#### Dhumketu outplay Bakshi Bazar

SPORTS REPORTER

Dhumketu outplayed Bakshi Bazar by 89-54 points in their Citycell Premier Division Basketball League match at the Dhanmondi Basketball Gymnasium yesterday. The first half was a bit more competitive than the second as the winners led by 31-20 points before the break.

Sajid and Romel were the top scorers for Dhumketu with 14 and 13 points respectively while Asif of Bakshi Bazar scored match's highest 20 points.

Meanwhile, Rangers defeated Flame Boys by 89-56 points in the late game on Tuesday night. Nahid caged 27 points while Sendi netted 21 for the winning side.

### Indo-Pak cricket this year?

AP, Islamabad

Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) chairman Zaka Ashraf expects to revive cricketing ties with India this year and is even willing to play against the arch-rivals at a neutral venue.

Ashraf says he had a 'fruitful" meeting with officials from the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) last week when he watched the Indian Premier League final at Chennai.

"I think our [cricketing] relations will be revived very soon and people will hear the good news," Ashraf said. Cricketing ties between

Pakistan and India were suspended in 2008 after the terror attacks in Mumbai in which 166 people were killed, straining political relations between the countries.

Ashraf says he won' mind sending the Pakistan team to India or to a neutral venue. Formalities of the bilat-

eral series will be finalised during the ICC Annual Conference in Kuala Lumpur

later this month. "Nothing has been finalised as yet because India will come up with a proposal at Kuala Lumpur, but what I

felt was that the series will be held this year," Ashraf said. BCCI Presiden Narainswamy Srinivasan

also met Ashraf in New Delhi and promised him he will talk with other BCCI officials before finalising an agreement with the PCB. "He told me 'just give us a

little time, we will talk more on this in Kuala Lumpur after I talk with other BCCI officials," Ashraf said.

Last week the BCCI said that it will invite Pakistan's domestic Twenty20 champions Sialkot Stallions to this year's Champions League which might also open doors for Pakistan cricketers to compete in next year's IPL.

#### Maria, Petra

FROM PAGE 16 Shvedova's serve to level the match at 4-4, followed by a crucial hold.

Serving at 4-5, nerves got the better of Shvedova, allowing the world number four to convert her second match point for a place in the semifinal.

"Every point that we played was really tough,'

Kvitova said. "I knew that I had to change my game. It wasn't easy and I'm really happy that my serve helped me and I played my

aggressive game again." Kvitova's clash with Sharapova on Thursday will be the pair's third Grand Slam

clash within a year. The Czech triumphed in the Wimbledon final before Sharapova defeated the Czech in the Australian Open

semi-finals. Crucially, Sharapova enjoyed a straight sets victory in the semi-finals on clay in Stuttgart in the run-up to

Paris. Thursday's other semifinal sees Australia's Samantha Stosur taking on

Sara Errani of Italy.



USA, Ricardo Catala of Puerto Rico and Daniel Tavares of USA.

# Nadal, Ferrer in semis

French Open

AFP, Paris

Spanish sixth seed David Ferrer defeated British fourth seed Andy Murray 6-4, 6-7 (3/7), 6-3, 6-2 on Wednesday to set up a semifinal clash against compatriot and sixtime champions Rafael Nadal in the French Open. Nadal defeated fellow Spaniard Nicolas Almagro 7-6 (7/4), 6-2, 6-3 earlier on the day to reach the semifinals without dropping a single set.

It was the 50th win for Nadal at the spiritual home of claycourt tennis since he first competed here as an 18-year-old in 2005.

His only defeat came in the fourth round in 2009 when he lost to Robin Soderling of Sweden in a fourth round match.

This year Nadal is bidding to become the first player to win seven French Open titles, moving him out of a tie with Swedish legend Bjorn Borg. A win on Sunday would also be his 11th Grand Slam title, level with Borg and Rod Laver.

In the end Almagro went the way of so many others over the course of the last seven years, but he gave a solid account of himself especially in a hotly-disputed first set.

