



## Did U Know?

The first tennis Grand Slam event of the year was first played in 1905 as the Australasian Championships. It was renamed the Australian Open in 1969.



## Virinder Sehwag

(India's star batsman)  
"I just love the Pakistani bowling. I was not getting runs before this series but I was confident I will get runs against the Pakistanis and that's what happened."

## What to WATCH

### ESPN

Football Crazy  
Live at 5:00 pm  
Sportscentre  
Live at 9:30 pm

### STAR Sports

Australian Open  
Men's/Women's Second Rd  
Live at 6:00 am

## Surprising BTTF councillors' list

### SPORTS REPORTER

The constitution of the Bangladesh Table Tennis Federation (BTTF) was allegedly violated as its elected general secretary and a vice-president were not included in the draft councillors' list given by the Election Commission on Wednesday.

According to the constitution, the outgoing general secretary and any member of the World or Asian table tennis governing bodies automatically qualify as councillors. However, vice-president Ishiaque Ahmed, who is an executive committee member of the Asian Table Tennis Union, and general secretary Rafiqul Islam Tipu were not among the 67-member list published by the National Sports Council.

"We are surprised that our names were not on the list," commented Ishiaque yesterday. "The federation will protest against this violation," he added.

A hearing will be held on January 25.

The metropolis table tennis clubs were also frustrated as only five out of 25 regular participating teams were missing from the list.

The 67-member list was originally prepared by BTTF president Solaiman Chowdhury, who ignored a list readied by a three-member committee appointed by the executive committee.

According to the constitution, districts or clubs to have participated in at least two national championships or two metropolis

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## Zia, Niaz share points in Delhi

### SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladeshi Grand Masters Niaz Murshed and Ziaur Rahman drew their fifth round boards in the 4th Parsvnath International Open Chess tournament in New Delhi yesterday.

Zia shared points with Natarajan and Niaz split points with Somesh to increase their tallies to 3.5 points while IM Abdullah Al Rakib drew with Anwar and IM Enamul Hossain Rajib beat Sandeep to bag four points each.

FM Mehdi Hasan Parag also earned four points after beating Bajpai.

# BCB bends the rules

## Cricket

### SPORTS REPORTER

Much to the disappointment of cricket lovers, the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) executive committee is on the verge of breaching its constitution for the second time.

As per the board's much-talked 2003 constitution, under which the present board members were elected in August last year, the executive committee is bound to hold at least one meeting in every three months.

But there seems to be no chance to fulfil the demand as the Mahbul Anam-led BCB executive committee -- which had earlier broken the rules by not forming the sub-committees -- is left with only a day to meet the deadline. The last board meeting took place on October 20 last year.

Although the same BCB high-ups showed a lot of respect to the constitution before the election, they failed to maintain it afterwards and many thought that the

board this time was dilly-dallying only to save their skin and avoid some controversial issues.

So far, the board has had three probable dates cancelled, the last one being yesterday. BCB president Ali Asghar, a ruling party lawmaker, had told the press during the Under-19 tri-nation final at BKSP last month that they would hold the meeting in the first week of January, well before the deadline.

It is the duty of the general secretary as a chief executive to make the groundwork and take the consent of the president before calling the meeting, but Mahbul Anam was yet to clear his position whether he has done his job or not.

Asghar, however, understandably pointed his finger to the general secretary for not arranging the much-awaited meeting in time.

"The general secretary knows everything and only he can give you the explanation. I am always ready to call the meeting. We had fixed a date but we failed to hold it because of illness of our general secretary. Yes, the constitution says to hold a meeting in every three months, but sometimes we

are helpless due to some unavoidable circumstances," Asghar told The Daily Star Sport over telephone from Khulna yesterday.

When contacted, Mahbul Anam first expressed his helplessness about the matter and later said that he would issue letters to the executive committee members soon about the meeting.

"What can I do? It is funny that all the important work was pending for one man's illness. I think breaching the constitution would not be a big issue if every board member wants to absorb it. I will issue letters to the members soon about the meeting, but at the moment I can't say when it will happen," said the organiser showing his reluctance to elaborate.

