

Niaz best among Bangladeshis

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladeshi Grandmasters Niaz Mursheed and Ziaur Rahman ended on even grounds in the Kolkata Open Grandmaster Chess Tournament that concluded at the Gorky Sadan yesterday.

Both finished on six points after ten rounds but Niaz was placed 17th and Zia 26th by virtue of tie-breaking points.

Armenia's GM Tigran Petrosian became champion with eight points while GM Sergey Tiviakov finished runner-up with 7.5 points.

Among Bangladeshi contestants, out of total 80 players including 20 GMs, International Master Enamul Hossain Rajib (5.5 points) clinched 33rd place while IM Abdurrahman Al Rakib, FM Mehdi Hasan Parag and FM Abu Sufian Shakil (all five points) finished 42nd, 45th and 48th respectively. Debaraj Chatterjee was 78th with three points.

Nimbus rouses BCCI into action

PTI, New Delhi

Barely a year after signing a telecast deal with the Cricket Board for a whopping 612 million dollars, Nimbus on Monday issued a notice to the BCCI threatening to pull out of the deal.

Nimbus' decision to withdraw from the deal, covering matches in India till 2010 March, comes after the Government issued on an Ordinance making it mandatory for private broadcasters to share with Prasar Bharati the live feed of sports events of national importance.

The sudden development prompted the BCCI to go into an emergency meeting at Board President Sharad Pawar's official residence here to discuss the issue.

"We have received a notice from Nimbus threatening to pull out of the deal," a top BCCI official told PTI.

Woolmer glad

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get fed up with this. This is another misconception. Look at India, Australia, England and South Africa.

"The new ball does a bit and opening bowlers are meant to take wickets. Imran Nazir and Hafeez, or maybe Kamran Akmal or Shahid Afridi, the four can destroy an attack."

Woolmer said the mood in the camp was upbeat and the team were looking forward to making an impressive start in the tournament.

"Smile in adversity. Smile when you are doing well. But always smile, smile as you realise that you are lucky to represent your country in a great tournament that comes not every other day but after every four years."

"The theme is to enjoy ourselves. To work hard, play hard. The mood is excellent and hopefully we have a good start and we carry that through."

Rijkaard loses

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getting too easy," Rijkaard admitted. "But we have paid the penalty and now we the chance to put it right."

"It is a dream for any sportsman to play in the kind of fantastic atmosphere there will be here tomorrow. It is a great opportunity to show what we are worth."

Barca's captain, the centre-back Carlos Puyol, echoed Rijkaard's bullish tone but admitted it would require a near "perfect" performance to keep the defence of their Champions League crown alive.

"We are ready, we're excited and hopeful of getting a good result," Puyol said. "It is going to be a test against a side with an excellent defence which is also strong on the counter-attack."

"We know we are going to have to play an almost perfect game but that is what we are going to try and do. We have got a huge desire to carry on and stay in the competition. We want to win for a second year running and we are confident of putting on a good show."

"We have got to attack and the earlier we score the better," Puyol added. "But we can't go gung ho and forget about defending. We have to play a complete game, stay patient and keep our concentration."

Blatter backs

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FIFA had warned that if Poland does not comply it risked the suspension of the federation and all Polish players, clubs and officials from international competitions, plus a ban on Poland organising international matches.

Poland is bidding to jointly host, with Ukraine, the 2012 European Championships.

Italy is also in the running to host Euro 2012 along with joint-bidders Hungary and Croatia.

The winning bid is expected to be announced by a meeting of UEFA's executive committee next month in Cardiff, Wales.



PHOTO: STAR

Farzana Hossain Annie (L) and Mahmuda Haque Moly ponder their next moves in a second round match of the 28th National Women's Chess Championship at the federation hall yesterday.

LOCAL SNIPPETS

SPORTS REPORTER

Zahid's five-wicket burst gave Islami Adarsha High School a 59-run win over Kalshi Islamia High School in a low-scoring affair of the Standard Chartered School Cricket competition at the Kalindi ground yesterday.

Islami only scored 128 in 22 overs as Moinuddin of Islami Adarsha took four wickets but Zahid's superb bowling was enough to skittle Kalshi Islamia for only 69 in 14.4 overs.

In other matches, Dhaka Modern Pre-Cadet High School, National Bangla High School, Mirpur Udayan School and Mirpur Sidhanta High School won their respective matches.

