

Tennis fest concludes

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 Viqarunnisa Noon School and College were crowned champions of the 3rd Inter-School Tennis Carnival which concluded at the National Tennis Complex in Ramna yesterday. Viqarunnisa grabbed seven championship medals along with six runners-up medals to beat nearest rivals Scholastica School, which won six championship medals and one runners-up medal. BSRIS School, BAF Shaheen School and Manarat International School finished runners-up in two events each.

SCHOOL HANDBALL Final fours confirmed

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 Narinda High School set up a semifinal clash against Play Pen School while Sunnydale set up the other semifinal encounter against St. Gregory's School in the Polar Ice Cream 21st School Handball Tournament. Both semifinals will take place at the National Handball Stadium in Palton today. In the girls' section, Scholastica, Dhanmondi Tutorial, Sunnydale and Viqarunnisa Noon School confirmed their berth in the last four after posting victories yesterday. Scholastica will face Dhanmondi Tutorial while Sunnydale will play against Viqarunnisa in the semifinals.

Guangzhou title goes to Zhang

AFP, Beijing
 Chinese wildcard Zhang Shuai overpowered qualifier Vania King of the United States 7-6 (7/1), 6-1 to win the 500,000 dollars WTA Guangzhou Open on Saturday. Zhang, who had the home crowd firmly behind her, claimed the title in just over 90 minutes to make a nonsense of her lowly world ranking of 112. King, ranked 124 in the world, more than held her own in the narrow first set that went to tiebreak. But Zhang rammed home a 7-1 advantage in the tiebreak and then sent King packing in the one-sided second set. All the seeds went out of the Guangzhou showpiece by the semifinal stage.



BIG CLASH TODAY: Abahani captain Shahriar Nafees (L) takes a breather while Mohammedan captain Mashrafe Bin Mortaza (second from right) and coach Khaled Mashud discuss team strategies during their respective training sessions in Mirpur yesterday. **PHOTOS: STAR**

Abahani, MSC rekindle rivalry

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While football fans all around the world will be busy gnawing their nails over the Manchester derby tonight -- City take on United at nine pm -- there is another set of rival teams that will have a face-off, albeit in a different game and with a local touch. Traditional rivals Mohammedan Sporting Club and Abahani Limited will go head to head today at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium, Mirpur, in the third round of the Dhaka Premier League, the lone 50-over domestic cricket tournament.

And while the newly-styled player transfer may have restricted the clubs from forming powerhouses, players of both sides believe that the match shall sustain the intensity normally seen during an 'Abahani-Mohammedan' contest. Unlike the rivalry at Manchester, the one at Mirpur is not likely to have a huge affect on the championship chances of either teams and neither are they deadlocked in terms of a head-to-head analysis. On paper Mohammedan, who have won both their games in the tournament so far, seems to be the better side. Their foreign recruits, Mohammad Nabi -- who hammered a 145 in the first game -- and

Tilakarathne Dilshan have played important roles in both those wins. They will be boosted by the services of Upul Tharanga who re-joined the club following an early exit in the Champions League T20. The bowling front has seen a combined effort so far. Murad Khan with six wickets tops the list, followed by Dilshan's five. Captain Mashrafe Bin Mortaza has picked three wickets so far in what seems to be a steady return from his heel injury. Mashrafe believes that the high intensity of the match will encourage the players to play better. "It does not really matter that there are fewer big names in both sides this year. The intensity will remain the same.

Everybody in the team, including the foreign players, will no doubt put in their best effort because they all know what this game means to us," Mashrafe told reporters during a training session. Abahani have added Sri Lanka's Thilina Kandamby, who arrived yesterday, to their foreign list and he is expected to make an appearance today. Young Mosaddek Hossain, who bats at number five and scored a century in the previous game, seems to be Abahani's best bet with the bat so far. Other than him their batting has mostly depended upon their Sri Lankan recruits, Tharanga Paranavithana and Indika De Saram. Pacer Al-Amin Hossain, who has picked

up 11 wickets in his first two matches, will be expected to play an important part in the game today. On the other hand, Abahani will also want their captain Shahriar Nafees, who has scored just eight runs in two games, to hit form. The day's other games will see Mushfiqur Rahim's Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club take on the Forhad Reza-led Prime Doleshwar Sporting at Fatullah. Sheikh Jamal, who have won their two games will want to maintain the hundred per cent record. Marshal Ayub-led Kalabagan Cricket Academy will also feature today when they take on Khelaghor Samaj Kallyan Samity led by Faisal Hossain at BKSP-3.

