

NATIONAL BADMINTON CHAMPIONSHIP

Two titles each for Elena, Rais

SPORTS REPORTER

It was double delight for Elena and Rais in the Citycell 30th National Badminton Championship as both clinched the singles and doubles titles at the Wooden Floor Gymnasium yesterday.

Elena defeated her Narayanganj teammate Shapla 20-22, 24-22, 21-14 to lift the women's singles crown and then paired with Shapla to win the doubles, defeating Biman's Konika and Dola 21-16, 21-14.

Rais of Biman won the men's singles title with a competitive 22-24, 21-12, 25-23 win over Narayanganj's Javed and then he paired up with Parash to win the doubles in an all-Biman final as they handed a 21-17, 19-21, 21-16 defeat to Enam and Dula.

In the mixed doubles, the

crown went to Biman as the Dulal-Enam pair defeated teammates Konika and Parash 22-20, 21-14.

Elena and Rais were also adjudged the best men's and women's players among a record 300 players from 77 teams in the meet.

State Minister for Youth and Sports Ahad Ali Sarker witnessed the finals and distributed trophies as well as the prize money among the winners while Bangladesh Olympic Association president and Army Chief General M Abdul Mubeen, ATN Bangla advisor Nawajish Ali Khan, Citycell chief marketing officer Kafil HS Mueed, Bangladesh Badminton Federation president Rubaba Dowla and general secretary Mahbubur Rabi were present among others.

LOCAL SNIPPETS

SPORTS REPORTER

FM Khondoker Aminul Islam became unbeaten champion in the Six Seasons International chess tournament after drawing with Russian Minina Veronika in the final round at the Bangladesh Chess Federation Hall Room yesterday.

Aminul secured 6.5 points from nine games while FM Syed Mahfuzur Rahman Emon became runner-up with a score of six points after he got a walkover in his final round match against Indian Chandrasekhar.

Shamima Akhter Liza could have earned a Women International Master norm had she secured one point more than her five in nine games.

DIVI FOOTBALL

Fakirerpool Youngmen Club continued their winning run in the Senior Division Football League as the holders posted their fourth victory with a 2-1 win over Purbachal Parisad at the Bir Shreshtha Shaheed Mostafa Kamal Stadium yesterday.

Wahed Ahmed put Fakirerpool ahead in the third minute before Manjur Ali leveled the margin for Purbachal in the 35th minute. Mohammad Sagar struck the decisive goal in the 77th minute.

With their fourth victory in five matches, leaders Fakirerpool top the points table with 13 while Purbachal were stuck to four points after three consecutive defeats.

JUNIOR CHESS

Abdullah Al Saif maintained his solo lead in the BASIC Bank 31st National Junior Chess Championship at the end of the seven round at the Bangladesh Chess Federation hall-room yesterday.

Saif secured seven points from as many matches.

Sharif Hossain and Ikramul Haque Siam shared the second position with six points each.

Usha-Police opener on Friday

SPORTS REPORTER

Holders Usha Krira Chaktra will take on newcomers Police AC on the opening day of the Green Delta Insurance First Division Hockey League at the Maulana Bhasani National Hockey Stadium on Friday.

Last year's runners-up Abahani will play against Sardar Bima while Mohammmedan take on Wari Club the next day.

The perennial foes Abahani and Mohammmedan will square off on July 10.

Top five teams among the participating eleven teams will qualify for the Super Five League.

Tigers arrive today

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh cricket team will return home today after taking part in the Twenty20 World Cup followed by the Test series in England.

The team is scheduled to reach Dhaka at 8:40am.

Shakib Al Hasan's men made an early exit from the Twenty20 World Cup in West Indies and then lost both the Test matches in England.

After an impressive performance in the first Test at Lord's thanks to Shahadat Hossain's five-wicket haul and Tamim Iqbal's blitzkrieg hundred, the Tigers surrendered inside three days in the second Test at Old Trafford.

However it was a memorable tour for dashing left-hander Tamim as the Chittagongian smashed back-to-back hundreds, first by a Bangladeshi batsman.

The Tigers will only get a day's break at home as they are scheduled to fly for Colombo on June 12 to take part in the Asia Cup which will kick off from June 15 in Dambulla.

Tough talking

Minister Yade for staying in such an expensive hotel during an economic crisis. Domenech did not react to Yade's comments.



Biman's Rais (L) and Elena of Narayanganj show off their medals after both picked up the singles and doubles titles in the Citycell 30th National Badminton Championship at the Wooden Floor Gymnasium yesterday.

PHOTO: COURTESY

Cricket can wait at St George's Park

AFP, Port Elizabeth



Died in the wool cricket traditionalists should avoid the historic St George's Park ground at all costs over the next month as the venerable venue is turned into FIFA's World Cup fanfest site in Port Elizabeth.

Gone are the crease and wickets, stumps and scoreboard, and in their place an array of beer tents and the World Cup's largest 'big screen', a 75 square metre monster.

Up to 25,000 World Cup revellers are expected on a daily basis as Port Elizabeth and the other 2010 host cities seek to emulate the success of fan fests at the 2006 World Cup in Germany.

St George's Park is steeped in sporting folklore.

It was the venue for the first Test ever to be played in South Africa, the last Test before South Africa's expulsion from international cricket, the first ever Test series win over Australia and the first Test with the resumption of 'normal' cricket after the end of apartheid.

It was also host to the first rugby test played in South Africa, and home to the country's first bowls club in 1882.

For cricket anoraks the first Test ever staged was South Africa v England on March 12-13, 1889 with an eight-wicket win for the visitors after South Africa had won the toss and

elected to bat.

The sixth oldest cricket ground in the world was being readied Tuesday for the latest chapter in its history.

