

Int'l Junior Tennis

SPORTS REPORTER

David Thomson of Great Britain thrashed Jerson Patrombon of Philippines 6-3, 6-0 in the boys' singles quarterfinals of the AWR 7th BKSP International Junior Tennis Tournament at BKSP Tennis Complex yesterday.

In the other boys' singles quarterfinals Mohit Jayaprakash of India beat Tng Yu Chuang of Taipei 7-5, 6-2 and Jui Mao also from Taipei defeated Yun-Hao Leng of China 4-6, 7-6, 6-3.

In the girls' singles quarterfinals, Sharon Paul of India went past Sian Bayliss of Great Britain 7-5, 6-4, Demi Schuurs of Netherlands overpowered Thailand's Tanaporn Thongsing 6-0, 3-6, 7-5 and India's Nova Patel defeated Hyojung Yea of Korea 6-4, 6-7, 6-3 to conclude the list for the semifinalists.

In the boys' doubles quarterfinal, Kong Pop Lertchai and Phaninthon of Thailand bettered their Taipei counterparts Chi Shih Jao and Chi Shan Jao 6-3, 7-5 and Great Britain's David and Mathew Thomson beat Bai Dong Du and Yuan-Tao Pan of China 6-3, 6-2.

In the last quarterfinal match of the boys' doubles Indian pair Naveen Saai and Sidharth Sivakumak were defeated by Ting Chuang and Chieh-Fu Wang of Taipei 6-3, 5-7.

The closing ceremony of the tournament will be held at the venue tomorrow at 10.30am.

Full marks to Shantinagar

SPORTS REPORTER

A 67th minute strike by Aminul gave Shantinagar a 1-0 win over Rahmatganj SC in yesterday's Citycell 3rd Division Football League at the Birshreshtha Shaheed Mostafa Kamal Stadium in Kamalapur.

The other match of the day between PWD and Kasaituli ended in a goalless draw.

Big win for Khulna

SPORTS REPORTER

Rubina and Shimu slammed hattricks as Khulna drubbed Madaripur 8-0 in the Citycell Women's National Championship at the Birshreshtha Shaheed Mostafa Kamal Stadium in Kamalapur yesterday morning.

The two notched three goals each while Sultana and Eeti added one apiece for the winners.

Murali

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amending the law in 2005 to allow a 15-degree flexibility in the bowling arm, the debate refuses to die down.

Muralidaran has taken all the criticism in his stride and continues to make life uncomfortable for batsmen with his huge turn and disconcerting bounce. He is virtually unplayable at home, where pitches are more spinner-friendly.

He also has a deceptive 'doosra', a delivery which leaves the right-handers instead of coming in to them like a conventional off-break.

Muralidaran has played a big role not only in making Sri Lanka a major force in international cricket, but also in reviving the dying art of off-spin.

He has bagged five or more wickets in a Test innings 66 times and 10 or more in a match on 22 occasions -- both world records.

He also has 10 hauls of five or more wickets in 325 one-dayers, his best being 7-30 against India in Sharjah in 2000.

Former Australian captain Steve Waugh once called the Sri Lankan the "Don Bradman of bowlers" and a "rubber-wristed illusionist".

"He is a unique type of bowler. He gets people talking about cricket. He's the sort of player you want in the game. He is great to watch and makes Sri Lanka competitive in world cricket," said Waugh.

Former Australian leg-spin wizard Shane Warne called the Sri Lankan a "unique" bowler who "presents challenges that any serious batsman loves to tackle".

"All in all, whatever your opinion is of the great off-spinner, it's a real challenge to face him, and the way the ball leaves his hands and dips and fizzes is truly a great skill," he wrote in his book "Shane Warne's Century".

