

Saif, Siam keep lead

SPORTS REPORTER

Abdullah Al Saif and Ikramul Haque Siam maintained their joint lead in the Prime Bank 30th National Sub-Junior (U-16) Chess Championship at the close of the sixth round at the Sankar Gobinda Chowdhury Stadium Bhavan in Both yesterday.

Both Saif and Siam beat Shahidul Islam Shahan and Farhad Rahman respectively to secure 5.5 points.

Tahmina Akter Tisha was in second position with five points followed by Sabyasachi Dey, who has now with 4.5 points from six matches. Tisha beat Mohammad Shawon, said a press release.

Bandhu Ekadash become champs

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Manikganj

A century from Masud guided Bandhu Ekadash to emerge champions in the Poura Gold Cup cricket tournament with a huge 152-run win over Nabajagan Sangsad in the final at the Shaheed Miraj-Tapan Stadium here yesterday.

Bandhu Ekadash amassed 274 for six wickets in the stipulated 40 overs, riding on a magnificent 129 off 104 balls from Masud. Manik made 32 while Jamil and Mithun added 21 runs respectively. Masud was later adjudged man-of-the-final.

Mazed and Bidyut of Nabajagan Sangsad took two wickets each.

In reply, Nabajagan were bundled out for 122 runs in 27.5 overs as Shahin picked up five wickets. Shamim and Probal scored 24 and 23 respectively.

Renovation

FROM PAGE 17 host the opening ceremony of the mega event beside staging eight matches including two quarterfinals in Dhaka and Chittagong and the government has allocated Tk 256 crore to renovate, develop and modernise five venues -- Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium, Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium in Chittagong, Khan Saheb Osmani Stadium, Sheikh Abu Naser Stadium in Khulna and Bangabandhu National Stadium.

The venues in Khulna and Narayanganj will be kept as alternatives while Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium and Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium are to stage the matches.

MIRPUR MASALA

FROM PAGE 17 with 704 runs in the second Test against England here in Dhaka.

After making 419 in the first innings, the Tigers could not take a huge lead in the second innings as they made 285.

It was enough to beat the 692 that Bangladesh mustered in the 2005 Chittagong Test against Zimbabwe which Bangladesh won by 226 runs.

Back in February, the Tigers made 408 and 282 in the Hamilton Test against New Zealand.

In fact four of the top five aggregates come from the last season.

We deserved

FROM PAGE 17 Junaed c & b Tredwell 34 Jahurul b Swann 43 Mahmudullah c Prior b Bresnan 6 Shakib st Prior b Tredwell 96 Mushfiqur b Broad 3 Shafiqul c Trott b Tredwell 28 Nayeem c Pietersen b Tredwell 3 Razzak lbw b Finn 8 Rubel not out 0 Extras: (lb-3, w-5) 8 Total: (All out in 102 overs) 285 Fall of wickets: 1-23, 2-86, 3-110, 4-130, 5-156, 6-169, 7-232, 8-258, 9-275.

Bowler O M R W Broad 16 2 72 2 Bresnan 13 2 34 1 Tredwell 34 8 82 4 Finn 9 3 21 1 Swann 30 7 73 2

ENGLAND: Second innings Cook not out 109 Trott run out 19 Pietersen not out 74 Extras: (b-2, lb-4, nb-1) 7 Total: (For one wkt in 44 overs) 209 Did not bat: Collingwood, Bell, Prior, Bresnan, Broad, Swann, Tredwell, Finn.

Fall of wicket: 1-42. Bowler O M R W Shafiqul 6 0 22 0 Razzak 15 0 67 0 Shakib 8 0 31 0 Mahmudullah 7 1 38 0 Rubel 4 0 26 0 Nayeem 4 0 19 0

Result: England won by nine wickets and clinched two-match series 2-0. Man-of-the-match: Shakib Al Hasan.

Man-of-the-series: Graeme Swann.