Teams look abroad for revival

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Four-time Premier League champions Abahani and defending Super Cup Champions Mohammedan have set their sights on quality foreign recruits in a bid to fight for the league and cup titles as they have just started their preseason training camp. Both historically popular clubs fell behind new giants Sheikh Russel KC and Sheikh Jamal DC as Abahani managed third place in the league while Mohammedan finished fifth. Last season, Abahani failed to even make it to the semifinals of any of the three cup tournaments, while Mohammedan saved face by winning the season-ending Super Cup. The quality of foreign recruits has been blamed as one of the reasons behind the downturn in performance. Now both clubs are looking to new sources and personnel to bolster their squads. Mohammedan, who started their camp yesterday, are mulling recruiting players from SAFF champions Afghanistan and Nepal. Afghan crick-

eter Mohammed Nabi, who is currently playing for Mohammedan in the ongoing Dhaka Premier League, is said to be the mediator for a deal between Afghan booters and the Black and Whites. According to a source within the club, the Motijheel outfit are keen on three Afghan forwards -- Belal Arezou, Mostafa Azadzoy and Sanzar Ahmadi. Mohammedan are also said to be keen on Nepalese footballers Bharat Khawas, Jumanu Rai, Anil Gurung and Bholanath after watching their excellent performance in the SAFF Championship. "We prefer players from the sub-continent as they have proven themselves in the SAFF Championship. The Africans, on the other hand, will have to go through a trial if they have to impress us," informed the source. Manzurul Alam, chairman of the football committee of Mohammedan, admitted that they are thinking about recruiting players from the sub-continent. "We are yet to decide on the foreign players. Africans are under consideration but we have a plan to bring players who performed well in the SAFF

Championship," said Manzurul. Meanwhile, having failed to rope in quality local players and dissatisfied with the old guard, Abahani have set their sights on new African recruits, six of whom (from Morocco and Nigeria) are scheduled to arrive by the end this month for a trial. The Dhanmondi-based outfit started their camp on September 15 with the season-opening Federation Cup still at least two months away. Abahani have already confirmed the services of Osei Morison, last season's top-scorer, from Mohammedan and are looking for better alternatives to veterans Awudu Ibrahim and Samad Yusuf. "We are looking for some quality foreign booters and also have an eye on those we have. After observing the new faces, we will decide whether to take them or keep the old guard," said Satyajit Das Rupu, manager of Abahani yesterday. "We are also trying to appoint a foreign coach for next season as we have bio-data of two British coaches, a Dutch and an Australian coach. Hopefully the recruitment will be done by the first week of October," Rupu added.

Faulty start for Niaz

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Defending champion Grandmaster Niaz Murshed started the Berger Paints 39th National 'A' Chess Championship on the wrong foot as he was held to a draw by Fide Master Khandaker Aminul Islam on the opening day of the meet at the media centre of Bangladesh Olympic Association yesterday. Niaz played with white pieces and was forced to a draw after 17 moves. GM Ziaur Rahman, the highest rated player of the country, also drew his first round game against IM Minhazuddin Ahmed. Playing with black piece, Zia adopted the Hungarian Defense but the ploy did not work and both players agreed for a draw after 59 moves. However the other two GMs participating in the meet -- Abdullah Al Rakib and Enamul Hossain Razib have won their 1st round boards. Rakib, playing with white piece, beat of FM Mehdi Hasan Parag after 34 moves. Razib's Old Indian Defense was too strong for Jamal Ahmed. In the other match Shafiq Ahmed of Golden Chess Club beat FM Mohammad Javed of Access Group. Earlier, the president of the Bangladesh Chess Federation and Commerce Minister GM Quader inaugurated the 39th edition of the chess championship.

