

FIDE endorses Rajib as GM

SPORTS REPORTER

FIDE (World Chess Federation) has approved Bangladeshi chess player Enamul Hossain Rajib's application for a Grand Master title, confirmed Bangladesh Chess Federation yesterday.

The decision was taken in FIDE's 3rd Quarter Presidential board meeting in Athens on Monday.

Rajib had completed his third and final norm during last month's National Championship to become the fifth Bangladeshi GM after Niaz Murshed, Ziaur Rahman, Abdullah Al Rakib and Rezaat Bin Sattar.

Rajib won his first norm during the 2002 Chess Olympiad in Slovenia and secured the second norm in Abu Dhabi last year during a GM tournament.

The highlight of the 27-year-old's long chess career is reaching the second round of the World Chess Cup in Russia in November 2007 when he upset the then world No 19 Pavel Eljanov of Ukraine in the first round.

Hockey team going to Singapore

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh national hockey team are expected to leave for Singapore on June 12 to take part in the 3rd Men's AHF Cup championship to be held in Singapore from June 14.

The participation of Bangladesh team in the nine-nation Asia Cup qualifying round became uncertain due to financial problems as the National Sports Council (NSC) has allocated Tk 4 lakh only against a budget of Tk 24.38 lakh submitted by Bangladesh Hockey Federation for the tour.

BHF general secretary Sajid Adel told UNB that after getting approval of a poor amount from the NSC, they began communicating with business houses to sponsor the national team and they obtained 'positive response'.

Moreover, he said that they sent a letter to NSC chairman and Army Chief General Moeen U Ahmed on Wednesday to allocate at least Tk 20 lakh for the tour. "Otherwise our affiliation may be cancelled," he informed.

"We're now quite hopeful of leaving for Singapore on June 12 to participate in the qualifiers either with fund from NSC or from the sponsors."

Earlier, Bangladesh have been placed in Pool A of the hockey meet with Chinese Taipei, Uzbekistan, Brunei and hosts Singapore, while Pool B comprises Hong Kong, Oman, Thailand and Sri Lanka.

Bangladesh is scheduled to play Brunei on June 14 in one of the four opening day fixtures.

They will play Chinese Taipei on June 15, Singapore on June 18 and Uzbekistan on June 19 in the group matches.

BFF to prepare

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there was yet any confirmation about the tournament.

"We cannot say anything concrete yet but we have discussed everything from why the tournament has not been held since 1982 and what are its future," said the BFF chief.

"We have told the delegation that we can organise the tournament together and they can have their men in all committees for transparency."

"We have also asked them to talk with local clubs and foreign teams for satisfactory feedback," said the former national footballer.

"We will prepare a budget for them but the men here cannot take any decision. The decision will come from Paris where Aga Khan lives."

The inaugural Aga Khan Gold Cup was held in 1958 and ran regularly till 1970. After the Liberation War, the first effort to organise the tournament in 1975 was postponed just after the start due to political crisis.

The tournament restarted in 1976 but after the 1977 event, it was held only once in 1982 when Brothers Union emerged joint-champions with Bangkok Bank Club to become the only local side to win the cup after Liberation.

Dhaka Mohammedan won the trophy three times, in 1959, 1964 and 1968, while the other local club to have won the title are Victoria Sporting Club, in 1962.



Did U Know?

The Thomas Cup, the men's world team badminton championships, has been won by only three countries since it began in 1948 - Malaysia, Indonesia and China.



West Indies captain Ramnaresh Sarwan raises his bat after reaching a century against Australia during the final day of the second Test at the Sir Vivian Richards Stadium in St. John's on Tuesday.

Twenty-five years on India's WC heroes start celebration

Cricket

AFP, New Delhi

India's only World Cup winning cricket team will gather in London later this month to celebrate the 25th year of arguably the country's greatest sporting triumph.

It was on June 25, 1983 that Kapil Dev's unheralded team pulled off a stunning upset to deny Clive Lloyd's all-conquering West Indies a hat-trick of World Cup titles with an amazing 43-run win at Lord's.

The 14-man squad, popularly known as Kapil's Devils, will mark the anniversary with a private function at the Long Room in Lord's on June 25 followed by a gala dinner in London later that evening.

