



Narayanganj shuttler Elina returns against Konika of Biman in the Citycell 30th National Badminton Championship at the Wooden Floor Gymnasium yesterday.

BKSP includes martial art, table tennis

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Krira Shikha Protisthan decided to introduce Martial Art as a new faculty at the sport institute following the successes of the local athletes in the 11th South Asian Games held at home earlier this year.

The martial arts will include three disciplines -- karate, taekwondo and wushu -- as BKSP's board of governors took this decision at its 22nd meeting with state minister for youth and sports Ahad Ali Sarker in chair.

The meeting also decided to include table tennis at the regional center in Savar. At present, there are thirteen disciplines in BKSP.

After the meeting, the sports minister met with teachers and students and urged the students to bring laurels for the nation upholding the disciplines of the institute, said a press release yesterday.

Zim eye final upset

Cricket

INTERNET

Giant-killer Zimbabwe will hope to cap their fairytale campaign with yet another stunning display while revenge will be high on Sri Lanka's agenda in the final of the cricket tri-series on Wednesday.

Even though both India and Sri Lanka sent second-string squads for the low-profile tournament, few expected Zimbabwe to emerge as the table-topper with 13 points in their kitty.

The minnows twice beat India and both were comprehensive victories. As if to prove it was no fluke, they thumped Sri Lanka in Monday's dead rubber as well to finish their league campaign with three victories from four outings.

Sri Lanka skipper Dilshan will particularly expect Dinesh Chandimal, who scored his maiden ODI century against India the other day, to come good in the final and underline his talent with another significant knock.

In the bowling department, onus would be on Thilan Thushara and Dilhara Fernando to provide the early breakthrough and remove Taylor at the earliest.

TEAMS

SRI LANKA (from): Tillakaratne Dilshan (captain), Angelo Mathews, Upul Tharanga, Thilan Samaraweera, Dinesh Chandimal, Lahiru Thirimanne, Chamara Kapugedera, Suraj Randiv, Nuwan Kulasekara, Thilan Thushara, Ajantha Mendis, Jeewan Mendis, Dilhara Fernando, Chamara Silva, Thissira Perera.

ZIMBABWE (from): Elton Chigumbura (captain), Andy Blignaut, Chamu Chibhabha, Charles Coventry, Graeme Cremer, Craig Ervine, Greg Lamb, Hamilton Masakadza, Chris Mpofu, Ray Price, Ed Rainsford, Vusi Sibanda, Tatenda Taibu, Brendan Taylor, Prosper Utseyo.

Sania's winning return

Tennis

AFP, Birmingham

India's Sania Mirza made a winning return to action after her wedding to Pakistan cricketer Shoaib Malik as she defeated Chan Yung-Jan 6-1, 6-4 in the first round here on Monday.

Mirza had taken several months off from tennis to focus on her personal life before controversially marrying Malik in April.

The tense nature of relations between India and Pakistan meant political groups in her homeland protested against the 23-year-old's decision to marry Malik.

Mirza's picture was burnt on the streets of Bhopal, where activists from the right-wing Hindu nationalist Vishwa Hindu Parishad party vowed to stop her competing in the Commonwealth Games in Delhi in October.

But, with the storm of controversy dying down, Mirza has been able to return to tennis and she quickly rediscovered her rhythm on the Birmingham grass-courts as she swatted aside

Chan, a 20-year-old from Taipei.

Meanwhile, Thailand's Tamarine Tanasugarn, a Wimbledon quarterfinalist in 2008, cruised through as the 14th seed won 6-2, 6-2 against Lilia Osterloh of the US.

Britain's Laura Robson, who last week had to offer an abject apology for an interview she had given where she labelled some of her fellow players as 'sluts', advanced to the second round when her Swiss opponent Stefanie Voegele retired with a back injury in the second game of the second set.

Robson, a junior Wimbledon champion in 2008, had taken the first set 6-4 as the 16-year-old claimed the first WTA tour win of her young career.

Croatia's Mirjana Lucic, a Wimbledon semi-finalist in 1999, gave a glimpse of a talent that seemed to have been lost for good as she beat Mariana Duque Marino 6-1, 6-2.

Lucic walked away from tennis in 2003 after falling out with her father and the 28-year-old, who had been ranked as high as 32nd in the world, is only now beginning to rebuild her career.

Rooney ready

FROM PAGE 17

we need, so the preparation has been good and, if you prepare right, you get results."

Defoe added: "Everyone's hungry. We want to win it. We'll take each game as it comes, but I think we've got that winning mentality."

"We're winning games and we want to take that into a tournament now."

SA winding

FROM PAGE 17

"This World Cup will be marvellous and we are looking forward to the kickoff," said Blatter. "This will be a fantastic World Cup."

