

## Siddikur misses out

SPORTS REPORTER

Siddikur Rahman missed out on the US Open qualification after he finished joint 34th in the qualifier at the Walton Heath Golf Club in Surrey, England yesterday. The 27-year old golfer posted a one-over-par on the second and final day of the qualification for an aggregate of one-under-par 143 which saw him trail the last qualifier by 5 strokes.

A total of 11 players, out of a field of 81, qualified for the second Major of the year which will be held in Los Angeles from June 14 to 17.

Swede Alex Noren and Scot Marc Warren finished top of the pile as Italian sensation Matteo Manassero was one of four players to emerge from a nail-biting play-off for the final places.

Noren and Warren cruised through the Qualifier on nine under par, two shots clear of their nearest rivals.

England's Lee Slattery, Frenchman Gregory Bourdy, Finn Mikko Ilonen, South

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Mohammedan's Nigerian midfielder Augustine Chizoba (C) is pushed away by Muktiyoddha's Brazilian recruit Rafael de Androde (3rd from L) during a scuffle over a ruling in yesterday's Grameenphone Bangladesh Premier League match at the Bangabandhu National Stadium.

PHOTO: STAR

## Muktis held by MSC

SPORTS REPORTER



Aspirited Mohammedan twice equalised to hold title-contenders Muktiyoddha Sangsad to a 2-2 draw in an entertaining affair of the Grameenphone Bangladesh Premier League at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

Nasiruddin Chowdhury and De Souza Lima struck one goal each for Muktiyoddha Sangsad while Nigerians debutants Nduka Uwa and Udeh Damian Chigozie netted one apiece for Mohammedan in the keenly contested match in front of some 3,000 spectators at the Big Bowl.

A fourth draw for Muktiyoddha meant they are now two points behind league leaders Abahani who have also played a match less. Muktiyoddha have 31 points from 15 outings while Mohammedan climb up to fourth with 21 points.

Muktiyoddha came into this match on the back of three successive victories but they were up against a side, who themselves are in a rich vein of form, taming Abahani and Sheikh Russel KC in successive matches.

Despite the return of midfielder Motiur Munna after one match suspension, the Black and Whites might have felt the absence of their inspirational Beninese midfield Oladikpiko W Okalawon which let Muktiyoddha Sangsad dominate the midfield in the first half. However, the backline of Black and Whites marshalled by veterans Hasan Al Mamun, Rajani Kanta and Nigerian Nyock Nyobe produced good amount of resistance before finally conceding the lead on the half-hour mark. Muktiyoddha launched the attack from the left flank through Shakil Ahmed, who whipped a

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## Tie-breaker to get the champion

PTI, Moscow

Defending champion Viswanathan Anand will have to fight it out in rapid chess tiebreaker against challenger Boris Gelfand after a tied 6-6 result in the World Chess Championship match on Wednesday.

To start with, there will be four games under rapid chess rules with 25 minutes to each player and a ten seconds increment after every move is made.

In case of a 2-2 result, the two will play two blitz games with five minutes each with a three seconds increment.

There will be five such matches if the tie persists and finally an Armageddon game will be played with five minutes to white and four to black and white will be forced to win should this arise.

The tie-breaker is likely to see a high-tension drama which has been so far amiss from this World Championship, which produced just two decisive games apart from ten draws.

Playing his third match since winning the world title

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## Shuktara fires MSC to title

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

A brilliant all-round performance from Shuktara Rahman propelled Mohammedan Sporting Club to clinch the 4th Women's Club Cricket League title yesterday at the BKSP in Savar.

It was the Motijheel giant's third trophy in the tournament since winning the inaugural event in 2009 and then winning it last year. This time they defeated Gulshan Youth Club by 52 runs.

Batting first, Mohammedan made 158-6 in 40 overs with Shuktara, opening the batting, making 67 off 118 balls with the help of eight fours and a six. She shared a 70-run opening stand with Shaila Sharmeen, who scored 19.

Shuktara was the fifth batswoman out in the 36th over but she made sure her side was on the right track for a winning score. Fahima Khatun's 17 off 16 balls helped Mohammedan cross the 150-mark.

