

LOCAL SNIPS

SPORTS REPORTER

GM Reefat Bin Sattar is in the lead along with Iranian GM Ghaem Maghami and Vietnamese GM Nguyen Anh Dung in the United Leasing and United Insurance eighth Grandmasters chess tournament at the NSC conference room yesterday.

All three have gained six points after eight rounds with Reefat winning against Pakistani IM Mahmud Lodi, Maghami beating Nasir Ahmed and Nguyen defeating PDS Girinath of India.

IM Abdullah Al Rakib, IM Enamul Hossain and Girinath are all in second place with five points each.

POLICE VOLLEYBALL

Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) thumped Chittagong Range 3-0 in the final of the Bangladesh Police Volleyball Championship at the Rajarbagh Police Lines ground yesterday.

Maruf Hasan of DMP was adjudged the best player of the tournament.

Inspector General of Police Nur Mohammad was present as the chief guest.

DIV 1 VOLLEYBALL

Swabolombi Society beat Madartek Mitali Sangha 3-2 in the National Bank Metropolis First Division Volleyball League at the Dhaka Volleyball Stadium yesterday.

Swabolombi fought all the way to win 25-19, 20-25, 25-21, 18-25 and 15-13 in the thrilling encounter.

DIVISIONAL KARATE

Nurul Huda of Chapaiaawabganj and Halima Khatun of Thakurgaon won gold in the men's and women's event of the second divisional karate competition in Rajshahi.

In the 45kg event, Rangpur's Parimal Chandra and Mariam Khatun of Chapaiaawabganj won while in the 60kg event, Asaduzzaman of Rajshahi was victorious.

Sonn laid to rest

AFP, Cape Town

International Cricket Council (ICC) president Percy Sonn, who died last weekend following complications after undergoing minor colon surgery, was laid to rest in Cape Town on Saturday.

Hundreds of people gathered at St George's cathedral in the city centre for a funeral service, according to an AFP photographer.

ICC chief executive Malcolm Speed paid tribute to Sonn, 57, the first African to head the ICC.

South African Finance Minister Trevor Manuel was among the mourners.

Born on September 25 1949, Percival Henry Frederick Sonn, known as Percy, dedicated much of his life to cricket and became an administrator while still a teenager with his club side, Bellville South.

Sonn was elected ICC president in June 2006 after successfully heading the United Cricket Board of South Africa, where he played an integral part in the integration of South Africa into the world game after the end of apartheid.

Away from cricket, Sonn was a lawyer and became a legal advisor to the South African Police Service.

He leaves his wife, Sandra, and three children.

Edwards, Sammy brighten Test chance

BBC ONLINE, undated

West Indies pace duo Fidel Edwards and Darren Sammy boosted their chances of a starting the third Test with England by wrapping up the MCC innings on Day Two.

With the Windies blighted by injury, compounded by Ravi Rampaul and Chris Gayle's problems on day one, Edwards and Sammy provided a welcome lift.

Resuming on 234-7, Edwards (3-66) and Sammy (2-66) cleaned up the tail as the MCC slumped to 260 all out.

In reply, the Windies lost Devon Smith for just 16 to leave them 21-1.

Ruel Braithwaite was the wicket-keeper, bowling the opener to end his 19-ball stay.

Earlier, Edwards and Sammy found good pace and bounce to wrap up the innings in the first morning, with Jermaine Taylor (5-43) given the morning's rest.

Katich full of hope

BBC ONLINE, undated

Discarded batsman Simon Katich has not given up hope of a return to Australia's Test and one-day teams.

The 31-year-old lost his Test place shortly after the 2005 Ashes series and gave way in the world champions' one-day side in 2006 to Matthew Hayden.

Katich told BBC Sport: "I had a run of low scores so I understood the selectors' reasons for dropping me."

"But you're never too old and should never give up hope. Just keep piling on the runs and they will take notice."



PHOTO: STAR
GM Reefat Bin Sattar (L) concentrates hard during his match against Pakistani IM Mahmud Lodi in the United Leasing and Insurance eighth Grand Masters' chess tournament at the NSC conference room yesterday.

