

Jatrabari topple Badda

SPORTS REPORTER

Jatrabari Krira Chakra toppled Badda Jagorani Sangsad in the Popular Life Insurance Senior Division Football League with a lone-goal win over Youngmen's Club Fakirerpool at the Birshreshtha Shaheed Mostafa Kamal Stadium in Kamalapur yesterday.

Selim Reza scored the decisive goal of the match in the 75th minute.

Eighth victory in their stipulated 12 matches helped Jatrabari KC go top with 26 points. The win gave Jatrabari a great chance to become champions in the seven-team league, provided that Badda Jagorani lose to Dhaka Wanderers Club in the last match on Wednesday.

However, a win against Wanderers will help Badda to emerge champions while a draw will take the two sides to a title-deciding play-off.

The champions of the Senior Division Football League will earn the right to play in the Bangladesh Championship League, the second-tier professional football league, in next season if they meet other criteria of professional football league.

Four lead women's chess

SPORTS REPORTER

Four players shared the lead in the Sultana Kamal 33rd National Women Chess Championship at the close of the third round at the Bangladesh Chess Federation Hall Room yesterday.

WFM Sharmin Sultana Shirin, WIM Shamima Akter Liza and WFM Zakia Sultana hold joint lead with 2.5 points each as Liza beat Mahmud Haque Chowdhury Moly, Zakia beat Arifa Khatun Moni and Sirin drew against WFM Nazrana Khan Eva.

In the day's other matches, Tanzina Akter Tani drew against Sharmin Samiha Simmi while the match between WIM Rani Hamid and Protiva Talukdar continued till this report was filed.

Div I cricket

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41.1 overs. (Asif Iqbal Babu 43, Raihan Uddin 32; Faisal Bin Mostak 3-23, Md Sentu 3-25). **DHAKA WANDERERS CLUB:** 147 for 6 in 33.4 overs (Faruk Hossain 76; Raihan Uddin 4-33)

Result: Dhaka Wanderers Club won by 4 wickets.

BIMAN BD AIRLINES CRICKET TEAM: 197 for 7 in 40 overs (Imran Ahmed 69, Proshanto Das 57; Shahadat Hossain 4-29).

YOUNG PEGASUS CLUB: 200 for 6 in 38 overs. (Rahat Sadak 75, Manul Hossain 31; Moin Khan 2-35, Zahid Hossain 1-23.

Result: Young Pegasus Club won by 4 wickets.

BARIDHARA DAZZLERS: 184 all out in 44.3 overs (Tanjeen Ahmed 58, Arifuzzaman 28; Razib Hossain 4-33, Masud Parvez 1-71).

AZAD SPORTING CLUB: 150 all out in 41.2 overs (Ishaq Sajal 47, Mehedi Hassan 33, Imtiaz Khan 31; Raihan Sharif 3-23, Md. Sukran 2-19).

Result: Baridhara Dazzlers won by 34 Runs.

KATHALBAGAN GREEN CRESCENT CLUB: 193 for 9 in 45 overs. (Prosenjit Bosh 62, Khairul Islam 32; Habibul Hasan 5-30).

AGRANI BANK CRICKET CLUB: 195 for 8 in 42.2 overs (Saddam Hossain 60, Lalmon Hossain 53; Monirul Hoq 2-31, Ashish Chandra 2-12).

Result: Agrani Bank Cricket Club won by 2 wickets.

