

SPORT

42ND CHESS OLYMPIAD

Contrasting fortunes for BD teams

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh men's team slipped to 76th position after losing to Serbia 3-1 in the 42nd Chess Olympiad on Friday. Having drawn against UAE in the previous round, the 58th seeded Bangladesh team suffered a heavy defeat as GM Niaz Murshed, GM Ziar Rahman and IM Minhazuddin Ahmed surrendered. Only GM Enamul Hossain Razib won his board in the seventh round.

However, Bangladesh had the chance to move up the rankings as they were scheduled to face lightweight South Korea in the eighth round on Saturday night.

Meanwhile, the women's team lifted themselves to 52nd after a 3-1 win against Jordan in the seventh round. WFM Sultana Shirin Sharmin, WFM Nazrana Khan Eva and WIM Rani Hamid won their boards while WIM Shamima Akter Liza lost her board. Bangladesh women's team were set to take on Austria in the eighth round.



This picture taken on Friday at the Goshershat Govt Primary School in Pirojpur district shows how popular ha-du-du (kabaddi) is in the rural areas of the country. It's not just the players who have fixed their focus on the raider but the whole audience which included a huge number of fans who even took the risk of sitting on the roof of the dilapidated one-storey structure.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

Seven teams in 4th BPL

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Premier League's fourth edition will be played between seven franchises this year, two more than the last season. The T20 league is set to kick off on November 4 2016 with the player draft scheduled to take place on September 30.

A press release sent from the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) last night revealed that Khulna and Rajshahi had returned as franchisees to join Comilla Victorians, Barisal Bulls, Rangpur Riders, Dhaka Dynamites and Chittagong Vikings. Sylhet Super Stars meanwhile, will not be a part of the fourth edition after its contract was terminated for breaching franchise agreement terms.

The BCB had invited Expression of Interest for franchisee rights of Rajshahi and Khulna and subsequently four organisations -- GEMCON Group, Mango Entertainment Ltd, Tanveer Food Ltd (A concern of Meghna Group of Industries) and LABAID Group -- have been shortlisted after scrutiny.

The conjurer meets the calculator

AFP, New York



Novak Djokovic's strange US Open path took another odd turn Friday as the defending champion defied stultifying humidity and the controversial tactics of Gael Monfils to book a title showdown with Stan Wawrinka.

World number one and defending champion Djokovic prevailed 6-3, 6-2, 3-6, 6-2 in a bizarre semi-final that saw 10th-seeded Monfils roundly booed and accused of not trying.

Third-seeded Wawrinka withstood an early onslaught from sixth-seeded Kei Nishikori of Japan, asserting himself in the later stages to claim a 4-6, 7-5, 6-4, 6-2 victory.

Although Djokovic holds a 19-4 record over Wawrinka, including two victories since the Swiss player shocked him the French Open final last year, Wawrinka welcomed the chance to take him on again.

"To play Novak again it will be very special," he said.

Djokovic admitted he was "completely caught off guard" when Monfils, down 0-5 in the first 15 minutes, stood lackadaisically in the court and began chipping the ball back.

The strategy paid off as Monfils reeled off three games in a row.

"If I would get to the net he would go for the passing shot and hit some impossible gets and balls. But that's Gael," Djokovic said.

It was Djokovic who emerged with the set, however, and as the Serbian star raced through the second Monfils's interest again appeared to wane.

By the sixth game the 30-year-old had won just nine points, which he managed to nudge into double figures by the end of it.

Monfils, playing in only his second Grand Slam semi-final after making the last-four at the 2008 French Open, theatrically hobbled off the court and was jeered.

He was booed again by sections of the 20,000-strong crowd as he dropped the first game of the third set.

Monfils said his tactics were a deliberate attempt "to get inside his head".

A more orthodox approach saw Monfils break back for 2-2 and again for 4-2 in a third set that saw Djokovic receive treatment on his left shoulder.

Although Djokovic saved one set point, and gave himself three break chances in the ninth game, Monfils was able to extend the match, marking the moment with a mighty roar to which Djokovic responded by ripping off his shirt.

After giving back an early break in the fourth Djokovic had treatment on his right shoulder, but he broke twice more to close out the win.

Djokovic arrived at the semi-finals having played just two complete matches in five prior rounds after a walkover from one opponent and the mid-match retirements of two others.

Wawrinka's arduous path to the title match included saving a match point in the third round.

