

BAAF goes to polls in Jan

SPORTS REPORTER

The councillors of Bangladesh Amateur Athletics Federation (BAAF) decided yesterday to hold fresh elections in January for a new executive committee.

Out of 68 councillors, 31 were present in the meeting, which also unanimously voted to remove the 'amateur' tag from its name.

The 31-member federation will work till January with 26 members. Five of its members including general secretary Ibrahim Chenghis have been absent for two years and vice-president Shah Alam is the acting secretary.

It was learned that post of the president, which is a nominated position, will be contested in the elections.

Nat'l jr chess

SPORTS REPORTER

Mehdi Hasan Parag, Mohammad Ali and Obaidul Islam Shaheen jointly shared the lead with four points each after the end of the fourth round games in the 25th National Junior Chess Championship at the federation hall room yesterday.

In the this round, Parag beat Minhazuddin Ahmed Sagar, Ali beat Shamiba Sharmin Shimmi, Shaheen beat Nazir Saleheen, Mahfuz beat Mimi Arjuman, Masum beat Shiblu and Parvez beat Sharmin Akter Shirin. Robin drew with Mostafa.

Nat'l v'ball

BSS, Dhaka

Satkthira District Sports Association clinched a 3-1 win over Gaibandha DSA in the City Bank national youth volleyball championship at the volleyball court next to Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

Gaibandha won the first set 26-24 but the Satkthira spikers fought back to win the next three 26-24, 25-23, 25-23.

In the day's other fixtures, Pirojpur DSA outclassed Chandpur DSA 25-9, 25-7, 25-14; Jessore DSA defeated Tangail DSA 25-18, 25-20, 25-19 and Rajshahi DSA overpowered Comilla DSA 25-15, 25-16, 25-17.

Heroes home

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port was led by hundreds of members of the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), waving party flag and beating drums.

The BJP, which heads the ruling coalition, is aiming to cash in on the positive mood generated by the cricket success and peace moves with Pakistan in the general election starting next week.

More than a thousand employees of the Indian company sponsoring the team besides a huge media contingent, including TV channels telecasting the arrival live, were also present.

But to their dismay, the players were briefly received by a federal minister before being escorted away.

The cricket rivalry between India and Pakistan is so intense that many offices shut down throughout the series as employees followed the fortunes of their team on television.

The peerless

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Lara is needed not only to keep alive the hopes of the West Indian cricket that has over the last ten years plunged into unprecedented gloom but for the sake of the game and posterity when cricketers from across the world will look at him as a model.

Black players may join in



REUTERS/AFP, undated

Up to three prominent black players could join the rebellion by 13 white players against the Zimbabwe Cricket Union (ZCU), one of the rebels told Reuters on Sunday.

The 13 rebels have refused to play in the home series against Sri Lanka, which starts with the first of five one-day internationals in Bulawayo on Tuesday.

The players want Heath Streak reinstated as captain, changes to the selection panel, and an acknowledgment by the ZCU of transgressions they say have been committed by board officials.

One of the rebels, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said the black players supported their stand but were cautious about voicing their support publicly.

"They understand the future is not very bright if all of us should leave," he told Reuters from

Zimbabwe on Sunday.

"They think we've done the right thing and they are keen to join us but they are coming from a different perspective."

The players and the ZCU issued writs against each other on Friday, with each side claiming "breach of contract" against the other.

The parties have 21 days to remedy the alleged breaches, failing which the matter will go to court.

The ZCU, which told them that if they did not show up for practice Friday "action would be taken", have held back by giving them this ultimatum.

But if they do not comply by the deadline, May 8, they will either be suspended or dismissed.

ZCU chairman Peter Chingoka said Thursday: "They are employees, after all."

The 15 dissident players, although advised to soften their stance by their lawyer Chris Ventura, seem hell bent on continuing the stand-off over the removal of

Streak in particular.

However, the chief executive of the ZCU, Vincent Hogg, told AFP there had been no writs and counter-writs as reported in the Times of London and other British newspapers on Saturday.

"The letter is what is on the table," he said.

Neither Venturas, nor any senior white player, was available for comment or to give initial reaction to the ZCU letter.

The rebel players say that the selectors have allowed political and racial considerations to enter their choices. The ZCU said Heath and the other 12 were asking for too much influence in the way the team was picked.

The row means that a severely under-strength Zimbabwe side, already one of the weakest Test-playing nations, will take on Sri Lanka over the forthcoming series.

SLC reports Broad



AFF, Colombo

Sri Lanka's cricket authorities have raised concerns over the conduct of match referee Chris Broad after he reported controversial off-spinner Muttiah Muralitharan for a suspect bowling action.

Sri Lanka Cricket (SLC) chairman Mohan de Silva said Sunday they had informally raised the issue with the International Cricket Council (ICC) about Broad's behaviour during Australia's tour here last month.

