### DIV I HANDBALL

## Maiden crown for Menjis

SPORTS REPORTER

Menjis Krira Chakra clinched the Bactrol First Division Handball League title with a 38-23 victory over Bhratritta Samaj Kalyan Sangha in the last Super Four match at the outer stadium hand-ball ground yesterday.

The winners led the first half 23-

It was the first time that Menjis won this league

Rafique was the top scorer with ten goals while Asad added eight for the winners. Faruque netted nine goals for the losers.

### JFA CUP

## Narayanganj zonal champs

**SPORTS REPORTER** 

Mohammad Sohel scored a hattrick to take Narayanganj into the final round of the JFA Cup Under-16 Football tournament vesterday.

All the goals came from Sohel as Narayanganj blanked Barisal 3-0 at the Chandpur Stadium to become zonal champions.

Earlier, Gaibandha, Ranghamati, Satkhira, Tangail, Kurigram, Dhaka and Bagerhat confirmed their final round berths.

The final round will kick off on January 21 at the Bangabandhu

### **Botha will know** in 48 hours

AFP, Brisbane

The South African team is expected to get an ICC report on off-spinner Johan Botha's bowling action within the next 48 hours, a team spokesman said here Saturday.

Botha was placed on report for a suspected illegal bowling action following the third Sydney Test against Australia on Friday.

Council (ICC) has 14 days to complete the report but has told the South African team the case will be treated as a top priority.

The International Cricket

A South African team spokesman said the report would be delivered "either tomorrow or Monday".

Botha, who made his Test debut in the eight-wicket loss to Australia, has modelled his bowling, particularly his 'doosra' which turns the opposite way to a conventional off-spinner -- on that of Indian finger-spinner Harbhajan Singh.

Harbhajan was previously reported for throwing by English match referee Chris Broad who, has also reported Sri Lankan Pakistan pair Shabbir Ahmed and Mohammad Hafeez in the past three years.

Broad said in a statement Friday that Botha's 'doosra' was of partic-

"Concerns have been raised by the match officials over the general legality of his bowling action and, in particular, his 'doosra' and quicker deliveries when viewed with the naked eye," Broad said.

"We are therefore requesting the ICC to commission a biomechanical report into the bowler's action in accordance with the process introduced last year.'

Botha was included in the tourists' squad for Monday's Twenty20 clash against Australia here but his involvement in that game, as well as the ensuing Tri-Series, could rest on the report's findings.

The ICC said Botha would have to undergo independent analysis of his action by a member of their panel of human movement specialists.

If Botha is withdrawn from the ODI series, it will leave the South Africans' bowling ranks thin, with paceman Andre Nel carrying a foot injury and Makhaya Ntini resting at home with a knee ligament injury.

New Zealand chase clean sweep, Sri Lanka play for pride

## Hingis to face **Henin in Sydney** Int'l opener

AFP, Sydney

Martina Hingis will get a serious test of her comeback to the women's tennis tour in a firstround blockbuster with fellow former world number one Justine Henin-Hardenne at the Sydney International tournament.

The pair were drawn together here Saturday with Hingis unseeded and playing her second tournament after a three-year lay-

The game's top two-ranked players, Lindsay Davenport and Kim Clijsters, have both questioned Hingis' comeback credentials and she will have no greater opportunity to prove her worth than against Henin-Hardenne.

Henin-Hardenne, coming off an injury-disrupted year, is the fifth seed in a strong women's draw, headed by Clijsters and world number three Amelie Mauresmo.

## Henry staying at Highbury

Football

BBC ONLINE, undated

Arsenal striker Thierry Henry has insisted he will stay at the club beyond next season.

The French star, 28, was free to leave the club in the summer of 2007 and has been strongly linked with a move to Barcelona at the end

"The truth is I love this club and I've made my mind up to stay," he told The Sun.

