

Sakhawat & Jamal flop

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh golfers Sakhawat Sohel and Jamal Hossain put in dispiriting performances in the first round of the Hero India Open in Bangalore yesterday, finishing joint 86th and joint 104th respectively.

At the other end of the leader board, James Morrison of England and Richie Ramsay of Scotland powered to the joint lead with superb rounds of five-under-par 66 in the 1.25 million-dollar event at the Karnataka Golf Association course.

Sakhawat traded two birdies for two double-bogeys and a bogey to end the round with a three-over-par 74, while Jamal fared even worse, notching just one birdie to five bogeys to end up with four-over-par 75.

Judging from the scores near the top of the board, the conditions seem to have been conducive for under-par scores -- seven players were tied for third position with four-under-par. The two Bangladeshi golfers will be looking to improve significantly over the coming rounds if they are to avoid the cut.

Zia joint leader

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladeshi Grand Master Ziaur Rahman and Indian International Master IM Vidit Santosh Gujrathi shared the lead in the NIT Nagpur Grandmasters Chess Tournament at the end of the fourth round in Nagpur, India yesterday.

Zia and Vidit secured maximum four points each from as many matches. Zia beat Indian IM Shivanandha.

GM Abdullah Al Rakib, along with nine more players, was in second position with 3.5 points. IM Minhazuddin Ahmed Sagar, FM Taibur Rahman and FM Mehdi Hasan secured three points each from four games while GM Enamul Hossain, IM Abu Sufian Shakil and FM Nasir Ahmed earned 2.5 points each. FM Debaraj Chatterjee and WIM Shamima Akter Liza achieved two points each. The fifth round was scheduled to start Thursday evening.

Local snippets

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tournament where some 20 players are taking part.

WIM Rani Hamid, WFM Zakia Sulatan, WFM Nazrana Khan Eva, Tahmina Akter Tisha, Tanzina Akter Tani, Jahanara Haque Runu, Mehnaz Ahmed Mithila, Sharmin Samiha Simmi, Zannatul Ferdous and Farjana Hossain Anny were on the top after the first round.

Pioneer League

Gazipur Ekadosh registered a massive 7-1 win over Academy of Sports in the Dhaka (North & South) City Corporation Pioneer Football League at the Uttara ground yesterday.

In the day's other matches at different venues, Tangail FA beat Gulshan Youth Club 3-0, Matuail Udayon Sangha beat Tipu Sultan SC 1-0, JBHB thrashed Ali Imran FA 3-0, London Tigers beat Dragon FA 3-2, KR Boys thrashed Labagh ES 5-1, Tareq Tahman KC beat Surjotaran 1-0, Araf SC thumped Elu SS 4-2, Khilgaon FA routed Khilgaon Bandhan 6-0 while Rampura FA played out a goalless draw against



Maria Kirilenko of Russia hits a backhand return to Kazakhstan's Yaroslava Shvedova during their Kremlin Cup match in Moscow yesterday. Kirilenko won 7-5, 6-4.

Touring Crowe's carcinogen

Cricket

Former New Zealand captain Martin Crowe on Thursday blamed illnesses picked up touring during a 13-year international cricket career for his diagnosis with the cancer lymphoma.

Crowe said his cancer was "very treatable" and he would battle it with the same determination he displayed during his playing days.

"My mindset and fierce focus has kicked in just like it did when approaching a long innings in a Test match," he said in a statement. "I will focus on the important things in front of me, and nothing else."

The 50-year-old said he believed his immune system had been weakened by illness while on the road with the Black Caps, leaving him vulnerable to the cancer, which he said was grade two follicular lymphoma.

"In the past, on travels during my cricket career, suffering salmonella and glandular fever has compromised

me," he said. "The result of a weakened immune system over the last two decades is basically why I have become exposed to this sort of disease."

Crowe, who scored a record 17 centuries for New Zealand in his 77-Test career and is regarded as the country's greatest batsman, said he had been buoyed by expressions of support since he went public with his diagnosis.



MARTIN CROWE

"I am overwhelmed by the support and concern by so many around the world and wish to say a massive thanks... it has enabled me to come to terms with the shock from my recent lymphoma diagnosis faster."

Crowe said the cancer had affected the lymph nodes in his neck, armpits and stomach.

"It is very treatable. It is not aggressive," he said. "Treatment will be decided in due course after further tests and consultation in the next two weeks."

Crowe, a cousin of Hollywood actor Russell Crowe, averaged 45.36 with the bat in a Test career which spanned from 1982-1995.

