

## Zia remains on top

SPORTS REPORTER

Grand Master Ziaur Rahman continued his solo lead with seven points after the end of the eighth round games of the Singer 30th National Chess Championship at the NSC conference room yesterday.

Grand Master Niaz Mursheed was in second position with 6.5 points. International Masters Enamul Hossain Rajib and Abdullah Al-Rakib jointly hold the third position with 6 points each.

### EIGHTH ROUND RESULTS

Zia beat Debaraj Chatterjee, Niaz beat Aminul Islam Polash, Rajib beat Mehdi Hasan Parag, Rakib beat Mohammad Javed, Fide Master Nasir beat Saif Uddin Lavlu, Reefat beat Sawkhat Hossain Pallab, Abdul Maleq drew Monjur Alam.

## M'singh cricket

OUR CORRESPONDENT, M'singh

Pandit Para AC recorded a 94-run victory over Renaissance Sporting Club in the Navana Premier Division Cricket League at local stadium yesterday.

Batting first, Pandit Para scored 163 for nine in 40 overs.

In reply, Renaissance were all out for 69 in 19 overs.

### SCORES IN BRIEF

**PANDIT PARA AC:** 163/9 in 40 overs (Rinku 30, Riad 32, Rashed 27, Rasel 14, Jitu 17, Rahat 11; Plabon 3/25, Liton 1/20 Ujjal 1/17, Arafat 1/35, Pankoj 1/19).

**RENAISSANCE SPORTING CLUB:** 69/10 in 19 overs (Liton 23, Plabon 11; Rasel 2/20, Zitu 3/15, Rashed 4/14 and Shantu 1/20). **Result: Pandit Para AC won by 94 runs.**

## MSC Sheetal h'ball champs

SPORTS REPORTER

Mohammedan Sporting Club became champions dethroning holders Arambagh Krira Sangha in the Sheetal Women's Handball League yesterday.

The Motijheel outfit finished the league with unbeaten note when they handed Arambagh a thrashing 23-10 defeat in the last league match at the Outer Stadium handball court.

The winners led the first half 14-7. Usha Krira Chakra became runners-up securing nine points while Arambagh finished third with six points.

Dalia of Mohammedan was adjudged best player in the competition.

German Ambassador to Bangladesh Dietrich Andreas distributed the prizes as chief guest.

# Vaughan to show no mercy



AFP, Bridgetown

Michael Vaughan pledged to go all out in search of a 4-0 whitewash when England take on a battered and bruised West Indies in the final Test in Antigua next week.

England won the third Test inside three days here on Saturday by eight wickets to wrap up a first series win in the Caribbean since 1968 when the legendary Colin Cowdrey was in charge.

Now Vaughan has promised no mercy to Brian Lara's shell-shocked side.

"That's the aim now," said the skipper when asked about a possible 4-0 scoreline.

"We are three-nil up and we'll be going to Antigua to try to win. But we'll certainly celebrate this great series victory. It's been a long wait but these lads deserve all the credit they are going to get because they have put in a lot of hard work."

Since Cowdrey last led a successful England team here, it had been one long tale of misery.

The 1973-74 series finished 1-1, the West Indies won 2-0 in 1981, 5-0 in 1986, 2-1 in 1990, 3-1 in 1994 and 3-1 again in 1998.

"Everyone has put so much work in, it's been one huge team effort," said Vaughan.

"We owe a big thanks to Graham Thorpe for the way he played on Friday. That century got us out of trouble and I thought in the conditions our bowlers were brilliant."

"But the real credit goes to Thorpe. He played a gem of a knock. He got us back in the game. We could quite easily have been rolled over for 150. We owe a lot to him."

Lara was devastated by the defeat and knows he will face more calls for his resignation.

"It is very hard to put into words how the team feels because it's been a long time since England won a Test series here," Lara said.

"Now it's a matter of picking ourselves up. It hurts a lot. We have another Test starting very soon. We have to regroup and get our emotions in place and get ready to do battle again."

Graham Thorpe was named man-of-the-match for his first innings 119 not out which he rated the second best of his career after his comeback ton against South Africa at The Oval last year.

"It was good to get runs when the team needed it," said Thorpe.

"It was probably the second-best knock I've played for England, to be honest. The best was the century against South Africa coming back after being so long out of Test cricket."

SPORTS REPORTER

Muktijodha Sangsad Krira Chakra's departure for Yemen has been delayed because the Yemen Football Federation was yet to send a conformation letter.

The Reds were scheduled to fly today by Qatar Airlines to play Yemen's Al Shaab Ibb Club in the Asian Football Confederations (AFC) Cup away fixture on April 7.

"The tour is on and we will confirm our flight once we receive the necessary documentation from the Yemen soccer authorities. It is impossible to obtain port entry clearance without it," said Muktijodha coach Shafulq Islam Manik yesterday.

Manik said that the club has already requested AFC through Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) to reschedule the match just in case.

"I still think everything will be okay within two or three days," he assured.

