



Scene from yesterday's second round of the 4th Metropolitan Deaf Chess Tournament at the Bangladesh Chess Federation hall room.

Metropolitan deaf chess

SPORTS REPORTER

Eight players are jointly on the top of the points table at the close of the second round of the 4th Metropolitan Deaf Chess Tournament at the Bangladesh Chess Federation hall room yesterday.

All eight players -- Fazlul, Faruk, Quddus, Samajpati, Saiful, Rauf, Salim and Mosarraf -- won their respective second round matches to secure maximum two points from as many matches.

Div I b'ball

SPORTS REPORTER

Mohammadpur Basketball Club came from behind to record a hard-fought 51-48 win over Wraiths Club in the Premier Bank First Division Basketball League at the Dhanmondi Basketball Gymnasium yesterday.

Mohammadpur were trailing by three points after the first half, which ended at 29-26 points, but the winners staged a superb performance in the second half to overcome Wraiths.

Dhruvketu Club handed a 88-78 defeat to Hornets SC after leading the first half 40-27 while The Gregarious thrashed Cantonions Club 68-24 after dominating the first half 37-13.

Asian chess

SPORTS REPORTER

GM Ziaur Rahman registered his third victory in the 9th Asian Continental Individual Chess Championship in Subic free Port City in Philippines yesterday.

Zia beat IM Duong Anh of Vietnam to earn three points from five matches.

Bhajji wishes Sachin well

CRICINFO, undated

Indian cricketers Harbhajan Singh and Mahendra Singh Dhoni have paid tribute to Sachin Tendulkar, who turned 37 on Saturday.

Tendulkar is presently recovering from a split webbing and is hoping to be fit for Sunday's IPL final between Mumbai Indians and Chennai Super Kings.

"We now have to try and get the combinations right and the players right. So it's tough but it's also interesting," Sangakkara said.

Sri Lanka's 15-man squad has barely practiced together, with most of the players contracted to the Indian Premier League.

Dan's beginning of end

AFF, Wellington



When Daniel Vettori leads New Zealand into the World Twenty20 it will start a long and calculated farewell across the world stage by New Zealand's cricket figurehead.

While most of his contemporaries plot their exit by bowing out of Test play to spend their twilight years chasing the Twenty20 dollars, Vettori's road map heads in the other direction.

One of only two cricketers in New Zealand, along with Brendon McCullum, thanks primarily to playing Twenty20 in the Indian Premier League, Vettori will concentrate on the less lucrative but pure form of Test cricket.

His route to retirement will see him captain New Zealand in the West Indies and later in the year on tours of Bangladesh and India as well as the ODI World Cup in the sub-continent in 2011.

Then he will relinquish the captaincy to focus on being a Test all-rounder for four more years with the target of being the second player behind the great Kapil Dev to achieve the double of 400 Test wickets and 4,000 runs.

"I've always thought I'd play until I was about 35 and Test cricket is the part of the game that I want to persevere with," said the 31-year-old Vettori who already has 325 wickets and 3,962 runs.

When compiling a list of the best in New Zealand cricket, almost every question in the modern era has the same answer -- Daniel Vettori.

The bespectacled captain is pivotal in the New Zealand team as the best bowler, best all-rounder, arguably the best batsman, as well as being a selector and de facto coach.

He is "an inspiration to his team and to New Zealand cricket fans," according to New Zealand Cricket chief executive Justin Vaughan.

Vettori's Test goals were "a great endorsement of his character, but we don't want him quitting one-day cricket any time soon," said Vaughan, before adding: "Daniel is statistically aware and knows Test cricket is where you make your name as a player."

Vettori's international career began 13 years ago when he became New Zealand's youngest Test player at the age of 18 years 10 days.

Although never considered a leading turner of the ball, his speed and flight variations have made him one of the most successful spinners with averages of 14.51 in Twenty20, 31.22 in ODIs and 33.86 in Tests.

He has also transformed himself from a gangly tailend batsman into a highly respected all-rounder who is a recognised number six with a Test batting average of 30.71.

To underscore how he relishes leadership, Vettori has batted at an average 44.07 in the 26 Tests since he replaced Fleming as captain in November 2007.