On another cool, overcast Parisian afternoon, games went with serve in the opening

According to zookeeper Jerzy Pirog, Citta

correctly predicted the outcome of the

Champions League final last month and has

now been put to the test to predict the results of

The co-hosts open their Group A campaign

against Greece on Friday and according to

Presented with a choice of three melons,

each set out in front of either the Polish flag, the

Greek one or a banner proclaiming a draw, 33-

year-old Citta scooped up the one in front of

Whereas Paul the Octopus was the original

But having beaten off competition from a

self-made psychic, Citta had to come through

an X-Factor style competition to earn her

parrot called Kuba and Black Mary the donkey,

Citta is being trusted with the vital role of

showing the way for betting coupons up and

the Champions League between Chelsea and

"Everything happened before the final of

Citta the Paul

so far has a 100 percent record.

Poland's group matches.

Citta, they can expect to win.

FROM PAGE 16

the Polish flag.

chance.

set until 6-6 with Almagro, who won the Nice claycourt title in the week before Roland Garros, dominating Nadal at times.

In the ensuing tie-break though Nadal jumped out into a winning 4-0 lead on the back of some brutal hitting down both flanks and Almagro showed the first signs of wear and tear after just over an hour of play.

He held firm till the fourth game of the second set, but then finally crumbled on serve in the face of another assault from Nadal's hammerblows.

Nadal held serve to make it 4-1 and already the writing was on the wall for Almagro as he moved inexorably onwards toward an eighth defeat in eight matches against his fellow 26-year-old.

The 12th seed did conjure up a break point in the seventh game, but Nadal snuffed that out with a big swinging first serve. A game later it was two sets ahead for Nadal as Almagro was broken for a second time.

Nadal took the first game of the third set before rain stopped play for a few minutes. Almagro then let slip two further break points in the fifth game to trail 2-3.

The axe fell on Almagro shortly after as Nadal broke him in the seventh game and then served out for the win.

Nadal's drive into the final four has come at the cost of just 30 games.

Bayern Munich," said Pirog, a vet who special-

"We did this test with the elephant, an

"The donkey and the parrot decided the

winner would be Bayern Munich but only the

elephant got the right winner, so we decided

much to task Citta with predicting the out-

come of every match so they're just going to

put her powers to the test for Poland's games.

her out for the knock-out rounds as well.

The Krakow Zoo thought it would be a bit

However, should she prove as talented as

It's been a long road for the Indian elephant

Paul the Octopus, they're planning on rolling

to reach this illustrious stage in her career,

having previously worked for a German circus

and then entertained visitors at nature parks in

Austria and Spain as well as the zoo in Hamburg.

Calcioscommesse match-fixing scandal in Italy,

it is not yet clear how UEFA will react to Citta's

predictions, although it is worth noting that

Paul was never sanctioned during his career.

Given the recent football betting

ises in monkeys and birds.

she's got psychic powers."

African Grey Parrot and a donkey.

# Absent Jimmy the issue

### Final England-Windies Test begins today

Cricket

AFP, Birmingham

A series where plenty of attention has been given to absent West Indies players concludes with the focus on England resting spearhead seamer James Anderson from the third Test here at Edgbaston.

In rising to number one in the world Test rankings, England have rested players along the way -- Anderson missed the 2010 tour of Bangladesh.

The difference now is that the Lancashire star doesn't want a break.

But the concern for England is the sheer amount of cricket they have left this season -- four Tests (three against South Africa who will be challenging them for top spot in the rankings), 14 one-day internationals and four Twenty20s.

And then comes the defence of their World Twenty20 title in Sri Lanka and a ing him." Test tour of India.

series, do have capable seam bowling Onions and both could be in the side on Thursday if the selectors opt to give Test defeat at Trent Bridge.

Anderson's new-ball partner Stuart Broad a rest as well.

Anderson, in his Sunday newspaper column, made it clear he wanted to play at Edgbaston but England coach Andy Flower insisted now was the right time for him to take a breather.

"We came into this series with one goal, and that was to win the series," Flower said Tuesday.

"I'm not intending to demean the importance of this Test -- but since we won the series already, our priority does now shift to the South Africa series."

