

BSWA honours Ranjit in Sylhet

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

The Sylhet district unit of Bangladesh Sports Writers Association (BSWA) at a function yesterday accorded reception to national sports award recipient and veteran footballer Ranjit Dass at the Zilla Krira Bhaban.

A national footballer and hockey player in the 1960s, Ranjit was honoured with the national sports award years ago.

Three other sports personalities -- Abdul Halim Jony (hockey) and Azad Khan and Mahub Hossain (cricket) were also honoured at the function.

Sylhet City Corporation Mayor Badar Uddin Ahmed Kamran was present as chief guest at the function while general secretary of Sylhet DSA Khondaker Fazlur Rahman Babul, general secretary of Sylhet Press Club Ahmed Nur, Divisional Sports Association general secretary Imran Chowdhury and founder president of Sylhet BSWA Ahea Reza Chowdhury were special guests.

The Mayor announced that the City Corporation will soon launch a football tournament.

Ranjit Dass called upon the City Corporation, sports organisers and the club officials to work united for bringing a change in the district's sports arena, which had long been lying at a poor state. He also urged organisers to hold tournaments immediately to save football in Sylhet as the first division football league has not been played in the district for years.

CHAMPS TROPHY IN SA Pakistan will still gain

AFP, Lahore

Pakistan will still pocket 2.75 million dollars from the Champions Trophy despite the event being shifted to South Africa for security reasons, a top cricket official said here Tuesday.

South Africa was approved on Monday as the new host of the biennial tournament in September-October by the board of International Cricket Council (ICC) after the decision last month to take it out of troubled Pakistan.

However the ICC board decided that Pakistan will keep the hosting rights, ensuring a significant windfall for the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB), the sport's governing body here.

A terrorist attack on the Sri Lankan team earlier this month in Lahore which left eight policemen dead and wounded seven Sri Lankan players and a coach further dented Pakistan's hopes of staging international cricket.

The Champions Trophy had already been taken away from Pakistan after several teams had expressed fears about security.

Neil may sue

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believes a bigger club would have been treated differently.

"I think Scudamore is an absolute disgrace," added Warnock. "I'd love to get him in a room on my own for an hour, no holds barred. If it was any other club, Scudamore would have made sure the facts came out. I find it amazing that he has kept his job."

"If it had been a big club, the truth would have come out earlier and it would have been sorted."

A joint investigation by the Premier League and Football Association into the Tevez and Mascherano signings is ongoing.

Wenger backs

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he scored a great goal, it came naturally and I think he was very happy about it," the full-back added.

"Every time he plays he is good and he can play on the right, on the left and up front as well."

Semifinalists

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semifinals and the March 27 final.

BFF president Kazi Salahuddin had defended local referees but he too, was irked during the Abahani-Chittagong Mohammedan Group A match where FIFA referee Azad Rahman failed to establish his authority properly.

The return-leg semifinals are due for March 23 and 24.

The Plate semifinals -- Sheikh Russel-Chittagong Abahani and Farashganj-Rahmatganj -- will be held on March 21 and 22 and the final on March 25.



Former Japan international footballer Tsuyoshi Kitazawa (L) presents a national team shirt to BFF president and ex-Bangladesh football captain Kazi Salahuddin at the BFF Bhaban yesterday.

MSC puncture

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Imrul Kayes at second slip off Rubel Hossain.

Tigers batter Raquibul Hassan came in next and made an insipid 27 off 46 balls before perishing at short cover to Wassel Uddin off Gazi Tank and national captain Mohammad Ashraf.

The Mohammedan innings progressed steadily, up till the next wicket of Nadimuddin Mintu who top-scored with 65, hitting seven boundaries.

Marshal Ayub, who is considered one of the finest batsmen on the domestic circuit, strolled into the middle and scored a characteristic 33 of 37 balls, which included just one four. He fell to an identical delivery that got Jayasuriya out, the ball just landing and swimming up to the pads.