Sachin skips World Twenty20 again

Cricket

AFP, New Delhi

Sachin Tendulkar on Wednesday rejected a growing clamour in India to play in next month's World Twenty20 despite enjoying prime batting form in recent months.

"I will not be playing the ICC World Twenty20," Tendulkar told the CNN-IBN news channel. "I have not played Twenty20 Internationals from 2007 onwards and I don't think it should become an issue now."

Tendulkar, who recently became the first man to score a double-century in one-day cricket, has played just one Twenty20 international in his 21-year, record-breaking career. The Mumbai star, who turns 37 next month, opted out of the first two T20 World Championships in 2007 and 2009, saying the younger members of the side were more suited for the shortest format of the game.

But former players want him to take part in the third edition, starting in the Caribbean on April 30, following a string of high scores in both Test and one-day cricket.

In the past 12 months, Tendulkar has averaged 71.50 in nine Tests with five centuries, and 65.28 in 17 one-dayers with three hundreds.

In the ongoing Indian Premier League

domestic Twenty20 tournament, he has hit 176 runs in four games with a strike-rate of 155.75 off 100 balls.

"I hope the selectors can persuade Tendulkar to go to the West Indies," said former India batsman and commentator Navjot Sidhu during a discussion on the subject on television.

"He loves playing for the country and the Indian team needs him more than ever before. He is batting like the champion he is."

Another former player Mohinder Amarnath admitted Tendulkar would make a huge difference to India's chances, but wanted the decision to be left entirely to him.

"Sachin knows best what to do," said Amarnath. "He has played for so long that we must all respect his decision."

The selectors will meet on Friday to pick the 15-man squad for the tournament which India won in 2007 but failed to qualify for the semi-finals two years later.

Tendulkar was excluded from the provisional list of 30 announced last month, but tournament rules permit a player not in the list to be included in the final 15.

India are drawn alongside South Africa and surprise qualifiers Afghanistan in one of the four preliminary league groups, with two teams from each group qualifying for the Super Eights round.

McCullum may give up gloves

Cricket

CRICINFO, undated

Brendon McCullum will spend New Zealand's off-season pondering his future as a Test wicketkeeper after the successful emergence of Gareth Hopkins in the shorter formats. McCullum opens in one-day and Twenty20 internationals but bats at No. 7 in the Test team and made his fifth century against Australia in Wellington this week, an innings he described as his best Test hundred.

Although McCullum has for many years been considered the best wicketkeeper-batsman in New Zealand, he has expressed a desire to hang up the gloves and focus on his batting. During the Twenty20s and ODIs against Australia, Hopkins kept wicket and proved a very handy lower-order batsman and New Zealand will discuss whether that could work at Test level as well.

The main problem is that McCullum's run scoring in Test cricket has been less consistent than in the shorter formats, although in the past year he has lifted his output and has made three centuries and averaged 48.60. It appears likely that Hopkins will retain the gloves for the upcoming ICC World Twenty20, but New

Zealand have no Tests scheduled in the next few months, so McCullum has time to consider his five-day future.

"We've got a few months coming up that we've got off, so it's something that we've got to try and weigh up during that downtime," McCullum said. "At the moment I'm very much fixed on making sure that I can make a contribution in this next Test match as a wicketkeeper-batsman. I have to continuously score runs to warrant a place in the top six."

The captain Daniel Vettori said it was a matter of team balance in each format as to whether McCullum could play purely as a batsman. The two men have spoken about the issue but have not yet come to a resolution as to what is best for the Test outfit.

"It's a tough one," Vettori said. "Brendon and I have had a number of discussions on it. The emergence of Gareth Hopkins in the limited overs has probably made the decision a little bit easier if it does go that way. But I still think Brendon is one of the best wicketkeeper-batsmen in the world."

"If we can get him for all forms of the game that would be great, but we also understand that probably in one-dayers and Twenty20, his runs are the most important thing to us. If that's the best thing for the team then I support it."



