

Chess Olympiad Women, men win

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh men's and women's teams both won their respective matches of the 10th round of the 40th World Chess Olympiad in Istanbul, Turkey on Friday.

The men's team beat Thailand by 3.5-0.5 points, thanks to victories by GM Abdullah Al Rakib, GM Enamul Hossain Razeed and GM Niaz Murshed. However, the highest rated Bangladeshi GM Ziaur Rahman drew his board. The men's team now have 12 match points and 23.5 games points and are placed 49th with the last round to be played today. Bangladesh take on Bosnia & Herzegovina in the last round. China, Armenia and Russia share the lead with 17 match points each.

In the women's section, Bangladesh beat Ireland by 3-1 points on Friday with Sharmin Sultana Shirin, WIM Rani Hamid and Nazrana Khan Eva winning their boards. WFM Zakia Sultana lost her board. Bangladesh women's team have 11 match points and 22.5 games points and take on Turkmenistan in the last round. China and Russia lead the women's section with 17 matchpointseach.

INDO-PAK SERIES PCB demands visa for fans

AFP, Islamabad

Pakistan's cricket chief on Friday urged the visiting Indian Foreign Minister SM Krishna to ensure fans would get visas so they can see the first series between the two countries in five years.

India has invited Pakistan to play three one-day internationals and two Twenty20 games in December-January. The rivals have not held a series since 2007, after cricket ties were snapped following the 2008 attacks on Mumbai.

Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) said its chairman Zaka Ashraf met Krishna in Islamabad to discuss travel arrangements for the series.

"Ashraf requested Krishna for the support of the Indian government to facilitate in the issuance of Indian visas for the Pakistani fans wanting to watch the Pakistan-India series this year," a PCB press release said.

Krishna had directed India's High Commissioner in Pakistan to extend maximum cooperation, the PCB said.

"A cricket series between Pakistan and India is very important for the fans on both sides of the border," said Ashraf.

"So it is extremely important that they are facilitated any way possible by the governments and the cricket boards of both the countries."

Rankings bemuse Bailey

AFP, Dubai

Australia captain George Bailey was left scratching his head as to how his side was now ranked below Ireland in the Twenty20 rankings after their super over defeat in the second Twenty20 international against Pakistan on Friday.

He questioned the rankings system in which minnows Ireland are a place above them.

"That does not look good but I am still not sure how the rankings work," said Bailey of the Twenty20 rankings introduced last year and currently topped by South Africa.

"So Ireland goes past us when we haven't played Ireland in a T20. If Ireland is a better side than us then I guess it will show in a couple of weeks in Sri Lanka," said Bailey of the World Twenty20 championship starting on September 18.

Australia are in Group B of the 12-team competition and open their campaign against Ireland in Colombo



PHOTO: AFP

US tennis superstar Serena Williams was in destruction mode as she cast aside Italy's Sara Errani in their US Open semifinal at Flushing Meadows in New York on Friday.

Serena-Victoria finale

AFP, New York



Three-time champion Serena Williams cruised into her sixth US Open final on Friday with a 6-1, 6-2 mauling of Italian

Victoria Azarenka in the final.

Williams, the Wimbledon and Olympic champion, will be looking to capture a 15th Grand Slam singles title in Saturday's title match which she has reached for the loss of just 19 games and without dropping serve.

She will take a 9-1 winning record into the final against top-seeded Australian Open winner Azarenka, who came back from a set and a break down to beat 2006 champion Maria Sharapova 3-6, 6-2, 6-4 to reach her first New York final.

In a rematch of the Australian Open final where Azarenka beat Sharapova to win her first Grand Slam title, the 23-year-old from Belarus rallied to defeat the Russian third seed.

"I was just trying to grab the first opportunity," Azarenka said. "Maria is such a great player. She came out firing and didn't give me a chance to get into a rhythm. I just kept fighting with all my heart."

No women's top seed has won the US Open since Justine Henin five years ago. No top seed has won any Grand Slam women's crown since Williams in 2010 at Wimbledon.

This is the first time a US Open women's final four has included the year's prior Grand Slam champions -- Azarenka, Wimbledon and Olympic winner Williams and Sharapova, who completed a career Grand Slam with her Roland Garros title.

"I love playing here. It's always an honour, every time I play here is such a pleasure," said Williams, who was just 17 when she won her first US Open title 13 years ago.

"It's awesome to be back in the final again. I dreamt about this all year and I am really happy. It'll be great to win again, but Victoria also wants it. But hey, I'm the last American standing, so come on guys."

