracts are unjustified and the Indian board will not be a party in an attempt to induce the players to break existing contracts," he said.

The proposed ICC contracts bar players from advertising products that conflict with those of the official tournament sponsors, even if they have existing deals.

Top Indian players including star batsman Sachin Tendulkar have contracts with rivals of official sponsors.

The situation mirrors a row that preceded the ICC Champions Trophy tournament in Sri Lanka in September, when top Indian stars were on the verge of withdrawing.

But this time the Indian board has said it will name a team of 15 players by the December 31 deadline and then await the outcome of the contracts issue.

Warne on the mend

AFP, Melbourne

Shane Warne says he is happy with his progress from a shoulder operation in his bid to play in next February's cricket World Cup in southern Africa.

The champion Australian leg-spinner dislocated his right bowling shoulder when he dived for a ball during a one-day match against England at the Melbourne Cricket Ground on December 15.

"When I saw Errol Alcott (team physio) on Christmas Eve, he was very happy with my movement and was very happy with my progress a week after an operation," Warne said in a television interview here on Thursday.

"If I keep improving like that then my chances will be good. It all comes down to confidence."

The Australian selectors will pick Warne in the final Cup squad of 15 on December 31, having confirmed they can replace him even during the tournament if his shoulder does not heal.

Warne is on a four-to-six-week timetable to return to the top level if

he is to play in the Cup. "It's too early to say that (to give a percentage on his chances)," Warne said.

"The best thing I can do is say to everyone who's supported me so far is just to make sure I give myself every chance."



SHANE WARNE

"To keep my fitness up, to keep my shoulder work going with Errol and just do whatever I can, and whatever it takes it I will do that and if that means I'm not right for the

World Cup then so be it.

"I'm just going to give it my best shot, I don't know if that's a 50-50 chance or whatever."

"At this stage, all I know is that I'm committed to the rehab, I'm committed to what I have to do in the next four to six weeks and hopefully I'll be on that plane to the World Cup."

The World Cup is scheduled to start on February 9 in South Africa. Australia's first match in the tournament is against Pakistan in Johannesburg two days later.

Warne needed reconstruction surgery on his right shoulder in 1998, forcing him out of the first four Tests of the 1998-99 home Ashes series against England.

The wrist-splinter is Test cricket's second-highest wicket taker with 491 wickets, behind West Indian Courtney Walsh.

Warne was presented with a framed baggy green cap in a glass case by the Australian Cricket Board during the tea interval at the fourth Ashes Test against England here on Thursday.

It marked his 100th Test, which he played against South Africa in Cape Town last March.

National Youth Cricket

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Shamim with four for 10 was the main wrecker.

Bandarban will now face Chittagong in the next round at the same venue today.

Away in Dinajpur, Rajshahi took only 52 balls to outplay Joypurhat by eight wickets.

Chasing a paltry Joypurhat total of 81 in 45 overs, Rajshahi raced home in 8.4 overs with Pappa hammering highest 40 and Nirala added 30.

Earlier, in a reduced 30-over-aside match, Joypurhat made 81 for eight.

At the Jhenidah Stadium, Jessore thrashed Meherpur by ten wickets.
Needing 56 to win, Jessore took 9.1 overs to sail home without any loss.

In Jessore, Khulna crushed Narail by 133 runs.
Rezwan scored 78 and Babel scored 58 as Khulna scored a commanding 234 for six in the stipulated 45 overs after electing to bat first.

In reply, Narail were restricted to 101 for 9 in 45 overs.

Sylhet registered a 87-run victory over Habiganj at the Sylhet Stadium.

Electing to bat the home side were all out for 230 in 49 overs with Sami and Tazin scoring 65 and 54 respectively.
In reply, Habiganj were all out for 143 in 43.5 overs.

In the other match of the day, Barguna got walkover against

Pirozpur at the Patuakhali Stadium.

SCORES IN BRIEF
Munshiganj v Gopalganj
Venue: Jagannath Hall ground.
Gopalganj: 174 all out in 40 overs (Faruque 55, Hasan 3-14, Alamgir 3-40)

Munshiganj: 175 for 8 in 42.1 overs (Rossi 42, Rana 30, Shamim 2-27)
Result: Munshiganj won by two wickets.

Bandarban v Brahmanbaria
Venue: Comilla Stadium
Bandarban: 129 all out in 43.1 overs (Shawkat 12, Tareq 3-25)

Brahmanbaria: 87 all out in 35.4 overs (Halim 16, Shamim 4-10)
Result: Bandarban won by 42 runs.

Rajshahi v Joypurhat
Venue: Dinajpur Stadium
Joypurhat: 81 for 8 in 30 overs (Anam 23, Rony 2-18)

Rajshahi: 82 for 2 in 8.2 overs (Papa 40, Nirala 30)
Result: Rajshahi won by eight wickets.

Jessore v Meherpur
Venue: Jhenidah Stadium
Meherpur: 55 all out in 23.4 overs (Jewel 14, Javed 3-8, Sumon 3-19)

Jessore: 55 for 6 in 9.1 overs (Russell 24 n.o., Rafique 19 n.o.)
Result: Jessore won by ten wickets.

Khulna v Narail
Venue: Jessore Stadium
Khulna: 234 for 6 in 45 overs (Rezwan 78, Babel 58)

Narail: 101 for 9 in 45 overs (Proshanto 18, Faizul 2-21)
Result: Khulna won by 133 runs.

Sylhet v Habiganj
Venue: Sylhet Stadium
Sylhet: 230 all out in 49 overs (Sami 65, Tazin 54, Rintu 3-29)

Habiganj: 143 all out in 43.5 overs (Nipu 39, Masud 4-28, Topu 3-26)
Result: Sylhet won by 87 runs.