

Rajib on top in Vizag chess

GM Enamul Hossain Rajib took the solo lead in the Vizag Grandmasters International Open Chess Tournament at the close of the ninth round at the Rajiv Gandhi Indoor Stadium in Andhra Pradesh in India. Rajib, with black pieces drew his ninth board against Armenian GM Davit Petrosian in the 31st move and secured 7.5 points from nine games to top the points-table while compatriots GM Ziaur Rahman, GM Abdullah Al Rakib, GM Niaz Murshed and IM Minhazuddin Ahmed Sagar earned six points each. Rakib lost to Indian IM GA Stany, Niaz lost to Ukrainian GM Andrey Vovk, Zia drew against Indian FM Gagare Shardul, Sagar drew against Indian Akshat Chandra. Mehdi Hasan Parag and WIM Shamima Akter Liza earned 5.5 points each while IM Abu Sufian Shakil and Debaraj Chatterjee earned five points each.

Heavy rain prevented any play in the first one-day international between Sri Lanka and New Zealand at Pallekele on Thursday. A one-off Twenty20 international between the two sides on Tuesday at the same venue was also affected by bad weather and ended in a no result with only 16 overs bowled in the entire match. The teams travel to Colombo for the second and third one-day internationals in the five-match series to be played on Nov. 4 and 6.

Rain ruins 1st SL-NZ ODI

Novak Djokovic crashed out of the Paris Masters in his first match, losing 0-6, 7-6 (7/5), 6-4 to American journeyman Sam Querrey on Wednesday. Third seed Andy Murray took full advantage of the situation at the last event of the ATP regular season before next week's World Tour Finals, beating Frenchman Paul-Henri Mathieu 7-5, 6-3 to reach the third round.

Djokovic falls flat

FIFA director himself might conduct the selection in December. The football's governing body had earlier requested the youth and sports ministry to complete the Sylhet academy as soon as possible and the youth ministry sent a project proposal worth Tk 2.10 crore to finance ministry for approval. "Today [Thursday] the youth and sports ministry sent the project proposal to the finance ministry and we will be informed in the next week about the progress," said BFF vice-president Badal Roy, who yesterday visited the ministry to learn about the progress of the project. Roy also informed that if the Sylhet academy was not ready by January next, they would start training with the selected booters on a temporary basis before moving to the Sylhet.

FIFA director

Salma informed that they will now engage in domestic competition, as the inter-district competition is likely to start from November 15, before their next international engagement against the England A team at home in January next year. However, Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club and Sheikh Russel finally released their players who joined the camp yesterday at the Birshreshtha Shaheed Mostafa Kamal Stadium. "Our target is to play the final but it would have been better for us if we could have played some matches in the group stage," said Titu adding that he was not able to assess anything about his charges until they played a game.

Shooters mourn Pakhi

AHMED HUMAYUN KABIR TOPU, Pabna

Hundreds of relatives and mourners laid South Asian Games gold medal-winning shooter Firoz Hossain Pakhi, who along with his three-year-old daughter Pushpita and domestic help Aina died in a fatal road accident, to rest at Arifpur graveyard here on Wednesday night.

Pakhi was the country's fourth renowned athlete after SA Games gold-winning sprinters Shah Alam and Mahbub Alam and Test cricketer Manjarul Islam Rana to have met a fatal end in road mishaps.

Shah Alam, twice SA Games' fastest man, died in a motorcycle accident on May 29, 1990. Mahbub Alam, SA Games' 200m gold medalist, died in a car accident in Dhaka on December 4, 2010 while Test cricketer Manjarul Islam, along with his Khulna teammate Sajjadul Islam Setu, was killed in a motorcycle accident in Khulna on March 16, 2007.

Pakhi, after spending the eid vacation in his village home, had started for Dhaka in his car with his family on Wednesday morning. But a truck from the opposite direction in Banpara upazila of Natore hit their vehicle head-on, leaving the three dead.

Earlier, a lot of people attended his namaz-e-janaja. Renowned shooters Saiful Alam Rinki, Asif Hossain Khan, Sharmin Akhter, Sabrina Sultana and Sharmin Akhter Ratna were present to mourn the untimely death of Pakhi, who was working as a coach.