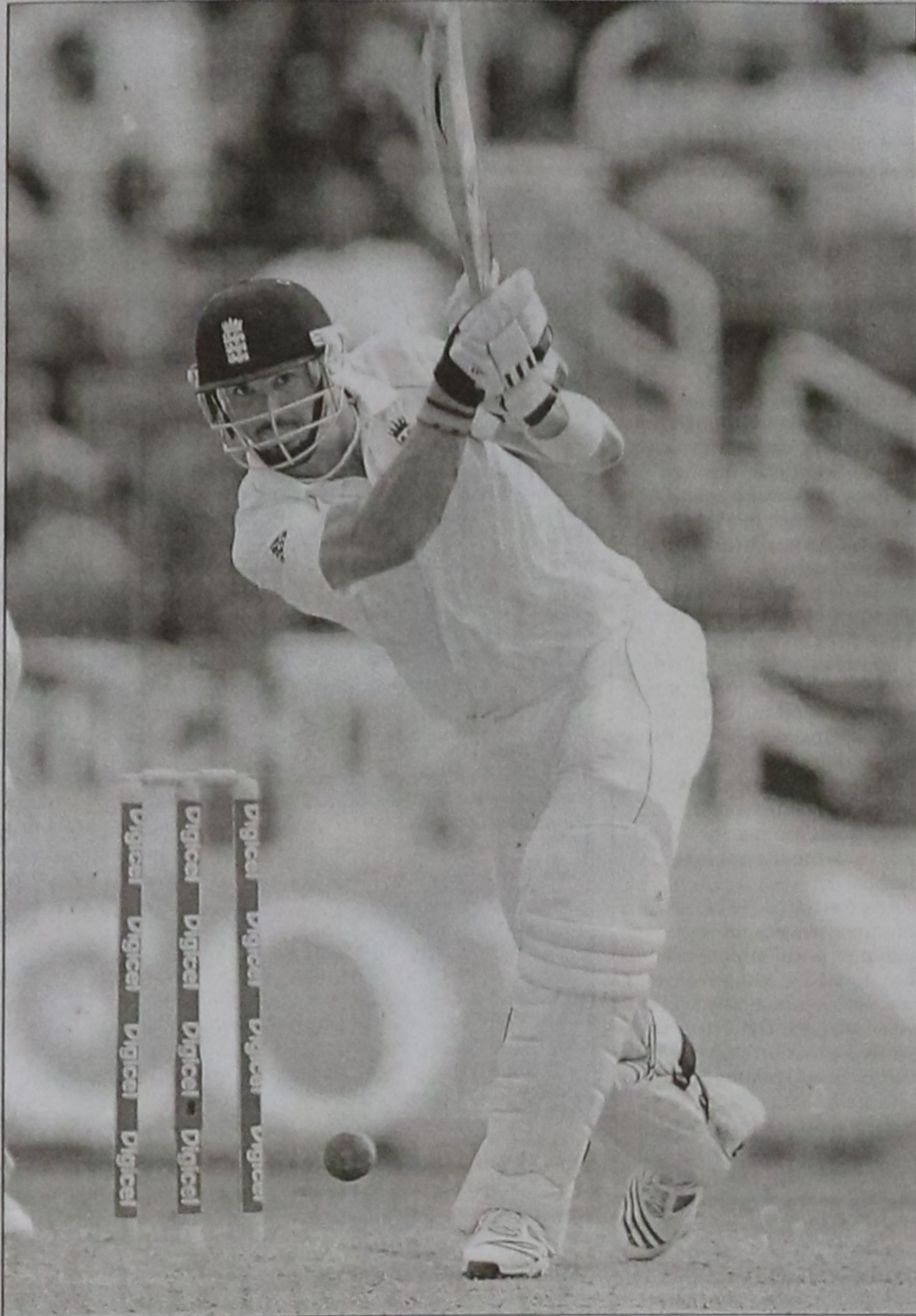


PHOTO: AFP

England batsman Kevin Pietersen drives down the ground during his sparkling knock of 97 in the first Test against West Indies at Sabina Park in Kingston, Jamaica on Wednesday.

