

Debraj 74th in Hyderabad

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladeshi Fide Master Debaraj Chatterjee finished 74th in the Second Hyderabad Open International Grandmasters Chess Tournament which concluded yesterday.

Debarej lost against IM Himanshu Sharma of India to finish 74th while other five Bangladeshis finished below him. Sharif Hossain finished 107th, Amir Ali 110th, Saidul Islam 118th, Zoar Hoque Prodhon 121st and Saimon Siddiquir Rahman 122nd.

A total of 124 players, including 26 GMs, 2 WGMs and 24 IMs from 14 countries took part in the event.

Pirlo out for the year

AFP, Milan

Juventus veteran Andrea Pirlo faces missing the rest of 2013 and perhaps the start of next year after the Serie A leaders confirmed on Monday he has suffered knee ligament damage.

Coach Antonio Conte admitted to fears over Pirlo on Sunday after the experienced midfielder hobbled off 15 minutes into a 1-0 win over Udinese in Turin. Pirlo left the pitch for treatment and despite returning to the pitch to play on, pain got the better of the Italy international.

A Juventus statement said: "After departing yesterday's Juventus v Udinese match early in the first half, Andrea Pirlo underwent medical tests this afternoon which revealed second-grade damage to the medial collateral ligament of his right knee."

The Serie A champions did not say for how long Pirlo would be ruled out but such injuries normally require a one to two-month recovery period.

An injury-time header from Spain striker Fernando Llorente rescued Juventus in Turin on Sunday and sent them three points clear of Roma at the top of Serie A.

Juventus travel to Istanbul in 10 days time where they require a draw against Turkish giants Galatasaray to qualify for the last 16 of the Champions League.

Cook, Dhoni lead ICC teams

CRICINFO, Dubai

Alastair Cook and Mahendra Singh Dhoni have been named captains of the ICC's Test and ODI Teams of the Year. Dale Steyn was included in the Test side for the sixth successive year, while Dhoni made the ODI line-up for the sixth consecutive year as well.

Performances between August 7, 2012 and August 25, 2013 were considered by a panel chaired by former India captain Anil Kumble, also the ICC cricket committee chairman.

Test Team of the Year (in batting order)
Alastair Cook (captain), Cheteshwar Pujara, Hashim Amla, Michael Clarke, Michael Hussey, AB de Villiers, Mahendra S Dhoni (wicketkeeper), Graeme Swann, Dale Steyn, James Anderson, Vernon Philander, R Ashwin (12th man)
ODI Team of the Year (in batting order)
Tillakaratne Dilshan, Shikhar Dhawan, Hashim Amla, Kumar Sangakkara, AB de Villiers, MS Dhoni (captain & wicketkeeper), Ravindra Jadeja, Saeed Ajmal, Mitchell Starc, James Anderson, Lasith Malinga, Mitchell McClenaghan (12th man)

Higuain fires Napoli

AFP, Milan



Gonzalo Higuain hit a brace as Napoli crept closer to second-placed Roma in Italy's Serie A with a 4-2 win away to Lazio on Monday.

Napoli's 10th win left them in third spot but after Roma's fourth consecutive draw on Sunday, Rafael Benitez's men are now only three points behind the Giallorossi and six off leaders Juventus.

With only one win against Napoli in their last five games, and having taken only eight points in their last eight outings, Lazio were desperate for a morale-boosting first success since a 2-0 defeat of Cagliari at the end of October.

But despite containing Napoli in a balanced first half, the Biancocelesti were punished after the break when Goran Pandev and Higuain struck in clinical fashion to give the visitors a 3-1 lead 18 minutes from time.

Despite reducing the arrears two minutes from time thanks to teenager Keita Balde, slack defending allowed Jose Callejon to hit Napoli's fourth in injury time to send Lazio down one place to ninth, with AC Milan moving up to eighth.

Napoli broke the deadlock in the 24th minute when Higuain muscled his way into the area and brushed off a challenge from Frenchman Michael Ciani to send a shot past Federico Marchetti at the goalkeeper's far post.

RESULTS

Fiorentina 4 (Valero 5, 14, Vargas 43, Rossi 54-pen)
Verona 3 (Romulo 6, Iturbe 13, Jorginho 72)
Lazio 2 (Behrami 25-og, Keita 88) **Napoli 4** (Higuain 24, 72, Pandev 50, Callejon 90+1)

Napoli's joy was tempered barely a minute later when defender Valon Behrami rushed in and sent the ball past his own goalkeeper to gift Lazio the equaliser.

