



Nat'l chess from today

SPORTS REPORTER

The draw for the final phase of Mercantile Bank 36th National Chess Championship was held yesterday at the Bangladesh Chess Federation hall room.

A total of 14 players will take part in the finals which gets underway today as Reefat Bin Sattar is the lone Grand Master participating in the round-robin league system meet.

Civil Aviation and Tourism Minister and BCF president Golam Mohammed Quader and Mercantile Bank chairman Abdul Jalil MP were among others present at the draw ceremony.

Participants as per the draw are Golam Mostafa Bhuiyan, FM Mehdi Hasan Parag, FM Minhazuddin Ahmed Sagar, Mahtabuddin Ahmed, Sharif Hossain, FM Abu Sufian Shakil, FM Mohammad Javed, GM Reefat Bin Sattar, FM Aminul Islam, Arman Monir, Debaraj Chatterjee, FM Syed Mahfuzur Rahman, Abdullah Al Saif and Mizanur Rahman Labu.

V'ball training camp ends

SPORTS REPORTER

A month-long volleyball training camp for the students of Vigarunnissa Noon School and College ended yesterday on its campus.

Some 25 students took part in the training, arranged by the district sports office of Dhaka. Principal Hosne Ara Begum witnessed an exhibition match on the concluding day and later distributed certificates among the participants.

Nadal-Murray semifinal

AFP, London

Rafael Nadal came from behind Wednesday to win his grudge match with Sweden's Robin Soderling 3-6, 6-3, 7-6 (7/4), 6-1 and set up Wimbledon semifinal clash with British fourth seed Andy Murray.

The Spanish world number one recovered from an early set-back against the sixth seed to win their quarterfinal on Court One, using a dispute with the umpire over a line call to fire himself up and turn the match around.

Murray booked his place in the semifinals with a 6-7 (5/7), 7-6 (7/5), 6-2, 6-2 win over France's Jo-Wilfried Tsonga on Wednesday.

Bolt out of C'wealth Games

AFP, New Delhi

The world's fastest man Usain Bolt will not compete at the Commonwealth Games in India despite his name appearing in the preliminary entry list, his manager was quoted as saying on Thursday.

"I can 100 percent confirm that Usain will not be running at the Commonwealth Games," manager Ricky Simms told the Times of India.

Simms said he was surprised Jamaica had entered Bolt's name and urged the organisers of the October 3-14 Games not to raise hopes that the double Olympic and world sprint champion would run in New Delhi.

"Maybe this list was sent in some time ago," Simms told the newspaper. "The Commonwealth Games is not on Usain's schedule for this year."

"I do not understand why officials cannot just accept his decision and stop putting out more stories in the press. They should focus on the athletes who are coming to India."

NOTICE

Due to unavoidable circumstances we could not accommodate our regular item CROSSWORD today. It will resume on Sunday. We regret any inconvenience.

-- Sports Editor



ESPN

FIFA 2010 World Cup
QUARTERFINALS
Netherlands v Brazil
Live from 8:00pm
Uruguay v Ghana
Time: 12:30am (Saturday)

STAR Sports &
SuperSport5
Wimbledon Championships
Men's semifinals
Live from 6:00pm



PHOTO: AFP

Russia's Vera Zvonareva jubilates after beating Bulgaria's Tsvetana Pironkova in the Wimbledon semifinals at the All England Tennis Club in London yesterday.

It's Serena v Vera

AFP, London



Defending champion Serena Williams reached her third successive Wimbledon final after seeing off a challenge from the gritty Czech Petra Kvitova 7-6 (7/5), 6-2 on Thursday.

The world number one was given a stiff challenge from the unseeded world number 62, but Kvitova began to run out of steam in the second set and could not stop Williams from taking a step closer towards a fourth Wimbledon title.

The American top seed's victory means that at least one of the Williams sisters has advanced to 10 out of 11 straight finals here, with Serena now having made six.

"It definitely wasn't easy. I worked really hard," Williams said.

"I'm happy to still be here, it's such a blessing to still be in the tournament."

Williams now faces Russian 21st seed Vera Zvonareva in the final.

"Vera is a great player. I've had some unbelievable matches against her," the 28-year-old said.

"It will be tough. I feel like I have nothing to lose going into the final and she doesn't either, so it will be good."

