

Dhumketu outplay Bakshi Bazar

SPORTS REPORTER

Dhumketu outplayed Bakshi Bazar by 89-54 points in their Citycell Premier Division Basketball League match at the Dhanmondi Basketball Gymnasium yesterday.

Sajid and Romel were the top scorers for Dhumketu with 14 and 13 points respectively while Asif of Bakshi Bazar scored match's highest 20 points.

Meanwhile, Rangers defeated Flame Boys by 89-56 points in the late game on Tuesday night. Nahid caged 27 points while Sendi netted 21 for the winning side.

Indo-Pak cricket this year?

AP, Islamabad

Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) chairman Zaka Ashraf expects to revive cricketing ties with India this year and is even willing to play against the arch-rivals at a neutral venue.

Ashraf says he had a "fruitful" meeting with officials from the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) last week when he watched the Indian Premier League final at Chennai.

"I think our [cricketing] relations will be revived very soon and people will hear the good news," Ashraf said.

Cricketing ties between Pakistan and India were suspended in 2008 after the terror attacks in Mumbai in which 166 people were killed, straining political relations between the countries.

Ashraf says he won't mind sending the Pakistan team to India or to a neutral venue.

Formalities of the bilateral series will be finalised during the ICC Annual Conference in Kuala Lumpur later this month.

"Nothing has been finalised as yet because India will come up with a proposal at Kuala Lumpur, but what I felt was that the series will be held this year," Ashraf said.

BCCI President Narainswamy Srinivasan also met Ashraf in New Delhi and promised him he will talk with other BCCI officials before finalising an agreement with the PCB.

"He told me 'just give us a little time, we will talk more on this in Kuala Lumpur after I talk with other BCCI officials,'" Ashraf said.

Last week the BCCI said that it will invite Pakistan's domestic Twenty20 champions Sialkot Stallions to this year's Champions League which might also open doors for Pakistan cricketers to compete in next year's IPL.

Maria, Petra

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Shvedova's serve to level the match at 4-4, followed by a crucial hold.

Serving at 4-5, nerves got the better of Shvedova, allowing the world number four to convert her second match point for a place in the semi-final.

"Everything happened before the final of the Champions League between Chelsea and Bayern Munich," said Pirog, a vet who specialises in monkeys and birds.

"We did this test with the elephant, an African Grey Parrot and a donkey." "The donkey and the parrot decided the winner would be Bayern Munich but only the elephant got the right winner, so we decided she's got psychic powers."

The Krakow Zoo thought it would be a bit much to task Citta with predicting the outcome of every match so they're just going to put her powers to the test for Poland's games. However, should she prove as talented as Paul the Octopus, they're planning on rolling her out for the knock-out rounds as well.

It's been a long road for the Indian elephant to reach this illustrious stage in her career, having previously worked for a German circus and then entertained visitors at nature parks in Austria and Spain as well as the zoo in Hamburg.

Given the recent football betting Calciocorruption match-fixing scandal in Italy, it is not yet clear how UEFA will react to Citta's predictions, although it is worth noting that Paul was never sanctioned during his career.



The three basketball players, who arrived yesterday to play in the Premier Division League for Dhaka Gladiators, pose at a hotel in Dhanmondi. (L-R) Cheyenne Moore of USA, Ricardo Catala of Puerto Rico and Daniel Tavares of USA.

Nadal, Ferrer in semis

AFP, Paris

Spanish sixth seed David Ferrer defeated British fourth seed Andy Murray 6-4, 6-7 (3/7), 6-3, 6-2 on Wednesday to set up a semifinal clash against compatriot and six-time champions Rafael Nadal in the French Open. Nadal defeated fellow Spaniard Nicolas Almagro 7-6 (7/4), 6-2, 6-3 earlier on the day to reach the semifinals without dropping a single set.

It was the 50th win for Nadal at the spiritual home of claycourt tennis since he first competed here as an 18-year-old in 2005. His only defeat came in the fourth round in 2009 when he lost to Robin Soderling of Sweden in a fourth round match.

This year Nadal is bidding to become the first player to win seven French Open titles, moving him out of a tie with Swedish legend Bjorn Borg. A win on Sunday would also be his 11th Grand Slam title, level with Borg and Rod Laver.

In the end Almagro went the way of so many others over the course of the last seven years, but he gave a solid account of himself especially in a hotly-disputed first set.

On another cool, overcast Parisian afternoon, games went with serve in the opening

Citta the Paul

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so far has a 100 percent record.

According to zookeeper Jerzy Pirog, Citta correctly predicted the outcome of the Champions League final last month and has now been put to the test to predict the results of Poland's group matches.

The co-hosts open their Group A campaign against Greece on Friday and according to Citta, they can expect to win.