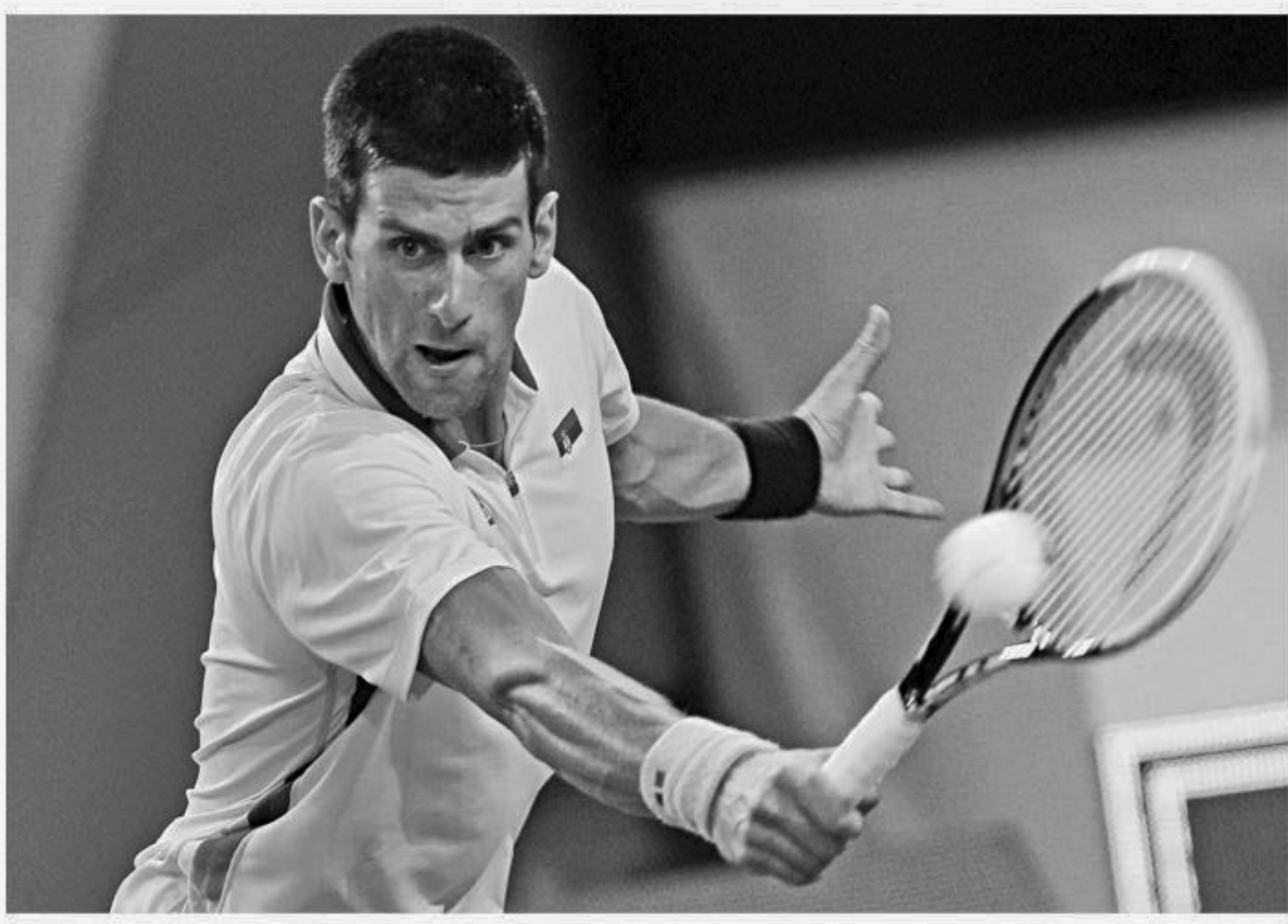


PHOTO: AFP

World number one Novak Djokovic of Serbia makes a backhand return against Andreas Seppi of Italy during their Hopman Cup match in Perth yesterday.

Serbia get past Italy

Djokovic escapes injury at Hopman Cup



Tennis

AFP, Perth

World number one Novak Djokovic escaped serious injury in an incident with over zealous fans after helping Serbia beat Italy at the mixed teams Hopman Cup in Perth on Monday.

Djokovic, who only arrived in the city on Sunday evening after winning an exhibition tournament in Abu Dhabi, was too good for Italian Andreas Seppi, defeating him 6-3, 6-4.

After the match, Djokovic made his way to sign autographs for youngsters at the side of the court. But as fans clamoured to get the Serbian star's attention the barrier holding them back fell onto his legs.

Djokovic spent a few moments on his haunches before gingerly walking off the court and cancelling his post-match press conference to get treatment.

However the 25-year-old showed no signs of discomfort when he returned to the court for mixed doubles a short time later and played down the incident.

"I am good," he said. "It was a bit of a shock and I am glad that the children involved are okay. I am fine."

Djokovic, aiming for a third straight Australian Open title in Melbourne next month, made it 10 wins from as many matches against Seppi, in their first meeting since the Serb came from two sets down to win at this year's French Open.

Monday's win secured the tie for Serbia with his team-mate Ana Ivanovic, the top

seeds for the eight-nation event and playing the event together for the third time.

The Italians won the dead mixed doubles rubber.

Ivanovic gave the Serbians the lead with a commanding straight sets win over fellow French Open winner Francesca Schiavone in the women's singles.

In an impressive start to her new campaign, Ivanovic won 6-0, 6-4.

Having been in Australia for more than a week, Ivanovic showed she was in good shape for next year's first Grand Slam by overpowering Schiavone.

Ivanovic went into the match with wins over the Italian in their only four previous meetings, and continued that dominance.

Schiavone held break points in the first game, but Ivanovic steadied and then won the first seven games of the match.

Her only hiccup came when she was broken while serving for the match at 5-3, but she immediately broke back to secure the win.

Ivanovic, ranked 13th in the world after a solid 2012, said she was trying to play more aggressively as she seeks to recapture the form that took her to number one in the world earlier in her career.