He's spent 17 hours and 54 minutes on court.

Nishikori, coming off his own five-set quarter-final triumph over world number two Andy Murray, seized the initiative with a near flawless first set.

He broke Wawrinka again to open the second, but the Swiss was gradually beginning to find his range and regained the break.

After saving a bevy of break points, he broke in the 12th game to level the match at two sets apiece.

After taking the third and breaking Nishikori at love for a 2-0 lead in the fourth, Wawrinka appeared to be on his way.

Nishikori's last gasp was a break in the fifth game, but a quick break back and a hold at love and Wawrinka was back in charge.

"He dictated play early tonight, put pressure on me and gave me no time," Wawrinka said.

"I had to wait and fight and make him uncomfortable. He got tired and I started to be more aggressive."

Wawrinka, who was in the US Open semis for the third time in four years, was delighted to finally make it to the final.

"I am really excited," he said. "I have seen the final here on TV many times, watching Roger, Rafa, Novak."

Nishikori, meanwhile, was denied a chance to improve on his runner-up to Marin Cilic in 2014.

Off-spin the key for Miraz

SPORTS REPORTER



When you think of Mehedi Hasan Miraz, the first thing that comes to mind is the Under-19 World Cup. Miraz led what was arguably the strongest ever Bangladesh under-19 team in a World Cup that took place in his own den.

There was plenty of pressure on the teenagers right from the start. In fact, the media coverage reached such an extent that Stuart Law, the coach of the team back then, was compelled to ask reporters to calm down and let the teenagers do what they are best at: playing the game.

Facing a majority of that media storm was Miraz. And the manner in which the 18-year-old tactfully handled a number of the media's questions depicted maturity and surprised many.

Be it in victory or defeat, Miraz maintained his smile. It was as though he knew that this was just the beginning and that losing the semifinal of the Under-19 World Cup was merely his introduction to international cricket.

Seven months on, Miraz has found himself a spot in the 20-member national pool for the Afghanistan and England series. The player who performed the role of an all-rounder in under-19 cricket has been selected as a specialist off-spinner, chief selector Minhajul Abedin informed reporters last week.

Speaking to The Daily Star from his hometown in Barisal, where he will spend Eid, Miraz described his inclusion as a 'big opportunity'.

"This is a big deal for me and this is just the start. The next challenge is to make it to the final squad and I hope I can do it," he said.

While he has played the role of an all-rounder in age-group cricket, he said that he doesn't mind being selected as a specialist off-spinner.

"I think at this point in time there are many good batsmen in the national side and it will be difficult to make it through as a batsman. It's not

as though I like batting more than bowling, I like both the departments equally but at this point in time it seems like the only way I can make it to the national team is through my off-spinners and that's why I am working hard on them," he added.

The selectors were quick to spot Miraz's turners. He was given an opportunity to play for Khulna in the National Cricket League where he excelled on the dead pitches. The highlight of his performance was when he picked up a ten-wicket haul against Rangpur on October 10, 2015.

He followed that with an eight-wicket haul in his last first-class game against Dhaka Metropolis.

Bangladesh has generally found it hard to field specialist off-spinners in the team. Currently Shuvagata Hom is the only one who performs that role.

Considering the dearth, it seems like a good time for Miraz to begin staking a claim for himself.

While Miraz knows that, he also knows that there's still a long way to go.

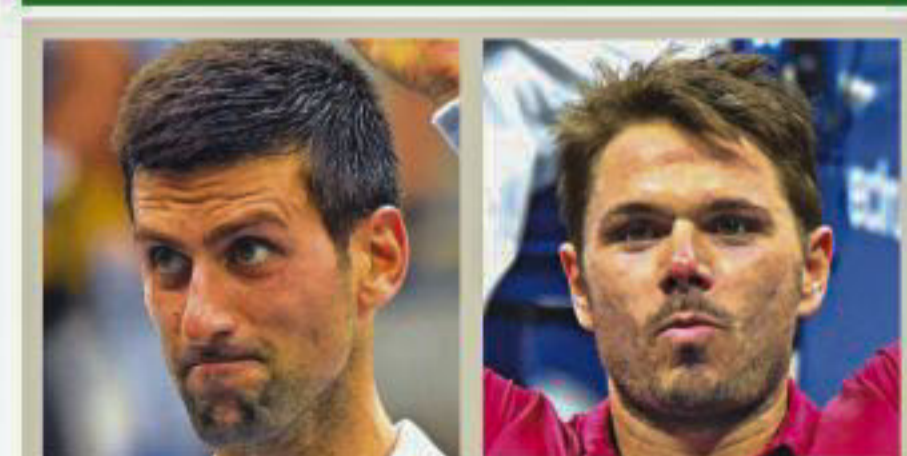
He described it best: "Honestly speaking, as a player I haven't proved anything as yet. There's a lot of difference between domestic and international cricket. I still have a lot to learn. They have selected me as a spinner, but I can only call myself a successful spinner once I do well in international cricket."



