

Dual lead in qualifying chess

Sports Reporter Amjad Hossain Mintu of Dhaka Metropolis shared the top spot with Ziaur Rahman in the qualifying meet for the 20th national chess championship after the seventh round at the National Sports Council (NSC) chess room yesterday.

10th nat'l women's h'ball from June 8

Sports Reporter The 10th national women's handball championship under the auspices of Bangladesh Handball Federation (BHF) will be held at Rangpur from June 8.

Elina, Momo win women's doubles title

Sports Reporter Defending national women's champion Elina and Momo clinched the women's doubles title of the Open Summer badminton championship eliminating Juthi and Konika pair in the final at the NSC wooden floor gymnasium yesterday.

Gods regains lead

MITAKECHO, Japan, May 14: Unheralded Hiroshi Goda shot the day's best score Saturday, a bogey-free 4-under-par 67, and recaptured the lead by five shots going into the final round of the prestigious Japan PGA Championship, reports AP.

Gooch's timely reminder

LONDON, May 14: Graham Gooch paved the way for an England recall with a magnificent 236 for Essex against Kent on Friday to



GOOCH... double centurion

show his appetite for runs remains as large as ever, reports Reuter. The former Test captain crashed 28 fours and three sixes during a 332-ball innings on the second day of the four-

day county match at Chelmsford. It could not have been more timely, with the England selectors meeting this weekend to select the squad for the two one-day internationals against New Zealand.

Having declared himself available also to tour Australia later this year, there seems nothing to bar his return to the international scene. It was the ninth double century of Gooch's career and his third three-figure score already this season.

Gooch and Paul Princhard, who made 109, shared in a county record opening stand of 316 as Essex ended on 446 for three in reply to Kent's 191.

There was another double century at the Oval where David Ward hit 216 not out and added 301 for the third wicket with Graham Thorpe (114) to put championship leaders Surrey totally in command against Derbyshire.

The hard-hitting Ward thumped five sixes and 24 fours to leave Surrey on an imposing 373 for five off 92 overs and a lead of 165 after bowling out Derbyshire for 208 shortly after midday.

Richard Step's left-arm spin put Yorkshire in command at Cardiff, where Glamorgan ended the day 32 runs short of saving the follow on with only two wickets in hand.

Step took five for 41 from 23 overs as Glamorgan slumped to 158 for eight in reply to Yorkshire's 339.

Ownes to replace Doull LONDON, May 14: The New Zealand cricket team has asked Michael Ownes to replace injured pace bowler Simon Doull for the current series in England, reports AP.

Ownes, a 24-year-old pacer who has played in four Tests, narrowly missed an automatic place on the tour.

Kasparov surges ahead

AMSTERDAM, May 14: Professional Chess Association (PCA) world champion Garry Kasparov took the lead in the VSB Bank tournament on Friday when he convincingly beat Britain's Nigel Short, his opponent in the 1993 world title match in London, reports Reuter.

The 31-year-old Russian has one and a half points after two rounds. He is half a point ahead of Short and world number five Vassily Ivanchuk of Ukraine, who drew with Dutchman Jan Timman.

The four-player tournament includes all but one of the contenders in the 1993 two rival World Championships. The missing name is Russian Anatoly Karpov, ranked two in the world on playing strength, who last autumn beat Timman for the International Chess Federation (FIDE) world crown.

Kasparov and Short, who were due to contest the world crown under FIDE's auspices, broke away last year and founded the PCA to run their title match. FIDE retaliated by staging a new championship between losing semifinalists Karpov and Timman.

Karpov turned down the VSB's invitation when it became clear the tournament would look like a head-to-head

contest between the rival FIDE and PCA camps. He was replaced by Ivanchuk. Short, with the black pieces, replied to Kasparov's Kings Pawn opening with the French Defence, and within ten minutes the two had rattled out 15 moves of the Steinitz Variation. The 29-year-old Briton chose what he thought was a novel pawn move to surprise the Russian on move 15.

But Kasparov later revealed he had already found an answering move in research for his world title match against Short.

