

Women's open cricket from today

SPORTS REPORTER

Parachute women's open cricket tournament get underway today with four matches taking place on the opening day in Dhaka and Khulna.

Ten teams divided into three groups will take part in the tourney and three group champions will play the final round from which two top teams will qualify for the final match to be held on January 25.

Monowar Anis Khan, BCB's ad-hoc committee member and chairperson of the women's wing committee, disclosed the tournament details at a press conference yesterday at the board's management office in Gulshan.

Apart from the trophies, the champions will receive Tk 10,000 and the runners-up Tk 6,000 while the organisers will provide Tk 10,000 to all the teams as participation money.

Player-of-the-tournament will be awarded Tk 3,000 while the player-of-the-match Tk 1,000 in addition to Tk 300 for each of the players as match fee.

The budget for the tournament has been estimated at Tk 500,000.

Group A: Ansar & VDP Academy, Tetulia and Jahangirnagar University.

Group B: Abahani, Digital Vision and Prantik Kira Chakra.

Group C: Ispahani Sporting Club, Narail, Chuadanga and Khulna.

Saif shares lead with Shiblu

SPORTS REPORTER

Abdullah Al Saif and Mosabbir Khan Shiblu were jointly leading the table of the 28th National Sub-junior Chess Championship after eight rounds yesterday.

The leaders were level on seven points with one round left and were closely followed by Nazmus Shakib, at second place with 6.5 points.

In the penultimate round at the Chess Federation hall-room, Shiblu beat Rana, Saif beat Amir, Shakib beat Abir, Ashiq beat Sami, Moni beat Mainuddin, Fahim beat Sayebul, Ashraf beat Saidul, Masud beat Arnob and Russel beat Masum.

It's not over

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from the organisation," informed Waliullah.

Asif scored 580 in the 11th Asian Shooting competition in Kuwait (December 3-13, 2007) in his pet event 10m air rifle, but National Shooting Federation general secretary Nazimuddin is not ready to accept the score as ideal.

"It is not good for a shooter of his class. Before going to China, his best score had been 590. So it is surprising how could his performance fell off," said Nazimuddin.

"We have yet to get any answer from Asif so far. So we cannot tell when he would return."

Although the Olympic Solidarity has not picked him for the Olympics, Asif still has a flickering hope to participate in the Games.

"Bangladesh will get one wild card at least. We would naturally select him but he must improve to get that opportunity," Nazimuddin added.

It can be mentioned that Asif, who won gold medals in the 2002 Manchester Commonwealth Games and the South Asian Games in Pakistan in 2004, has been trying to recover his form since he and a number of shooters were brutally assaulted by police during a raid at the National Shooting Federation on October 2, 2006.

Not entirely

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Africa by 184 runs here two years ago.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard at stumps on the first day of the third Test between Australia and India at the WACA Ground on Wednesday:

INDIA: First innings	16
Jaffer Gilchrist b Lee	29
Sehwag c Gilchrist b Johnson	16
Dravid c Ponting b Symonds	93
Tendulkar lbw Lee	9
Ganguly c Hussey b Johnson	7
Laxman c Tait b Lee	27
Dhoni not out	8
Pathan not out	8
Extras: (lb-18, w-9, nb-9)	36
Total: (For six wickets in 84 overs)	297
To bat: Kumble, RP Singh, Sharma.	
Fall of wickets: 1-57, 2-59, 3-198, 4-214, 5-278, 6-284.	

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Lee	19	3	64	3
Johnson	21	5	62	2
Clark	15	3	44	0
Tait	13	1	59	0
Symonds	10	1	36	1
Clarke	6	1	14	0

AUSTRALIA: Jaques, Rogers, Ponting, Hussey, Clarke, Symonds, Gilchrist, Tait, Lee, Johnson, Clark.

Toss: India

Umpires: Asad Rauf (PAK), Billy Bowden (NZL)

Third umpire: Bruce Oxenford (AUS)

Match referee: Mike Procter (RSA)



Women's wing chairman of Bangladesh Cricket Board Monowar Anis Khan (2nd from L) speaks at a press conference concerning the Parachute Women's Open Tournament at BCB's management office yesterday.

Zim face defeat in tour opener

Cricket

AFP, Karachi

Zimbabwe's batting flopped for a second time in their four-day tour opener here, leaving them staring a heavy defeat in the face against the Patron's XI.

The tourists slumped to 111-6 at close on the third day at the Defence Stadium, needing another 159 runs to avoid an innings defeat with four wickets and a full day's play left.

At the close, Elton Chigumbura and Gary Brent -- both on two -- were at the crease.

The home side made 479-6 before declaring their first innings,

giving them a huge first innings lead of 270 runs.

