

Liza stays on top

SPORTS REPORTER

Shamima Akter Liza maintained solo lead in the points table of the Prime Bank 1st Women's FIDE Rating chess tournament five points at the end of the 5th round yesterday at the conference-room of National Sports Council.

Liza beat Mahmuda Haque Chowdhury to keep her winning spree.

In other games, Tanima Parveen beat Masuda Begum and Zakia Sultana drew with Kishwara Shajrin Evana.

Landis tests

FROM PAGE 21

Ethical Code, the rider will not race anymore until this problem is totally clear," the statement added.

"If the result of the B sample analysis confirms the result of the A sample, the rider will be dismissed."

Tour de France organisers said they were stunned by the news and a statement said: "If the B sample test confirms the first result, anger and sadness will dominate the feelings of all of those who had been filled with enthusiasm for the Tour de France of 2006."

The test was carried out on the evening of Landis's victory in the 17th stage of the Tour de France to Morzine when he managed to claim victory after a staggering 130km solo break-away.

The 30-year-old regained the yellow jersey two days after winning in Morzine and won the race overall in Paris on July 23.

The news comes as mystery surrounded the whereabouts of the American champion after he withdrew from two races in the Netherlands and Denmark the day after UCI announced a rider on the Tour had failed a doping test.

The ANP Dutch news agency said Landis pulled out of a race in Chaam on Wednesday evening on medical advice but this reason for not appearing was not confirmed by race organisers.

Landis also pulled out of Thursday's Grand Prix Jyske Bank race, the Danish organisers said in a statement.

Landis did win the Stiphout criterium in the Netherlands on Tuesday night.

On Wednesday, the UCI had said in a statement: "The adverse analytical finding received this morning relates to the first analysis, and will have to be confirmed either by a counter-analysis required by the rider, or by the fact that the rider renounces to that counter analysis."

"The World Anti-doping Code and the Anti-doping Rules of the UCI do not allow to make the name of the concerned rider public, as well as other information that may allow identification."

This year's Tour was rocked by a drugs scandal on the eve of the race which saw 13 riders, including pre-race favourites Jan Ullrich and Ivan Basso, barred from taking part after they were implicated in a Spanish blood-doping ring.

It was the latest in a series of high-profile drugs controversies to tarnish cycling over the past decade, with the Tour de France being particularly hard hit.

The 1988 Tour de France champion Pedro Delgado was the last rider to test positive for a classic doping test but he was never punished because the substance, probenecide, found in his urine was not prohibited at the time though it was on the Olympic list of banned substances.

Apart from Ullrich, the 1997 champion currently under suspicion, the 1998 winner Marco Pantani of Italy was thrown out of the 1999 Tour of Italy the day before the final stage because of a high hematocrite level in his blood.

Salahuddin's court

FROM PAGE 21

and 'keep the bondage of the football family intact' but it seems that things are heading the same way as before.

It is also the general idea that with the executive committee's tenure coming to an end, the BFF members have become impatient to get foreign tours and disregard the NTMC, which has not only provided the salary of Argentine coach Diego Cruciani and trainer Ariel Colman for the last one year but also handled different national level teams rather successfully.

DU first

FROM PAGE 21

following a 2-1 loss to Barisal, who banked on first-half goals by Milon and Parvez in the Meghna zone semi.

In other matches of the day, Alif Hossain's hatrick helped Natore snatch a late come-from-behind 3-2 win against Sirajganj at the Jaipurhat Stadium, Mymensingh blanked Sherpur 2-0 at the Tangail Stadium and hosts Gaibandha edged Lalmonirhat 2-1 in the Teesta zone.

Deschamps ends

FROM PAGE 24

Buffon's agent, Silvano Martina, said earlier this month that his client had decided to stay at Juventus but seemed less certain following the appeals court ruling with rumours of a move the AC Milan still running.

Other players rumoured to be considering leaving include midfielder Mauro Camoranesi and strikers David Trezeguet and Zlatan Ibrahimovic.

Roddick in round two

Agassi reaches quarters



AFP, Los Angeles

Top seed Andy Roddick launched his Los Angeles ATP campaign with a 6-4, 6-4 victory over Rik de Voest Wednesday, to the approval of his new coach Jimmy Connors.

