

Women's chess resumes today

SPORTS REPORTER

The 30th Parachute National Women's Chess Championship will resume today with the seventh round of the competition at the Bangladesh Chess Federation hall-room.

Sharmin Sultana Shirin, who leads the table with maximum six points, will take on WFM Zakia Sultana.

Defending champion IWM Rani Hamid, now at second place along with Masuda Begum with 4.5 points, will face Farjana Hossain Anne. Masuda is pitted against Ahely Sarkar.

BFF, BHF condole

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) has condoled the death of BDR Director General Major General Shakil Ahmed, other army officers, jawans and all loss of lives in Wednesday's mutiny at the BDR headquarters.

Bangladesh Hockey Federation has also condoled the deaths and condemned the barbarous killings.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh Olympic Association and Shommlito Krija Poribar will organise a doa mahfil in memory of Gen Shakil at the NSC conference room on March 5 after the Asr prayers.

WADA okays Asif's ban

AFP, Lahore

The global anti-doping body Saturday endorsed a one-year ban placed on Pakistan's Mohammad Asif, saying it will not appeal against the punishment.

Asif, 26, tested positive for the banned steroid nandrolone during the opening season of the Indian Premier League (IPL) last year.

A doping tribunal of the league last month ruled that Asif violated the anti-doping codes and banned him for one year effective from September 22, 2008 to September 21, 2009.

There was speculation that the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) might ask for a stiffer penalty but its spokesman told AFP that it would not appeal.

"Under the Indian league rules, WADA has no right of appeal in first instance. The league rules give WADA a right of appeal in second instance," he said in an email message.

The IPL is recognised by the International Cricket Council which follows WADA doping rules.

"In this particular case, given that the parties allowed to appeal in first instance (the player and the IPL) chose not to appeal the initial decision within the deadline set forth, WADA could not pursue the matter further."

City's blues

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effort superbly saved by Rob Green, before missing a glorious opportunity at the far post when he stabbed wide after good work from Stephen Ireland and Craig Bellamy.

Former Hammers striker Bellamy, jeered by the home fans throughout on his return to Upton Park, was replaced by Elano in the 66th minute with the Brazilian seeing a late free-kick glanced onto the outside of the post by Lucas Neill.

Elsewhere, Blackburn Rovers got the better of Hull City with a two-goal salvo in three minutes from Stephen Warnock and Keith Andrews seeing off Phil Brown's side. In an ill-tempered affair both sides were reduced to ten men as Dean Marney saw red for Hull while Gamst Pederson received his marching orders for a reckless challenge.

Voronin

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Cottbus who drop into the danger zone.

Bochum's Austrian defender Christian Fuchs equalised with a direct free-kick on 54 minutes before French defender Marc Pletzel converted an 80th-minute penalty to give Bochum three much-needed points.

Struggling Schalke 04 allowed a late equaliser from Eintracht Frankfurt to threaten to share the points before Germany defender Heiko Westermann volleyed into an empty net in the 83rd minute.

The 2-1 win moves Schalke up to seventh in the league with Frankfurt now 13th.

Bayer Leverkusen were shocked by a 1-0 defeat at Hanover which leaves them sixth in the table, while Hanover are 12th.



Serbia's Novak Djokovic kisses the winner's trophy after beating Spaniard David Ferrer at the Dubai Open final on Saturday.

Djokovic wraps up Dubai

AFP, Dubai

Novak Djokovic closed up a little on Rafael Nadal and Roger Federer at the top of the world rankings by winning the 12th title of his career in the Dubai Open on Saturday.

The top-seeded, world number three from Serbia overcame Spaniard David Ferrer by 7-5, 6-3, and in some ways it was a slight surprise that Djokovic won the final with a little to spare.

He had not been in the greatest of form coming into the tournament, nor had he found it easy to deal with the tight schedule between the Marseille and Dubai tournaments, or the hot weather.

But having survived a marathon in 100-degree Fahrenheit temperatures against Gilles Simon of France the day before, he now showed his resilience as well as his ground stroke solidity with a gritty performance.

