

## StanChart school chess begins

SPORTS REPORTER

The 9th Standard Chartered School Chess Tournament got underway at the NSC conference room yesterday.

In the boys' senior group, 54 players won their respective matches while 28 players in the junior group.

In the girls' competition, which will be 7-round Swiss League unlike the boys' 9-round contest, 13 players collected full points.

A total of 230 students including 12 from India are taking part in the regular event of the Bangladesh Chess Federation, sponsored by Standard Chartered.

Grandmaster Ziaur Rahman and Shah Masud Imam, Standard Chartered's Head of Corporate Affairs, jointly inaugurated the meet.

## DRU Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

Daily Janakantha will take on Amar Desh while CSB face Channel i in the semifinals of the DRU-Pepsi cricket tournament at the Maulana Bhasani Hockey Stadium today.

In yesterday's quarterfinals, man-of-the-match Asif Iqbal inspired Janakantha to a four-wicket win over Naya Diganta. Amar Desh beat Khabarpatra by 10 runs while at the other end of the draw, CSB defeated New Nation by 11 runs and Channel i beat Karatoa by two wickets.

Rakibul Hasan of CSB, Karatoa's Sakhawat Hossain and Tanzim Ahmed of Amar Desh won the man-of-the-match awards in the other semifinals.

## US Open purse in record increase

INTERNET, undated

The total prize money for this year's US Open will increase one million dollars to a total purse of 19 million dollars in the largest rise in the tournament's history.

Both the men's and women's champions will receive at least 1.4 million dollars, a 100,000-dollar boost from last year that will be equal to the prize tallies for both the French Open and Wimbledon.

Also, the top three finishers could earn a bonus of up to 2.6 million dollars that could push the total purse to 22.2 million dollars, just 400,000 dollars short of the record total paid at Wimbledon this season.

The US Tennis Association also announced a renovation to player facilities such as locker rooms, player lounges, and a fitness centre.

Roger Federer and Maria Sharapova are set to defend their respective titles at Flushing Meadows between August 27th and September 9th.

## Smicer moves to Slavia

AFP, Prague

Czech international and former Liverpool midfield star, Vladimir Smicer, announced Thursday his return to top-flight local team Slavia Prague after an 11-year absence.

Smicer, who helped Liverpool win the Champions League two years ago, has signed a one year contract with the possibility of a 12-month extension, the club said at a news conference.

The 34-year-old joined Slavia, his first major club, in 1992, leaving four years later to join French club Lens, from where he went onto Liverpool. For the last two years he has been with French club Bordeaux.

## Roux wins right

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which is out of date," Sarkozy's spokesman, David Martinon said.

Wednesday's decision by the CNOSF brings to an end a fortnight's stand off between Roux and Lens in one corner and the French league in the other.

When he was first told of the vote to stop him taking up his new post Roux had reacted in typically forthright style, telling reporters: "This decision is particularly disagreeable at a time when we're trying to combat discrimination against age, religion or sex."

"I'll be taking my place in the dug-out whether my contract is accepted or not."

## Metsu curses

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Qatar's match against Vietnam. The Bosnian coach blamed Breeze for penalising Yaser for no reason.

Metsu, who has come under heavy fire for the loss against Vietnam, added that it was a learning experience for his young squad. "It's a very good tournament and our team have a very good future. It's a very good first step," he said, adding that "football is strange".

"When the team win, it's the players (who are responsible.) When the team lose, it's the coach."



Shah Masud Imam, Head of Corporate Affairs of Standard Chartered, makes a move on the chessboard as GM Ziaur Rahman (R) looks on during the opening round of the Standard Chartered School Chess Tournament at the NSC conference room yesterday.

## Murali slams Ashrafu

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taking a century of wickets at Asgiriya International Stadium as 'a tremendous achievement in a long career'.

This man has every right to make such a bold statement because he has always tried his best even though he achieved lot in the game. Just one example from yesterday's event was good enough to realize his hunger: a ball popped up at short mid-off and he ran as if his life depended on the wicket of Mashrafe Bin Mortaza, and dived full-length to come up with a sensational left-hand catch.

### SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard after the rain-hit second day of the third and final Test between Bangladesh and Sri Lanka at the Asgiriya Stadium on Thursday:

**BANGLADESH:** First innings (overnight 72-4):

Javed lbw b Malinga	8
Nafees c De Silva b Muralidaran	29
Bashar c P Jayawardene b Maharoof	18
Rajin c M Jayawardene b Muralidaran	0
Ashrafu c P Jayawardene b De Silva	26

Tushar M Jayawardene b De Silva	17
Mushfiqur not out	11
Mashrafe c and b Muralidaran	5
Rafique c & b Muralidaran	5

Shahadat c Dilshan b Muralidaran	0
Rasel c Silva b Muralidaran	0
Extras: (b-4, lb-2, nb-5, w-1)	12
Total: (All out in 48.5 overs)	131
Fall of wickets: 1-110, 2-50, 3-61, 4-64, 5-98, 6-111, 7-118, 8-130, 9-131	

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Malinga	10	2	41	1
De Silva	12	3	29	2
Maharoof	8	4	21	1
Muralidaran	14.5	6	28	6
Dilshan	4	1	6	0

**SRI LANKA:** Firstinnings

Vandort not out	25
Tharanga not out	4
Extras: (nb-1)	1
Total: (For no loss in 8.4 overs)	30

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Mashrafe	3	0	12	0
Rasel	4	0	18	0
Shahadat	1.4	1	0	0

**Toss: Sri Lanka**  
**Umpires:** Rudi Koertzen and Suresh Shastri

## 'Best yet to come for Magpies'

AFP, London

England striker Michael Owen has forecast good times ahead for Newcastle United after committing himself to the club under new manager Sam Allardyce.

Owen joined the Magpies from Real Madrid two seasons ago but he has been floored by injuries and doubts over his motivation to do well on Tyneside.

The 27-year-old Owen though believes a bright future lies just around the corner in the new season especially with the recent arrival of former Bolton boss Allardyce.

"I believe that these can be good times to be at Newcastle, which is why I am more than happy to be here," He wrote in his column in the Times.

"There has been plenty of speculation about my future, but I can assure the Newcastle fans that I didn't start any of it."

"There was a lot of talk from other quarters and my attitude to rumour has always been to ignore it."

## Women's kabaddi from today

UNB, Dhaka

The Spectra Group Inter-district Women's kabaddi tournament will begin at two city venues today.

Thirteen teams, split into four groups, are taking part in the meet to be held at the Outer Stadium kabaddi court and the Dhanmondi Women's Sports Complex.

The four group champions will qualify for the semifinals.

The Bangladesh Kabaddi Federation will run a training camp with 25-30 promising players for preparation for the next Indo-Bangla Games scheduled for January 2008.

### TEAMS

**Group A:** Tangail, Narail and Khulna.

**Group B:** Dhaka, Jamalpur, Manikganj and Gaibandha.

**Group C:** Narayanganj, Rangamati and Munshiganj.

**Group D:** Rajshahi, Faridpur and Madaripur.

## Arambagh stun

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up a headed clearance by Muktiyoddha's Ghanaian defender Ghansah near the centre-circle. The longhaired skipper ran down the middle and hammered a pile driver into the back of the net on the trot from 30 yards, giving Titumir no chance to react.

Substitute Kanchan threatened to bring Muktiyoddha back when he was set by Moni but the winger only rattled the crossbar to waste their last chance.

Arambagh had a chance to increase the margin six minutes from time but Iddi, who controlled Domenic's freekick, screwed his short over the bar with only Titumir to beat.

Muktiyoddha remained on 33 points after 18 games, two points behind current leaders Abahani who have played a couple of matches less. Muktiyoddha will play Sheikh Russel and Abahani in their remaining league games.

Arambagh on the other hand, came level with Brothers on 23 points after their seventh win in 17 outings.

**Yellow cards:** Domenic (Arambagh) and Arman Aziz, Moni, Azizi (Muktiyoddha).

**Arambagh:** Piru, Monu, Ramjan (Ratan), Biketi, Akram, Sharif, Moloy, Zuku, Domenic, Iddi (Nurul) and Nicodemus.

**Muktiyoddha:** Titumir, Azizi (Kanchan), Ghansah, Deen Mohammed, Hassan Al Mamun, Brahmi, Maruf, Arman Aziz, Munna (Jonny), Moni and Kum.

**Referee:** Azad Rahman.

## Fowler in talks

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The 32-year-old reportedly has a number of British clubs chasing his signature, including Leicester, Cardiff and Port Vale.

Sydney FC chief executive George Perry told a Sydney radio station Wednesday that he expected a decision from Fowler next week.

Under A-League rules, clubs can sign a marquee player whose wages are exempted from the team's salary cap as a means of raising the sport's profile in Australia.