BRENDON McCULLUM

Cairns will have his say

Cricket

DLFA Premier League

Former New Zealand all-rounder Chris Cairns has told CricInfo of his "distress" at reported claims by Indian Premier League (IPL) commissioner Lalit Modi that he had been barred from the tournament because of what was alleged on Modi's Twitter post to be "his past record in match-fixing" and explained why he has decided to take the matter to court.

"Modi is ... possibly the most powerful man in world cricket today," Cairns said. "I couldn't believe what he'd said. My initial reaction of shock turned into outrage. I'm proud of what I have achieved in cricket and I am not going to have Modi or anyone else destroy that."

Cairns is anything but naive and admits he is aware of murmurs that have been circulating ever since he left the rebel ICL tournament in 2008.

Bukola puts

FROM PAGE 17

After three successive draws against Sheikh Russel, Beanibazar SC and archrivals Abahani, Mohammedan needed this victory badly not only to get back on track but also to reduce the gap with perennial foes and league leaders Abahani and the Black and Whites did it well against a side, who demolished visitors Shuktara Jubo Sangsad 5-1 on home soil in their previous game on Monday.

And as expected Chittagong Mohammedan provided some nervous times to their mighty Dhaka opponents who were kept at bay throughout the first half before Emeka opened the account one minute into the second half. Emeka also set up the next two goals for his coun-

tryman Bukola, who struck only two goals in 11 matches before the start of the crucial match against Chittagong Mohammedan.

Then last season's highest scorer Bukola doubled the margin in the 51st minute and made it 3-0 to make the result safe in the 65th minute and completed his hat-trick and league's fifth nine minutes from time.

Arambagh SC's Nicodemus G Anunda, Alfaz Ahmed, Sheikh Russel KC's Moroccan striker Samir Omari and Chittagong Mohammedan's Akbar Hossain Ridon had earlier struck treble.

Before the final whistle, the port city side pulled one goal back through striker Ridon after being set up by Pavel.

cricketing performance was hampered. While I indicated to ICL at the time of my dismissal that I was unhappy with their decision, I understood and respected that their main priority was to have a reputable competition.

Subsequently I went back home in December 2008 and had an operation on my left ankle because I knew I had to get it fixed if I wanted to try and regain my ICL contract."

But with the ICL now moribund, Cairns who has not played since, says he was genuinely excited when Sundar Raman, the chief executive of the IPL, suggested via a third party that he should put his name forward for the 2010 auction.

Defeated Tigers

FROM PAGE 17 Bangladesh innings closed at 285 runs. It was the third time Shakib stopped on 96.

For England, Tredwell picked up four wickets while man-of-the-series Graeme Swann and Stuart Broad took two each.

After that it was a matter of seeing how much the Bangladesh spinners could exploit the wicket but there was nothing to exploit. The wicket remained lifeless as it offered no turn and the England batsmen, barring Trott, made merry. The only England wicket that fell was a compliment from TV umpire Nadir Shah, whose decision to declare Trott run out was as contentious as other rulings during the course of this Test.

Cook signed off his first tour as captain with an innings filled with his favourite shots. He cut and drove with glee as the tired Bangladesh attack wilted in the heat. Pietersen, at the other end, was at his reverse-sweeping best, slamming nine boundaries and a straight-driven six off an insipid Abdur Razzak.

Club Cup hockey from March 28

SPORTS REPORTER

Holders Abahani and aspirants Mohammedan have been drawn in same group in the hockey season's curtain-raising tournament, the Club Cup, beginning on March 28 at Maulana Bhasani National Hockey Stadium.

Group A comprises Abahani, Mohammedan, Mariners, Ajax SC and Bangladesh Police while Group B consists of last year's runners-up Sonali Bank, Usha Krira Chakra, Wari Club and Sadharan Bima after Azad Sporting Club and Bangladesh Boys skipped the preparatory tournament of the Premier Division League.

On the opening day, Abahani will take on Bangladesh Police while Mohammedan face Ajax SC.