"I wasn't comfortable with where my batting was at and I was disappointed with batting so low and my average and I wanted to turn that around," he said on reaching 100 Tests against Australia last month.

"That'll be one of my prouder achievements in those 100 Tests is being able to turn myself from a guy who started 11 to a genuine No.6."

"New Zealand has got a really good all-round team which can be totally devastating. Zimbabwe has done well, especially in the West Indies and have got some explosive players who can really take it away from you," he said.

The last time Sri Lanka played in the Caribbean, Jayawardene led them to the final of the World Cup in 2007.

This time round, he hopes the team can go all the way and bring home the silverware.

"You have to make sure that on a match day, you turn it on and get the job done. So, we have to really take one game at a time, get through the group stage which is very important and then try to continue all the way."

Uncapped batsman Dinesh Chandimal is the only rookie in the 15-man squad that includes the world's leading Test and one-day wicket taker Muralitharan. The squad also includes veteran batsman Sanath Jayasuriya, who turns 41 in June.

Tennakoon says big names like Dilshan, Jayawardene and Sangakkara are in good form, along with youngsters like all-rounder Angelo Mathews and Mendis.

Sri Lanka take on New Zealand in the opening match on April 30 at the Guyana International Stadium, where Malinga made history in 2007, taking four wickets in four balls against South Africa.

Sri Lanka, world champions in the 50-over format in 1996, are desperate to add the Twenty20 title to their collection in the Caribbean after a series of near-misses.

Captain Kumar Sangakkara's men lost the World T20 championship by eight wickets to Pakistan at Lords last year.

Two years earlier, the Sri Lankans lost to Australia in the final of the World Cup while the same opponents went on to deny them a semi-final place in the inaugural World Twenty20 later in 2007.

"Our focus is to bring the cup home this time after we lost to Pakistan last year. A Twenty20 World Cup will be good for our collection," team manager Anura Tennakoon told AFP.

The tropical Indian Ocean Island will also look to Tillakaratne Dilshan to reproduce his starring role of 2009 when he captured the Player of the Tournament award.

Sangakkara says the team is in a transition period where some seniors are reaching the end of their careers while younger players are making a push to fill the gaps.

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Sri Lanka's 15-man squad has barely practiced together, with most of the players contracted to the Indian Premier League.

"Most of the experienced players were in India and that has hampered our preparation. I think if we can get everyone together and perform, our chances are pretty good," said Tennakoon.

Sri Lanka make up Group B alongside New Zealand and Zimbabwe and former skipper Mahela Jayawardene says neither team can be taken lightly.

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Lanka want it now

AFF, Colombo



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Mission as captain

AFF, Karachi



Pakistan skipper Shahid Afridi's roller-coaster international career has reflected the fortunes of his team -- brilliant, baffling and controversial.

From the time in 1996 when he hit the fastest one-day century off 37 balls against Sri Lanka in Nairobi, Afridi has never been far from the headlines.

A big-match player, the 30-year-old was the player of the tournament for the inaugural edition of the World Twenty20 in 2007 and last year led Pakistan to the title with match-winning performances in the semifinal and final.

"Pakistan are a team in the making at the moment and Shahid Afridi is quite a force in the shorter form of cricket," said Pakistan Test legend Mushtaq Mohammad.

"He won us the Twenty20 last summer. He is a very positive cricketer and we need somebody to lead Pakistan from the front."

Afridi, who gave up Test cricket in 2006, inherited the T20 captaincy after former skipper, and star batsman, Younus Khan and Mohammad Yousof were banned by the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) after the disastrous tour of Australia ended without a single international win for the visitors.

Even Afridi didn't escape censure.

He was fined 35,000 dollars by the PCB for ball-tampering in a one-day match against Australia in Perth in February, although he appealed saying it was unfair to punish him twice after he was hit with a two-game ban by the International Cricket Council.

Afridi has played 27 Twenty20 internationals, scoring 475 runs with a highest score of 54 not out. He has also taken 37 wickets with a best of 4-11 and a miserly average of 16.32.

Afridi believes his team, who are in Group A for the first round with Bangladesh as well as old rivals Australia in the Caribbean, have the right balance to retain their title.