Former India captain Sunil Gavaskar, who was part of the winning team, has organised the Lord's gathering while liquor baron Vijay Malviya will sponsor the dinner, an official said on Wednesday.

A diamond-studded bat signed by all team members will be auctioned by Malviya's United Breweries group to mark the occasion, a company release said.

"This is our way of ensuring that the silver jubilee celebrations are memorable for millions of those who were either a part of it or yearned to be one," said Gavaskar.

Dev told AFP: "We will enjoy the moment and have fun. We will remember the good times."

The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) will also organise a celebratory dinner on June 22 in New Delhi before the team flies to London.

The BCCI had earlier been reluctant to mark the occasion because the team included players who are involved in the unauthorised Indian Cricket League (ICL) promoted by the Zee media group.

Dev is the ICL's chief organiser while 1983 teammates Sandeep Patil, Madan Lal and Balwinder Sandhu serve as coaches of various ICL teams.

The BCCI, however, relented and agreed to celebrate the 1983 feat even though ICL players and officials are banned from associating themselves with official cricket.

"Cricket has always been the most popular sport in India," said BCCI president Sharad Pawar, a political heavyweight and federal agriculture minister.

"However, the most remembered event in the history of Indian cricket is the stunning victory of our team against West Indies -- the then cricket superpower."

"I am certain that every cricketer in the years to come has this rich legacy to inherit and the die-hard spirit to win."

Dev's men were widely expected to be crushed by the powerful West Indians in the 60-overs-a-side final when they were shot out for 183 in 54.4 overs in good batting conditions at Lord's.

But man-of-the-series Mohinder Amarnath and Madan Lal claimed three wickets each as the West Indians, cruising at 50-1 at one stage, were bowled out for 140 in 52 overs to spark frenzied Indian celebrations.

India have not won the World Cup again, their next best finish coming in South Africa in 2003 when Sourav Ganguly's team reached the final but lost to Australia.

In the last edition in 2007 in the Caribbean, India were knocked out in the first round after losing to minnows Bangladesh and eventual finalists Sri Lanka.

The next World Cup will be jointly hosted by India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh in 2011.

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In the first match, Chalchal Club defeated Jovat Sangha by six wickets. Jovat Sangha batted first but were bowled out for only 63 in 17.2 over. Sanju took three wickets while Rakib, Probab and Mohadev took two wickets each.

In reply, Chalchal reached 68-4 in only 13.4 over.

In another match, Kishan defeated Anirban by 129 runs at the same venue. Kishan made 193-9 in 25 overs. Shakil made 49 runs, Sabuj 37 and Masum added 22 runs.

Azam and Toto of Anirban took three wickets each while Zinnat took two wickets.

In reply, Anirban were bundled out for 64 runs in 13.5 over. Sabuj of Chalchal took three wickets while Jalal snared two.

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President's Cup finals in Kyrgyzstan

SPORTS REPORTER

The semifinals and the final of the AFC President's Cup will be held in Kyrgyzstan capital Bishkek from September 19-21, the Asian Football Federation (AFC) confirmed yesterday.

The announcement will definitely inspire Dordoi-Dynamo, two-time defending champions from Kyrgyzstan, who will be banking on home advantage at the Spartak Stadium in their quest for a hat-trick.

While Dordoi booked their place in the last four from Group B, another Central Asian side, Turkmenistan's Ashgabat, confirmed their semifinal berth from Group C.

The Group A qualification campaign kicks off on June 22 in Kuala Lumpur and involves Bangladesh professional league champions Abahani, Nepal Police Club from Nepal, Pakistan's WAPDA and Tajikistan's Regar-TadAZ.

Apart from the group toppers, the best runners-up from the three pools also qualify for the main competition in Kyrgyzstan.

LOCAL SNIPPETS

SPORTS REPORTER

Riding on Farhad's hat-trick, Nasrin Sports Academy drubbed Abdul Hadi Lane Jubo Sangha 9-0 in an East Zone match of the Dhaka City Corporation Pioneer Football League at the Jagannath Hal University ground at Dhuppholayesterday.

Apart from Farhad's treble strike, Faisal struck twice while Mintu, Rubal, Badal and Shakil scored one goal each.