Former Manchester United striker Dwight Yorke filled the role in 2006, helping Sydney FC to the inaugural A-League title before moving back to Britain with Sunderland.

# Can Becks band it in US?

## Football

AFP, Los Angeles

David Beckham's bid to redefine football's place in the US sports landscape begins in earnest on Friday, when the Los Angeles Galaxy introduce their sleek European import.

The former England captain and his pop-star wife Victoria arrive amid a swirl of publicity befitting their new Hollywood home.

But it will likely be Beckham's abilities on the pitch that determine whether his tenure here will ultimately be judged an experiment or an era in Major League Soccer's development.

In America Beckham will face a twin challenge -- infusing oft-overlooked football with enough glamour to attract new fans, while playing at a level high enough to satisfy serious sports spectators.

Some 14.5 million Americans play football, but its popularity pales in comparison to the top three sports: American football, basketball and baseball.

He isn't the first charismatic star to try to bring football to a mainstream US audience.

Despite the excitement of landing all-time great Pele in the 1970s, the North American Soccer League went bankrupt.

Even so, Galaxy president and former US international Alexi Lalas believes Beckham can succeed.

"Beckham, unlike any other player, transcends all boundaries," Lalas says. "I would argue that whether you are a housewife from Orange County or a person of Mexican heritage living in Los Angeles, you know who Beckham is."

"If we were to go out and get an internationally renowned South American star, I would argue that although the Mexican may know who he is, the housewife in Orange

County wouldn't. And that is the difference."

Beckham, 32, is to be introduced by the Galaxy at the club's Home Depot Centre facility in the south Los Angeles suburbs on Friday.

The midfielder's first game for Los Angeles will be an exhibition match against Chelsea, who are preparing for the upcoming Premiership season with a tour of the United States.

When Beckham inked a five-year contract with the Galaxy in January it was widely seen as a money-making move by a player whose best days were behind him.

While he will earn a salary of 5.5 million dollars, Beckham's deal could eventually be worth up to 250 million dollars in profit-sharing and sponsorship deals.

Since January, however, Beckham has been recalled by England, and helped Real Madrid to claim the Spanish League title in June.

Beckham himself has said he believes he could have continued to thrive in Europe.

"I felt capable of staying for longer at Real," Beckham said. "I could have still played for three more seasons at the highest level."

"But after the club told me in January that they did not want to renew my contract, I took this decision."

"The day we won the title with a 3-1 win over Real Mallorca my heart ached -- but the decision was already taken."

Certainly Beckham is switching to a lesser league -- and to a team that is the second worst in the league with just three victories in 12 games.

Lalas has said the expected mid-season arrival of Beckham may have contributed to his side's lackluster showing so far, and Beckham himself knows there is a danger that the massive build-up may make for an inevitable let-

down.

"People probably do think they're going to see me turn out, and we'll win our first game 10-0," Beckham told The Sun newspaper. "That's one thing I'm worried about."

"I'm not a player who will run past 10 players and score three or four goals. My game is about working hard and being a team player."

But Beckham is already making an economic impact.

Just five of the MLS's 13 teams are expected to turn a profit this year, but the Galaxy have already seen ticket sales climb.

The increased ticket sales and sponsorship have resulted in about 20 million dollars in added revenue, says Tim Leiweke, chief executive of Anschutz Entertainment Group which owns the team.

As Friday approaches, the bandwagon is picking up speed. The Beckhams are currently featured in a steamy photo layout in V magazine, while Beckham graces the cover of Sports Illustrated.

The Los Angeles Times has traced Beckham's career from childhood to the present in a series of articles while on Monday US broadcast network NBC will air a one-hour programme dubbed "Victoria Beckham: Coming to America" documenting the couple's move.

Chelsea boss Jose Mourinho, whose side found themselves squarely in the midst of Beckham-mania when they arrived in California this week, said he thought Beckham was just what US football needs.

"I think it's a pity for European football that a good player like him is gone, but we all in Europe want soccer in the US to go up," Mourinho said. "It is a market that if it does then it's good for everybody, and they couldn't choose a better player for their objectives because he is more than a player."

# The spirit of Saqlain

## Cricket

INTERNET, undated

In early 1999, as a Delhi newspaper celebrated five years of existence, a few Pakistan players simply walked into the party at the hottest nightclub in town. A fresh-faced, cheerful young man was among them, at 22 the youngest of the group, and also the most tireless dancer.