Dhoni given extra cover

PTI, Ranchi

Even after denying any Naxal threat to Indian superstar cricketer Mahendra Singh Dhoni, Jharkhand police have decided to leave nothing to chance and provided complete security cover for the wicketkeeper.

Dhoni, who arrived here on Saturday after visiting Delhi and Mumbai, was given additional protection on his way from airport to his residence.

Besides gun-wielding state policemen, the Central Industrial Security Force personnel posted at the Birsa Munda Airport also joined to escort Dhoni till he got into a vehicle.

The vehicle, having one policeman inside it, was escorted by a police car carrying five security men.

Deepak Kumar Ambast, in-charge of Doranda police station under which Dhoni's house falls, said the procedure would be a routine from now on whenever Dhoni was in town.

"It is quite normal to provide security to all VIPs," replied Ambast when asked whether the extra cover was given in the wake of the reports of Naxal threat on Dhoni.

"We will keep a strict vigil and accompany him wherever Dhoni visits," he added.

On May 27, Jharkhand Director General of Police JB Mahapatra had denied reports by a section of media that the cricketer faced Naxal threat.

Lehmann unsure

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thought about them before deciding to prolong with Arsenal until June 2008," said Lehmann.

"I want to impose myself on this situation and that's why I decided to stay until 2008," added the German number one ahead of his country's Euro 2008 qualifier against San Marino on Saturday.

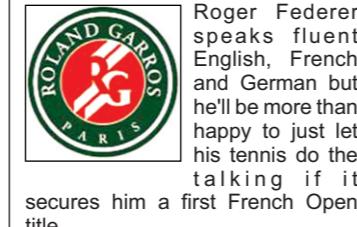
Lehmann, who has been at Arsenal since 2003, said the coming season will be his hardest yet. He faces a battle to hold off both the Arsenal and Germany number one shirts.

"I play at Arsenal I will have no worries for the national team because the English league is a higher level than the German league," he said. "If I'm not starting at Arsenal, then that will be new for me."

Lehmann displaced Bayern Munich stopper Oliver Kahn as Germany's first choice keeper before last season's World Cup but

Federer focussed on game

AFP, Paris



ROLAND GARROS PARIS

Roger Federer speaks fluent English, French and German but he'll be more than happy to just let his tennis do the talking if it secures him a first French Open title.

With his linguistic prowess, dealing with the press -- newspapers, radio and TV -- can take up to an hour after each match the Swiss plays.

Considering he makes a routine out of reaching finals, that's a lot of talking and the world number one has started to rein in his media obligations to concentrate on his game.

"I have definitely cut down on the interviews on off-days because I used to do more off-court activities," said Federer.

"I was trying to do all kinds of things and make everybody happy. Now it's about really trying to rest yourself and not get too tired because of doing too much media."

Federer is acutely aware of his public responsibilities.

But the prospect of finally winning a French Open, and becoming only the third man in history to hold

Pawar's no to short term

CRICINFO, undated

India's board president, Sharad Pawar, has said he will not be seeking to step in as Percy Sonn's short-term successor at the ICC, adding that the post should be filled by a fellow South African at least until Sonn's two-year tenure expires at the end of 2009.

Pawar vied for the ICC presidency with the ECB's David Morgan in March, only for the vote to be split 3-3 -- a result that led to Sonn being asked to stay on for an extra year. But his death last week, after complications following a colon operation in Cape Town, has created a power vacuum in the run-in to next month's executive meeting at Lord's.

According to PTI, the Asian Cricket Council has decided to press for an early election and has once again backed Pawar's candidacy. But the man himself is not tempted to rush into the top job.

"Sonn had a tenure of two years and since it was not completed, we feel another South African office-bearer should get the post," he told NDTV. "This is because Sonn's tenure belonged to his country. The ICC president's seat did not come to BCCI and if someone other than South Africa claims it, it is wrong."