"I have a well balanced team in batting and bowling, and we have to further lift the standard of fielding. Fielding is crucial in this fastest version of the game and a lot of hard work was done to raise the standard," said the captain.

"But we have got a lot of firepower on our batting Misbahul Haq, Abdul Razaq, Umar Akmal, Khalid Latif and Salman Butt. As we expect spinning tracks, we have good options in Saeed Ajmal, Mohammad Hafeez and myself. In the pace department we have Mohammad Aamer, Mohammad Sami, Mohammad Asif and Abdul Razaq."

Afridi also told www.cricinfo.com that it was "mission as captain, with the support of players and team management, to keep the team away from any controversy."



Members of the Bhatiyari Golf and Country Club, who became champions in the Banglalion Challenge Cup and Pro-Am Golf Tournament, receive the trophy from the chief guest Chief of Air Staff Air Marshal SM Ziaur Rahman at the Kurmitola Golf Club on Friday.

BCCI suspends

FROM PAGE 17

Members of the governing council have been requested to give all such complaints in writing with the requisite supporting documents at the meeting to the chairman so they can be replied in full.

Now that seems to be irrelevant. One member of the governing council told Cricinfo the BCCI president was vested with the powers to suspend any member. "Under the provisions of the BCCI constitution, the president can utilise Article 32 to suspend a member and an enquiry committee will be instituted to probe the matter further."

"On the agenda will be a discussion on any complaints received in writing from members of the governing council against the chairman, other members of the council and/or the BCCI," it said.

Race to the death

FROM PAGE 20

French midfielder Franck Ribery, who is being investigated as part of the under-age call-girl scandal rocking the French football team, played the full game, but was booted on occasion at the sold-out Borussia Park.

Bottom side Hertha Berlin are now almost certain to be relegated at the end of the season after Schalke captain Heiko Westermann scored their winner on 87 minutes, putting his side level with Bayern on 64 points.

"It wasn't a good game for either side," said Schalke coach Felix Magath.

Werder Bremen are third in the league having beaten Cologne 1-0 with a last-minute goal as captain Torsten Frings scored a 91st-minute penalty after defender Pedro

CL T20 in S Africa

CRICINFO, undated

South Africa will host the next Champions League Twenty20, to run from September 10 to 26, the tournament's organisers have announced.

The tournament chairman Lalit Modi confirmed the decision, following a board meeting in Mumbai where it was formally agreed to accept Cricket South Africa's invitation to stage the event.

However Modi, under immense scrutiny over the ongoing IPL mess, was not present at that meeting, which took place at the BCCI headquarters on Saturday.

The Tigers, six points adrift with two games to play and a hugely inferior goal difference, could have equalised before half-time but Jimmy Bullard's penalty hit the post.

Both sides received a red card late in the first half as Hull's US striker Jozy Altidore and Sunderland's Alan Hutton clashed.

Aruna Dindane scored twice as already relegated Portsmouth came from 2-0 down to draw 2-2 away to Bolton Wanderers while Wolves, still not mathematically safe, and Blackburn Rovers drew 1-1 at Molineux.

However, Scott Parker eased the pressure on Hamers boss Gianfranco Zola with a 25-yard drive in the 77th minute.

Hull were all but relegated after Sunderland won 1-0 at the KC Stadium thanks to Darren Bent's seventh minute tap-in, his 25th goal of the season.

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Barcelona striker Thierry Henry struck his first goal in over two months as defending champions Barcelona beat nine-man Xerez.

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CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

Crossword puzzle grid with clues for Across, Down, and Cryptiquip.

Cryptiquip puzzle grid with letters Z, U, Z, W, B, D, H, Z, P, K, J, N, H, H, Y, V, R, N, H, Y, V, F, Z, J, V, N, H, H, B, W, D, P, E, V, E, N, Z, J, X, H, E, N, H, O, B, V, G, O, K, B, J, N, G, Z, W, N, E, N, J, H, N, Y, U, F, B, B, R, H, E, V, N, Y, X, H.

Yesterday's Cryptiquip: THESE CHEESE-TOPPED POTATOES HAVE STARTED GOING SOUR. MAYBE THEY'VE BECOME ROTTEN AU GRATIN. Today's Cryptiquip Clue: H equals S