When Shamsur Rahman returned it was expected that he would bolster his team's innings at that stage, which looked a little unsteady at 186-5 in 44.2 overs. But, he could only send Rubel on a hat-trick as he chased one outside off stump and Mohammad Mithun gloved a simple catch at chest height behind the stumps.

But number seven Foyzal Hossain denied the bowler his milestone when he dug out a fast and well-directed ball on length. Foyzal eventually took the Mohammedan total beyond 200 together with skipper Sohrwardi Shuvo who hit the last ball of the innings

for a four through midwicket to take the total to 216-9.

When Gazi Tank started the chase not even the wildest cricket pundit would have predicted that in about an hour and a half, it would be time for the post-match presentation.

After national opener Imrul Kayes edged a decisive outswinger off another national paceman Tareq Aziz the score-board read at 4-1, Bangladesh captain Mohammad Ashraf continued to develop his wrong shot selections as he lobbed a simple catch to long leg fielder Sajidul Islam, to a rising delivery by Tareq.

Gazi's Indian recruit Niranjan Behera fell victim to a ball, which pitched well up and swung in late to disturb the furniture by Sajidul Islam.

Wickets fell like a pack of cards, which soon reduced Gazi to 36-7 and it clearly looked like a score of 50 would be daunting to reach, but when the last three batsmen scammed to the half mark, they could only better it by three more runs before the innings folded at 53.

Captain Sohrwardi Shuvo took the final wicket of Rubel Hossain who scooped one down the throat of Murad Khan at short midwicket.

Sajidul Islam was adjudged the player-of-the-match for his hearty bowling that earned him three wickets for 16 runs in five overs.

Abahani flying high

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Zahurul at gully.

Tamim made 66 off 98 balls with the help of five fours and a six. It was, however, the Orissa right-hander who took the spotlight by playing a scintillating knock of 79.

Parida played some brilliant cover drives during his 73-ball essay which contained ten boundaries before pacesman Shahadat Hossain uprooted his stumps with a well-directed delivery.

Mahubul was the most successful bowler with three wickets for 48.

Biman made an impressive start in the chase as Nazmus Sadat and Zahurul added 52 runs in 9.2 overs before Nasir Hossain gave Abahani the breakthrough by removing the former for 24.

The national flag carrier were very much in the match when they reached 167 for the loss of three wickets but lost their way following a chaos which saw them lose three more wickets in the span of eight runs. The match was stopped for a while with heated exchanges between Biman players and Abahani fans over the issue of appointing a runner for Zahurul.

Biman failed to get back the

Jayasuriya

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and Gazi Tank at the Fatullah Cricket Stadium.

Asked whether the new captain has enough time in his hands to prepare for the upcoming Twenty20 World Cup, Jayasuriya said, "Yeah, he's got enough time to prepare the team. Because he has been so long with the team, he knows the ins and outs of the side and understands all of us really well, so time is definitely not against him."

Jayasuriya, now playing for Mohammedan, also added that Sangakkara had full support of all his teammates and senior players.

Sri Lanka has recently had their Pakistan tour cut short due to a terrorist attack on their team bus at Lahore, and their next international fixture is the Twenty20 World Cup in England this June.

LOCAL SNIPPETS

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Police recorded an emphatic 3-0 victory against Titus Club in yesterday's NBL Premier Volleyball League. Police won the sets 25-14, 25-18 and 25-17 at the Dhaka Volleyball Stadium.

In first division, Swabalambi Society blanked Dhaka Green.

HANDBALL

Abdus Sobhan team suffered their second consecutive defeat in the Swadhinata Cup handball tournament when they went down 30-28 to Nazrul Islam team at the Dhaka handball court.

Mahub scored 13 goals for the winners while Asad slammed nine for Sobhan team, which suffered another slim defeat in the tournament opener on Monday.

