

Sport

A smiling champion who loves his chess

Star Special by Chandrasekhar

Reefat bin-Sattar, the lanky national chess champion who has retained the crown for the second successive time, is an epitome of friendliness, a trait that is marked in his magnificently winning smile.



REEFAT BIN-SATTAR... retains title

Born on July 25, 1974 this young king was initiated into chess in 1982.

A student of Class Three then, Reefat first got the taste of competitive chess in the Mufti chess tournament held at the Engineering University. The start to his chess career did not augur particularly well for this second year HSC student of Notre Dame College but setbacks are something which champions are capable of taking in their strides, and Reefat is no exception. He kept on learning his lessons and soon distinguished himself as the worthy successor of Niaz Murshed, the only Grandmaster the country has produced so far.

FIDE Master Reefat's exposure international tournaments came in 1988 when he got the opportunity of testing his cerebral development with foreign players like Lian Xin-Rong from China, Mahmud Lodhi and Shehzad Mirza from Pakistan and TN Parameswaran from India. Next year, Reefat took part in the Lloyds Bank chess in England. Although he could not do very well there the experience of playing against players like Grandmaster Jonathan Speelman left him richer in temperament and experience.

Almost apologetic for not having done anything extraordinary at the international level, Reefat was candid enough to mention his match against Indian Grandmaster

Reefat remains national champion

By Afzal H Khan

Reefat bin-Sattar has retained his national chess title.

The amiable teenager who plays for Bangladesh Biman yesterday won his 15th and final round match of the 18th national championships against national women's champion Rani Hamid at the NSC chess room, thereby renewing his lease on the most coveted title for at least another year.

It was a most tense yet rewarding day for the young HSC student who takes his chess very seriously. He started the day at par with Rani Hamid and former national champion Ziaur Rahman with 11 points: points from 14 rounds each and theoretically all three of them had a real chance of claiming the title. Yet, a monumental blunder by Ziaur Rahman in his last match against Syed Iqbal Rakib of Dhaka Metropolis, which led him to part with a vital half point following the drawn result, facilitated Reefat's retention of his mantle. For, had Zia won and earned, the full point, Reefat would have been deposed as the national chess king by virtue of the Buscholtz tiebreak system. Zia had beaten Reefat in their robin league encounter, in the very second round.

Yet it is to Reefat's credit that he did not allow the tension and excitement of seeing Zia squander his chance get the better of his nerves and the gangling youngster, who always sports a most disarming

smile, kept his cool to beat Rani Hamid in 32 moves.

Rani, playing with the white pieces, opened with e4 to which Reefat replied with a Winawer variation of the French defence. From the very first moves the contest contained the makings of an interesting battle.

Rani made a dubious 11th move, and e6, followed by another dubious Kg5 in the 16th move, thereby giving Reefat a slight advantage. Perhaps a bit nervous given the prospect of becoming the first woman ever to lift the national title, Rani faltered yet again with an Rf1,

a mistake that the smart Reefat wasn't going to overlook. Taking full advantage of his good fortune, Reefat applied pressure on Rani's king, forcing the country's chess queen to blunder yet again in the 25th move with a Be7, an error that virtually sealed her fate. And duly enough, Reefat went for the kill, forcing Rani to give up in the 32nd move.

The match produced fine counter-play by Reefat with his black pieces.

Yesterday proved a most unlucky day for the other challenger, Ziaur Rahman, who won the title in 1988. In the

other key match of the day Zia, perhaps the most attacking player in the country — and a bit impetuous, too — let the title slip out of his grasp when the unfancied Syed Iqbal Rakib held him to a draw.

In a case of so close yet so far, Zia, playing with black pieces, adopted a Dutch defence against Rakib's d4 opening. Almost immediately, the former champion made a dubious move, his third, when he played b6. Rakib, in turn, faltered in the 16th move — Ke6 — thus tending to give Zia the upperhand. But for reasons best known to himself, FIDE Master Zia obliged Rakib with a strange blunder in the 18th move — Ke5 — which left him little option but to agree to a draw, being a pawn, within 23 moves. Zia finished runner-up with 11.5 points.

