

STANCHART SCHOOL CHESS
Sharif, Sayantan chasing title

SPORTS REPORTER

Sharif Hossain of Nakhlapara School and Sayantan Das of Kolkata Scottish Church School shared lead in the 9th Standard Chartered School Chess Tournament (Class VI-X Group) with full five points after the fifth round ended yesterday at the NSC conference room.

Shaati Majumder of Kolkata Indira Gandhi School took solo lead in the girls' group with maximum five points while Mohammad Fahim of Titas Gas School, Shayan Majumder of Kolkata Indira Gandhi School, Mainuddin Ahmed Asif of Hazrat Shah Ali School and Saiful Islam of Aporajevo Bangladesh were jointly leading the in Class KG-V group.

PCB not with ICL

CRICINFO, undated

Officials from the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) have distanced themselves from the Indian Cricket League (ICL).

Shafqat Naghmi, PCB's chief operating officer, indicated the matter was the concern of the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI).

"The ICL is happening in another country so it is not our business," said Naghmi.

The ICL was launched by India's Essel Group earlier this year.

However, Naghmi admitted that the PCB might get involved if some players contracted by the Board are approached by the organisers of the ICL.

"If some former [Pakistani] cricketer or a player who doesn't have a contract with the PCB decides to play in the series then we have no way to legally bound him against going to India.

"However, if any player contracted by us wants to go there then that would be a different case."

The PCB has not yet announced its list of contracted players for the upcoming season.

The ICL has generated controversy in India, with the BCCI revoking the pensions of players associating with the league. Kapil Dev is one of the former players to have joined the league, and has publicly criticised the BCCI for treating the ICL as a potential rival.



PHOTO: AFP

Australia's veteran striker Mark Viduka (R) controls the ball on his chest against Thailand's Niwet Siriwong during their group match of the Asian Cup in Bangkok yesterday.

Japan, Australia in qtrs

AFP, Bangkok



Defending champions Japan stormed into the Asian Cup quarterfinals Monday, and were joined by Australia, minnows Vietnam, and Iraq.

Japan overwhelmed Vietnam 4-1 in Hanoi yet despite being beaten the tournament co-hosts still go through to the knockout rounds for the first time in 47 years after United Arab Emirates beat Gulf neighbours Qatar 2-1 in group B.

It means Japan remain in Hanoi for a quarter-final next Saturday against Australia, who hammered Thailand 4-0 to finish second in group A and relieve the pressure after a poor tournament till now.

Iraq topped group A after a dull goalless draw against Oman and remain in Bangkok to meet Vietnam in their quarterfinal, also on Saturday.

Japan ensured their fifth consecutive quarterfinal appearance with a brace from Seiichiro Maki and goals from Shunsuke Nakamura and Yasuhiro Endo.

"We were nervous at the outset and our opponents were aggressive. Lucky

or not, we were able to catch up early in the game and it made our life easier," Japan coach Ivica Osim said.

Despite the defeat, Vietnamese coach Alfred Riedl was over the moon.

"It is a sensation for Vietnamese football," said the Austrian.

"Only very few people had expected this result, a place in the quarterfinals."

In Bangkok, Australia had a late Mark Viduka brace to thank for their passage to the last eight in their first ever Asian Cup.

The Newcastle striker scored twice in three minutes to give the Australians their much-needed win after they absorbed waves of Thai attacks.

Defender Michael Beauchamp and substitute Harry Kewell added the icing to the Socceroos' cake with the other goals, although the score didn't reflect the immense pressure Australia had to endure in a tense second half.

"We were tested at the back, they are a good side, but we managed to score some goals which is what it is about," said under-pressure Australian coach Graham Arnold.

"Things haven't gone well for us but we are looking forward to Japan."

Japan, bidding for a third straight continental title, struggled to penetrate a determined Vietnam defence early in the match before a raucous sell-out

crowd of 40,000 at the My Dinh National Stadium.

And Vietnam took the lead when Nguyen Vu Phong's corner kick from the left bounced off teammate Phan Van Tai Em and then Japanese midfielder Kenta Suzuki after a goalmouth scramble in the seventh minute.