"I can say to all my fans and the people who care about me I want to lead the team out in the new sta-

Arsenal will leave Highbury at the end of this season to move to the new multimillion pound Emirates Stadium at Ashburton

"I'll talk to (manager) Arsene Wenger, to (vice-chairman) David Dein and the board and talk of the future," he added.

"My mind is to stay and we have to sort this out.'

Henry joined Arsenal from Juventus in August 1999 and earlier this season broke Ian Wright's club goalscoring record of 185.

But his contract expires in 18 months' time and he had previously said he would not decide whether to sign a new deal until the end of this season, leading to links with Spanish club Barcelona. "There was a lot of ridiculous

speculation," Henry said. "But the truth is this, I never spoke with or met with a single person from any other club at any time.

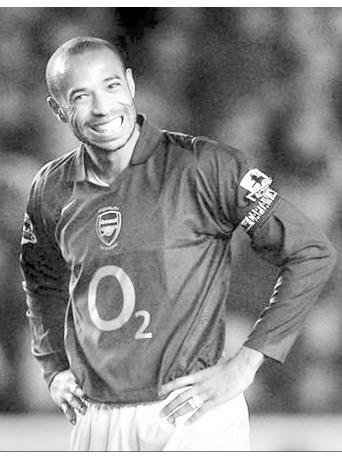
"This will put an end to all the stories. We can move on.

was tempted to leave in the wake of fellow Frenchman Patrick Vieira's exit last summer, saying: "I'm still

"But when I see the fans and the way they talk to me, it helped make my decision.'

"They didn't boo me or make life difficult for me on the pitch."

However former Arsenal star Nigel Winterburn believes the unners may need to match Henry's aspirations for silverware to ensure the French striker stays at



THIERRY HENRY

## Kiwis target clean sweep

Cricket

The New Zealand cricketers have no intention of easing up on Sri Lanka as they aim for a clean sweep in their one-day cricket series which ends here Sunday.

They are adamant a 5-0 outcome is the right therapy after being on the end of a whitewash themselves in South Africa two months ago.

For the dejected Sri Lankans, their motivation rests with an urgent need to restore some pride before heading to the tri-series South Africa with Australia and next week.

Sri Lanka started their New Zealand series a game down, that being their loss from the sole game played in the aborted 2004 tour following the Boxing Day tsunami.

Jet-lagged, they collapsed to a seven-wicket loss in the opening match of the revived tour, then narrowed the margin to a fivewicket loss in the second encoun-

They were poised to snap the losing streak in the third match in Wellington on Friday when closing in on New Zealand's modest 224 for nine before a dramatic batting collapse saw them fall 21 runs

Now, instead of crossing the Tasman filled with confidence for their Australian assignment, they face the ignominy of a clean sweep only a month after India trampled them 6-1.

New Zealand skipper Stephen Fleming, who missed the first two games while on paternity leave, said the feeling in the home camp is that nothing less than a 5-0 result

"It's pretty strong. I've been watching the first couple of games and the feeling in the side is very determined. Five-nil is certainly the goal," he said.

New Zealand have been criticised for becoming too onedimensional, preferring to chase after winning the toss, but in the Wellington match they broke the mould and batted first.

"They feel they should do every-

The general uncertainty of the

"No one in the room was under

"The players feel they are risks,

The players' decision clears the

any illusion that this thing might be

political and otherwise, to taking a

way for Zimbabwe to send a team to

the under-19 World Cup in Sri Lanka

can be gauged by an incident which

took place in a Melbourne hotel in

2003 when a woman complained of

someone trying to drill into her room

revealed that the thuds the woman

heard came from a bat hitting the

floor as Tendulkar practised his shots

score," said Tendulkar, "It is very

important to be determined. To me

improving his batting, Tendulkar

said: "You can't improve after a

add any more because it would then

spill. But you can change the temper-

always changing. It is good to look in

terms of improving but then all this

can happen only to a certain point."