After a few exchanges Kasparov squeezed his queen behind Short's central pawn wedge, where it seemed to threaten everything in the Briton's defence. With doubled isolated pawns on the E-file, one of which was relying on the king's protection, Short's position soon looked untenable and

he resigned on move 32. In the post-match analysis Kasparov rapidly demonstrated all the powerful threats he was planning to unleash. "I don't see a defence against any of these moves," Short said drily. "I think the position is just rather unpleasant."

The other game was equally exciting. Ivanchuk, playing white, sped off against Timman into a racy and little-researched version of the Queen's Indian defence.

In this, white gives up his queen for a pawn but grabs a knight and a rook, and is 'loaned' a bishop. Black then has to grab the bishop back without losing too much time.

After some fireworks the game evolved into a balanced end game, and the Ukrainian accepted Timman's offer of a draw.

In today's third round Short has white against Ivanchuk and Timman white against Kasparov.

The VSB tournament, with total prize money of 377,500 guilders (20,000 dollars) has six rounds with players, meeting each other twice, once with the white pieces and once with black.

Standings after two rounds: 1. Kasparov 1 1/2 points 2. Short, Ivanchuk 1 3. Timman 1/2.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer. A grid for a crossword puzzle with clues for across and down words.

CRYPTOQUIP. A word puzzle where letters are substituted. Includes a grid and a list of words to be found.

Div II qualifying cricket results

Sports Reporter Skipper Azam and Fazal scored 76 runs for the third wicket to propel Nawab Bari to a comfortable four-wicket win over Eskaton Club in one of the three Lotus-Kamal Second Division qualifying cricket matches at different city venues yesterday.

Sent in to bat first Eskaton scored a handsome 150 before being all out in 33.1 overs at the Jagannath Hall ground.

Opener Shamsul topscored with 26 followed by Momin (22), Sajal (19) and Ruman (19) while extras featured with 37.

Spinner Hashem, who devastated Eskaton with the ball finished with an excellent analysis of 6.1-1-19.5.

Chasing 151 for victory Nawab Bari SSC reached the target in 29.2 overs losing six wickets.

Azam and Fazal who added 76 runs off only 67 for the third wicket balls set Nawab Bari on the track while Danesh who remained not out on 13 took his team to victory with more than five overs to spare in the 35-overs-a-side match. Fazlu hit a quickfire 44 off 40 balls while skipper Azam made 38.

In the other match of the day played on the western strip of Dhamondi Cricket Stadium Tuhin Smriti Sangsad beat Bailey Sports Club by 14 runs.

Batting first, Tuhin Smriti Sangsad scored 161 before being all out in 33.5 overs with opener Rubel hitting an excellent 63.

His 85-ball innings included eight sparkling hits to the fence. Extras was the other notable contribution with 36.

In reply, Bailey Sports were bundled out for 147 in 25.5 overs. Fazlu (42) and Biplob (35) were the notable scorers for the losers.

New ball bowler Rahat who claimed four wickets for 29 was the highest-wicket getter followed by spinner Zahid who took three for 21.

On the eastern strip of Dhamondi Cricket Stadium Falcon Eleven edged past Kalpataru SK by two wickets.

Sent into bat first, Kalpataru managed 149 runs in the allotted 35 overs losing all their wickets.

Mukul and Nazim scored 47 and 42 runs for Kalpataru. Dipu captured three wickets for Falcon followed by Shahriar and Faruque who took two wickets apiece.

Needing 150 for victory, Falcon reached the target in 27.2 overs for the loss of eight wickets, with Faruque hitting a flourishing half century.

Faruque's sparkling 52 included five hits to the fence. Tanvir scored 40 with the help of four boundaries.

Kiwis fight back well

LONDON, May 14: New Zealand's stylish left-hander Stephen Fleming completed a fine, unbeaten century in his side's resurrection on the second day of their three-day match against Middlesex on Friday, reports Reuter.

The 21-year-old, who made his Test debut only two months ago, had rescued New Zealand from a perilous 82 for five to enable them to declare at 249 for six.

