

Premier Div kabadi

UNB, Dhaka
Bangladesh Rifles and Bangladesh Police earned comfortable wins against their respective rivals in the opening day matches of the eighth Premier Division Kabadi League at the court near the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

Vienna title goes to Suarez

AFP, Vienna
Argentine sixth seed Paola Suarez ousted Croatian qualifier Karolina Sprem in three sets to win her third career title at the 170,000-dollar (145,200 euro) WTA event here on Saturday.

Becker goes to court in Sept

AFP, Munich
Three-time Wimbledon champion Boris Becker will appear in court here next September following the collapse of his internet company.

Administrators of his internet company Sportgate are demanding 1.5 million euros damages and interest from the retired player who has not covered losses he had undertaken in writing in June 2000.

Razzaq's reminder

FROM PAGE 13
Fall of wickets: 1-53, 2-82, 3-86, 4-134, 5-199, 6-199, 7-225
Did not bat: Whiley, Grove
Bowler O M R W
Akhtar 10 0 44 0
Shabbir 8 0 44 1
Gul 10 0 31 1
Razzaq 10 0 55 4
Hafeez 10 1 26 1
Younis 2 0 15 0

Roddick sees Agassi off



AFP, London

Andy Roddick beat world number one Andre Agassi for the first time to book his place in the Queen's Club grasscourt final with a 6-1, 6-7, 7-6 win here Saturday.

Roddick, according to the court-side speed gun, delivered one serve at 149 mph (239.7 kph). If ratified that would equal the mark set by Britain's Greg Rusedski at Indian Wells in 1998 for the fastest recorded serve in professional tennis history.

He will now face Sebastian Grosjean in the final after the Frenchman beat Britain's Tim Henman - three times a Queen's finalist in the past four years - in straight sets.

Grosjean, who knocked out three-time defending champion Lleyton Hewitt on Friday, won 6-3, 6-4. "I like grass," said Grosjean. "So I'm not surprised," he added after beating quadruple Wimbledon semi-finalist Henman.

"I won my first title on grass at Nottingham in 2000. "But maybe Tim was not 100 percent because of his shoulder," said Grosjean after Henman needed on-court treatment for a longstanding injury.

Earlier an enthralling all-American battle saw Roddick, at 20 thirteen years younger than Agassi, serve 27 aces.

But Roddick 4-0 down against Agassi in their previous meetings, also matched his opponent's groundstrokes and saved a match point as well.

Afterwards former Wimbledon champion Agassi said: "I was pretty fortunate to even have a shout of winning that match. The way he was serving and moving and the way I was hitting the ball, I deserved to lose that match."

Informed of Roddick's potentially record-equalling serve, Agassi asked reporters if he had returned it. Told he had, Agassi joked: "Sounds like I got some sort of record there too."

Agassi added that while he expected the 150 mph service barrier to be broken, returners would still have a chance.

"The good news is that you've still got to get it in. Like facing a baseball pitcher, there are ways to get around it."

Roddick, coached by Brad Gilbert who used to look after Agassi, was unconcerned by his service speed.

"You try to serve with pace to get it past one of the great returners of all time, not to beat the clock."

Turning to the match overall, Roddick said: "It wasn't the most convincing victory but against Andre it's not going to be. I felt I played pretty flawless tennis in the first set but the third set I shouldn't have won."

"I was down a break and you don't expect him to miss two balls at the end of the match."

Roddick started the match with a 139 mph ace and after holding serve broke Agassi, who on Friday dethroned Hewitt as world number one, for a 2-0 lead.

Then an Agassi forehand into the net gave Roddick his first match point at 7-6 which the young American converted when Agassi hit a forehand long.



PHOTO: AFP
American Andy Roddick plays a forehand against compatriot Andre Agassi at the Queen's Club yesterday.

Jones looks for August return

CRICINFO, London

Young England bowler Simon Jones suggested he could be back playing cricket in two months time as his recovery from a horrific knee injury continues to make good progress.

