

Women's chess

SPORTS REPORTER

Reigning national women's champion Sharmin Sultana Shirin and runner-up Shamima Akter Liza were jointly leading the points table with 7.5 points each after the eighth round of the Arlin Developer 31st National Women Chess Championship yesterday.

Masuda Begum of Barisal was in second position with 6.5 points and Nazrana Khan Eva of Manikgonj in third position with 5.5 points.

The eighth round games were held yesterday at the Narayanganj Club Auditorium. In the round Shirin beat Protiva Talukder of Rajshahi, Liza beat Rokshana Titi of Pabna, Eva drew with IWM Rani Hamid of Titas Club, WFM Zakia Sultana of Metropolitan Chess Club beat Dilara Jahan Nupur of Kushtia, Jahanara Haque Runu drew with Mahmuda Haque Chowdhury Moly of Chittagong and Masuda got walkover against Aeon Sarker. Ninth round games will be held today.

Zamir resigns from chess federation

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Chess Federation president Muhammad Zamir has recently tendered his resignation from the top post citing busy schedule in government service as the reason.

Former ambassador Zamir, who was appointed as the president of chess federation in the ad-hoc committee last year, was recently made the chief information commissioner.

BCF general secretary Mokaddes Hossain confirmed that Zamir submitted his resignation to the federation as well as ministry.

Abahani aim

FROM PAGE 17 the performance of the strikers. "We have been creating a lot of scoring chances in the ongoing league, but the strikers unfortunately could not avail all of them. If they carry such performance in the qualifiers, it will be tough job for them because the opponents will certainly not give them any room."

Meanwhile, Abahani were placed in Group A along with Dordoi Bishkek of Kyrgyzstan, Hasus NTCPE of Chinese Taipei and the league champions of Nepal. Top club from each of three groups and the best runners-up will advance to the 2010 AFC President's Cup finals which is scheduled to take place in September.

Chelsea a step

FROM PAGE 20 who were both magnificent, were causing all sorts of problems and both had chances to extend Chelsea's lead before Lampard sealed a priceless victory in the 54th minute.

At least Chelsea were not handed the goal on a plate this time, although the defending that led to England midfielder Lampard sliding home to meet Anelka's low cross was poor to say the least.

Liverpool never threatened to mount a fightback and although Chelsea's celebrations on the pitch at the final whistle were subdued, the title is almost theirs.

Battle royal

FROM PAGE 20 That meant local rivals Liverpool qualified for the Europa League at least.

Portsmouth gave their fans something to cheer in their final game at Fratton Park before bowing out of the top flight with a 3-1 win over Wolves.

"If anyone in the world wants a lesson about passion and commitment, then Fratton Park is the place," Pompey boss Avram Grant said.

"They can take points from us, put an embargo on us, but they cannot destroy our spirit-never!" Birmingham City beat relegated Burnley 2-1 at St Andrews, the Clarets having now lost 17 of their 19 away league games.

"I want to be at the club next season, no question about that," said Burnley boss Brian Laws.

"We have been preparing for some time for next season, whether we are in the Premier League or the Championship."



England cricketers exercise prior to a training session at the Everest Cricket Club ahead of their first match of the ICC World Twenty20 in Georgetown in Guyana on Saturday. They will take on the West Indies today.

KP ready for exit

AFP, Providence



England head into their World Twenty20 opener against hosts the West Indies here Monday knowing star batsman Kevin Pietersen could leave the squad at a moment's notice.

Pietersen's wife, Jess, is due to give birth to the couple's first child on the weekend of the May 16 final in Barbados.

But whenever she goes into labour, Pietersen has made it clear he will be on the plane to London to be present for the birth.

"As soon as she goes into labour, I'll be off," he said.

"No matter where it is in the tournament, I'll be off -- and it's been cleared with the management to do that.

"If I'm in the middle of a match, I'll obviously get off the field and then I'll be on the next plane that flies into London Heathrow.

"The only worry is that I won't be back in time. But I will be back as soon as I can. I'm off as soon as."

England, despite pioneering Twenty20 as a professional sport, have struggled to make much of an impact upon the World Twenty20.

And when they hosted last year's edition they went out in the Super Eight phase after losing to the West Indies in a rain-affected match at The Oval.

Often seen as a batsman's game, Pietersen -- out for a first ball nought as England completed an unbeaten warm-up campaign against his native South Africa on Thursday -- said

shotmakers would have to play themselves in on the generally slow Caribbean pitches before going for big hits.

"I reckon batters are definitely going to have to be a lot more patient," he said.

"They're certainly not wickets for strokemakers."

Spin could play an important role and England, in Graeme Swann, have one of the leading off-break bowlers currently in world cricket.

Much will also depend on their opening partnership, with England set to field their 16th first wicket pair at this level in Craig Kieswetter and Michael Lumb who, like Pietersen, were both born in South Africa.