Unemployment hits

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to create more records and bring more laurels for my country, but poverty has held back my dreams," said a disappointed Halim, who hails from Chhoyghoria village in Shalikhapuzila of the district.

"As at the moment I have no source of income, I have been failing to maintain my family itself, let alone pursuing my dreams," lamented Halim.

But the self-confidence was there. He hoped to set new records for skating and swimming with a ball on his head.

"Despite the financial limitations, I am now practising for new records and I am confident I will succeed if I can get a sponsor," Halim hoped.

Halim lives in a one-room dilapidated cottage in his village. As the tin-shed house has only one room, Halim and his wife have to pass the nights in the veranda to ensure that their two sons -- Sumon Hossain and Shahin Hossain sleep safe and sound.

But Halim has more things to worry about. As he is already hard done by poverty, he is also burdened with the expenditure of his sick son Sumon's treatment who has been suffering from a disease named 'osteoporosis' causing infection to the bone of his right leg.

"As the disease causing hindrance to the growth of Sumon's leg, in May this year he had to undergo an operation at a hospital in Madras at a cost of Tk 1.50 lakh," Halim said.

Son of a landless poor farmer Mohammad Sanaullah Patoari, Halim failed to go past the primary levels in education. Despite having not enough education, from his childhood, Halim dreamt of doing something exceptional to glorify the nation.

At the age of 15, Halim tried to emulate the feat of a rural footballer who had kept a ball on his head for merely 30 seconds during a football match at an adjoining playground. That was the beginning of his desire to do something exceptional.

'Pakistan now safe'

AFP, Karachi

Former Sri Lanka skipper Sanath Jayasuriya said Thursday that Pakistan was safe to host foreign cricket teams, as he arrived to lead an international all-star XI in two Twenty20 matches.

Jayasuriya will captain the International World XI, featuring former South African Test players Andre Nel and Nantie Hayward, against Pakistan All Stars, led by current all-rounder Shahid Afridi.

Overseas sides have shunned Pakistan over security fears since militants attacked the Sri Lankan team bus during a Test in Lahore in 2009, killing eight people.

But Jayasuriya, who was part of the Sri Lankan one-day squad two months before the tragic 2009 incident, said he hoped this weekend's matches would help internationals return to the cricket-mad country.

NCL from

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has also introduced a revised points system, decreasing the points for an outright victory from eight to six.

Sydney Sixers thru'

Mumbai-Yorkshire game rained off

STAR SPORT DESK

The Champions League T20 Group B match between Mumbai Indians and Yorkshire was called off after persistent rain prevented play after 17.5 overs at Newlands in Cape Town last night.

Mumbai raced to 156 for 6 when it started raining after Yorkshire had won the toss and decided to bowl.

Earlier, Sydney Sixers qualified for the semifinals with a five-wicket win over the Highveld Lions.

Michael Lumb and Shane Watson began the 138-run chase in earnest, with a 60 run-stand for the first wicket, before Aaron Phangiso broke the partnership by having the former bowled for 22. The left-arm went on to remove Thornely and Watson as the Sixers fell from 60-0 to 74-3.

SCORES IN BRIEF

LIONS: 137 for 9 (Bodi 61, Symes 23; Starc 3-19, Hazlewood 2-18)

SYDNEY SIXERS: 141 for 5 (Watson 47, Haddin 32, Lumb 20, Smith 25)

Result: Sydney Sixers won by 5 wickets.

Majola found guilty of graft

AFP, Johannesburg

South Africa's suspended cricket boss Gerald Majola was on Thursday found guilty of wrongfully receiving bonuses linked to international tournaments staged in 2009, officials said.

Cricket South Africa (CSA) spokesman Michael Owen-Smith confirmed to AFP that Majola had been found guilty by an independent probe panel, but did not give details.

Joy pleads

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In his reply, the former national footballer wrote that he had carried his licensed-gun with him unconsciously and mistakenly. He admitted that he confronted the referee about a penalty decision that had gone against Team BJMC.

In his reply, Joy also requested the league committee to view the matter leniently. He vowed that both him and his club would obey all rules and regulations in the future.

Kevin back in Eng fold

Cricket

AFP, London

Kevin Pietersen will return to the England fold for the upcoming tour of India, the ECB announced Thursday, following his exile from the squad for sending provocative texts to opposition players.

The decision came after the star batsman met with England coach Andy Flower, Test captain Alastair Cook and other senior players and managers this week to finalise his reintegration into the side.

The Surrey batsman was cast into international exile in August after sending text messages to touring South Africa players that contained criticism of then-England captain Andrew Strauss during the Test series.

The 32-year-old was dropped for the final Test and missed the One-Day series against South Africa and England's failed defence of their World Twenty20 title in Sri Lanka, while Strauss retired from all forms of cricket.