Presented with a choice of three melons, each set out in front of either the Polish flag, the Greek one or a banner proclaiming a draw, 33-year-old Citta scooped up the one in front of the Polish flag.

Whereas Paul the Octopus was the original self-made psychic, Citta had to come through an X-Factor style competition to earn her chance.

But having beaten off competition from a parrot called Kuba and Black Mary the donkey, Citta is being trusted with the vital role of showing the way for betting coupons up and down the country.

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Shakib seeks to skip Zim tour

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"Unfortunately we (the selectors) knew nothing about the matter, so I can't comment on it," said Akram.

Soon after returning from the IPL, Shakib said that he had an immediate feeling of taking a break from cricket following a gruelling season. But he was not sure whether he will take rest rather he lent support to Victoria Sporting Club to clinch the league title.

He also jokingly said that he always changes his plans, so one can't be sure whether he will ultimately take rest and skip the Zimbabwe trip. Shakib, who came to the board office yesterday to meet the newly-appointed coach Pybus, was not ready to make any comments on this issue rather he said that he was looking forward to tomorrow's Premier League title-deciding match between Victoria and Old DOHS at the Fatullah Cricket Stadium.

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Absent Jimmy the issue

Final England-Windies Test begins today

AFP, Birmingham

A series where plenty of attention has been given to absent West Indies players concludes with the focus on England resting spearhead seamer James Anderson from the third Test here at Edgbaston.

In rising to number one in the world Test rankings, England have rested players along the way -- Anderson missed the 2010 tour of Bangladesh.

The difference now is that the Lancashire star doesn't want a break. But the concern for England is the sheer amount of cricket they have left this season -- four Tests (three against South Africa who will be challenging them for top spot in the rankings), 14 one-day internationals and four Twenty20s.

And then comes the defence of their World Twenty20 title in Sri Lanka and a Test tour of India.

England, 2-0 up in the three-match series, do have capable seam bowling reserves in Steven Finn and Graham Onions and both could be in the side on Thursday if the selectors opt to give

Barath terms Gayle return as 'great'

AFP, Birmingham

West Indies opener Adrian Barath has said "it's great" Chris Gayle is returning to the one-day squad -- even if the recall has come, in part, at his expense.

Former captain Gayle has been selected for the three-match one-day series against England later this month after a 14-month dispute with the West Indies Cricket Board (WICB).

The 32-year-old dynamic opening batsman, with a West Indies record 19 hundreds in 228 ODIs to his name, has not played international cricket since a defeat by Pakistan in the quarterfinals of the World Cup in March last year.

MSC in semis

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to 14 goals for the tournament.

The other match between Azad Sporting and Police SC ended 3-2 in favour of Azad. The winners led the first half 1-0. Mohammad Salahuddin scored two goals for the winning side.

Deadlines

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process so we understand what problems they may go through. We hope the franchisees make payments, which isn't much left unpaid," he added.

In another meeting yesterday, the NBR officials called upon Ashraf and the franchisees where the ultimatum to complete the payment of taxes was delivered.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

- ACROSS 35 Ms. 53 Chop 23 Siesta 24 Have bills
4 Make 36 Spacecraft 25 Rowing need
8 Polio vaccine compartment 26 Moonshine holder
12 Pub 37 "Two and a Half ..." 3 Cried 27 "A pox upon thee!"
13 Burn 38 Salad option 5 Mourner's poem 28 Part of UCLA
14 Entreaty 45 Taj Mahal city 6 Got up 29 Inseparable
15 Back 46 Zhivago's love 7 "Dennis the Menace" cartoonist Hank
16 For fear 47 Bronze 8 Binge 32 Photog's choice
17 Whatever 48 Close tightly 9 Sheltered 33 Apiece
18 Dieter's dairy 50 Book-keeper (Abbr.) 11 William's wife 19 Woe
21 Unfriendly 51 Steerer's place 19 Ceremony 20 Drone
22 Shade 51 Steerer's place 19 Ceremony 20 Drone
23 Nary a soul 52 Ceremony 20 Drone
26 Predicament
27 "Alice" spinoff
30 Vacationing
31 Mojito ingredient
32 MGM mascot
33 Apiece
34 Leprechauns' dance

Cryptogram grid with numbers 1-44 and corresponding letters: H G H R W K G G J E J D Y C R K M B V H N Y H ' A R E J M O H M Q K M K J I K C A J D N O G N K K C H M Q, J A H A K W I H M Q K M B K K O?

CRYPTOQUIP
Yesterday's Cryptoquip: WANTING EVERYONE TO LIVE IN THE PRESENT, THE ORTHOPEDIST WILL SOMETIMES CRY "CARPAL DIEM!"
Today's Cryptoquip Clue: H equals I