

Ponomariov lifts world chess title

AFP, Moscow

Ukraine's Ruslan Ponomariov, 18, became the youngest-ever FIDE world chess champion Wednesday after beating compatriot Vassily Ivanchuk in the final in Moscow, ITAR-TASS reported.

Playing white, Ponomariov drew the seventh game of the final to defeat Ivanchuk, 32, by 4.5 points to 2.5 points and secure the title previously held by Viswanathan Anand of India.

Ponomariov, ranked seventh in the world, won the first prize of 500,000 dollars, with Ivanchuk getting 250,000 dollars.

The world's top-ranked players, Gary Kasparov and Vladimir Kramnik, boycotted the competition. Kasparov was the previous youngest holder of the FIDE (World Chess Federation) title, becoming champion in 1985 at the age of 22.

He held the title until 1993 when he refused to defend it under the FIDE aegis.

Pepsi h'ball

UNB, Dhaka

Chittagong Metropolitan Sports Association made a flying start in the Pepsi 14th National Men's Handball Championships outplaying Netrokona DSA by 13-4 in the opening match at the Mirpur National Indoor Stadium yesterday.

The port city team led the first session by 7-2.

In the day's other match, Faridpur DSA managed a 29-26, victory over Narsingdi after dominating the first session by 12-10 at the same venue.

In the women's competition, Rangamati beat Tangail 14-8 while Narsingdi outplayed Patuakhali 13-1.

Spare football

FROM PAGE 13

ONE ALFAZ AND PM'S DEAF EAR

When the news of the ban came, a distraught national football star Alfaz Ahmed in desperation, pleaded to Prime Minister Khaleda Zia to intervene and do something to address this national crisis. Alfaz and millions of others across the country are still waiting for the Prime Minister's response.

The government has been remarkably quiet on the issue. Reportedly, it was not even raised in any of the cabinet meetings.

Had a lawmaker's indiscretion brought about such shame and ignominy to his (her) country's image in any civilised nation of this world, either he (she) would have rendered his resignation taking full responsibility of his (her) actions or the government would have replaced him immediately. Unfortunately, in Bangladesh's case these are long forgotten practices and politicians like Fazlur Rahman can go about their daily chores without any feeling of embarrassment and remorse.

Players and fans have planned to form a human chain today to draw attention to the potential massacre of the beautiful game. Meantime, football goes to the grave.

No truce between ICC, India



REUTERS/AFP, New Delhi

The Indian cricket board is ready to boycott the International Cricket Council (ICC) referee's commission set up to review the Mike Denness affair, president Jagmohan Dalmiya said on Tuesday.

The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) has informed the world governing body that its three-member panel should either not meet until the ICC's executive board meeting in March, or that a separate 10-member commission, with one nomination from each of the Test-playing nations, be formed instead to review the affair.

Dalmya said in a statement: "If these alternatives are still not acceptable to the ICC, BCCI will be reluctantly compelled to refrain from participation in the referees' commission in any form or manner."

The ICC formed the commission as a compromise after a row with India threatened the unity of the world game.

Dalmya said India's views were not taken into account in the creation of the committee.

India had match referee Denness of England sacked without the permission of the world governing body during their tour of South

Africa late last year. They were unhappy after he handed out bans to six of their players over their on-field conduct.

The ICC, feeling its authority threatened, responded by stripping the third match between South Africa and India of its Test status.

The ICC confirmed the make-up of the commission last week despite Indian protests. The commission is due to hold its first meeting on



JAGMOHAN DALMIYA

February 23.

Dalmya said he has written to ICC president Malcolm Gray to inform him that the BCCI would boycott the commission if its suggestions were not accepted.

He said the BCCI wanted South African judge Albie Sachs, who will

chair the panel, to be replaced, arguing no one from the three countries involved in the controversy should be on the body.

"This is why we did not recommend a single name from India, including that of Sunil Gavaskar, who is in fact the chairman of the ICC cricket committee," he said.

India has also opposed former Australian Test opener Andrew Hilditch and ex-Pakistan skipper Majid Khan, the other two members in the panel.