Higuain thought he had restored Napoli's lead on 37 minutes, only to be ruled offside after pouncing on the rebound from Lorenzo Insigne's strike.

Napoli lived dangerously for the rest of the half, a slip-up by Gokhan Inler just inside the area gifting Hernanes possession, only for the Brazilian to strike off target.

Hernanes threatened again two minutes after the restart with another off-target shot.

But only three minutes later Napoli restored their lead when Christian Maggio headed down for Pandev near the far post, the Macedonian spinning round to beat Marchetti down low from close range.

In the 73rd minute Higuain collected Pandev's ball on the right and sped past Lorik Cana to slam the ball into the net.

Napoli were given a scare three minutes from time when Keita was allowed to run across the area before beating Reina with a fine, right-footed strike.

Messi begins 2nd phase of recovery

REUTERS, Buenos Aires

Lionel Messi began the second phase of recovery from the injury that has sidelined the Barcelona forward until next month with a physiotherapy session at Argentina's training complex on Monday.

The Argentina captain, who suffered a thigh strain playing for Barca last month, was also seen doing a short, light stint with the ball in a video broadcast by TyC Sports.

Messi, winner of four consecutive FIFA Ballon d'Or awards for world player of the year, came home to Argentina at the weekend and will stay until January 2 when he returns to Barcelona.

Having helped Argentina secure a World Cup place with a 5-2 win in Paraguay in September, Messi has since missed all four of their matches due to injury.

Real, Barca fined

AFP, Madrid



Spanish financial regulators on Monday fined four football clubs including Real Madrid and Barcelona, as well as a big television producer millions of euros for allegedly breaking the rules on the sale of television rights.

The National Markets and Competition Commission (CNMC) handed out fines totalling 15 million euros (\$20 million) for "a very serious infraction" of the rules on the acquisition of football-related rights, it said in a statement.

Television production giant Mediapro was fined 6.5 million euros, while Real Madrid were ordered to pay 3.9 million euros and Barcelona 3.6 million euros.

The regulator also fined Sevilla 900,000 euros and Racing Santander 30,000 euros.

It said the clubs all signed four-year contracts with Mediapro to broadcast their domestic league and cup matches, when the maximum duration of such a deal was limited to three years by competition law.

Current joint league-leaders Barcelona said they would appeal the ruling at Spain's National Court. They have two months to do so.

The club said in a statement late Monday that the contract it signed with Mediapro respected the law and "has not practically

affected the audiovisual market".

"Before presenting its appeal, the club will have to pay the penalty or underwrite the amount, which will have an economic impact on it this season," the Barcelona statement added.

However "a favourable resolution in future court proceedings will involve the money being paid back" to the club, it added.

According to a table put together by the consultancy firm Deloitte, Real Madrid became the first sports club in the world to earn more than 500 million euros in 2011-12.

Barcelona were named as the world's second richest club on the same list with income of 483 million euros.

Unlike in other European countries, there is no collective television rights deal for clubs in Spain.

Instead, clubs negotiate their own deals with broadcasters, a situation that allows Barcelona and Real Madrid to earn vastly superior sums compared to the rest of the country.

Spanish football was for years marred by a television rights war. A number of clubs struck deals with Mediapro while others entered into partnership with Sogecable, part of Spain's biggest media group Prisa, the owners of the subscription channel Canal+.

Ronaldo ready to return

REUTERS, Madrid

Cristiano Ronaldo has recovered from a muscle strain and is ready to return to action, the Real Madrid and Portugal forward said on Monday.

Ronaldo damaged a hamstring in Real's La Liga match at Almeria on November 23 and missed last week's Champions League win over Galatasaray and Saturday's La Liga success against Real Valladolid.

"I no longer have an injury," Ronaldo said at an awards ceremony in Madrid.

"I have been fine for a couple of days," added the 28-year-old, who has been on scintillating form this season.

"We preferred not to push things against Valladolid but I will be there for the next game for sure."

Ronaldo netted 14 goals in his last seven appearances for club and country before his injury and is one of the favourites to scoop the FIFA Ballon d'Or when the footballer of the year award is announced next month.

The former Manchester United man was the last player to win in 2008 before Barcelona's Argentine forward Lionel Messi took the next four.

"I am on good form," Ronaldo said. "It's possible that it is the best start to the season of my career but the past few years have also been very good."

Real's next match is a King's Cup last 32, first leg at third-tier Olimpic de Xativa on Saturday and they play at FC Copenhagen in the Champions League the following Tuesday.