After making his name as an all-rounder for the Bangladesh under-19 side, Mehedi Hasan Miraz is now aiming to stake a claim to the senior national side as an off-spinner.

PHOTO: FILE

FINAL H2H



NOVAK DJOKOVIC (1) V STANISLAV WAWRINKA (3)

Head-to-Head (Overall) Played:	23
19	4
Head-to-Head on grass Played:	13
11	2
US OPEN 2016 STATS	
14 Sets Played	23
2 Sets Lost	5
28 Return Games Won	29
17 Aces	52
108 Winners	285
8h Hours on court	17h
58m	54m

Three teams inserted into C'ship League

SPORTS REPORTER



The Bangladesh Football Federation approved three new teams -- Chittagong Mohammedan SC, Karwan Bazar Pragati Sangha and Saif Sporting Club -- to participate in the Championship League which will kick off in October. The decision was disclosed after an emergency meeting of the executive committee of the federation yesterday.

The inclusion of these three teams will make the league an eight-team affair just like the last edition, with Victoria SC, Motijheel T&T Club, Youngmen's Fakirerpool Club, Agrani Bank Sports Club and Police Football Club being the other participating teams.

"We have approved these three teams after receiving a total of 12 applications. The financial solvency and club infrastructure was taken into consideration when reviewing the applications," revealed Kazi Nabil Ahmed, vice president of the BFF, at the press conference which was chaired by the BFF president

Kazi Salahuddin.

However, Nabil informed that the applications of two other teams -- Shuktara Juba Sangha and Cox City FC -- are still being considered, and that whether they will be allowed to take part will only be decided by the professional league committee after further deliberation.

Kawran Bazar Pragati Sangha plied their trade in the first division last year while Chittagong Mohammedan SC last played in the Bangladesh Premier League in 2010. Saif Sporting Club, which is owned by Saif Global Sports, are a completely new outfit.

"The transfers for the Championship league will be held from September 18 to 30. The league will likely kick off from October 10 at the Birshreshtha Shaheed Mostafa Kamal Stadium in Kamalapur and the league will be on double-legged basis," Nabil added.

Last year a total of eight teams participated in the league, with champions Uttar Baridhara Club and runners-up Arambagh Krira Sangha being promoted to the top tier whilst bottom-place finishers, Wari Club, were relegated to the first division.

On-fire Maxwell topples Shakib

AGENCIES, Colombo



Australia's Glenn Maxwell has replaced Bangladeshi Shakib Al Hasan at the top of the all-rounders' list while also making a huge jump to reach third position in the latest ICC players rankings for T20I batsmen.

Maxwell, who smashed aggressive knocks of 145 not out and 66 in the two-match series against Sri Lanka in Pallekele and Colombo that his team won 2-0, leapfrogged Pakistan's Shahid Afridi and Shakib to become the top-ranked T20I all-rounder.

Shakib's ranking has suffered as Bangladesh have not played a T20I since the World T20 and as a result he has found points hard to come by.

Maxwell also gained 16 places in the T20I batsmen's ranking, which is led by India's Virat Kohli with Australia's Aaron Finch in second place. Kohli is comfortably placed with 820 points but Maxwell moved to 763 points, just eight less than Finch.

Sri Lanka captain Dinesh Chandimal moved up four places to 60th rank in the batsmen's list with scores of 58 and four in the two matches while his team-mate Chamara Kapugedera moved up 18 slots to reach 72nd rank after scoring 43 and seven.

Tillakaratne Dilshan retired at 19. In the all-rounders' list he is in 15th position after playing his last match in Colombo and is ranked 119th in the bowlers' list. His best rank as an all-rounder was fifth in March 2012 while as a bowler his highest rank was 18th in January 2007.