But Japan hit back five minutes later when Maki headed home a left wing cross from Celtic playmaker Nakamura.

It was the signal for a one-sided match with Endo getting the second just after the half hour mark before a trademark Nakamura left-foot drive made it three. Maki wrapped it up with a fourth in the 59th minute.

In the other group B match in Ho Chi Minh City, Faisal Khaili ruined Qatar's ambitions with a last minute winner to prevent their Gulf neighbours making the quarterfinals.

A first half penalty by Uruguay-born Sebastian Quintana Soria gave Qatar hopes but Al Sharjah striker Saeed Al Kaas brought them down to earth with a well-placed header on 59 minutes.

Faisal Khaili rubbed salt in their wounds when he pounced on a rebound from an Ismail Matar free-kick in stoppage time to consign Qatar to the bottom of the group.

Focus shifts

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"It's nice that Tamim (Iqbal) joined us because he is in good form since the World Cup but our other top order batsmen should play their role if we want to finish the series at a high note. In Test matches our main target is to survive but the case is totally different in the one-day game where we go for the win. And that's why bowlers also should give their best," he explained.

In Sri Lanka, a healthy contingent of people recall Bangladesh's World Cup adventure with fond memories and Ashrafal believes that it is now their responsibility to enhance their reputation in the shorter-version game.

Torres set

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Benitez said: "We know that Voronin is going to be another option for us. He has good game intelligence, he plays well between the lines and he has a lot of quality."

Henry unties

FROM PAGE 20

contrary to reports in today's press, his move to Barcelona was entirely for footballing reasons. We would ask the media to kindly respect the privacy of both parties at this difficult time."

The statement added that Henry would make no further comment.

Lawson new

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"What changes when we get there? Well, there'll probably be quite a few. I'm hoping to take a few more Australian personnel with me as well," he said.

Woolmer's death in Jamaica was initially regarded as murder but police later said he had died from natural causes. Lawson told reporters this helped him make a decision after he received an approach from the PCB.

"Security to me seems to be fine and I don't have any personal concerns. That was one of the big hurdles to get over, to even go for an interview," he said.

"They know I am a very straightforward person, and they are the terms I got employed on," Lawson added.

"I see Pakistan as a highly talented but underachieving side and it will be a great challenge to get them playing at their best again.

"And if they don't want to be part of that, that'll be their downfall."

But he said that was not the impression he got when he spoke to the players at a training camp last month.

New coach Nayeem picks

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Farhad and retired striker Alfaz Ahmed.

"We have emphasised on youth and this is our best possible team," informed National Team Management Committee head and BFF deputy general secretary Manzoor Hossain Malu while introducing Nayeemuddin at the BFF Bhaban.

"This team is the result of joint efforts of our new coach, local coaches and ex-players. We expect to make a few changes when we form our team for the SAFF Championship, which is our main target," Malu said adding that they will go into camp as soon as the B. League concludes.

For Nayeemuddin, who possesses a shrewd football brain, work is the key to success.

"It is an honour for me to coach a team like Bangladesh, who are a big name in this region. I am a follower of Jadukar Samad and his work, ethics and practice. To lead and live like champions, we must work day and night.

"I believe that God has created man to work and I will try my best to

achieve something for this nation," said the evergreen mentor.

"The selection was difficult in a short time but I think we have not missed any outstanding performer. The players have the physique and technique but they need to be mentally stronger. I always try to look positive and believe we can build a better future," said Nayeem, who ignored players with short stature which led to exclusion of players like Siraji and Zahed Parvez.

BFF president SA Sultan said that the federation was desperately looking for a foreign coach and Nayeem's presence in the country helped them to rope him in.

His past record is bright and I am thankful to him for agreeing to our proposal," Sultan said.

BFF general secretary Anwarul Hoque Helal informed that Nayeem will get Tk one lakh per month as salary in addition of other hospitalities.