Fleming made 118 not out and was ably assisted by Gavin Larsen who contributed 40 to an unbroken seventh-wicket partnership after New Zealand resumed at 155 for six.

Mark Ramprakash did his hopes of retaining his Test place no good when he was dismissed for nine as Middlesex scored 156 for four before declaring in an attempt to forge a result.

New Zealand were further buoyed by the bowling of Danny Morrison who had been sidelined by a groin injury.

He took two wickets and confirmed his fitness with 13 overs of challenging pace, sending back openers Mike Roseberry and Ason Pooley in the process.

New Zealand had made 34 for the loss of Bryan Young by the close, a lead of 127.

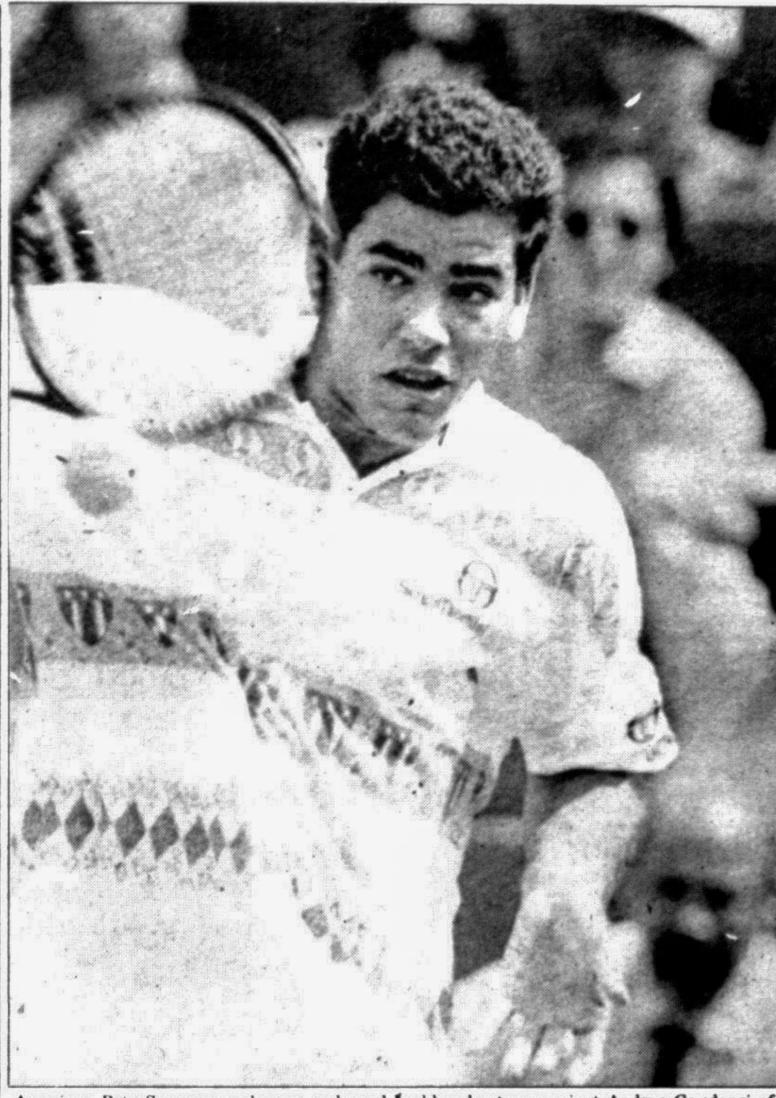
Close call for Graf

BERLIN, May 14: World number one Steffi Graf, who lost her first match of the year on home soil 12 days ago, went close to defeat again in the quarter-finals of the German Open on Friday, reports Reuter.

French girl Julie Halard pushed the title holder to three sets and was an easy volley away from having two match points when she led the German 5-4, 30-15 in the final set.

Top-seed Graf, who lost the Hamburg Open final to Arantxa Sanchez-Vicario on May 1, needed all her experience to turn the match around and finally won 6-3, 4-6, 7-5.