Williams, 30, was barely troubled by 10th-seeded Errani, the French Open runner-up, who she had already defeated three times in three outings prior to Friday's mismatch.

She broke three times in the first set, which was wrapped-up in 30 minutes, firing 18 winners to just three and allowing the Italian just five points on her serve.

More breaks followed in the first and fifth games of the second set as the American built a 4-1 lead.

Errani, the first Italian woman to reach the US Open semifinals, saved a match point in the seventh game.

But Williams, the runner-up to Samantha Stosur in a bad-tempered final in 2011, wasn't to be denied, winning the tie with a second serve ace -- her ninth of the contest and 50th of the tournament.

Her 64-minute victory was perfectly illustrated by 38 winners to just six by Errani.

"For me, Serena is incredible," said the Italian. "The way she won today and when she plays like this, she is the best player in the world."

Williams second round win over Spain's Maria Jose Martinez Sanchez kept her on court for the longest stretch -- and that was only 82 minutes.

"I think Serena will win on Saturday. Azarenka is also a strong player but Serena is

Super over Pakistan's

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31 off just 19 balls, hitting two boundaries and a six off Hafeez's first over.

But once Saeed Ajmal came to bowl, the Australian innings faltered. Ajmal bowled Warner and then had Watson (33), taking his tally to 58 in Twenty20 cricket, the joint top bowler along with countryman Shahid Afridi.

Watson had hit two boundaries and two sixes during his 28-ball knock.

Michael Hussey (23) and Bailey took the secure to 109 before Hussey holed out to Gul. Australia at that point needed 43 off the last five overs.

Earlier Hafeez hit three boundaries in Cummins' first over of the match but fellow opener Imran Nazir was bowled for nought in Mitchell Starc's second over.

Hafeez and Jamshed shared a solid 76-run partnership for the second wicket as both charged the Australian bowling with some aggressive batting. Jamshed hit four boundaries and a six during his 36-ball knock.

He fell to a superb catch by Dan Christian off Cummins, as the fielder lunged backward and held the ball with left hand.

Hafeez hit six boundaries during his 42-ball knock.

Kamran added 46 for the fourth wicket with his younger brother Umar who made 13.

Kamran hit six boundaries during his knock, helping Pakistan to 90 runs in the last 10 overs.

SCORES IN BRIEF

PAKISTAN: 151 for 4 in 20 overs (Hafeez 45, Jamshed 45, K Akmal 43 not out; Starc 1-17, Christian 1-22)

AUSTRALIA: 151 for 8 in 20 overs (Bailey 42, Watson 33, Warner 31, M Hussey 23; Razzaq 2-9, Ajmal 2-20)

Super over: Australia 11-1; Pakistan 12-0.

Result: Match tied and Pakistan won the one-over eliminator. Man-of-the-match: Saeed Ajmal.

Tigers notch second

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Tamim's wicket.

Earlier, tight bowling from the Bangladeshi spinners restricted Afghanistan to 99 at the end of fifteen overs. Mashrafe Bin Mortaza was the most expensive, giving away 33 runs in his three-over spell while fellow pacer Shafuil Islam conceded 27 runs in three overs, but the Afghan batsmen struggled to score against the spinners.

Shakib Al Hasan claimed two wickets for 13 runs in three overs while Abdur Razzak took one for 16 but it was Elias Sunny who really had the Afghanistan batsmen in a web, giving away only nine runs in three overs taking one wicket.

Mohammad Shahzad was top-scorer with 29 off 25 balls with four boundaries while Nabi added an unbeaten 26 off 20 balls that featured two boundaries.

SCORES IN BRIEF

AFGHANISTAN: 99-5 in 15 overs (Shahzad 29, Nabi 26 not out, Shafiqullah 15, Naib 14 not out, extras 3; Razzak 1-16, Shakib 2-13, Sunny 1-9, Shafuil 1-27)

BCB XI: 100-2 in 14.2 overs (Tamim 37, Ashraful 47 not out, Zia O, Shakib 5 not out, extras 11; Nabi 2-11)

Result: BCB XI won by eight wickets.

Kevin struck off the rolls

AFP, London

There was no place for Kevin Pietersen among the 10 England players awarded central contracts on Friday by the England and Wales Cricket Board for the 2013 season.

Pietersen has been in England exile since being dropped following the second Test against his native South Africa in Leeds last month.

But the ECB did not completely close the door on Pietersen being added to the list for what will be an Ashes year, saying in a statement Friday: "In respect to Kevin Pietersen discussions are ongoing and they remain private."

