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| <div>DAY'S EVENT</div> | National Cricket League | Venue:SCS, Bogura |
| | Four-day match | Barishal v Chattogram |
| | Day four | Venue:BDS, Barishal |
| | Rajshahi v Khulna | Dhaka Metro v Sylhet |
| | Venue:SBNCS, Dhaka | Venue:SKS, Rajshahi |
| | Rangpur v Dhaka | |

Niaz regains national title

The 53-year-old beat nine-year-old Neer in final round

SPORTS REPORTER



Niaz Murshed, the country's first Grand Master, regained the title of the National Chess Championship, beating Manon Reja Neer, the youngest Candidate Master of the country, in the final round of the event at the Engineers' Institute Building in Ramna yesterday.

The 53-year-old, who won his first national title 40 years ago at the tender age of 13, collected eight points from 10 rounds to scoop his sixth national title and the first since 2012.

Niaz, also the first GM of the sub-continent, had started the tournament strongly, winning the first four rounds. However, he drew the next four rounds to share the lead briefly with two others before regaining a half-point lead going into the final round against nine-year-old Neer.

It eventually did not prove to be a big challenge as the veteran, playing with white pieces, earned his victory after 25 moves. But Niaz admitted he was a bit tensed as a draw might have seen him share the lead, leading to a tiebreaker.

"I was a bit tensed as I needed a win to ensure the title. Manon had even offered me a draw early in the game, but I knew I had to win," Niaz said with an almost apologetic smile.

It was the first time that all five GMs of the country had participated, so the feeling was special.

"Obviously the first title was way more pleasing. But since this time all five GMs played and there was good competition and environment, I enjoyed this title," Niaz said.

Niaz had first participated in the national championship at the age of 10 and won the first of his six titles when he was just 13. Yesterday, he was playing against a player who is a year younger than when Niaz started playing national chess.

Neer, in his first senior event, upset a few established names including forcing a draw against defending champion Ziaur Rahman.



GM Niaz Murshed (L) writes his move during the National Chess Championship match against CM Manon Reja Neer at the Engineer's Institute Building yesterday.

PHOTO: **FIROZ AHMED**

Niaz could see bright future for Neer.

"It is more difficult now than when I started as there was less competition at that time, especially as a few good players had left the country," Niaz said. "I can see a bright future for Neer. I would like to see him become a GM by 15. Becoming a GM by 20 is not good enough at this day and age. But in order to achieve that, he needs more knowledge about the game as well as more support."

After the penultimate round, GM Abdullah Al Rakib and IM Fahad Rahman were trailing Niaz by 0.5 points. The last round had pitted Fahad, another youngster tipped to make it big at the

international level, against GM Enamul Hossain Rajib while Rakib was up against Zia.

Both those games ended in draws as Rakib was adjudged runner-up while Fahad finished third, in tiebreaker.

At one of the tables in the next row, Zia's son Tahsin Tajwar took the fight to FM Mehedi Hasan Parag. It seemed like the past of our chess was fighting to keep their supremacy over the future, just managing to keep themselves ahead for the time being. With the country's last GM coming a good 11 years ago, it would be a welcome boost for our chess if these prodigies make it to the top sooner rather than later.

RONALDO LEAVES STADIUM

Cristiano Ronaldo reportedly left the Allianz Stadium before the final whistle of Juventus' 1-0 Serie A win over AC Milan on Sunday after being substituted for the second match in a week. Paulo Dybala replaced Ronaldo on 55 minutes with the Argentina striker going on to score the winning goal 22 minutes later to keep Juventus top in Serie A ahead of Inter Milan. Five-time Ballon d'Or winner Ronaldo looked glum as he came off and directed some words at coach Maurizio Sarri before heading to the changing rooms and Sky Sport Italia reported that the 34-year-old had left the stadium three minutes before the match finished. "I have no problem with Cristiano, he should be thanked because he made himself available despite not being in the best condition," said Sarri.

--AFP



'Oman away would be the toughest'

SPORTS REPORTER



Bangladesh coach Jamie Day said he expects the matches away to Oman to be tougher than the previous matches in their qualifying campaign of the World Cup.

