



PHOTO: STAR

Champion Prantik Roy (R) and local boy Abdullah Al Saif ponder over their moves during a final round match of the 9th Standard Chartered School Chess tournament at the BCF chess room yesterday.

Prantik has the last laugh

SPORTS REPORTER

Indian prodigy Prantik Roy of Kolkata Carmel School clinched the title in the senior group (Class VI-X) of the 9th Standard Chartered School Chess Tournament yesterday.

In the ninth and final round, the Kolkata student defeated contender Abdullah Al Saif of Quality School, Dhaka at the BCF chess room to secure eight points.

Saif stuck to seven points along with four other players but he slipped to third place as Sayantas Das of Scottish Church School, Kolkata finished runner-up due to better progressive score.

Sharif Hossain of Nakhhalpara School and Akshat Agarwal of Hansraj School, Delhi finished fourth and fifth respectively.

Bangladesh, however, kept the title in the junior group (KG-Class V) with Mainuddin Ahmed Asif emerging unbeaten champion with 8.5 points.

India's Shayan Majumder also collected 8.5 points but had to settle for runners-up after tiebreakers.

Eves to present ACC trophy to BCB boss

UNB, Dhaka

The Bangladesh women's cricket team which won the first-ever Asian Cricket Council (ACC) Women's Cricket Tournament will formally hand over the championship trophy to Bangladesh Cricket Board president M Abdul Aziz today.

The BCB president will receive the trophy at 2.30pm at the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium.

The Bangladesh eves returned home from Malaysia on Thursday after outplaying Nepal by eight wickets in the final.

Batting blues

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very confident during the lunch break that we can go on to win another game. We had a plan to complete fifty overs and Tamim and Nafees started according to plan but suddenly we lost their way. Our bowlers created an opportunity for us but the batsmen simply spoiled it," he said.

"I also had a plan to finish the game that's why I decided to go in at number five but I played a very very bad shot. The most frustrating thing was that the wicket behaved so good in the second session," he admitted like he has done in every occasions after making the same mistakes.

Fernando however said that Ashraf fell in their trap by playing the mistimed pull shot. "We know that Ashraf always loves to play the pull shot against the short pitch delivery and that was the reason I trapped him to play the shot," said the 28-year old paceman, who returned with his career best figure of 4-24 in the match.

It is impossible to comment whether the Bangladesh team will take any lesson from the defeat but Sri Lanka skipper Mahela Jayawardene ensured that they definitely learnt a lesson despite the comprehensive victory.

"We have to be careful against them in the one-day game although we won the match by a quite convincing margin. In longer-version game it was easy to put pressure on them but they can be dangerous in the shorter-version competition which is what they even proved today," said Mahela.

Australia recall Brett Lee

AFP, Sydney

Australia on Friday confirmed it would field an almost unchanged World Cup winning team as its 15-man squad to contest the shorter version of the game in the Twenty20 World Championship in September.

An addition to the team which won its fourth trophy in the Caribbean in May will be paceman Brett Lee who has recovered from the ankle injury which dashed his World Cup hopes. Fellow fast bowler Glenn McGrath has retired.

"It's fantastic to have Brett Lee back, fully fit and resuming his spot in the Australian side. He's back to training and raring to go," chair of the national selectors Andrew Hilditch said in a statement.

Hilditch said the panel had lengthy discussions on how to improve the team that won the World Cup.

"We looked at the performances of some of the top domestic Twenty20 players, but ultimately we felt that the World Cup winning side would adapt well and deserved the opportunity to prove that they can perform to the highest standards in both shorter forms of the game," he said.

Cricket Australia said the same squad, with the exception of Brad Haddin, would tour India.

Meanwhile, the Australia A team to tour Pakistan was named with a view to the future of Australian cricket.

"We've taken the opportunity to take three spinners and also look at prominent all-rounders Andrew McDonald and James Hopes," Hilditch said.

Australia is scheduled to kick off its ICC World Twenty20 programme with a match against Zimbabwe in Cape Town on September 12. It will play England in Cape Town on September 14.

Australia's tour of India begins on September 25 while the

Australia A tour of Pakistan will begin September 1.

The Twenty20 squad: Ricky Ponting (captain), Adam Gilchrist (vice captain), Nathan Bracken, Stuart Clark, Michael Clarke, Brad Haddin, Matthew Hayden, Brad Hodge, Brad Hogg, Michael Hussey, Mitchell Johnson, Brett Lee, Andrew Symonds, Shaun Tait and Shane Watson.

The Australia squad: Ricky Ponting (captain), Adam Gilchrist (vice captain), Cullen Bailey, Doug Bollinger, Dan Cullen, Ben Hilfenhaus, James Hopes, David Hussey, Phil Jaques, Andrew McDonald, Stuart MacGill, Ashley Noffke, Chris Rogers and Luke Ronchi.

Helguera signs for Valencia

INTERNET, undated

Real Madrid defender Ivan Helguera has signed for Valencia on a three-year deal after being released from his Real Madrid contract.

The Spain international, 32, won the Liga title three times and the Champions League twice in his eight-year career at the Santiago Bernabeu.

