

## Victoria rout Mukta Bihanga

UNB, Dhaka

Victoria SC posted their maiden win in the Green Delta Insurance First Division Hockey League after they outplayed Mukta Bihanga Tarun Sangha 4-1 at the Maulana Bhasani National Hockey Stadium on Friday. Victoria led the first half by 1-0.

Mohammad Sabbir Hossain Johnny scored two goals for Victoria SC while Mohammad Yusuf and Sabbir Hossain netted one goal apiece.

Jasim struck the consolation goal for Mukta Bihanga Tarun Sangha.

The day's other match between Bachelor SC and Shishu Kishore Sangha could not held due to unavoidable circumstances.

The match will be held today at 9:00 am at the same venue.

## Mahela keeps leadership

CRICINFO, undated

Mahela Jayawardene has been retained as Sri Lanka's captain for the Champions Trophy although Marvan Atapattu is included in the 14-man squad. Prasanna Jayawardene, the wicketkeeper, is the only exclusion from the team named for the cancelled one-day triangular series in Colombo.

Kumar Sangakkara will act as the vice-captain and the squad consists of the players who performed well in England and in the Test series against South Africa. Atapattu came into the squad for the Unitech tri-series, against India and South Africa, but did not get an opportunity to play when the tournament was cancelled following South Africa's withdrawal for security reasons.

Sri Lanka are due to leave for India on October 1 and play a series of three qualifying matches, starting six days later, against Bangladesh, Zimbabwe and West Indies. If they get through the preliminary round they will join the main tournament which starts on October 15.

### SQUAD

Mahela Jayawardene (capt), Kumar Sangakkara (wk), Sanath Jayasuriya, Marvan Atapattu, Upul Tharanga, Tillakaratne Dilshan, Chamara Kapugedera, Farveez Maharoof, Chaminda Vaas, Ruchira Perera, Dilhara Fernando, Lasith Malinga, Malinga Bandara, Muttiah Muralitharan

## No place yet

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Makaay. Instead he has turned his attention to younger players such as Wigan's Denny Landzaat and Ajax forward Klaas-Jan Huntelaar, who scored a brace against Ireland.

Two weeks ago, Dutch skipper Edwin van der Sar, the Manchester United goalkeeper, said he did not understand van Basten's omissions of Real Madrid's van Nistelrooy and Barcelona's van Bommel.

There is also no place in the squad for Chelsea winger Arjen Robben, who has a calf injury, but his new teammate Khalid Boulahrouz and Barcelona's Giovanni van Bronckhorst, both of whom are suspended for the Luxembourg match, do find themselves in the squad.

## The league

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and that in itself could set the tone for a bit of topsy-turvy near the start. But expect that to even itself out as the season progresses. The promoted clubs of Nastic and Levante pose little threat and may be set for a quick trip down.

Aside them, Deportivo are lost past their glory days but Sevilla may take up that mantle after their UEFA Cup triumph last season. Andreas Hinkel comes in to replace last season's star Dani Alves and Luis Fabiano will look to follow from where Javier Saviola left off. However, they will not be genuine challengers for sure.

In the end though it boils down to the top teams looking towards glory and the younger ones looking to ease the gap and provide surprises, which are not too uncommon in Spain.

The football is of high quality, a quick passing game based on flair and finesse. Tactically more than astute and huge stadia's all contribute to making Spain the country to watch for league football.

So keep your eyes glued. This may be the return of the Real Madrid. Or it could be Catalan all the way.

What you can be assured of is that you will be entertained all throughout the next year.

Viva la Espanol!

## Spain unchanged

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Ibanez (Athletic Madrid), Juanito (Real Betis)

**Midfielders:** David Albelda (Valencia), Xabi Alonso (Liverpool/ENG), Joaquin (Real Betis), Cesc Fabregas (Arsenal/ENG), Andres Iniesta (Barcelona), Xavi (Barcelona), Borja Oubina Melendez (Celta Vigo)

**Strikers:** Jose Antonio Reyes (Arsenal/ENG), David Villa (Valencia), Fernando Torres (Atletico Madrid), Raul (Real Madrid), Luis Garcia (Liverpool/ENG)



PHOTO:AFP

Belgian star Justine Henin-Hardenne celebrates after her win against Mara Santangelo of Italy during the Pilot Pen tournament at the Connecticut Tennis Center at Yale in New Haven, Connecticut on Thursday.