"We have brought to the notice of the ICC about his general conduct," de Silva told AFP.

"It is not a formal protest or a complaint, but a letter to keep the ICC informed as part of our responsibility."

Former England batsman Broad reported Muralitharan after watching the Sri Lankan bowl his controversial delivery called 'doosra' during the third and final Test against Australia here in March.

Sri Lankan officials raised concerns at the time, pointing out that Broad had acted unilaterally without any of the umpires raising the issue.

Muralitharan was then sent to Australia to work on his bowling action with a biomechanical expert.

De Silva said he was confident Muralitharan would be able to continue bowling the 'doosra', a delivery which spins away from the right-handers instead of coming into them like a normal off-break.

He said they had reviewed results from Australian biomechanical experts who tested Muralitharan and believed the

bowler would be cleared.

A report had been sent to the ICC for a final say on the matter.

Muralitharan, currently touring Zimbabwe with the team, needs just seven victims to smash retired West Indies paceman Courtney Walsh's world record of 519 Test wickets.

De Silva said they were also concerned about the issue involving Australian batsman Justin Langer.

Langer was let off with a warning after being involved in a bizarre ball-lifting incident during the final Test here.

The match referee had found Langer not guilty of bringing the game into disrepute by breaching the code of conduct, but officials here said they were baffled after the Australian was cleared.



PHOTO: AP

LOVE'S THE WINNER: Australia's Lleyton Hewitt (R) consoles his Belgium girlfriend Kim Clijsters after their unique exhibition match at the Expodroom in Bree, Belgium on April 17.

Hewitt beats his true love!



SFP, Bree

Lleyton Hewitt came out on top in a lovebirds' battle against his fiancée Kim Clijsters here on Saturday in their first ever face-to-face clash on a tennis court.

The Australian, a former world number one, won the exhibition

match 9-8 at the Expodroom in Bree, the town where Clijsters was born.

Such was the eager anticipation for the match that the 4,000 tickets were sold out in just 45 minutes.

Hewitt and Clijsters had been due to face each other in the mixed doubles when Australia were drawn against Belgium in the Hopman Cup in January but

Clijsters had to withdraw because of an ankle injury.

The Belgian star has been off the tour for five weeks because of a wrist injury while Hewitt will now head for Monaco for the Monte Carlo Masters, which gets underway on Monday.

Murali allowed to bowl doosra?

CRICINFO, undated

Bruce Elliott's biomechanics team at the University of Western Australia has concluded that Muttiah Muralitharan should be allowed to continue using his 'doosra' until the completion of further biomechanical research into slow bowling.

But Muralitharan, who departed last week for Sri Lanka's tour of Zimbabwe, faces an anxious wait to see whether those conclusions are accepted because the results also show that he currently exceeds the flexing threshold that has been agreed by the ICC.

Ashraful

FROM PAGE 13
grade, informed advisor Reazuddin Al Mamun.

It also discussed India's reluctance to tour Bangladesh this year. Sourav Ganguly's men who won the three Tests and five ODIs in Pakistan, were due to visit here in April.

"We will suffer financial losses if India don't fulfil their commitment. We are keeping in touch with the Indian board and if needed, we will seek the ICC's help," Mamun said.

Razzak, Faisal

FROM PAGE 13
unlucky players to be left out from Bangladesh's maiden tour to the West Indies.

Bangladesh set off for West Indies on May 6 to play three one-day internationals and two Tests.

The probable one-day squad: Habibur Bashar, Rajin Saleh, Shahriar Hossain, Hannan Sarker, Mohammad Ashraful, Alok Kapali, Khaled Mahmud, Khaled Mashud, Mushfiqur Rahman, Mohammad Rafique, Manjarul Islam, Tareque Aziz, Tapas Baishya, Faisal Hossain and Abdur Razzak.

Mehrab's

FROM PAGE 13
The first to arrive at the temporary registration centre at BNS' conference room was the evergreen Minhazul Abedin. Behind him came a host of fellow Chittagong players who followed the ex-Bangladesh skipper to pledge their loyalty to MM Isphani Ltd.

ARAF Apparels signed opening batsman Ehsanul Haque and lanky left-arm pace bowler Shafaq Al Jabir while Bangladesh Biman took in Under-19 captain Ashikur Rahman.

The BCB Development Squad, which will also take part in the league, named a 21-member side yesterday that included Abul Bashar, a player of the Bangladesh team in the recently concluded U/19 World Cup.

The Development Committee had already released 13 cricketers of the U-19 team to play for different corporate houses.

In the three days of registration, 12 office teams contracted over 200 cricketers. The Development Squad was not part of this process.

Where's

FROM PAGE 13
"Frankly speaking, we really don't know whether they are coming or not. All that is known is they were coming to Dhaka by Qatar Airways today," the worried BFF general secretary added.