Meiyappan charged

AFP, Mumbai

Mumbai police filed charges Saturday against the son-in-law of India's cricket chief for gambling, cheating and conspiracy, in a scandal that has engulfed the country's Twenty20 league. Police formally charged Gurnath Meiyappan, former owner of the Indian Premier League (IPL) team Chennai Super Kings and son-in-law of Narayanaswami Srinivasan, chief of the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI), reports said.

Notts county 40-over champions

AFP, London

Nottinghamshire beat Glamorgan by 87 runs to win the English county 40-over final at Lord's on Saturday. The eventual champions slumped to 90 for four before a fifth-wicket stand of 99 between Australia's David Hussey (42) and Nottinghamshire captain Chris Read (53) helped take the Midlands county to 244 for eight in their 40 overs. Former England fast bowler Simon Jones led Welsh county Glamorgan's attack with two for 36 in his maximum permitted 8 overs. Glamorgan made a steady start to their pursuit of 245 but England left-arm spinner Samit Patel sparked a middle-order collapse. England fast bowler Stuart Broad took the last three wickets as Glamorgan were dismissed for 157.

SCORES IN BRIEF NOTTINGHAMSHIRE: 244 for 8 in 40 overs (Read 53, Hussey 42; Jones 2-36) **GLAMORGAN:** 157 all out in 33 overs (Cooke 46, Allenby 34; Patel 3-21, S Broad 3-29, A Shahzad 3-33) **Result:** Nottinghamshire won by 87 runs

Royals outfox Mumbai

CRICINFO



After an early shower delayed the start by 15 minutes, Royals asked the IPL champions to bat first on a pitch with fresh grass, and kept them down to 142 thanks to Vikramjeet Malik, who possibly wouldn't have been playing had Siddharth Trivedi not been suspended for one year for not reporting an approach by bookies. Mitchell Johnson and Nathan Coulter-Nile, the latter playing in the absence of Lasith Malinga, put the Royals batsmen through a stern test, but were frustrated by Sanju Samson's escaping a plumb lbw when on one. Samson went onto become the youngest player to score a fifty in CLT20. More importantly it saw Royals home. The knock wasn't as convincing as the scorebook will show: even his fifty came up with a massive outside edge on heave, he was beaten next ball, and then - clearly out of place against fast short bowling - gloved one over the keeper. Then again, it was hardly a night where things were what they seemed to be. Mumbai's team sheet slated the comeback man Sachin Tendulkar at No. 4, Rahul Dravid said his side needed no spinner,

and the grass on the pitch promised high and consistent bounce. Tendulkar came out to open, part-time spinner Ashok Menaria bowled the first over, and Malik bowled a nasty grubber in the second over to trap Dwayne Smith lbw. Mumbai hardly looked comfortable against the movement, losing wickets regularly until Rohit Sharma and Kieron Pollard added 52 for the fifth wicket. Rohit, though, edged the returning Malik a ball after hitting for a six, leaving Pollard with a lot to do. Pollard threatened to do the lot, but in the last over of the innings - when a 20 from him looked possible - he edged a wide half-volley through to the keeper. Coulter-Nile hit a six and a four to give Mumbai some momentum going into the second innings, and got lucky with the ball too when Rahul Dravid cut a wide ball straight to point. Johnson wasn't as lucky when he had Samson dead in front to a 150kmph swinger. **SCORES IN BRIEF MUMBAI INDIANS:** 142 for 7 in 20 overs (Sharma 44, Pollard 42; Malik 3-24) **RAJASTHAN ROYALS:** 143 for 3 in 19.4 overs (Samson 54, Rahane 33) **Result:** Rajasthan Royals won by 7 wickets



President of Bangladesh Chess Federation and Commerce Minister GM Quader inaugurates the Berger Paints 39th National 'A' Chess Championship at the media centre of Bangladesh Olympic Association Bhaban yesterday. **PHOTO: STAR**