In the day's other East Zone match, Jatrabari Jhatika Sangsad defeated Red Sun 4-1 at the same venue.

West Zone: At the Outer Stadium, Great Wall beat Islambagh Lucky Seven 3-1 while Arambagh Juniors played out a one-all draw with Noor Sporting Club.

North Zone: Kalachandpur Ekadash beat Modhubagh Friends Club 2-0 while Siraj Smriti Sangsad played out a goalless draw with Khelaghar Krira Chakra at the Mahakhali T&T ground.

Central Zone: At the Basabo Tarun Sangha ground, Anrudoy Jubo Sangha edged past Nandipara Komololi Sangsad by a solitary goal.

UNDER-16 CRICKET

Hosts Khulna clinched the title of the Under-16 Young Tigers Elite National competition by virtue of better bonus points over Sylhet on the final day of the three-day final at the Bir Shreshtha Matur Rahman Stadium yesterday.

Chasing a victory target of 173, hosts Khulna scored 130-5 in their second innings at stumps on the final day.

Faruq contributed 65 while Joyanta made 22. Sayem grabbed two wickets for 15 runs, while AM Rupu took one wicket for 35 runs.

Earlier, resuming on overnight 95-2, Sylhet made 190 in their second innings with nightwatchman Sayem making 73 and Mizanur 36.

Sohel and Khaleed claimed three wickets apiece for 40 and 42 runs respectively.

Khulna earlier scored 177 runs in their first innings, replying to Sylhet's first innings total of 159.

DIVII CRICKET

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INTER-DISTRICT VOLLEYBALL Hosts Chittagong made a good start in the opening match of the inter-district volleyball competition defeating Sylhet in straight sets.

They comprehensively won 25-4, 25-7, 25-5.

Six teams -- Comilla, Chittagong, Cox's Bazar, Sylhet, Chandpur and Chittagong Metropolis -- are competing in the zonal phase matches.

Chittagong Metropolitan Police Commissioner M Akbar Ali inaugurated the competition as chief guest. Chittagong Metropolitan Sports Association general secretary Shayesta Khan was the special guest on the occasion.

INTER-VARSITY VOLLEYBALL The inter-university volleyball competition will commence at the Dhaka University playground on May 5.

Tourists' testing time Nottingham Test from today

Cricket

AFP, Nottingham

New Zealand face some awkward choices even before the third and final Test starts here on Thursday as they look to square the series against England at 1-1.

New Zealand suffered a morale-sapping six-wicket defeat in the second Test at Old Trafford, a match they dominated until a second innings collapse against Monty Panesar paved the way for an England fightback.

They head into the series climax with questions regarding their batsmen.

James Marshall, their No 3 in the drawn first Test at Lord's and again in Manchester, has been out of form and suffered two more failures during last week's tour match against Northamptonshire.

And No 6 Daniel Flynn, who lost two teeth after being hit by a bouncer from James Anderson at Old Trafford, has also been struggling for runs.

Peter Fulton, who hasn't played a Test since January, is pressing for a recall after making a first innings fifty against Northamptonshire.

New Zealand are also having to tackle a bowling dilemma as they build up for the Trent Bridge finale.

Tim Southee missed the second Test with illness but Iain O'Brien, the teenager seamer's stand-in, performed admirably in testing conditions.

However, it is New Zealand's batting, for all the class of Ross Taylor's Test-best 154 not out in the first innings at Old Trafford, that remains more of a problem for coach John Bracewell and captain Daniel Vettori.

"We were really pleased with the way Fulton went (against Northamptonshire) and he certainly comes into contention," said Bracewell.

As for Flynn, Bracewell said: "He will recover quickly. It's just whether we match up Fulton's form against him and James Marshall."

New Zealand's coach urged his players to learn from Andrew Strauss, the opener whose well-paced century was the backbone of England's successful run chase which saw them win with more than a day to spare at Old Trafford.

"It was an excellent innings of control in difficult conditions, teaching our guys what should and shouldn't be done in trying circumstances."

England, for their seventh straight Test against the Black Caps after a 2-1 series win, are set to field an unchanged side with fast bowler Chris Tremlett again likely to drop out of a 12-man squad.

If they do it will be the first time since 1884-85, when they won a series in Australia 3-2, that England have used the same XI in five consecutive Tests.