"You are good only when you

Asked if there was scope for

"It is like a cup full of tea. You can't

"As a human, as a player you are

in the wee hours of the morning.

Investigations by the hotel staff

from the floor above.

that is perfection.

certain point.

igger than us now," Field said.

players' plight also played a role in

thing in their power to keep Test

status, and clearly if they all walk off

the job today it won't be long before

that is taken away.

Saturday's decision.

in February.

One last hurrah

Fleming conceded it was not one of their strengths and it was an area that needed improvement, however they would not compromise a win for the sake of developing the side.

"There's been a lot of talk about doing things differently, but that will never compromise the want to win and that's exactly the same here," he said. "It (the Wellington wicket) screamed of us batting first, and

it's something we haven't been comfortable with, so we have to get used to doing it. "I won't say we'll have another go at it in Napier, because conditions may suit us bowling first,

but when we come around again (to bat first), we'll be better for it. Fleming is in doubt for the

final game with a groin strain, as is paceman Bond with a thigh strain and all-rounder Scott

Sri Lanka remained without veteran Sanath Jayasuriya who dislocated a shoulder when he slipped in the shower earlier in the

### Zim cricketers **Clijsters** paramount, if we don't have test cricket we have no jobs and we have

hold out much hope that their dissatisfaction over the new ZC contracts, which are based heavily on performance incentives, would be settled "The guys don't feel for a second

that it will be resolved by then, but the feeling is that this is better way of keeping the pressure on than by just walking away," Field said.

"They've put their pockets in front of their principles in the hopes that they can persevere and preserve

their income. Field said the players were mindful of trying to protect Zimbabwe's test status, which could be threatened if the International Cricket Council decides the county is not putting its best available team on the field.

"The players feel that Test status is

"Pressure will always be there when

you play for the country and millions

expect you to do well," Tendulkar

"I am still trying to deal with these

"Cricket is all about handling

pressure and I have lived with it all

through my career. Why worry and

increase the pressure. I always look

Asked what made him proud,

Tendulkar has had an unblem-

ished career. No one pointed a finger

at him during the match-fixing

scandal which rocked cricket in 2000.

He is admired and respected by

once in a lifetime and I am privileged

he played in my time," said Pakistan

"Cricketers like Sachin come

Tendulkar's devotion to the game

team-mates and rivals alike.

legend Wasim Akram.

Tendulkar was quick to reply "my

ressures, but I leave this pressure

behind once I step onto the field.

to try and control these things.

discipline.'

said in a recent interview

clinches **HK** title no financial security for the players,

AFP, Hong Kong

US Open champion Kim Cliisters downed world number one Lindsay Davenport 6-3, 7-5 in a hard-fought Champions Challenge final here on Saturday.

The Belgian world number two overcame a nervous start to win the exhibition tournament featuring four of the top 10 women players in a boost for her Australian Open campaign.

Clijsters, 22, fought back from 3-1 down in the first set to break twice for 5-3 before serving out the set.

Both players struggled to hold serve in a sea-sawing second set before Davenport broke for 5-3 when Clijsters found the net after a lengthy rally.

But the Belgian recovered to break twice and won with an overhead smash on her own serve after 75 minutes.

Clijsters, who beat China's Zheng Jie and Russian Elena Dementieva to reach the final in the eight-player event, said her game still needed improvement before the season's first Grand Slam starting on January 16.

"This tournament has been perfect to work on a lot of things and look at things we need to work on. I'm going to Sydney next and there's definitely a lot of improvement to look forward to," she said.

## Tenth round

FROM PAGE 12

comparatively easy task as they face Îndira Road at BKSP. No-hoppers Agrani Bank and

Orient Sporting Club will meet at

the Comilla Stadium. The eleventh and final round will be held on January 16.

### INTERNET, undated German consumer protection group Stiftung Warentest claim a

German stadium

fears emerge

number of World Cup stadiums have serious safety deficiencies.