GAIBANDHA SCHOOL CRICKET

Mohimaganj High School earned a 61-run victory over Chandipur High School in the school cricket competition at the local stadium.

Islamia High School take on Sundarganj Government High School today.

JFA CUP

Scholastica had two wins on the day as both their boys and girls handball teams won in the Bata 16th School Handball competition at the Dhanmondi Women's Complex.

Press dine with Dwayne

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"The full weight of the law."

Its sports section was along similar lines, suggesting Pietersen, who was stumped, was "undone by a wide delivery". The Daily Star went with "Gut-ya", noting his likeness to comedian Eddie Murphy's "Nutty Professor" character.

But there was also praise for the big man, whose efforts at one stage saw England 132 for five before they rallied to 286 for eight.

The Telegraph's Derek Pringle, himself a former England paceman, said Leverock was a "decent tweaker". The Daily Express's man at Arnos Grove said Leverock "troubled England's batsmen with well-controlled, well-fighted" spin.

And The Guardian said Leverock's efforts raised the possibility of an upset, even if it did refer to the

left-arter as someone "who looked as if he was trying to emulate the Old Lady Who Swallowed A Fly".

The Times sports sub-editor Dexter Smith, who used to open the batting for Bermuda, wrote that he first came across Leverock as a "read-thin 15-year-old" who showed great promise but was more interested in football.

Years later, with a knee injury having ended his footballing aspirations, excess weight and an asthmatic condition, he is still first on the team sheet and a crowd pleaser because of his exuberant celebrations and spirit.

"He got me out once, too, which should be of some consolation to Paul Collingwood and Pietersen. I recovered, and I suspect they will, too," he added.

"We don't want to prevent Gul from a good contract but we have to safeguard his future as well," he added.

Gul has only recently recovered from a shin problem after being sent back from the tour of South Africa.

Lille seek United revenge

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The Scot added further fuel to the fire by claiming Lille were portraying themselves as a David to United's Goliath.

"They have tried to create an issue around the game, saying they are a small team from France and they are playing the big Manchester United," he said.

"But the laws say if you leave the pitch, you need the referee's permission to come back on."

"Four or five of their players should have been yellow-carded and probably a couple of them had already been booked."

"It is an interesting aspect. But, from the referee's point of view, he probably wanted the game finished and over with."

United will kick off as favourites to progress to the last eight, despite the probable loss of Wayne Rooney, who was struggling to recover from a knee injury incurred in the 1-0 win at Liverpool on Saturday which has significantly shortened the odds on

Ferguson's men reclaiming the Premiership title.

Ole Gunnar Solskjaer is also sidelined following knee surgery last week but the likely forward pairing of Louis Saha with Henrik Larsson, who will be playing his last match for the club at Old Trafford, amounts to the kind of cover most managers would love to have.

Lille in contrast have been hit by injuries to two first-choice midfielders, Yohan Cabaye and Mathieu Bodmer.

The ball-winning Cabaye is set to be replaced by fit-again Stephane Dumont, who marked his return from a knee injury by scoring twice in Lille's 4-0 win over Troyes at the weekend.

With Lille obliged to score at least once to take the tie into extra-time, the loss of the more attacking Bodmer represents a bigger blow to Lille boss Claude Puel, although he can call upon another midfielder, Kader Keita, who was suspended for the first leg.

"We know we are going to have to play an almost perfect game but that is what we are going to try and do. We have got a huge desire to carry on and stay in the competition. We want to win for a second year running and we are confident of putting on a good show."

"We have got to attack and the earlier we score the better," Puyol added. "But we can't go gung ho and forget about defending. We have to play a complete game, stay patient and keep our concentration."

Bayern hold the edge

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injuries in Sunday's 1-1 draw.

"Neither of them will be fit to travel to Germany. We have three serious injuries," said Real coach Fabio Capello.

"Reyes' injury is serious, Beckham's could be just as significant."

But with all-time tournament top scorer Raul, who scored twice in the first-leg win, back after missing Sunday's draw with a sore groin, Real still have some enviable talent to rely on.

"With this spirit and quality we can play a good game in Munich. We are only thinking about going through to the quarterfinals," said Capello, who is feeling the pressure to progress after the Italian reportedly offered to resign ahead of the first leg.