Lata Mondol took two wickets, but her first-ball dismissal in Gulshan's reply was a shock that they never recovered from.

Player-of-the-match Shuktara then took charge, claiming four wickets as Mohammedan rode to an easy victory with Gulshan being bowled out for 106 runs in 36.1 overs.

Lata was later adjudged player-of-the-competition for her all-round performance which includes 240 runs and ten wickets from seven matches.

BKSP's Sharmin ended as the tournament's highest run-scorer with 260 runs while Khadiza Tul Kubra finished with 16 wickets as the top wicket-taker.

## Federer craves Olympic gold

AFP, Paris

Roger Federer is desperate to add Olympic gold to his 16 Grand Slam singles titles in London this summer to fill the one gaping hole in his career achievements.

The Swiss legend won a gold in doubles in Beijing in 2008, but has never been on the top of the medals podium in singles despite lingering frustration at knowing he should have been involved at least once.

"It's different pressure because the form is best of three so you feel like you have a bad five minutes and that could be it. That's kind of what cost me against [Tomas] Berdych in Athens, against [James] Blake in Beijing," said Federer.

"And then next thing, you know, you're out of both tournaments, and I think I was seeded 1 or 2 in either one of them."

Federer finished fourth in Sydney in 2000, was knocked out in the second round by Berdych in 2004 and lost a 2008 quarterfinal to Blake.

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## Nadal flies into Rd 2

French Open

AFP, Paris

Rafael Nadal, bidding for a record seventh men's crown, and Maria Sharapova, seeking the only Grand Slam she has never won, both raced into the second round of the French Open on Tuesday with emphatic wins.

Nadal, beaten only once in his entire career at the venue as he attempts to go one better than Bjorn Borg's six titles, overcame a second-set blip as he thrashed Italian journeyman Simone Bolelli 6-2, 6-2, 6-1.

Despite the wide margin of his win the Spaniard, whose record in Paris is now 46-1, insisted he had had to battle some early butterflies.

"All matches are always difficult - the more so here, as you are a bit more nervous. It's not easy to get your bearings right off as the court is big and it's difficult out there," said the Mallorcan, who is looking to join Borg and Rod Laver on 11 Grand Slam singles titles.

"But I'm always happy to play here - it's an incredible feeling."

Despite dropping his service once midway through the second set on the Philippe Chatrier showcourt Nadal won comfortably in 1hr 58min to book a meeting with Denis Istomin of Uzbekistan, who whipped Russian Igor Kunitsyn 6-2, 6-1, 6-2.

Later among the men, British fourth seed Andy Murray was starting his campaign against Japan's Tatsuma Ito.

Winning through was Spanish sixth seed David Ferrer, who dismissed Slovakia's Lukas Lacko 6-3, 6-4, 6-1 as he bears down on a potential quarter-final with Murray.

Next up for Ferrer is France's Benoit Paire,

who saw off Albert Ramos of Spain in four sets.

Among the women, Sharapova was one of three former grand slam champions to advance in the morning session along with young British hope Heather Watson.

Sharapova humiliated Romania's Alexandra Cadantu 6-0, 6-0 in just 48 minutes as the Russian second seed, seeking to complete her collection of majors, cruised towards a meeting with Japan's Ayumi Morita, who put out Polona Hercog of Slovenia 3-6, 6-4, 6-3.

Clad in black, and seeking her third claycourt title of the season, Sharapova overpowered her 74th-ranked rival, who failed to hit a single winner.

Wimbledon champion Petra Kvitova, the fourth-seeded Czech, thrashed Australia's Ashleigh Barty 6-1, 6-2 in 54 minutes to join Sharapova in the next round where she meets Urszula Radwanska of Poland.

Also marching on was 2010 champion Francesca Schiavone of Italy, seeded 14, who defeated Japanese veteran Kimiko Date-Krumm 6-3, 6-1.

Channel Islands-born Watson, who managed to reach the second round on her debut last year, thereby entering the top 100, scored an impressive 6-2, 6-4 win over Russian Elena Vesnina to earn a match-up against Germany's 25th seed Julia Goerges.

