



PHOTO: STAR

TONMOY, JUI lead BKSP’s dominance in pool

SPORTS REPORTER

BKSP’s Monir Khan Tonmoy and Jui Akter emerged as the best swimmers of the 37th National Age-group Swimming and Diving Competition, which concluded at the National Swimming Complex in Mirpur on Saturday.

Tonmoy, competing in the 18-20 age-group category, grabbed nine gold and

one bronze including a record he set in the 100m freestyle event on Friday. Jui, competing in the same age-group category for girls, finished with five gold medals including two records, the last of which came on Saturday in 200m individual medley. Jui took 2:48min 0.1sec to set the record, shaving off 0.50 seconds from the previous record held by Any Akter of BKSP.

A total of six records – four in swimming and two in diving – were set over four days of the competition, which concluded with complete dominance of BKSP. The sports institute amassed 70 gold, 62 silver and 32 bronze medals. Kushitia’s Shilaidaha Swimming Club finished distant second with six gold, five silver and eight bronze. Kushitia’s Amla Swimming Club finished third with six

gold, two silver and four bronze.

Navy chief and Bangladesh Swimming Federation’s president Admiral M Nazmul Hassan distributed prizes among the winners as the chief guest of the closing ceremony. There were monetary rewards of Tk 5,000 each for record setters, Tk 2,000 each for gold winners, Tk 1,000 each for silver winners and Tk 500 each for bronze winners.

‘A’ team lose four-day series to New Zealand

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh ‘A’ team suffered a 1-0 series defeat to New Zealand ‘A’ after the second unofficial Test of the two-match series ended in a draw at the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

Both teams agreed on a stalemate on the fourth day after the hosts reached 87-2 in their second innings with Zakir Hasan and Amite Hasan not out on 24 and 21 runs respectively. Earlier in the day, resuming on an overnight score of 277 for four, New Zealand ‘A’ finished on 379 all out in reply to Bangladesh ‘A’ team’s first innings score of 357, securing a 22-run lead.

Although the hosts had the more experienced squad, it hardly reflected on the field during the series as the opposition looked better equipped to handle the ebbs and flows of the longer format.

“Cricket isn’t played on pen and paper. I think experience and how you react on the field is important,” skipper Nurul Hasan Sohan told reporters after the match.

The hosts had earlier lost the first match by 70 runs in Sylhet and Sohan claimed just one poor session cost them that game. “We played well in the ODI series. In Sylhet, we dominated in 8-9 out of the 12 sessions. We played badly in one session and that’s why we lost the game. Otherwise, the result could have been different.”

New era dawns at Roland-Garros

The 2025 French Open begins May 25 at Roland-Garros, ushering in a new era following Rafael Nadal’s retirement. A special ceremony will honor the 14-time champion Nadal on opening day. Defending champions Carlos Alcaraz and Iga Swiatek return under pressure, with top seeds Jannik Sinner and Aryna Sabalenka leading the charge. Swiatek aims for a fourth straight title, while Sinner returns from a doping ban hungry for redemption. With star power and rising threats, Paris sets the stage for a captivating clay-court showdown.

Tournament Dates: May 25 – June 08

Defending Champions: Carlos Alcaraz (Men), Iga Swiatek (Women)

Top Seeds: Jannik Sinner (men’s singles), Aryna Sabalenka (women’s singles)

Djokovic eyes record 25th Grand Slam title

Notable Contenders (Men’s Singles): Carlos Alcaraz, Jannik Sinner, Novak Djokovic, Alexander Zverev, Casper Ruud, Jack Draper and Lorenzo Musetti.

Notable Contenders (Women’s Singles): Iga Swiatek, Aryna Sabalenka, Coco Gauff, Elena Rybakina, Ons Jabeur, Marketa Vondrousova.

Moya sees ‘Big Three’ legacy too high for Alcaraz, Sinner

AGENCIES

Carlos Moya, Rafael Nadal’s former coach, believes Carlos Alcaraz and Jannik Sinner could form a strong rivalry in the coming years but doubts they can match the dominance of the ‘Big Three’—Nadal, Roger Federer, and Novak Djokovic.