He had a major operation to rebuild his knee in February after he tore the ligaments in the joint during that sickening tumble in Brisbane on the opening day of the 2002-03 Ashes series.

Talking in Cardiff after a brief bowl in the nets with his leg heavily strapped, Jones said: "Things are going well and I'm happy."

Reflecting on the injury, he said: "It was an absolute nightmare but it's all in the past and I am looking to the future. I've had a chat with the physio and the medical staff around here and maybe I could play again at the end of August."

However, after such a serious operation, an August return might be pushing it a bit, and Jones did sensibly offer a note of caution: "If I'm not right I won't play, but I'll be looking to go to Australia for the winter."

Vitali vows to fight till last moment

AFP, Los Angeles

Former heavyweight champ Vitali Klitschko admitted he quit before he could get knocked out in his only loss, but he insists there will be repeat scene when he faces Lennox Lewis on June 21.

"It was right decision," said Klitschko on Thursday. "If you are injured and can't move and then lose by KO then it is too late to explain."

Klitschko quit with an injured shoulder to start the 10th round in April 2000 World Boxing Organization title fight against Chris Byrd.

The 31-year-old Ukrainian (32-1, 30 knockouts) is the number one contender for Lewis' World Boxing Council heavyweight title. The two will square off at Staples Center arena.

"I am back right now. Everything is good with my left shoulder I want to show how good it is."

Vaughan off

FROM PAGE 13
Table with 5 columns: Dale, Jones, Croft, Cosker, Thomas. Rows show scores for various players.

WALE
Croft c Gough b Giles 59
Thomas run out 10
Powell run out 7
Maynard lbw b Gough 9
Hemp c Solanki b Giles 38
Dale b Ali 25
Wallace c Troughton b Vaughan 12
Kasprovicz run out 15
Harrison c Clarke b Anderson 6
Jones not out 9
Cosker c Vaughan b Ali 10
Extras: (b-2, lb-6, nb-9, w-10) 27
Total: (All out in 48.4 overs) 227
Fall of wickets: 1-21, 2-35, 3-56, 4-138, 5-139, 6-165, 7-191, 8-203, 9-206

Table with 5 columns: Bowler, Anderson, Gough, Flintoff, Ali, Giles, Vaughan. Rows show bowling figures for various players.

Result: England won by eight runs.

Tim, Dwain showdown

AFP, London

The world's fastest sprinter, Tim Montgomery, is to go head to head with Britain's European champion Dwain Chambers for the first time since the American set the 100m record of 9.78sec in Paris last year.

Chambers finished second in that race with a time of 9.87sec that equalled Linford Christie's European record. The two have not met since.

Montgomery will also line up against former world junior champion Mark Lewis-Francis at an international meeting of the United States, Russia and Britain at Glasgow on June 29.

The American is using the race as part of his build-up to the world championships in Paris in August, where he is aiming to win gold to add to the silver medal he won behind Maurice Greene two years ago in Edmonton.

"I'm looking forward to the match, it's always a pleasure to run in Britain and to represent my country against world-class opposition," Montgomery said.

Chambers, who is on the comeback trail after injury and a split from long-time coach Mike McFarlane, said he was looking forward to the chance to turn the tables on Montgomery.

Sharapova sent packing



REUTERS, Birmingham

Russian qualifier Maria Sharapova's impressive run at the Edgbaston Open ended in the semifinals when she was beaten 6-2, 2-6, 7-6 by Shinobu Asagoe on Saturday.

The 16-year-old blonde, dubbed the new Anna Kournikova, kept the photographers busy as she walked on court with a determined look at the Edgbaston Priory Club but eventually ran out of steam against her Japanese opponent.

Asagoe will face third seed Magdalena Maleeva in the final.

"I will take away a lot of experience from this and a lot of confidence from beating some top names," said Sharapova, who claimed the scalps of top seed Elena Dementieva and Nathalie Dechy on her way to the last four.

"There are a lot of things I learned here and there about my game."

Playing her first WTA semi-final, Sharapova got off to a flying start as Asagoe struggled to control the Russian's powerful groundstrokes

and easily claimed the first set.

