

BD GM chess Uzbek Tahir leads the way

SPORTS REPORTER

International Master Vakhidov Tahir of Uzbekistan took a solo lead in the Maan Bangladesh Grand Masters' Chess Tournament yesterday.

After the fourth round Tahir raised his tally to 3.5 points when he defeated Monir Hossain at the federation chess room.

Five players were trailing him on half-a-point behind. They are GM Ziaur Rahman IM Reefat-Bin-Sattar of and Leonine's three GM's Dao Thien Hai and Nguyen Anh Dung of Vietnam and Uzbekistan's Ildachey Saidali.

In this round Zia drew with Nguyen, Dao Thien drew with Saidali, Reefat beat Fide Master Taibur Rahman and GM Niaz Murshed won against Prasentj Data.

Niaz was one four players occupying third place on 2.5 points. They include FM Sk. Nasir Ahmed, IM Mahmood Lodhi of Pakistan and Rahul Sangma of India.

Lodhi drew with Rahul, Nasir beat Aminul Islam Polish, FM Abu Sufian Shakil drew with Debaraj Chatterjee, Tanmoy Pattanyk of India beat Sohel Chowdhury of Titas, Syed Mahfuzur Rahman Emon beat Shamima Akter Liza of Sonali Bank, Saifuddin Lavlu beat Souvik Chakraborty of India, Mahtabuddin Ahmed beat FM Rezaul Haque and Arman Monir beat Rabiul Islam.

Magura soccer

OUR CORRESPONDENT

Muslim Sporting Club and Parmandual Ekadosh drew 1-1 in the Shaheed Mukul Smriti Football League at the Government College playground yesterday.

Milon scored for Parmandual in the first half while Ahad equalised for Muslim Sporting in the second half.

Shaheed Mintu Sangha will take on Mohammadpur Ekadosh today at the same venue.

Zahoor slices

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propelled Brothers' way to a thrilling last-over victory at the Fatullah Cricket Stadium. Chasing Oriant's 164-7, Brothers were reeling at 65-6 before skipper Halim Shah (30) and Kumaran (45) added 72 runs. The Gopibagh outfit, however, secured their second win with one ball to spare.

Kumaran, who earlier took 3-14 from ten overs, was adjudged man-of-the-match.

SCORES IN BRIEF

Venue: Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium

OLD DOHS: 266 all out in 50 overs (Hannan 39, Zahoor 106, Akram 63 n.o., Ashiqur 4-35, Mahmood 3-43, Shaiful-2-38).

UTTARA: 156 all out in 46.3 overs (Moniruzzaman 58, Asadullah 43, Ashiqur 16 n.o., Hasibul 2-35, Nazmul 3-26, Enamul 2-22). Result: DOHS won by 110 runs.

Venue: BKSP

INDIRA ROAD: 143 all out in 48 overs (Jahirul 16, Nahidul 17, Maola 24, Robin 32, Shahjada 3-29, Shafiq 2-35, Masudur 2-15).

VICTORIA: 144-4 in 35.4 overs (Salahuddin 23, Azam 37, Ehsanul 20, Kappal 39 n.o., Sajjadul 2-36). Result: Victoria won by six wickets.

Venue: Fatullah Cricket Stadium

ORIENT: 164-7 in 50 overs (Rashed 40, Kamal 33 n.o., Kumaran 3-14, Zia 2-45).

BROTHERS: 165-9 in 49.5 overs (Halim 30, Kumaran 45, Aminul 2-18, Ismail 2-29). Result: Brothers won by one wicket.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

Crossword puzzle grid with clues for Across and Down. Includes a solution time of 21 mins and a Cryptiquip section.



SPANISH ARMADA: Members of the Spanish hockey team celebrate their Champions Trophy triumph in Lahore yesterday. They upset holders the Netherlands 4-2 in the final.

Spain deny Dutch treble

Hockey

AFP, Lahore

Spain won the men's field hockey Champions Trophy for the first time when they defeated defending champions the Netherlands 4-2 in the final here Sunday.