"That's a good start to the week," Connors said after watching Roddick dispose of the South African in 67 minutes from a base-line box at the hot and steamy UCLA Tennis Centre.

Roddick made use of a solid serve and formidable forehand, but De Voest wasn't easy to put away.

Roddick claimed the only service break in the seventh game to claim the opening set.

He broke early in the second, but up 5-4 he needed to save five break points in the final game before a rare forehand volley closed out the match.

"It's a nice feeling, that I haven't had for a while, to say I won the match four and four," Roddick said. Roddick had been without a

coach since firing Dean Goldfine in February, and was bounced in the first round of the French Open in May. He failed to make the Wimbledon final for the first time in three years, losing to Scot Andy Murray in the third round.

Following the disappointment at the All England Club, Roddick worked out for a four-day stretch with Connors, who won eight Grand Slam titles.

The move paid early dividends as Roddick reached his first final of the year at Indianapolis on Sunday, losing to James Blake in a third-set tiebreaker.

"I was eager to get out there to work on stuff," Roddick said of his revitalized attitude. "It's exciting, I'm eager."

"I'm hitting the ball better, my intensity and my focus is on the court," he added. "I think there's a long way to go. But just the fact that I'm looking forward to getting out there and playing with a sense of purpose feels good."

While Connors contented himself with his coach's role, another eight-time Grand Slam

champion, Andre Agassi, booked a quarterfinal berth with a 6-7 (4/7), 6-2, 6-1 victory over Switzerland's George Bastl.

The 36-year-old has said he will retire after the US Open. In the meantime he is seeking to add to the four titles he has won here, including a triumph last year.

"I'm reacting good, moving well," he said. "It's a lot of relief to play at that level. I haven't played at that level since last year."

He next faces third-seeded Fernando Gonzalez of Chile, who advanced with a 6-4, 6-2 victory over two-time Grand Slam champion Marat Safin of Russia.

Sixth-seeded Germany Tommy Haas, who won the title here in 2004, fired 13 aces in a 6-3, 4-6, 6-1 victory over Chile's Paul Capdeville.

Unheralded American Paul Goldstein, who stunned second-seeded Lleyton Hewitt of Australia in the first round, advanced to a meeting with Haas with a 6-4, 6-4 win over Russian Igor Kunitsyn.