In a brief statement, ahead of a news conference later this month, Stiftung Warentest cast serious doubts over the ability of some stadiums to cope in a fire or if crowd panic broke out after checking the 12 venues for this summer's tournament.

The country has spent 1.5 billion euros on upgrading the stadiums in question ahead of the World Cup which will get underway in Munich on June 9 and ends with the final in Berlin on July 9.

However Stiftung Warentest said it has, "examined the construction safety of the World Cup stadiums and in places identified serious deficiencies that could have grave consequences if panic broke out."

A full news conference will take place on January 19, while World Cup organisers say they are aware of the survey, despite not being consulted about them, and are open to constructive criticism.

A spokesman said "One thing is certain, namely that the World Cup will begin on June 9 and will take place in these 12 stadiums."

The study follows on from Kaiserslautern's Fritz Walter Stadium needing to be closed for a few days in December after a large crack appear in the east stand.

The roof of Eintracht Frankfurt's new Waldstadion proved unable to keep out the rain during the Confederations Cup final last year, while cracks appeared in the concrete at Nuremberg's Frankenstadion during a German Cup match.

## Liton, Arif

FROM PAGE 12 Moroccan Rachidi and Nigerian

Another Nigerian recruit of Muktijoddha Jeremiah has been asked to explain within seven days why the disciplinary committee will not take action against him.

"The suspended players will not able to take part in any BFF competitions. We had to take the harsh measures for greater interest of the game because it was unacceptable what happened in the two semifinals," said Monjur Hossain Malu, secretary of NFL and deputy secretary of BFF.

## Ponting

'It has just turned out to be an almost perfect Test match for the

before playing a three-Test and one-day series in South Africa in February-March.

## Dungarpur

FROM PAGE 12

India or abroad. I think this puts a big question mark on the integrity of whoever is doing this.

channel had quoted Raj Singh as saving: "Souray is not a student of the game. He is also not a role model of a captain. A captain cannot be the laziest and possibly the worst fielder of the side. According to the channel, Raj Singh had also spoken of John Wright's unhappiness at Ganguly's slovenly ways. He was reported as saying that Wright had expressed his frustration many times, but "he was a little mild. He had huge

problems with Souray. Ganguly, along with Virender Sehwag, Anil Kumble and Parthiv Patel, arrives in Lahore on Saturday. After the furore over his non-selection for the Ahmedabad Test against Sri Lanka and the subsequent recall to the team for this tour, this was yet another needless incident ahead of a series that means so much.

### Sachin shines FROM PAGE 12

ground in Lahore on Saturday

INDIA: First innings

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Iftikhar	10	2	33	0
Arafat	17	3	61	1
Irshad	13	2	44	1
Farhat	8	0	36	1
Amjad	16	0	80	0
PAKISTAN A:				
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Toss: India Umpires: Riazuddin and Zameer

## Real are a great side: Riquelme

Football

INTERNET, undated

Villarreal's Juan Roman Riquelme has said Real Madrid are still a 'great side'' ahead of Sunday's showdown. The Argentina playmaker has helped his side into fourth - a point ahead of a Real side in turmoil - but Riquelme knows the clash at El Madrigal will be no walk in the park.

> "We've got a big game on Sunday against a great team and I hope that we'll have everything well prepared as we are going to need it," said Riquelme.

"Real Madrid is a great side, with great players, and we're going to have to produce a great display to

Real are likely to be missing striker Ronaldo through injury, while new signing Antonio Cassano - signed from Roma in a 5.5m euro deal in midweek - is short of match fitness and will not make his debut.

illarreal still start as underdogs.

can to cause an upset.

## Zoff impressed by Fiorentina

Football

INTERNET, undated

Former Fiorentina boss Dino Zoff admits he has been bowled over by the new squad and especially goalkeeper Sebastien Frey.