"His job starts on August 1 and if we are satisfied, we may consider an extension after December. He did not have any specific demand and we tried to be reasonable within

limitations," said Helal adding that the federation has received another invitation from Malaysia to participate in the Merdeka Cup.

"Both the tournament (Nehru and Merdeka) are for national teams but collide with each other. We will have to decide soon where to send the team but as we've already confirmed playing in India, it is our likely destination."

THE SQUAD

Goalkeepers: Biplab (Abahani), Zia (Russel), Mamun Khan (Farashgani); defenders: Nazrul Waly (Abahani), Titu, Rajani (Muktijodha), Arif (Mohammedan), Jahirul, Mishu (Russel), Saikat (Chittagong Mohammedan), Sony (Rahmatganj), Rajib (Farashgani); midfielders: Ujjal, Abul (Abahani), Arman Aziz (Muktijodha), Zahid, Sharif (Mohammedan), Mamunul Islam (Brothers), Liton (Farashgani), Jitu (Chittagong Abahani); forwards: Emily (Abahani), Robin (Farashgani), Rony (Mohammedan) and GM Mamun (Khulna Abahani).

Bangladesh meet Hong Kong in semis today

UNB, Dhaka

Bangladesh women's cricket team face Hong Kong in the semifinal of the ACC Women's Cricket Tournament today at the IPTI ground in Johor Bahru, Malaysia.

In the day's other semis, Nepal take on China at the Johor Cricket Academy (JCA).

Group B winners Bangladesh eves crushed the United Arab Emirates by 10 wickets, thrashed Singapore by the same margin and outplayed China by 86 runs in the group matches.

India's practice

FROM PAGE 17

171, hard-hitting wicketkeeper Mahendra Singh Dhoni scored 76 off 84 balls with two sixes and 10 fours.

SCORES IN BRIEF

England Lions 413-8 declared (Bresnan 126 not out, Denly 83, Broad 50; Zaheer 3-119) and 227-2 declared (Strauss 80, Shah 77 not out) v India 383 (Tendulkar 171, Dhoni 76, Yuvraj 59; Broad 5-76, Onions 3-90) and 91-1 (Karthik 51)

Muktijodha

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Abahani's match against Arambagh on Sunday.

FIXTURES

July 17: Muktijodha v Russel (BNS)

July 18: Rahmatganj v Farashganj (BNS)

July 19: Chittagong Mohammedan v Khulna Abahani (MA Aziz Stadium, Chittagong)

July 21: Mohammedan v Brothers (BNS)

July 22: Abahani v Arambagh (BNS)

Italy set up

FROM PAGE 20

but to no avail.

She had already delivered two points for the United States, including a quick 6-1, 6-4 victory over Anna Chakvetadze Sunday that put the Americans 2-1 up.

But Petrova responded with a 6-1, 6-2 victory over inexperienced Melien Tu to knot the tie at 2-2.

It was an easy win for Williams compared to Saturday, when she endured a nightmare match against Petrova but eked out a 7-6 (8/6), 0-6, 6-4 win that saw the Americans finish the opening day level at 1-1.

Chakvetadze had opened the tie with a 6-1, 6-3 victory over 18-year-old American Vania King, who was replaced by Tu in Sunday's singles and then by Williams in the doubles as US captain Zina Garrison sought in vain to find a formula that would bring the Americans to the FedCup final for the first time since 2003.

Pragmatism

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for the Argentina defence.

And because at the other end Brazil were able to hold Argentina with a midfield based more on lung power than finesse.

Defence and midfield stayed compact, Mineiro and Josue kept snapping away, and Argentina were stopped by fair means, and by foul.

Brazil's total of 37 fouls was high, but the objective was achieved. The niggling stoppages prevented Argentina from building up their rhythm.

But pragmatism does not necessarily mean defensive - as arch-pragmatist Dunga showed when injury meant he had to substitute Elano in the first half.

Brazil were already a goal up, and some coaches might have been tempted to bring on holding midfielder Fernando.

Instead Dunga introduced flying right-back Daniel Alves and played him on the right of midfield.