Stand-in captain Hamilton Masakadza (44) and Tatenda Taibu (30) helped the tourists avoid disaster with a fighting 63-run stand for the third wicket in an otherwise unimpressive batting display.

New-ball bowlers Samiullah Niazi (3-15) and Sohail Khan (3-30) bowled lively spells to derail the tourists. Niazi removed Vusi Sibanda (23) and Brendon Taylor (4) before returning to dismiss Taibu after tea.

Khan removed Masakadza before snaring Sean Williams (4) and Keith Dabengwa off successive deliveries to push Zimbabwe to the brink of defeat.

Earlier in the day, Naumanullah Khan (86) and Fawad Alam (82 not out) helped the Patron's XI press home their advantage with a fourth-wicket stand of 127.

Left-arm spinner Ray Price was the pick of the Zimbabwe bowlers with 4-130.

Zimbabwe are due to play five one-day internationals against Pakistan on the tour. The first match is scheduled here on January 21.

BRIEF SCORES

ZIMBABWE: First innings 209 (Taylor 64; Afridi 4-37) and second innings 111-6 (Masakadza 44; Samiullah 3-15, Sohail 3-30).
PATRON'S XI: First innings 479-6 dec. (Jamshed 182, Naumanullah 86, Fawad 82*, Afaq 77; Price 4-130).

GM Zia back to winning track

SPORTS REPORTER

Ziaur Rahman recovered from a fifth round loss when the Bangladesh Grandmaster defeated Akshat Kamparia of India in the sixth round of the Parsvnath Open International Chess Tournament in Delhi yesterday.

After four straight wins, Zia lost to Russian GM Igor Kurnosov while Enamul Hossain Rajib's winning streak was ended also in the fifth round when he was beaten by Indian IM BG Prakash.

Rajib's recovery was not that impressive as he drew with local guy Aditya Udeshi in Round 6.

Zia had five points and Rajib 4.5 while other Bangladeshi participants FM Taibur Rahman and Sohail Chowdhury were on four and three points respectively.

Capello under investigation

AFP, Rome

Prosecutors in Turin are investigating new England manager Fabio Capello for suspected tax evasion, Italian media reported on Wednesday.

The inquiry, which was opened some months ago, regards earnings Capello received during his time at Roma and Juventus, according to Il Giornale newspaper.

Capello is still fiscally registered in Turin, where he undertook his last coaching post in Italy.

He is suspected of not having paid tax on sponsorship earnings and of diverting funds directly to foreign companies to avoid paying tax in Italy.

Turin prosecutors are also still looking into Juventus's books as investigations are ongoing into the affairs of former Juventus bosses Luciano Moggi, Antonio Giraudo and Roberto Bettiga.

Daily Star down but not out

SPORTS REPORTER

Cricket has always been the weak link of The Daily Star and this year it was no exception. Despite having a new captain and a set of fresh blood The Daily Star stumbled to a 30-run defeat against The Inqilab in their opening group league match of the Pepsi Media cricket tournament at the Maulana Bhasani National Hockey Stadium yesterday.

Expectations of a turnaround of fortune ran high when Ashfaq Wares with a promise to bring the Aussie consistency that he was a part of during his down under days took over the demanding job from Rabeed Imam, now Tiger Cricket.com editor.

But unfortunately Wares's new look side failed to adjust with the new wicket, which was completely antithesis of Perth. The outcome was inevitable. Inqilab hammered 85 from six overs including 60 odd runs from two prodigal overs of Wares and debutant Suranjit Devnath. The Daily Star chase never took off after star opener Mohammad Isam was run out and Wares struck a golden duck. The only saving grace was Shamim's 32 in a total of 55-3.

Daily Star will play Ittefaq in their final match tomorrow.

Meanwhile, in the other matches of the day, ATN Bangla defeated Sangbad by four wickets, Bangladesh thrashed BSS by 66 runs, The Daily Jugantor edged BTV by eight runs, Channel One picked up a four-wicket win against The Daily Korotoa, RTV defeated New Age by three wickets and BD News handed a 46-run defeat on Boisakhi TV. On a disappointing day for English dailies, The Independent were the saving grace with a 23-run win over The Daily Khabarpatra.

End of the road

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including representatives from every one of the 53 national associations of UEFA.

The G14 welcomed the move as a "long-sought change in governance of football" and said they would make a decision on their future at their General Assembly on February 15.

"By entering into a real and mature dialogue with the clubs, UEFA and FIFA have signalled their intention to correct the imbalance that exists in the governance of the game at European and international levels," the G14 said in a statement.

BFF officially

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Manzoor Hossain Malu signed on behalf of the federation and Hailul Kaium, director sports, NSC, signed on behalf of the NSC.

