

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 Sarwan.

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 Aheya 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 Shomnilito Krira Poribar will organise a doa mahlif 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 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 Garmt 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 Pfertzel 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.



PHOTO: AFP

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

Tennis

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 Marseilles 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 necessary 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 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."

At the interval, after they had continued from their overnight total of 85 for one.

The spinner struck with his third ball of the day, after Sarwan and Smith batted through the first hour to add 108 for the second wicket.

Swann had adjudged lbw playing defensively forward -- a decision which the batsmen challenged and TV replays seemed to suggest the ball would beat off-stump.

Swann again provided England with the breakthrough about five minutes before the interval, when Hinds was also adjudged lbw playing defensively forward, but this decision was not referred although it too looked questionable.

After lunch, England endured a wicket-less foil, as Sarwan reached his milestone and found Shivarne Chanderpaul an unflappable partner to take West Indies 265 for three at tea.

Sarwan's hundred followed scores of 107, 94, and 106 in his previous three innings in the series before Chanderpaul then cut Ravi Bopara through backward point for a single to reach his 50 from 80 balls.

After tea, Sarwan and Chanderpaul continued merrily and were just getting into the swing of things when Anderson struck with the second newball.

He got Chanderpaul to offer no stroke to a delivery that straightened and umpire Russell Tiffen adjudged him lbw -- which the batsman appealed and lost -- although TV evidence suggested the ball may have travelled over the top of the stumps.

Windies almost safe

FROM PAGE 17

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Twice Aleem Dar turned them down only for England to challenge and the Pakistani umpire to change his mind about the second decision.

Ramdin joined Sarwan whose 150 came when he drove Swann through mid-off for his 15th four.

England trail in the five-Test series following an innings and 23-run defeat in the opening Test at Sabina Park in Jamaica.

The second Test at the Vivian Richards Cricket Ground in Antigua was abandoned while the third Test at the Antigua Recreation Ground was drawn.

The final Test starts next Friday in Trinidad.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard at stumps on the third day of the fourth Test between West Indies and England at Kensington Oval on Saturday:

ENGLAND: First innings 600-6 declared (Strauss 142, Bopara 104)

WEST INDIES: First innings (overnight 85 for one)

Smith lbw Swann 55
Gayle bwb Anderson 6
Sarwan not out 184

Hinds lbw Swann 15
Chanderpaul lbw Anderson 70
Nash lbw Swann 33

Ramdin not out 25
Extras: (b-4, lb-3, nb-3) 10
Total: (For 5 wkt in 109 overs) 398

To bat: Taylor, Benn, Powell, Edwards.

Fall of wickets: 1-13, 2-121, 3-

159, 4-281, 5-334.

Bowler O M R W
Anderson 20 3 79 2
Sidebottom 22 2 83 0

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

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According to the B. League standings, champions Abahani will be pitted against Sheikh Russell, Chittagong Mohammedan and Rahmatganj while runners-up Mohammadian 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

FROM PAGE 17

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 a 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 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.

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the back-foot when Nash came to the crease and played a brief, but feisty knock before Swann twice appealed for lbw verdicts.

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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 a six.

SCOREBOARD

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