West Indies coach Ottis Gibson has no qualms with England's selection policy.

"If they rest six players and we win, it's still West Indies vs England and we don't really care how many people they rest," he said.

Meanwhile opener Adrian Barath was glad to see the back of Anderson, saying Tuesday: "Any opener would say the same. It was really a challenge fac-

But Gibson warned against thinking England, 2-0 up in the three-match life was about to get any easier for a toporder whose struggles were exemplireserves in Steven Finn and Graham fied by their collapse to 61 for six in the second innings of a nine-wicket second

West Indies, who've won just two of their last 32 Tests and haven't enjoyed a Test win in England for over a decade, suffered a blow when Kemar Roach, their most hostile fast bowler, dropped out of the tour with a shin problem last week.

He has been replaced by Sunil Narine, the 'mystery' spinner who could make his Test debut on Thursday after starring for champions Kolkata Knight Riders in the Indian Premier League.

But even Narine could do with some runs to bowl against.

#### **TEAMS**

ENGLAND (from): Andrew Strauss [captain), Alastair Cook, Jonathan Trott, Kevin Pietersen, Ian Bell, Jonathan Bairstow, Matt Prior, Tim Bresnan, Stuart Broad, Graeme Swann, Steven Finn, Graham Onions. WEST INDIES (from): Darren Sammy

(captain), Kirk Edwards, Adrian Barath, Darren Bravo, Shivnarine Chanderpaul, Narsingh Deonarine, Fidel Edwards, Assad Fudadin, Kieran Powell, Denesh Ramdin, Ravi Rampaul, Marlon Samuels, Shane Shillingford, Tino Best, Sunil Narine.

### Barath terms Gayle return as 'great'

AFP, Birmingham

West Indies opener Adrian Barath has said "it's great' Chris Gayle is returning to the one-day squad -- even if the recall has come, in part, at his expense. Former captain Gayle has

been selected for the threematch one-day series against England later this month after a 14-month dispute with the West Indies Cricket Board (WICB).

The 32-year-old dynamic opening batsman, with a West Indies record 19 hundreds in 228 ODIs to his name, has not played international cricket since a defeat by Pakistan in the quarterfinals of the World Cup in March last year.

#### MSC in semis

**FROM PAGE 16** to 14 goals for the tournament.

The other match between Azad Sporting and Police SC ended 3-2 in favour of Azad. The winners led the first half 1-0. Mohammad Salahuddin scored two goals for the winning side.

#### Deadlines

FROM PAGE 16 process so we understand what

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problems they may go through. We hope the franchises make payments, which isn't much left unpaid," he added. In another meeting yester-

day, the NBR officials called upon Ashraf and the franchises where the ultimatum to complete the payment of taxes was delivered.

### SL ODIs start today makes them competitive is the sort of bowling

Cricket

AFP, Pallekele

Sri Lanka will look to improve their recent one-day record against Pakistan when they clash in a five-match series starting in Pallekele on Thursday. The World Cup runners-up have lost five of

their last six one-dayers against Pakistan, four in the United Arab Emirates last November and one in the Asia Cup in Dhaka in March. The key to Sri Lanka's success will be a solid

batting performance by Mahela

Jayawardene's men against a side that boasts a rich variety in both spin and pace bowling. The spin trio of Saeed Ajmal, Shahid Afridi and Mohammad Hafeez have proved a hand-

ful for most rivals, helping Pakistan win 16 of their last 22 one-dayers. The pace attack will be spearheaded by Umar Gul, Mohammad Sami and Sohail Tanvir,

who was drafted into the one-day squad in place of injured batsman Nasir Jamshed. Sri Lanka will rely heavily on their trusted trio of Jayawardene, Kumar Sangakkara and Tillakaratne Dilshan to test the resurgent tourists, led by middle-order batsman

Misbahul Haq. "Pakistan will be a challenge and what

options available, apart from the specialists, Jayawardene said ahead of the series. The rivals shared the preceding Twenty20

series in the southern town of Hambantota as Pakistan bounced back to draw level after Sri Lanka had won the opening match. Afridi, who scored a brisk half-century and

grabbed two wickets in Pakistan's serieslevelling win last Sunday, will once again play a pivotal role in the 50-overs-a-side games. Misbah, who remains the Test and one-day

captain despite being dropped from the Twenty20 team, called for a collective display from his side to tackle the Sri Lankans.