Santiago Freixa, voted the international young player of the year last week, scored two goals as Spain shattered the Dutch dream of winning a hat-trick of titles in the elite six-nation event.

Pau Quemada and Victor Sojo were the other scorers for Spain, whose previous best in the annual tournament was the bronze medal they won at the 1997 edition in Adelaide, Australia.

Taeko Taekema and Karel Klaver netted for the Dutch, who had also conceded the Olympic title to first-

time gold medalists Australia in Athens in August.

Spain led 1-0 at half-time through Quemada's penalty-corner, but the Dutch drew level seven minutes after resumption with penalty corner specialist Taekema's seventh goal of the tournament.

Freixa and Sojo scored in the space of seven minutes to make it 3-1 for Spain before Klaver gave the Dutch hope by narrowing the margin 10 minutes from the end.

The 19-year-old Freixa made it 4-2 soon after but wasted a penalty stroke in the penultimate minute to deny himself a hat-trick.

"My best moment was today, I am so excited that we won," Freixa said.

"I think we were the best team in the tournament and deserved to win. There will be a lot of celebrations in the team."

Dutch captain Jeroen Delmee

conceded Spain outplayed his side.

"I am quite disappointed because this has not been a good year for us," Delmee said. "But we have some very good young players who will do well in the near future."

GERMANY-NEW ZEALAND

Earlier, New Zealand were knocked out of next year's Champions Trophy to be held in the Indian city of Madras after being beaten 2-1 by Germany in the play-off for 5-6 positions.

Florian Keller scored both goals for the Germans, who fielded a second-string team comprising just two players who took part in the Athens Olympics in August.

Bevan Hari reduced the margin for New Zealand two minutes before the final whistle, but failed to get the equaliser in the remaining time.

Pakistan do Indian double

Hockey

AFP, Lahore

Hosts Pakistan defeated arch-rivals India for the 12th time in 16 matches this year to win their third successive bronze medal at the men's Champions Trophy field hockey here on Sunday.

A holiday crowd of 15,000 at the National Hockey Stadium watched Pakistan cruise to a 3-2 win in the play-off for the bronze medal, adding to the 2-1 victory over the same rivals in the round-robin league.

Pakistan had also beaten India for the bronze in both the 2002 and

2003 editions of the annual tournament featuring the top six nations in the sport.

India, whose lone medal at the elite event was a bronze way back in 1982, opened the scoring in the second minute when defender Sandeep Singh converted his team's first penalty corner.

Pakistan drew level two minutes later through Sohail Abbas' penalty corner skills, taking the world record-holder's tally to 273 goals from 222 matches.

Rehan Butt deflected in Shakeel Abbas' pass in the 27th minute to give Pakistan a 2-1 lead.

The hosts earned three successive penalty corners early in the

second half and made it 3-1 with the third when Mudassar Ali Khan pounced on a rebound and struck the ball home.

Sandeep narrowed the margin for India two minutes before the final whistle, but failed to convert another penalty corner in the last few seconds that would have taken the match to extra time.

Pakistan dedicated the win to their Dutch coach Roelant Oltmans, who is slated to take charge of the Netherlands from January in place of Australian Terry Walsh.

"I am glad we managed to win in the coach's last match with us," said Pakistan captain Waseem Ahmed.

Abbas takes his last penalty-corner

Hockey

AFP, Lahore

Pakistan's penalty-corner ace Sohail Abbas, field hockey's leading scorer with 274 goals, announced his retirement from the game on Sunday.

"I have played enough for my country and it is now time for youngsters to take over," said the 28-year-old veteran of 222 matches.

The decision came after Pakistan finished third in the ongoing Champions Trophy tournament

here in which Abbas scored six goals.

"I am getting married in two weeks time and that will start a new chapter in my life," he said.

"I have a few offers to play in league matches in Europe and India. I have not made up my mind yet, all I want to do at the moment is rest."

Abbas, a nephew of former Pakistan international Safdar Abbas, made his debut against India at Peshawar in 1998 and was soon regarded as one of the most feared penalty-corner strikers in the game.