Dalmya said Hilditch -- an Australian national selector -- was directly associated with the Australian Cricket Board.

Khan, meanwhile, had made unsubstantiated allegations that India's victory over Pakistan in a 1999 World Cup game was fixed, he said.

The BCCI has suggested such names as Justice Ahmed Ebrahim of Zimbabwe, an ICC match referee, Australia's Richie Benaud and Ian Chappell, Gary Sobers and Clive Lloyd of West Indies and Imran Khan of Pakistan, all former Test captains.

Dalmya said: "The ICC commands BCCI's respect as a parent body. But it is a pity that although BCCI is a part of ICC cricket family, the Indian sentiments were not respected."

Black Caps boost morale



REUTERS, Bowral

New Zealand's cricketers warmed up for this weekend's double-header against Australia and South Africa with a crushing 249-run win over Australian Country on Wednesday.

New Zealand, currently leading the triangular international series, play Australia and South Africa in Adelaide this weekend.

The New Zealanders went on a run-scoring spree to post 392 for six from their allotted 50 overs before the bowlers dismissed the scratch team of amateur players from rural Australia for just 143.

Opener Brendon McCullum smashed 96 runs off 81 balls while News Zealand captain Stephen Fleming and Dion Nash also blasted half-centuries against their out-classed opposition.

McCullum reached his half-century off just 35 balls and was racing towards his century when he holed out four runs short of triple figures, ending a spectacular innings that featured 17 boundaries.

Fleming also passed his 50 from 35 deliveries before he was dis-

missed for 73 off just 53 balls, including nine fours and two sixes while Nash made an unbeaten 72.

The country side offered little resistance when it was their turn to bat, succumbing in 40 overs.

"It would have been nice if it was a bit harder for us but I thought there was good commitment," said New Zealand coach Dennis Aberhart.

Wednesday's match was played at the country town of Bowral in the New South Wales southern highlands where the late Don Bradman grew up.

Played in a picnic atmosphere, it is an annual fixture for touring teams on the Australian cricketing calendar to raise funds for the Bradman museum.

SCOREBOARD
Scoreboard of a limited-overs match between Australian Country and New Zealand on Wednesday:
NEW ZEALAND
Richardson c Hughes b Tonkin 44
McCullum c Haworth b Tonkin 96
Fleming c Haworth b Males 76
McMillan b Barber 28
Nash not out 72
Vincent c Burns b Klemm 49
Adams b Klemm 1
Styris not out 17
Extras: (b-1, lb-2, w-3, nb-3) 9
Total: (For 6 wks in 50 overs) 392
Fall of wickets: 1-135, 3-160, 3-

229, 4-263, 5-350, 6-371
Did not bat: A Parore, J Franklin, S Bond
Bowler O M R W
Klemm 6 0 56 2
Ambrose 8 0 56 0
Hughes 10 0 89 0
Tonkin 10 1 74 2
Males 6 0 60 1
Barber 10 0 54 1

AUSTRALIAN COUNTRY
Burns run out 4
Else c Parore b Franklin 4
May c and b Adams 16
Grimmond run out 5
Haworth c Vincent b Bond 13
Barber lbw b Nash 27
Tonkin lbw b Bond 0
Males b Richardson 18
Ambrose lbw b Richardson 16
Hughes not out 16
Klemm run out 12
Extras: (b-2, lb-1, w-2, nb-7) 12
Total: (All out in 40 overs) 143
Fall of wickets: 1-9, 2-14, 3-25, 4-50, 5-50, 6-50, 7-91, 8-97, 9-123

Bowler O M R W
Nash 10 3 18 1
Franklin 6 0 17 1
Bond 4 1 15 2
Adams 6 0 19 2
Fleming 6 0 37 0
Richardson 8 1 34 0
Result: New Zealand won by 249 runs.

U-19 World Cup Australia beat West Indies

REUTERS, Dunedin

Australia beat the West Indies by 42 runs in a clash of two previously high-scoring teams at the ICC under-19 World Cup on Wednesday.

Both teams had made more than 400 in their opening matches against Kenya and Scotland respectively, but this Group D match was a low-scoring affair.