Interestingly, before Muktiyoddha's away match in Yemen confusion over certain documents, caused the Dhaka giants to concede the game before kicking a ball.

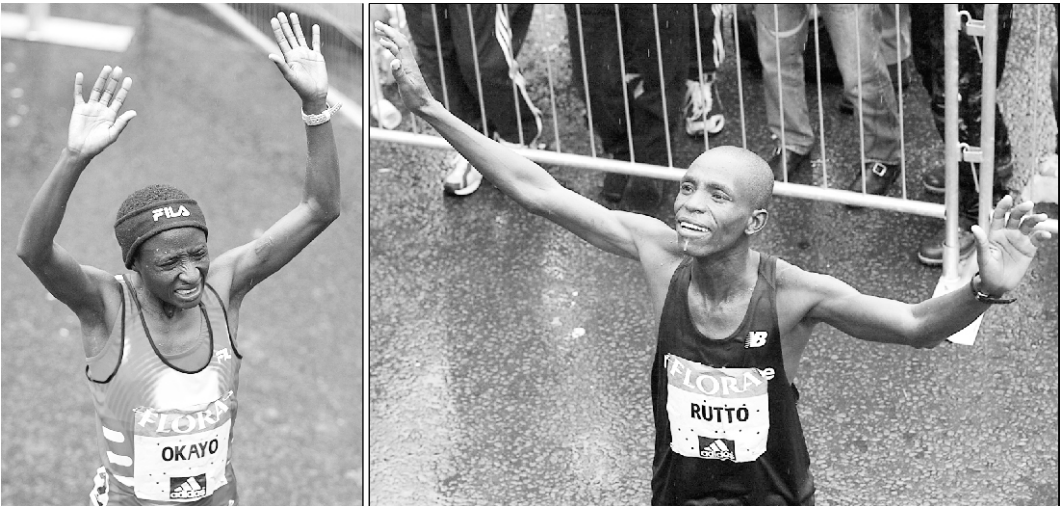


PHOTO: AFP

A combo photo of Kenyans Margaret Okayo (L) and Evans Rutto who won the London Marathon yesterday.

Kenyans rule London



AFP, London

It was Kenya's day at the London Marathon here Sunday with both men's champion Evans Rutto and women's winner Margaret Okayo finishing first on their debuts at the event.

Rutto broke away from compatriot Sammy Korir in the closing stages after both men recovered from a heavy fall -- the winner bringing down the runner-up -- on wet cobblestones three miles from the

finish.

Rutto -- who made the fastest-ever marathon debut when he won in Chicago in October but who has yet to secure selection for Kenya's Olympic team for the forthcoming Olympic Games in Athens -- finished in an unofficial time of 2 hours 6 minutes 18 seconds.

Korir was second in 2:06:48 with last year's world champion Jaouad Gharib of Morocco third in 2:07:02.

"It feels great to be champion of London," said Rutto, who had cuts on his knees from the fall.

Last year's winner Gezahegne Abera failed to finish after suffering

a recurrence of the Achilles tendon injury that forced him out of the world championships last August.

In the women's race Okayo won in extraordinary fashion. She set off at breakneck speed and appeared to have mistimed her run when she was passed shortly before the 11-mile mark by Romanian Constantina Tomescu-Dita.

But the diminutive prison sergeant, twice a New York marathon winner, recovered and regained the lead six miles from the finish before winning with something to spare in an unofficial time of 2:22:36.

Venus meets Conchita



AFP, Charleston

Venus Williams defeated Croatia's Jelena Kostanic 6-4, 6-1 here Saturday to reach a final's date with Spain's Conchita Martinez at the 1.3 million-dollar WTA Family Circle Cup.

The 23-year-old American advanced to her first final since a six-month layoff with a strained abdominal muscle following her loss to younger sister Serena in last year's Wimbledon final.

"I feel great about getting to the finals of this event, my first clay court of the year, first final of the year," said the former No. 1, who is making her debut at this tournament.

But Williams, who will be seeking her 30th career title, had to hustle in

the first set as her left-handed opponent delivered a potent mix of shots including some well-disguised drop-shots.

"When I'm playing good, my drop shots are probably pretty good, and a lot of players struggle with them," said Kostanic, who scored her best Tier I result this week.

"I just know I have that kind of variety where I can play long slice, short slice, drop shot, and I'm not scared to play it."

In the second set, experience pulled through and Williams served a 106 mph ace for the victory on her fourth match point.

Martinez fired three aces and 16 winners to defeat Switzerland's Patty Schnyder 6-4, 6-3 and will try to deny Williams her first title in 14 months.

Martinez, who rose to 7-2 against Schnyder, turned 32 on Friday and

on Monday captured her 700th career match victory.

"Hopefully Venus is not going to to out there and overpower me in two shots, so I'm going to try to just get to the balls, fight like crazy and try to do whatever I can with my shots, like hitting different slices, and also try to be aggressive," Martinez said.