He was the centre of attraction, the star on the floor despite the presence of Wasim Akram and Waqar Younis just days ago, his 10 wickets had taken Pakistan to a stirring victory over India at Chennai.

Eight years on, I ask Saqlain Mushtaq if he remembers that night in Delhi. So much has changed in his life in the last eight years: the mastery of the doosra, acclaim and ignominy, injury and insult and now a new British passport. Monty Panesar should soon have competition.

Saqlain, though, wishes to play down this talk. He is in his 31st year, a stage in life when spinners peak, but injury troubles have made him prudent, and he's not looking too far ahead or at least not speaking about it.

"If I start saying that I want to play for England, and my body doesn't allow me to play, it would be very embarrassing," he says. "Yes, if my body is okay, if all goes well, then I'll see what happens..."

"I haven't even kept that in mind. I'm trying to just play cricket, trying to remain fit and play well," he says.

"I'll see in October-November what the position is, the condition of my body. Then I'll decide what to do."

He sinks deep into the sofa in his simply furnished living room. "You know about your fitness when you play regular cricket," he adds. He wants a breather he had to fight with the bat for Sussex as India pressed for victory, and we have just walked into his apartment right next to the Hove ground.

At his best, Saqlain could simply have walked into any team in the world, let alone England. But he is happy in England; he says it feels like being among family at Sussex. He has signed up his own agent, TBL Sports. And he has actual family ties with England his wife was born in England and has been living there for the last 15 years.

"She had a British passport, and my children were born here, they are British citizens," Saqlain says.

"And because my wife was here and I played for Surrey, we got a home here."

He says he's at home at Sussex Club, which owns the property he lives in, a 10-minute walk from the seashore. "They have been very good to me," Saqlain says. "When I was going through bad times, they told me to come here, they told me they would look after me and help me recover from injuries."

Suddenly, the door opens and Sussex coach Mark Robinson and two others walk in, carrying a sofa. It's huge, but the three men are big. Saqlain smiles and thanks them, and explains in Urdu.

"It's like a family here, it's a small town, everyone knows everyone else," he says. "I'm enjoying my life here. Then these guys are really very nice, they help me out with chores at home." Then, of course, there are Mushtaq Ahmed and Rana Naved-ul-Hasan, the overseas pros for Sussex.

Twenty-four hours after he got his British passport after some efforts from the Sussex county Saqlain debuted for his new county in a Twenty20 game.

He says he was sleepless the night before, but then bowled four neat overs as his team won.

The game against India was his first first-class match in two years. Dinesh Karthik was his first victim for his new county, and he dismissed VVS Laxman twice. But he seems regretful about getting Laxman on 95.

"Unfortunately, he got out to my doosra," he says. "He had read it earlier, had hit me for a few fours. But this ball landed in the rough, bounced suddenly... But he deserved to make a century."

Isn't this strange, sympathy for a sporting foe? "As long as I don't wear a uniform, sympathies would be with India," he laughs. "Since I haven't donned the England colours yet, I cannot say anything about that. But the Indian players are like my brothers. Last night, we had a dinner at Mushtaq bhai's home, and most of the Indians were there. We had a great time together."

And yes, he does remember that night in Delhi, eight years ago. But those are unwanted remembrances of things past. "Why do you make me remember the days I wish to forget?" he asks, but his manner is still affable. "God will punish me for the way I lived those days."

Perhaps he might be judged with a bit of indulgence, for he's a changed man now? Saqlain, though, says there is no real change in his life.

### CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS	39	Front of the ship	DOWN	1	Pom-pous fool	
1 Suitable	41	George's brother	2	'Great Expectations'	lad	
4 Antitoxins	42	The Pequod, e.g.	3	Literary critic	Lionel	
8 Govt. employees	46	Star status	4	Hardly ever	5	Inventor
12 Private address?	50	Under the weather	51	Jai —	52	Old British coin
13 Mideast airline	52	Old British coin	56	Pelt	57	Architect
14 Detail	58	Ultramodernist	59	Suspend	60	Abound
15 Overflowing	61	Chatter away	11	Complacent		
17 Waikiki wing-ding						
18 Cover						
19 Sudden profit						
21 Dormant						
24 "Opus —"						
25 "The Greatest"						
26 Encountered						
28 Erstwhile Peruvians						

28	Erstwhile Peruvians	Solution time: 25 mins									
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36	Steps leading to the Ganges	EONS	LIGATUR								
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37	Kelly's co-host	ZEAL	GOWN	TH							
		Yesterday's answers									

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