He overtook Dutchman Paul Litjens' world record of 267 goals in October and ended his career with a

record 21 hat-tricks, the most by any player in the history of the game.

Abbas said his biggest regret was not winning an Olympic gold medal for Pakistan, having played in the 2000 Games in Sydney and in Athens in August.

Pakistan finished fourth at Sydney and fifth in Athens.

No Mashrafe

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22 on Day One in his comeback Test, still looks a certainty to stay in the final list of 14 for the second Test after the selectors added one more player to the 13-man squad for the Dhaka Test.

It was learnt that young pacesman Nazmul Hossain has been drafted in and is most likely to make his Test debut in Chittagong as Mashrafe's replacement. The Tigers could go into the game with three specialist pacemen with Talha Jubair and Tapash Baishya completing the trio.

Mashrafe made a dream return to the Test arena after an absence of 14 months and has been the one of the few shining lights with his control and hostility in an otherwise forgettable first Test. He however appeared stiff when he bowled on the third day.

RU cricket

RU CORRESPONDENT

Botany Department defeated Accounting Department by eight wickets and Information and Communication Technology Department won 19 runs against Pharmacy department in the inter-department cricket tournament of Rajshahi University (RU) campus yesterday.

Accounting made 109 for nine in 25 overs with Biddut scoring 51 not out.

John scored an unbeaten 51 as Botany reached the target in 23 overs losing two wickets.

B'DESH-INDIA 3RD DAY SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard at stumps on the third day of the first Test between Bangladesh and India at the Bangabandhu National Stadium in Dhaka on Sunday.

BANGLADESH: First innings 184 (Ashraf 60 not out, Rafique 47, Manzarul 24; Pathan 5-45, Kumble 2-45, Zaheer 2-51)

INDIA: First innings (overnight 348-7) Gambhir run out 35, Sehwal lbw b Baista 13, Dravid b Mashrafe 0, Tendulkar not out 248, Ganguly b Baista 71, Laxman lbw b Rafique 32, Karthik c Mashrafe b Mushfiq 25, Pathan c Mushfiq b Rafique 5, Kumble b Mashrafe 5, Harbhajan c Bashir b Mushfiq 7, Zaheer c Mashud b Ashraf 8, Extras: (b-2, lb-11) 13, Total: (All out in 136.4 overs) 526, Fall of wickets: 1-19, 2-24, 3-68, 4-232, 5-291, 6-339, 7-348, 8-368, 9-393

Table with columns: Bowler, O, M, R, W. Lists bowlers like Baista, Mashrafe, Mushfiq, Rafique, Manzarul, Ashraf, and their performance statistics.

BANGLADESH: Second innings Omar lbw b Pathan 4, Iqbal lbw b Kumble 54, Bashir c Zaheer b Pathan 12, Saleh lbw b Pathan 0, Ashraf lbw b Pathan 0, Mashud c Karthik b Pathan 5, Manzarul not out 50, Mushfiq c Dravid b Harbhajan 6, Rafique c Sehwal b Kumble 11, Baista not out 17, Extras: (lb-5, nb-4, w-2) 11, Total: (For 8 wickets in 48 overs) 170, Fall of wickets: 1-4, 2-24, 3-24, 4-24, 5-36, 6-100, 7-117, 8-133, To bat: Mashrafe

Table with columns: Bowler, O, M, R, W. Lists bowlers like Pathan, Zaheer, Kumble, Harbhajan, and their performance statistics.

Toss: India. Umpires: Jeremy Lloyds (England) and Aleem Dar (Pakistan).

Of records

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who smashed ten fours and two sixes in two hours during an Indian record 133-run partnership for the last wicket.

The previous highest partnership at the last wicket for India was 109 between HR Adhikari and Ghulam Ahmed in their inaugural Test in against Pakistan in 1952 in Delhi.

At one stage, the pair looked set to cross the 151-run world record for the last wicket but Ashraf relieved his teammates from further humiliation by dismissing Zaheer, who crossed New Zealander Richard Collinge's 68 not out -- the previous highest score batting at No. 11 -- against Pakistan in Auckland in 1972.

