## 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

## Mimo included in WHL squad

Rahman, however slipped

further as he lost to RA

Pradeep Kumar of India.

Zia has 6.5 points from 10

SPORTS REPORTER

matches.

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 semifinal round.

Apart from Mimo, two new faces -- right-back Rokonuzzaman 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 Jahirul 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 membersecretary, Dr. IH Mallick.

## Dutch duo

FROM PAGE 16 team," said Ahmed.

On January 11, the BFF signed a MoU with Kruif 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.

exertions of his five-hour epic with Stanislas

Wawrinka as he booked an Australian Open

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-

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

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

"It was a great performance. I was hoping

the length of his match with Wawrinka.

The resilient Serb, who came through a

semifinal with David Ferrer on Tuesday.

Super-fit reigning

champion Novak

Djokovic shrugged off the



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 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."

after his fellow Spaniard Nicolas Almagro

blew a golden chance to reach his first

world number five, whom he has never

beaten, in the opening two sets and

Tenth seed Almagro outplayed the

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),

"It was a miracle that I won this match.

"I know all the players in important

On Wednesday, Roger Federer and

Nicolas had a lot of chances to beat me and

moments are nervous. Today I was close

Andy Murray will bid to contest the other

men's semifinal when they take on

Frenchmen Jo-Wilfried Tsonga and

to losing, but finally I come back."

Jeremy Chardy respectively.

I tried to fight for every point," Ferrer said.

major semifinal in 34 attempts.

falter on each occasion.

6-2 in 3hr 44min.

Novak flies into semis

## 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 fivematch 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.

#### served for the match three times, only to 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 drawinspiration from her."

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# 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.

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.

Though Gautam Gambhir has been getting the starts and going into the 30s, he has not been able to translate them into a big knock. The other opener Ajinkya Rahane has not been in good touch and has got out cheaply. As a result, India have never really got a flying start in the series.

England, on the other hand, have plenty to worry about with neither their bowling nor batting departments living upto expectation.

Captain Alastair Cook has not tormented the Indians as he did in the Test series while dangerman Kevin Pietersen

has also not fired though he was trifle

unlucky as he fell victim to a dubious

#### decision in Ranchi. **TEAMS**

INDIA (from): Mahendra Singh Dhoni (captain), Ajinkya Rahane, Gautam Gambhir, Virat Kohli, Yuvraj Singh, Suresh Raina, Ravindra Jadeja, Ravichandran Ashwin, Bhuvneshwar Kumar, Ishant Sharma, Shami Ahmed, Rohit Sharma, Clearly, the pressure will be on the Cheteshwar Pujara Amit Mishra and Ashok Dinda.

> ENGLAND (from): Alastair Cook (captain), Ian Bell, Kevin Pietersen, Joe Root, Eoin Morgan, Craig Kieswetter, Samit Patel, Chris Woakes, James Tredwell, Steven Finn, Jade Dernbach, Tim Bresnan, Danny Briggs, Jos Buttler, Stuart Meaker.

## Transfer window closes

**FROM PAGE 16** 

(Tuesday) as replacement for Otojareri and Kester while already-registered Nigerian defender Monday and midfielder Ikecukwu 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 sing 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.

## **Duronto's** latest leader Jahurul

SPORTS REPORTER

Former Australia batsman Simon Katich, who was initially named as the captain of Duronto Rajshahi, was given the position of the vicecaptain when he played his first match of the Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) T20 yesterday as the team management felt that a local captain would be able to communicate better with the players.

The captaincy role was thus given to Jahurul Islam in yesterday's game after left-handed opener Tamim Iqbal, who led Rajshahi in the team's first two games in Katich's absence, wanted to be relieved of the role.

The Rajshahi management informed reporters that Tamim wanted to concentrate on his batting and did not want the extra responsibility. As a result, Jahurul captained the side against Dhaka Gladiators yesterday with Simon Katich as his deputy.

Tamim, who scored a fluent half-century against Dhaka yesterday, scored 17 in his first game against Chittagong and was out for a duck against Sylhet in the second.

## Shakib laments sparse spending Tk 200, if it was 50 to 100, they would just come

FROM PAGE 16

AFP, Melbourne

1, 4-6, 6-1, 6-4 win.

and have fun. If the crowd doubles I don't think it'll be a loss for anybody," he added.

Tamim echoed Shakib's sentiments, saying that a big crowd at the matches is a distinguishing feature of Bangladesh cricket. "The first thing that I tell people with regard to Bangladesh's cricket whenever I go abroad is that we have close to 30,000 people supporting us in a game, which is quite a unique feature," said Tamim Iqbal at the end of the match between Duronto Rajshahi and Dhaka Gladiators yesterday. Tamim said that the BPL's current crowd shortage was obviously a problem that needed to be addressed.

He was also of the opinion that the lack of foreign players wasn't the reason behind the empty stands. "If tomorrow Chris Gayle plays in one team and Shakib Al Hasan plays in the other, I am sure that people will support Shakib, so I don't think the lack of foreign players is the reason," said Tamim.

## Shakib makes it 3 in 3

Wright and Shakib Al Hasan shared a 79-run stand for the second wicket in 39 balls and propelled the Gladiators to a solid 93 for 1 at the end of the first ten overs.

Shakib was the more aggressive of the two as he smacked Ben Edmondson, playing his first game for Rajshahi in the competition, for four boundaries in his first over. The first four was hit straight over the bowler's head, the second slashed behind point, the third delivery was lofted over the bowler while the fourth one was a slower ball smartly guided to the third man fence. The rampage didn't just stop there. The all-rounder launched Taijul Islam for two 4s and a six in the very next over.

Following Shakib's blitz, it was Luke Wright's turn to join the party and he too attacked the bowlers at will. He first hit Edmondson for a six over long-on and then dispatched Simon Katich for three fours in the ninth over. Wright got to his half-century in the 11th over with a four through short fine leg off Moeen Ali before getting out to him in the same over.

The very next over saw Shakib get bowled by Naeem Islam Jr and that's when the game turned. The Gladiators scored only 50 runs off the last eight overs. Quick wickets towards the end of the innings, courtesy of some good bowling by the spinners, especially Moeen Ali who finished with figures of 3-19 in four, restricted Dhaka to 156 for 8.

### 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 Sangho 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-

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.

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CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

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CRYPTOQUIP

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Yesterday's Cryptoquip: FUNNY OLD TV

SERIES ABOUT A PARTICULARLY DEVILISH

BUNCH OF PUPPIES: "THE LITTER RASCALS." Today's Cryptoquip Clue: X equals F