One of the BCB vice-presidents Aziz Al Kaiser Tito, who was an important member in Asghar's advisory committee but now maintains a distance, requested everybody concerned to follow the rules.

"There are some people who have been elected but are not involved in board activities like me. But everybody was elected under

the same constitution and that's why we should show respect to it. The people who are now running the show should follow the rules. Otherwise it will not be a good example for the future," said Tito.

On the other hand, Reazuddin Al Mamun, who resigned as joint-secretary as well as chairman of the media committee in protest of Asghar's secret television rights deal with little known Aston Moore, was not surprised about the development.

"They know that they should explain some burning issues in the meeting. That is the reason they don't want to call a meeting. It is unfortunate that the constitution is being ignored," said Mamun, whose resignation has been accepted by the president but has yet to be discussed in an EC meeting.

He added that he was ready to attend the meeting if he got an invitation.

"I will join the meeting to raise some questions but there are a lot of issues to be addressed. I am waiting for an invitation," he said.

## Bangladesh go 17 places up in FIFA ranking

### SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh have leaped 17 places up in the FIFA World Ranking after their performance in the SAFF Championship and qualification for the Asian Cup qualifiers.

Although the SAFF Championship -- the most important tournament in the past four weeks -- has failed to rock the boat in the rankings, winners India (118th, up 9) and Bangladesh have managed to improve their standings considerably.

Bangladesh, who finished runners-up in the SAFF Championship in Pakistan in December 2005 and beat Pakistan 1-0 on aggregate in the Asian Cup pre-qualifiers, improved their position to 143rd place from 160.

Only twenty-one matches -- 17 from 2005 and four this year -- have been taken into account for the first FIFA/Coca-Cola World Ranking in 2006.

As expected, the effects of the games at the start of the World Cup year are minimal, with very few changes in position among the top 50.

Brazil continue to dominate at the top, followed by the Czech Republic and the Netherlands at a respectful distance of 40 points.

The composition of the top 50 has changed little as a consequence of the minor movements with UEFA represented by 25 teams, CAF with 9, CONMEBOL and CONCACAF with 6 each and AFC with 5.

The forthcoming African Cup of Nations with World Cup finalists Angola, Ivory Coast, Ghana, Togo and Tunisia promises to cause a few waves before next month's FIFA Coca-Cola World Ranking.

The next FIFA/Coca-Cola World Ranking will be published on 15

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## 34 picked for pace bowling camp

### SPORTS REPORTER

The National Pace Academy (NPA) will conduct training camps for the country's pace bowlers twice a week from next Monday at the Mirpur indoor facilities under the auspices of the Bangladesh Cricket Board.

The board has selected 34 pace bowlers for the camps to be conducted by NPA head coach Sarwar Imran.

The selected pacemen are: Mashrafe Bin Mortuza, Tapash Baisya, Tarek Aziz Khan, Shahadat Hossain Rajib, Anwar Hossain Munir, Talha Jubair, Syed Rasel, Nazmul Hossain, Kamrul Islam, Sajid Islam, Aslam Khan, Waskumi Palash, Sirajullah Khadem, Nazmul Hossain Milon, Shuvashish Roy, Robiul Islam, Zahidul Hassan Khan, Mahbul Alam, Mohammad Mamun, Mohammad Azim, Dollar Mahmud, Mohammad Sharif, Ashiqur Rahman, Mukhter Ali, Rumman Islam, Rashed Khan, Shafaq Al Jabir, Ashiquzzaman, Shiran Sharif, Emon Ahmed, Mohammad Shahjada, Hasibul Hossain, Manjurul Islam and Gazi Alamgir.

They have been requested to report to Sarwar Imran on January 23 at 2pm at the Sher-e-Bangla Mirpur Stadium.



PHOTO: STAR

MAKING WAY FOR NEW ONE: Workers taking off the worn out AstroTurf of the Maulana Bhasani National Hockey Stadium on Wednesday.