England will find themselves up against a West Indies side who thrashed Ireland by 70 runs in their tournament opener.

And that was without injured captain and star batsman Chris Gayle, who could return on Monday.

"The home advantage will play an important part and once our fans get behind us it really gets us going," said West Indies stand-in skipper Dwayne Bravo.

"I know the next game against England there will be a bigger crowd still and it's always important. We can use to our advantage," Bravo added.

England, who have former Ireland batsman Eoin Morgan in their side, will be expected to beat the associate nation.

But having lost spectacularly to minnows the Netherlands in last year's World Twenty20 at Lord's, England will be keen to avoid a winner-takes-all clash with Ireland.

Nadal sees Gulbis off

AFP, Rome

World number three Rafael Nadal survived a three-set thriller against unseeded Ernests Gulbis on Saturday to reach the final of the ATP Rome Masters 1000 with a 6-4, 3-6, 6-4 victory.

It will be an all-Spanish final on Sunday after 13th seed David Ferrer beat compatriot and sixth seed Fernando Verdasco 7-5, 6-3 in the first semifinal.

Another Bolt

AFP, Kingston

World and Olympic sprint champion Usain Bolt ran the fourth-fastest 200 metres ever clocked on Saturday, winning in 19.56 seconds at the Jamaica International Invitational.

Bolt, who sizzled through the first 100 in 10.1 seconds, trailed only his world record of 19.19 for a world title at Berlin, his 19.30 for 2008 Beijing Olympic gold and the former world record of 19.32 by Michael Johnson.

Bolt said the victory "puts me in a good stand for the season because I'm about 95 percent. I still have a lot of work to do."

American Wallace Spearman was second in 19.98 but a far cry from Bolt's devastating form.

Premier div volleyball

SPORTS REPORTER

Fire Service beat East End Boys Club by 3-1 sets in their clash of the National Bank Dhaka Metropolis Premier Division Volleyball League at the Volleyball Stadium in Paltan yesterday.

Fire Service won the first set 25-16, but went down 24-26 in the second before taking the next two 25-22 and 25-19.

The other matches of the day between Bhai Bhai Sangha and BDR and Titas Club and East End Club were on when the report was filed.

SL, lose and go home

AFP, Providence



Sri Lanka are doing their best to maintain an upbeat attitude as they face potential giantkillers Zimbabwe in what is a make or break World Twenty20 clash for the islanders here on Monday.

Zimbabwe, fresh from stunning warm-up wins over defending champions Pakistan and Australia, make their entrance into the World Twenty20 proper against Sri Lanka.

Defeat for the Lankans would mean last year's losing finalists leaving the competition at the group stage, following the Asian side's two-wicket defeat by New Zealand on Friday.

"If we win every game from here we'll be champions," said Sri Lanka coach Trevor Bayliss. "But there's no room for any more mistakes."

New Zealand captain Daniel Vettori put Sri Lanka's position into context by saying of his team's nailbiting win: "It's pretty big because otherwise the last game becomes do or die."

"Zimbabwe have shown their hand by beating Australia in the first warm-up game so are

obviously competitive in this format."

Meanwhile Sri Lanka captain Kumar Sangakkara was looking for an improved showing from his batsmen who, Mahela Jayawardene apart, failed to fire against New Zealand.

"We were a bit slow in the first six overs which put us under a lot of pressure," said Sangakkara. "We probably lost a bit of momentum in the first six overs and that was vital to try and kick on and keep the momentum going."

Zimbabwe, who beat Australia at the 2007 World Twenty20, are a team on the up and appear to be recovering from the political and racial disputes which have so weakened the side in recent years.

Veteran left-arm Ray Price is the most experienced spinner. He is backed by the off-spin of skipper Prosper Utseya and newcomer Greg Lamb and the leg-breaks of Graeme Cremer.

Hard-hitting left-hander Andy Blignaut has been recalled after five years and he and Elton Chigumbura, who made a dashing 76 in the warm-up win over Australia, will be expected to provide Zimbabwe with quick runs.

Hosts' solid start

AFP, Providence



West Indies thrashed Ireland by 70 runs as the hosts got their World Twenty20 campaign off to a winning start under the floodlights here on Friday.

Qualifiers Ireland were bowled out for just 68, inside 17 overs, with man-of-the-match Darren Sammy taking three wickets for eight runs to add to the all-rounder's top score of 30 in West Indies' 138 for nine.

Ireland saw 17-year-old off-spinner George Dockrell take three for 16 after West Indies captain Dwayne Bravo, deputising for the injured Chris Gayle, won the toss and batted.

But their top order had no answer to fast bowler Ravi Rampaul, who sparked Ireland's collapse with three for 17.