"It's a special night for me," Djokovic reckoned. "But it's more than that. This win in Dubai is going to give me a lot of confidence for the rest of the season."

The 2008 Australian Open champion had endured a sluggish start to the season with rivals believing his decision to switch racquet manufacturer was a major factor in his dip in form.

"I have not started the year the way I wanted. I made some major changes to racquets

which was quite risky. But I took responsibility, and that's what I did," said Djokovic whose Australian Open title defence ended at the last-eight stage.

"As the season is going on I feel more comfortable with the racquet, more comfortable on the court."

"I've got to release the pressure and play tennis like I have in the first part of 2008, and if I do I will be more successful."

Asked if he was trying to prove something after the criticism he received at the Australian Open, where he retired with heat exhaustion against Andy Roddick in the quarterfinals, Djokovic said: "No."

He added: "Everyone has a right to what they say. Of course there is criticism - it's not possible that everyone likes you, but I am trying to stay focussed on the right path."

Saturday's match was as strange as the weather, which had been dusty and with limited visibility, gradually depositing fine sand on the court.

Ferrer was all running, grunting, and vicious forehands, while Djokovic was two-winged and occasionally all court with his game.

The Serb let slip leads of 4-2 and 5-3, while the Spaniard looked as though he had recovered enough to take it to a tie-break, only to play a disappointing final game to the set.

There were five breaks of serve in all, and Ferrer's main consolation was that he had extended it to beyond 50

minutes and might be able to take advantage of Djokovic's exhausting semifinal.

But Djokovic had played a brilliant second point to take the final game and kept Ferrer under pressure in his opening service game of the second set.

Ferrer tried an ambitious inside out drive which slid just wide of the sideline and proved to be two inches out, according to the HawkEye computer replay to which he appealed.

That put him break point down, on which he tried a rare foray the net, where he put an angled stop volley out.

This put Djokovic 2-0 up, which he consolidated with increasing incisiveness and momentum to 3-0, and 4-1. But at 40-15 on his serve, about to reach 5-2, he faltered.

His first serve and ability to attack briefly disappeared and Ferrer, with some strident, even noisier forehands, got the break back. But it was a brief respite, for Ferrer could not take the chance he had created.

Instead he double faulted to go 3-5 and Djokovic closed out the match with a spectacular finish - an ace which had been called a fault, only for the decision to be reversed after Djokovic had made an agonising appeal.

The two men may meet again in the Davis Cup in Benidorm next week.

"That will be very different," said Djokovic immediately. "Here I had a great crowd, with plenty of Serbians. There he will have 15,000 Spaniards supporting him. He will be the favourite."

Broad	21	2	86	0
Swann	34	7	92	3
Pietersen	5	1	18	0
Bopara	7	0	33	0

Super Cup

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the format and bylaws and sent it to the clubs.

According to the B. League standings, champions Abahani will be pitted against Sheikh Russel, Chittagong Mohammedan and Rahmatganj while runners-up Mohammedan lead the other group involving Brothers Union, Farashganj and Chittagong Abahani.

The top two teams from each group will play in two-legged semifinals for a final berth while the remaining four compete for the Plate trophy.

A lot

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India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka have all nominated their venues for the event but Bangladesh lags behind as its submissions are still subject to government approval.

It would be huge task for the next two years to upgrade the facilities of the venues and it should be confirmed immediately that the government provides the budget as well as funds coming from the International Cricket Council (ICC).

"There remains a lot of work to do and we must start them as soon as possible," said Jalal. The ICC Cricket World Cup 2011 is set to kick-off in Dhaka on February 18, 2011 with the opening match scheduled on the following day.

India face ICL block

CRICINFO, undated

The Indian board's plan for six of its cricketers to turn out in New Zealand's domestic competition ahead of the Tests is in doubt with the New Zealand players' body saying it will not pull Indian Cricket League (ICL) players out of state squads to facilitate the games.