'Century wasn't to be'

Cricket

AFP, Kingston

Kevin Pietersen has dismissed criticism about his dismissal for 97 in the opening Test against West Indies on Wednesday.

Pietersen showed his class in 3-1/2 hours at the crease and looked set for another Test hundred, after clattering two fours and a six off successive balls from Sulieman Benn.

"That's the way," Pietersen told reporters. "I got to 97 playing that way, so it just wasn't meant to be."

"It was very tough to have been dismissed in that way. You can't play so nicely as you expect on a first day Test pitch. But the position in which we have gotten ourselves - with the outfield as slow as it has been - we would have been pushing 280 to 300 in better conditions."

"I think we are in a pretty good position, after losing only five wickets, and knowing that we do not have to bat last on this pitch is pretty positive."

Pietersen admitted that he had been careful over the first half of his innings, but he noted the situation at the time required a steady hand, and he was happy to provide it.

"I think on that pitch you have got to play

situations," he said. "That is what I have done in the last few years of my career."

"Instead of going out there and trying to be dominant, trying to be forceful, I am still trying to be some of that, but I was as dominant and forceful as I could have been on that pitch because I like to score runs, and I do not like to block all day."

"I think he was getting tired, and I went after him because I thought it would have been his last over."

Pietersen insisted that scoring runs remains his primary role, after he resigned the captaincy in controversial circumstances just prior to the team's departure for the Caribbean.

"I love batting... I love scoring runs... and I love playing for England," he said.

"To get 97, if somebody had said to me when everything was kicking off a month ago that I would have gotten 97 in this Test match, I would have said, 'Thank you, very much!' I am a happy boy because the team is in a pretty good position."

Pietersen believes that Monty Panesar will be handful on the pitch, after Benn and West Indies captain Chris Gayle exploited the surface to gain appreciable bounce and turn.

"I think the way he has been bowling in the last few weeks, the new Monty Panesar seems to have emerged," the former England captain said.

Sagar lifts jr chess title

SPORTS REPORTER

FIDE Master Minhazuddin Ahmed Sagar became unbeaten champion in the BASIC Bank 30th National Junior Chess Championships which concluded at the Chess Federation hall-room yesterday.

Sagar finished with 8.5 points after batting Sharif Hossain in the ninth and final round.

Shamima Akther Liza finished runner-up with eight points. Seven players finished level on seven points and the third place went to Sharif Hossain, followed by Mohammad Sagar, Masum Hossain, SM Sharon, Rakib Hasan Rana Olid Bin Manzil and Mejbahuddin.

Khulna Abahani stay bottom

SPORTS REPORTER

Bottom-table Khulna Abahani kept alive their slim hopes to avoid relegation from the Citycell B. League with a home draw against Arambagh at the Khulna Stadium yesterday.

With one win and two draws, Khulna Abahani have five points and if they win their remaining two matches and Muktiyoddha lose all three, the former will be spared from demotion.

On the other hand, the draw dashed Arambagh's hopes to finish among the top eight and book a place for the Super Cup.

DU Annual Sports

UNB, Dhaka

Imdadul Haque of Geology department emerged individual champion in the annual sports competition of Amor Ekushey Hall of Dhaka University at the University's central playground yesterday.

Rakibul Islam of Mathematics finished individual runner-up in the daylong meet, where about 100 students competed in 14 events.

Pro vice-chancellor of Dhaka University Harun-or-Rashid inaugurated the meet in the morning. AAMS Arefin Siddique, VC of DU, was the chief guest at the closing ceremony and distributed the prizes among winners.

Gambhir

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himself in the batting order, fell six short of his fifth hundred in one-dayers when he mistimed a shot off left-arm spinner Jayasuriya, with Dilhara Fernando taking a one-handed catch at point.

The Indian skipper hit two sixes and four boundaries in his 96-ball knock.

Kulasekara then bowled Yuvraj Singh for five and Yusuf Pathan for no score off successive deliveries to raise his team's hopes of restricting India.