"I know Sammy is a clean hitter of the ball," Bravo said. "I always had faith in the lower order and knew once

we got over 130 it would be difficult for Ireland.

"With Darren and also Nikita Miller bowling it was always going to be very hard for them to get past us if we put the balls in the right areas."

For Ireland captain William Porterfield, it was very much a game of two innings.

"We were right in it at half time, it was just disappointing with the bat," Porterfield said.

"We lost four wickets in the first 21 balls. We were right on the back foot from there and the wicket was always going to get lower and harder to score on."

"We can be pretty positive about the way young George Dockrell bowled and it could be a straight shoot-out between ourselves and England when we play them," Porterfield added.

Kemar Roach struck the first blow for the West Indies when he had Porterfield caught at second slip by Sammy for four.

Sammy again showed safe hands when he caught Paul Stirling for nought off Rampaul in the next over and when Rampaul had Niall O'Brien

caught behind for six, Ireland were 11 for three.

A rain break offered brief respite but Ireland were soon in more trouble at 16 for four when Alex Cusack edged to Sammy.

The all-rounder came on in the ninth over and any doubts about the man-of-the-match award were settled when he removed Kevin O'Brien first ball.

Sammy took a fourth catch to get rid of Gary Wilson and ended the match when he bowled Dockrell, in a stark reminder of cricket's highs and lows, for a duck.

SCORES IN BRIEF WEST INDIES: 138 for 9 in 20 overs (Fletcher 19, Bravo 18, Sarwan 24, Sammy 30; Dockrell 3-16)

IRELAND: 68 all out in 16.4 overs (Wilson 17; Sammy 3-8, Rampaul 3-17) Result: West Indies won by 70 runs.

Man-of-the-match: Darren Sammy.

Raina powers

FROM PAGE 17 foresaw the skipper dropping himself down to No 3.

Jacques Kallis, who opened in Smith's place, was nearly out for a second ball nought when a diving Yusuf Pathan at backward point just failed to hold on to a catch off the bowling of Harbhajan Singh.

Kallis, after the early loss of Loots Bosman, went on to complete a 45-ball fifty with three fours.

South Africa complete their group programme against Afghanistan in Barbados on May 5.

SCORES IN BRIEF INDIA: 186 for 5 in 20 overs (Raina 101, Yuvraj 37, karthik 16, Dhoni 16; Kleinveldt 2-48)

SOUTH AFRICA: 172 for 5 in 20 overs (Kallis 73, Smith 36, De Villiers 31; Nehra 1-27, Chawla 1-27) Result: India won by 14 runs.

Man-of-the-match: Suresh Raina.

Academies

FROM PAGE 17 five-wicket haul in the first innings while O Pienaar of South Africa was named player of the series.

The first four-day match between the two teams also ended in a draw.

Nathan stars on debut

AFP, Providence



Nathan McCullum proved he can hit big sixes just as well as brother Brendon as New Zealand beat Sri Lanka by two wickets with a ball to spare in a thrilling World Twenty20 opener here Friday.

New Zealand, needing three runs to win with two balls to spare, saw McCullum, better known as an off-spinner, loft fast bowler Lasith Malinga for six over long-off.

Man-of-the match McCullum's superb shot saw New Zealand finish on 139 for eight in reply to Sri Lanka's 135 for six.

It capped a memorable day for McCullum, whose unbeaten 16 came off six balls.

He'd earlier taken the new ball -- just as Kiwi off-spinner Dipak Patel had done at the 1992 World Cup -- and returned impressive figures of one wicket for 17 runs from his three overs.

By contrast younger brother Brendon, one of the world's most dangerous batsmen in this format, was out for nought when pulling Angelo Mathews to midwicket as New Zealand's run chase got off to the start all their fans would have feared.

Defeat for last year's losing finalists was tough on former Sri Lanka captain Mahela Jayawardene who made a typically stylish 81 off 51 balls -- but this time in his debut as an opener -- including two sixes and eight fours.

Runs were hard to come by in this match, with the next best score on either side the 42 made by New Zealand opener Jesse Ryder.

Sri Lanka captain Kumar Sangakkara won the toss and elected to bat in humid conditions.

But the dangerous Tillakaratne Dilshan, player of the tournament at last year's World Twenty20 in England, and Sangakkara himself could only manage seven runs between them.

However, debutant Dinesh Chandimal helped Jayawardene revive the innings in a third-wicket stand of 59 before he was caught in the deep off Nathan McCullum with the total on 103 for three.

Jayawardene fell in the penultimate over and again Nathan McCullum was involved, taking the catch at deep mid-wicket off paceman Tim Southee.

After Brendon McCullum's exit, New Zealand rebuilt their innings through a second-wicket stand of 62 between Ryder and Martin Guppitt (19).

New Zealand fell behind the run-rate after Ryder was bowled by off-spin star Muttiah Muralitharan and they needed 20 off the last two overs.