It was his pace on the counter that brought Brazil their second and third goals and puts another cup in their bulging trophy cabinet.

O'Grady's tour

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O'Grady, the winner of the Paris-Roubaix one-day classic in April, was one of the team support riders for CSC's Spaniard Carlos Sastre.

Brazil belittle

FROM PAGE 17

Milito, Gabriel Heinze, Juan Sebastian Veron (Lucho Gonzalez 67), Javier Mascherano, Esteban Cambiasso (Pablo Aimar 57), Juan Roman Riquelme, Lionel Messi, Carlos Tevez Yellow card: Javier Mascherano (44), Carlos Tevez (75) Referee: Carlos Amarilla (PAR) Attendance: 45,000

LADING SCORERS

6: Robinho (Brazil)
5: Riquelme (Argentina)
4: Nery Castillo (Mexico)
3: Bravo (Mexico), Cabanas (Paraguay), Crespo (Argentina), Forlan (Uruguay), Julio Baptista (Brazil), Santa Cruz (Paraguay), Suazo (Chile)

ZC slams few ICC nations



CRICINFO, undated

Peter Chingoka, chairman of Zimbabwe Cricket (ZC), has hit out at certain boards who, he claimed, tried to block Zimbabwe's return to Test cricket.

In an article in the pro-government Sunday News, Chingoka attacked unnamed International Cricket Council (ICC) Full Member countries.

"They were trying to be mischievous," he told the newspaper. "They know very well it was our prerogative to pull out of Test cricket for a while and so the decision to resume similarly rests with us. But they wanted to take it out of our hands, and put it into the ICC's."

"The management board of the ICC tried to use a subordinate board -- the cricket committee -- to suspend us, which is simply unacceptable. But we were successful in

our efforts to block it from being tabled to the executive board.

"Happily the board is unconvinced by any of their cheap arguments and say they are not qualified to handle political issues anyway. They had planned beforehand that we be stopped from playing Test cricket completely. But certainly we did better than we had initially thought, so I would say we had a very successful trip."

Chingoka did not name any of those either on the cricket committee or within the ICC who he believed acted against Zimbabwe, although his targets may well include Malcolm Speed, the ICC chief executive.

In a leaked report, Speed wrote: "My personal view, shared by the cricket committee and ICC senior management, is that the game in Zimbabwe and, more widely, the rest of the cricket world, will not be well served by Zimbabwe resuming Test cricket at this stage."

And shortly after the end of the

ICC conference he was on record as saying that he doubted "if Zimbabwe will ever be able to come back to Test cricket".

Chingoka, like his government, has often sought to play the race card when discussing the actions of other boards against Zimbabwe, although the cancellation by West Indies of an A-team tour due to take place this month on safety grounds appeared to put the skids under those arguments.

But the paper quoted a source who attended the ICC conference -- which in reality restricts the options to Chingoka or his right-hand man Ozias Bvute -- as saying that West Indies had "bowed under pressure and are now being used."

The source added: "Whereas it was first seen as black versus white, the West Indies have been persuaded otherwise and the white elite can now sanctimoniously justify any adverse action taken against Zimbabwe."

SA's tour on: PCB



CRICINFO, undated

The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) has insisted that South Africa's tour to Pakistan later this year will continue despite the ongoing political crisis in the country.

South Africa are due to tour for a two-Test and five-match ODI series in September and October. According to an itinerary finalised last month, they will play matches in Karachi and Peshawar, two venues which have been regularly overlooked in the recent past due to security concerns.

However, the itinerary was finalised before the Lal Masjid (Red Mosque) operation in Islamabad which saw the government crack down on hardline clerics, a large band of students and alleged militants who were illegally occupying government land and carrying out vigilante activities in the capital.

The operation has sparked a spate of suicide bombings, particularly in the North-West Frontier Province and the country is currently on a high state of security alert. Additionally, this may be election year in Pakistan and parts of the country have also seen widespread, albeit largely peaceful, protests against the suspension of the chief justice of the Supreme Court. In Karachi, however, there were riots related to the incident in May in which over 40 people were killed in a single day.