# Lindsay amazes Amelie

Tennis

REUTERS, New Haven

World number one Amelie Mauresmo suffered a blow going into next week's US Open when she lost 6-4, 7-5 to Lindsay Davenport in the New Haven quarterfinals on Thursday.

The Wimbledon and Australian Open champion could not cope with Davenport's power from the baseline and the American clinched her 11th consecutive win over the Frenchwoman in a repeat of last year's final.

The world number one, however, said she was happy with her form going into the year's final grand slam.

"I'm not worried," Mauresmo told reporters. "After the break that I

have had, I was not expecting to play my best tennis here this week."

Mauresmo did not play for six weeks after her Wimbledon triumph, a shoulder problem delaying her return to the Tour.

"Last week I could not even serve with my shoulder and I was just hoping that I would have the opportunity to play a couple of matches here," she said.

"I have played a couple of matches and today (Thursday) was much better than yesterday so I hope I can play my best next week."

"I would say I am about 80 per cent right now, but it is coming quickly."

Serving superbly and hitting with huge power on both sides, former world number one Davenport broke serve in the third game and held on to win the first set.

Davenport again broke for 2-1 in

the second set but Mauresmo broke back for 3-3, only for the next five games to go against serve.

But having failed to serve out at 5-4, Davenport made no mistake second time round and held on to set up a semifinal against lucky loser Samantha Stosur of Australia. Davenport, the defending champion, was off the Tour for five months due to a back injury and said she was well ahead of schedule.

"If you told me I would have beaten the number one player in the world sometime in the last six months, I probably would not have believed you," Davenport said.

"I was happy out there. Win or lose, where I'm at is just miles away from where I've been the last few months. I am determined to enjoy this."

# Agassi, Serena get tough draws

Tennis

AP, New York

Andre Agassi knows it's possible to do well as an unseeded player at the US Open. He won the 1994 title that way, after all -- the tournament's only unseeded champion in the Open era.

Still, being thrown into the draw without any sort of protection from facing top players too early can make things tough, as Agassi found out Wednesday.

His path at his last Open -- indeed, his last pro tournament of any sort -- looks difficult, including possible matchups against rising star Marcos Baghdatis in the second round and former No. 1 Andy Roddick in the fourth.

"Baghdatis has come a long way this year. He's usually a tougher guy to beat in a longer match," said four-time US Open champion John McEnroe, who'll call the tournament for CBS and USA Network. "Some of it's obviously going to be what the physical condition of Andre is."

The 36-year-old Agassi, an eight-time Grand Slam champion, has been hampered by a bad back in 2006 and is only 8-7, failing to get past the quarterfinals at any tournament. He withdrew from two events this month, and his ranking has fallen to No. 37, which is why he's unseeded a year after reaching the final.

Agassi starts off against Andrei Pavel of Romania, a former top-20 player currently ranked 76th. Agassi owns a 5-1 career edge against him. If Agassi makes that 6-1, he could face the eighth-seeded Baghdatis, a

21-year-old from Cyprus who was the runner-up at this year's Australian Open and a semifinalist at Wimbledon.

"If Baghdatis is on and healthy and fit," said US Davis Cup captain Patrick McEnroe, John's brother. "I think that's a very tough match for Andre to win right now."

Two rounds later might bring another intergenerational clash -- against Roddick, who'll turn 24 next week, was the 2003 US Open champion and is seeded ninth. Roddick's been working with Jimmy Connors, and the partnership paid off with a title at the Cincinnati Masters last week.

"It's a great thing for both of them, potentially," John McEnroe said. "Andy's been struggling with confidence."

Another past US Open champion and No. 1 player who's unseeded this year, Serena Williams, was given a tough draw, too. She fell out of the top 100 while sidelined with a left knee injury and needed a wild card to enter the tournament.

Her possible second-round opponent is No. 17 Daniela Hantuchova, who knocked off Williams in the Australian Open's third round in January. If Williams reaches the third round, she could face No. 16 Ana Ivanovic, who won last week's Open tuneup at Montreal and leads the US Open Series standings.

And should Williams get to the fourth round, her opponent could be No. 1 Amelie Mauresmo, the reigning Wimbledon and Australian Open champion.