The West Indies put Australia into bat and they scored 200, with George Bailey Australia's top scorer with just 39 and Ryan Nurse taking five for 28.

But Australia had no trouble in defending their modest total, bundling the West Indies out for 158 with some fine bowling by Xavier Doherty (3-28) and Beau Casson (3-48).

South Africa and India met in Auckland, with India running out easy winners by 71 runs. Their win was mainly thanks to an unbeaten innings of 105 by Chandan Madaan, who helped rescue his side from 59 for four at one stage.

In other matches Namibia -- winners over Sri Lanka on Tuesday - lost by six wickets to New Zealand, while England took just 28 overs to beat Papua New Guinea's respectable 222.

OTHER RESULTS

Group A: India beat South Africa by 71 runs. India 227-8 (Chandan Madaan 105no) and South Africa 156 in 42.3 overs.

Group B: New Zealand beat Namibia by six wickets. Namibia 201-5 (Burton van Rooi 62, Hugo Ludik 49not out) and New Zealand 203-4 in 36.5 overs (Neil Broom 85, Ross Taylor 58not out).

Group C: England beat Papua New Guinea by six wickets. Papua New Guinea 222-6 (F Joseph 92, C Amini 58), England 223-4 in 28 overs (K Ali 73, N Compton 58).

Group D: Australia beat West Indies by 42 runs. Australia 200 in 49.2 overs (Ryan Nurse 5-28, Narsingh Deonarine 3-28), West Indies 158 in 41.5 overs (Xavier Doherty 3-24, Beau Casson 3-48).

Div II soccer

SPORTS REPORTER

Sheikh Russell Kirra Chakra recorded a 3-1 victory over Gandaria Famous in the Second Division Football League at the Sher-e-Bangla Mirpur National Stadium on Wednesday.

Apu, Sami and Yasin gave Sheikh Russell an unassailable 3-0 lead nine minutes into the second half. Robin pulled one back for the losers.

The other match between Police Athletic Club and T and T Club ended in a goalless draw at the Abahani Ground.

Rain the spoiler

SPORTS REPORTER

Inclement weather on Wednesday forced all the Dhaka Zone qualifiers of the Standard Charted 20th National Schools Cricket Championship to be postponed.

The matches will be played at a later date.

Nawab fan laid to rest

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Chittagong

The cricket fan who died during the first one-day international here on Tuesday was Syed Khawja Rokon Uddin, a member of the Nawab family of Dhaka.

Accompanied by his daughter Khushboo and a friend, Rokon came to watch the match at the MA Aziz Stadium.

But only half-an-hour into the game, he started to feel pain in the chest after he saw two Pakistan wickets fall quickly.

He was taken to the makeshift emergency medical camp at the pavilion. However, by the time he arrived at Centre Point Hospital, the doctors declared him dead.

The body of the deceased was later taken to the Halihsahar residence of his brother-in-law Wasim, a national hockey player, and then to his Agrabad CDA Colony residence.

His namaze-e-yanaza was held at the local mosque before he was taken to Dhaka.

He was buried at his ancestral home Nawab Bari in Begum Bazar yesterday.

He is survived by his wife, daughter and seven-year-old son.

Rokon represented the Dhaka district team as well as Bachelors' Club before coming to Chittagong in 1984.

Minhaz bails

FROM PAGE 13

Hasan st Selim b Zaman 73
Mostakim lbw b Tushar 10
Mustadir lbw b Tushar 13
Bidyut not out 12
Sumon not out 2
Extras: (b-14, lb-2) 16
Total: (For 7 wks in 90 overs) 224
Fall of wickets: 1-33, 2-61, 3-80, 4-132, 5-152, 6-186, 7-216

Bowler O M R W
Al-Amin 25 8 55 1
Niaz 3 2 4 0
Zaman 15 5 32 1
Tushar 26 7 57 3
Jamal 7 4 3 0
Sohel 14 1 29 2

Safin sails at Ferreira's cost



AFP, Melbourne

Marat Safin emerged as favourite for the Australian Open men's crown Wednesday but South African veteran Wayne Ferreira warned he may yet blow his chances.

