

New schedule considered for Pak series

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) is looking forward to hold the Pakistan-Bangladesh limited-overs series at the end of this month.

It was learnt that the game's governing body in the country will chalk out a new schedule in a very short time and take the issue to the concerned government authorities.

"Everything would depend on the government decision," said a BCB official on condition of anonymity yesterday.

Ahmed Sajjadul Alam, BCB's director and tour organising secretary, met with the State Minister for Youth and Sports Ahsan Ali Sarkar yesterday.

"I met with the minister today and he said that the government is also giving importance to the tour. And he hoped that it would be possible to announce a new schedule in a very short time," said Sajjadul.

BCB is considering a slot from March 26 because it would be difficult for them to find gaps for the tour due to the IPL and Twenty20 World Cup schedules in England.

The Pakistan cricket team were due to arrive in Dhaka today to play two Twenty20 games and five one-day internationals but BCB postponed

SEE PAGE 18 COL 4



PHOTO: STAR

An armed security guard mans the exits as Bangladesh and Gazi Tank skipper Mohammad Ashraful leaves the field after their Premier Cricket League encounter against Old DOHS at the Fatullah Cricket Stadium yesterday.

Rain spoils India party

Cricket

AFP, Wellington

The second one-day cricket international between New Zealand and India was called off here Friday after frequent rain disruptions.

After India won the toss and elected to bat they reached 188 for four in 28.4 overs before rain forced the players from the field for the third time and the umpires declared the match abandoned.

The game had progressively been reduced from 50 to 44, then 33 overs before being called off.

Amid the showers, India were setting the stage for a big innings, cashing in on a typical rapid start by Sachin Tendulkar, who made 61, and Virender Sehwag, who was out for 54.

When the match started -- after the players had observed a minute's silence in memory of those killed and injured in Tuesday's terrorist attack in Pakistan -- Sehwag was circumspect by his standards.

But in the fifth over he belted four boundaries off Kyle Mills and raced to 54 with a minimal amount of running.

Restricted by a left leg injury, which necessitated the use of a runner late in his innings, Sehwag preferred the short route to gather runs and by the time he was controversially dismissed he had pounded nine boundaries and one six.

He was surprisingly sent back to the pavilion by umpire Evan Watkin, who ruled he was caught behind when television replays clearly showed the ball coming off the pads and passing nowhere near the bat.

Tendulkar, who had played sedately while Sehwag was at the crease accelerated after his departure.

He was dropped by Mills off Ian Butler on 22 and then belted the next two balls for six and four as he raced to 61.

But with India well poised at 139 for one by the 22nd over, Tendulkar mistimed a sweep and was trapped in front by Daniel Vettori.

Yuvraj Singh came and

went quickly, lasting four balls before he was caught by Ross Taylor off Mills without scoring, before Gautam Gambhir and Mahendra Singh Dhoni reigned the innings.

Gambhir had reached 30 off 36 balls when he fell to Ian O'Brien while trying to lift the pace after the second rain disruption, and when the rain drove the players off the field for the third and final time, Dhoni was unbeaten on 23 with Suresh Raina on 13.

Vettori and Butler were the pick of the New Zealand bowlers, with Vettori claiming one for 14 off three overs, while Butler had one for 38 off seven.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard in the rain-affected second one-day international between New Zealand and India at the Westpac Stadium in Wellington on Friday:

INDIA

Sehwag c McGlashan b Butler 54
Tendulkar lbw b Vettori 61
Gambhir c Elliott b O'Brien 30
Yuvraj c Taylor b Mills 0
Dhoni not out 23

SEE PAGE 18 COL 4

Shirin new chess queen

SPORTS REPORTER

Sharmin Sultana Shirin clinched her maiden national chess title when she defeated Amena Khutun in the 11th and final round of the Parachute 30th National Women's Chess Championship yesterday.

Shirin, who completed her tenth win in the competition in 48 moves at the federation chess-room, finished with ten points.

Shirin lost only to Zakia Sultana in seventh round.

Last year's runner-up WFM Shamima Akther Liza retained her position defeating outgoing champion IWM Rani Hamid, whose bid to win a world record 18 titles ended with a fifth-place finish.

Liza and Rani Hamid collected 9.5 and eight points respectively.

Apart from Rani Hamid, WFM Zakia Sultana and Nazrana Khan Eva also collected eight points but the

veteran quit the play-offs to settle for fifth place. Zakia and Eva locked horns in the 3rd-4th place play-off.

Other positions: Masuda Begum (6th, 7.5 points), Jahanara Haque Runu (7th, 4), Rokhsana Titu (8th, 3.5), Ahely Sarkar (9th, 2.5), Farjana Hossain Anne (10th, 2.5), Protiva Talukder (11th, 1.5), Amena Khutun (12th, 1).

In other final round matches, Zakia beat Titu, Masuda beat Protiva, Runu drew with Ahely and Eva got walkover against Anne.

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PHOTO: STAR
New champion Sharmin Sultana Shirin ponders over a move during her final round game of the 30th National Women's Chess Championship at the federation hall room yesterday.

ICC Women's WC starts today

SPORTS REPORTER

Australia have the home advantage and the statistical benefit of being unbeaten in a one-day series' since 2000, as the ICC Women's World Cup starts today Down Under.