"That was the big question mark:

Where was Serena going to be in the draw?" said former pro and current TV analyst Mary Joe Fernandez.

Williams' older sister Venus, the 2000-01 US Open winner, wound up on the opposite half of the draw as the No. 30 seed and appears to be in a relatively easy quarter. Bothered by a bad wrist, she hasn't played since being upset in the third round while trying to defend her Wimbledon title.

"We haven't seen Venus at all," Fernandez said. "But we know Venus can turn it on at any given time, like she did last year at Wimbledon."

## Selectors limit

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Faruque Ahmed yesterday. Although Faruque denied to make any comment on whether there would be any surprise name in the list, it was learnt that one or two is not unlikely after Sakib Al Hasan and Forhad Reza's good performances in the recently concluded Zimbabwe-Kenya tour.

Under the new format Bangladesh will play the preliminary round of the fifth version of the meet along with Sri Lanka, West Indies and Zimbabwe.

As per ICC desire, the cricket board must send a 14-member final squad by the first week of September.

Meanwhile, Faruque informed that they will announce the team for the six-a-side tournament to be held in Pakistan in mid-September, within short time.

"There will be a number of national players in the squad besides some young guys," he added.

## DC Cup from today

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khagrachhari

The long-awaited football tournament Deputy Commissioner Gold Cup begins today at the Khagrachhari Stadium.

It has been five years since a football tournament was organised by the district administration and naturally the sports-mad people of the region are brimming with excitement.

A total of eight upazila teams, comprising mostly of local footballers will participate in the tournament, to be inaugurated by Deputy Commissioner Humayun Kabir.

Khagrachhari will take on Rangpur in the opening match.

## MPs back Inzamam

AFP, Islamabad

Pakistani MPs Thursday threw their weight behind cricket captain Inzamamul Haq in a ball-tampering row and demanded the government take a firm stand against Australian umpire Darrell Hair.

Members of an opposition alliance of religious parties, the Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal (MMA), tabled a motion in the lower house to discuss the issue, said senior MMA leader Hafiz Hussain Ahmed.

"We urged the government to formally intervene in the matter," Ahmed told AFP.

The government should also initiate a probe into why the Pakistan Cricket Board did not seek "removal of Hair when other countries in the subcontinent had lodged a protest against his umpiring," he said.

"We condemn Hair's decision to abandon the match in favour of England and we demand a proper enquiry."

"We support Inzamam's decision," he said adding that the Pakistan captain was justified in registering protest after the team were dubbed "cheats".

He said several other MPs also supported the motion and dismissed the ball-tampering charges as "baseless".

Minister for sports Shamim Haider said Pakistan's cricket authorities had taken a stand in support of the team.

"We are also trying to take the matter in court and seek a redressal of the grievances," Haider said.

## All for Inzy

REUTERS, Karachi

A Pakistan radio station is inviting listeners to sign a petition backing captain Inzamamul Haq in the ball-tampering row and plans to submit it to the International Cricket Council (ICC).

"The response to the campaign has been fantastic," FM 107 marketing executive Talal Durrani told Reuters on Thursday.

"We are getting calls and SMS's constantly. It is our way of supporting our cricket team against an unjust umpire."

The station will send three listeners to Dubai to submit the petition to the ICC, he added.

Umpires imposed a five-run penalty on Pakistan for ball tampering in the fourth and final Test against England at The Oval on Sunday. Inzamam's team refused to emerge for the final session's play and Pakistan eventually forfeited the match.

Inzamam has been charged by the ICC with bringing the game into disrepute, for which there is a maximum ban of eight one-day internationals and four Tests.

## Bright day

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men's 400m hurdle with Pakistan claiming gold.

Susanthika Jayasinghe led Sri Lanka's women's 4x100m relay team to win gold, also bettering the old Games record by 0.02 seconds, finishing ahead of India, Pakistan and Bangladesh in the four-team race.

In the day's final event, the men's 4x100m relay team failed to finish the race due to misunderstanding between the first and second runners who failed to change the baton in spite of a very good start. Masudul Karim, the second runner who started with a finger injury in his baton hand (left), failed to collect the baton from starter Mohon Khan. India won gold, Pakistan silver and Afghanistan bronze as Sri Lanka disqualified.