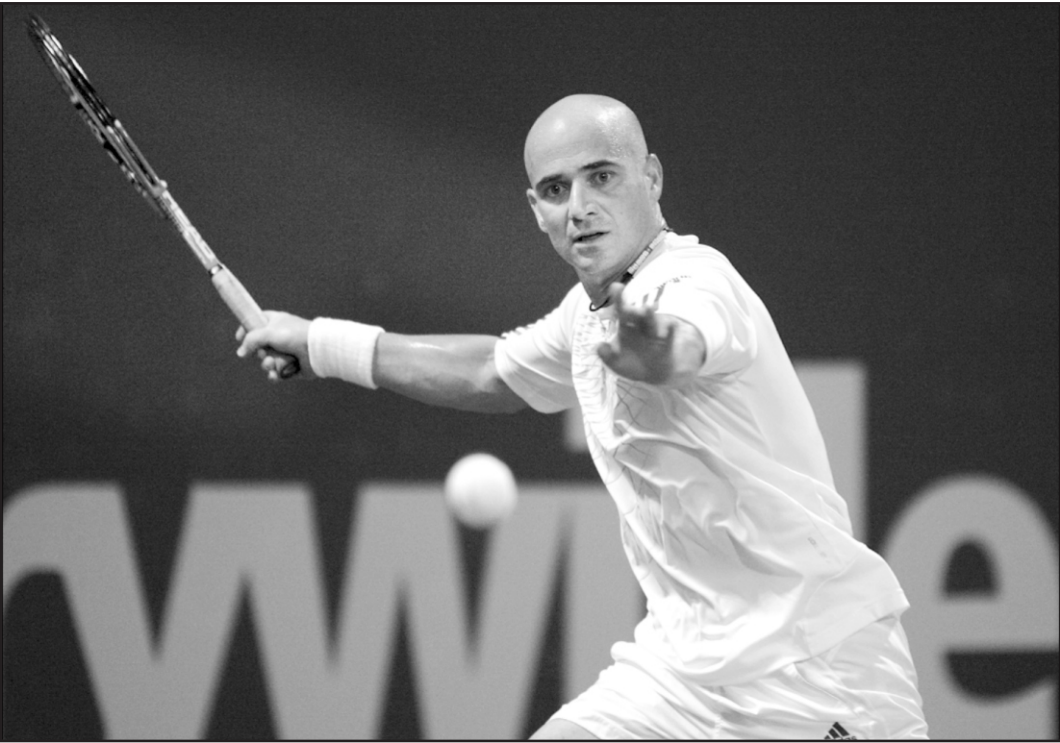


PHOTO: AFP

American Andre Agassi in action against George Bastl of Switzerland during their Countrywide Classic encounter at the Los Angeles Tennis Center at Westwood in California on Wednesday.

Relying on breaststroke

FROM PAGE 21

did not run preparation with a planning.

"We started from April 22 and it is taking time to get the swimmers into shape because the previous coach did not train them properly. Their performance was down going when we took over. There are other problems, like we don't have the electronic device to record the timing. We have been repeatedly asked for this but the government has not done anything. Otherwise the preparation is satisfactory," Mahbubur told.

Bangladesh have never won a gold in women's events but the coach said that Mahfuza Khatun, also a BKSP student, has an outside chance to break the jinx.

"Mahfuza has developed so much that we think she has a chance. The other three members of the women's team, Sabura, Dolly and Afsana might win medals but they are nowhere near winning a gold.

The main worry of the team was Rubel Rana, who lifted gold in the 100m backstroke two years ago in Pakistan.

"He has a 50-50 chance. His timing remains the same as Pakistan but India and hosts Sri Lanka both have improved timing. It depends how Rubel can stretch at the Games. However, we hope to give the opposition a tough time in the 4x100m medley relay as our quartet of Shahjahan, Jewel, Rubel and Rezaul Karim make a strong team.

The coach informed that butterfly specialist Jewel Ahmed could have been a bright prospect had he not suffered from illness.

A total of 16 swimmers attended the final training camp but the Bangladesh Olympic Association dropped butterfly swimmer Farid Sheikh from the squad yesterday. The total swimming team would be now of 18 members including three officials.

Usha, Abahani

FROM PAGE 21

and yellows also retained most of their old guns apart from pool members Shahidullah Titu and Shamim Reza.

Shamim has yet to find a team but Titu joined Usha along side Shamsuddin Tuhin, Khondokar Hassan, Zahidul Islam Rajan and Dinar. The other pool member is Usha's own Tabib-e-Noor.

Mariners signed Chandan and Kuti, leaving 11 members of the pool uncertain of their future, including the likes of Shamim, Habul, Rahul, Moksed, Biplab, Shishu, Yamin and Miraj.

The reason is the surprising silence of local giants Mohammedan Sporting Club, who have yet to decide whether they would form a strong team or not.

Like Mohammedan, Mariners are also struggling for lack of fund but have sights on three more poll players. Both the teams are expected to trade on the final day.

Proteas hit new low

FROM PAGE 24

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard at stumps on the opening day of the first Test between Sri Lanka and South Africa at the Sinhalese Sports Club ground in Colombo on Thursday:
SOUTH AFRICA: First innings
Gibbs b Fernando 19
Hall b Fernando 17
Rudolph c P Jayawardena b Maharoo 29
Amla st P Jayawardena b Muralidaran 19
Prince c P Jayawardena b Maharoo 1
De Villiers c Kapugedera b Muralidaran 65
Boucher c Jayasuriya b Muralidaran 4
Boje lbw b Muralidaran 5