Bangladesh, who are currently bottom of Group E with a single point from three matches, face Oman, in second position behind Qatar, in Muscat on Thursday.

Although Bangladesh lost 1-0 against Afghanistan away from home and 2-0 against Qatar at home before holding India to a 1-1 draw in Kolkata, the team performed beyond expectations, especially in the last two matches.

The English coach feels his charges will need to put up a similar performance if they are to earn a draw against the Middle Eastern nation.

"I would be happy with a point but I think it's extremely tough. It's the toughest game we will have so far and to keep asking our players to play above their standard every game is also a big ask," the coach said when asked of his thoughts regarding the game against Oman.

Bangladesh have been undergoing a

training camp in Muscat for the last one week and they won the only warm-up game against Muscat Club 3-1 a few days ago. The Bangladesh coach believes Oman will be a learning experience for his young defensive lineup.

"Big challenge but all good experience for the younger players," the coach said. "We have to defend like we did the last game [against India]."

Despite creating a number of scoring chances against both Qatar and India, Day's charges have only one goal from three games, courtesy of a first-half header from Saad Uddin against India.

The coach felt they should be more clinical in front of goal and not let these opportunities go begging. "We have been creating chances which is positive, just need to try and convert more," Day said.

The coach hinted that he was not looking to tinker too much with his game plan or line-up, but did not rule out the possibility of changes, especially in defence, with fit-again centre-back Tutul Hossain Badsha getting more gametime than the rest during the lone practice match and young full-back Yeasin Arafat joining the squad following the AFC U-19 Championship Qualifiers campaign, where he scored two goals.

U-19s finish bottom of group

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh finished bottom of Group B in their AFC U-19 Championship Qualifiers following a 2-1 defeat against Bhutan in their last match at the Khalifa Sports City Stadium in Manama on Sunday.

The boys in red and green, who started their campaign with a 3-0 defeat against Bahrain before holding Jordan to a 1-1 draw, needed a big win against Bhutan to have any chance of qualifying for the final round.

Andrew Peter Turner's charges took an 18th-minute lead, courtesy of skipper Yeasin Arafat's header on a long throw-in from Rahad Mia. However, Bhutan equalised in the 65th minute and scored the winning goal in stoppage time of the second half to condemn the Bangladesh team to the bottom of the group.

Bahrain grabbed the qualifying spot from this group with seven points following their 1-1 draw against Jordan later on Sunday night.

Shakil blows shooting's last hope for quota

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh's last chance of winning a quota place in shooting discipline of the 2020 Olympics was extinguished yesterday after Commonwealth Games silver medallist Shakil Ahmed finished 35th in the Asian Shooting Championship in Doha, Qatar.

The Bangladeshi shooter scored 570 points in the 10m air rifle event to finish 35th among 72 contestants.

The eighth and final qualifier for the final round of the event secured 581 points. Had he finished inside the top eight, there might have been a possibility of earning a quota place. Now the Bangladeshi shooters will have to rely on wildcards to participate in the Summer Olympics next year.

Liverpool boost title hopes

AFP, Liverpool



Liverpool took a huge step towards a first league title in 30 years by beating defending champions Manchester City 3-1 at Anfield on Sunday to open up an eight-point lead at the top of the table.

Two goals in the first 13 minutes from Fabinho and Mohamed Salah gave the European champions a dream start before Sadio Mane's diving header early in the second half sealed City's fate.

Bernardo Silva pulled a late goal back, but a third defeat in eight league games leaves City down in fourth, nine points behind Liverpool, and with a mountain to climb if they are to claim a third straight league

title.

"It's nine points but there is a long way to go," said Liverpool boss Jurgen Klopp.

"It's not important. Who wants to be first in early November? It's important to be top in May."

City's defensive deficiencies have been much publicised without the injured Aymeric Laporte so far this season and they crumbled as Liverpool scored with their first two attacks of the game.

But the visitors were furious with some justification at the move that led to the opening goal when a dangerous foray into the Liverpool box ended with the ball striking Trent Alexander-Arnold on the arm.

