

Anand keeps his crown

 Chess

AFP, Moscow

India's Viswanathan Anand on Wednesday retained his world chess title by outgunning his Israeli challenger Boris Gelfand in a quick-fire shootout forced after their 12-game Moscow epic ended all square.

Dubbed the "Battle of the Armageddon" in chess circles, the tie-break saw the two chess titans clash in four nail-biting speed chess games that lasted over four hours and left both players emotionally exhausted.

Three of the games ended in draws but a mistake by Gelfand in the endgame of game two as his allotted 25 minutes ran out proved decisive. Anand, known as the "Tiger of Madras", won that game and then doughtily resisted attempts by the Israeli to break through.

"It was incredibly tense," a drained Anand told reporters after the match. "I think that right now, the only feeling you have is relief. I am really too tense to be happy, but there is relief."

"Today, it is difficult to claim anything. I would simply say that my nerves held on better. I simply hung on for dear life."

With the players knowing one mistake could cost the championships, the match was marked by the almost unbearable tension of past great clashes like the epic world title match between Garry Kasparov and Anatoly Karpov in 1984-85.

The series had been staged at the Tretyakov art gallery in Moscow, the first time the Russian capital has hosted the world chess championships since the Kasparov-Karpov game that was called off due to fears for their health.

The thrilling tie-break was worthy of a tournament whose history also includes the historic 1972 clash in Reykjavik at the height of the Cold War between Bobby Fischer of the US and Soviet great Boris Spassky.

The Minsk-born Israeli had chances in all four tie-break games to put pressure on Anand and at times showed magnificently resourceful defence against the Indian's attacks.

Anand, dressed in his usual blue shirt, sat rooted to his chair as the more expressive Gelfand ran his hands through his hair and took long walks away from the board to think out his positions.

As tension mounted, Gelfand indulged in his favourite stress-busting habit of repeat-

edly rotating one of the taken bishop pieces in his right hand.

But he did not find a way to break down the Anand defence and seeing no chance of the victory he needed in the final fourth game Gelfand offered the draw which gave Anand the tiebreak by 2.5 points-to-1.5 and the title.

After four-and-a-half hours of extreme tension, the two men shook hands and immediately left the stage.

"Boris had his chances in each of the four tie-break games," commented Russian grandmaster Peter Svindler.

"Today has been a magnificent struggle, not without mistakes, but a lot of fight was shown by both players," he added.

Gelfand used up most of his allotted time in each of the games, leaving him under huge pressure as he made the endgame



India's Vishwanathan Anand ponders his next move during a tie-break of the FIDE World Chess Championship match against Israel's Boris Gelfand in State Tretyakovsky Gallery in Moscow yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

moves with just seconds remaining.

"I think the decisive factor was that fact I did not use my time so wisely," he said.

The two masters displayed titanic control of the board in the regular 12-game series earlier this month but it ended level with just a win apiece and 10 draws.

Tough passage for Federer, Djokovic

 French Open

REUTERS, Paris

Roger Federer and Novak Djokovic gave themselves more work than anticipated in moving into the third round of the French Open on Wednesday.

Former champion Federer set a record with his 234th Grand Slam match win but only after wasting two matchpoints in a third-set tiebreak and having to play a fourth set to beat Romanian Adrian Ungur.

The third-seeded Federer eventually won 6-3, 6-2, 6-7, 6-3 on a sunny Philippe Chatrier court to pass Jimmy Connors's professional-era record, having equalled it in the first round here.

"Instead of being aggressive I let him show me what he could do," Federer said of the lost matchpoints. "He played two beautiful shots and he played very well."

World number one Djokovic, aiming to become the first man in 43 years to hold all four grand-slam titles at the same time, rattled off the first seven games before faltering against Slovenian Blaz Kavcic.

"I stopped," the Serbian told a news conference, after the match turned into a fierce battle which he finally won 6-0, 6-4, 6-4. "I gave him the opportunity to come back into the match after a perfect first seven games."

The fans sitting in the sunshine on

Suzanne Lenglen court threw themselves behind underdog Kavcic and the Slovenian played on their sympathy, urging them on when they cheered his first game win at the start of the second set.

Their noisy enthusiasm reached a high point after he saved a breakpoint to hold for 3-3 in the third set and then went 0-30 up in the next game, and the umpire sternly warned the crowd to keep quiet during play.

In the third round, Djokovic will play French qualifier Nicolas Devilder while Federer will meet either Slovakian Martin Klizan or Frenchman Nicolas Mahut.

Women's world number one Victoria Azarenka redeemed herself after narrowly avoiding first-round defeat when she easily beat German qualifier Dinah Pfizenmaier 6-1, 6-1 in her second match.

The Belarussian lost the first game but then reeled off 11 in a row and declared herself happy, saying: "Definitely played much better today." She now faces Canada's Aleksandra Wozniak.