Rifles begin with a win

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Rifles made a winning start in the Independence Cup handball competition with a convincing 37-11 win over Bangladesh Ansar on the opening day at the newly-built Handball Stadium yesterday.

The winners dominated the first half 18-4.

In the day's other match, Bangladesh Handball Federation President's XI and Bangladesh Police played out a tense 31-31 draw. Police however did well to recover after trailing the first half 12-14.

Easy win

FROM PAGE 17

Returning to defend the total, Shane Warne and his men put up a tremendous team effort to skittle out the hosts for 152 in 19.1 overs and register their second victory of the tournament.

Once again the star players let down the Punjab side and the bulk of their runs came from Manvinder Bisla (35), Kumar Sangakkara (29) and Ravi Bopara (25).

SCORES IN BRIEF

RAJASTHAN ROYALS: 183 for 5 in 20 overs (Lumb 41, Voges 45 n o, Fazal 45, Pathan 28; Sreesanth 1-20, Chawla 1-29) KINGS XI PUNJAB: 152 all out in 19.1 overs (Bopara 25, Sangakkara 29, Bisla 35, Yuvraj 15, Jayawardene 23; Pathan 2-9, Tait 3-22, Trivedi 2-25) Result: Rajasthan Royals won by 31 runs.

Man-of-the-match: Adam Voges.

Bangla Games

FROM PAGE 17

kho kho, kabaddi, basketball, shooting, judo, badminton and gymnastic; the last three disciplines have been included for the first time.

A 182-member contingent led by chef de mission Harunur Rashed left here for Kolkata by road on Monday.

The events of athletics, women's football, swimming, kho kho, kabaddi, shooting, gymnastic, basketball and judo will be held today.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

Crossword puzzle grid with clues for Across and Down. Includes a solution time of 21 mins and a solution key at the bottom.

Bradshaw's fear

Cricket

AFP, London

Marylebone Cricket Club (MCC) boss Keith Bradshaw has warned Twenty20 "could sound the death knell for Test cricket".

The Australian, in article for the April edition of the Wisden Cricketer magazine, said: "I consider myself optimistic, but it isn't difficult to look ahead and see the pessimists' apocalyptic version of the future of the game -- where Tests are virtually redundant, Twenty20 saturates and players are globe-trotting mercenaries."

"We know several players have already forgone playing Tests to prolong more lucrative Twenty20 careers."

Bradshaw's views will alarm traditionalists, all the more so because he runs MCC, the owners of London's Lord's ground, the self-styled 'home of cricket' and the organisation responsible for cricket's Laws or rules.

And Bradshaw, himself a former Tasmania batsman, fears the growing emphasis on Twenty20 will leave future generations of cricketers ill-equipped for the differing demands of longer formats such as first-class and Test match cricket.

"I believe the more covert long-term problem will be that young players will be schooled purely in the Twenty20 game and be unable to adapt to the demands of cricket played over three, four and five days."

"The transition from Test to Twenty20 cricket is much easier than the other way round, and the result could be far fewer players capable of playing five-day cricket."

Bradshaw said Test cricket's enduring popularity in England could obscure the problems it was having in attracting spectators elsewhere in the world.

"We have a warped sense of the well-being of Tests in this country (England), because they attract good crowds."

"Yet there is a real danger that the format could become the preserve of four or five countries unless efforts are made to reinstate a fairer balance between bat and ball, to work alongside rather than against Twenty20 competitions to ensure players do not have to choose between playing for their country and their club, and to attract new audiences."

But Bradshaw also outlined a vision of the future where Twenty20 was the means by which cricket broadened its global appeal.

"Twenty20 could sound the death knell for Test cricket but it could also prove to be the perfect vehicle for the expansion of the game into other countries," Bradshaw hopes.

"The shorter the game, the greater the leveller -- and Twenty20 is an excellent pathway into the elite fold."

"Just think of the fairy tale qualification of Afghanistan for this year's World Twenty20 [which starts in the Caribbean next month]."

Like many administrators before him, Bradshaw also has high hopes for cricket in America.