On Friday, the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) had withdrawn Sachin Tendulkar and Dinesh Karthik at the last minute from a charity match involving ICL player Hamish Marshall.

"There's no way we'd stand for that," New Zealand Cricket Players' Association chief Heath Mills was quoted as saying in the New Zealand Herald. "They're New Zealanders and they're perfectly entitled to play in a domestic league in their own country. We will not accept players being stood down because of the petty politics of another country."

Also, if the BCCI maintains its tough stance on the ICL it cannot allow its players to join teams that field players from the banned league -- this includes Canterbury (Shane Bond and Chris Harris) and Auckland (Daryl Tuffey). Tuffey is the only one to have played the four-day State Championship so far this season.

Proteas stay

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Hughes finally fell to a sharp diving catch at leg slip off Harris after facing 121 balls and hitting 11 fours and six.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard at stumps on the fourth day of the first Test between South Africa and Australia at the Wanderers Stadium in Johannesburg on Sunday:

AUSTRALIA: First innings 466
SOUTH AFRICA: First innings 220

AUSTRALIA: Second innings (overnight 51-1)

Hughes c De Villiers b Harris	75
Katich c Boucher b Morkel	10
Ponting c Amla b Kallis	25
Hussey c Ntini b Kallis	0
Clarke c Kallis b Harris	0
North b Kallis	5
Haddin c Boucher b Ntini	37
McDonald c Boucher b Ntini	7
Johnson c Kallis b Ntini	1
Siddle not out	22
Hillendhaus b Steyn	16
Extras: (lb-5, nb-3, w-1)	9
Total: (All out in 53.4 overs) 207	
Fall of wickets: 1-38, 2-99, 3-99, 4-99, 5-104, 6-138, 7-145, 8-147, 9-174.	

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Steyn	16.4	5	51	1
Ntini	11	3	52	3
Morkel	10	1	41	1
Harris	11	0	36	2
Kallis	5	0	22	3

SOUTH AFRICA: Second innings

McKenzie c Haddin b Johnson	35
Smith c Johnson b Hillendhaus	69
Amla not out	43
Kallis not out	26
Extras: (lb-1, w-1, nb-3)	5
Total: (For 2 wts in 55 overs) 178	
Fall of wickets: 1-76, 2-130.	

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Johnson	13	0	59	1
Hillendhaus	16	4	47	1
Siddle	12	2	32	0
McDonald	9	3	16	0
North	5	0	23	0

Real keep

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defended his decision to leave out players with an eye on the Spanish Cup.

"I had to rest them for Wednesday so that they would be fresh but still we had options in the game. We had possession but we committed two silly mistakes," he said.

Sevilla coach Manolo Jimenez said: "Our intention was not to think about Wednesday, we are an ambitious team and we have set ourselves targets in the league which we have to achieve."

On Sunday, Barcelona face Atletico Madrid and midfielder Yaya Toure feels it's imperative they don't allow any more points to slip away.

"We cannot allow Real to make any ground on us. Our last three games have been difficult for us in the way that the opposition have played," he said.

Elsewhere, Villarreal will be looking to consolidate their Champions League place when they face Real Betis, while misfiring Valencia aim to pick up ground with a win against Valladolid.

At the other end of the table Numancia are in deep trouble and have asked for a big crowd to get behind the players against Deportivo La Coruna. Mallorca, who have put together back-to-back wins, know that a further victory against Sporting Gijon could take them clear of the relegation zone.

The immovable Sarwan

Cricket

AFP, Bridgetown

Graeme Swann has admitted that Ramnareesh Sarwan has become a thorn in England's side after the West Indies batsman struck his third hundred of their Test series on Saturday.

Sarwan's marathon, undefeated 184 followed scores of 107, 94, and 106 in his three previous innings in the series, and has enhanced West Indies' chances of saving the fourth Test at Kensington Oval.

Sarwan's 14th Test hundred carried West Indies to 398 for five, replying to England's first innings total of 600 for six declared, at the close on the third day -- leaving the home team three runs short of avoiding the follow-on.