Safin will play German seventh seed Tommy Haas, who beat former finalist Marcelo Rios of Chile 7-6 (7/2), 6-4, 6-7 (2/7), 7-6 (7/5) in the night match.

Ferreira warned Safin might be let down by his temperamental character.

"I think he has a great chance to win," said Ferreira who retired injured from their quarterfinal with Safin leading 5-2 in the first set.

"I thought if I had got through this one it would have got easier.

"This guy is playing great. I watched him play Sampras the other night and he was very, very good."

The ninth seeded Safin knocked out 13-times Grand Slam champion Pete Sampras in the fourth round on Monday.

"If he plays at his best, he's almost unbeatable. His mental side is the weakest. You never know, he

might come out his next match and play a horrible one, that's the way he is," Ferreira said.

"But as far as his game goes, he's got every shot and he's a great competitor."

But he said Safin, who has run into trouble with umpires in his two previous matches, was not as combustible as Goran Ivanisevic who last year performed an amazing transformation to finally win

Safin felt his win over Sampras had strengthened his belief in himself and he said his disputes with officials were part of the game.

"I'm growing up. You learn about everything," he said.

"Today was a present but against Pete I had to go out and work. And I did it," he said. "When you are confident everything works much easier, your forehand, your serve."

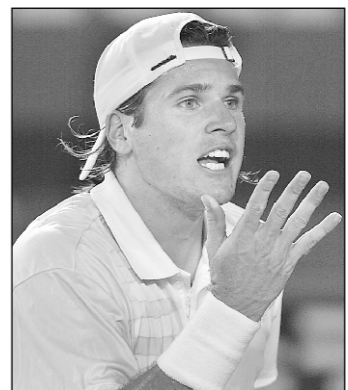
Sorry, Moin

REUTERS, Karachi

Joy turned to disappointment for former Pakistan captain and wicketkeeper Moin Khan, who just hours after being asked on Tuesday to reinforce the national team in Bangladesh was told he was no longer required.

"The team management had sent us a message earlier in the day asking for a wicketkeeper to cover for (Rashid) Latif. But later in the day they said Latif was okay," chief selector Wasim Bari told Reuters.

"Latif apparently strained his hamstring during the match today but is recovering well and will play in the remaining two one-dayers on Thursday and Friday."



TOMMY HAAS

Wimbledon.

"I don't think he's as bad as Goran but he could get better," Ferreira added.

Capriati, Clijsters in last four



AP, Melbourne

Defending champion Jennifer Capriati played her way out of trouble and advanced to the Australian Open semifinals with a 6-2, 6-2 victory Wednesday over Amelie Mauresmo.



JENNIFER CAPRIATI

Capriati next meets Kim Clijsters, a 6-2, 6-3 winner over Justine Henin. Capriati was extended to 12-10 in the final set before beating Clijsters for last year's French Open title.

Capriati lost the first two points before breaking Mauresmo's serve in the first game. Then, in two games

in the first set and one in the second, she saved a total of six break points. She had help from occasional wild play by Mauresmo, who squandered a 40-0 lead in the third game of the second set with three consecutive double faults. Mauresmo had 34 unforced errors to Capriati's 20.

"I'm glad I could raise my game," Capriati said. "This is where it all counts -- how you do in the Grand

"It feels like I've graduated to the next level," Capriati said. "I feel a lot better this year."

Before Capriati's victory, Clijsters referred to her loss to the American in last year's French Open final, and said, "It would be nice to be able to play her again."

Clijsters also pressured Henin into costly errors in her advance to the semifinals.

Tyson, Lewis

FROM PAGE 13

Nevada State Athletic Commission, which fined Tyson 3 million dollars and revoked his license after he bit Evander Holyfield's ears in 1997. Tyson's license later was restored, but it has since expired and the commission will hold a hearing Jan. 29 on Tyson's request to grant him another one.

Asked if what happened Tuesday might keep the fight from happening, Tyson adviser Shelly Finkel said: "It didn't help."

Marc Ratner, executive director of the Nevada body, said there should have been better security at the New York news conference.