The last Spanish title triumph arrived last season on the final day when they beat Mallorca 3-1.

The player had asked Madrid, who were not keen on strengthening one of their major domestic rivals, to facilitate a transfer out of recognition of his contribution to their success.

Meanwhile Mallorca have signed Valencia defender Javi Navarro, who cannot play until September after he punched Internacional's Nicolas Burdisso on the nose following a Champions League quarterfinal last season.

Totti

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his detractors.

"Now let the critics talk about me," he said. "Up till now they have massacred me. I am sure they won't be happy. I never answered them back. I was waiting to give my response on the pitch."

As his fitness improved, so did his performances, and he showed touches of genius in the 2-0 extra-time defeat of host nation Germany in the semifinals.

Totti is regarded as one of Italy's finest players, but he has often flattered to deceive when playing for his country with just nine goals in his 58 appearances.

Despite turning it on week in, week out in Serie A, there was a sense of unfulfilled potential about him at international level.

Perhaps his finest hour was the 2000 European championship in which his influence helped Italy reach the final, where they lost to France on a golden goal.

But at the World Cup in 2002, he failed to score in six matches and was sent off for diving in Italy's shock second-round exit at the hands of co-hosts South Korea.

He was tipped to inspire the Azzurri to success at the 2004 European championships, but instead left Portugal in disgrace after getting himself sent off for spitting in the face of Denmark's Christian Poulsen in the first game of the tournament.

Totti was given a three-match ban and Italy were knocked out in the group stages.

Lord's to lose Test?

CRICINFO, undated

The MCC and the ECB have urgent talks to discuss worries that Lord's may lose one of its summer Tests in 2009, when the new staging agreements take hold.

Lord's has traditionally received two Tests each summer, owing to being the home of cricket and its grandeur, but with increasing competition from other grounds, there are worries that one of the two Tests may be in jeopardy.

The MCC needs to make a good case to the ECB as to why they should continue to stage the amount of internationals that they do. Part of that will be capacity increases, which could be part of the redevelopment proposals.

Iain Wilton, the head of communications and public affairs, confirmed to Cricinfo that imminent talks were planned, but said that the £100million rumoured to be the cost of the planned redevelopment was "entirely speculative" at this stage.

He said: "The MCC Committee has yet to decide on how, for example, the ground's capacity should be increased - or by how much. When it has developed its thinking further, the club's first priority will be to consult its members."

Lord's is not the only traditional ground to think about redevelopment amid worries of increasing competition. Earlier this week, Surrey unveiled plans to overhaul The Oval in a 35 million pound revamp.

Bayern will rile rivals

INTERNET, undated

Bayern Munich's record-breaking spending spree will make them the target of envious opponents, according to chairman Karl-Heinz Rummenigge. The 20-time German champions have spent almost 70 million euros on the likes of Franck Ribery, Luca Toni, Miroslav Klose, Jose Ernesto Sosa, Marcell Jansen and Ze Roberto over the last two months.

The new arrivals have raised expectation levels at the Allianz Arena, but Rummenigge believes it will also make opponents more determined to cause an upset.

"It's going to be particularly competitive away from home," he told kicker magazine.

"There will almost be a measure of hate there which is already being stirred up by the tabloids. FC Bayern are being dressed up as the unbeatable team who everybody has got to defeat."

While Bayern are the team all their rivals will want to get one over on this year, they are still the overwhelming favourites to win a 21st Bundesliga title.

Defending champions Stuttgart know they will have their work cut out to ensure the silverware does not adorn their trophy cabinet for only one year.

And coach Armin Veh believes his side will face a tough challenge, admitting: "Bayern have strengthened with some big names and are therefore the favourites for the league."

Wenger egging on Theo

Football

INTERNET, undated

Arsene Wenger insists Theo Walcott is now in "much better shape" to play a major role for Arsenal next season.

The 18-year-old England international produced an impressive display during the Gunners' 3-0 pre-season win over Turkish side Genclerbirligi in Austria on Thursday night.

Walcott made one goal for Robin van Persie and also netted himself as Wenger's men continued their preparations for the new campaign.

The teenager found himself thrust into the spotlight following a potential 12million pound move from Southampton in January 2006 and was a controversial inclusion in Sven-Goran Eriksson's World Cup squad when he had yet to make his debut for Arsenal.

Walcott chalked up more than 30 first-team appearances last season, and netted his first goal for the Gunners in the Carling Cup final.

Although back in the under-21s following the arrival of new England boss Steve McClaren, the pacey forward was ruled out of this summer's European Championships

because of the need for shoulder surgery.

Stuart Pearce, confirmed as the permanent head coach of the under-21 international side on Thursday, hopes the Gunners will give one of his key men more competitive action.

Wenger indicated that was likely to come next season.

"We could see [from the match] that we have a lot of hope for Theo Walcott," said the Arsenal manager.

"He has shown that he is in much better shape than last year at the same time after the World Cup."

"Theo has recovered well from his shoulder injury and he is at an age now where you expect every month more."

Wenger told Arsenal TV Online: "Theo is in the squad of 20 players. When you want a successful season, every player will get his share in the number of games he will play - and Theo can be an important asset for us."