On Friday and then every day until the July 11 final the venue in the heart of Port Elizabeth will open its doors to football fans from all corners of the globe.

"This is a perfect location for a World Cup fan fest," Jason Stone, deputy Fan Fest director, told AFP on Tuesday.

"Much of the infrastructure is here already, like the 17,000 seater stands."

"We've installed four beer tents [one at the quaint 'Duckpond End of the ground], we've got the giant screen, and we've got some star acts lined up to keep the fans entertained before and between matches."

"It's a mammoth operation, including security personnel we have a workforce of around 500 people to handle a maximum crowd of 25,000."

"As entry is free it's hard to predict precisely how many we're expecting but with teams like England who have a huge following playing in Port Elizabeth it should be fun."

With the emphasis on enjoyment Stone said there would be a zero tolerance policy put in place for anyone trying to bring in a firearm gun possession being legal in South Africa.

"If anyone is found with a firearm at the entrance they will be asked to leave it at home before entering the enclosure."

The home team prodod their way to 15-1 in seven overs and to 40-2 in 15. By comparison, Sri Lanka were 46-0 in seven and 88-0 in 15.

Tatenda Taibu was initially a culprit with only four runs from his first 22 balls faced, but he redeemed himself by

SL stroll to title

Cricket

AFP, Harare

A dominant Sri Lanka came to within a freak run-out of whitewashing Zimbabwe in the final of the tri-nations tournament at Harare Sports Club here on Wednesday.

The Sri Lankans scored a leisurely 203-1 in 34.4 overs to win with ease in reply to Zimbabwe's effort of 199 all out in 49 overs.

The run-out stood between Sri Lanka bowing out the entire Zimbabwe team and then overtaking their target score without the loss of a single wicket.

Although Zimbabwe's Brendan Taylor was named man of the series afterwards it was Tillikaratne Dilshan who stole the day.

He was named man of the match after amassing 108 not out, both for his score and for his captaincy, with his 100 coming up in 97 balls and including 13 boundaries.

It was Dilshan's seventh one-day international century and his first against Zimbabwe.

The run-out came with the score on 160 Sri Lanka's highest opening partnership against Zimbabwe in internationals.

Dilshan went for a quick single to Graeme Cremer at point, but when his wicket was about to be broken he kept going and fellow opener Upul Tharanga moved forward from the other end to sacrifice his wicket.

Tharanga produced another of his speciality supporting roles with 72 runs.

The match was killed as a potential spectacle after just a few overs of the Zimbabwe innings.

The home team prodod their way to 15-1 in seven overs and to 40-2 in 15. By comparison, Sri Lanka were 46-0 in seven and 88-0 in 15.

Tatenda Taibu was initially a culprit with only four runs from his first 22 balls faced, but he redeemed himself by

becoming easily Zimbabwe's top scorer with 71.

Their meagre 199 runs was soon overwhelmed by Dilshan and Tharanga, who gobbled up the Zimbabwe bowing with ease, if not quite disdain.

India, the other team in the Tri-nation series, will play Zimbabwe in two Twenty20 matches this weekend and on Thursday a game has been arranged for them against Zimbabwe A.

Man-of-the-match: Tillikaratne Dilshan.

Man-of-the-series: Brendan Taylor.

SCORES IN BRIEF

ZIMBABWE: 199 all out in 49 overs (Taylor 19, Taibu 71, Lamb 37, Coventry 18; Fernando 3-36, A Mendis 2-44, J Mendis 2-36)

SRI LANKA: 203 for one in 34.4 overs (Tharanga 72, Dilshan 108 not out, Chandimal 16 not out)

Result: Sri Lanka won by nine wickets.

Man-of-the-match: Tillikaratne Dilshan.

Man-of-the-series: Brendan Taylor.



Sri Lanka batsman Tillikaratne Dilshan attempts a hook during his match-winning knock of 108 not out against Zimbabwe in the final of the tri-nation one-day tournament in Harare yesterday.

Roger back with a win

Tennis

AFP, Halle

Roger Federer made a victorious start to the grass court tennis season with a 6-4, 6-4 defeat of Finland's Jarkko Nieminen in the first round of the ATP event here on Tuesday.

The top-seeded Swiss superstar, five times a champion here, prevailed in 1hr 03min to set up a second-round match with either Colombia's Alejandro Falla or Israeli qualifier Noam Okun.

"I had two double faults, which is usually enough for two matches," said Federer, who had to save two break points in his first service game.

Federer is seeking to bounce back after falling to Sweden's Robin Soderling in the quarterfinals at last week's French Open and losing his world number one crown to eventual Paris champion Rafael Nadal.

The 16-time Grand Slam champion typically uses the Halle event as a tune-up event for

Wimbledon, where he will this year seek to win a record-equalling seventh singles title on the south-west London grass.

Elsewhere at Halle on Tuesday, Russian second seed Nikolay Davydenko beat Germany's Simon Greul 7-6 (7/1), 6-0, but Davydenko's third-seeded compatriot Mikhail Youzhny fell 4-6, 6-1, 7-5 to German Nicolas Kiefer.

"It was a tough game for me. The longer an injury absence endures, the harder it is to come back," said Davydenko, who is making his return to action after three months on the sidelines with a left wrist problem.

Austrian sixth seed Jürgen Melzer, a surprise semi-finalist at Roland Garros, overcame the loss of the first set against Russia's Alexandre Kudryavtsev to win 3-6, 7-6 (7/2), 6-2.

Germany's Philipp Kohlschreiber kept on course for a quarter-final meeting with Federer by edging Belgium's Ruben Bemelmans 7-6 (7/2), 6-7 (10/12), 6-4.

Next up for Kohlschreiber is Swiss Marco Chiudinelli, who defeated lucky loser Olivier Rochus of Belgium 6-3, 2-6, 6-3.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

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