"I predict a very interesting second half of the season, with Fiorentina consolidating their position as the fourth major force in Serie A." noted the Coach in an interview with Italian newspaper Il Messaggero.

"The club has made some intelligent and specific signings to reinforce the squad and, as you can see from the results, that kind of

Zoff's time in charge of the Viola

at the end of last term they only just avoided relegation. The arrival of tactician Cesare

Prandelli and a host of new stars have given them a different dimension and currently see the team challenging for a spot in the Champions League.

The main star has been Capocannoniere Luca Toni, but World Cup winning goalkeeper Zoff had praise for a more unsunghero.

"I have been extremely impressed with Frey," said the ex-Italy shot-stopper. "The Frenchman has made enormous progress this year and finally lived up to that great poten-

Zoff isn't the only boss to have noticed Frey's form, as it's claimed Arsenal's Arsene Wenger is interested in taking him to the

## **Country comes** first: Weah

Football

team," added Ponting. Australia and South Africa will series in January-February

from any batsman whether from

On Friday evening, an Indian TV

and Pakistan A at the Bagh-e-Jinnah

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otal: (For four wkts in 77 overs)298							
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ware Solution time: 21 mins **26** Bar 30 Lubricat 31 Combusted 32 With Anjum, Mohammad Wasim, Hasan Raza, Bazid Khan, Mansoor Amiad. 33 Counted Umar Gul, Yasir Arafat. 35 Actress Turner

36 Stockings

But Riquelme says the strength n depth of the Real squad means

"Even if Ronaldo doesn't play, there's Baptista, Guti or Zidane. They have a big squad and any player can step in," he said.

"We can't think that we're untouchable. We're lucky to be in a good situation, but we can't forget that they are favourites. It's Real who are under obligation to win. and we'll try and do everything we

planning has paid off."

# was not particularly successful, as

BBC ONLINE, undated

Liberia's former World and African Footballer of the Year, George Weah, has said that the continent's players should put their countries ahead of their clubs.

row between clubs and national teams is dominating the headlines, in the run up to the African Nations Cup that kicks off on 20 January. But for Weah there is no dilemma: "All the top African

Weah's comments come as the

Nations Cup. "The players are role models, no matter what happens or they feel about their clubs, their nation is also important.

players should go to the African

"Young people want to see them play and promoting the image of the African game is very important." Weah also admitted that he understood the players' dilemma at having to chose between club and country.

"I understand the frustration of

players sometimes they are not

looked after well and then they go

back to their clubs and lose their place in the team," he told BBC "The authorities then don't try and back you up or intervene with

the clubs to try and explain things

37 Composer

of 104

phonies

38 Post-

CROSSWORD

**ACROSS** 

1 Festive

5 "Jabber-

wocky"

forte

Got

Fun?

er's

"Sometimes when you lose your place at the club then the national don't recall you and the you have lost everything.'

## **Hungary booter** dead in Cyprus

AFP, Nicosia Hungarian international and Apollon Limassol FC player Gabor Zavadszky was found dead in his Cyprus åpartment shortly after midnight, Cypriot police said

Saturday. The 31-year-old midfielder was found on ȟis bed at his Limassol apartment by friends shortly after midnight on Friday, after phone

calls went answered.

ruled out foul play and club officials believe the death could be related to an injury he picked up playing in a cup match on Wednesday. An autopsy will be carried out

Police officers sent to the scene

later Saturday to determine the exact cause of death, said police. An announcement on the Apollon website said the player died suddenly from "pathological causes due to a possible pulmonary embo-

Apollon are currently top of the

Cyprus Championship and remain

## dreaming of Scudetto INTERNET, undated

Cambiasso still

Esteban Cambiasso claims that 2006 will see Inter end their 15-year Scudetto drought with a remarkable fight back against Juventus.

"Everything is possible in football," said the midfielder. "We cannot influence the results of others, but we can pick up where we left off with the same spirit when we take on Siena."