However, such consistency shouldn't mask the fact that at Old Trafford they again put themselves under pressure by failing to score 400 in the first innings for the 11th successive Test.

Middle-order batsman Paul Collingwood has looked in particularly wretched touch lately but, after surviving a strong lbw appeal from Vettori, showed typical grit in seeing England home with 24 not out.

And the Durham all-rounder, with no reserve batsman in the squad, has been given another chance to end a run of 22 innings without a Test hundred.

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"You draw on your knowledge of previous bad patches," said Collingwood.

"Look back at some of them and I was a lot lower than I am now. I have worked hard, had a couple of days off as well and I feel raring to go."

England left-arm quick Ryan Sidebottom, so often New Zealand's nemesis, will be looking forward to bowling on his home ground.

However the Kiwis' pace attack, not to mention left-arm spinner Vettori, have caused England problems and if they are bowling in swinging conditions will fancy their chances.

Should New Zealand get themselves into a strong position again, the challenge for them will be to see it through to the end.

Vettori has spoken of their third innings problems and the way in which vice-captain Brendon McCullum tried to put a positive gloss on the second Test suggested there was still work to be done on New Zealand's self-belief.

"In a strange sort of way, Old Trafford was a confidence booster for us," McCullum said. "We put ourselves in a position where we should have won."

"That was something that heading into the Test, we may not have whole-heartedly believed."

TEAMS

ENGLAND (from): Andrew Strauss, Alastair Cook, Michael Vaughan (captain), Kevin Pietersen, Ian Bell, Paul Collingwood, Tim Ambrose, Stuart Broad, Ryan Sidebottom, Monty Panesar, James Anderson, Chris Tremlett.

NEW ZEALAND (from): Jamie How, Aaron Redmond, James Marshall, Ross Taylor, Brendon McCullum, Daniel Flynn, Jacob Oram, Daniel Vettori (captain), Kyle Mills, Tim Southee, Chris Martin, Iain O'Brien, Peter Fulton.

Umpires: Steve Bucknor and Darrell Hair.

Shiv rises to career high

Cricket

CRICINFO, undated

Shivnarine Chanderpaul's outstanding performance in the second Test against Australia, in Antigua, which helped secure West Indies a draw, has lifted him to a career-best position of No. 5 in the world rankings.

Chanderpaul was twice unbeaten in the match, for 107 and 77, and claimed the Man-of-the-Match award as West Indies kept alive their hopes of squaring the series, although the Frank Worrell Trophy is now safely back with Australia.

Chanderpaul's double continues a prolific run of form, this following on from his 118 in the first Test, and he currently averages 156.50 in the series.

In the past 12 months he has played nine Tests and scored 1,062 runs at 106.20, including five centuries on away tours to England and South Africa as well as this home series against Australia.

Chanderpaul is now level with South Africa's Jacques Kallis and just three points behind Mohammad Yousof. Michael Hussey currently holds the No.1 spot, followed by Ricky Ponting and Kumar Sangakkara.

West Indies' captain Ramnaresh Sarwan just missed out on a return to the top 20 in after his fifth-day century. Sarwan scored 65 in the first innings and then 128 in the second and that performance has lifted Sarwan back to 21st place.

From the Australians, Simon Katich is the most significant mover following his first-innings century and has climbed 12 places to 56th.

After missing the first Test through injury, Jerome Taylor has climbed back into the top 20 of the bowling rankings. He took five wickets in the match -- including Ponting in both innings -- and moved up 12 places in the tightly packed rankings. It is the highest ranking of Taylor's 19-match career and he is now just three points behind Matthew Hoggard in 13th spot, who is currently trying to force his way back into the England side.

Brett Lee strengthened his position in fourth spot and is also holding the highest rating of his career. Lee was the outstanding bowler in Antigua, with match-figures of 8 for 110, on a docile surface. This included a destructive burst of reverse-swing in the first innings. He is closing the gap on teammate Stuart Clark, who is currently occupying third spot.

Muttiah Muralidaran is still in first position with Dale Steyn just behind him. With Sri Lanka hosting India in a Test series next month and South Africa playing in England around the same time, those two will be jostling for top place.

TOP 10 TEST BATSMEN