

Niaz on top again

SPORTS REPORTER

GM Niaz Murshed defeated GM Teske Henrik of Germany to regain top position in the Chennai Super Kings 5th International Grandmasters Chess Tournament in India yesterday. Niaz played with black pieces and took Ragozin Defence and won after 45 moves in the 10th round match yesterday. The sub-continent's first grand master has eight points and was in the lead along with five other players. Niaz will play against against GM B. Adhiban of India in the 11th and last round today. The country's other GM in the tournament, Ziaur Rahman, however slipped further as he lost to RA Pradeep Kumar of India. Zia has 6.5 points from 10 matches.

Mimo included in WHL squad

SPORTS REPORTER

Striker Pushkor Khisa Mimo returns to the national fold for the World Hockey League (round-2) as the Bangladesh Hockey Federation included him in the 18-member national squad tournament which will be held in New Delhi, India from February 18-24.

Mimo was dropped for the first round of the World Hockey League, which Bangladesh won to advance to the next round, due to poor form. Bangladesh will play against hosts India, Ireland, China, Fiji and Azerbaijan in the second round as top two finishers of the group will advance to the sixteen-team semi-final round.

Apart from Mimo, two new faces -- right-back Rokonzuzaman Shohag and midfielder Abdul Malek -- were included in the squad. Shahidullah Titu is the only exclusion from the squad from the team that won the first round, as Titu did not join training. Goalkeeper Zahid Hossain has been named captain instead of Mamunur Rahamn Chayan, who guided Bangladesh to that success.

The federation also revealed the names of six officials who will be accompanying the team to India. Monwar Hossain will be the manager while Mahbub Haroon and Jahiur Islam Mitul have been retained as coaches.

SQUAD

Zahid, Asim, Pinto, Chayan, Biplob, Tapash, Chandan, Khorshedur, Shohag, Kamruzzaman, Nannu, Sarwar, Malek, Jimmy, Krishna, Mimo, Koushik and Niloy.

Empty stands

FROM PAGE 16 Nasir Hossain, expressed a similar view and felt that the ticket prices were still a little high for the masses' liking.

"One can't expect a full stadium in domestic cricket, but judging by the initial stages of the previous BPL, we are hopeful that that there will be more people coming to the stands as the tournament progresses," said BPL's member-secretary, Dr. IH Mallick.

Dutch duo

FROM PAGE 16 team," said Ahmed.

On January 11, the BFF signed a MoU with Kruiif and Koster as Bangladesh national team's head coach and BFF Academy coach respectively and the contract will be effective from June.

Maria, Li clash early

AFP, Melbourne

Maria Sharapova set up an Australian Open showdown with China's Li Na Tuesday as she roared into the semifinals for the record loss of only nine games.

The world number two swamped her latest victim, fellow Russian Ekaterina Makarova 6-2, 6-2 in a quickfire 1hr 6min, continuing her blistering start to the season.

Sharapova was forced to pull out of her warm-up tournament with injury, hitting up with Australian junior boys instead, but she has been remorseless in her rampage to the last four at Melbourne Park.

Her record of losing just nine games in five matches obliterates the 22-year-old tournament record of Monica Seles, who dropped 12 en route to the 1991 semifinals.

Despite the scoreline, the four-time Grand Slam-winner insisted it had been close against Makarova, against whom she has never lost in five matches.

"No matter what our record is, we always have close matches," she said.

"It was quite close in the beginning today, we exchanged breaks of serves, but I think I ended up being the more aggressive player.

"Today was a matter of staying focused because I know how excited she was to play me."

However, Sharapova, 25, will face her sternest test yet against China's Li, who halted the 13-match unbeaten run of Agnieszka Radwanska to reach her first Grand Slam semifinal since she won the 2011 French Open.



China's Li Na pumps her fist in celebration after beating Poland's Agnieszka Radwanska in the quarterfinals of the Australian Open in Melbourne yesterday. Li Na won 7-5, 6-3.

PHOTO: AFP

Li, the world number six, became the first player this year to take a set off the Polish fourth seed when she edged a tight opener containing seven breaks of serve.

Radwanska came storming back by winning eight points in a row to take the first two games of the second set to love. But Li then rattled off five straight games before serving it out for a 7-5, 6-3 win.

"She's a tough player. I felt like I was against a wall today. She can hit everywhere, but without any mistakes," said Li.

"I felt it was just very tough. You have to focus on every shot. Not every point, every shot. If you hit like slow or like short one, she'll attack."

Novak flies into semis

AFP, Melbourne

Super-fit reigning champion Novak Djokovic shrugged off the exertions of his five-hour epic with Stanislas Wawrinka as he booked an Australian Open semifinal with David Ferrer on Tuesday.

The world number one, showing no ill-effects from his late-night showdown 48 hours earlier, suffered a second-set lapse against Czech fifth seed Tomas Berdych but was never seriously troubled in the 6-1, 4-6, 6-1, 6-4 win.