But the unseeded Asagoe came charging back in the second.

With both players failing to gain the upper hand in the deciding set, the contest headed into a tiebreak, where two wild forehands from Sharapova proved to be her undoing.

"I needed a little more energy at the end," said Sharapova, who was given a wildcard for Wimbledon earlier this week.

Bulgarian Maleeva battled past second seed Eleni Daniilidou of Greece 6-3, 5-7, 6-4 in the other semifinal.

Daniilidou established a 3-0 lead in the third set after winning nine games out of 10 but caved in as Maleeva displayed her fighting qualities.

"I've been playing tennis long enough to know that it's never ever over till it's over," said a delighted Maleeva.

WC preps their priority
Two-way battles for top WICB posts



REUTERS, Kingstown

The build up to the 2007 World Cup is expected to be the focal point of campaigns as the West Indies Cricket Board (WICB) announced nominations for its two top posts on Saturday.

William Rodriguez, of Trinidad and Tobago, will contest the WICB presidency with Guyana's Chetram Singh, while current vice-president Val Branks, of the Leeward Islands, will face a challenge from the Windward Islands' Lennox John.

The ballots are being held in the wake of Wes Hall's decision on Wednesday not to seek re-election as president.

Apart from the usual range of proposals for restoring the region's lost cricketing dominance, preparations for the 2007 World Cup have already given the WICB election a special flavour.

Recent tours by Australia and now Sri Lanka have highlighted the logistical challenges of staging a World Cup in an extensive region of independent island states, most of whom lack financial resources, and raised concerns about the West Indies' ability to solve these prob-

lems in time. Trinidad's Piarco airport earned unwelcome publicity when Australia suffered significant baggage theft there last month.

The current Sri Lankan touring side have also complained bitterly about the late arrival of team equipment on several different flights, causing the team to miss practice time.

"What we have gone through so far at Barbados and at St Vincent is not a healthy sign for West Indies cricket if they are to successfully host the 2007 cricket World Cup," said Sri Lanka team manager Ajith Jayasekera earlier this week.

Part of the problems stems from the fact that the island-hopping flights connecting much of the Caribbean offer limited space for passengers and baggage.

"The logistics of moving things around the Caribbean is something that has to be addressed right away," vice-presidential candidate Lennox John said.

"We will have to think of some form of transportation either by sea of special charter flights for players and their luggage, especially between the smaller islands."

The state of repair of some of the regions' most important cricket stadiums is another cause for concern.

WICB chief executive and world cup organiser Chris Dehring has warned that time is running short for reforms on hallowed but aging arenas such as Barbados' Kensington Oval and Jamaica's Sabina Park.

During a news conference before a recent one-day game with Australia in his native Trinidad and Tobago, West Indies skipper Brian Lara complained bitterly about the "pathetic" state of the practice facilities at the Queen's Park Oval.

However, all is not doom and gloom for the West Indies.

Leeward Island cricket administrators have led the way by investing heavily in the idea of sports tourism and new facilities there won praise from the Australian team.

Grenada was rewarded with its first Test match last year, in a drawn encounter with New Zealand, while St Lucia's Beausejour Stadium will obtain Test status when the West Indies take on Sri Lanka next week.

The WICB elections will take place at an annual general meeting in Roseau, Dominica, slated for July 12-13.

Wes Hall, a 65-year old Barbadian whose fast bowling terrorised batsmen in the 1960s, said a pre-existing medical condition had persuaded him to stand down.

Halle Open Federer's



REUTERS, Halle

World number five Roger Federer warmed up for Wimbledon in ideal fashion when he crushed German Nicolas Kiefer 6-1, 6-3 in the Halle Open final on Sunday to win his first ATP grasscourt title.

The top-seeded Swiss needed just 68 minutes to claim his fourth title of the year, putting him alongside an elite band of active players to have won on all four surfaces - grass, clay, hard courts and indoors.

Having been beaten by Kiefer in the semifinals in Halle last year, Federer looked in the mood for revenge and he began in style, storming to a 5-0 lead as his opponent, perhaps suffering from nerves, struggled to find his best form.