Watson said she has grown immensely as a player since a first nervous second round showing here last season and feels happy on the clay, despite her hardcourt tennis upbringing in Florida.



PHOTO: AFP

Spain's tennis world No 2 Rafael Nadal unleashes a serve to Italy's Simone Bolelli during their French Open first round match at the Roland Garros in Paris yesterday.

## Gregarious beat Flame Boys

SPORTS REPORTER

The Gregarious outplayed Flame Boys by 110-54 points in their Citycell Premier Division Basketball League match at the Dhanmondi Basketball Gymnasium yesterday. The Gregarians led the first half by 49-24 points and kept the same tempo in the second half over the newly promoted side. Mithun and Shoeb caged 34 and 29 points respectively for the winners while Sakib scored 25 points for the losing side.

In the late matches on Monday night, Europa Youth beat Eagles by 76-60 points with Akash and Bappy netting 20 points each for the winners.

## Setu Sangha Div-II h'ball champions

SPORTS REPORTER

Old Bandura Nabin Setu Sangha emerged champions in the Igloo Metropolis 2nd Division Men's Handball League beating Flame Boys Club by 45-43 goals in the last league match at the Shaheed (Capt) M Mansoor Ali National Handball Stadium yesterday.

The winners trailed the first half by 19-20 goals before staging a late comeback to win the match.

Rubel scored 15 goals and Leon 10 goals for the winners while Jashim Uddin netted 20 and Samiul Arefin scored eight goals for the losing side. Rubel was adjudged the best player of the league.

## Notice served on chess voters' list

SPORTS REPORTER

A Dhaka court yesterday served a show-cause notice to the National Sports Council, asking the sports regulatory body why the existing voters list for the upcoming polls of Bangladesh Chess Federation should not be declared illegal.

The NSC has been asked to

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## Shakib in the form of his life

NAIMUL KARIM



At the moment, it seems as though nothing can stop Shakib Al Hasan. With two 'man-of-the-tournament' awards in the Bangladesh Premier League and the Asia Cup, a vital contribution in the Indian Premier League and a possible signing with former English county champions Essex, Shakib, unlike the Magura Express, is on a roll this year.

It would be an overstatement if one were to say that the IPL brought the best out of the left-handed all-rounder. The tournament, however, did highlight the qualities that have kept him on top of the rankings for such a long time. It has also brought to light the new additions to his bowling armoury.

By now it's quite obvious that players from weaker international cricket teams need to fight extra hard to play in the IPL. Considering the fact that the Kolkata Knight Riders had a long list of foreign players which included the

likes of Sunil Narine and Jacques Kallis, it was always going to be difficult for Shakib to get into the playing eleven. To no one's surprise, he did just that.

Shakib played a more supporting role in the IPL this year. With Narine dominating the bowling attack, it was up to him to stem the run flow. After contributing to the initial victories of KKR, one bad game led to his downfall. This followed a series of matches where the likes of Marchant de Lange and Brendan McCullum were selected ahead of him.

However, despite being dropped after the first few games, he fought his way back into the squad with a match-winning performance against the Pune Warriors. He responded to his captain's call by bowling in the Powerplay -- a task that he is not used to -- and ended up getting the priceless scalps of Rahul Dravid and Sachin Tendulkar. Such was the determination that Shakib went on to find a place in the side for the final.

Perhaps the most refreshing change was his ability to bowl the pinpoint

yorkers, a skill that will definitely help Mushfiqur Rahim's side in the ICC World Twenty20s to take place in Sri Lanka later this year. Even Mahendra Singh Dhoni's much anticipated "helicopter shot" couldn't do much damage in the last over, bowled by Shakib, in the final.

Unfortunately, the Bangladesh Cricket Board hasn't been able to complement Shakib's good run. The left-hander's current form may be encouraging; however, the two-month long gap in Bangladesh's domestic cricket has kept several national players out of practice. While the upcoming tours to Europe and Zimbabwe may prepare the national team for the ICC World Twenty20s, domestic cricket continues to suffer.

While the IPL may not have seen the best of Shakib, it did show his resilience and prove that he is an even better player when under pressure, which are the trademark characteristics of great cricketers.

(Naimul Karim is a feature writer, The Star)