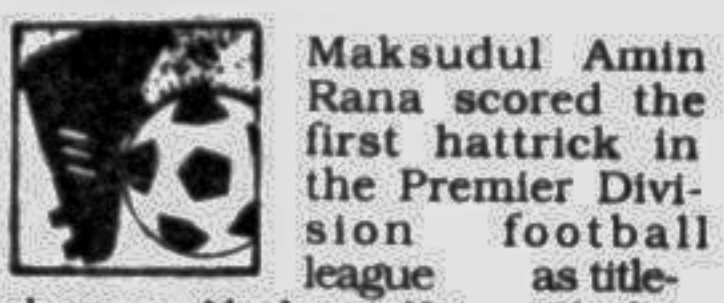


IM chess starts today

The fourth United Insurance International Masters' chess tournament was formally inaugurated at the National Sports Council (NSC) conference room yesterday, reports UNB.

Rana notches first hattrick Abahani begin in style

Sports Reporter



Maksudul Amin Rana scored the first hattrick in the Premier Division football league as title-chasers Abahani Krija Chakra romped home with a 5-2 win over Farashganj Sporting in their opening encounter of the Super League at the Mirpur Stadium yesterday.



Amin Rana... brilliant hattrick

(Abahani)

TEAMS ABABANI KC: Biplob, Partho, Mamun Joarder, Kingshuk, Prodeep, John, Raju (Liton), Zakir, Santu (Jahangir), Amin Rana and Tipu. FARASHGANJ SC: Nowshad, Jahangir, Montu, Din Mohammad, Dulal (Kajal), Chanchal, Ritu (Uttam), Mithu, Shakhawat (Selim), Babu Das and Farhad.

Referee: Ehsanul Haque.

SHANTINAGAR, DHANMONDI SPLIT POINTS

Earlier, in the day's first match, a First Division relegation league affair, Shantinagar Club and Dhanmondi Club shared points to a 1-1 draw.



Action from yesterday's Premier Division football super league clash between Abahani Krija Chakra and Farashganj Sporting Club at the Mirpur Stadium.

off 19 matches to remain in contention of the coveted title. They are now placed at the third position with five points adrift of holder Mohammedan Sporting Club and four points behind of Mahanagari Cup champions Muktiyoddha Sangsad Krija Chakra.

Yellow card: Amin Rana

Kamal Hossain put Dhanmondi ahead in the 35th minute while Motaleb scored the equalizer for Shantinagar in the 52nd minute. Shantinagar raised their account to 25 points from 20 matches while Dhanmondi raised their tally to 20 points from 19 matches.

Graf gets going

HANOVER, Germany, Feb 19: Steffi Graf made a successful singles comeback on Wednesday after an eight-month injury layoff, beating fellow German Andrea Glass in the second round of the Hanover Grand Prix tournament, reports Reuters.

Graf, who played her first competitive match in the doubles competition earlier this week, dismissed Glass 6-4, 6-2 in 64 minutes. The former world number one rarely looked in serious trouble during the match, although she showed frustration at some unforced errors by throwing down her racket at the beginning of the second set.

"I know I can play better," Graf said. "I made more mistakes than I have done in training recently." Graf goes forward to the quarterfinals where she will meet Belgium's Sabine Appelmans, who beat Bulgarian Magdalena Maleeva in straight sets.

Graf's comeback, in front of 4,000 spectators, followed a string of failed attempts to return to competitive tennis after an operation on tendons in her left knee last June.

"I couldn't train at all for five or six months. There were a lot of question marks about whether I would ever make it," she said.

TODAY'S MATCHES

- Janakantha Premier Cricket League: Mohammedan SC vs Abahani KC (Dhaka Stadium) Premier Division Football Relegation League: YMC Fakirerpool vs Agrani Bank (Mirpur Stadium, 5 pm) First Division Football Super League: Badda Jagarini vs BRTC SC (Mirpur Stadium, 3 pm)



Former World No1 Steffi Graf of Germany makes a forehand return against compatriot Andrea Glass in the second of the Faber Grand Prix in Hanover on Feb 18. Graf won 6-4, 6-2. —AP/UNB photo

Chang sails, Courier fails

MEMPHIS, Tennessee, Feb 19: Former world number one Jim Courier, playing his first match in six weeks, didn't receive much of a warm welcome at Kroger Stadium tennis tournament on Wednesday, reports Reuters.

Courier, the tournament's seventh seed, was eliminated in 57 minutes by qualifier Brian MacPhie, a stocky left-hander with 18 career singles wins in five years on the ATP Tour. Second-seed Michael Chang, defending Memphis champion, had no difficulties in his second-round match. He defeated Canadian Daniel Nestor 6-4, 6-4. Top seed Marcelo Rios did not play Wednesday.

Also advancing Wednesday to the third round were No 4 seed Mark Philippoussis, No 5 Thomas Enqvist and No 8 Julian Alonso, a rising Spaniard with a booming serve.