"I thought it was completely regrettable," Ratner said. "They had an incident when it didn't need to happen."

"Why nobody wasn't there to stop it is beyond my comprehension," he said.



KIM CLIJSTERS

Slams."

After a promising debut as a 14-year-old in 1990 and then a series of personal problems, Capriati finally won her first major tournament title at last year's Australian Open. She followed that with the French Open title and reached the semifinals at Wimbledon and the US Open.

Hussain hails his boys



REUTERS/AFP, Cuttack

England skipper Nasser Hussain praised his bowlers and fielders after a 16-run victory over India in the second one-day international.

"We played pretty well, everyone fielded well and bowled well," Hussain said after the tourists bounced back from Saturday's defeat in the first game of the six-match series.

The tourists scored 250-7 and then fielded superbly to dismiss India for 234 to square the six-match series, having lost the first match by 22 runs at Calcutta on Saturday.

India were coasting at 99 for one before Sachin Tendulkar's unfortunate run-out triggered a batting slump also prompted by superb England fielding.

"That was a crucial wicket,"

Hussain said of Tendulkar's dismissal after he backed up too far and bowler Ben Hollisook deflected a return drive onto the stumps at the non-striker's end.

"Our ground fielding was really good," said Hussain, whose team effected three crucial run-outs to restrict India.

Tendulkar (45), Dinesh Mongia (49) and Venkatesh Laxman (3) became run-out victims as they took one risk too many against tight England fielding.

Hussain felt his side could have scored another 20 runs but said he was confident India would not find the chase easy.

He said: "250 wasn't enough, but there will always be pressure chasing."

"Pressure does funny things to different sides. Our boys took their chances."

Hussain said his players could do even better after a couple of catches were dropped in between

some fine work in the field.

The Madras-born Hussain added: "The next game is crucial. The other side will then need to win the next two games."

FedEx V-Day basketball

UNB, Dhaka

Bangladesh Rifles recorded a 100-39 victory over Rising Force in the FedEx Victory-Day basketball tournament at the Dhanmondi gymnasium yesterday.

The first half score was 55-15 in favour of the rifles men.

Atiqur caged 32, Manjil 24, Kabir 15 for the winners while Azad scored 21 points for the losers.

In the day's second match, Bangladesh Air Force defeated Rangers 66-52 after dominating the first session by 33-22 at the same venue.

Advertisement for Lara misses Sharjah trip, featuring a photo of Lara Batai and text about her absence from the West Indies cricket team.

Lara misses Sharjah trip

REUTERS, St John's

Former West Indies captain Brian Lara, who fractured his elbow last month, will not play in a two-Test series against Pakistan in Sharjah.

The West Indies Cricket Board announced on Tuesday a 15-strong squad for the series between January 27 and February 18, led by Carl Hooper.

Squad: Carl Hooper (captain), Ridley Jacobs (vice-captain), Darrell Brown, Sherwin Campbell, Shivnarine Chanderpaul, Pedro Collins, Corey Collymore, Cameron Cuffy, Mervyn Dillon, Daren Ganga, Chris Gayle, Ryan Hinds, Wavell Hinds, Dinanath Ramnarine, Marlon Samuels.

Reserves: Marlon Black, Ian Bradshaw, Leon Garrick, Keith Hibbert, Jermaine Lawson, Neil McGarrell, Dave Mohammed

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

Crossword puzzle grid with clues for Across and Down words.

Cryptokuip puzzle grid for a Saturday puzzle.

CRYPTOQUIP

C U O Y R X U B U B Y X F A

H S A F J U E Q Q A P A S T P H Q B .

Q B U C J Y O T X W H Q B H X

A R Q A E B H X U J U W U F Q .

Saturday's Cryptokuip: WHEN HIS DELI RAN OUT OF CABBAGE SALAD, A CUSTOMER FUMED "THERE OUGHTA BE A SLAW!"

Today's Cryptokuip Clue: Q equals T

The Cryptokuip is a substitution cipher in which one letter stands for another. If you think that X equals O, it will equal O throughout the puzzle. Single letters, short words and words using an apostrophe give you clues to locating vowels. Solution is by trial and error.