TEAMS SRI LANKA (from): Mahela Jayawardene (cap-

tain), Tillakaratne Dilshan, Kumar Sangakkara, Dinesh Chandimal, Angelo Mathews, Lahiru Thirimanne, Jeevan Mendis, Thisara Perera, Nuwan Kulasekara, Sachithra Senanayake, Lasith Malinga, Rangana Herath, Upul Tharanga, Nuwan Pradeep, Dilhara Fernando. PAKISTAN (from): Misbahul Haq (captain), Mohammad Hafeez, Younis Khan, Umar Akmal, Sarfraz Ahmed, Shahid Afridi, Umar Gul, Rahat Ali, Saeed Ajmal, Abdur Rehman, Mohammad Sami, Asad Shafiq, Aizaz Cheema, Azhar Ali, Imran Farhat, Sohail Tanvir.

#### Ex-stars light up Manikganj **FROM PAGE 16**

tournament as chief guest while Badal Roy, vice-president of BFF and former national footballer, was also present.

Manikganj Sonali Ateet Club emerged

champions with a 2-0 win in the final against Dhaka Sonali Ateet Club. Selim Forazi scored both the goals, but in a

scene sadly reminiscent of the current state of football, the match will now have to be replayed following allegations of under-age players seeping in the midst. But the allegations hardly stopped up to

10,000 people flocking to the ground to watch the heroes of their youth.

The final itself was a who's who of Bangladesh football as Hasanuzzaman Khan

Bablu, Ahsanullah Mantu, Khurshid Alam Babul, Ilyas Hossain, Mahfuj Mamun Babu, Nurul Haque Manik, Mahmudul Haque Liton, Josim Uddin Joshi, Daulat Khan Babul and Satyajit Das Rupu turned up just for Dhaka.

Aminur Rahman, Haji Kashem, Humayun Ahmed, Jobayer Nipu, Shahid Hossain Swapan, Ajmat, Riajul Haque played for Narayanganj.

Ajmat Ali, (80-88), Rauf Babul (85), Harun Ar Rashid (85-86) played for Gazipur Sonali Ateet Club.

Swapan Das played for Munshiganj Sonali Ateet Club. Sadekul Islam Uttam (84-86) played for Tangail Sonali Ateet Club and Shafinur Rahman Samrat played for the Bogra team.

### CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

# Shakib seeks to skip Zim tour

FROM PAGE 16

down the country.

raised why he didn't take the rest during the IPL nothing about the matter, so I can't comment or the domestic competition [Dhaka Premier League] and many may think that it's unfair to take rest when it comes to national duty.

"But I feel that it would be good for us if we can give him rest for the Zimbabwe tour where we are going to play unofficial matches. Shakib is a very professional guy so he wants it only because he genuinely needs it.

"It would be a huge loss for us if he breaks down during the tri-nation tournament in Zimbabwe, so we must be careful before taking any decision about him," said Siraj.

Akram, on the other hand, said he hadn't received any official word on the matter, although Shakib did meet the selectors in the presence of captain Mushfiqur Rahim, new coach Richard Pybus and bowling coach Shane Jurgensen.

"Unfortunately we (the selectors) knew on it," said Akram.

Soon after returning from the IPL, Shakib said that he had an immediate feeling of taking a break from cricket following a grueling season. But he was not sure whether he will take rest rather he lent support to Victoria Sporting Club to clinch the league title.

He also jokingly said that he always changes his plans, so one can't be sure whether he will ultimately take rest and skip the Zimbabwe trip.

Shakib, who came to the board office yesterday to meet the newly-appointed coach Pybus, was not ready to make any comments on this issue rather he said that he was looking forward to tomorrow's Premier League title-deciding match between Victoria and Old DOHS at the Fatullah Cricket Stadium.

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