The shooters urged the government to ensure road safety across the country and take proper initiatives to prevent road accidents. "He was an icon in the country and I still can't think of such accident which took him away from us and it is an unbearable pain for us," said Asif, the SA Games and Commonwealth Games gold medalist.

"We don't want to see any more shooters die in road accident and the government should take proper measures to prevent road accidents," said Ratna, gold medalist shooter in SA Games and Commonwealth Shooting Championships.

Pakhi's wife Lovely Chowdhury Ankhi, herself a SA Games gold-winning shooter, was also injured in the accident and was released from the Pabna Sadar Hospital Wednesday night after treatment, but she was not in any mood to talk after the irreparable losses.

"Give my son back," cried Pakhi's 80-year-old mother Shaila Begum.

"The death of Pakhi bhai was not only a great loss to our family, but also a permanent damage to the country's shooting. We don't want to see any citizen die in road accident anymore," said Pakhi's younger brother Salim Hossain, demanding exemplary punishment to the culprit driver.

Meanwhile police was yet to identify the culprit driver after the highway police filed a case with Gurudaspur thana.

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CSA's yes to SL proposal

CRICINFO, Johannesburg

Cricket South Africa (CSA) have agreed to a request from the Sri Lanka board and postponed their Test series scheduled for next year until the middle of 2015.

Jacques Faul, CSA's acting chief executive, said the change would give South Africa's players an opportunity to rest after the Champions Trophy, which takes place in England next June.

Sri Lanka Cricket had asked for the three home Tests, due to have been played at some point in July and August 2013.

Last chance

The divisions have also been trying to bring in foreign players for the second round of the league. According to the rules of the NCL, a team can play two foreign players in the squad. Chittagong have already signed up players from Sri Lanka and with this round being the last for the national players, the other divisions are bound to follow suit.

Batting has

semifinal because we failed to perform as per our potential and the wicket also played a role due to rain," she added.

Salma informed that they will now engage in domestic competition, as the inter-district competition is likely to start from November 15, before their next international engagement against the England A team at home in January next year.

20 selected

That's why Sajib has been excluded," interim head coach Saiful Bari Titu explained to reporters yesterday.

However, Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club and Sheikh Russel finally released their players who joined the camp yesterday at the Birshreshtha Shaheed Mostafa Kamal Stadium. "Our target is to play the final but it would have been better for us if we could have played some matches in the group stage," said Titu adding that he was not able to assess anything about his charges until they played a game.



Bangladesh Cricket Board president Nazmul Hassan Papon (C) speaks during a board meeting at the BCB headquarters in Mirpur yesterday. PHOTO: STAR

Pakistan due in India on Dec 22

CRICINFO, New Delhi

Pakistan will arrive in Bangalore for the India tour on December 22 and will play the first Twenty20 international on Christmas Day.

The schedule, announced by the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) on Thursday, has the second T20 in Ahmedabad on December 27; Chennai will host the first ODI three days later and the two remaining one-dayers will be played in Kolkata and Delhi on January 3 and 6.

The BCCI's announcement followed the Indian home ministry's approval of the tour on Tuesday. The series is sandwiched between two legs of England's tour of India. England play the second and final T20 international in Mumbai on December 22.

Shocking start

FROM PAGE 16 Siddikur in a season of bad starts after having finished in 46th position in the just-concluded CIMB Classic in Malaysia. The 27-year-old traded five bogeys and a double bogey for two birdies in a round he will want to forget in a hurry.

NSC meeting

FROM PAGE 16 said Yunus. International teams have not visited Pakistan since the attack on the bus carrying the Sri Lanka cricket team in 2009, but recently a Twenty20 match was played in Karachi between an all-star side including players from South Africa and Sri Lanka and a Pakistan all-stars side.

WEST INDIES' TOUR OF BANGLADESH Edwards in for Roach

CRICINFO, Port of Spain

Kemar Roach, the West Indies fast bowler, has been ruled out of the Test series in Bangladesh in November because of a knee injury. Fidel Edwards has been chosen as the replacement and will join the squad before it leaves the Caribbean on November 3.

Roach sustained the injury during a club match in Barbados three weeks ago and West Indies physiotherapist CJ Clark said it was a right medial hamstring tendon tear.