Kiefer, runner-up to Yevgeny Kafelnikov in 2002, stopped the rot by holding serve in the sixth game but it was only a temporary reprieve as the Swiss served out for the set.

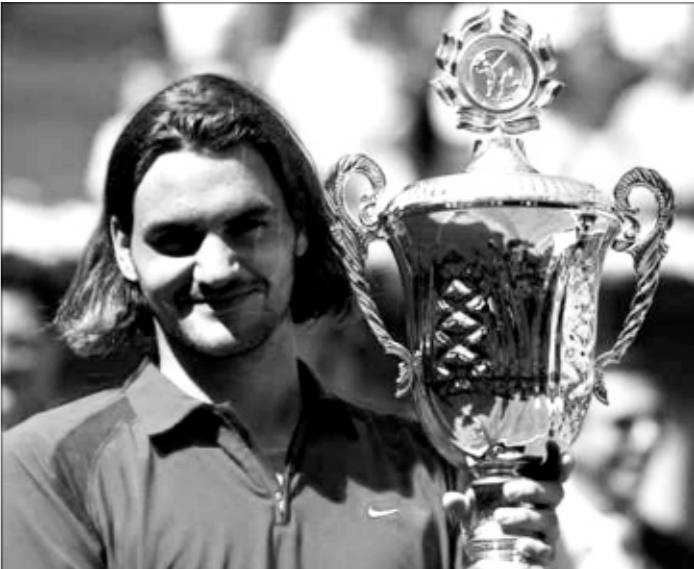
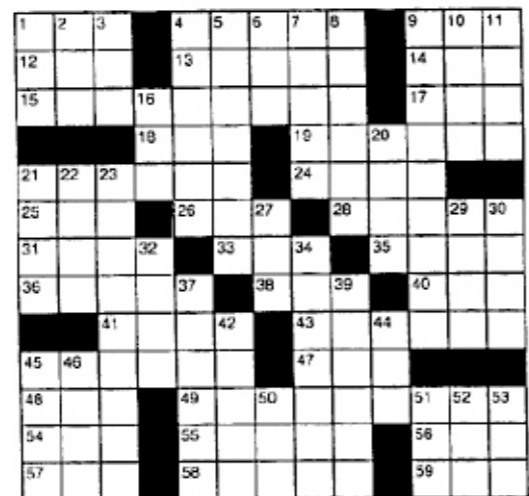


PHOTO: REUTERS
Roger Federer of Switzerland holds the winner's trophy after beating German Nicolas Kiefer in the Halle Open final yesterday.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS
41 Cheat at hide-and-see
43 Singer of you Warwick
45 Chant
47 Wilde-beast
48 Miss Piggy
49 Shot
54 Bustle
55 Worship
56 Prompt
57 Longing
58 Mississippi
59 Prior to
60 Bric-a-
61 Dillion or
62 Damon
63 out a living
64 Chic no longer
65 be wrong, but ...
66 Prolu-berance
67 DiMaggio or Narnath
68 Lipinski's surface
69 Miss Brooks'
70 Born



CRYPTOQUIP

Q U I W F O H I R Z W G Z J O X H V H R
J H E R G U Z X X M Y H X M H N H
U H Q M X X U F N H Y H H W
" M W E Z G V Z I M W F V H E . "

Saturday's Cryptoquip: BY WORKING ON MY MASTER'S AS WELL AS MY DOCTORATE, I'M BEING KILLED BY DEGREES.
Today's Cryptoquip Clue: X equals L.

The Cryptoquip is a substitution cipher in which one letter stands for another. If you think that X equals O, it will equal O throughout the puzzle. Single letters, short words and words using an apostrophe give you clues to locating vowels. Solution is by trial and error.



PHOTO: STAR
State Minister for Youth and Sports Fazlur Rahman inaugurates the Shahjalal Bank Second Division Football League at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium yesterday. The league is the first event of the Dhaka Metropolitan Football League Committee's proposed calendar for this season.