

## Papon hands out gear to DSAs

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) president Nazmul Hassan Papon handed over grounds equipment and cricket gear to the representatives of the District Sports Associations (DSAs) at the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium yesterday as part of the Board's initiative to help develop the game across the country.

"The objective is to make cricket more popular throughout Bangladesh. The more we popularise cricket in the villages and other areas the more players we will get in the future," said Papon.

The president also said that the board would ensure that these facilities are put to proper use.

"We are going to keep an eye on the districts. If someone is not doing anything for his region and merely getting the benefits, we will definitely do something about that," he said.

39 districts received the equipment and gear. The maintenance equipment included mowers, pitch covers, 500kg and 300kg rollers and boundary ropes.

## Minhaz leads B Chess

SPORTS REPORTER

International Master Minhazuddin Ahmed took solo lead in the 40th National B Chess Championship at the close of the penultimate round held at the Bangladesh Chess Federation Hall Room yesterday.

Minhazuddin drew against CM Mahtabuddin Ahmed Robin to earn 8.5 points from ten games while Robin, along with FM Debaraj Chatterjee, shared the second position with eight points each.

FM Nasir Ahmed, FM Aminul Islam, CM Soheli Chowdhury, Golam Mostafa Bhuiyan and Uten were jointly in third position with 7.5 points each.



**Mariam Khatun of Bogra Swimming Centre shows all the 10 gold, three silver and two bronze medals she won during the Cotton Group 30th National Age-Level Swimming Championships at the National Swimming Complex in Mirpur yesterday.**

PHOTO: STAR

## Ariful, Marium's gold spree

SPORTS REPORTER



Cotton Group 30th National Age-Level Swimming Championships concluded yesterday amidst 21 new national records set, with Ariful Islam and Marium Khatun sealing the show of the three-day meet by sharing nine records among them at the National Swimming Complex in Mirpur.

Ariful Islam, a class IX student of Bangladesh Krira Shikkha Protisthan (BSKP), won 13 gold medals in the 13 events he participated while setting three national records while Marium of Bogra Swimming Centre grabbed 10 gold, three silver and two bronze medals, while setting six new national records.

Having failed to produce any national records despite winning 13 gold in the last meet, Ariful concentrated this time on setting national records and ended up with three new records.

"Every time I participated, grabbed a lot of gold medals but could not set any record. This time I targeted eight national records but could manage only three. However, I am happy with my performance," said the lad from Khishorganj, who wants to prepare himself in the best possible way for the next South Asian Games.

"My ultimate target is to win a gold in the SA Games," said Ariful, who had a short-term training in Qatar High Performance Training Centre previously.

Though Ariful has reason to perform well as a student of a sports institution, Marium did not have enough facilities to perform well. However, it was her will power that led her to emulate the eight gold medals she won last time.

The feat of Ariful and Marium also helped their respective organisations to finish among top three. Bangladesh Krira Shikkha Protisthan became champions with 64 gold, 57 silver and 48 bronze medals followed by Bangladesh Ansar, who claimed 22 gold, 17 silver and 17 bronze medals.

Bogra Swimming Centre finished third with 13 gold, eight silver and two bronze medals.

## Siddikur embarks on Omega mission

SPORTS REPORTER



After a break of three months, Siddikur Rahman will commence the second half of the Asian Tour season with the Omega European Masters, a co-sanctioned event of Asian Tour and European Tour, to get underway in Switzerland today.

Siddikur reached Switzerland to get used to the Crans Montana golf course in Zurich, where he played quite a few times before but thinks the course this time is a bit different from the previous occasions.

"I played here at the Pro-Am yesterday (Tuesday). They have got a few changes in the course. It will be very important to keep the ball on the fairway because the rough is longer this time, so I think that's the key to a good game," Siddikur told

Asiantour.com yesterday.

Siddikur scored a splendid 15-under-par on Pro-Am event, which is a precursor to the main event, and was looking forward to having a good time at the Omega European Masters.