Earlier on Thursday, Russian 21st seed Vera Zvonareva reached the women's singles final with a 3-6, 6-3, 6-2 win over unseeded Bulgarian Tsvetana Pironkova on Thursday.

Zvonareva fought back from a set down to subdue Pironkova in a hard-fought semifinal on Centre Court and will face defending champion Serena Williams in the first Grand Slam final of her career.

Since turning professional 10 years ago,

Zvonareva has been dogged by doubts about her temperament as she failed to fulfil her undoubted potential.

She was perceived as a choker who would crumble at the most important moments.

Injuries have also blighted her career, but the 25-year-old has become a more confident, mature player in the last year and had already served notice of her improved mindset by reaching the Australian Open semi-finals 18 months ago.

At Wimbledon she knocked out three seeds en route to the last four, with Jelena Jankovic and Kim Clijsters among her scalps, and she was able to summon up the will-power to halt Pironkova's fairytale run as well.

Pironkova's expectations were so low heading into Wimbledon that she only arranged for accommodation for the first week of the tournament.

The 22-year-old's apartment booking ran out before the semi-final so the Bulgarian embassy had to find her emergency accommodation.

Yet, with her confidence sky-high after stunning wins over Venus Williams and Marion Bartoli in previous rounds, Pironkova continued to play with intelligence and freedom in the first set.

She was going for her shots right from the start against Zvonareva and made enough of them to break for a 4-2 lead when a fortunate net cord went in her favour.

Pironkova had no trouble closing out the first set and looked well on top at that stage.

Zvonareva needed to dig deep now to keep her challenge alive.

She had come from behind to defeat US Open champion Clijsters in the last round and did just that again.

Dutch haven't peaked yet

SOCCERNET

Netherlands winger Eljero Elia believes his side have yet to hit top form in South Africa and is in bullish mood ahead of Friday's quarterfinal with Brazil in Port Elizabeth.

The Oranje have won all four of their World Cup games in South Africa, but have still received criticism from the media at home for failing to reproduce the scintillating brand of football that saw them thrash Italy and France at Euro 2008.

But while Elia admits that the Dutch have yet to set the finals alight, he is confident that playing five-time winners Brazil will bring the best out of his teammates.

"We can play a lot better than we have," Elia told FIFA.com. "We've been getting the results, but we've not yet shown the kind of team we are and the kind of football we can play."

"We've been controlling all the matches, but

I think we can still get a lot better and I am sure we will."

Elia, 23, is confident that he can play some part against Brazil after coming off the bench in each of Netherlands' games so far. He said: "I feel like I have been doing a pretty good job when I get on the pitch and I want to stay hungry and keep going."

And the Ajax youth product, now plying his trade with Bundesliga side Hamburg, is not daunted at the prospect of facing one of the tournament favourites, Brazil, and says that Netherlands will approach the game like any other.

"When we came here to South Africa we only had one thing in our minds: to reach the final," he said. "We're not worried about Brazil or any other opponent because we just need to play our game."

"We came to South Africa to become world champions and we're going to do everything we can to make it happen."

Dunga's hands

FROM PAGE 17

regular starting midfielders against Portugal and struggled to break through its opponent's defensive setup in a 0-0 draw in Durban.

When Kaka was struggling to regain his form following a season hit by a series of injuries with Real Madrid, Dunga even tried to use Robinho in the playmaking position with Nilmar in attack.

The players have been downplaying the lack of options, however, saying the team will stay competitive regardless of who is starting.

"We have a group," defender Juan said. "Our work has always been based on the group."

Brazil is trying to win its sixth world title in South Africa. At the 2006 tournament in Germany, the team was eliminated by France in the quarterfinals.

Brazil was without its three

Awaiting

FROM PAGE 17

"They play their football like South Americans," said the 1994 World Cup winning captain.

"Even though Brazil has beaten the Dutch twice before, every World Cup provides its own experience."

"Holland have a good tradition at the World Cup, we have to be very careful with the Dutch players, they are very technically able and we have to be able to deal with that."

In midfield Dunga is without Ramires, suspended after picking up a second booking against Chile. Elano, who has scored twice, is also out with the ankle injury he suffered against the Ivory Coast.