Instead of City being awarded a penalty, the hosts broke down the other end and the ball fell to Fabinho

on the edge of the area.

The Brazilian is not renowned for his goalscoring, but when invited to shoot by a hesitant City back line, he arrowed a strike beyond stand-in goalkeeper Claudio Bravo.

"Ask to the referees, don't ask me," said City boss Pep Guardiola on the controversial opener. "I would like to talk about our performance. It was one of my proudest performances as (Man City) manager."

The visitors had more of the ball and plenty of chances even in between Liverpool's early blitz as Raheem Sterling headed wide Kevin De Bruyne's in-swinging free-kick.

But it was Liverpool who were ruthless as a pinpoint cross by Andy Robertson was headed home on the bounce by Salah.

Hope clinches clean sweep for Windies

AFP, Lucknow

Opening batsman Shai Hope struck an unbeaten century as West Indies outplayed Afghanistan by five wickets in the third one-day international yesterday to complete a 3-0 series rout.

Hope made 109 and built crucial partnerships including an unbeaten 71-run stand with Roston Chase, 42 not out, to anchor West Indies' chase of 250 with eight balls to spare in Lucknow.

The wicketkeeper-batsman completed his seventh ODI hundred as West Indies recorded their first ODI whitewash since 2014.

Paceman Keemo Paul played a key role in the win, returning figures of three for 44 in Afghanistan's 249 for seven.

Afghanistan's Mujeeb Ur Rahman took two wickets to reduce West Indies to four for two but Hope stood firm to keep the chase on track.

Hope, who starred in the opening win with an unbeaten 77, remained the top-scorer in the series with 229 runs. Man-of-the-match Hope got support from debutant Brandon King, who made 39, and Pollard, who hit 32. Chase was named man of the series for his 145 runs including a highest of 94 in the three matches and six wickets with his off-spin.

BD U-19s win 2nd ODI

SPORTS REPORTER



After the first youth ODI was abandoned due to inclement weather last Saturday, the Bangladesh Under-19 team took the lead in their five-match series with a five-wicket win over their Sri Lankan counterparts in the second match at the Sheikh Abu Naser Stadium in Khulna yesterday.

It was an all-round performance from Shamim Hossain that helped Bangladesh romp to victory with 32 balls to spare. Shamim's two for 41 in seven overs helped restrict the visitors to a modest 207 for seven in a game that was reduced to 31 overs-a-side before his 61-ball 95 took the young Tigers over the line comfortably.

After being sent to bat, opener Navod Paranavithana's 75-ball 78 and another 34-ball 41 from Sonal Dinusha in the middle helped Sri Lanka post a modest total. All five bowlers used by the young Tigers on the day accounted for at least a wicket each with Shamim's figures being the best in the lot.

Coming in to chase, the young Tigers were in a spot of bother, losing four wickets for 42 runs inside eight overs. However, Towhid Hridoy's unbeaten 56-ball 82 alongside the magnificent knock from Shamim saw the duo stitch a vital 161-run fifth-wicket stand which helped the young Tigers register a victory.



SHAMIM HOSSAIN...95 not out

13TH SA GAMES India to skip 10 disciplines?

SPORTS REPORTER

Regional powerhouse India may not send teams to 10 out of 27 disciplines in the upcoming 13th South Asian Games in Nepal, which should open up medal chances for the other six participating nations.

A two-day meeting of the participating nations took place in Kathmandu on Saturday and Sunday where the teams gave their preliminary lists of contingent sizes and disciplines.

Although no official confirmation in this regard came from the Bangladesh Olympic Association, it has been learnt that India may skip 10 important disciplines -- archery, golf, cricket, kabaddi, tennis, table tennis, karate, taekwondo, paragliding and wrestling. It has been also learnt that India, unlike previous editions, will send a smaller contingent but fourth largest according to the preliminary list.

Pakistan, the second-best team in the regional games, is expected to send a truncated contingent too.

The absence of these two countries in important disciplines should work in favour of the other countries. Bangladesh, with a contingent of close to 600 members, will participate in 25 disciplines.

The last date for finalising entries of a contingent is November 20. The games will be held from December 1 to 10.