"He has been a pain in the backside for us in the series so far," Swann said. "We need to come up with a method for dislodging him."

"He has been good enough to get a hundred and get out in the previous three knocks, but

(on Saturday), he carried on after he got the milestone and he has been hard to get out."

"He must be due a low score at some stage, so let's hope it is in the second innings of this Test."

This may be wishful thinking on Swann's part because Sarwan believes that West Indies have not yet reached the threshold of safety.

"I do not think we have reached safe waters just yet," he said. "There is still a lot of time to go. There is two days left in the match."

"(On Sunday) we have to try and continue from where we left off. Denesh (Ramdin) and I seem to be going pretty well, so we just want to continue to build that partnership."

"Our aim right now is to get way past 400, whether I get a double-hundred or not. I just want to bat for as long as possible, and continue to form partnership with the batsmen to come."

Sarwan shared four significant partnerships that boosted the West Indies. He added 108 for the second wicket with Devon Smith, 122 for the fourth

wicket with compatriot Shivnarine Chanderpaul, 53 for the fifth wicket with Brendan Nash, and 64 -- unbroken -- with Ramdin.

"I think it is a matter of us forming partnerships," he said. "This is what we have been concentrating on doing in this series."

"I think we did it (this time) quite consistently. After Shiv got out, Brendan came in and we got a 50 partnership, and then another with Denesh."

"This is what we have been trying to do for a long time -- form partnerships -- and it worked."

Sarwan is clearly in the form of his life, and seems unwilling to accept any labelling of him as a star batsman.

"It is one of my better knocks, but I don't want to get carried away," he said. "I still have a lot of cricket to be played in my career."

"I just want to take it step by step, and this is just another stepping stone, and hopefully, one day when I retire, things will fall into place. I do not want to look too far ahead."

De Villiers on track

Cricket

CRICINFO, Wanderers

In the lead-up to the Johannesburg Test AB de Villiers spoke of his desire to become the best batsman in the world. It's a bold ambition for a player currently sitting 21st on the ICC's Test batting rankings. But for a man who has just turned 25 and has enjoyed the most prolific year of his career, it's a commendable aspiration.

The first step would be to develop into the leading batsman in his own side and on the third day at the Wanderers he was without question South Africa's star. de Villiers came in at a precarious 49 for 3 and together with Neil McKenzie slowly put things back on track. That there was a further derailment later in the innings was not de Villiers' fault.

His brilliant 104 was his fifth Test century since the start of 2008, a calendar year that brought him 1061 runs at 58.94. In the four Tests against Australia in the past couple of months he has been South Africa's leading scorer with 347 runs, ahead of acknowledged champions like Graeme Smith and Jacques Kallis.

To achieve that feat batting from No. 5 deserves extra credit. When he spoke of his desire to become the world's best batsman he specifically pointed out that it was next to impossible to manage that while coming in at five or six. De Villiers wants to bat at No. 4 and with Kallis struggling for form it would not be the worst move for South Africa to make a middle-order switch.

In four of his five most recent hundreds de Villiers has been left unbeaten, sometimes due to declaration, sometimes because he had run out of partners and once, memorably, because he had orchestrated the world's second highest Test run chase. On this occasion, when he walked off the Wanderers with 104 next to his name, his teammates had lacked the ability to stay alive in the difficult conditions that de Villiers had mastered.

His first 100 balls brought 34 runs as survival was the primary objective. An inexperienced attack made up of Mitchell Johnson, Peter Siddle and Ben Hilfenhaus didn't give away many scoring opportunities. In general his partners didn't fall due to lack of patience but because of an inability to fend off the dangerous swinging, seaming or bouncing balls.

That was not a problem for de Villiers, whose eyes were good. Australia tried to bowl fuller than South Africa had and when de Villiers was given opportunities to drive he did so with excellent timing and judgment. As his colleagues came and went, he lifted his

rate and managed to reach his century with a forceful pull to the boundary off Hilfenhaus.