Siddikur, who is currently in ninth position in the Asian Tour Order of Merit, was looking forward to finishing higher by the end of the season.

"I have confidence on my game because the first half wasn't bad. So I'm looking forward to be higher in the order merit," said Siddikur.

Siddikur will face competition from will some of the region's best players including Thailand's Thaworn Wiratchant, India's Gaganjeet Bhullar, Filipino ace Angelo Que and Korea's Baek Seuk-hyun as well as Spaniard Miguel Angel Jimenez, Wales' Jamie Donaldson, Italian Matteo Manassero and French star Victor Dubuisson.

## Batsmen in 'good shape'

SPORTS REPORTER



Bangladesh team manager Habibul Basha has said that the team are in much better shape after their three-day practice match, which was played against St Kitts and Nevis at St Kitts.

The three-day match that ended as a draw saw Bangladesh captain Mushfiqur Rahim and middle order batsman Nasir Hossain both score centuries. Imrul Kayes and Shuvagata Hom also played well, scoring 48 and 46 respectively.

While the top order failed in the first innings, the likes of Tamim Iqbal and Shamsur Rahman bounced back by sharing a 94-run stand in the second innings.

"The batsmen are more confident now. They needed the boost especially after their performance in the ODI series," said Basha.

"Today (Wednesday) we had our first training session and as of now we seem in good shape. We have not gotten a chance to see the wickets as yet so we still have not decided on our team's combination," he added.

The first Test is going to be played at St Vincent from Friday.

The tied highest wicket-takers at St Vincent are Mahmudullah Riyad and Muttiah Muralidaran, each with eight wickets in their only Test there.



**Denmark's Caroline Wozniacki blows a kiss to her fans after her US Open quarterfinal win over Sara Errani of Italy at the Arthur Ashe Stadium court in New York on Tuesday.**

PHOTO: AFP

## Hockey dormitory gets a facelift



PHOTOS: STAR

(Top) National hockey players relax in the cosy environment of the newly-renovated dormitory of the Maulana Bhasani National Hockey Stadium yesterday. (Below) a file photo published on July 27, 2013 shows the shabby condition the rooms at the dormitory were in before renovation took place.

SPORTS REPORTER

The dormitory for hockey players at the Maulana Bhasani National Hockey Stadium has got a tremendous facelift after Bangladesh Hockey Federation (BHF), with financial assistance from Green Delta Insurance Company, renovated six rooms of the stadium.

The six rooms, which were in a very shabby and unhygienic condition for a long time and was a major grievance for the players, are now all air-conditioned and well furnished and have the capacity to accommodate 26 people at a time.

"The rooms at the stadium were always shabby and unhygienic, an issue we fought for long," said national striker Hasan Jubair Niloy. "The BHF has finally met our demands and hope they will gradually increase other facilities for the players as well."

"We will use these rooms to accommodate the coaches and umpires during different courses as well as member of the executive committee during the governing body's meeting. However, the accommodation of the players during national team's camp will get the first priority," said BHF's joint secretary Mohammad Yousuf.

The National Sports Council (NSC) allotted the rooms to the game's governing body after the Green Delta Insurance Company gave the BHF Tk 52 lakhs for renovation of the rooms. The federation also provided Tk 5 lakhs to complete the renovation work.

State minister for youth and sports Biren Sikder officially inaugurated the dormitory yesterday where BHF president and Air Chief Air Marshal Enamul Bari was also present.

## Roger flies to face Gael

AGENCIES, New York

Second seed Roger Federer powered to a 6-4, 6-3, 6-2 win over Roberto Bautista, charging into the quarterfinals of the US Open for the 10th time in 11 years.

The 26-year-old Spaniard was handed the unenviable task of trying to upset the 17-time Grand Slam winner on Arthur Ashe Stadium court, where the Swiss maestro has a dazzling 25-1 record under the Flushing Meadows floodlights.

It quickly became clear there would be no power shortage on Tuesday as Federer raced to a 5-1 lead in opening set then eased off the gas and coasted to an unflustered win in just under two hours.