Billal Hossain won a bronze in 84kg wrestling while all four competitors in taekwondo failed to go past the first round for Bangladesh, who ended the day with two gold, 12 silver and 22 bronze medals.

India consolidated their position at the top of the medals table, netting 94 gold, 54 silver and 35 bronze, followed by Pakistan (30-34-50), Sri Lanka (26-48-58), Nepal (6-8-22), Afghanistan (3-5-9), Bangladesh (2-12-22) and Bhutan (0-0-6).

# PCB irate with players

Cricket

REUTERS, Karachi

Pakistan Cricket Board chairman Shaharyar Khan is losing patience with captain Inzamamul Haq and other players over their stance on a Twenty20 match and one-day series against England, a PCB official said on Friday.

Shaharyar, who has held discussions with the captain and his players, was unhappy that a question mark remained over their commitment to play in the wake of the ball-tampering controversy, the official said.

"The PCB is convinced the team should play the Twenty20 match and the five one-day games. But the response from Inzamam and some other players has not been very decisive," said the official, who declined to be identified.

"Some players keep on insisting

that we should first ensure the ICC does not take action against Inzamam on ball-tampering charges, which they say are not true.

"They insist their stand against Australian umpire Darrell Hair is justified, as is their reaction to not play after tea."

The England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) have already announced contingency plans to play the Twenty20 game against a World XI and for the one-day series if Pakistan pulls out.

ECB Chief Executive David Collier, however, has stressed that talks between the England and Pakistan boards suggested the matches would go ahead as scheduled.

Manager Zaheer Abbas has also said the team would play the series but there has been no firm comment from Inzamam.

The PCB is also concerned it may face a hefty compensation claim if Pakistan refuse to play. The

ECB says it lost 400,000 pounds on ticket refunds from the final day of the Oval Test.

A board source in Lahore said the PCB was preparing for the ICC to impose a lengthy ban on Inzamam for bringing the game into disrepute.

Selectors had been told to start thinking about playing the ICC Champions Trophy in India in October without Inzamam, he said. The PCB has employed an English legal firm to represent Inzamam.

Pakistani members of parliament on Thursday backed Inzamam and his team in the ball-tampering row but experts say the silence of President Pervez Musharraf, who is also chief patron of the board, is significant.

"There has been no official statement from Musharraf as yet," said former Test player, Sarfaraz Nawaz.

"Heads might roll after the dust settles."

# Vijay Mehra passes away

Cricket

CRICINFO, undated

Vijay Mehra, the former Indian opener, has died of a heart attack in Delhi on Friday morning. Mehra's death was sudden and he collapsed while reading a newspaper at 8.15 am, it was reported. He was 68.

Mehra, a prodigy of just 17 when he made his debut, played eight Tests for India between 1955 and 1964 and will always be remembered for his courageous 62 against England at Calcutta, a knock where he continued batting even after fracturing his right thumb. A pugnacious 62 in the second Test of the 1962 West Indies tour, when India were completely outclassed, was also one of Mehra's highpoints.

"He was a very dear friend and I was even supposed to have dinner with him tomorrow (Saturday) night," former Indian captain Bishan Singh Bedi told Cricinfo. "As a player he was limited in talent but excelled within those limitations. He was a technician who used to build his innings, not one to take risks. We're both from Amritsar and we had the same coach (Gyan Prakash). He was an absolute fitness freak and had a tremendous sense of humour, something so badly lacking in the modern world."

"You could call him a strokeless wonder but he was a very gutsy cricketer," Raju Bharatan, a veteran journalist, told Cricinfo. "How many

players, in that era, were willing to open against pace?"

Mehra -- who played for Railways, Punjab and Delhi -- managed 5636 runs in first-class cricket (at 34.36) and had a successful first-class career that stretched for more than two decades. After retirement, he was active in Delhi cricket administration and was also a national selector. He



VIJAY MEHRA

also made a name as an expert commentator with television and radio. He was the expert commentator for All-India Radio on India's recent Test series against West Indies and regaled the press with his quirky sense of humour.

He is survived by a son and a daughter. His son, Ajay Mehra, played 46 first-class matches for Punjab and Rajasthan in the '90s.