US Open champion Samantha Stosur, the runner-up here two years ago, raced to a 5-0 lead before beating American world number 112 Irina Falconi 6-1, 6-4.

Argentine men's ninth seed Juan Martin del Potro also reached the third round with a 6-7, 7-6, 6-4 victory over Frenchman Edouard Roger-Vasselin and will now play Croatian Marin Cilic.

BCB seals

FROM PAGE 16

team's responsibility twice between 1999-2001 and 2003.

Following a second spell with Border, he went on to coach Middlesex and the Titans before deciding to return to the international fold by accepting terms with Bangladesh.

BCB had earlier got a good response for the position vacated by Law, mainly due to Bangladesh's excellent Asia Cup showing as several big-name coaches applied for the role soon after Law made official his resignation on April 16.

The board was met with an unprecedented number of applicants who were willing to take on the role but considering his stature they decided on Pybus and finally sealed the deal to make sure that the boys get the right man beside them.

Abahani win

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playing as a winger instead of left-back, volleyed home a Awudu Ibrahim free-kick. Afterwards, BJMC came close to restoring the lead twice but Felix and Jean Jules Ikanga squandered chances before the break.

After resumption, BJMC stepped up the attack and yielded a good number of chances before restoring the lead on 64 minutes. Abahani goalkeeper Soheli failed to grip a lob properly and Felix tapped in from close.

However, they could hold on to the lead for only three minutes as Abahani's Brazilian Silva nodded home an Arman Aziz chip from the six-yard box on 67 minutes.

Abahani were lucky to find the decider in the 77th minute as Wali Faisal ran down from the left to put a lob for Twum Frank who entered the box playing one-two with his compatriot Ibrahim and placed the ball from close range to score the decisive goal.

The defeat saw BJMC saw remain on 23 points, but they were overtaken in third position by Sheikh Russel who defeated Brothers Union 4-1 in the other encounter at the Bangabndu National Stadium yesterday, thanks to a second-half hat-trick from midfielder Mezbahul Huq Manik. Sheikh Russel moved to third position with 24 points.

In the other match played at the Birsheshtha Mostafa Kamal Stadium in Kamalapur, Feni Soccer Club defeated Farashganj SC 1-0 with Rowland scoring the decider on 55 minutes.

UK Minister meets Shagor

SPORTS REPORTER

The United Kingdom's Foreign Office Minister for South Asia, Alistair Burt MP, yesterday paid a visit to the National Swimming Complex in Mirpur to extend his support and cooperation to Bangladeshi Olympic swimmer Mahfuzur Rahman Shagor, who is training for the Games in London this summer.

Shagor will be a wild card entry into the 50m freestyle competition and as such has been undertaking intensive training in the National Swimming Complex.

"It was great to see Shagor in training and ask him about his prospects for the 2012 Olympics," said Burt.

"London is ready to welcome all the Bangladeshi competitors this summer," he said adding that all Bangladeshi athletes could expect to, "receive plenty of support from the half million strong Bangladeshi community in the UK."

The Minister spoke to Shagor on the occasion an enquired about his prospects in the upcoming Games.

"Participating in the Olympic Games is a great honour for any athlete. I hope Shagor will enjoy competing in the Aquatic Centre. He will inspire others in Bangladesh," said Burt.

The Minister also took time to laud the London 2012 International Inspiration programme which is currently working with the Bangladesh Swimming Federation to teach survival swimming skills to upto 250,000 children. He said that this was a great way to showcase London 2012's global legacy.

Alistair Burt MP, UK Foreign Office Minister for South Asia speaks to Bangladeshi Olympic swimmer Mahfuzur Rahman Shagor at the National Swimming Complex in Mirpur yesterday.



PHOTO: COURTESY

DL method or VJD system?

ICC rules today on which to follow

 Cricket

AFP, New Delhi

An Indian engineer will learn Thursday whether his challenge to the English system for determining the winner of rain-affected cricket matches -- one of the most complicated rules in the sport -- has been successful.

The current method, devised by English statisticians Frank Duckworth and Tony Lewis and known as the Duckworth-Lewis (D/L) rule, was first introduced at the international level in 1996.

It uses mathematical formulas to calculate the winning target for the batting team when rain reduces playing time in limited-overs matches and was first adopted after World Cup rules made a mockery of the 1992 semifinal between England and South Africa in Sydney.

V Jayadevan, an engineer in southern Kerala state, spent a decade work-

ing on his so-called VJD system, which has been used in Indian domestic matches since 2007 following a recommendation from batting legend Sunil Gavaskar.

The International Cricket Council will announce on Thursday if the VJD system will replace the Duckworth-Lewis method after discussions in London by the ICC's cricket committee, headed by former West Indies captain Clive Lloyd.