Wenger was happy enough with a "good workout" against the Turks at the tiny Bad Waltersdorf Stadion, a game which featured debuts for summer signings Bacary Sagna and Eduardo, who came on for the last 21 minutes.

The Brazilian-born Croatian striker - a 7.5 million pound signing

from Dinamo Zagreb - clearly impressed his new boss.

"You could see that straightaway when Eduardo came on he is a quality player," said Wenger. "His movement, his sharpness, the quality of his runs, and his final ball was perfect."

Eduardo was content to have now been involved for his new club - but maintained the hard work starts now.

"I am very happy for this first match, but I know I have a lot more to do to prove myself," he said, conscious of his arrival soon after the departure of captain Thierry Henry to Barcelona.

"The rest of the squad is very good. Robin van Persie particularly impressed me [last night], but it is just important to be here with them and stay away from injuries."

"So far the training out here has not been difficult because we are using the ball more than we did when I was at Dinamo Zagreb."

"On the face of it, I feel there is no big difference between English and Croatian football."

"It is just that in English football there are a lot less mistakes and the players are physically stronger than in Croatia. I am still adjusting to my new club, but it is good."

Dalmiya can contest polls

Cricket

CRICINFO, undated

The Calcutta High Court today stayed the BCCI's suspension of Jagmohan Dalmiya and directed that he was free to contest next week's election to the Cricket Association of Bengal (CAB). Nominations for the election close on Friday evening. Soon after the decision, Dalmiya filed a perjury case against the Indian board before the court.

The BCCI responded by moving a division bench and sought leave to move an appeal on Monday, July 23 against the order of Justice Indira Banerjee claiming that the order would affect the functioning of BCCI and also several of its previous decisions.

Upholding Dalmiya's application against the suspension imposed by BCCI, headed by Sharad Pawar, last December, Justice Indira Banerjee observed that the rule under which he was suspended was

not registered and, as such, was illegal. The judge said there was no bar on Dalmiya contesting any elections of the BCCI or CAB.

The BCCI had suspended Dalmiya following allegations of his involvement in misappropriation of funds of the Pakistan-India-Lanka Committee (PILCOM), the organising body of the 1996 World Cup held in the subcontinent. Following his suspension, Dalmiya resigned as CAB president and Prasun Mukherjee, also Kolkata's police commissioner, was elected unopposed to the post.

Mukherjee, who had lost the presidential race in a bitterly-contested CAB polls to Dalmiya in July last year, is seeking re-election to the top job.

After getting the reprieve, Dalmiya's counsel, Arindam Banerjee, revealed the counter case. "We have filed a perjury case against the Board and members of the disciplinary committee which had expelled Dalmiya."

The case was filed against the

BCCI, Sharad Pawar, its president, Niranjan Shah, Shashank Manohar and Chirayu Amin. Banerjee alleged that the board had placed a forged document before Justice Banerjee regarding the condonation of time application for the registration of an amendment to BCCI's Clause V of Rule 38.

He also alleged that the board had incorrectly claimed to have been permitted by the Tamil Nadu Societies Registration (TNSR) body to register the amendment at a later date. Banerjee, stating that an amendment must be registered with TNSRA within three months, claimed that the application for condonation of delay was filed six years after the amendment was made in September, 2000.

It was applied for only after the suspension of Dalmiya, he claimed. The perjury case was filed under Section 340 of criminal procedure code for allegedly providing false information to the court.

The matter would be moved shortly before the High Court, he said.

Strauss relieved

Football

BBC ONLINE

England opener Andrew Strauss was a relieved man after finally hitting form in the first Test against India

Strauss, who struggled in the Ashes, at the World Cup and against West Indies, made 96 in England's 268-4 on day one.

"After what's gone on in the last six months or so it was an important innings for me," he told BBC Sport.

"You have to feel responsible for changing your luck, do the right things and get in the right frame of

mind. Coming into this I felt really good."

Strauss saw Dinesh Karthik drop a straightforward chance at point when he was on 43.

"It was an extraordinary bit of fortune, I must admit. It was a pretty average shot and I was cursing myself for playing it thinking it was definitely going to get caught but fortunately he put it down," the left-hander explained.

"Luck evens itself out. I've had a tough time and that was a major slice in my favour."

After Strauss was out, India struck two more late blows to salvage a day on which their bowlers had struggled to cope with the Lord's slope.

But the Middlesex star insists the hosts are in a "decent position".

"I had to knuckle down - it was a quicker wicket than a lot of Lord's wickets in the past and we had to get stuck in," he added.

"The Indians came back at us pretty well and losing Vaughany and Paul put them back into the game a little bit but we still have a lot of batting to come and hopefully we can push on."

"Our bowlers, Chris Tremlett and James Anderson in particular, will be keen to prove a point."

"Hopefully we can get some momentum, take a couple of early wickets, and put India under pressure."



PHOTO: AFP

Manchester United striker Cristiano Ronaldo (R) surges past FC Seoul's Ki Sung-Yueng during their friendly match at the WorldCup Stadium in Seoul yesterday. Manchester United won the match 4-0.