The final documents, however, are expected to reach the BFF after the signing of the NSC secretary.

The second 'Goal' project for BFF was on the verge of cancellation when NSC chairman and Army Chief General Moeen U Ahmed took the initiative to provide the football governing body a site for the project.

The artificial turf will provide the national team and the clubs the opportunity to train even during the rainy season.

The BFF Babban was built under the first 'Goal' project.

Pitch was off pace

Cricket

CRICINFO, undated

For all the predictions of damage from Australia's four fast men there was not much blazing fire. Each of the quartet, which was steered superbly by Brett Lee, was sharp, but the expected explosiveness was missing after an energetic opening from both teams. A hot day sapped the early promise from the surface and rumours of Perth's bounce returning have been exaggerated, at least on the side of the square that hasn't been relaid.

In December Shaun Tait was almost unplayable during a Twenty20 international on one of the springy pitches, but in his third Test he was unable to create the same level of fear. India's batsmen were the most relieved while many of the rest, including the home bowlers, felt slightly deceived.

The last time Australia tried a combination of four fast men was against India 15 years ago and the match was won in five days. In the lead-up to this game there was speculation it would be a short one, but the home team will have to sweat to achieve the world record of 17 wins in a row.

Brett Lee and Mitchell Johnson opened, with the back-up coming from Tait and Stuart Clark, and while teeth were shown, the edges were soon blunted. Lee and Tait posted speeds above 150kmph in the first session, but they dropped to the low 140s in an afternoon of intense heat. A Tait bouncer barely

reached Gilchrist on the full and a Sachin Tendulkar edge off Lee fell short of second slip. India's batsmen, particularly Tendulkar, were even able to re-think their shots, which is something that was not possible in Perth's prime.

Rather than having the luxury of unleashing his bowlers and watching them feed the cordon, Ricky Ponting had to be thoughtful. The slips stayed deep, but fielders were regularly rearranged in the infield and on the boundary, just as they were in the first two Tests.

A couple of wickets came with bowling changes, Lee swapping ends to pick up Wasim Jaffer and Mitchell Johnson returning to capture Sourav Ganguly with a slice to Michael Hussey, who took a fine diving catch. Dismissals that were meant for extreme speed came with cageyness instead.

At times it looked like the captain had too many riches and was not sure how to spend them. Andrew Symonds bowled five overs of medium pace in the second session after Tait had waited until shortly before lunch to be employed. Tait, who came in for Brad Hogg, was unsurprisingly erratic and more was expected when he had an aging ball, but he went without reward in 13 overs in three spells. Limited-overs games have provided most of his recent workload and he will need some time to run himself in.

Johnson was more effective than in Sydney and had two important wickets to show for the effort put in between Tests. Stronger in his delivery stride, he forced the

batsmen to play more around off stump, picking up Virender Sehwag with an edge behind before removing Ganguly. An inswinging yorker was too fierce for Rahul Dravid, who was lucky to sustain only a sore foot and not an lbw dismissal.

However, Lee was the most impressive and once he swapped ends after an expensive opening he operated like a well-tuned thoroughbred. Batsmen were forced to worry about nicking, Tendulkar missed a brilliant legcutter and the slips were always on alert. Jaffer pushed at Lee and gave Adam Gilchrist a simple catch and there were numerous challenges for India.

Dravid survived another drop in the series -- Michael Clarke was the offender at first slip when the batsman was 11 -- but Lee recovered and collected 3 for 64, a haul enhanced by the wicket of VVS Laxman with the second new ball. He powered towards the crease through 19 overs and Tendulkar's wicket came in his 15th, although the batsman was the unfortunate one this time. The ball was heading well over the stumps and might not have been in line with off. Asad Rauf upheld the lbw appeal.

The general rule in Perth is if the ball hits on the knee roll it can't be out. In the morning nobody would have believed a dismissal would have come this way, but the lack of spring in the pitch made it a possibility. While the surface may have tricked Rauf, it also flattened the bounce of Australia's fast-bowling posse.

Power of three

Cricket

CRICINFO, undated

Years from now Perth might be remembered as the city where Rahul Dravid recovered from his toughest phase in Test cricket. Back to his favourite No. 3 position, his value as the side's cushion was evident. The compact defence was back, as were the long strides to meet the ball on the full. Unfortunately the innings might be temporarily remembered for the way it ended. It shouldn't.

After opening in the first two Tests, today (Wednesday) when Dravid entered, in the 17th over, India had already had their best opening stand of the series. He began with some controlled trickles past the slips, endured a good spell of bowling from Brett Lee and survived a dropped catch on 11, before flowing freely. The second

half of his innings was played with as much freedom as his innings were in mid 2006, the last time he made a hundred against top-class opposition.