Jayadevan, a passionate statistician, calculates his chances of success in percentage terms.

"I think there is 90 per cent hope if members read it patiently," Jayadevan told AFP from his office in Thrissur.

"I will not be at the meeting because I was not invited, so I cannot immediately clear any doubts which a member may have. That is why I have taken away the remaining 10 per cent chance," he said.

Jayadevan insists his system of calculating revised targets is a vast improvement on the D/L method.

"Both are two different ways of approaching a problem, two different mathematical models," he said. "There is nothing wrong with D/L system, but many times the targets set by it are not reasonable or sensible."

"In my report to the ICC, I have pointed out the mathematical and statistical flaws in the D/L system and how that has been corrected in my method."

In the World Cup game that prompted the adoption of the D/L method, South Africa needed a gettable 22 runs off 13 balls before rain stopped play, but that became a ludicrous 21 off one ball when the match resumed.

In England, the challenge has been seen by some as another attempt by India, the game's superpower, to chip away at the influence of England, the former colonial power and inventor of the game.

"There could be no more symbolic example of India's challenge to surpass England in every aspect of cricket's world order," noted the Guardian newspaper.

No water in swing theory!

 Cricket

AFP, Wellington

The widely-held belief that moisture in the air during humid conditions helps make a cricket ball swing has been clean bowled in a scientific study.

Swing bowling -- when a delivery curves sideways in mid-air -- has long been regarded as one of the game's dark arts, not only deceiving hapless batsmen but also puzzling cricket-loving scientists.

Researchers from Britain's Sheffield Hallam University and the University of Auckland in New Zealand reviewed scientific literature on the subject and conducted their own tests to try to get to the bottom of the mystery.

From the earliest studies of the phenomenon in the 1950s to the "semi-

nal review of sports ball dynamics" by NASA scientist Rabindra Mehta in 1985, they found humidity was consistently cited as a crucial factor in achieving swing.

The researchers tested the theory using 3D laser scanners in an atmospheric chamber to measure the effect different humidity levels had on deliveries using balls which had been "aged" to simulate match conditions.

While altitude and the age of the ball both increased swing, the scientists did not discover any link between moisture levels in the air and sideways movement of the ball.

"This study shows that there is no direct or indirect manner in which humidity can significantly affect the ability of the bowler to make the ball swing," they concluded in research published in the online journal

Procedia Engineering this week.

"It is therefore logical to conclude that humidity may not have the significant influence on swing bowling that is widely assumed."

Instead, the researchers put forward their own theory that cloud cover provided the ideal environment for swing bowling because it reduced turbulence in the air caused by heating from sunlight.

They said such still conditions meant the air surrounding the ball during the delivery was less likely to be disturbed, making it easier to produce the "asymmetrical" flight needed for swing bowling.

"What is clear is that the scientific community should turn their attention away from the question of humidity and focus their efforts to test the cloud cover hypothesis," they said.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS	38 "Monty Python" opener	DOWN	20 Really fast
1 Food	39 Gloomy	1 Leave a lasting impres-	22 Mass hysteria
5 Workout venues	42 Embrace	2 "Hi, sailor!"	24 Should
9 Craze	44 Approximately	3 Walked (on)	25 Seuss' hat-wearer
12 Drive- in	48 Early bird?	4 Boss	26 Past
13 Waikiki wingding	49 Former frosh	5 Glistens	27 A Bobbsey twin
14 Exist	50 Night light?	6 Taiwanese dollar	29 Compass dir.
15 Hens' housing	51 Every last	7 Joan of Arc, for instance	30 Geological period
16 Deserve	52 Jog	8 Baltimore news-paper	31 Game, —, match
17 Spy novel org.	53 "American —"	9 Datum	35 Pakistan city
18 Steven-son villain	54 "30 Rock" cast member	10 Bocelli show-stopper	36 Leggings
19 Pismire	55 Longings	11 Cherished	39 Un-hearing
20 Celebrity	56 Rabbit		40 Lecherous look
21 Spinning stat			41 In pre-swam mode
23 Ad-dressee			43 Fairy tale preposi-tion
25 Painter's surface			45 Start over
28 Money of India			46 Any time now
32 Once more			47 Sibling-less
33 Literary category			49 Pigs' digs
34 Adenoid neighbor			
36 Menace			
37 Goose (Sp.)			

Solution time: 27 mins.

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PALE	OMEGA	
SNORE	DAOC	
HOST	FELOS	SPAR
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CRYPTOQUIP

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ZCUCBSBGC: "WUDUHNPNFZC."

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: BECAUSE THIS FRAGILE FABRIC RIPS SO EASILY, I GUESS PEOPLE OUGHT TO CALL IT TEAR-Y CLOTH.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: C equals T