Nel lbw b Fernando	0	Extras: (w-1, nb-2)				3
Steyn b Fernando	0	Total: (For 2 wkts in 26 overs)				128
Ntini not out	0	Fall of wickets: 1-6, 2-14				
Extras: (b-4, lb-6)	10	To bat: Dilshan, Kapugedera, P Jayawardena, Maharoo, Malinga, Fernando, Muralidaran				
Total: (All out in 50.2 overs)	169					
Fall of wickets: 1-32, 2-45, 3-78, 4-80, 5-112, 6-128, 7-148, 8-151, 9-151						
Bowler	O	M	R	W		
Malinga	10	2	38	0		
Maharoor	9	1	32	2		
Fernando	13	2	48	4		
Muralidaran	18.2	6	41	4		
SRI LANKA: First innings						
Tharanga c Boucher b Steyn	7	Toss: South Africa.				
Jayasuriya lbw b Steyn	4	Umpires: Billy Bowden and Mark Benson.				
Sangakkara not out	59					
M Jayawardena not out	55					

Steve too pacy for Pakistan

FROM PAGE 24

by Paul Collingwood off a steeping Harmison delivery.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard at tea on the first day of the second Test between England and Pakistan at Old Trafford on Thursday:
PAKISTAN: First innings
Akmal c Trescothick b Harmison 4
Farhat c Pietersen b Harmison 0
Younis c Collingwood b Harmison 44
Yousuf c Jones b Panesar 38
Inzamam c Pietersen b Harmison 0
Iqbal c Jones b Panesar 3
Razaq b Harmison 9

Afridi c Pietersen b Panesar	15	Cook not out	5	
Sami c Strauss b Harmison	1	Extras: (b-8, w-1, nb-1)	10	
Gul not out	1	Total: (For 1 wkt in 15 overs)	49	
Kaneria run out	0	Fall of wicket: 1-30		
Extras: (lb-2, w-2)	4	To bat: Pietersen, Collingwood, Bell,		
Total: (All out in 38.4 overs)	119	Jones, Mahmood, Hoggard,		
Fall of wickets: 1-4, 2-9, 3-90, 4-90, 5-93, 6-93, 7-112, 8-113, 9-118		Harmison, Panesar		
Bowler	O	M	R	W
Sami	6	1	16	1
Hoggard	9	1	30	0
Harmison	13	7	19	6
Mahmood	6	1	33	0
Collingwood	3	0	14	0
Panesar	7.4	3	21	3
ENGLAND: First innings				
Trescothick c Akmal b Sami	5			
Strauss not out	29			