Muktijodha lost their previous matches in the inaugural competition last February away to Nisa Club of Turkmenistan and Al Nejme of Lebanon at home both by 1-0 margins.

They will play their second home match against Yemen side on April 20 before playing Nisa on May 5 at home and then fly to Lebanon on May 19 for their last away match against Al Nejme.

Manik said that Brothers Union defender Rajani, Abahani midfielder Arif Khan Joy and left-back Mahmudul Hasan will be part of the squad this time.

"Hasan Al Mamun is now in America while Matuir Munna is unlikely to play due to injury that's why we included some players from other clubs," he said.

## Josephites meet Navy in final

SPORTS REPORTER

Josephites Club set up a meeting with Bangladesh Navy in the final of the Maple Leaf Independence Day Basketball Competition when they edged past Dhumketu Club 59-58 in the second semifinal at the Dhanmondi Gymnasium yesterday.

The final takes place at the same venue today.

The first half of the thrilling semi was locked at 21-21.

Sejad, Raja and Shaheed caged 15 points each for the winners while Abdullah was the highest scorer with 18 points.

## Rain spoils CJKS cricket opener

CU CORRESPONDENT

The opening match of the CJKS Ispahani Premier Division Cricket League between reigning champions Rising Star Club and Chittagong Port Authority was abandoned due to a heavy shower at the MA Aziz Stadium yesterday.

Before rain stopped play, Port Authority had reached 135-6 in 43 overs after being put into bat.

Earlier, Salman Ispahani managing director of sponsors MM Ispahani Ltd, inaugurated the league as the chief guest in the morning.

## Emerson as snobbish as ever

CRICINFO, undated

Five years after he no-balled Muttiah Muralitharan for throwing at the Adelaide Oval, sparking a furious row with Arjuna Ranatunga, umpire Ross Emerson said that he remains convinced that Murali's action "is worse than ever before".

Speaking to Sunday's Sydney Morning Herald, Emerson said: "I can't see why they are questioning just his doosra. I actually watched some of this last Test match and his action is worse than whatever it was."

"And why wouldn't it be? He knows he is not under any threat. None of the umpires are going to call him. It is not worth the trouble."

And Emerson predicted that Chris Broad, the ICC match referee who reported Murali, would not be allowed to officiate in any Sri Lankan games in the future.

"I'll put money on it," he said. "That's what happens. Who is running cricket now? The sub-continent. What a joke."

## Bowl straight,

FROM PAGE 13  
"Pakistan was negative in their approach in Multan. They have to play positively here to win."

Akram brushed aside criticism in the Pakistani media that he had contributed to India's success by giving tips to 19-year-old Irfan Pathan, who claimed a career-best 4-100 at Multan.

"One or two tips to a bowler does not make him successful," he said. "It is sheer hard work which helps a good bowler move up."

"And I don't think Pathan bowled extraordinarily well in Multan. He just bowled in-swingers and kept a good line and length which the Pakistanis should also do."

## Mukti waiting to fly to Yemen

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## English press go euphoric

REUTERS, London

British newspapers heaped praise on Matthew Hoggard on Sunday after the fast bowler's hatrick inspired England to their first Test series triumph in the Caribbean since 1968.

Hoggard triggered a West Indies collapse which handed England an eight-wicket victory in the third Test on Saturday and an unbeatable 3-0 lead in the four-match series.

While The Mail on Sunday exclaimed "We've done it at last", The Sunday Telegraph saluted Hoggard under the headline "Hatrick hero".

Former England captain Michael Atherton summed up the mindset of the two teams in his Sunday Telegraph column.

"A series that threatened to be compellingly competitive has proved to be the most one-sided between these teams in a decade," Atherton said.

## Bronze day

FROM PAGE 13  
a full series after many years, the passion also caught up with football as the prestigious title-fight will be contested between the two fierce neighbours at the Jinnah Stadium today.

India cruised to the final thrashing Bhutan 4-1 in the first semifinal at the same venue on Saturday night.

Hosts Pakistan after knocking out holders Bangladesh, held their nerves to beat Sri Lanka 6-5 in the tie-breaker.

The second semi finished goalless in regulation time.

Meanwhile, Anuradha Cooray of Sri Lanka won the men's marathon. He completed the distance in 2:16:38 ahead of countryman Ajith Bandara who finished in a time of 2:19:29 for silver. Arjun Bahadur Basnet of Nepal secured the bronze clocking 2:21:23.

After six days of competition, India are the runaway gold leaders with 66 compared to 23 for Pakistan. Sri Lanka has eight glittering medals while Bangladesh has three and Nepal two to their credit.

## What's on off

FROM PAGE 13  
Miandad and most commentators.

But accusations by former Pakistan captain Rashid Latif that the home side may have deliberately under-performed in the one-day series gained such wide publicity that the PCB threatened to take Latif to court.

Even the Indian cricket board has not been spared.

PCB chief executive Rameez Raja told AFP on Friday that the hosts wanted to play a Test in Peshawar where the wicket would have suited Pakistan's fast bowlers, but the Indians declined to play there for security reasons.