The resilient Serb, who came through a record 5hr 53min final against Rafael Nadal last year, said he was glad to get the job done against Berdych in 2hr 31min -- exactly half the length of his match with Wawrinka.

"It was a great performance. I was hoping to have a shorter match, whoever wins tonight, not to go over five hours," he said. "It's always going to be tough against Tomas."

Ferrer clawed back from two sets down

after his fellow Spaniard Nicolas Almagro blew a golden chance to reach his first major semifinal in 34 attempts.

Tenth seed Almagro outplayed the world number five, whom he has never beaten, in the opening two sets and served for the match three times, only to falter on each occasion.

Ferrer seized the lifeline and finished too strongly for his Davis Cup team-mate, clinching it with two service breaks in the fifth set as he won 4-6, 4-6, 7-5, 7-6 (7/4), 6-2 in 3hr 44min.

"It was a miracle that I won this match. Nicolas had a lot of chances to beat me and I tried to fight for every point," Ferrer said.

"I know all the players in important moments are nervous. Today I was close to losing, but finally I come back."

On Wednesday, Roger Federer and Andy Murray will bid to contest the other men's semifinal when they take on Frenchmen Jo-Wilfried Tsonga and Jeremy Chardy respectively.

Div I cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

Eskaton Sabuj Sangha thrived on two half centuries from Waliul Karim and Mustafizur Rahman to secure a 55-run victory over City Club in the First Division Cricket Super League match at the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium yesterday.

In the day's other match, Orient Sporting Club posted a three-wicket victory over Magnum Cricketers at BKSP.

SCORES IN BRIEF

ESKATON SABUJ SANGHA: 246-6 in 50 overs (Waliul Karim 75, Mustafizur Rahman 74, Hasanuzzaman 29; Monjur Ahmed 2-46, Sajjadur Hoque 1-15). **CITY CLUB:** 191 all out in 46.2 overs (Arafat Sunny 48, Kallayan Ashish 39, Sajjadur Hoque 24; Mustafizur Rahman 3-27, Minhaj 2-36, Abu Bakkar 2-40, Sarfaraj 2-49). **Result:** Eskaton Sabuj Sangha won by 55 runs.

MAGNUM CRICKETERS: 124 all out in 36.1 overs (Irfan Sukkur 22, Moinul 20, Mahfuzur 19; Rony 3-24, Hasu 3-29, Momin 2-18). **ORIENT SPORTING CLUB:** 125-7 in 35.1 overs (Latiful Azam 37, Rony 24, Shahadat 21; Ali Akbar 3-56, Raihan Anas 2-21, Ashraful 2-27).

Result: Orient Sporting Club won by three wickets.

Australia in Clarke doubt

Final ODI against Sri Lanka today

AFP, Hobart

Australia captain Michael Clarke is a serious doubt for Wednesday's fifth and final one-day international against Sri Lanka after twisting his ankle.

He was undergoing treatment, Cricket

Australia said, ahead of the game Australia need to win to draw the series 2-2.

Clarke went over on the ankle during a fielding drill at training on Tuesday.

George Bailey, who would stand in as skipper, said Clarke would be given until the last minute to decide.

"He will obviously be given right up to the toss tomorrow to prove he is right to go," Bailey said.

"There will be a little bit of pain but, if he is 100 per cent, he will play."

All-rounder Glenn Maxwell was expected to be promoted if Clarke fails to recover.

Sri Lanka lead the five-match series 2-1 after the fourth leg in Sydney was washed out on Sunday.

The tourists were chasing 223 runs to take the series after thrashing Australia in the second and third games. They needed 209 more runs off 46.4 overs with all their wickets intact when the umpires took the players off.

Australia scored 222 for nine off their 50 overs after winning the toss.

Four down

FROM PAGE 16 completed four of the seven mountains in her "Bangladesh on Seven Summits" campaign, having previously scaled the heights of Mount Kilimanjaro, Mount Aconcagua and Mount Everest.

The Mount Vinson expedition of Bangladesh on Seven Summits was supported by BRAC in collaboration with bKash Limited and BRAC Bank Limited.

As part of the deal, Wasfia will also work as BRAC's Goodwill Ambassador for the next one year to champion the cause of women empowerment.

Congratulating Wasfia, Dr Mahabub Hossain, Executive Director of BRAC said he hoped Wasfia "can be an idol for young girls and women to look up to, and that many young girls can draw inspiration from her."

Fourth ODI today

India's chance to clinch series

Cricket

PTI, Mohali

Bolstered by two emphatic back-to-back wins, India will seek to clinch the ODI series against England by taking an unassailable 3-1 lead in the fourth match on Wednesday with the under-fire hosts showing signs of rediscovering their winning touch.

After a series of indifferent performances in the recent past, the team is beginning to prove its worth with two comprehensive victories and captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni will be hoping that his young teammates can maintain the tempo for a third successive win in the five-match series.