Speaking to AFP, Moya praised world number one Sinner, 23, and 22-year-old Alcaraz, who have already won seven Grand Slam titles combined. In contrast, the Big Three amassed 66 Slams between 2003 and 2023.

“To replicate what Rafa, Roger, and Novak did over 15-20 years is hard to imagine,” said Moya,

a former world number one and 1998 French Open winner. “Injuries, family issues, mental health—so much can happen in five years.”

Moya, who will attend Sunday’s French Open tribute to 14-time champion Nadal, credited the Big Three’s longevity to their rivalry. “They pushed each other to the limit. Without them, Rafa may have retired earlier with fewer Slams.”

Reflecting on his own career, Moya admitted he never dreamt of such dominance. “My dream was to win a Slam and become number one—not to stay there for years. What these guys did is mentally unbelievable. People don’t realize how tough that is.”



India’s ‘Prince’ ascends the throne

AGENCIES

At just 25, Shubman Gill has been handed the reins of Indian Test cricket, tasked with steering a new era following the retirements of legends Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli.

Once seen as Kohli’s heir apparent after a composed Test debut in Melbourne in 2020, Gill now stands at the forefront of Indian cricket’s future.

Gill’s rise to the Test captaincy stems as much from his elegant strokeplay as from his calm, calculated leadership of Gujarat Titans in the IPL.

This week, his fluent 93 sealed a playoff spot for Gujarat, showcasing both form and fortitude. “When I’m batting, I want to think like a batsman, not a captain,” said Gill, who has scored 636 runs this IPL season at an average of 57.81.

Dubbed “Prince” by pundits, Gill has brushed off the tag. Gujarat’s assistant coach Parthiv Patel echoed that sentiment: “He doesn’t talk much, but his words carry weight.”



Gill was chosen over candidates like Jasprit Bumrah, Rishabh Pant, KL Rahul, and Shreyas Iyer to lead India in a tough five-Test series in England starting June 20. He follows in the footsteps of Kohli (40 wins from 68 Tests) and Rohit (12 from 24), both giants of Indian cricket.

Former captain Sunil Gavaskar has backed Gill’s appointment, calling him “the most competitive” among India’s young stars. “He’s quick to react, very involved,” Gavaskar noted.

With centuries across all formats and a gritty upbringing in Punjab under his father’s mentorship, Gill’s journey has been one of talent molded by relentless discipline.

Gill has played 32 Tests, scoring 1,893 runs at an average of 35.05, with five hundreds. But there are question marks over his overseas record – in 13 Tests abroad, his average drops to 29.50.

While his overseas record remains a concern, the future now rests on his young shoulders. The crown may be heavy, but Gill seems ready to wear it.

Smart moves, steady run seal Napoli title

AGENCIES

Napoli clinched their second Scudetto in three seasons on Friday, crowning a campaign defined by ruthless consistency, a manageable fixture list, and the timely stumbles of their title rivals.

A 2-0 victory over Cagliari in the final round ensured they stayed ahead of Inter Milan, sending the Campania region into rapturous celebration.

The numbers tell the story. With just 41 matches played, thanks to an early cup exit and no European distractions, Napoli enjoyed a significantly lighter load compared to Inter, who balanced a 58-game season while reaching the Champions League final.

It wasn’t a dream start for Antonio Conte’s men. A 3-0 defeat at Hellas Verona on the opening day threatened to derail their season early. But swift action

in the transfer market proved pivotal. Within 24 hours, Conte secured Romelu Lukaku from Chelsea and Scott McTominay from Manchester United; a duo that would define the campaign.

Lukaku and McTominay combined for 26 league goals, injecting life into Napoli’s title charge and evoking memories of the iconic Osimhen.

Kvaratskhelia pairing that led them to glory two years ago.

After Kvaratskhelia’s January departure, McTominay emerged as a talisman, and the duo found the net in the final match, sealing the title in style and rewarding Conte’s calculated gamble.

The title race had been a tense three-horse contest until March, with Atalanta challenging before fading. Juventus also faltered early under

Thiago Motta, whose replacement Igor Tudor steadied the ship but couldn’t close the gap.

