

StanChart school chess begins

SPORTS REPORTER

The 9th Standard Chartered School Chess Tournament got underway at the NSC conference room yesterday.

In the boys' senior group, 54 players won their respective matches while 28 players in the junior group.

In the girls' competition, which will be 7-round Swiss League unlike the boys' 9-round contest, 13 players collected full points.

A total of 230 students including 12 from India are taking part in the regular event of the Bangladesh Chess Federation, sponsored by Standard Chartered.

Grandmaster Ziaur Rahman and Shah Masud Imam, Standard Chartered's Head of Corporate Affairs, jointly inaugurated the meet.

DRU Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

Daily Janakantha will take on Amar Desh while CSB face Channel i in the semifinals of the DRU-Pepsi cricket tournament at the Maulana Bhasani Hockey Stadium today.

In yesterday's quarterfinals, man-of-the-match Asif Iqbal inspired Janakantha to a four-wicket win over Naya Diganta, Amar Desh beat Khabarpatria by 10 runs while at the other end of the draw, CSB defeated New Nation by 11 runs and Channel i beat Karata by two wickets.

Rakibul Hasan of CSB, Karatoa's Sakhawat Hossain and Tanzim Ahmed of Amar Desh won the man-of-the-match awards in the other semifinals.

US Open purse in record increase

INTERNET, undated

The total prize money for this year's US Open will increase one million dollars to a total purse of 19 million dollars in the largest rise in the tournament's history.

Both the men's and women's champions will receive at least 1.4 million dollars, a 100,000-dollar boost from last year that will be equal to the prize tallies for both the French Open and Wimbledon.

Also, the top three finishers could earn a bonus of up to 2.6 million dollars that could push the total purse to 22.2 million dollars, just 400,000 dollars short of the record total paid at Wimbledon this season.

The US Tennis Association also announced a renovation to player facilities such as locker rooms, player lounges, and a fitness centre.

Roger Federer and Maria Sharapova are set to defend their respective titles at Flushing Meadows between August 27th and September 9th.

Smicer moves to Slavia

AFP, Prague

Czech international and former Liverpool midfield star, Vladimir Smicer, announced Thursday his return to top-flight local team Slavia Prague after an 11-year absence.

Smicer, who helped Liverpool win the Champions League two years ago, has signed a one year contract with the possibility of a 12-month extension, the club said at a news conference.

The 34-year-old joined Slavia, his first major club, in 1992, leaving four years later to join French club Lens, from where he went onto Liverpool. For the last two years he has been with French club Bordeaux.

Roux wins right

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which is out of date," Sarkozy's spokesman, David Martinon said.

Wednesday's decision by the CNOFS brings to an end a fortnight's stand off between Roux and Lens in one corner and the French league in the other.

When he was first told of the vote to stop him taking up his new post Roux had reacted in typically forthright style, telling reporters: "This decision is particularly disagreeable at a time when we're trying to combat discrimination against age, gender or sex."

"I'll be taking my place in the dug-out whether my contract is accepted or not."

Metsu curses

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Qatar's match against Vietnam.

The Bosnian coach blamed Breeze for penalising Yaser for no reason.

Metsu, who has come under heavy fire for the loss against Vietnam, added that it was a learning experience for his young squad.

"It's a very good tournament and our team have a very good future. It's a very good first step," he said, adding that "football is strange".

"When the team win, it's the players (who are responsible). When the team lose, it's the coach."



PHOTO: COURTESY

Shah Masud Imam, Head of Corporate Affairs of Standard Chartered, makes a move on the chessboard as GM Ziaur Rahman (R) looks on during the opening round of the Standard Chartered School Chess Tournament at the NSC conference room yesterday.

Murali slams Ashraful

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taking a century of wickets at Asiriyah International Stadium as 'a tremendous achievement in a long career'.

This man has every right to make such a bold statement because he has always tried his best even though he achieved lot in the game. Just one example from yesterday's event was good enough to realize his hunger: a ball popped up at short mid-off and he ran as if his life depended on the wicket of Mashrafe Bin Mortaza, and dived full-length to come up with a sensational left-hand catch.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard after the rain-hit second day of the third and final Test between Bangladesh and Sri Lanka at the Asiriyah Stadium on Thursday:

BANGLADESH: First innings

(overnight 72-4):

Javed b/w Malina 8

Nafees c De Silva b Muralidaran 29

Bashar c P Jayawardene 18

Maharof 18

Rajin c M Jayawardene 0

b Muralidaran 0

Toss: Sri Lanka 26

Umpires: Rudi Koertzen and Suresh Shastri

Tushar M Jayawardene b De Silva 17

Mushfiqur not out 11

Mashrafe c and b Muralidaran 5

Rafique c & b Muralidaran 5

Shahadat c Dilshan b Muralidaran 0

Rasel c Silva b Muralidaran 0

Extras: (b-4, lb-2, nb-5, w-1) 12

Total: (All out in 48.5 overs) 131

Fall of wickets: 1-10, 2-50, 3-61, 4-64, 5-98, 6-111, 7-118, 8-130, 9-131

Bowler O M R W

Malina 10 2 41 1

De Silva 12 3 29 2

Maharof 8 4 21 1

Muralidaran 14.5 6 28 6

Dilshan 4 1 6 0

SRI LANKA: First innings

Vandort not out 25

Tharanga not out 4

Extras: (nb-1) 1

Total: (For no loss in 8.4 overs) 30

Bowler O M R W

Mashrafe 3 0 12 0

Rasel 4 0 18 0

Shahadat 1.4 1 0 0

Toss: Sri Lanka 26

Umpires: Rudi Koertzen and Suresh Shastri

'Best yet to come for Magpies'

AFP, London

England striker Michael Owen has forecast good times ahead for Newcastle United after committing himself to the club under new manager Sam Allardyce.