"It's nice to be back in a familiar position," he said, "and the openers got us off to a good start. They played positively, took their chances and put fifty on the board. It gives you a psychological advantage when you walk in then. I've done well and badly at No. 3. I wouldn't want to attribute scoring runs to my batting position. There's a lot of hard work that went into it, not just the position."

Then why does he distinctly prefer the No. 3 position? "It's tough to explain," he said. "It's maybe because I've never really done well as an opener. I haven't found an answer to it. I just feel different. It doesn't feel the same in the two positions."

When in form he could adjust to any position. He reeled off hun-

dreds while opening against Pakistan in early 2006 and settled into the No. 4 slot later in the year in West Indies. Since then, though, he's struggled at home and away. He went through an entire tour of South Africa without a half-century and didn't hit the high notes against England as well. He turned in some crucial innings against Pakistan at home but kept getting out at the wrong time. He didn't seem out of form, just out of luck.

Things have been different on this tour, though. He's waded through the turbulent times with a bit of luck, both in Sydney and here. "This was a good pitch with better bounce and pace," he said of his comfort factor. "The ball came on to the bat. In fact I've been moving my feet well through the series. I felt comfortable in the second innings in Sydney and did well in the practice game as well. It's slowly coming together."

It came together all right, especially after he raised his bat to bring up his half-century. He doubled his run-rate and bisected the field perfectly with his cover-drives. Seven short of his hundred, Dravid attempted to slog-sweep Andrew Symonds' offspin, only to lob a catch to the covers. The force with which he swung the bat after that indicated the disappointment.

"The shot was on," he later said, "and I had played it earlier as well. The ball was tossed up. When it comes off, it looks great, otherwise it looks stupid. There's a fine line to being positive and throwing it away. People accused us of being negative in the first Test and we've been trying to be positive throughout. It's a little disappointing but there's a lot of cricket left in this game yet."

Would his side have settled for this position at the start of the day? "Maybe four down for 300. But we're happy overall. There were a lot of fighting performances and a lot of guys showed character. If the lower order does well we have a chance of getting to 400. And that's a score we would have settled for at the start."



PHOTO STAR

Action from yesterday's match between Bangladesh Army and Bangladesh Air Force of the President Cup Super Four volleyball tournament at the Dhaka Volleyball Stadium.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS	36 Intention	53 Not	16 Elevator
1 Earing	37 Skip	many	20 Prohibit
4 Locals	to My	words	21 Stuart
5 Drone	—	—	Smalley
8 —	38 Kind of cheer?	1 Bound	creator
Romeo (sporty ride)	41 Glutton	2 Look	22 Cornfield
42 Realtor's	parcel	3 lasciviously	call
12 Holy cow!	45 Egg	3 Mexican peninsula	23 Billboards
13 Mimic	46 Scenel of a Woman?	4 Tokyo's old name	24 Speck
14 Pork cut	47 Oscar	5 Ain't got	25 E.T.'s transport...
15 "Swanee" singer	48 Buster Brown's dog	6 "Once — a Mattress"	26 ... and a compartment therein?
17 Martial art	49 Space	7 Chaps	27 Scepter
18 Shell-game	50 Lunch	8 "We're in This Love Together"	topper
19 Hostelry?	51 Verve	9 Boorish	28 Up to, in verse
20 Maestro's prop	52 What's over amount	10 Rover's sort	29 Witness
21 Sternward	53 What's over amount	11 Unsigned (Abbr.)	31 Height of fashion?
22 Train	54 What's over amount	35 Frat party	34 Blend
23 NC-17 moviegoer	55 What's over amount	36 Frat party	35 Frat party
24 Repeatals by rote	56 What's over amount	37 Given to back talk	36 Frat party
30 Remove a hat	57 What's over amount	38 PC info measure	39 Anger
31 "Please explain"	58 What's over amount	40 Gymnast	Korbul
32 Ontario neighbor	59 What's over amount	41 Blueprint	42 Megastore
33 Was lamp-postuous	60 What's over amount	43 Responsibility	44 Malador's foe
35 Texas Hold 'Em setting	61 What's over amount	46 —	47 Greek X

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CRYPTOQUIP

FBZJZDZS PVMSHJZXHX
YGGICMJ IHI QGCZXBHJY
KMDGSMVZ, GJZ CHYBX
QME HX FMQ AZJE-KHPHMV
Yesterday's Cryptoquip: IF A GROUP OF FIERCE FELINES ARE FOPPIH, I SUPPOSE YOU MIGHT CALL THEM DANDY LIONS.
Today's Cryptoquip Clue: I equals D