His final contribution of 104 out of 220 was a mammoth effort in trying circumstances. Since the tour of Australia he has had his wisdom teeth removed but clearly hasn't lost any smarts. For a man who made his Test debut at 20 -- incidentally the same age as Australia's Phillip Hughes -- nearly five years at the highest level has been invaluable.

"I've worked on a few things over the last few years and it's coming together pretty nicely," de Villiers said. "If anything I'm just taking my opportunities better than ever. When I get to 50 I try and make sure that I get to 100. My technique has got better of the last few years and I'm obviously a better player with experience."

Going on to capitalise on his fifties has been a notable feature of his play in recent months. Of the past eight months he has reached 50 in a Test innings he has turned it into three figures on five occasions. This is a man who has learnt the art of fulfilling his promise.

It is fitting that he spoke of converting starts during his 50th Test. If he can also turn that half-century into a hundred, South African cricket will be all the better for it. It might even give him a chance of becoming the world's best.

Twin ton-up

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added 61 for the third wicket with Sangakkara before Gul struck again. He had Jayawardene caught behind off a moving delivery soon after lunch.

Jayawardene, who hit 240 in Karachi, hit five boundaries. Both teams made one change from their first Test line-up. Pakistan gave a Test debut to Mohammad Talha in place of Sohail Khan, while Sri Lanka made a tough call by excluding veteran paceman Chaminda Vaas and brought in Thilan Thushara.

Talha struggled with his line and went wicket-less in his 11 overs.

SCOREBOARD
Scoreboard at stumps on the first day of the second Test between Pakistan and Sri Lanka at the Gaddafi Stadium in Lahore on Sunday:

SRI LANKA: First innings

Warnapura c Misbahul b Gul	8
Paranavitana c Malik b Gul	21
Sangakkara c Akmal b Arafat	104
M Jayawardene c Akmal b Gul	30
Samaraweera not out	133
Dilshan not out	3
Extras: (b-4, nb-12, w-2)	18
Total: (For four wts in 86.4 overs) 317	
To bat: P Jayawardene, Thushara, Fernando, Mendis, Muralidaran.	
Fall of wickets: 1-16, 2-35, 3-96, 4-300.	

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Gul	19.4	2	67	3
Talha	11	0	50	1
Arafat	13	2	53	0
Kaneria	24	1	89	0
Malik	17	2	45	0
Younis	2	0	9	0

Toss: Pakistan
Umpires: Simon Taufel (AUS), Steve Davis (AUS)
TV umpire: Nadeem Ghouri (PAK)
Match referee: Chris Broad (ENG)

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS	DOWN
1 Emotional "Analyze This" one?	1 Frau's mister
4 Watch co-star chain	2 "... black-birds, baked in--"
7 Pop duo, -- and 44 Clarinet	3 St. with two peninsulas
11 Magnificent tale	50 Nil
13 Neighbor	53 Have a bug
14 Firetruck necessity	55 Therefore island
15 Quipent certainty	6 Great joy
16 Actor	7 Two and a Half Men
17 Church section	8 Bound
18 Recovery regimen	9 Donkey
20 Cold War	10 Ruby or Sandra
22 Like 20-Across	61 Apply lightly
23 Brunei bigwig	12 Snoopy's owner
28 Hot water tanks	13 Spelling contest
32 Liberate's instrument	21 Dine
33 Con	23 Parched
34 Assen-ter's vote	25 Bakery offering
36 Sea eagle	26 Koumi-koya of tennis
37 Superman comparison	27 Christmas refrain
	28 Low voice
	29 Aware of
	30 Detail
	31 Moment
	35 Branch
	38 Shelter
	40 Tibetan critter
	42 Do a double-take
	45 Catastrophic
	47 Raised
	48 Taj Mahal
	49 Nitwit
	50 Use a ray gun
	51 She (raised Cain)
	52 Kangaroo kid
	54 Caustic solution

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11		12		13		14		15	
16			17		18		19		20