"I felt like I played well," the 2008 French Open champion said.

"I feel I have a lot more on the ball and I am playing the way I used to play before, setting up the points and using my forehand.

"The things I worked on during the off-season are paying off."

BCB president stands by

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Out of the four major changes, Papon expressed satisfaction over three of the amended clauses.

"The president will be elected through the votes of the directors instead of the councillors and it (amended constitution) maintains the standard of the other ICC member countries. We don't see anything undemocratic in it. We are also happy to see that the players got back their councillorship rights because personally I am in favour of that and you know our Prime Minister (Sheikh Hasina) is also in favour of the players," added Papon.

"We also appreciated the clause that allows the players to become a councillor from any district. I'm happy that the door is now open for all. Still, the district organisers will call all the shots but it's nice to see that the players will also be eligible for councillorship from any district."

Regarding the awarding of two councillorships to each of the six Premier

Division Cricket Super League clubs, Papon chose to be philosophical.

"All three changes are acceptable to us and we found them highly satisfactory but we didn't give any opinion on the change which allowed two councillors from each Super League club and we don't want to speak in favour of it, but I heard that the club officials met with the minister (state minister for youth and sports Ahad Ali Sarkar) and said that they wanted to bring balance," he continued.

When asked about his chances of contesting in the next BCB election, Papon said: "A lot of options are open for me. I can contest for directorship, get the nomination from the government, I can come through NSC quota or I can only contest for president in the election, but I am not thinking about it now -- my main focus is on how I can bring professionalism to the board, how I can manage things more professionally and handle some of the current issues."

Tour postponed

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probably would have reacted in the same way," said Papon.

With regard to the possible 'pullout' of the Pakistani players from the BPL, Afzalur Rahman Sinha, chairman of the BPL Governing Council said, "This is a very sensitive issue. But I think the situation is well understood by everyone. The absence of Pakistani players will obviously be a big loss, but no one is indispensable and we will have to continue with the league even if Pakistan doesn't send their players."

"There are lots of pro-

tests around the country against the tour of Pakistan. If we go to Pakistan, people will criticise us. On the other hand, if the Pakistani players don't come to the BPL, we'll again be criticised. So it's actually a very sensitive issue," added Sinha.

The PCB and BCB have for some time now been discussing a short tour of Pakistan that would mark the return of international cricket to the country following the terrorist attack on the Sri Lankan team bus in March 2009.

Bangladesh were supposed to play three ODIs and two Tests in Pakistan in August 2010. That tour however was postponed due to security concerns. The boards had then agreed upon a tour in April last year, when the two teams were scheduled to meet on the 29th and 30th.

That series was postponed on April 19 after the Dhaka High Court ruled in favour of a four-week ban on the tour. Following that episode, the teams were supposed to meet in Lahore on January 12 and 13, to play a One Day International and a T20 International. That arrangement, however, got postponed yesterday.

DS succumb to own weight

SPORTS REPORTER

They say that size does matter, but that was certainly not the case yesterday in the Pepsi Media Six-a-Side Cricket Tournament as former champions The Daily Star, with more than one dimensionally big player, succumbed to an 11-run defeat to ATN News at the Maulana Bhasani Hockey Stadium. It was particularly disappointing as the team were depending heavily on Sakeb Subhan and Hanif Mohammad Faisal, whose failures matched their generous size.

After being put in to bowl first, the Daily Star bowled superbly to restrict the opponents to 41/2 in the first four overs but they failed to keep the momentum when captain Hasan Jahid Tushar and Sakeb came to bowl as they together conceded 41 in the remaining two overs that eventually helped the opponents put up a fighting total of 82 on the board.

In reply, Zia and Faisal got off to a flying start after adding 29 runs in the first two overs but later their reckless batting saw The Daily Star collapsed to 71 at the cost of all five wickets.

In the day's other matches, Independent TV (68/5) defeat Boishakhi TV (64/3) by four runs, Channel 24 (93/2) thrashed The Independent (70/0) by 23 runs, ETV (113/3) routed Channel 9 (70/4) by 43 runs and Shamokal (129/1) handed a massive 73-run defeat to New Nation (56/2).

BCB president Nazmul Hassan Papon declared the 24-team meet open as chief guest while sponsor Transcom Beverage Ltd's executive director Khurshid Irfan Chowdhury, BSJA president Syed Mamun, former president Manjurul Haque, BCB members Jalal Younus and Ismail Haider Mallik, Mohammedan cricket committee chairman Hanif Bhuiyan were among others present.

BCL transfers

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teams from the BCL will be promoted to the Bangladesh Premier League for the next season while one team from nine-team BPL will be relegated to the BCL.