The loss of Beckham is a major blow as the English veteran has earned plaudits since fighting his

way back into the team despite being told by Capello that he would not pull on a Real shirt again following his decision to move to LA Galaxy at the end of the season.

Bayern will have to tread carefully against the Spanish with three players -- Martin Demichelis, Mark van Bommel and Andreas Ottl -- on two yellow cards. A third would earn them a one-match suspension from their team progress.

To add extra spice to the tie, Dutch midfielder van Bommel will have his behaviour scrutinised after being fined 8,200 dollars by UEFA for making obscene gestures to Real fans after scoring a late goal in his side's 3-2 defeat last month.

"I must apologise to the supporters. I have nothing against them, but I have something against some of the Real players," said the Dutchman, who had an injury-marred year with Real's bitter rivals Barcelona before joining Bayern.

"They all have my heartfelt thanks."

BKSP, Mariners coast along

SPORTS REPORTER

Fifties from Nadir Hossain and Mahmudul Hasan and a brilliant bowling display gave BKSP a 76-run win over Dhaka Wanderers in the Kai-Altech First Division Cricket League at the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium yesterday.

Opting to bat first on a flat track, BKSP racked up 271-9 in 50 overs and then bowled out Wanderers for 195 in 47.4 overs.

Nadir (65) and Mahmudul (60) top-scored for the promoted side but when they bowled two tight spells dismissed Wanderers. Left-arm spinner Raihan Anas and seamer Golam Kibria took three wickets each as BKSP won their fourth consecutive match.

Dhanmondi Club beat Dhaka Mariners Youngs Club by seven wickets at BKSP with Rony Talukdar slaming 96 off 86 balls during their 243-run chase at BKSP.

Opting to bat first, Mariners scored 242-7 in 50 overs with Golam Fayyaz missing his second century in the league as he was out for 91. Dhanmondi made light work as they won in only 40.5 overs, losing only three wickets.

At the Dhaka University ground, a four-wicket haul from Miraj gave Eskaton Sabuj Sangha a solid 59-run victory over Bangladesh Boys.

Playpen ANNUAL SPORTS

The annual sports competition of Playpen was held at Gulshan Youth Club on February 27.

Principal of Playpen Sabera Parveen Harun was present as the chief guest. Coordinators, teachers, office personnel and students were present in this colourful event held with a lot of enthusiasm.

Gul concern

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part of Shoaib Akhtar and Mohammad Asif were lost to injury.

"We have asked for assurances from the country there will be acceptable workloads for Umar as he is a valuable player for us," Saleem Alif, PCB director cricket operations.

"We don't want to prevent Gul from a good contract but we have to safeguard his future as well," he added.

Gul has only recently recovered from a shin problem after being sent back from the tour of South Africa.

First one-dayer

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our potential then there is every possibility of winning the series," said the dashing batsman.

"It should be a cracking game of cricket. We are looking forward to the match. They (Bangladesh A) matched us for the most part of the four-day series and I think that they will do even better in the one-day series. Obviously we would love to win that but that won't be easy, surely," reckoned England A coach Peter Moores while talking with TigerCricket.com.

The home team finalised their playing eleven which is Tushar Imran (captain), Junaed Siddique, Mehra Hossain, Jahirul Islam, Nazimuddin, Nadir Chowdhury, Forhad Reza, Manzurul Islam, Sahagir Hossain, Nazmul Hossain, Mohammad Shahajad.

The touring side have picked a twelve-man side. Apart from Adil Rashid, the leg-spinner, all the other players who were in the starting eleven of the second four-day match have been included. James Curly and Alex Gidman are the fresh inclusions.

Samuels slams

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West Indies, the World Champions in 1975 and 1979, have been drawn with Pakistan, Ireland, and Zimbabwe in Group D of the tournament.

The touring side will take place at the P Sara Stadium in Colombo on April 2 and 4.

The Bangladesh team will leave Colombo on April 5.

ITINERARY

March 19-22: First Test (four-day) at Colombo

March 25-28: Second Test (four-day) at Colombo

March 31: First One-day at Colombo

April 2: Second One-day at Colombo

April 4: Third One-day at Colombo

Lanka

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native Scotland, took two wickets as did opening bowler John Blair.

Sri Lanka play New Zealand in their final warm-up match on Friday while Scotland will face Bangladesh on Thursday.