In another interesting match yesterday, 1990 champion Syed Tahmidur Rahman of Biman beat Amir Hossain of Dhaka Metro in 42 moves to finish fifth in the 16-player meet with 9.5 points. Amir finished the meet in 14th place with 3.5 points.

Niamul Huq Niru of Metropolis beat teammate Kalimullah Khan Kalam in another final round match that did not end in a draw. Niru placed eighth with 7 points while Kalam finished 13th with four points.

The other matches of the concluding day saw former champion Jamilur Rahman of Ansars get a walkover against last year's runner-up Ziaul Kader Tuhin, who withdrew from the meet due to illness. Jamal, who along with Rani Hamid earned ten points, finished fourth to Rani's third position because of having lost to the International Woman Master in their robin league encounter.

Nahid Mizid of Chittagong and MR Hafiz of Metro agreed upon a draw, Nahid placing tenth with five points and Hafiz 12th with 4.5 points. Ruhul Kabir Shiplu of BTMC placed ninth with 6.5 points following a walkover conceded by his last round opponent Abdul Khaleq of Jamalpur, who finished 15th with three points from 15 games.

THE CHAMPIONS ANALYSE THEIR OWN GAMES

Following are the analyses of the two vital, last-round matches that helped determine the outcome of the 18th national chess championship at the National Sports Council yesterday.

National champion Reefat bin-Sattar, who retained his title, and runner-up Ziaur Rahman analysed their respective matches of the day as special contributors to The Daily Star. Reefat won his match against national women's champion Rani Hamid while Ziaur Rahman, who along with Rani and Reefat had an equal chance of regaining the title since he last won it in 1988, drew his final round contest with Syed Iqbal Rakib of Dhaka Metropolis to leave Reefat clear.

White — Rani Hamid
Black — Reefat bin-Sattar
French defence winawer variation

1. e4 e6
2. d4 d5
3. Nc3 Bb4
4. e5 e5
5. a3 Bc3+
6. bc3 Nc7
7. Nf3 Qa5
8. Qd2 Nc6
9. a4 Bd7
10. Bd3 f6
11. e6? f6 | 11. Ba3
12. Rb1 c4
13. Be2 0-0-0
14. 0-0 e5
15. de5 fe5
16. Ng5? Rd8 | 16. Ba3
17. Bh5 Rf6!
18. Ba3 Qc7
19. a5 h6
20. Nf3 Rg8
21. Rf1? | 21. Nf7, Rf8
22. Nh6, e4 ♠
21. ... Rf5!
22. Qh6 e4
23. Nh4 Rf5
24. g3 Qe5!
25. Be7?? | 25. Nf3, Rh5
26. Ne5, Rh6
27. Nd7, Kd7
28. Rb7 + =!
25. ... Rh5
26. Qe3 Qc7
27. Ng2 Bg4
28. h4 Bf3
29. a6 ba6
30. Rb2 Bg2
31. Kg2 Qh5
32. Kf1 Qg4

White — Syed Iqbal Rakib
Black — Ziaur Rahman
Dutch defence

1. d4 e6
2. Nf3 f5
3. g3 b6? | 3. ... Nf6
4. d5 Bb6
5. e4 fe
6. Ng5 Nf6
7. de6 de6
8. Bg2 0-0
9. 0-0 Nc6
10. Nc3 Qd7
11. Nce4 Bb7
12. Bf4 Rad8
13. Bd6 cd6
14. Bh3 Rde8
15. Nf6+ g6
16. Ne6? Re6
17. Qg4+ Kf7
18. Rae1 Ne5?? | ... Rde8
19. Qc6 Qc6
20. bc6+ Kg6
21. f4 Nf3+
22. Rf2 Ne1
23. Re1 f5

Draw agreed
1/2 — 1/2

SYMBOLS

- ! — Good move
- ? — Bad move
- ?? — Dubious move
- ?? — Blunder
- + — Better
- o — Check
- ♠ — Black has the upper hand
- ∞ — Compensation for the material
- — Only move

Iran beat India 3-0

CALCUTTA, May 13: Asian Games champion, Iran, playing at half pace outclassed India by 3-0 to emerge champions in the Group-III qualifying round in the 10th Asian Cup football championship here today.