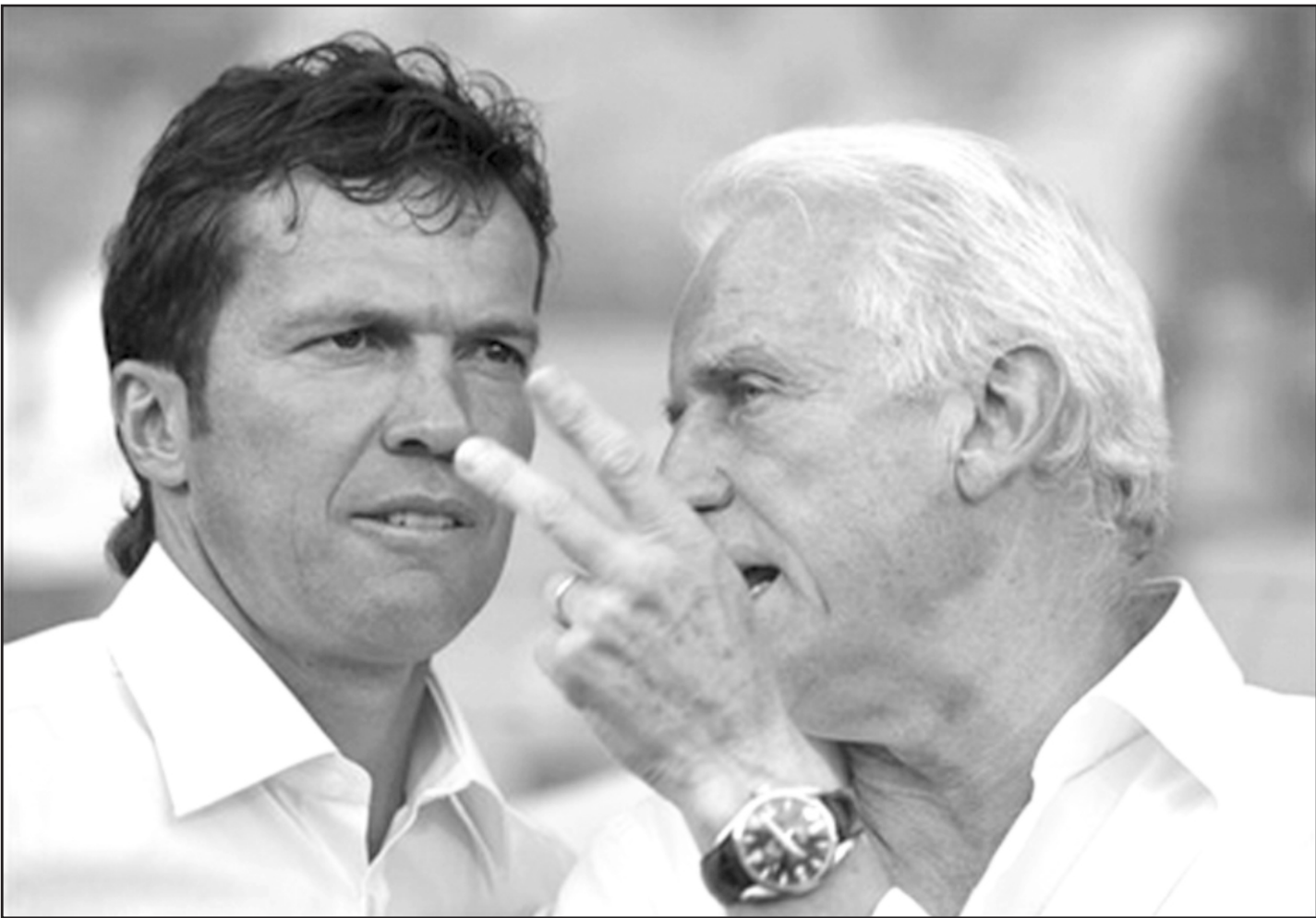


PHOTO: INTERNET

Red Bull Salzburg coach Lothar Matthaus (L) and sporting director Giovanni Trapattoni (R) ponder tactics during their Champions League qualification round tie at FC Zurich. Salzburg lost 2-1.

Clijsters crawls into quarters

AFP, Stanford

Defending champion Kim Clijsters rallied for a three-set victory over Jelena Jankovic Wednesday to reach the quarterfinals of this 600,000-dollar WTA Tour hardcourt tournament.

The top-seeded Belgian, seeking her fourth Stanford title in six years, got off to a rocky start but steadied to post a 5-7, 6-2, 6-2 victory over the unseeded Serbian.

Clijsters, one of four players with a first-round bye, will next face the winner of Thursday's second-round clash between Russian Vera Zvonareva and France's Nathalie Dechy.

She is trying to add another title to those she won here in 2001, 2003 and 2005 -- the last coming after she missed the 2004 edition with a wrist injury.

In other second-round action Wednesday, France's Tatiana Golovin upset sixth-seeded Ai Sugiyama of Japan 6-2, 6-3.

"I played Ai before and had a good record against her on the hardcourts, so I had confidence going into the match, which helped," said Golovin, who next faces either Russian Vasilisa Bardina or Germany's Anna-Lena Groenfeld.

Australian Samantha Stosur also posted an upset, ousting seventh-seeded Shahar Peer of Israel 7-5, 6-3.

"I think I served very well. That was probably the thing I did the best out there today," Stosur said. "She never really got a chance to attack my serve. She has very good ground strokes, and as soon as the ball drops, she's always looking to do something with it and try to finish the point."

"I didn't really give her a chance to do that, especially on my service games."

American Jill Craybas advanced to the quarters, beating her US Fed Cup teammate Shenay Perry 6-3, 3-6, 7-6.

There also were three first-round matches played Wednesday.

Zvonareva, who claimed her second title since June at Cincinnati on Sunday, knocked off eighth-seeded Slovenian Katarina Srebotnik -- the same woman she beat in the Cincinnati final -- 6-4, 6-3.