But there was no stopping Gambhir, who reached his century with a lofted four over covers off Kulasekara. He hit one six and 14 fours before being the fifth man out.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard after India innings against Sri Lanka in the fourth one-day international at the Premadasa Stadium in Colombo on Thursday:

INDIA

Table with 5 columns: Player, O, M, R, W. Includes players like Sehwag, Gambhir, Sangakkara, Muralidaran, Dhoni, Fernando, Jayasuriya, Yusufb, Raina, Rohit, Extras, Total, Did not bat, Bowler, Maharoo, Fernando, Mathews, Muralidaran, Jayasuriya, Sri Lanka, Jayasuriya, Kapugedera, Kandamby, Maharoo, Kulasekara, Mathews, Muralidaran, Fernando, Toss, India, Umpires, Brian Jerling and Kumar Dharmasena.

TEAMS

ABAHANI: Biplab, Nazrul, Sujjan, Samad, Waly, Abul (Zahed), Pranotosh (Mamun), Joy, Emeka, Ibrahim (Siraji) and Emily. RUSSEL: Azam (Titu), Aminul, Zahirul, Hassan, Rajan, Mobarak, Moujahid (Prashanta), Maric, Monwar, Alfaz and Morshed. Referee: Azad Rahman.

POINTS TABLE

Table with 7 columns: Teams, M, W, D, L, GF, GA, Pts. Lists teams like Abahani, Mohammedan, Russel, Brothers, Ctg MSC, Farashganj, Rahmatganj, Ctg Abahani, Arambagh, Muktiyoddha, Khulna Abahani.

TOP GOAL SCORERS

Table with 2 columns: Goals, Player. Lists scorers like Alfaz (Russel), Emeka (Abahani), Bukola (Mohammedan), Idnis (RMFS), Emily (Abahani), Enamul (Farashganj), Sakhawal Rony (Ctg Abahani), Robin (Mohammedan), Mithun (Ctg Abahani), Henry (Brothers), Raphael (Ctg Mohammedan), Youness, Omari (Russel), Nasir (Mohammedan), Zahid (Brothers).

KP holds Eng together

Cricket

AFP, Kingston

Kevin Pietersen infuriatingly gave his wicket away on the verge of another milestone, as England toiled for runs in the opening Test against West Indies here on Wednesday.

No England batsman looked to have mastered the steady, if not menacing West Indies attack which featured a marathon 33-over spell from Sulieman Benn.

But Pietersen showed his class in three and a half hours at the crease and looked set for another Test hundred, after clattering two fours and a six off successive balls from Benn.

The former England captain appeared to have the beanpole left-arm spin bowler at his mercy, when he tried to clear the wide long-on boundary with another slog/sweep, top-edged, and was caught by the keeper.

His dismissal brought West Indies back into the match, after Pietersen had added 86 for the fifth wicket with Andrew Flintoff to rescue England from a shaky 94 for four.

But Flintoff put his head down and found Matt Prior a steady ally, and they batted through the 1-1/2 hours to add 56 and save England from desperation.

It had looked desperate for England, as they stumbled to 73 for three at lunch after they chose to bat on a hard, easy-paced pitch.

The visitors lost their captain Andrew Strauss for seven,

their vice-captain Alastair Cook for four, and Ian Bell for 28.

Strauss, playing in his first Test following the upheaval that led to his resignation of Pietersen, looked shaky from the start.

Taylor put him out of his misery, when Strauss was caught behind playing forward defensively.

England continued to find it hard to adjust to the slow nature of the pitch, and Darren Powell, whose place in the side is under question, added to their woes, when he had Cook caught at mid-on. The left-hander mistimed a pull to leave the visitors on 30 for two.

Pietersen joined Bell and they spent the next hour and 10 minutes repairing the early damage with a stand of 41 for the third wicket.

Bell, whose position at No.3 continues to generate debate, was looking to "shut-up shop", as the interval approached, when he played defensively forward, edged, and was caught at slip.