The winners will now travel to the Japanese city, Hiroshima, to play the final round of Asia Cup football. Iran, earlier, had thrashed Pakistan 7-0.

Malaysia will meet the winner of Wednesday's semifinal between South Korea and Indonesia in the final on Saturday.

Malaysia had won three of four matches played Tuesday night with only one match still undecided.

Even if Malaysia lost the last match, its three wins gave it a berth in the final.

Razif Sidek, ranked third in the world, defeated world champion Zhao Jianhua of China 15-17, 15-10, 12-15 in the first singles.

In the doubles Malaysia's Rashid Sidek and Jalani Sidek defeated China's Li Yongho and Tian Bingyi 5-15, 15-10, 15-5.

Tian, suffering from a fever, had stayed out of the last group match against Indonesia on May 10, but recovered and was felled Tuesday.

In the second singles China's Wu Wenkat defeated Malaysia's Foo Kok Keong 15-11, 15-8 giving the Chinese some hope.

But Malaysia won the second doubles with Cheah Soon Kit and Soo Beng Kiang defeating China's Zheng Yumin and Huang Zhanzhong 15-9, 18-14.

The Thomas Cup is the world's premier badminton tournament for men's national teams. Eight nations divided into two groups participated in round robin group matches from May 5 to 10.

In Group A were China, Indonesia, South Korea and England.

The winners and runners up of the groups play in the semifinals.

In the women's Uber Cup semifinal, China crushed Sweden 5-0 they will meet the winners of the Indonesia-South Korea tie. Also to be played today.