Kabir clinches qualifying title

SPORTS REPORTER

Sirajul Kabir became unbeaten champion in the Metropolitan Selection Chess Tournament -- the qualifying competition for the 35th National Chess Championship -- which concluded yesterday at the Bangladesh Chess Federation hall room.

Siraj finished with 7.5 points when he drew the ninth and final round game with Habibur Rahman Sohel.

Three players earned seven points each but Shamim Khan was runners-up for higher tie-breaking points. Ibrahim Hossain Sohel clinched third and fourth places respectively.

The top 16 players of the competition qualify for this year's national chess finals.

The other qualifiers are: 5th- Obaidul Islam Shahin, 6th- Giasuddin Mithu, 7th- Quamruzzaman Imran, 8th- Imrose Uddin, 9th- Badrul Alam, 10th- Sheik Mohammed Khairul, 11th- Sheikh Anwar Hossain, 12th- Hafizul Islam Chapal, 13th- Mohammed Abdul Momin, 14th- Abul Kashem, 15th- Masum Hossain, 16th- Amir Hossain.

BRIEF SCORES

ABAHANI: 269-7 in 50 overs (Tamim 66, Rony 25, Sahagir 17, Ranjan 79, Nasir 25, Mashrafe 16, extras 13; Mahubul 3-48, Shahajada 1-47, Shahadat 2-67, Nabil 1-43)

BIMAN: 231 all out in 46 overs (Sadat 24, Zahurul 78, Javed 13, Zahid 37, Sajjad 24, Shahajada 23, extras 21; Shahadat 1-46, Nasir 2-23, Sunny 1-59, Mashrafe 3-45)

Result: Abahani won by 38 runs.

Stanfords

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and his wife owed 110 million dollars in taxes and 116.5 million in penalties and interest for the years 1999 through 2003.

The agency asked the judge to order Stanford to file his 2007 taxes and grant the IRS permission to sue Stanford and his wife, Susan Stanford, for back taxes.

Stanford informed the court last week that he will exercise his constitutional guarantee against self-incrimination and will not testify or cooperate with investigators from the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC).

Cricket

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cautioned them.

"It was unacceptable and unexpected what happened today (Tuesday). I summoned both the players for hearing and warned them. It's something new which happened today and that's why I just asked them to be careful in future," said Masum, the former national player.

"I also asked the venue manager not to allow the fans in an area which is supposed to be restricted for them and I can assure you that from the next day you will see the changes," he said.

ICC WOMEN'S WORLD CUP

Eng storm into final

CRICINFO, undated

England marched into the final and further cemented themselves as favourites with a strong win against West Indies at Drummoyne Oval on Tuesday. It will be England's first appearance in a final since their victorious home campaign in 1993.

The gulf in experience between the two sides told with West Indies surrendering for 90 in reply to England's 236. Sarah Taylor returned to form, top-scoring with 78 in an opening stand of 134 with Caroline Atkins. Claire Taylor then boosted England to an unassailable total with a quickfire 65 from 56 balls after they lost 4 wickets for 11. She gave the innings some late impetus, adding 26 runs in 18 balls with captain Charlotte Edwards, who batted down the order to give the others a chance to get some runs.

West Indies' batsmen had no answer to England's penetrative bowlers who have now bowled out the opposition in both Super Six contests. England's fielders backed up the bowlers with razor-sharp fielding.

What would worry England is the implosion of their middle- and lower-order batsmen -- after Sarah Taylor was the first wicket to fall in the 32nd over. The next seven wickets added a mere 91 to the total. West Indies used nine bowlers to try and stem the flow of runs with medium-pace Shanel Daley proving the most successful with a career-best 3 for 31.

Marriage matters most!

AFP, Melbourne

Australian batsman Adam Voges put his upcoming wedding ahead of representing his country Tuesday when he withdrew from the one-day and Twenty20 squad to play in South Africa.