Tendulkar, who was dropped thrice on way to emulating Sunil Gavaskar's world record of 34 Test centuries on Saturday, equalled another record of his predecessor from Mumbai by reaching another milestone.

When Bangladesh came out to bat in the second innings, things turned from bad to worse. They were reduced to 36-5 by tea with Irfan Pathan taking all five wickets in a deadly eight-over spell conceding 18 runs. The left-arm seamer, fresh from his maiden five-wicket haul in the first innings, celebrated his first ten-wicket haul Test cricket.

The only solace for the Tigers was Nafees Iqbal and Manzarul Islam's maiden Test half-centuries which steered Bangladesh to reach 170-8 at stumps and push the match into a fourth day.

Salman tipped

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could make runs and for the bowlers there was pace and bounce," he said.

"We have been craving to have these sort of wickets here because it brings some character back into the grounds around Australia."

"If we get that for the Test then the fast bowlers are going to be licking their lips," he said.

Pakistan headed for the nets on Sunday under the watchful eye of coach Bob Woolmer, who maintains his youthful side will improve with experience.

Woolmer said captain Inzamamul Haq had been disappointed with his own form but had been getting his eye in during the second innings against Western Australia, when he was dismissed by a beautiful diving catch while on 14.

"He's all right and he'll play pretty well on these pitches," he said.

Woolmer would not speculate on the team selection so it remains unclear who will partner Salman as an opener with Imran Farhat in poor form and Yasir Hameed having played barely any cricket on tour.

But other certainties for the side include leg-spinner Danish Kaneria who showed on the pace-friendly WACA pitch he will be a threat on the more accommodating wickets of Sydney and Melbourne.

Fast bowler Mohammad Sami is also a definite starter although Woolmer said he had been far too inaccurate during the match against Western Australia, bowling too many no-balls and struggling with his length.

"I'm sure he's strong enough mentally to bowl well when it counts," he said.

The Australians will train at the WACA ground on Monday.

England start shakily

Cricket

AFP, Potchefstroom

England's lack of match practice was exposed Saturday when they made a shaky start to their only first-class game before a five-Test series against South Africa.

The tourists were bowled out for a disappointing 225 by South Africa A on the first day of a three-day match at Sedgars Park. The South African second-stringers then piled up 133 for two by the close, scoring at better than four runs an over, to be 92 runs behind.

Johannesburg-born left-hander Andrew Strauss was the only England top-order batsman to shine, making 50 off 72 balls against a five-pronged seam attack.

He struck ten fours before being caught at point off Charl Langeveldt, the pick of the attack.

Pace bowler Langeveldt, who had to withdraw from South Africa's tour of India last month because of a back injury, took five for 48 after England were sent to bat.

England, who have won their last seven Tests, crashed to 117 for six shortly after lunch before some useful contributions by the lower order enabled them to get beyond the 200 mark.

Wicket-keeper Geraint Jones made 41 and was backed up by Ashley Giles (22), Simon Jones (31 not out) and Matthew Hoggard (17).

England fielded a likely Test batting line-up but there was no encouragement for players who did not go on the

recent one-day tour to Zimbabwe.

Mark Butcher, who missed England's series against the West Indies because of injury, was out for three after making only six in the one-day match against a Nicky Oppenheimer XI Wednesday.

Butcher was caught behind by Mark Boucher, who was controversially dropped from South Africa's touring team to India, off the last ball of Langeveldt's first over.

Fellow left-hander Graham Thorpe was out for nought, leg before third ball to Langeveldt. Andrew Flintoff (four) was another of medium-pace Langeveldt's victims. All three batsmen were playing in their first high-standard match since the English season ended in September.

Fast bowler Steve Harmison struck early for England, dismissing Andrew Puttick when the South Africa A total was on 11.

But Test discards Martin van Jaarsveld and Justin Ontong, who both played during the series against India, shared a free-scoring stand of 106 for the second wicket before Ontong was caught off left-arm spinner Ashley Giles for 56. Van Jaarsveld was unbeaten on 58 at the close.