Pakistan meet India at the Bradman Oval in Bowral while England play Sri Lanka at the Manuka Oval in Canberra in the opening fixtures of the World Cup.

Eight teams split into two groups are participating in the event with England, Sri Lanka, India and Pakistan in Group A and South Africa, West Indies, New Zealand and hosts Australia in Group B.

A glittering ceremony marked the beginning of the ICC Women's World Cup Cricket, which is being held under the aegis of International Cricket Council this year for the first time, at the iconic Luna Park in Sydney on Thursday.

"It has only been four years since women's cricket came under the ICC's control but its rapid growth since that time can be gauged from the fact that from 15 members playing the sport in 2005, we now have 78 members who are involved in some form of women's and

SEE PAGE 18 COL 1

Gazi closer to leaders

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

Imrul Kayes and Mohammad Ashraful shone with the bat after Sajju Datta's four-wicket haul as Gazi Tank removed Old DOHS from the second place with a four-wicket victory in the Premier Cricket League at the Fatullah Stadium yesterday.

With five win in seven games, newcomers Gazi remained two points adrift of joint leaders Biman, Abahani and Surjo Torun who are on 12 points each. DOHS slipped to third position with eight points.

Away at BKSP, a quickfire half-century by Sharifullah helped Victoria register their second win when they handed a 54-run defeat to Young Pegasus. It was Pegasus's sixth defeat in seven rounds.

Defending champions Abahani meet Surjo Torun in a top-of-the-table clash at Fatullah today while Partex face CCS at BKSP. Former Indian international batsman Venugopal Rao who had left after fifth round, would be available for Abahani today.

GAZI-DOHS

New ball bowler Mukter Ali caused the initial damage before left-arm orthodox Sajju claimed four wickets for 32 in his ten-over spell to restrict Old DOHS to 214-9.

Mukter trapped both the openers -- Anhoo Niwaz (4) and Fazle Rabbi (29) -- and made another successful lbw appeal against Mahmudullah Riyad, who top scored 49 off 82 balls without any boundary, to finish with figures of 34-1.

In reply, Gazi lost an early wicket when Anwar Hossain was trapped in front for five runs but Nafis Iqbal joined Imrul Kayes to consolidate their position by sharing 79 runs

for the second wicket.

Nafis scored 29 off 59 balls with three fours while national opener Imrul smashed eight boundaries to score team highest 52 off 67 balls.

Ashraful followed up his hundred in the previous game with a quickfire 29-ball 42 that saw six fours before the Bangladesh captain became a run out victim while Nayem Islam was not out on 31 as Gazi reached 218-6 with 19 balls to spare.

VICTORIA-PEGASUS

Victoria piled up an imposing total of 286-5 after deciding to bat first, thanks to half centuries from Amit Majumder, Faisal Akhter and Sharifullah.

Opener Amit scored highest 70 off 96 balls with five fours and a six while Faisal contributed 51 off 73 balls that featured two fours and a six but it was Sharifullah who put the opposition bowlers to the sword during an unbeaten 37-ball 68 laced with six fours and three sixes.

In reply, Pegasus lost wickets at regular intervals before being bundled out for 232.

The highest 83-run partnership came from Humayun Kabir (64) and Iftekhar Nayem (45) for the sixth wicket stand.

Raihan Anas was the most successful bowler with three for 45.

BRIEF SCORES

DOHS: 214-9 in 50 overs (Rabbi 29, Wasim 35, Mehrab 17, Riyad 49, Golam Rahman 31, Ejaz 22, extras 8; Mukter 3-41, Sajju 4-32)

GAZI: 218-6 in 46.5 overs (Imrul 52, Nafis 29, Ashraful 42, Nayem 31*, Mukter 23*, extras 15; Abul 2-38)

Result: Gazi Tank won by four wickets.

VICTORIA: 286-5 in 50 overs (Amit 70, Shakil 26, Faisal 51, Sharifullah 68*, Raihan 21, Arifat 27*, extras 18; Riazul 2-52)

PEGASUS: 232 all out in 47.2 overs (Faisal 47, Humayun 64, Iftekhar 45, extras 10; Palash 2-43, Taposh 2-50, Sharifullah 2-19, Raihan 3-45).

Result: Victoria won by 54 runs.

U-13 Festival

final round

from today

SPORTS REPORTER

The final round of the Under-13 Football Festival will kick off today in Mymensingh with eight teams competing in two groups.

Six group stage matches

will be held today and six more

tomorrow to decide the semi-

finalists. The semifinals and

the final will be held on

Monday.

The Bangladesh Football

Federation (BFF) has already

selected 143 budding footballers

from the tournament's

qualifying rounds to take

them to a two-day trial. After

the Match 10-11 trial, the

squad will be short-listed to 22

members to represent

Bangladesh in the AFC

Football Festival in Iran.

The finalists: Group-A:

Bogra, Narayanganj, Jhalakathi,

Satkhira; Group-B: Chuadanga,

Chapainawabganj, Tangail,

Chittagong.

Scoreboard

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SEE PAGE 18 COL 4

Abahani target title

Farashganj want to surprise

SPORTS REPORTER

While Abahani eye the Tk one-

crore top prize in the Citycell

Super Cup

success in consecutive years,

Farashganj will be out to dent

the pride of the giants in the

richest ever domestic football

competition in the sub-

continent.

"Abahani never go into a tournament for

being second best. We want the trophy and