Uphill battle for NZ



Cricket
REUTERS, Cape Town

New Zealand have done absolutely nothing to suggest they can upset South Africa in the first Test of the two-match series beginning at Newlands on Wednesday -- and that may be their greatest weapon.

Not for generations have expectations been lower before a Test series. The hosts hold a commanding five-point lead at the top of the world Rankings while New Zealand languish in eighth place, ahead only of Bangladesh and Zimbabwe.

The last time the Black Caps were in South Africa, in November 2007, they were humiliated in both Test matches, failing to reach 200 in four innings and losing by margins of 358 runs and an innings and 59 runs.

South Africa fast bowler Dale Steyn began his ascent to the top of the world bowling rankings by taking 20 wickets at a little over 10 runs apiece.

Steyn is still top of the world rankings but now he has two teammates for company in the top 10, Vernon Philander in second place and Morne Morkel in sixth.

New Zealand's 38-year-old seamer Chris Martin is the leading Kiwi in 17th place.

A look at the batting rankings is even more bleak for the touring side. Not only do South Africa have another three men (Hashim Amla, Jacques Kallis and AB de Villiers) ranked in the top 10 -- but with Graeme Smith at number 13 -- but the tourists have just one, and he is not on the tour.

The saga of Ross Taylor's embarrassing sacking as captain is still haunting the management team and further holes in the first-choice XI have been created by injuries to all-rounders Daniel Vettori and Tim Southee.

But filled they will be, and by men who will take to the crease with bat or ball in the knowledge that even the optimism of their closest friends and family will be based more on hope than expectation.

The same cannot be said of the home side. Such is the weight of expectation on them that one suspects they cannot satisfy it. Certainly, victory alone will not suffice. South Africa fans have not seen their Test team on home soil in 2012 and they are expecting to see them now in all their glory.

PCB furious

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"We will take a principled stance on BPL," Ashraf said, "but one thing is sure our players may not be free as we are making our own arrangements from next year." He said that PCB-related commitments may occupy most of the players' time and that, "they may not be bothered for other things."

The PCB has begun its preparations for an impending tour after getting a positive response from the BCB. Tenders had gone out, inviting sponsorship bids for a series title sponsor, two co-sponsors and in-stadia advertising rights for two international matches (one ODI and one T20). The PCB has also moved the domestic first-class Quaid-e-Azam matches, scheduled between January 7 and 22 away from the Gaddafi Stadium in Lahore to accommodate the proposed matches against Bangladesh.

Ashraf said, it was "almost confirmed" that Bangladesh would tour Pakistan, but found it "strange" that they had pulled out from their commitment. The PCB's efforts to revive international cricket in Pakistan, according to Ashraf, was on track. "Soon we will manage to get a better team to tour Pakistan than Bangladesh."



PHOTO: COURTESY

BCB president Nazmul Hassan Papon (C) inaugurates the Pepsi Media Six-a-Side Cricket Tournament at the Maulana Bhasani Hockey Stadium yesterday.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

- ACROSS**
1 One of the kin
4 Genie's home
8 Green or Rogen
12 Noshed
13 Bloodhound's clue
14 Temptation
15 Cribbage scorer
16 Un-escorted
17 Belligerent deity
18 Insignificant sum
21 Still
22 Last letter
23 Pollster's find
26 Moment
27 Moo goo gai pan
30 Deception
31 Solidify
32 Marathon fraction
33 Mel of Coopers-town
34 "Family Guy" airt
35 Annie's dog
- 36** Botheration
37 Erstwhile acorn
38 Universe explanation
45 Vicinity
46 Greek vowel
47 Court
48 Inmates
49 Watchful one
50 Drag along
51 Dandling site
52 Whodunit writer
53 Vast expanse
- 3** Genesis maker
4 Hung lazily
5 Take as one's own
6 Stereo forerunner
7 Tavern snack
8 Chalkboard in a 1985 movie
32 Create
34 Almond or pecan
10 Pianist Dame Myra
19 Bobcat kin
20 Early nuclear org.
23 However, in verse
- 24** Deterioration
25 Dine on lazily
26 Driver's license datum
27 Triumph
28 Bygone
29 Crucial
31 Treasure seekers
33 Board in a 1985 movie
37 Create
38 Lower in rank
39 Press
40 Heredity unit
41 "The Third of May 1808" painter
42 They give a hoot
43 Libertine
44 Relaxing practice

Solution time: 27 mins.

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CRYPTOQUIP

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D H Y L Z A O Z O Y K Y I Q O .

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: IF ALL OF A REPUBLIC'S

RESIDENTS BECAME BAKERS, YOU MIGHT SAY

THEY'D MAKE A DOUGH-NATION.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: P equals W