"Everywhere, one can feel, even you journalists, I hope, that this World Cup is very special, the first on African soil," Blatter said, before Friday's kick-off between the hosts and Mexico.

As well as the Gautrain opening, a new train station is opening for football fans in central Cape Town.

Authorities in Johannesburg were also sealing off roads in the downtown area where a giant fan park will play host to thousands of supporters unable to hunt down a ticket for Friday's opening.

The sky is Azzurri

FROM PAGE 17

the seventh minute was awarded after a clumsy foul on Florent Malouda by Marco Materazzi. In choosing to send arguably the world's best keeper, Gianluigi Buffon, the wrong way and then drink the ball off the bar and across the line, it looked as if he had signed off in the style he clearly wanted.

But then Materazzi, only playing at centre-half because Alessandro Nesta had succumbed to injury, powered home a header from an Andrea Pirlo corner to take the game into a chess session of two teams matching each other in every department. Extra-time again arrived, and penalties loomed again with few clues as to who would triumph. As it turned out, the pendulum was swung by perhaps the World Cup's most incendiary moment.

Zidane had continued to push for an opening but began to be frustrated by the flagging efforts of both his teammates and his own body. Suddenly, off the ball, he became involved in an altercation with Materazzi, the Italian crashing to the floor. The world looked on in confusion only for TV replays to show that the Frenchman had head-butted Materazzi in the chest in the style of a charging bull. The tournament had been besmirched by play-acting but this was no dive: Materazzi had been knocked from his feet. Referee Horacio Elizondo was informed by fourth official Luis Medina Cantalejo of the offence, the Spanish assistant seemingly swayed by a TV replay. Zidane, whose quiet demeanour always shadowed a hot temper, left the field wordlessly, passing the trophy with a rueful glance and sloping into football history.

With France's leader deposed, Italy gained a confidence in the shoot-out they had not displayed in painful exits from the 1990, 1994 and 1998 tournaments, and it was a Frenchman plying his trade in Serie A, David Trezeguet, who missed the key spot-kick. The Italians scored all five, Fabio Grosso smashing the last past Fabien Barthez to send the Azzurri into raptures. Many of their players had suffered a summer of uncertainty and accusation as part of the Calcipoli corruption scandal that had torn their domestic game's reputation to shreds. Lifting the World Cup for a fourth time served as delightful vindication.

With France's leader deposed, Italy gained a confidence in the shoot-out they had not displayed in painful exits from the 1990, 1994 and 1998 tournaments, and it was a Frenchman plying his trade in Serie A, David Trezeguet, who missed the key spot-kick. The Italians scored all five, Fabio Grosso smashing the last past Fabien Barthez to send the Azzurri into raptures. Many of their players had suffered a summer of uncertainty and accusation as part of the Calcipoli corruption scandal that had torn their domestic game's reputation to shreds. Lifting the World Cup for a fourth time served as delightful vindication.

Singles finals today

SPORTS REPORTER

It will be an all-Narayanganj final as Elina and Shapla made it to the women's singles final of the Citycell 30th National Badminton Championships at the Wooden Floor Gymnasium yesterday.

Shapla defeated her Narayanganj's teammate Rozina 21-15 and 21-15 while Elina beat Konika of Biman 21-21, 21-16 and 21-5 to set the final clash.

In the men's singles semifinals, Rais of Biman defeated Enayet of Narayanganj 21-18, 21-9 while Javed of Narayanganj beat Parash of Biman 18-21, 21-15 and 21-15.

Both finals take place today.

LOCAL SNIPS

SPORTS REPORTER

Uttara Baridhara Club suffered their first defeat in the Senior Division Football League when they went down 1-0 to Wari Club at the Bir Shreshtha Shaheed Mostafa Kamal Stadium yesterday.

Shamim struck the all-important goal in the 42nd minute.

Wari raised their points tally to four from as many matches while Baridhara are stuck at five, also from four matches.

SIXSEASONS CHESS

FM Khondoker Aminul Islam maintained his solo lead in the Six Seasons International chess tournament at the close of the eighth round at the NSC Tower auditorium.

Aminul drew with FM Minhazuddin Ahmed Sagar to secure six points from eight matches while Russian Minina Veronika, with 5.5 points, is in second place. She also drew her game against Indian Manodip Dhar.

FM Syed Mahfuzur Rahaman Emom was in third position with five points as he beat FM Mohammed Abdul Malek.

JUNIOR CHESS

Abdullah Al Saif continued his winning run in the BASIC Bank National Junior Chess Championship as he won his sixth round game at the Bangladesh Chess Federation hallroom yesterday.

Saif beat Ikrumul Haque Siam to collect six points from as many games.

In the sixth round games, Sharif beat Emdadul Huque, Sharif beat Rizaul Islam and Sagar beat Mosabir Khan.