Felipe Melo is also carrying an ankle injury and faces a race against time to take Ramires' place on the left.

Kaka is one of three Brazilians and no fewer than seven Dutch who will miss an eventual semifinal should they receive a second yellow card.

Sneijder, Van Persie still friends

SOCCERNET

Wesley Sneijder has dismissed suggestions that a rift has developed between himself and Netherlands teammate Robin van Persie.

Sneijder and Van Persie are believed to have a complicated relationship and one that may have been further strained by suggestions that when the Arsenal striker was substituted against Slovakia, he told coach Bert van Marwijk that it should have been the Inter Milan midfielder making way.

Van Persie did indulge in an angry outburst at Van Marwijk but subsequently claimed he said "nothing bad to the coach, nothing that could harm the squad."

It is a version of events that Sneijder has accepted ahead of Friday's World Cup quarterfinal meeting with Brazil, and the playmaker has attempted to paint a picture of harmony in a Dutch side that has form for disagreements at major tournaments.

"Robin assured me that he had not said those words and I have no reason to doubt him," Sneijder said. "I don't have a problem with him and I never have done. He was disappointed to come off, that one can understand and it really isn't a serious matter."

"We will be united as never before against Brazil. We have already drawn a line under the last 16 match and we will be 120 per cent raring to go against Brazil."

Netherlands were somewhat unimpressive when defeating Slovakia 2-1 in the second round and Van Persie's rant at Van Marwijk put the side under further scrutiny. But the coach believes suggestions of tension in the camp should be dropped after he called Van Persie and Sneijder in for clear-the-air talks.

"The meeting was to draw a line under the story and so we could now focus on the Brazil match," Van Marwijk said. "Robin played well against Slovakia, and was involved in the first goal. I was satisfied with his contribution but I needed to send on a fresh player who could continue to harry our opponents."

An eye for a vuvuzela

AFP, Harare

A Zimbabwean man has lost an eye in a fight over a vuvuzela, a state daily reported on Thursday.

The man, who was not identified, was attacked at his home in Zimbabwe's second city of Bulawayo by three teenagers after he refused to give up a vuvuzela the three claimed belonged to their friend.

"One of them allegedly kicked him in the chest and when he fell to the ground the others also assaulted him," the newspaper reported.

"He sustained a swollen right eye that had to be removed," it said.

The man was still recovering in hospital, the newspaper said. His alleged attackers appeared before a magistrate's court in Bulawayo and were released on 100 US dollar bail.

The vuvuzela has been the defining sound for the football World Cup in neighbouring South Africa while in Zimbabwe it is popular among viewers at fan parks.

Winning matters most

AFP, Port Elizabeth

For a team that was supposed to flounder in the first round and that has come under attack for its reliance on style over substance, Dunga's boys from Brazil aren't doing too badly.

Dunga's class of 2010 head into Friday's World Cup quarterfinal clash against the Netherlands seemingly coming to the boil at just the right time.

But the 1994 World Cup winning skipper's pragmatic approach has not pleased detractors who yearn for the return of 'o joga bonito' (the beautiful game).

Individuals like Pele, Gerson, Zico and Ronaldo intoxicated the world with their talent, and the Selecao's supporters crave for a repeat of that golden era.

Brazil are now just three games away from achieving a sensational sixth title, which is a good deal closer than former skipper Socrates thought they would get.

Socrates captained a side that was big on entertainment and low on results, losing out to Italy in the quarterfinals at the 1982 World Cup.

He called Dunga's team "an affront to our culture".

"[There is] this focus on staying power, which is alien

to us traditionally," he argued. Socrates, even if Brazil were to win their sixth World Cup, said he would "take no pleasure in seeing the team play in this fashion".

And to add insult to injury he added: "I am very worried they will have difficulty getting past the opening phase."

Those comments came before Brazil's World Cup campaign began, and Dunga and his team have proved him wrong on several counts.

Not only are Brazil past the group stage and facing a last eight date with Holland, the side that created 'total football', they are also showing dashes of style with dollops of substance.

For Brazil though the contention that they may be lacking in the style department doesn't close them much sleep.

Full-back Maicon, author of Brazil's first goal at the 2010 World Cup, a sublime tight-angled shot against North Korea, stated before the competition commenced: "I want to be a champion -- whether

or not Brazil turn on the joga bonito.