Officials, already frustrated by availability rows, were furious when it emerged Pietersen had sent "provocative" texts to South African players -- some allegedly critical of then England captain Andrew Strauss.

Women play

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their skipper Mignon du Preez have become accustomed to the conditions.

The visiting team batters had looked uncomfortable against spin bowling in the first game but they showed their character in the second match. South Africa however must thank the sloppy fielding from the home team as Bangladesh dropped three catches at crucial junctures.

So Salma Khatun's team must ensure that they improve their batting and also capitalise on chances when they present themselves during fielding if they want to accomplish a first major success at international level.

China keep volley gold

AFP, London



China beat the United States 3-1 to take the London 2012 women's sitting volleyball gold medal -- then jokingly threatened to beat up their assistant coach for pushing them so hard.

In a match at the ExCeL exhibition centre's South Arena 2 on Friday between the world's top sides, China won 22-25, 25-15, 32-30, 25-15, with Sheng Yuhong the best player by far, top-scoring with 38 points.

China have won all three gold medals since women's sitting volleyball was introduced to the Paralympics at Athens 2004.

"We made the country proud," Sheng said.

"Now we are going to punch the assistant coach for being too tough on us during training. We need all the girls' strength to take him down. Then we will have a rest. We need it!"

Kari Miller of the United States said: "China is a great team -- very steady."

SA restrict England

AFP, Chester-le-Street

South Africa restricted World Twenty20 champions England to just 118 for seven in the first Twenty20 international here on Saturday.

Spin bowling, long regarded as the weakest part of the Proteas' game, accounted for four wickets with off-break bowler Johan Botha (two for 19) and left-armer Robin Peterson (two for 27), who took the new ball, doing damage.

Meanwhile ever reliable fast bowler Dale Steyn took one for 13 in his maximum four overs after captain AB de Villiers won the toss, with the Proteas' attack carrying on from where they left off in their series levelling seven-wicket win in Wednesday's fifth one-day international at Trent Bridge.

England, who defend their Twenty20 title in Sri Lanka later this month, were held to their third lowest total in the format.

Siddikur's

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The other Bangladeshi who made the cut, Jamal Hossain Mollah, shrugged off the disappointment from the previous two rounds with a three-under-par round which placed him in joint 44th position.

The day though belonged to 45-year-old Wiratchant who became the most decorated golfer on the Asian Tour circuit by winning his 14th title.

The next event in the Asian Tour calendar is the Yeangder Tournament Players Championship in Taipei which starts on Thursday where Siddikur along with Jamal and Shakhawat Hossain Sohel are

"We have to train harder and learn to be as steady as China. It's great to have the opportunity to battle great teams. It helps us to grow."

Ukraine took the bronze medal after beating the Netherlands in straight sets.

Sitting volleyball is played on a smaller court than regular volleyball, and with a lower net. Players can also block and attack the serve.

Each team can have two players classed as having "minimal disability" on their squad, though only one can be among the six on the court at any one time during the best-of-five-sets matches.

Meanwhile, Germany beat Australia 58-44 in the women's wheelchair basketball gold medal match to condemn the Gliders to a third Paralympics final defeat.

Germany made it seven wins out of seven at the London 2012 Games to take the gold at the North Greenwich Arena before a 13,000-strong crowd on Friday, going one better than the silver they achieved at Beijing 2008.

Australia won the bronze four years ago, having taken silver at Athens 2004

and Sydney 2000.

"We have had many tournaments over the last seven years and we have won medals, not gold, but we have been doing this step by step," said Germany coach Holger Glinicki.

"We had a silver medal in Beijing and now we are at the end, we have reached our pinnacle."

Australia coach John Triscari said: "The ball would not go in the hole. It was one of those games where the shots did not drop. I thought our defence was still pretty tough, but down the stretch their shots dropped but ours didn't."

"It is a funny game this. If the ball does not go through the steel thing with the rope on it you do not win."

"I am not crying. I am still proud of my girls. It is disappointing that we did not get the gold medal, but I am so proud of the girls and they did a remarkable job."

The Netherlands delivered their best performance of the competition in their 71-47 defeat of the United States, the defending champions, to win the bronze medal.

Kala Ghafoor no more

SPORTS REPORTER

Legendary footballer Abdul 'Kala' Ghafoor Majna, who was a superstar of the Dhaka football scene in the 1960s, passed away on Friday at the age of 71 in Karachi after a long battle with paralysis. The iconic footballer, dubbed the Pele of Pakistan, is survived by his wife, two sons and three daughters.