The only consolation for England's batsmen was that they are likely to get a second opportunity to find form during the remaining two days of the match.

The first Test starts in Port Elizabeth on Friday.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard at close of play on the first day of the three-day tour match

between South Africa A and England at Sedgars Park on Saturday:

Table with columns: ENGLAND: Firstinnings, Batsman, Runs, and South Africa A: Firstinnings, Batsman, Runs. Lists players like Strauss, Butcher, Vaughan, Thorpe, Flintoff, Giles, Jones, Harmison, Flintoff, and their scores.

Marsh to quit after Ashes

Cricket

AFP, London

Rodney Marsh is to step down as an England selector and head of the country's cricket academy after next year's Ashes series.

The former Australia wicket-keeper said in a statement here Saturday he would not be renewing his current contract with the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) when it expires on September 30, 2005.

Marsh, 57, said he and his wife wanted to return to Australia in order to spend more time with their grandchildren. The Western Australia great added that while he expected to continue to be involved in cricket, it would probably not be on a full-time basis.

He was appointed as the first head of England's cricket academy when it was set up in 2001 having previously held a similar position in Australia.

Half of the 14-man Test squad which is currently on tour in South Africa are academy graduates including all-rounder Andrew



RODNEY MARSH

Flintoff and fast bowler Stephen Harmison.

"I have enjoyed every moment of my time at the ECB," Marsh said. "When I took the position in October 2001 I made the statement that people had to be patient about the future of English cricket. Miracles don't happen overnight."

"The England team is now in a position whereby it can command respect from all opposition and I would expect that position to remain if not improve over the next

few years," he added with Michael Vaughan's men looking to build on a run of seven straight Test wins -- England's best sequence for 75 years -- when they face the Proteas in next week's first Test in Port Elizabeth.

"It's time my wife and I went back to Australia to spend time with our new grandchildren," Marsh explained. "I have no idea what I will do but I will continue to work in cricket but certainly not on a full-time basis."

Hugh Morris, ECB performance director and acting chief executive, said: "Rod has been fantastic for ECB, and cricket in England and Wales has benefited from him enormously."

"I thank him for his considerable efforts in setting up the National Academy system and for ensuring a successful beginning to the new National Academy centre at Loughborough."

Despite their improving form, next year's series at home to Australia is set to be the acid test of England's progress. They have not won an Ashes series since Mike Gatting's team triumphed in Australia back in 1986-87.

Let the spirit rule

Cricket

AFP, Perth

Flamboyant Test umpire Billy Bowden has called on Australia and Pakistan's cricketers to avoid controversy in their upcoming series by reaching a gentlemen's agreement on disputed catches.

Bowden, who will officiate with South Africa's Rudi Koertzen in the first Test which starts in Perth this week, said he wanted rival skippers Ricky Ponting and Inzamamul Haq to agree to take the fielder's word on doubtful catches.

"I believe in honesty whether it's on the field or off the field," Bowden said on Sunday.

"I just think for the good of the game, for the spirit of the game, it's unfair to have someone knowing that they have not caught the ball and (the batsman) has been given out, or (the fielder) has caught the ball and (the batsman) has not been given out."

"I'd like to see some loyalty and integrity put back in the game," said the 41-year-old New Zealander, known for his theatrical on-field signalling.

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Premier hockey

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games, can reclaim the lead by the end of the fifth round.

The day's other match between Ajax Sporting Club and Azad Sporting Club ended in a goalless draw.

This wicket

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his end," came the honest reply. Meanwhile, a subdued Bangladesh skipper Habibul Bashar was lost for reasons to explain another awful collapse.

"I think the pitch behaved far better today than on the first day. We failed to stay in the middle. I don't know what is the real reason behind our top order's failure," said Bashar.

The country's premier batsman said that he did not consider his dismissals in both innings to attempted pull shots as irresponsible shot-making.

"I love to play the pull shot and I have scored maximum runs playing this shot. I have fallen at times for this but that doesn't mean I played irresponsibly."

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