Pietersen has since apologised for his behaviour and signed a new central contract with the England and Wales Cricket Board after agreeing to enter a "re-integration" process.

"We were keen that Kevin should hold a

series of face-to-face meetings with team management and senior players before the Test squad departs for the United Arab Emirates and India next week," said ECB managing director Hugh Morris.

"The meetings were constructive and cordial and all outstanding issues have been resolved.

"All the England players and management are now keen to draw a line under this matter and fully focus on the cricketing challenge that lies ahead in India."

Pietersen is playing with the Delhi Daredevils at the Champions League Twenty20 tournament being held in South Africa. The final is scheduled for October 28.

"We are pleased to welcome a player of Kevin's proven international calibre back into the Test squad for such an important series," added ECB national selector Geoff Miller.

"As we anticipate that Ian Bell will return home for the birth of his first child around the time of the second Test in Mumbai, the team will benefit from having an extra batsman in the squad and all players who were originally selected for the tour will fly out as planned next week.

"Kevin will join up with the squad as soon as his Champions League commitments are complete."

'Challenge not insurmountable'

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"It is not only in the match-fixing issue, rather we have to be disciplined in all our activities and I must ensure that first. Everybody will be given a free rein to perform their duties but they must work in a disciplined manner," said a confident Papon, who has been involved with popular club Abahani Limited for nearly a decade and since 2008 has served as the chairman of the club's cricket committee. He is also an accomplished administrator.

"I think there is a strong foundation for our cricket and everything is in place. We just need to take the game forward. Cricket now has a strong footing but definitely I will try to eliminate loopholes, if there are any, and talk with everybody before taking a decision. At first, I need to know the details before making comments about my priorities as president," said Papon when asked about what would be his priority as president of the BCB.

Papon has taken the reins at a time when there has been much talk about the board's next election, as well as the election for the post of president as per ICC guidelines, and the new BCB boss

endorsed the need for an elected president.

"I'm not in favour of selection in the president post; I prefer that the president be elected. It's always good to see a man come to a post through a voting system," opined the new president. He however sidestepped the question about whether being the President's son had helped in him getting the BCB top job.

In the board's amended constitution, the former cricketers' councillorship rights were abolished, which created widespread criticism in the cricket fraternity. Papon raised his voice in favour of the cricketers saying that he would like to see maximum representation by former players at the BCB.

"I'm completely in favour of former cricketers' holding decision-making posts in the board. I would like to see them more," said Papon.

The new president will formally take over the reins from AHM Mustafa Kamal today at the BCB headquarters in Mirpur and get down to business immediately as there are a number of pending issues that require urgent resolution.



Former BCB president AHM Mustafa Kamal (2nd from L) is honoured for his elevation to the ICC vice-president's post in a reception organised by Islami Bank at the Bangabandhu International Conference Centre yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

1 React to gravity
5 G-man's org.
8 Gym-floor padding
12 Sandwich cookie
13 "— the fields we go ..."
14 Shrek is one
15 Paper quantity
16 Leave
18 Distinguish
20 Senate staffers
21 "Monty Python" starter
32 Omega predecessor
33 Protract
36 Tablet bearer
38 Bagel topping
39 Yon maiden

40 Rice (Sp.)
43 Endure
47 Omit
49 Emanation
50 Logical
51 Ailing
52 "— It Romantic?"
53 Probability
54 Deposit
55 "Un-touchable" Eliot

DOWN

1 Dress-maker's dummy
2 Vicinity
3 Plumbing problem
4 Chinese noodle recipe
5 Concentrate (on)
6 Suspenders alternative
7 Anger
8 Aesopian conclusions
9 Enthusiastic, plus
10 Verifiable
11 Collections
17 Tarzan's clique
19 Giant in Coopers-town
22 Group of whales
23 Crazy

24 Blunder
25 Alias (Abbr.)
26 Cauldron
27 Chances, for short
28 Work with
29 "— the season to be jolly"
31 Formal wear
34 Boxer's gear
35 Seep
36 First name of 19-Down
37 Invest with authority
39 With ardor
40 More-over
41 Peruse
42 McNally partner
43 Island dance
44 River of England
45 Coffee shop array
46 Skin art, for short
48 Lubricate

Solution time: 21 mins.

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CRYPTOQUIP

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Yesterday's Cryptoquip: OLD TELEVISION SITCOM ABOUT A MARRIED WOMAN WHO'S A TOTAL TRIVIA BUFF: "THE FACTS OF WIFE."
Today's Cryptoquip Clue: Y equals T