But regardless of Pawar's remarks, which will doubtless win over the African vote that went against him at the last presidency election, the likeliest candidate to fill the vacuum on a short-term assignment is Sir John Anderson of New Zealand.

"There has been talk of Malaysia's Prince Tunku Imran being considered as acting president," said an official at the Pakistan Cricket Board, "but the ICC history is that the members always back a representative of a full member country for any prime posting, not anyone from an associate country."

Buffon backs

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fitness coaches from this season.

The former Chelsea boss is free

from his ties to Parma, having

rescued them from relegation, and it

seems as if Juventus will leap in

before Manchester City can secure

his signature.

To further boost Ranier's creden-

tials, Buffon has come out in

favour of this new era in the

Bianconeri's history.

"Ranier has the right charisma

and would be excellent," said the

goalkeeper. "He is a great coach

and so can lead a team like Juve."

"He achieved a miracle with

Parma, because they had even less

chance of safety than Messina

when he took over. Ranier has an

excellent CV."

As a final open door to Juventus,

Buffon also pointed out that he was

not demanding Lippi's return to the

bench.

"I had never said it was either

Lippi or nobody. I am not a director

and do not sponsor anyone."

Pizarro Chelsea

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in England following his 10 million pound move from Hamburg last summer and would welcome a return to Germany.

Chelsea are said to be delighted with the signing of 16-year-old Phillipskirk, son of Latvian youth team coach Tony, who signed a four-year deal.

Phillipskirk will undertake a two-year scholarship before moving onto a professional contract for the remainder of his spell.

Oldham are expected to benefit from numerous add-ons and Chelsea have agreed to send some of the club's top youngsters out on loan to Boundary Park.

Players, PCB

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team management.

"We have been told that if we violate this new ruling we can be banned for a number of matches. But the ban would be for how many matches they have not told us as yet," the player said on condition of anonymity.

"Obviously the players are not happy with the new restrictions which have come into effect more strictly after the World Cup," he said.

Sources said two days back a few players were committed to appear on a television talk show on the Geo sports channel. The channel finally had to cancel its scheduled programme after the board made it clear to the players that they could not make direct commitments with media.

Uruguay

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But Jones brought groans from the 61,000 crowd when he flapped at Giacomazzi's cross, gifting Recoba an easy headed goal to give Uruguay victory.

The Australians, testing their reserve depth ahead of their first foray into July's Asian Cup, have a final warm-up game against Singapore on June 30.

Del Piero

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Azzurrijersey." Del Piero was expected to start upfront against the Faroe Islands in their Euro 2008 qualifier and, after a spell in Serie B, finds himself facing a team made up of amateur players.

"In the Faroe Islands it really is like another world," he said. "It's curious to think that I will be marked by a carpenter."

Freddie has ankle op

Cricket

AFP, London

England all-rounder Andrew Flintoff underwent surgery on his troublesome left ankle on Friday, according to the English and Wales Cricket Board (ECB).

The Lancashire player had tissue removed from the joint in what was described as a routine operation.

"Andrew Flintoff on Saturday underwent an exploratory arthroscopy on his injured left ankle," said an ECB statement.

"Early signs are that the operation was routine, and Andrew will begin his rehabilitation accordingly following successful removal of tissue contributing to anterior impingement in the ankle."

No timescale has been put on his return to action, although initial suggestions were that the 29-year-

old could perhaps hope for a return in time for a three-match Test series against India, starting next month.

Flintoff had to miss the first two Tests against West Indies and was ruled out of the remainder of that four-match series when it was announced just this week he would have to have a third bout of surgery on his ankle.

Meanwhile, former England coach David Lloyd allayed fears for Flintoff's future in the game and said he will bounce back despite being ruled out of the current Test series against West Indies.

But Lloyd, Flintoff's former coach and now a Sky Sports commentator, believes he has the drive and determination to return and perform in with bat, ball and in the field.

"I don't think he's changed at all from when I first met him as a teenager -- he's always been very determined," said Lloyd, who signed Flintoff for Lancashire back in 1994.</