Oram was bowled off the first ball of the 19th, by Chanaka Welegedara and next ball Gareth Hopkins was run out to leave New Zealand 177 for seven with 10 balls left.

The target then became 10 off six.

SCORES IN BRIEF SRI LANKA: 135 for 6 in 20 overs (Jayawardene 81, Chandimal 29; Bond 2-35)

NEW ZEALAND: 139 for 8 in 19.5 overs (Ryder 42, Guppitt 19, Styris 17, N McCullum 16; Muralidaran 2-35) Result: New Zealand won by two wickets.

Man-of-the-match: Nathan McCullum.

Tigers scare Pakistan

FROM PAGE 17

again why he is such a special young man. He never panicked, which can't often be said of Ashraf, and went about choosing his spots almost at will. Saeed Ajmal was heaved for one and Mohammad Hafeez was slog-swept for two maximums and suddenly Bangladesh had recovered from 36 for 2 to 115 for two after 14.

As so often, however, it wasn't to be and the surprise was that it was Shakib who perished first. Afridi took a gamble in bringing back an uncertain Sami, but it paid off as Shakib fell and Mahmudullah followed a few balls later. Ashraf still went on, dishing out some serious stick to Afridi, before falling, inevitably, to an improvised paddle, signaling a brave end.

Pakistan's big bonus, alongside Sami's effort, was Butt's earlier contribution. He has appeared ill-suited to the format, unable to work gaps and not blessed with the power that gets poorer bats-

men more runs. But he has a good ODI record and the intent was there from the start with a first-ball boundary. From thereon, at regular intervals he would dance down, move away, find gaps or go aerial and went about as quietly as you can in reaching fifty off 29 balls. There was no violence, just clear-headed intent and faith in his regular strokes.

His improved leg-side game was on display as well; in three successive overs after the 10th, he swept Shakib, slog-swept Abdur Razzak and slapped debutant Suhrawadi Shuvo over long-on for sixes.

Akmal gave him predictable company, almost immediately trying to set the agenda. A bold statement was made against left-arm spin - Bangladesh's most potent weapon - straight away, as he twice swept away Abdur Razzak in the second over.

He was the one who took risks, almost paying for it when a miscued pull was fluffed by Ashraf. They were

to pay for it as Akmal did what he does best. Out came the cuts, the scything cover drives, the pulls and the occasional mind-boggling slap over extra cover. All the while singles and doubles flowed on the large ground, giving Akmal a comfortable 73.

Bangladesh were unable to string together an over of good balls. It wasn't until the 16th over, when they claimed Akmal finally, that they bowled an over without conceding at least one boundary. They recovered, not allowing any more in the final overs but the damage had been done.

SCORES IN BRIEF PAKISTAN: 172 for 3 in 20 overs (Akmal 73, Butt 73; Shakib 2-27)

BANGLADESH: 151 for 7 in 20 overs (Ashraf 65, Shakib 47, Tamim 19, Nayeem 10 not out; Sami 3-29)

Result: Pakistan won by 21 runs.

Man-of-the-match: Salman Butt.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS 46 Take as one's own 50 Musicfest 55 Neither mate 56 Genealogy chart 57 — gin fizz 58 Bill's partner 59 Goes off course 60 Probability 61 Actor Ron 1 Bashful 4 Founder of analytical psychology 8 Possess 12 Verily 13 Somewhere out there 14 Culture medium 15 Zero 16 "Join us" 18 River tributary, often 20 Humor 21 Cronies 24 Starbucks option 28 William Boyd's nom de 5 Venusian vessel? 6 "Platoon" setting, for short 7 Got bigger 8 Summer-time garment 9 Past 10 Moving truck 11 Work unit 17 Help 19 Fuel economy org. 22 Mississippi politico Trent 23 "Slammin' Sammy" of golf 25 Mafia boss 26 Not "fer" 27 Phyllis Diller's "husband" 28 Corn coating 29 Norway's capital 30 Juror, in theory 31 Pop singer Lady — 35 Court-case compensation 38 Shims 40 Started 42 Ortiz of "Ugly Betty" 45 Moreover 47 Erstwhile of golf 48 Swimmers' place 49 Helen of — 50 Phippen 51 401(k) alternative 52 Opposite of 53-Down 53 Opposite of 52-Down 54 Affirmative action?

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CRYPTOQUIP

BK KYX YNIVXV' GXJO YBHI L INNHGL JNGKXVK, ZX YXBIC VNQXMNCP IXQBIO "QBP KYX MXVK QBGX ZHG."

Yesterday's Cryptquip: WHEN BOSTON'S MAIN AIRPORT USES MOTTOES IN ITS ADS, I SUPPOSE THOSE WOULD BE LOGAN'S SLOGANS. Today's Cryptquip Clue: K equals T