In today's semifinals Graf plays her Wimbledon final opponent of last year, Czech Jana Novotna.



American Pete Sampras makes an awkward backhand return against Andrea Gaudenzi of Italy during their quarterfinal match at the Italian Open on Friday. Sampras won 6-3, 7-6. — AFP photo

Courier's quest cut short

ROME, May 14: Jim Courier's bid to win the Italian Open for the third straight year ended in disappointment when he slumped to a shock defeat by unseeded Czech Slava Dosedel in an enthralling quarter-final on Friday, reports Reuter.

Dosedel, ranked only 51 in the world, recovered from a first set pummeling to score a 1-6, 6-3, 6-4 win over the number three seed.

It ended a 15-match winning run at the pine-lined Foro Italico for the American Courier, a former world number one.

The 23-year-old Dosedel now meets Pete Sampras, the world's current top player, in the second of today's semifinals. Sampras blew away Italian outsider Andrea Gaudenzi 6-3, 7-5 earlier on Friday.

In the other semifinal, Croatian Goran Ivanisevic plays German triple Wimbledon champion Boris Becker.

Ivanisevic, seeded four, beat Dutchman Jacco Eltingh 7-6 (7-5), 6-3, rounding off an impressive display with four straight aces.

Becker, seeking to win a clay court tournament for the first time, had a quarter-final walkover after compatriot Michael Stich withdrew with back trouble.

Courier, who has not won a title for nine months, paid tribute to his opponent. "I've seen him a lot recently and know he's a good player. He deserved this win. I played very well in the first set and then dropped off while he picked his game up," said Courier.

Dosedel, who claimed the scalp of world number five Andrei Medvedev in the previous round, scurried around the baseline, pulling out unlikely returns to grind down Courier in the decisive set of one of the best matches of the week.

Courier remained optimistic about his chances going into the French Open which begins on May 23.

Courier said it would be difficult for Dosedel to live with Sampras as well as on Friday, when he hit 17 aces.

Stakes high for Indonesia

JAKARTA, May 14: Indonesia clash with China on Saturday night in a Thomas Cup tie that has the makings of an epic, reports Reuter.

Although both teams have secured slots in next week's semifinals, they are striving to finish at the top of Group A and earn the right to play against the runners-up from Group B.

Defending champion Malaysia, with two wins, seem almost certain to finish at the top of Group B South Korea, narrow winners over Denmark on Friday, are likely runners-up.

Denmark have a very slim chance of usurping the Koreans for the runners-up spot if they can beat Malaysia on Sunday.

However, five of the Danes, including top singles players Thomas Stuer-Lauridsen and Poul-Erik Hoyer, have had a stomach virus.

Indonesia, powered by one of the strongest team line-ups in the Cup's 55-year history, desperately want to win the event before their home crowd.

A Thomas Cup victory would be sweeter still if they won the final over Malaysia, their closest rivals on the badminton court.

It could also help to erase a black spot from Indonesian badminton history.

Jakarta was the site of the so-called "Scheele incident" in 1967 when Thomas Cup honorary referee Herbert Scheele stopped the final between Indonesia and Malaysia because he felt the spectators were unfairly harassing the Malaysian players.

The Cup was subsequently awarded to Malaysia.

Malaysian first singles player Rashid Sidek is counting on his team winning in Jakarta.

It will be a matter of pride when Sweden play Finland on Saturday night. Both teams are without wins in the event.

The tie between China and South Korea in the Uber Cup on Saturday night could be a prelude to next week's final.

China and South Korea have contested the last three Uber Cup finals, with the Chinese winning every time.

South Korea were assured of finishing at the top of Group A to play the runners up from Group B.

Unless the Danes can play above themselves on Sunday and defeat Indonesia, the home team should finish in first place in Group B. Sweden were almost certain to finish second.

Japan, who gave China scare earlier in the week, should have the measure of the inexperienced Russians in the other tie.



Argentina's Gabriela Sabatini makes an awkward return against American Kimberley Po during her match at the international ladies tournament in Berlin on Wednesday. — AFP photo