# Hair warns of consequences

Cricket

PTI, London

Under-fire Australian umpire Darrell Hair is not unduly bothered by the strong criticism against him in the wake of the ball-tampering controversy, saying a lot of people will pay the price when he comes out with his version of the row.

Expressing his anguish that he was not treated well in his adopted country (England) following Sunday's unpleasant episode, Hair said he would reveal his side of the story only after the issue came to an end.

"I'll be putting a lot of my side when this is all over. I have been vilified by virtually everybody here and when the truth comes out a lot of people will pay. So, that's all I can say," Hair was quoted as saying by the Independent.

The 53-year-old Lincolnshire-based umpire said people who wanted him out of the ICC Elite panel

umpires would have to do something special to achieve their aim.

"If people want to try and force me out of the game it has to be done in some shape or form that I am unaware of, because I am contracted to do a job and I know I am doing it quite well at the moment so far as the ins and outs are concerned," he said.

Hair said he did not have any problem in officiating in matches involving teams from the sub-continent.

"There is no problem with me and the sub-continent. I have umpired quite a lot in the sub-continent over the last couple of years to the best of my ability." Responding to a question whether his umpiring was under threat after the ball-tampering row, Hair blamed the media for giving unnecessary emphasis on any subject.

"There's a lot of things under threat and you people (the media) are probably responsible for a lot of them."

# Hair offers to quit

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"This payment is to be the sum of 500,000 dollars, details of which must be kept confidential by both parties. This sum is to be paid directly into my account by August 31, 2006."

"ICC may announce the retirement in any way they wish but I would prefer a simple 'lifestyle choice' as this was the very reason I moved from Australia to settle in the UK three years ago."

"This offer in no way precludes me taking legal action and/or instigating libel suits against various sections of the electronic and print media for comments made either previously or in the future."

Percy Sonn, the ICC president, told the meeting: "I find myself in London following a regrettable turn of events that started last Sunday. From my point of view at least things can only get better."

"The question is what happens next? In the light of the developments, I called a meeting of the executive board. That matter will discuss this matter in detail."

"In terms of what the board has the power to do, it has wide-ranging powers, however we are currently seeking legal advice."

"We realise this makes Mr Hair's situation very sensitive. We have made avail to him security advice, counselling and media management to assist him."

There was a pause when it was asked whether that by releasing the information on Hair, the ICC had effectively made his position untenable.

Sonn added: "Darrell Hair has been in a difficult position since Sunday and I'm stating the obvious by saying as a result of this disclosure that position has been made more difficult."

"I said to Darrell today - he and I had a long meeting - that while this is a serious issue, there are issues in relation to his contract and to the ICC's Umpires' Code of Conduct."

"I said to him he's not sacked, he's not suspended and he has not been charged. We are in a very early stage of dealing with this issue."

## SA turn down Eng approach

CRICINFO, undated

Cricket South Africa has announced that it will not be able to send a side to play in England should Pakistan not be able to honour their commitments.

"We were approached by the ECB earlier this week, requesting the Proteas to replace Pakistan should they withdraw from the ODI tournament against England," Gerald Majola, the board's chief executive told reporters. "We have turned down the request on the basis that we are committed to playing against Zimbabwe in the three-match ODI tournament starting next month."

Majola also indicated that South Africa are concluding arrangements to face as yet un-named opposition in Abu Dhabi. "We are looking for extra one-day games and they are almost finalised," he said. "The conditions in Abu Dhabi are very similar to those in India and that will give us the preparation we need for the Champions Trophy."

England have also been reported to have approached New Zealand and West Indies asking whether they could fill the gap should the need arise.

But West Indies are due to play their opening match in Malaysia on September 12 -- two days after the scheduled date for the last ODI in England -- and are also likely to find themselves struggling to help out.

## Athletics, football

FROM PAGE 17  
India and Nepal clash in the bronze medal play-off earlier at the same venue.

Bangladesh will look for a few medals as they compete in men's and women's kabaddi bronze play-offs as well as a number of martial art events.

Toufiq Shahriar Chandan will be in action in men's 50m air rifle three positions (3x40 shots) on the last day of shooting competition.

## BANGLADESH IN TODAY'S GAMES

**Athletics:** (men's) Masudul Karim, Mohon Khan (100m), 4x400m relay; (women's) Nazmu-nnahr Beauty, Shamsunnahar Chumki (100m), 4x400m relay.