Malaysia in Thomas Cup final

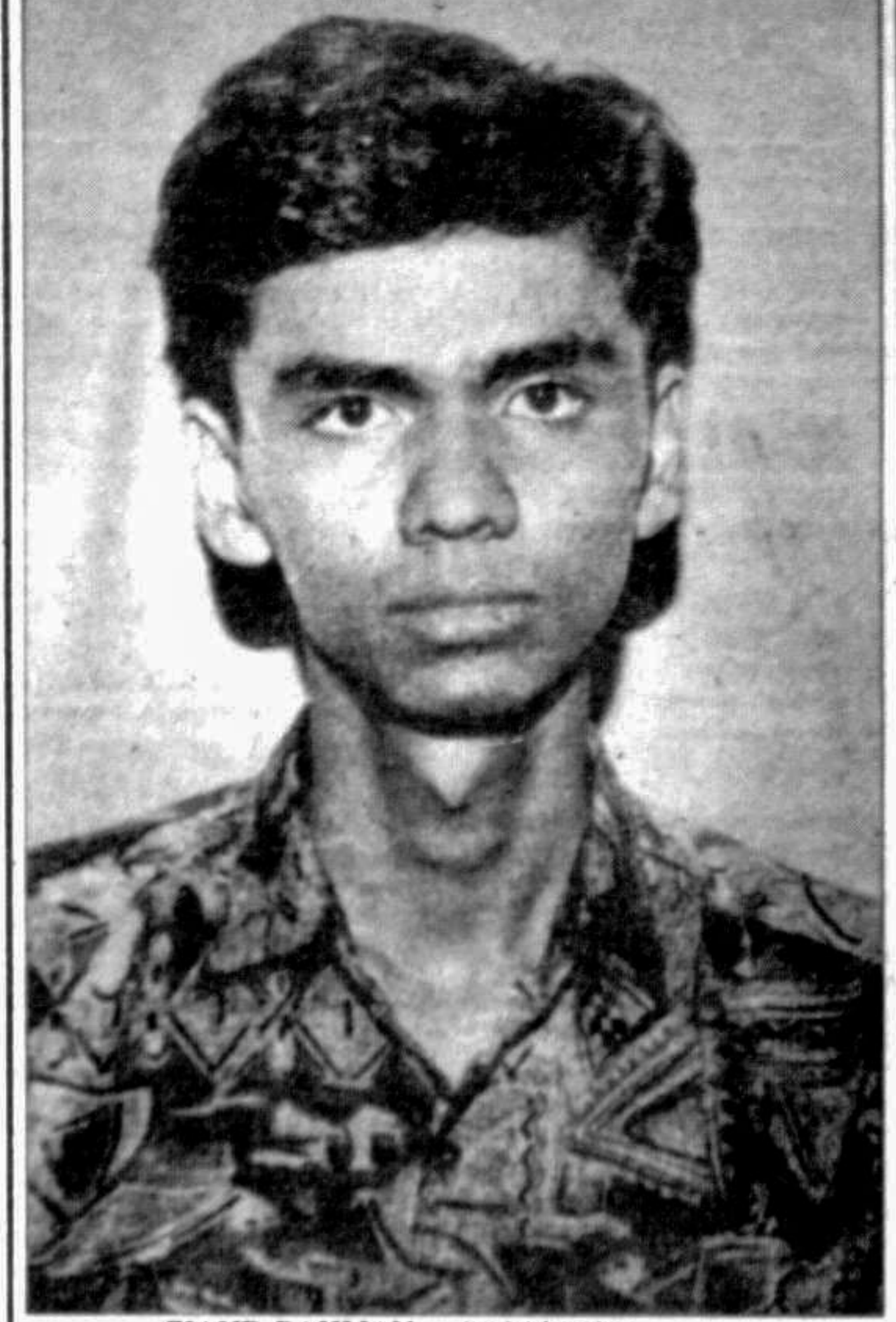


MALAYSIA'S HEROES: The Sidek brothers Razif (L) and Jalani.

A runner-up who has no regrets

Star Special by Ashish Das

Ziaur Rahman is one of the few losers in the final of tournament who can share a laugh while analysing his own game with the eventual champion of the 18th national chess championship Reefat bin-



ZIAUR RAHMAN... bad blunder

Sattar, who happens to be friend and schoolmate during their Saint Joseph's days.

A first year I Com student Zia, who plays for Biman in the local league along with Reefat, inherited the passion for the game from his father Paighamuddin Ahmed, who is an engineer.

More reflective in look than his friend Reefat, Zia, too, did not meet with overwhelming success in his first acquaintance with competitive chess in the Bata chess tournament in 1983. But the scraggy former national champion who was born on May 1 in 1974, has made steady progress since then and is deemed as a future Grandmaster. Zia was baptised in international cricket in 1987 and has played in countries like England, Greece, Dubai, Australia, India, Malaysia and Singapore in his individual capacity as well as a representative of the country. Zia was one of members of the Dhaka city team that won the Asian cities championship in Dubai by upsetting five other fancied teams.

Zia remembers his match against Filipino Antonio in the 1992 Goodricke chess in India as the most memorable and satisfactory performance to date.

Bobby Fischer is Zia's idol but Nigel Short of England attracts him most among the

value judgment.

Although obsessed with his chess, Zia was not found wanting in his opinion about the problems of chess in our country.

"Our players do not get enough exposure, that is why they cannot chisel or polish themselves and graduate into the international level. Unlike our neighbours where talented players are encouraged by private sponsors Bangladesh players have to wait for state-arranged trips abroad," he regretted.

Chess apart, Zia takes keen interest in table tennis. However, he loves outdoor games like football and cricket. Mohammedan Sporting Club is his favourite team but Monem Munna of Abahani is his choice of a footballer. India and Pakistan have his sympathies and love as cricketing nations, but World Cup hero Inzamamul Huq is his favourite cricketer.

Unlike Reefat, Zia has no pronounced weakness for any particular recipe, but he shares Reefat's liking for Humayun Ahmed as an author. Zia, whose chromatic choice is limited to green and blue, has an ear for both oriental and western music. The heterogeneous melange of Manna Dey, Kishore Kumar and Michael Jackson hears that out quite well.

Bulgarians start favourites

HELSINKI, May 13: Confident Bulgaria, brimming with European experience, begin their World Cup qualifying campaign here on Thursday against a Finnish side weakened by injury, reports Reuter.

"We have the strongest attacking line in Europe and we will play to win", Bulgarian chief coach Dimitar Penev said.