Pirlo focuses

FROM PAGE 17

"The tear to my left calf muscle is healing. The situation is encouraging. I am more confident, even if the recovery time will be defined step-by-step."

"The idea is that of being available on June 24 against Slovakia, the last of our group games and for those afterwards."

"We can repeat our campaign in Germany [four years ago]. Why not? I am leaving for South Africa with the idea of returning to Italy as late as possible."

How to score

FROM PAGE 17

pressure and that if the attention of the kicker was on the centre of the goal, the shot was more likely to go to the centre, too resulting in a more saveable penalty.

"The optimum strategy for penalty takers to use is to pick a spot and shoot to it, ignoring the goalkeeper in the process," said Wood.

"We needed confidence ahead of the Argentina game and scoring three goals is a good boost."

Lagerback also justified the choice of their base, in the relative industrial obscurity of South Africa's leading bulk export port of Richards Bay. Nigeria are just one of a handful of teams who have spurned a chance of a high-altitude base, but Lagerback said the advantages of warmth had triumphed.

"I checked it (the advantages of altitude) up a year ago. We talked to a lot of specialists about it. There is a slight physiological advantage, but it's a very small thing," said the Swede.

Much better, he said, was the "psychological advantage" his team would have from being able to bask in temperatures of 29 degrees Celsius (84F) during the day.

BCB promises better school cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) will form a combined national school cricket team after next season's Standard Chartered Young Tigers National School Cricket tournament.

"We will arrange matches at home and abroad for this combined team so that the young cricketers can get more exposure," BCB president AHM Mustafa Kamal while addressing a press conference yesterday at the Pan Pacific Sonargaon Hotel.

The media briefing was arranged to inform about this year's tournament where the BCB boss also expressed his high hopes on the school tournament.

"We will try our best to make it a successful event in the domestic calendar because it's a breeding ground for our cricket."

"I promise you that school cricket will be held in front of 40,000 spectators from the next season," said an ambitious Kamal.

"With the financial support from Standard Chartered Bank, the development committee of BCB organised the two-tier tournament. The one was national school cricket competition and the other was the national under-16 (age-level) tournament."

BCSP became champions in both the

"Past is past," he said when his attention was drawn to the poor grounds and overall quality of cricket in the school competitions so far.

Kamal however admitted that they could not give the best facilities for the cricketers to sustain in different conditions.

"You saw our national team's performance in the Test series in England. We don't want to blame our cricketers for their failure because they tried their best but the main problem was that our players are hardly accustomed with conditions like England. I must say we failed to provide them with proper facilities at home," he said.

With the financial support from Standard Chartered Bank, the development committee of BCB organised the two-tier tournament. The one was national school cricket competition and the other was the national under-16 (age-level) tournament.

"The training camp already got underway. It's really encouraging that eighty per cent cricketers of the academy and under-16 teams are the products of school cricket," added Jalal.

BCB's directors Aminul Huq Moni and Gazi Ashraf Hossain, Standard Chartered Bank CEO Jim McCabe and head of corporate affairs Biplobi Das Chowdhury were also present in the function.



PHOTO: COURTESY OF BCB

France miss a Zidane

AP, Knysna

With only four days left before their opening World Cup group game, France are struggling for leadership and confidence.

Coach Raymond Domenech's team look rudderless in comparison to 2006 when they united behind Zinedine Zidane's inspired leadership to reach the final.

Former captain Thierry Henry is on the bench and Patrice Evra was only recently given the armband.

There is mounting expectation that the current crop of players is bound to flop and winger Sidney Govou says that France will only improve by pulling together quickly.

"We're lacking this little something for us to be a good team, a very good team," Govou said. "This won't happen if we shoot each other down, putting the blame on such and such."

Some critics, like former France defender Marcel Desailly, are predicting the worst for Domenech's team.

Desailly played alongside Zidane when France won the World Cup in 1998 and the European Championship two years later.

A decade on, he is an outspoken media pundit. In his newspaper column for South Africa's Sunday Times, he drew bleak and unfavourable comparisons with the team of four years ago. Desailly even predicted Domenech's team would not qualify from the group stage. Mexico and host South Africa are also in Group A.

"In 2006, the spine of the team was

Fabien Barthez, Lilian Thuram, Patrick Vieira, Claude Makelele, Zinedine Zidane and Thierry Henry experienced players," said Desailly.

Desailly questions the wisdom of Domenech's sudden decision to switch from a defensive 4-2-3-1 formation to a more attacking 4-3-3 line-up only two weeks ago, suggesting it was arranged too hastily and has confused the players.

"They are now at the end of their preparation and should be at their best, but I'm annoyed that we still don't have a starting lineup and are undecided over tactics," said Desailly, who played 116 times for France. "A team