"Whether you turn on the style or play ugly, the important thing is that come July 11, Brazil are in the final."

Striker Luis Fabiano chipped in to the debate, saying before the opening 2-1 win over North Korea, that if Brazil had to "win dirty then we will as what counts with a World Cup is winning it".

And former Arsenal midfielder Gilberto Silva has stressed that Brazil are in South Africa "not to have a good time -- we want to be champions".

So the message is clear to Socrates, and the others, Brazil, as they are only too happy to prove, mean business and can do the business.

After all the criticism he's received Dunga would not be human if he were not to feel an overwhelming sense of vindication should Kaka and co. lift the trophy at Soccer City on July 11.

The end, he might well say, has justified the means.

Download free games, applications, ring tones and wallpapers on your device from Ovi Store. **NOOKIA OVI** Visit www.ovi.com

Houseful PE

AFP, Port Elizabeth

Port Elizabeth has put a 'no room at the inn' sign up as Brazilian and Dutch fans invade this sleepy Eastern Cape city for Friday's mouthwatering World Cup quarterfinal.

This is PE's sixth World Cup game and a full house of 42,000 is expected on Friday for the first time at the Nelson Mandela Bay stadium which was built at a cost of 2.1 billion Rand (270 million US dollars).

The only fixture that has really stirred the place up to now was when England and their travelling band of 20,000 plus fans came to town to play Slovenia.

The Three Lions' 1-0 win was watched by over 38,000 at a Nelson Mandela Bay stadium which in contrast had more than 12,000 empty seats for last Saturday's second round game between Uruguay and South Korea.

The city's fan fest at PE's historic St George's Park cricket ground has welcomed around 150,000 through its gates, a crowd that peaked at 29,000 on the day of the opening match between South Africa and Mexico.

The city's coffers though have suffered compared to other host cities like Cape Town and Durban but not having any teams using it as a World Cup base, with most supporters flying in and out on match days.

But accountants, hotel, bar and restaurant owners have their fingers on the till in anticipation of a cash windfall for Friday's headline last eight clash.

Thursday's edition of the local paper, The Herald, meanwhile reported a 30 per cent increase in visitors since the World Cup began on June 11.

That could have been even better if teams had been staying in or around PE, Bed and Breakfast Association chairman Walter Passet told the paper.

"The fans booked accommodation in cities where their home teams are based," he explained.

"Unfortunately we failed to host even a single team." Radisson Hotel duty manager Ravindar Kumar reported all 173 rooms were booked.

Fan Fest director Glenn van Eck revealed that PE's big screen in St George's Park had attracted the third highest attendance after Durban and Cape Town of all the 10 fan parks in South Africa.

"By last Friday evening 150,000 people had passed through the turnstiles," he said.

Teams train away from stadium

GUARDIAN

Brazil and Holland will complete their preparations for Friday's World Cup quarterfinal clash in Port Elizabeth away from Nelson Mandela Bay stadium.

Groundstaff have been working tirelessly to repair the playing surface since Saturday's Round of 16 meeting between Uruguay and South Korea. The most badly affected areas of the pitch have been under lights ever since to help stimulate growth.



FREE POSTER WORLD CUP T-SHIRTS LIMITED EDITION ORDER YOURS NOW!! FREE FLAG
E-MAIL: ORDER@YOUTEEZ.COM
0161-5555-YOU (968)
WWW.ILOVEYOU.COM.BD

Whoever wins you'll be the champion

1st prize Nokia N900, 2nd prize Nokia N97, 3rd prize Nokia E72, 4th prize Nokia E71, 5th prize Nokia E52

Now the football fever has caught your mobile. Be the first to correctly answer 10 questions daily and win a Nokia 2700c every day!

The combined highest scorer also stands the chance to win exclusive handsets like Nokia N900 at the end of the tournament.

To participate, type Q and send SMS to 2002

Stay Close | grameenphone

Duration of the contest is from June 11 to July 11, 2010
One subscriber can play multiple times from a single number
To know your score, SMS Score to 2002
If you stop playing anytime, to get the last unanswered question SMS LQ to 2002
For details, please call 121 or visit www.grameenphone.com
SMS charge, VAT and conditions apply.