"Kemar has not recovered adequately from the injury to join the squad for the tour," Clark said. "He has commenced rehabilitation and will undergo further assessment. He is expected to return to action in three to four weeks time."

Roach took 39 wickets at an average of 22.25 in seven Tests this year and was West Indies' most successful bowler. "It's a blow for us," West Indies coach Otis Gibson said. "He's [Roach] been an outstanding Test bowler for us in the last 12

months. He's got a lot of wickets for us. "The news is not all bad. It's not a major, major injury. He has started his rehab already, so hopefully, he can recover within the next three weeks and, perhaps, make the one-day series, which means he will get some cricket before the end of the year. "It's a difficult situation. He reckons he feels OK sometimes, and other times, if he gets his knee in the wrong position, he feels it, and the pain is so severe, he can't do anything for a while. These things happen in sport."

Gibson said Edwards was an able replacement for Roach. Edwards' last Test series was in England this summer and he was left out of the home Tests against New Zealand in August.

"Fidel was a member of the squad that played in the recent ICC World Twenty20 tournament and he has been bowling [in club cricket in Barbados], so his bowling fitness will be right up there at its peak," Gibson said. "Along with Ravi Rampaul and Tino Best, we feel confident that they will all be able to do a good job for us in the Tests, whichever combination is selected."

'Fitness key to Yuvi'

CRICINFO, New Delhi

Fitness will be the key to cancer survivor Yuvraj Singh's selection to the Indian team for a home Test series against England next month, skipper Mahendra Singh Dhoni said on Wednesday.

"We have to assess whether Yuvraj is ready to field for two days," said Dhoni when asked whether the skilful all-rounder would be picked for the four-Test series starting in Ahmedabad on November 15.

Yuvraj, who has not played Test cricket since last November, was treated for a rare germ-cell cancer between his lungs in the United States earlier this year.

The 30-year-old returned after chemotherapy treatment in April and played in the recent World Twenty20 in Sri Lanka. He also cracked a double-century in a

domestic four-day game in Hyderabad this month.

Yuvraj has performed impressively in the ongoing three-day match against England in Mumbai, scoring a half-century and taking two wickets for India 'A'.

The Indian team for the opening Test will be named on Monday.

"It is very difficult for me to comment on his [Yuvraj] fitness sitting over here. We have to understand that five-day format has its own uncertainties unlike ODIs or T20s," Dhoni was quoted as saying by the Press Trust of India.

"In ODIs, you know that you have to field for 50 overs only, while in Test cricket there may be a situation that a team might bat for one-and-a-half to two days.

"Having said that it is Yuvraj who is the best judge about how he is feeling. He has played quite a few domestic games now and it is up to him to reflect on his game."

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

Crossword puzzle grid with clues for ACROSS and DOWN. Clues include 'Money of India', 'Arizona city', 'Nuisance', 'Composer', 'Expectations', 'Indivisible', 'Performances', 'Home', 'Ms.', 'Writer', 'Legend', 'Verve', 'A billion years', 'Falsehood', 'Grecian vessel', 'Affirmative action?', 'Great Frat party need', 'Expectations lad', 'Ball-bearing item', 'Erstwhile', 'Expert', 'Most mature', 'Juice-box item', 'Heights', 'Reveille's opposite', 'Send out', 'De Pablo of "NCIS"', 'The Music Man venue', 'Dogfight participants', 'Forum garb', 'Nervous'.

Cryptoquip puzzle grid with letters and numbers. Clue: YESTERDAY'S CRYPTOQUIP: OUR EXTREMELY CRITICAL SUPERVISOR AT THE LINEN PLANT WAS ALWAYS GIVING ME A LOT OF FLAX. Today's Cryptoquip Clue: Q equals T

CRYPTOQUIP

RFNUGOF QTF RULX TUC U NEUJP KL QTUQ PUL' O OJPBEF OTUNX, NKGEC HKG OUH JQ TUC U EFUL-QK EJFL? Yesterday's Cryptoquip: OUR EXTREMELY CRITICAL SUPERVISOR AT THE LINEN PLANT WAS ALWAYS GIVING ME A LOT OF FLAX. Today's Cryptoquip Clue: Q equals T