Next up for Federer is a player he knows very well, 20th seeded Frenchman Gael Monfils, who was earlier a 7-5, 7-6 (6), 7-5 winner over seventh seed Grigor Dimitrov of Bulgaria.

Federer and Monfils have clashed nine times with the Swiss holding a 7-2 advantage but the former world number one will be wary of the enigmatic Frenchman, who many rate as among the most gifted on the men's tour.

While Federer holds a big edge in their head-to-head clashes, they have split their four most recent matches with the Swiss coming out on top in their most recent meeting just last month in Cincinnati.

Czech sixth seed Tomas Berdych reached the quarterfinals with a 6-1, 6-2, 6-4 win over Austria's Dominic Thiem.

Berdych, a semifinalist in 2012, saved seven break points in the first set against the 20-year-old Austrian, but it was plain sailing after that mini-scare as he wrapped up victory in just 98 minutes.

He will next tackle Croatia's Marin Cilic for a place in the semifinals after the 14th seeded Croatian reached his third US Open quarterfinal with a 5-7, 7-6 (7/3), 6-4, 3-6, 6-3 win over France's Gilles Simon.

Berdych has a 5-3 career lead over Cilic but the Croatian won their most recent meeting in straights sets in the Wimbledon third round.

## Caroline, Peng in semifinals

AFP, New York



Former world number one Caroline Wozniacki and first-time Grand Slam semifinalist Peng Shuai will meet for a place in the US Open title match after dominant victories on Tuesday.

Wozniacki, the runner-up at Flushing Meadows in 2009, dismissed 13th-seeded Italian Sara Errani 6-0, 6-1 and is back in the semifinals of a major for the first time since the 2011 US Open.

China's Peng, in the quarterfinals of a major for the first time in her 37th attempt, made similarly short work of Swiss teen Belinda Bencic 6-2, 6-1.

Peng joined two-time Grand Slam champion Li Na and Zheng Jie as the only Chinese to reach the last four of a Grand Slam.

"Thirty-seven times Grand Slam," Peng said, then had to stop the thought as she struggled to contain her emotions after taking apart Bencic in just 64 minutes.

Wozniacki was similarly convincing on a windy night on Arthur Ashe Stadium court, where towels from the players' chairs and stray plastic bags had to be corralled.

In a match between two players with an uncanny ability to extend rallies, Wozniacki's 26 outright winners to the 12 of Errani made the difference.

Errani, who boasts a top-speed serve of less than 90 mph couldn't hold once in six service games.

She was unable to capitalise on any of four break points in the opening game of the match and after fighting for that hold Wozniacki was rolling.

"It was really tricky conditions with the wind but I tried to stay aggressive," Wozniacki said, calling

the opening game "very important".

"You always go out there and are a little bit nervous. I served really well after that."

Errani did break Wozniacki to open the second set, but with the Italian unable to protect her own serve it was immaterial, and the Dane wrapped things up in 65 minutes.

"It means so much to me," said Wozniacki, who has struggled to find consistency this season and coped with the abrupt and highly publicised end of her engagement to golfer Rory McIlroy.

"It's been a pretty up and down year for me, and to be here in the semifinals of the US Open again is just incredible."

Wozniacki toppled former champion Maria Sharapova in the fourth round, while Errani's run had included a third-round win over seven-time Grand Slam champion Venus Williams as upsets saw only two of the top 10 seeds reach the last eight.

Peng, ranked 39th, ploughed through three seeded players to reach the quarters, including fourth-seeded Pole Agnieszka Radwanska.

She is the only woman besides two-time defending champion Serena Williams who has yet to drop a set in a tournament in which Williams and 10th-seeded Wozniacki are the only players remaining from the top 10 seeds.

Peng took control early against Bencic, the youngest US Open quarterfinalist since Martina Hingis won the title at 16 in 1997.

Peng fended off two break points in her opening service game and didn't face another.

She broke Bencic twice in the first set, and seized a 4-0 lead with two breaks of serve in the second.