India's young and inexperienced bowlers excelled in the last two matches and were largely responsible for setting up the victories while some of the top-order batsmen, who have been woefully out of form, have showed signs of recovery.

Clearly, the pressure will be on the visitors who have to come up with a far more inspired show to prevent the Indians from winning the series in what promises to be a thrilling contest at the PCA Stadium.

Despite the two big wins, there are still some areas of concern for the Indians who have not being able to fix their opening problems.

Transfer window closes

FROM PAGE 16

(Tuesday) as replacement for Otojari and Kester while already-registered Nigerian defender Monday and midfielder Ikecuwu Okemmiri will join us before the start of the second leg," said Sheikh Jamal DC manager Anwarul Azim Helal.

Abahani manager Satyajit Das Rupu informed that they were not going to sign up any new players, and were keeping faith on the old guard.

Abahani's archrivals Mohammedan however are going to make wholesale changes as they have released Augustine Chizoba of Nigeria, Koli Osman of Zambia, Mustapha Ibrahim of Ghana while keeping their sights on BJMC's Elita Kingsly and Nigerian duo Kajim and Kaderi who were on trial earlier. Cameroonian defender Baybeck fombagne will also join the Black and Whites in a few days.

However, relegation-threatened Brothers Union, Arambagh KS and Feni Soccer Club look doomed as they were yet to find proper replacements till yesterday.

"Amadi Moses and Goodwin were supposed to join Arambagh but they are not coming," said Arambagh manager Kazi Jolly adding that they confirmed a Nigerian midfielder named Gerard.

Brothers Union released their Beninese striker Wassiou Okalawon and Ugandan defender Dumba Micheal and kept their sights on the foreign players staying in Bangladesh while Feni Soccer confirmed Wasiou Okalawon, Nigerian Anthony and a defender from Gambia. Feni freed Lamine Camara and Mostafa Kaba.

Team BJMC brought two Russian players but are seemingly in hesitation whether to give the Russian chance as they might not be very effective in a short period.

Shamsur, Nasir win

FROM PAGE 16

catches. The catch of the match, and perhaps the tournament, was taken by Rangpur's Taposh Ghosh as he ran from deep square leg and dived full-stretch at deep fine leg to send Naeem Islam packing.

Their bowling attack, which received a boost with the inclusion of Fidel Edwards, was also on target. He picked up the crucial wicket of Oram who was beginning to look dangerous. Mascarenhas, Abdur Razzak and Kevin O' Brien also maintained steady economy rates of around 6 and made it difficult for the batsmen to score runs off them.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

1 Muse's instrument

5 Renders speechless

9 Obtain

12 Billions of years

13 Future stallion

14 Multi-purpose truck

15 Avocado dip

17 Top card

18 Singles

19 Gordon and Ginsburg

21 Mad

24 It begins at 40

25 Toe woe

26 Zig-zagged on skis

30 Eggs

31 Actress Witherspoon

32 Past

33 Clothing line

35 Story

36 "— She Sweet?"

37 Instant

38 From then on

40 Icelandic epic

42 Industrial insect

43 Port city of Ecuador

48 Eisenhower

49 Being, to Brutus

50 — Major

51 Caustic solution

52 "— of Our Lives"

53 Shade trees

DOWN

1 Lower limb

2 Thee

Solution time: 21 mins.

HUNKBDVABLE
ELONGATECLOP
STRAINERHOLIE
FAAICICLE
RENEWOFAN
AXEDSWINGER
YESOUNESDOH
STINGERAGAR
JAGHEREVENS
MOUSSEAVE
IMPSPRINGER
MEETE TAILGATE
ENOLSPAEGAD

3 Genetic letters

4 Accompany to a party

5 Pinnacle

6 Courts

7 Right angle

8 Germ-free

9 Central American nation

10 Leave an impression

11 Golf gadgets

16 Whatever number

20 Aliens' craft

21 Enthusiastic, plus

22 PBS science show

23 Insure

24 Glasgow girl

26 Transmitted

27 Allow

28 Hollywood clashers

29 "... — protest too much"

31 Went back on an agreement

34 Karaoke need, for short

35 Award for a dentist?

37 Med. approval org.

38 Take to the seas

39 Black

40 Simple

41 Coloring agents

44 Can. neighbor

45 Web address

46 Doctrine

47 — Vegas

1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8		9	10	11	
12						13					14		
15					16						17		
			18					19	20				
21	22	23					24						
25						26	27				28	29	
30					31						32		
33				34						35			
			36						37				
38	39						40	41					
42						43	44				45	46	47
48						49				50			
51						52				53			

CRYPTOQUIP

F X N J G R T V P N X R W K
R M K S R G R W P U D B K K P E D F W R
L R F Y T O S F H R Y F Y B K B M F.
E J V W O K D R P D B H R B U B L - X R N K ?

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: FUNNY OLD TV SERIES ABOUT A PARTICULARLY DEVILISH BUNCH OF PUPPIES: "THE LITTER RASCALS."

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: X equals F