Owen joined the Magpies from Real Madrid two seasons ago but he has been floored by injuries and doubts over his motivation to do well on Tyneside.

The 27-year-old Owen though believes a bright future lies just around the corner in the new season especially with the recent arrival of former Bolton boss Allardyce.

"I believe that these can be good times to be at Newcastle, which is why I am more than happy to be here," he wrote in his column in the Times.

"There has been plenty of speculation about my future, but I can assure the Newcastle fans that I didn't start any of it."

"There was a lot of talk from other quarters and my attitude to rumour has always been to ignore it."

Women's kabaddi from today

UNB, Dhaka

The Spectra Group Inter-district Women's kabaddi tournament will begin at two city venues today.

Thirteen teams, split into four groups, are taking part in the meet to be held at the Outer Stadium kabaddi court and the Dhanmondi Women's Sports Complex.

The four group champions will qualify for the semifinals.

The Bangladesh Kabaddi Federation will run a training camp with 25-30 promising players for preparation for the next Indo-Bangla Games scheduled for January 2008.

TEAMS

Group A: Tangail, Narail and Khulna.

Group B: Dhaka, Jamalpur, Manikganj and Gaibandha.

Group C: Narayanganj, Rangamati and Munshiganj.

Group D: Rajshahi, Faridpur and Madaripur.

Arambagh stun

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up a headed clearance by Mukti Joddha's Ghanaian defender Ghansah near the centre-circle. The longhaired skipper ran down the middle and hammered a pile driver into the back of the net on the trot from 30 yards, giving Titumir no chance to react.

Substitute Kanchan threatened to bring Mukti Joddha back when he was set by Moni but the winger only rattled the crossbar to waste their last chance.

Arambagh had a chance to increase the margin six minutes from time but Iddi, who controlled Domenic's freekick, screwed his shot over the bar with only Titumir to beat.

Mukti Joddha remained on 33 points after 18 games, two points behind current leaders Abahani who have played a couple of matches less. Mukti Joddha will play Sheikh Russel and Abahani in their remaining league games.

Arambagh on the other hand, came level with Brothers on 23 points after their seventh win in 17 outings.

Yellow cards: Domenic (Arambagh) and Arman Aziz, Moni, Azizi (Mukti Joddha).

Arambagh: Piru, Monu, Ramjan (Ratan), Biketi, Akram, Sharif, Moloy, Zuku, Domenic, Iddi (Nurul) and Nicodemus.

Mukti Joddha: Titumir, Azizi (Kanchan), Ghansah, Deen Mohammed, Hassan Al Mamun, Brahim, Maruf, Arman Aziz, Munna (Jonny), Moni and Kum.

Referee: Azad Rahman.

Fowler in talks

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The 32-year-old reportedly has a number of British clubs chasing his signature, including Leicester, Cardiff and Port Vale.

Sydney FC chief executive George Perry told a Sydney radio station Wednesday that he expected a decision from Fowler next week.

Under A-League rules, clubs can sign a marquee player whose wages are exempted from the team's salary cap as a means of raising the sport's profile in Australia.

Former Manchester United striker Dwight Yorke filled the role in 2006, helping Sydney FC to the inaugural A-League title before moving back to Britain with Sunderland.

Can Becks band it in US?

Football

AFP, Los Angeles

County wouldn't. And that is the difference."

Beckham, 32, is to be introduced by the Galaxy at the club's Home Depot Centre facility in the south Los Angeles suburbs on Friday.

The midfielder's first game for Los Angeles will be an exhibition match against Chelsea, who are preparing for the upcoming Premiership season with a tour of the United States.

When Beckham inked a five-year contract with the Galaxy in January it was widely seen as a money-making move by a player whose best days were behind him.

But it will likely be Beckham's abilities on the pitch that determine whether his tenure here will ultimately be judged an experiment or an era in Major League Soccer's development.

In America Beckham will face a twin challenge -- infusing often-overlooked football with enough glamour to attract new fans, while playing at a level high enough to satisfy serious sports spectators.

Some 14.5 million Americans play football, but its popularity pales in comparison to the top three sports: American football, basketball and baseball.

He isn't the first charismatic star to try to bring football to a mainstream US audience.

Despite the excitement of landing all-time great Pele in the 1970s, the North American Soccer League went bankrupt.

Even so, Galaxy president and former US international Alexi Lalas believes Beckham can succeed.

"Beckham, unlike any other player, transcends all boundaries," Lalas says. "I would argue that whether you are a housewife from Orange County or a person of Mexican heritage living in Los Angeles, you know who Beckham is."

Certainly Beckham is switching to a lesser league -- and to a team that is the second worst in the league with just three victories in 12 games.

Lalas has said the expected mid-season arrival of Beckham may have contributed to his side's lackluster showing so far, and Beckham himself knows there is a danger that the massive build-up may make for an inevitable let-

down.

"People probably do think they're going to see me turn out, and we'll win our first game 10-0," Beckham told The Sun newspaper.

"That's one thing I'm worried about."

"I'm not a player who will run past 10 players and score three or four goals. My game is about working hard and being a team player."

But Beckham is already making an economic impact.

Just five of the MLS's 13 teams are expected to turn a profit this year, but the Galaxy have already seen ticket sales climb.

The increased ticket sales and sponsorship have