Two-time Memphis champion Todd Martin, unseeded after missing seven months last year due to injury, eliminated

although he defeated Marc Rosset last year when he was ranked 18th in the world. Courier is currently ranked 41st.

"This would have to be one of my better ones, particularly at this stage of my career," MacPhie said. "I've been working pretty hard this past year on my singles. And when you get a win like this, it makes you feel you can do it."

MacPhie earned most of his 91,000 dollars on tour last year in doubles. He reached the quarterfinals of last month's Australian Open doubles with Justin Gimelstob.

"Jim and I are good friends," MacPhie said. "I used to practice with him in Palm Springs and we worked out a year ago in Florida. Jim has struggled a little bit and he is coming off an injury and is not match tough. Obviously he wasn't on top of his game."

Courier complimented MacPhie's effort Wednesday. Philippoussis raced to a 6-1, 6-2 victory in 46 minutes, serving 18 aces.

Edmundo tells Fiorentina off

ROME, Feb 19: Brazil striker Edmundo has carried out his threat to walk out on Fiorentina if the Serie A club did not guarantee him a first team place, and flew back to Rio today, reports Reuters.

Edmundo, a controversial figure at the best of times, left Rome shortly after midnight, avoiding reporters' questions at Fiumicino airport.

His agent Pedrinho said Edmundo was "happy" with Fiorentina owner Vittorio Cecchi Gori and other managers "but he's standing firm on this."

"This is a decision he took during the (CONCACAF) Gold Cup and it's motivated only by his great desire to play," Pedrinho said.

Asked whether Edmundo would change his mind, Pedrinho said: "I don't know. Now we're going to Rio, in peace, and we'll stay in touch with Fiorentina to see how we can resolve the situation."

Edmundo was bought by Fiorentina from Brazilian club Vasco da Gama last May for 7.4 million dollars but only arrived in Italy early in the New Year after completing Brazil's season with Vasco, for whom he scored a record 28 goals but also received seven red cards.

Bangladesh University of Engineering & Technology Dhaka Tender Notice. No. P&D/LP-1(469,470,472&473)/97-98/D-18/10(2) Dated : 18-2-98. Sealed tenders are invited from bonafide suppliers for supply of Computer, Printer, Voltage Stabilizer, UPS, Type Writer, Toner Cartridge, Ribbon etc. at an estimated cost of Tk. 5,08,500/-.

Vialli debut dwarfs Gullit

LONDON, Feb 19 (AP/Reuters): Ruud Gullit, who? Gianluca Vialli's debut as Chelsea's new player-manager couldn't have been better.

The Blues scored three spectacular goals and were aided by a sending off as they whipped Arsenal 3-1 Wednesday to reach the League Cup final at Wembley Stadium on March 29.

Chelsea will face Middlesbrough in a replay of last season's FA Cup final won 2-0 by Chelsea.

First-Division Middlesbrough shocked Liverpool 2-0 in the day's other second-leg semifinal to go through on a 3-2 aggregate on a goal by Paul Merson on a penalty in the second minute and Marco Branca's a minute later.

anfranco Zola and Hughes — retrieved the ball and gave it a kiss. During the Gullit era, the former Italian international was often benched.

The physical game, which generated five yellow cards in the first half, turned in the 47th minute when Arsenal defender Patrick Vieira got his second on a controversial call by referee Graham Poll.

That's when the game broke loose. Matteo, who scored a similar goal in Chelsea's victory last season in the FA Cup final, lashed a shot from 25 yards (metres) in the 50th minute to make it 2-0.

Three minutes later, Romanian Dan Petrescu faked twice as he moved in on goal and then scored on a perfectly placed shot from 12 yards (metres).

In the other Premier game, Coventry beat Southampton 2-1.

United now has 53 points from 26 matches, seven ahead of second placed Liverpool with Chelsea and Blackburn level on 45 points, both with a match in hand over the leaders.

Duisburg end Eintracht's run

BONN, Feb 19: Duisburg ended giant-killing Eintracht Trier's run in the German Cup on Wednesday by beating the south German amateurs after a penalty shoot-out, reports Reuters.

The win means Duisburg will meet Bayern Munich for an all First Division final in May. Duisburg had gone ahead with a 51st-minute strike from Michael Zeyer and looked assured of a smooth passage into the final until Trier bounced back into the match two minutes from the end with an equaliser from striker Dirk Fenzler.

After a goalless 30 minutes of extra time, Duisburg won a tense penalty shoot-out 10-9 after Trier goalkeeper Dentel Ischodonat, whose turn had come to take a penalty, failed to convert.

The defeat marked the end for Trier of a cup run in which their victims included European Cup winners Borussia Dortmund.

The Daily Star TV Guide

Friday 20th February. (All programmes are in local time but subject to last minute change). Morning Session, Evening Session, STAR PLUS, STAR SPORTS, ZEE INDIA TV, ZEE CINEMA, DD 7, ZEE TV, DD METRO, ZEE CINEMA, EE TV, CHANNEL V, PTV. Includes various channel logos and program listings.