The 29-year-old said he could not reschedule his April 5 nuptials, which had been planned for 12 months, and admitted the decision could affect future selection prospects, despite assurances to the contrary.

"There's people coming from a lot of different places, it's been planned for a long time now," he told reporters.

The West Australian, who has played for his country in three Twenty20 matches and a single one-dayer, said he spoke with chairman of selectors Andrew Hilditch and coach Tim Nielsen before making his decision.

"There's certainly no guarantees that I'm going to get selected again and I fully understand that and realise that," he said.

"I spoke at length to Andrew Hilditch and Tim Nielsen and they were both really good, they were both very supportive and Andrew said this won't affect (future selection) in any negative fashion."

Voges asked for permission to fly home when he realised the ceremony clashed with the one-dayer but Hilditch said it was impractical.

He will be replaced in the squad by fellow West Australian Marcus North.

Viv Stadium suspended

AFP, Dubai

The International Cricket Council (ICC) has informed the West Indies Cricket Board (WICB) that no more international cricket can take place at the Sir Vivian Richards Stadium in Antigua until extensive remedial work is carried out and it passes an inspection by the ICC.

In February the ground was the scene of a Test match between the West Indies and England that lasted just 10 balls before being abandoned because of a chewed up outfield that was deemed dangerous to fielders.

The ICC also said in a statement that the WICB had been given an official warning for not preparing the ground effectively for what was to have been the second Test match between the two sides.

"Appropriate work must now be carried out and monitored by the WICB before the inspection can take place," the statement said, adding that at least a year would have to pass before this could be carried out.

Johnson gets into his swing

CRICINFO, undated

Batsmen the world over must be whispering to each other in hushed, worried tones. Word is spreading that Mitchell Johnson has found it. The second top wicket-taker in Tests last year, Johnson picked up his 63 breakthroughs without the key weapon of swinging the ball in to right-handers. Observers wondered how good he could be if he ever mastered that skill. The world is about to find out.

When he took the new ball in the first Test in Johannesburg, Johnson surprised the South Africans immediately with his newfound ability. Where once he had relied almost exclusively on his speed and bounce as the ball followed his natural angle, Johnson moved the ball in to Neil McKenzie and then found an outside edge from the left-hander Graeme Smith to give Australia the perfect start to the series.

"I don't know if it was the first or second ball that swung back into McKenzie," Johnson said. "My first two balls to Smith swung and obviously the second one got him. Being a left-arter bowling to a left-hander you've more chance of swinging it but it was actually really nice to see it swing back into the right-hander and swing back as much as it did."

"It put a bit of a smile on my face when it came about. I knew I'd done all the hard work in the nets. It wasn't like it just happened out of the blue. I'd been swinging it in the nets and it had been going well, and had my opportunity with the new ball and really wanted that chance to go out there and bowl with the new ball and swing it."

The opportunity to take the new ball was given to Johnson during last year's tour of the West Indies and was then withdrawn because he battled to control the swing. His existing armory was enough to cause chaos every now and then, like when he skittled South Africa in

Federer moves on

AFP, Indian Wells

Roger Federer was more than a match for the firepower of Ivo Karlovic Monday, beating the towering Croatian in straight sets to reach the fourth round of the Indian Wells hardcourt tennis tournament.

The Swiss world number two, seeded second in the first ATP Masters series of 2009 behind world number one Rafael Nadal, needed only 70 minutes to notch a 7-6 (7/4), 6-3 victory - his seventh over Karlovic in eight career meetings.

The Swiss, who calls Karlovic's first serve "untouchable," was nonetheless able to withstand 13 aces by the Croatian, breaking him in the seventh game of the second set to avoid another tie-

India start favourites

FROM PAGE 17

"If the wicket is a bit damp and it gets a bit cloudy you know that will help the seamers and that's a toss you want to win," he said.

Whether New Zealand bat first or second, the pressure is on their bowlers to perform if the match is to be competitive.