The Nerazzurri are eight points adrift of the Serie A leaders, but are the form team of the moment after six consecutive victories.

"We have to continue along our own path and the fact that 4,000 fans have come to watch us train in the height of Winter proves the players aren't the only ones to believe in this Scudetto.'

Cambiasso has been one of Inter's most reliable elements since arriving on a free transfer from Real Madrid in 2004 and gave his opinion on how Antonio Cassano will settle in Spain. "Cassano did well to join Real,"

assured the Argentine who spent two seasons at the club. "He is certainly a player worthy of the Madrid shirt and deserves to be a Galactico.'

## Garce fails dope test

**REUTERS,** Buenos Aires

Olimpo defender Ariel Garce has failed a doping test, the Argentine Football Association (AFA) said on its official website on Friday.

The AFA said Garce tested positive for an undisclosed substance following his team's 2-1 defeat at Gimnasia-Jujuy on December 4. He will appear before a disciplinary hearing at the end of

Garce has also played for River

He has made two full appear-

Plate and Colon as well as Mexico's

## ances for Argentina, in friendlies against Honduras and United States in early 2003. Maniche wants permanent

**Bridge stay** 

REUTERS, Cobham Chelsea signing Maniche, who suffered a miserable three months with Dynamo Moscow, hopes to remain at the London club after his six-month loan.

Mourinho, told a news conference on Friday his Russian move had been a mistake and he needed now to impress the English champions. "It was an experience to forget. I was not happy. I stayed for three

The 28-year-old Portugual mid-

fielder, who won the Champions

League and UEFA Cup at Porto

under Chelsea coach Jose

to show my value again," Maniche The player said he had missed his family, who stayed in Portugal, and found it hard to adapt to Russian football

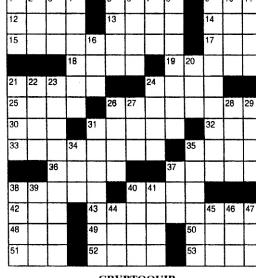
"It was a different country and a

very different football from what I

months but now I have the chance

was used to," he said, adding his wife and two daughters were due to arrive in London later on Friday. Maniche said he was delighted to link up again with Mourinho, who still had plenty to teach him. "The proof is he always wins and I

came here to be a champion as



well," he said.

DEYTML, R DTAAVDC XVT

B V T U O D F X Q C 'D I R Y C O . **Yesterday's Cryptoquip:** IF YOU HAVE TO SEND YOUR DOG OR CAT TO A DIFFERENT VET, SOME

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.

### 9 Height of office probably lab purchase fashion? 5 Reveille's dream 12 Satan's 40 Despot opposite 27 Tramcai 42 Ally 6 Telegram 13 "-- We McBeal 7 Literary 28 Orange collection 43 Be so 8 Salon 29 Bridge employee 31 Scatter 48 Carte 9 Retire about 10 Tend texts 34 Pirouette lead-in 49 Existence 11 Double pivot

By Eugene Sheffer

23 Sinatra

24 McNally's

partner

26 Medical-

2 "Hail

Caesa

3 Torched

4 Vassar

bones Dance

44 Dos Passos trilogy 45 Nebulous 46 "All the Things You -**47** Japanese

FM

MIGHT CALL IT A RE-FURRAL. Today's Cryptoquip Clue: Q equals H The Cryptoquip is a substitution cipher in which one letter stands for

### 14 Altar affirma 15 Preach-35 Rio (Lat.) directive 50 Tragic 16 Seek Grande 17 Up to restitution 51 Tarzan's city 37 "That's a 18 Ponder 20 Perfor-19 Starbucks 52 Nasty mance laugh! 38 Thick 21 Cataorder stinger 21 Sawyer or **CRYPTOQUIP** strophic chunk Keaton 39 Head CUCBEYRBRFM DOWN 24 Affluent 22 Pelvic light? 25 Earthen-ECMDC FMO QRLQ