Ghafoor captained the Pakistan national team for 11 years and led them to the triumphant Asian Games campaign in 1974. But it was in the 1960s and in Dhaka that he enjoyed the best years of his footballing career while playing for clubs like Mohammedan Sporting Club, Victoria SC and Dilkusha SC. A possession midfielder with exquisite skills and great shooting ability, Ghafoor was loved by one and all he played with and against.

"There was not a single player close to his quality in the subcontinent. He was such a quality player that we felt comfortable with the knowledge that he was playing for our side. Had he played in

Europe, he would've been as famous as Pele," recalled Zakaria Pintu, a teammate of Ghafoor's at Mohammedan in 1969 and Swadhin Bangla Football team captain.

Likened to Pele for his striking physical resemblance as well as style of play, Ghafoor would have made it into the best sides of the world had he been born anywhere else, so believed his contemporaries.

"Ghafoor was such a quality player, he could have made it into the Brazil team. Everyone who saw him play would vouch for that," said Pratap Shankar Hazra, former national football captain who played alongside Ghafoor for many years.

A modest person on and off the field, Ghafoor met Sabiha when in Dhaka and later married her before they moved to Karachi after independence. There he founded a club called Saifi and trained youngsters before he was struck down by brain haemorrhage and subsequent paralysis four years ago. Ghafoor's family said that he always wanted to meet Pele, but he did not have the money to travel.

London says goodbye to summer of sports today

AFP, London

London 2012 organisers on Saturday promised an emotional celebration to bid farewell to the Olympics and Paralympics, as the curtain falls on a summer of elite sport in the British capital.

Coldplay will headline Sunday evening's show, entitled "Festival of the Flame", which will draw heavily on Britain's rich history of cultural, musical and seasonal festivals, artistic director Kim Gavin told a news conference.

"The only narrative we have got is that we are taken through the seasons to the Coldplay music. It's not just a concert and we are not just looking at Coldplay," he added.

"We have got fantastic visuals and amazing stunts going on. It's a celebration and recognition of people coming together... What we have tried to do is bring something that feels very raw.

"We have taken the flame, being part of and representing the human spirit that brings so much power to these Games, and really focused towards the flame going out. That's our emotion."

Final rehearsals for the closing ceremony took place in east London on Friday and included the British band fronted by Chris Martin, who is married to the Hollywood actress Gwyneth Paltrow, Gavin added.

The executive producer for all four Olympic and Paralympic opening and closing ceremonies, Stephen Daldry, said Coldplay had been paid the 1-pound contractual fee to perform, "VAT [sales tax] included".

One sequence would include injured British former armed forces personnel and the Help for Heroes charity, that helps to rehabilitate wounded veterans from battle-field injuries in places like Afghanistan and

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

1 Nerd-pack contents
5 Intimidate
8 Mop the decks
12 "I smell —!"
13 Blackbird
14 Designer
15 It may rock you to sleep
17 — time (never)
18 Kitchen fixture
19 Hosts
21 World's fair
24 — the fields we go"
25 Sunrise
28 Lambs' dams
30 Squeazy snake
33 Eggs
34 Shoe strength-eners
35 Chances, for short

36 Drench
37 Oil cartel
38 Ancient legend
39 Prior night
41 Siamese
43 This way —!"
46 Seafood selec-tions
50 Missing
51 ABBA hit
54 Create
55 Past
56 Norway's capital
57 Use a teaspoon
58 Sweet potato's kin
59 Reddish steed

DOWN

1 Feline feet
2 Part of Q.E.D.
3 Peace-keeping org.
4 Spielberg or Soder-bergh
5 Taxi
6 Individual
7 Broad
8 Gap
9 Football team's aide
10 Teen's worry
11 Greet's the villain
16 Tyranno-saurus —

20 Rolling stone's lack
22 Incubator sound
23 Little hooter
25 Wall Street stat, familiarly
26 "Hail!"
27 Have fun on waves
29 Engrave
31 Choose
32 Fire leftovers
34 Troubles
38 Wicked Queen's advisor?
40 Ballot caster
42 Expert
43 Charita-ble donations
44 Layer
45 Vacillate
47 As well
48 Gaucho's weapon
49 Any time now
52 — Khan
53 Huck's pal

Solution time: 21 mins.

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CRYPTOQUIP

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WFO LA PLSWDF ZN MPRX ,

ZIF UGNA OK KPUUFGOLA

UGNR DFSX EFXGOBSZONL .

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: I BOUGHT THIS COURSE OF ANTIBIOTICS FOR SUCH A CHEAP PRICE, THEY'RE CALLING IT PENNY-CILLIN.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: S equals A