Bulgaria's 17-man squad includes nine foreign-based players and even Finnish Football Association spokesman Esko Lahtinen concedes the visitors, who have won four of the two sides last five clashes.

start favourites.

"They have six or seven professionals who play for very good teams in Spain and Portugal", he said.

He said Bulgaria's defence was tight and their quick-moving strikers, particularly Barcelona's Christo Stoichkov who scored for his club last weekend, very dangerous.

Meanwhile, Finland's Aberdeen striker Mike-Matti Paatelainen is ruled out of the

Rain spoils India-Nepal match

KANNUR, May 13: A heavy downpour late this afternoon caused the postponement of the crucial league match between India and Nepal in the 28th Asian Junior (under-19) football tournament here, reports PTI.

Added to the water-logging in some parts of the ground, the lack of proper lighting facilities also forced the referee to postpone the match tomorrow.

There will be two matches tomorrow. The first one, at 1630 hrs, being today's postponed tie followed by Bangladesh-Maldives match.

Swaziland to play South Africa

JOHANNESBURG, May 13: Swaziland will become the second country to play South Africa when the latter returns to international soccer in July, it was announced here today, reports AFP.

South African Football Association secretary general Solomon Morewa said a friendly against Swaziland would be played in the neighbouring kingdom on July 22.

It will be the first meeting between the two countries and will follow a three-match series against Cameroon, who arrive in South Africa on July 5.

Morewa said the Swaziland game will be used as a warm-up for the African Nations Cup games against Zimbabwe in Harare on August 16 and Zambia in Johannesburg on August 30.

AIS booters due today

Sports Reporters

The Ambassadors In Sports (AIS) Club, an amateur Britain-based 'Sunday' football squad, arrives in the city this morning to play some exhibition matches with Bangladesh teams.

The AIS Club will play two matches in Dhaka and in all likelihood two more in Khulna and Jessore.

Defending champions of the Dhaka First Division League Abahant Kirra Chakra and their arch-rivals Mohammedan Sporting Club will feature in two city matches scheduled to be held on May 16 and 18 at the Dhaka Stadium.

However, the fixture for the matches outside the capital is yet to be finalised.

The 'multi-national' AIS team includes eight Britons, four Americans, two Haitians and three players from New Zealand, Spain and Bangladesh.

Steve Adolph, 27, the only Bangladeshi in the side, is a forward who was born and grew up in Bangladesh. In 1989 he visited Bangladesh with the Seahorse Club from California.

Spaniard Jose Ruiz, also 27, is a midfielder reportedly possessing excellent ball control and speed.

Keith Hammond, 40, the oldest booter on the team, has had years of experience playing a good standard of amateur football in the London area. His speed and size (six feet) are supposed to be his greatest strengths.

Besides, there are standout players like John Squires of

New Zealand, Tom Fite of the USA and Philip Mitchell of Northern Ireland, on the squad.

Mitchell played professional football in England for Ipswich for a season. His international experience has included playing the Argentinian national side in a warm-up for the 1990 World Cup in Italy.

Twenty-three years old midfielder Mitchell is a key player of the club.

Following is the list of AIS booters (the numbers against the players' name suggest their jersey numbers):

Tim Kangas-1 (custodian), Graham Dancy, 2 (defender), Pete Smith, 4 (defender), John Squires, 5 (defender), Jose Ruiz, 6 (midfielder), Steve Blackburn, 7 (midfielder), Rich Jones, 8 (forward), Philip Mitchell, 9 (midfielder), Tom Fite, 10 (midfielder), Garrick Pang, 11 (forward), David Garb, 12 (midfielder), Jonathan Ortlip, 14 (defender), Keith Dakin, 15 (forward), Keith Hammond, 16 (forward), Steve Adolph, 17 (forward), John Beggis, 18 (defender) and Steve Ball (manager).

MSC retain Nagjee Trophy

KOZHIKODE, May 13: Defending champions Mohammedan Sporting Club, Calcutta, retained the Nagjee Trophy defeating Titanium, Thiruvananthapuram 2-1 in the final of the 4th edition of the football championship here today, reports PTI.