

Rajib still unbeaten

SPORTS REPORTER

Enamul Hossain Rajib remained unbeaten in the Kolkata Open Grandmaster Chess Tournament when the Bangladeshi International Master defeated compatriot FIDE Master Abu Sufian Shakil in the third round at the Gorky Sardan yesterday.

Rajib extended his lead to 2.5 points while Grandmaster Niaz Moshed, who lost to Armenian GM Tigran Petrosian after wins in the first two rounds, stuck to two points.

Petrosian shared the lead with two GMs, Tiviakov of Holland and Alon Greenfeld of Israel with maximum three points.

IM Abdullah Al Rakib and Shakil were on 1.5 points each while GM Ziaur Rahman, FM Mehdi Hasan Parag and Debaraj Chatterjee have so far collected one point each.

In the third round, Zia tasted his first victory after two defeats when he edged P Priya but Rakib lost to local player Rathnakaran while Parag, who upset French GM Oliver Renet in the opening round, crashed to Indian IM DP Singh.

Effortless win for Bangladesh

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh put behind the frustration of losing their opener to Pakistan when the hosts blanked Jordan 3-0 in the second round match of the Junior Davis Cup Asia/Oceania zone yesterday.

Omarr Faruk Sunny beat Ahmad Hamez of Jordan 6-2, 6-4 while Mufazzal Hossain defeated Fawzaw Samer in the singles before the local pair downed their Jordanian rivals 6-2, 5-7, 6-1 in the doubles at the Rama Tennis Complex.

Singapore maintained their winning run, defeating Malaysia 3-0 in the day's other match for their second consecutive victory.

Bangladesh are pitted against Malaysia while Jordan face Pakistan in today's fixture.

The Junior Fed Cup will begin today with Bangladesh taking on Sri Lanka and Pakistan playing Singapore.

Noble Akram

AFP, Karachi

Former Pakistan great Wasim Akram said Monday he was setting up an organisation to spread public awareness about diabetes and how patients should counter it.

The former left-arm paceman, himself a diabetic, announced a seven-member committee which includes his former captain and cricket legend, Imran Khan.

"We would raise funds through charity matches between Pakistan and Indian film stars, and the first match of this kind will be played in Dubai on April 6 this year," Wasim told AFP.

Wasim, who took a world record 502 one-day wickets and 414 Test wickets during his career, was hit by the disease in 1997 but managed to continue playing until 2003.

He said a study revealed Pakistan would have the world's fourth-largest population of diabetes sufferers by 2025, and his foundation would fight to minimise this in the coming years.

"Around 80 per cent of sufferers don't know they have this disease, so we want to create awareness and then help them fight it," said Wasim, now a commentator with Hong Kong-based television.

Ctg scale

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as Khulna posted 254, 30 runs short from Sylhet first essay.

Leg-spinner Alok Kapali claimed three wickets conceding 48 runs while Shiharu Sharif captured two wickets for 53 runs.

Sylhet made good start in the second innings when they finished the day on 24 without loss in six overs.

SCORES IN BRIEF

DHAKA: First innings 357 all out in 112 overs (overnight 329-6) (Uttam 11, Rashedul 6, Anwar 105, Shamsur 31, Riyad 48, Shariful 1, Sajjad 130, Arifat 12, Rashedul 1, Talha 0, Azim 0 not out, extras 12; Shahjada 2-67, Moshfiqur 2-79, Forhad 5-70, Mahbub 1-36).

RAJSHAHI: First innings 201-6 in 66 overs (Zunaed 53, Raquib 1, Hasanuzzaman 4, Naim 2, Anisur 48, Mashud 2, Moshfiqur 25 not out, Forhad 39, extras 27; Talha 2-34, Azim 3-53, Shariful 1-24).

CHITTAGONG: First innings 622-8de in 141.5 overs (overnight 362-3) (Salahuddin 165, Nafis 6, Sunny 74, Nazimuddin 92, Ehsanul 44, Faisal 9, Dhamal 81, Palash 88, Sabir 38 not out, extras 25; Arifat 3-74, Ariful 1-76, Ali Arman 1-102, Humayun 1-63, Tarikul 1-202).

BARISAL: First innings 156-3 in 39 overs (Imran 75 not out, Hannan 43, Raquib 11, Nayeem 10, Ali Arman 10 not out, extras 7; Alamgir 1-24, Sabir 1-27, Ehsanul 1-12).

SYLHET: First innings 284 and second innings 24-0 in 6 overs (Saf 12 not out, Imtiaz 12 not out).

KHULNA: 254 all out in 94.4 overs (Monirul 56, Hasan 14, Imrul 0, Nahidul 5, Manjul 9, Jamaluddin 103, Montasir 19, Salim 16, Kabir 5, Mahmud 0, Shibli 0 not out, extras 27; Sharif 2-53, Kapali 3-48, Saif 1-13, Nabil 4-71).



PHOTO: AFP

Indian cricket captain Rahul Dravid (R) speaks at a press conference in Mumbai in connection with the Cricket World Cup yesterday.

Stage again set for Sachin

AFP, New Delhi



If there is an Indian batsman whose temporary lapse in form can spark a heated debate across the country, he is Sachin Tendulkar. And he himself is responsible for it.

The little genius has set such high standards in his illustrious 17-year international career that even a minor slip can disturb millions of his fans and send media into an overdrive.

Tendulkar was just 16 when he played his first one-day series in 1989 in Pakistan, giving glimpses of his courage and amazing shot-making ability. And his countrymen still expect him to relive the old magic.

He will turn 34 during the World Cup carrying the burden of expectations on his shoulders after scoring nearly 15,000 runs with more than 40 centuries in one-day internationals, both world records in the shorter version of the game.

It is not easy being a Tendulkar in India and retired Australian leg-spin magician Shane Warne was not off the target when he said he

admired the Indian for what he had gone through in his career.

"One of the hardest things when you've been a successful player is everybody else's expectations. They can wear you down after a while," Warne said in praise of Tendulkar.

"I really admire Sachin for what he has to go through everyday in India, with a billion people wanting him to do well."

Tendulkar recently came under fire for losing much of his flamboyance, but gave a fitting reply to his critics with a 76-ball hundred against the West Indies in the fourth and final one-dayer at Vadodara in January.

India expect him to continue in the same vein because his form will be vital and he is expected to fire irrespective of his batting slot.

Even the Indian team's think-tank realise the significance of Tendulkar and has often changed his batting position, confident he is an experienced and extraordinary batsman who can deliver at any slot.

Tendulkar has scored bulk of his runs as an opener, but showed that he was also comfortable in the middle order when he hammered a rapidfire century against Brian Lara's team recently.

The occasion brings the best out of him. He was a bowlers' nightmare in the 2003 tournament in South Africa where he emerged as a leading scorer with 673 runs in 11 matches.

Tendulkar was instrumental in his team reaching the final after two decades and his failure in the title-clash against Ricky Ponting's Australians severely affected India's chances.

Now he has nothing to prove after amassing more than 25,000 runs in international cricket, but will be keen to be a member of the World Cup-winning team, the only missing accolade in his long career.

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