"You can't be too passive because she hits the ball really hard."

Reigning Wimbledon champion Serena Williams withdrew from the event with a sore left knee and Belgian world number Justine Henin-Hardenne, the defending champion, pulled out due to illness and will miss at least two more weeks.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

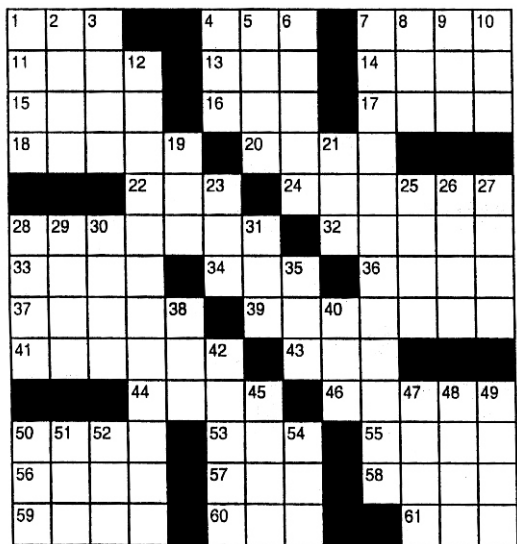
ACROSS
1 DVDs' fore-runners
4 Faux —
7 Coil of yam
11 "Portnoy's Complaint" author
13 A matter of pride
14 Sunblock ingredient
15 Notion
16 Holster occupant
17 Eugene of "A Mighty Wind"
18 Athletic stadiums
20 Count .counter-part
22 Meadow
24 Theater district
28 Recipe with arborio kernels
32 Whopper topper
33 Since
34 Scratch
36 Love not wisely but too well
37 Sec

39 Loose dressing
41 Achieve
43 Animal winger
44 Movie rating org.
46 Different
50 He's told to make a sad song better
53 Family
55 Rain
56 Cupid's gutter site
57 Conductor de Waart
58 Ap-proached home, maybe
59 Grand-scale
60 Trygve's successor

61 "Alice" spinoff
DOWN
1 Bin
2 Extinct bird
3 Leftovers
4 Cribbage scorer
5 Malarial symptom
6 Echo-location method
7 "Man-eater" duo
8 Brewery product
9 Calendar abbr.
10 Crucial
12 Coopers-town inductees, e.g.
19 Prepared
21 Carnival city
23 After-hrs. bank
25 This "Oz" character
26 ... was startled by this one
27 Individuals
28 Hindu prince
29 "— an earthquake, or ..."
30 Cushy
31 Erstwhile acorn
35 Tease
38 Shri! bark
40 Cattle call
42 Bare
45 John/Rice collaboration
47 Fifty percent
48 Malficence
49 Give an extreme makeover
50 Predicament
51 Ms. Thurman
52 Two (Sp.)
54 Yule beverage

Solution time: 24 mins.

SNAEU PRIMA RAINON RISERS IMPART IMPACT GUP KILNS NAE EELS EAT STINE SLEET GENTLEL PLEASURA RUE PARDONS BARGE ONUS NOS DEAD DTM BELLA PSI IMPORT IMPOST AULAIT DOUSIES SERGIE ESTIES



CRYPTOQUIP

K X V L D R B L D A H M Y Y T L M G B

M H L L T N B M N B M R M

Q F M D N K X D A , X M S G V

H L L T Q F A A , H L S ' N J S L G J K N !
Saturday's Cryptquip: MY DAD FINALLY KNOWS WHAT POISON IVY LEAVES LOOK LIKE. HE LEARNED IT FROM SCRATCH.

Today's Cryptquip Clue: H equals D

The Cryptquip is a substitution cipher in which one letter stands for another. If you think that X equals O, it will equal O throughout the puzzle. Single letters, short words and words using an apostrophe give you clues to locating vowels. Solution is by trial and error.

Indian Express rolls again



AFP, New Delhi

Indian tennis stars Leander Paes and Mahesh Bhupathi will reunite in a bid to win a doubles medal at this year's Olympic Games in Athens.

"We want to pair up again and are planning to play some tournaments before the Olympics," Paes said Saturday on his return here after a Davis Cup tie in New Zealand.

Paes and Bhupathi, the former world number one pair, have separated twice in the past and agreed to a similar reunion before the last Olympics at Sydney in 2000.

"We have been playing together in the Davis Cup and it was natural to have another go at the Olympics," said Paes, a former Wimbledon junior champion.

The pair have not won a doubles medal at the Olympics in two previous attempts, although Paes won a singles bronze at the Atlanta Olympics in 1996.

They lost to the Australian pair of Todd Woodbridge and Mark Woodforde in the second round on both occasions.



Leander Paes and Mahesh Bhupathi