After lunch, Pietersen continued to erase the bad memories of the last few weeks as he reached his half-century and carried England to 132 for four at tea.

Pietersen slashed his short, wide 117th delivery from Darren Powell through the slips for the sixth of his seven boundaries to reach 50.

He held England's innings together, after they subsided to 94 for four about 45 minutes after lunch.

England's batsmen were tied down after the interval by the left-arm spin bowling of

Benn and the uncomplicated off-spin of Gayle.

The pressure however, was too much for Paul Collingwood, and he was lbw for 16 struck on the back leg by a delivery that spun through his forward defensive shot.

But Pietersen and Flintoff started to shake the shackles free, when Gayle brought Powell back for a second spell from the northern end and he was wayward.

After the break, Pietersen and Flintoff spent another 40 minutes navigate the treacherous before a bit of fortune came West Indies' way.

Benn has been West Indies' most successful bowler with two wickets for 64 runs from 33 overs.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard at close of play on the first day of the first Test between West Indies and England at Sabina Park in Kingston on Wednesday. Includes tables for England's first and second innings, and a bowler table.

A deserving reward

FROM PAGE 17

"Now we want to rest two or three days and get ready to beat Rahmatganj to end the league on a winning note."

Abahani's Ghanaian forward Awudu Ibrahim, whose indefatigable playmaking was the side's powerhouse, said he was happy at winning two professional trophies with the side.

Ibrahim went to Holland for personal reasons and did not play against Mohammedan last season, a match Abahani won 2-1 coming from behind.

"I am sorry I missed that match but I returned to play the rest of the league to keep my commitment. I had promised to come back," said Ibrahim, who is likely to leave for Holland, where he will settle, within a few days.

"I have not planned whether to come back here or play in Holland but my heart will remain here," added Ibrahim, who may skip the Rahmatganj match to do necessary paperworks.

Emeka Christian, the Nigerian who played as an attacking midfielder in the blue shirt after scoring 12 goals for Mohammedan last season, said it was a big achievement in his career.

"I was in the losing side last year but enjoyed it with Abahani. I worked hard and playing just behind the strikers suited me more. I felt it better and easier to score coming from back," Emeka said.

"I know I am one goal behind Alfaz but I'll try my best to beat him for the top scorer's post," said the hungry goalpoacher.

Abahani captain Nazrul Islam, who led the defence and for sake of the team, sacrificed his position as centre-back to play as a fullback, said it was a very special day for him.

"I have won three league titles but as captain, this is my first in a career spanning 15 years. I couldn't have asked for more," said Nazrul, who regained the club's armband

seven years later.

"We built a champion team because the 18 players who made the core are quality players. So we never faltered due to injuries or suspensions because we always had a proper alternative. I'd also thank the management for doing a tough job to keep us going throughout the competition."

After beating Mohammedan, the club had announced Tk two lakh as bonus and last night, Tk five lakh was added for the league champions.

"We do not know about the next domestic tournament but we will keep the same team for the AFC President's Cup in May," said manager Satyajit Das Rupu.

"I hope to hold on to the foreigners who worked hard with the players. It was a total team effort with the players doing their duty and the coaching staff and management doing their part," added the former national midfielder.



PHOTO: COURTESY

General Moeen U Ahmed (2nd from L), president of the Bangladesh Olympic Association, hands over a grant to AAM Zakaria, managing director of First Security Islami Bank Limited, for his institution's contribution to sports in the country at the NSC auditorium on Wednesday.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

Crossword puzzle grid with clues for Across and Down. Includes a solution time of 25 mins and a list of words to be found.

Cryptoquip puzzle grid with a key: K V U U R K X L U X Z K R F M K. Includes a clue: Yesterday's Cryptoquip: WE TRY HARD NEVER TO PEEVE OUR PARENTS. AFTER ALL, WE WOULDN'T WANT TO RUFFLE ANY FATHERS.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: K equals S