The nine-times European champions are already through to the last 16 as Group B winners.



PHOTO: AFP

Napoli striker Gonzalo Higuain (R) celebrates one of his two goals with teammate Goran Pandev during their Serie A encounter against Lazio at Rome's Olympic Stadium on Monday.

Eng bid to halt Oz run

Second Ashes Test starts tomorrow

AFP, Adelaide



England face a critical challenge to their four-year Ashes reign in the second Test against Australia starting in Adelaide on Thursday against a re-energised home team looking to drive home their advantage.

Alastair Cook's tourists were swept away by the Mitchell Johnson-inspired home side in the first Test, going down by the enormous margin 381 runs in a match overshadowed by a sledging barrage from Australian captain Michael Clarke.

It was England's first defeat in 14 Tests since losing to India in Ahmedabad a year ago, but another loss in Adelaide could prove an insurmountable blow in their bid to hold on to the Ashes after three successive series wins dating back to 2009.

England urgently need to regroup after wilting under Australia's bowling and verbal barrage in Brisbane, their task made all the more difficult by having to find a replacement at number three following the shock departure of Jonathan Trott with a stress-related illness.

The choice to fill Trott's spot is between 94-Test veteran Ian Bell and the inexperienced Joe Root, with Zimbabwe-born Gary Ballance likely to slot in at number six after his innings of 55 in Alice Springs in a tour game last week.

England batting coach and former Test captain Graham Gooch was pragmatic about whoever is chosen to fill the crucial number three slot.

"You've got to handle it," he said. "That's part of sport. You've got to adapt."

England must find a way to cope with the hostile bowling of Johnson, who was player-of-the-match in Brisbane with a

nine-wicket haul, helping dismiss the tourists for 136 and 179.

The left-arm is vowing more of the short stuff but will have different bowling conditions on a drop-in pitch as Adelaide Oval undergoes a transformation into a multi-purpose stadium.

The ground curator said the pitch would offer early spice, prime batting for the five-day duration and reverse swing late in the game.

England say they have no problem with Australia's incessant insults after skipper Clarke was fined by the International Cricket Council for telling England's Jimmy Anderson to expect a broken arm during the Brisbane Test.

"I have absolutely no problem about any of what the Australians were doing on the field," Anderson wrote in Britain's Mail on Sunday newspaper.

"I probably dish it out more than most in the field, so I generally get it back more than most. I expect it and accept it."

England will be looking to their batsmen to post a huge first innings total at the Adelaide Oval, much like they did three years ago when captain Cook (148) and Kevin Pietersen (227) combined to lead the tourists to a daunting 620 for five declared.

Cook's team went on to inflict an innings and 71-run victory over Australia at the ground -- renowned for big scores -- to take the second Test on their way to a 3-1 series victory.

Michael Clarke's 230 against South Africa in Adelaide last year was the fourth highest Test score at the famous ground behind Don Bradman's unbeaten 299 and the Australia skipper has accumulated five tons in eight Adelaide Tests for a ground average of 100.82.

The teams will not get much of a breather after Adelaide, with the third Test starting at Perth's WACA ground just four days after the scheduled end of the match.

Toure wins BBC gong

AFP, London



Ivory Coast midfielder Yaya Toure was named the BBC's African Footballer of the Year for 2013 on Monday.

It was the fifth straight year the Manchester City star had made the shortlist but the first time he'd taken the award.

"Thank you to all the fans around the world who continue to support me and who love me a lot," said Toure in a BBC statement. "I'm very proud, I'm very happy, this award is amazing."

"It's the fifth time in a row (being nominated) and this time is very special."

Toure, who has scored 13 goals for club and country this year, was the choice of the BBC's global audience.

He held off competition from Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang (Gabon and Borussia

Dortmund), Victor Moses (Nigeria and Liverpool, on loan from Chelsea), John Obi Mikel (Nigeria and Chelsea), and Jonathan Pitroipa (Burkina Faso and Rennes).

Toure was presented with the award at Manchester City's Carrington training ground on Monday.

"We are pleased for Yaya Toure that he has finally won the BBC African Footballer of the Year on his fifth nomination for the award," said BBC Africa's current affairs editor Vera Kwakofi.

"This shows the high esteem in which he is held by lovers of African football and the respect the fans have for his exploits for club and country."

Toure now has the chance to complete an awards double having been selected among a 25-man shortlist for the African Football Confederation (CAF) African Footballer of the Year for 2013.



মিরপুর-১ শাখা

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