# ICC warning for India

## Cricket

### AFP, Dubai

The International Cricket Council (ICC) has warned India against withdrawing from the Champions Trophy one-day tournament and altering agreed tour programmes.

"I have read a number of media reports emanating from BCCI (Board of Control for Cricket in India) in which you and other BCCI officials are quoted as spokesmen on behalf of the Board," said ICC chief executive Malcolm Speed in a letter written to BCCI honorary secretary Niranjan Shah.

"The President (Ehsan Mani) and I are both very concerned that BCCI is moving ahead and taking what appear to be unilateral decisions that are contrary to ICC policy as agreed by the ICC members including BCCI."

India, which hosts the next edition of the Champions Trophy one-day event in October-November this year, believes the tournament -- staged every two years -- dilutes the importance of the four-yearly World

Cup and causes huge financial losses to the host country.

"We will honour our commitment to organise the Champions Trophy this year but want the tournament to be taken off the calendar in future," an Indian cricket board official told AFP in Delhi earlier this month.

"Since the ICC takes away a major part of the revenue, the tournament is a financial burden on the country which hosts it."

The move to scrap the tournament comes amidst reports that India wants to maximise revenues from TV rights by organising more series against major nations like Australia, England and Pakistan over the next four years.

However, Speed said in his letter: "I wish to remind BCCI of three important decisions that have been taken by the ICC and the commercial arm of the ICC) Boards in recent times."

"At its meeting in Auckland on 9 March, 2004, the ICC Executive Board resolved to adopt the ICC Future Tours Programme (FTP)."

"The effect of this decision is that the FTP is binding on all of the mem-

bers of ICC, including BCCI. Any attempt by a member to amend it unilaterally without the consent of the ICC Executive Board is invalid."

Speed, an Australian, added in his letter: "With the greatest of respect to BCCI, could I urge you to take these decisions into account when you are considering scheduling of matches."

He said the next appropriate forums to discuss ICC policy were the Chief Executives Committee and Executive Board meetings scheduled for February and March 2006 respectively.

Speed also reiterated a previous offer from Mani to provide the BCCI with a full briefing on ICC policy ahead of these meetings.

The Champions Trophy was the brainchild of former Indian and ICC chief Jagmohan Dalmiya, who lost control of the Indian cricket board in November when his faction was voted out by political heavyweight Sharad Pawar.

The previous four editions of the Champions Trophy were hosted by Bangladesh (1998), Kenya (2000), Sri Lanka (2002) and England (2004).



PHOTO: AFP

THE GLO-BALL: A giant crystal ball named the Football Globe Germany is on display at Trocadero place in Paris on Tuesday. The ball is on a global tour as part of the build-up for FIFA World Cup that starts in Germany on June 9.



PHOTO: AFP

Russian Maria Sharapova pumps her fist after her victory over Ashley Harkleroad of USA in the second round of the Australian Open in Melbourne on Wednesday.

# An American day

## Australian Open

### AP, Melbourne

With Andy Roddick's personal cheering section leading the way, it was a red, white and blue day at the Australian Open.

The second-seeded Roddick shrugged off an ankle injury and was nearly perfect in beating Wesley Moodie of South Africa 7-5, 6-3, 6-2 in the second round Wednesday.

Roddick was at the top of his game, yielding only 17 points in 15

included a group of young women who wore red, blue and silver hats, had the letters of his name painted on their bare stomachs and cheered him throughout.

With a sprinkling of American flags around Rod Laver Arena, it almost looked as if Roddick was playing at the US Open.

When Moodie, the Wimbledon doubles champion, netted a backhand on match point, Roddick turned to the group of fans and pumped his fist as they chanted "U-S-A!"

Roddick was at the top of his game, yielding only 17 points in 15

service games and committing only nine unforced errors.

Defending women's champion Serena Williams used her match against soft-hitting Camille Pin of France as a virtual practice session while extending her winning streak at the Australian Open to 16 matches with a 6-3, 6-1 victory.

Top-seeded Lindsay Davenport had to work a little harder to defeat Karolina Sprem of Croatia.

Fourth-seeded Maria Sharapova overcame 31 unforced errors

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