They will be looking for the pace in the wicket they enjoyed in Auckland on Saturday when they had their sole one-day success.

However, the New Zealand attack, which is expected to be led by the recall of the experienced Chris Martin, cannot afford any loose deliveries or they will be punished.

Sehwag averages 51.06 from his 66 Tests, while around him are the veteran trio with impressive averages, and nicknames to match.

Tendulkar, known as "the little master", averages 54.27 from 156 Tests, while Dravid --

alias "The Wall" -- is at 52.28 from 131 Tests and VVS "Very, Very, Special" Laxman averages 44.45 from 102 Tests.

"Experience is the major factor. If you look at the Indian top order its very impressive through their weight of games and weight of runs so we know we're up against it," Vettori acknowledged.

The New Zealand Test squad includes two newcomers, bowler Brent Arnel and one-day top order specialist Martin Guptill, while James Franklin and Martin have been recalled.

Left-arter Franklin is in as an all-rounder, covering for Jacob Oram, and the New Zealand camp said he is more likely to be used as a batsman than a bowler.

Of the seven Test series between New Zealand and India played in New Zealand, India won the first in 1969 while

Perth and grabbed 8 for 61. There haven't been any quite so devastating spells on the return tour but he is still the leading wicket-taker in the series with 12 at an average of 21.

Other breakthroughs were more telling in securing Australia's wins but few would have had Australia's coaching staff licking their lips like the perfect inswinger at Kingsmead that angled across Hashim Amla, pitched in line and straightened so dramatically that he was plumb lbw. Johnson said the key to discovering his new talent was relaxing and going back to basics.

"In the game situation I probably pushed a little bit too hard at times," Johnson said. "Now I've pulled it back just slightly and tried to be nice and tall in my action and tried to swing that ball. It does help when you get the new ball. I had my opportunities in the West Indies and I didn't swing it there."

"So I went back to the drawing board. I have worked a lot with Troy (Cooley) and he keeps in close contact with Dennis Lillee. Ben Hilfenhaus has given me a few tips as well because he can swing the ball. It's good when young guys like that can come through and have the confidence to speak to, I guess you could call me a more experienced member of the team."

It's easy to forget how experienced Johnson has become in a short space of time. He made his Test debut two summers ago but in a changing attack has quickly become its spearhead in South Africa. Few would call Johnson a senior bowler compared to the injured Stuart Clark but the two have exactly the same number of Test wickets -- 90.

It's Johnson the Australians will look to as they aim for a 3-0 series clean sweep when the third Test begins on Thursday in Cape Town, where he will take the new ball against a fresh opening pair, Ashwell Prince and Imraan Khan. Incredibly, he has never bowled to the veteran Prince but has recent memories of the debutant Imraan, who made 100 against Australia in the tour match in Potchefstroom.

Murray next faces Spain's

Tommy Robredo, a 7-5, 7-6 (7/2) winner over Croatian Marin Cilic.

Croatian veteran Ivan Ljubicic advanced at the expense of eighth-seeded Frenchman Gilles Simon. Ljubicic beat the Australian Open quarterfinalist 6-3, 7-6 (7/3).

Ljubicic next plays Russian Igor Andreev, who bounced another Frenchman, beating 11th-seeded Jo-Wilfried Tsonga 7-5, 6-4.

On the women's side, defending champion Ana Ivanovic defeated tenacious Argentinian Gisela Dulko 6-3, 6-3 to reach the fourth round.

Seeded fifth in a draw topped by world number two Dina Safina, Ivanovic said the good form she has been feeling in practice was beginning to show in matches.

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CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

Crossword puzzle grid with clues for Across and Down words.

CRYPTOQUIP puzzle with a grid and a key: TJOLXAJ RKL R PJYYM VKM TLGJA INJA LZE ELZNAKJA NA ANOYD-YMMGNZU N UXJAA KJA LILARD OKJP.