"I firmly believe the next big step will be the growth of cricket in the United States," he said.

"It's not unrealistic to think there could be 20 countries capable of playing competitive Twenty20 cricket within the next five years -- surely something to celebrate."

Keith Bradshaw

NZ take in teen Kane

Cricket

CRICINFO, undated

Teenage batsman Kane Williamson is line for a potential Test debut after being named in New Zealand's squad for the second Test against Australia starting in Hamilton on Saturday.

Williamson, 19, has been in irresistible form in the Plunket Shield this summer, and will replace the injured Daryl Tuffey. All-rounder James Franklin has also been included in the squad.

Williamson, a top-order batsman and off-spinner, put in a brilliant all-round performance for Northern Districts against Auckland last week, when he made 192 and finished with match figures of 5 for 59. He has made 588 runs at 53.45 in the Plunket Shield this season and will be pushing for a Test debut at his home ground, Seddon Park, after the shaky efforts of the top order in Wellington.

"I wasn't expecting a call at all, but I was aware that I was probably getting looked at after past performances, I was absolutely thrilled," Williamson said. "I had a bit of contact with [coach] Mark Greatbatch, not on a consistent basis, but once or twice he said 'keep going'. I'm certainly excited to test myself at the next level and learn a lot."

Franklin's ability to bowl left-arm seam won him the nod, as the selectors prepared for the possibility of overcast conditions in Hamilton.

"There has been a lot of rain in Hamilton of late, and it is fair to say that the conditions we saw today at Seddon Park, at this stage, are far different to those we experienced earlier in the season," Greatbatch said. "We thought it prudent to have all our bases covered, and James does that for us."

The squad also includes Mathew Sinclair, who was included as top-order cover in the squad at the Basin Reserve but did not make the side. The off-spinner Jeetan Patel will feature strongly in the selection discussions on a pitch expected to take some turn, but most of the interest in the lead-up will surround the young Williamson.

"He's in the 13 so he's a chance, there's no doubt about that," Greatbatch said. "We'll have to look at the conditions at Seddon Park but he's playing well. We resisted the temptation to bring him in earlier but we've decided with one Test left, he's a young lad playing well, very talented and it's an opportunity for him to be involved in our environment. If he does make the starting 11 I'm sure he'll acquit himself well."

SQUAD

Tim McIntosh, BJ Watling, Mathew Sinclair, Peter Ingram, Ross Taylor, Martin Guptill, Kane Williamson, Daniel Vettori (captain), Brendon McCullum, Tim Southee, Brent Arnel, Jeetan Patel, Chris Martin, James Franklin.

They're pushovers

FROM PAGE 17

happened there before but it didn't spin in this series.

"It (the pitches) limited what one can do as a captain and if you push too hard, the opposition could run away with the match," said Cook.

He also found captaincy as a tough job both on and off the field.

"That first hour (when Bangladesh batted in their first innings) was something I've never experienced before. But it was

pleasing to see how we fought back from that," said Cook, who admitted he was glad to give back the captaincy to regular captain Andrew Strauss.

"I certainly had my moments but I understood a few things about myself and how I need to get better as a captain, especially my leadership in the dressing room," said Cook who added that he was thankful to the coaches and players but would go back home and

speak to people about captaincy.

He however was most pleased with his batting under the stress of captaincy.

"One aspect that really pleased me was that I only concentrated on myself and when I was at the crease, added Cook.

Except Kevin Pietersen and Paul Collingwood who are going to play in the IPL, the rest of the England team will fly home today.

CRYPTOQUIP

R JYXN QJXQ QJY SFSZKXN UNZRCY KRTY SKXTC QF FBYN VFCQ FB RQC UZCQFVYNC X JXKB - SNRUY CXRK .

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: HOW WOULD ONE REFER TO BITS OF GOSSIP SPREAD BY A MOTEL'S PAYING GUESTS? THE ROOMERS' RUMORS. Today's Cryptoquip Clue: Q equals T