Security concerns, particularly in the aftermath of September 11,

have forced sides to cancel tours to Pakistan but for the moment, says the PCB, there is no such problem. "As the situation currently stands, right now, there is an unqualified commitment from South Africa to tour. The tour is 100 per cent on currently and Karachi and Peshawar are on the itinerary," said Shafqat Naghmi, chief operating officer, PCB.

Privately, however, board officials concede that if the situation worsens, and in particular a big city is attacked, the tour may face obstacles. One newspaper report suggests that the board will be meeting the interior ministry for assurances of fool-proof security to South African players.

The situation in Peshawar is further complicated by a match referee's report after the last international the city staged. Chris Broad told the Pakistan board after Pakistan played an ODI against India in February 2006 that the venue was not fit to host international matches. The situation, according to a PCB official, has not yet been fully resolved.

"What happens many times is that the local authorities just carry out cosmetic changes without really bettering the situation at the ground just to be passable for the match. Problems remain and it is the case with Peshawar but we just have to sort it out. We have got control of the stadium now and we will have it ready for when South Africa arrive," said one official.

A security delegation from Australia also arrives in Pakistan on Monday to undertake a quick-fire

inspection of venues. Australia A is due to tour in September after which the Under-19 team will also visit. The senior team are also scheduled to visit in March-April next year, for their first tour of Pakistan in 10 years. The security delegation arrives after visiting Malaysia and India for similar inspections ahead of Australian tours to those countries.

New buys

FROM PAGE 20

"I am happy to see reinforcements arrive for goalkeeper or any other position. It will bolster competition as nobody here can be sure of a starting place," said Casillas, who has spent much of his summer break doing charitable work in poverty-stricken Sierra Leone.

"That was incredible. We are not conscious of how badly off people are over there. We (players) are privileged and being Real Madrid goalkeeper enabled me to get over there. It makes you very sad but it is a highly enriching experience.

"They are crazy about football and I never thought the kids from the villages would recognise me. It was the first time but it won't be the last," said Casillas, who admitted he would miss Beckham and Roberto Carlos.

"That's life. The day will come in a few years when I will have to move on too."



PHOTO: STAR

Scene from fifth round of the Standard Chartered Ninth School Chess Tournament at the chess federation conference room yesterday.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS	38 Affirmative claim, briefly	40 Blunder group?	59 Adipose tissue	11 Picks up the check
1 Kreskin's	41 Support	1 Sprite	21 Plantkin component	16 Born
4 Wanders	43 Game participant	2 Old French coin	22 Meadow	20 Pout
9 Aware	45 Sunday meal	3 Bit of wordplay	23 Thorns in Elmer Fudd's side	
12 Boudreau of baseball	47 Science work-place	4 Capital of Saudi Arabia	27 Spring time	
13 Other-wise	48 Thither	5 On unpaved areas	29 Withered	
14 Can. neighbor	49 Bees' structure	30 Munich mister	32 Deserve	
15 1957 Astaire movie	54 A billion years	6 Literary collection	34 Use up	
17 Crafty	55 Hack-nayed	7 Starbucks flavor	37 America's Cup	
18 Corn spike	56 Retainer	8 Pillers of a sort	38 Buffy, to vampires	
19 Chops into small bits	57 Firmament	10 Gilligan's home	42 Concise	
21 Reflective power	58 Handle the helm		44 Regis' network	
24 Grad			45 Tournament situations	
25 Roman money			46 Chess piece	
26 Overactor			50 Never, in Nuremberg	
28 Flourder through puddles			51 Vacationing	
31 Token of defiance			52 — culpa	
33 Papa			53 Wager	
35 Elbow counter-part				
36 Examine ore				

Solution time: 24 mins.

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CRYPTOQUIP

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Saturday's Cryptoquip: IF A WOODLAND
DEITY HAD TO CHOOSE ONE PREFERRED DAY
OF THE WEEK, WOULD IT PICK SATYR-DAY?
Today's Cryptoquip Clue: 1 equals H