The Lahore Test from Monday will be a make-or-break game not only in the context of the current series but for many associated with Pakistan cricket as well.

Prior to the current tour, India had never won a one-day series or a Test match on Pakistan soil. Victory or draws in the remaining two Tests in Lahore and Rawalpindi would win the tourists the rubber.

# Serena's comeback victory



AFP, Key Biscayne

Serena Williams completed a title run in her comeback tournament after an eight-month layoff, routing Russia's Elena Dementieva 6-1, 6-1 to win the WTA event.

The six-time Grand Slam champion, back after left knee surgery last August, took only 50 minutes to claim her third Key Biscayne crown in a row and inflict the most lopsided finals defeat in the hardcourt tournament's 20-year history.

"I think the rust has definitely worn off," Williams said.

"I honestly didn't expect to win my first tournament back. I really didn't."



PHOTO: AFP

American Serena Williams holds aloft the winner's trophy after beating Russian Elena Dementieva in the WTA Masters Series final in Miami on March 3.

The 22-year-old American won 400,000 dollars and joined Andre Agassi and Steffi Graf as the only players to win crowns here three years in a row. She matched sister Venus as a three-time champion of the 6.5 million-dollar event.

"I just says that I'm back and as long as I'm healthy, I'm still a top competitor," Williams said.

"I'm really excited. I feel really happy I was able to come back and take a title."

Top seed Serena, playing in her first event since she beat sister Venus in last July's Wimbledon final, said she took inspiration from Monica Seles, the only other woman with a championship comeback after a long layoff.

"I used her as inspiration," Williams said. "I figured if Monica can do it I could win a few rounds. I never imagined I could win such a huge tournament."

"It feels amazing."

Seles is the only top-10 player to win her comeback event after being out six months or more, taking the 1995 Canadian Open after a 1993 stabbing.

Dementieva never held a service game, had nine double faults and 23 unforced errors, connected on only 51 percent of her serves and won only 1-of-19 points of her second serve. She lost the first set in just 24 minutes.

"Serena was just a little too tough for me," Dementieva said. "She's such a great player. It's amazing how well she played after such a long layoff. It's unbelievable. She was very strong on the court."

Williams, wearing her "Wonder Woman" tight top and shorts attire, missed a forehand to surrender a break in the opening game, but won 16 of the next 17 points, including a run of 11 in a row, and captured the next 11 games.

Williams, who dropped only one set in six matches, was broken when serving for the match in the sixth game of the second set but instead finished off the Russian with a seventh service break when Dementieva hit a forehand wide.

# Schumi sizzles in Bahrain

REUTERS, Manama

World champion Michael Schumacher made it three out of three this season as he won the first Formula One race in the Middle East on Sunday, with Ferrari dominating in the Bahrain desert.

The six-times world champion raced untroubled from pole position to secure his 73rd win of a record-breaking career.

While Formula One's debut in the Middle East provided novelty and a change of scenery, the result remained the same as Schumacher led Ferrari imperiously to their second one-two of the year.

Brazilian Rubens Barrichello was second, just as he had been in the Australian season-opener, with Briton Jenson Button third again for BAR after taking the first grand prix

podium of his career at the last race in Malaysia.

Italian Jarno Trulli was fourth in a Renault on a surprisingly cool and overcast afternoon with occasional drops of rain.

Ferrari maintained their stranglehold on the constructors' championship with 51 points, ahead of Renault with 22.

As Schumacher sprayed fizzy fruit juice at his podium rivals, in accordance with local Islamic sensitivities, Ferrari's old rivals McLaren once again licked their wounds.

Kimi Raikkonen, the man who took Schumacher down to the wire last season and ended overall runner-up, was the first retirement when his engine blew spectacularly with the race barely started.

A sheet of flames erupted from

the rear of the car, followed by a column of smoke and steam, as the Finn headed for his third successive retirement.

Team mate David Coulthard also retired.

Button's Japanese team mate Takuma Sato finished fifth while Spain's Fernando Alonso, watched by his country's king Juan Carlos from a gathering of kings and princes, powered from 16th place to take sixth.

Williams driver Ralf Schumacher, Michael's younger brother, was seventh with Jaguar's Australian Mark Webber eighth.

Colombian Juan Pablo Montoya, who had been third for most of the race, was lapped and limped across the line 13th after his Williams slowed in the closing stages.



PHOTO: COURTESY

Members of Mohammedan Sporting Club who clinched the Sheetal Women's Handball League title receiving the trophy from German Ambassador to Bangladesh Dietrich Andreas yesterday.

## CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

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### CRYPTOQUIP

NC KRM GPI OSGFOMAKGS  
NF CGSKLTQKM, N ILMFF  
RM AGLPI CNTI RNZFMPC  
Q OPGK GC HGPI.  
Yesterday's Cryptoquip: IF YOUR DOG SLEEPS ON A PILLOW EVERY NIGHT, I'D SAY YOU HAVE A SOFT SPOT FOR HER.  
Today's Cryptoquip Clue: O equals P

The Cryptoquip 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.