She next will face Dechy, who beat Italian Maria Elena Camerin 0-6, 7-6, 6-3.

"Playing in a final and in the first round is very different, so I went on the court not even thinking about last week's final in Cincinnati," Zvonareva said. "It was a whole new match."

Japan's Akiko Morigami booked a second-round match against second-seeded Patty Schnyder of Switzerland with a 6-0, 6-3 triumph over Gisela Duako of Argentina.

Selectors on

FROM PAGE 21

the matter of the endorsement to the knowledge of the board back in June. It was surprising that Athar was oblivious of the whole incident even though he's the only person who has an affiliation with both Reebok and the board.

The CEO later mentioned that the cricket operations committee will also be in contact with Reebok International over the matter and admitted a 'mistake' on his part on calling the press conference since he thought 'the rejoinder would create distance between the board and the media'.

If the words of the CEO are anything to go by, it will be one long and painful ride for the selectors who are under fire.

Benaud bucks England up



AFP, London

Richie Benaud has insisted England can mount a successful defence of the Ashes when they travel to Australia later this year despite their growing injury crisis.

Michael Vaughan, the man who captained England to a 2-1 Ashes triumph last year, has already been ruled out of the return series in Australia starting in November because of his longstanding knee injury.

And last week star all-rounder Andrew Flintoff was sidelined for the rest of the season with an ankle problem.

He joined fellow Ashes winning bowlers Simon Jones (knee) and Ashley Giles (hip) on England's list of long-term casualties along with reserve fast bowler James Anderson (back).

And, to make matters worse, Tuesday saw Durham paceman Liam Plunkett ruled out of England's second and third Tests at home to Pakistan with a side strain.

But former Australia captain Benaud, now as famous for his work as a television commentator as he was as a leg-spinning all-rounder and superb skipper during the 1950s and 1960s, insisted now was not the time to write off England's chances.

"There is so much time to go between now and the start of the Ashes (at Brisbane's Gabba ground in November). We are only just half-way through July. You (England) might have 12 fit fast bowlers by the time the Ashes start."

"There is no point in anyone

panicking. Eighteen months ago I was saying that if England have a fully-fit fast bowling attack they can easily regain the Ashes. Everyone laughed at me. The fast bowlers were the key then and they still are," he also told the London Evening Standard.

But he admitted England would



RICHIE BENAUD

miss Vaughan, as much as for his leadership skills as his batting. "It's a big blow for England not to have him. He was high-class last year. He had this very good control over the team and when they got into a tough situation he kept the players calm, which is not easy."

Since the Ashes, England's have won just two out of 10 Tests. "They made good progress in India, went a bit pear-shaped against Sri Lanka. Now they are starting to play better again," Benaud, in England to cover the team's ongoing home series against Pakistan, added.

"We know already Vaughan is not

going to make it but we hope Andrew Flintoff, Simon Jones and Ashley Giles will be there.

"There has been enormous interest back home in the coming series. Ticket sales have been unprecedented and it promises to be a wonderful occasion. "Home-ground advantage is a big thing although the Test match pitches in England are much more similar to Australia than they used to be."

One of Australia's stars during the last Ashes campaign was Shane Warne, who indicated at the time that it would be his final Test tour of England although he would continue to captain English county Hampshire.

But Benaud said he'd told his fellow leg-spinner to reconsider and make sure he was around for the 2009 Ashes series in England.

"When the last ball is bowled he will still only be 39. I said to him 'You are bowling better than you have done for a considerable amount of time'. He said to me 'Richie, I will give it some thought.'"

As for his own career, Benaud wasn't about to call time on that either, with the 75-year-old is still the cornerstone of Channel Nine television's cricket commentary team in Australia.

And although his 42 years of broadcasting in England came to an end last year when the terrestrial Channel Four lost the contract to cover cricket to satellite station Sky, Benaud continues to write his weekly column for Britain's News of the World tabloid.

"I have this year and next year (with Nine) still to do. I don't know what I will do then. It just depends what Channel Nine wants to do."

7x3