

F'ganj, Police win big

UNB, Dhaka

Farashganj Sporting Club posted their fifth win in six matches in the Green Delta Metropolitan First Division Hockey League...

Pioneer Football League results

SPORTS REPORTER

Goals by Rubel, Narayan and Nippon gave Bangladesh Sporting Club a convincing 3-0 win over Titu Smriti Sangsad in yesterday's Pioneer Football League...

Akhtar found not guilty

CRICINFO, undated

Shoaib Akhtar and the rest of the Pakistan team were cleared of any wrongdoing after a controversial incident during the third one-day international against England at the Rose Bowl.

PCB will turn to others if needed

PTI, Karachi

Pakistan cricket authorities on Thursday said they would not hesitate to seek support from other countries like India and West Indies to back their case if the ball-tampering issue was given a political twist.

MSC to groom 30 for future

SPORTS REPORTER

Mohammedan Sporting Club will train 30 young players for one year with a view to strengthening the base of their football team.



Russian superstar Maria Sharapova blows a kiss to the crowd after her straight-sets victory over Frenchwoman Tatiana Golovin in the quarterfinals of the US Open at Flushing Meadows in New York on Wednesday.

OPEN SECRETS

AP, New York

The racket-throwing tandem of Marat Safin and sister Dinara Safina got tossed out of the US Open.

"If you look at the big picture, the way I played during last six months, right now I'm playing some of my best tennis," he said.

Despite the loss, Murray left the Open feeling encouraged about his accomplishments this year.

Highest on his list of achievements was an upset of Roger Federer at the Cincinnati Masters.

ON MARAT'S MIND When Marat Safin was asked about the rise of Russian players, he quickly separated the men from the women.

"With all due respect, you cannot compare the men to the women," Safin said Wednesday.

PICK A COURT Top-seeded Roger Federer didn't mind that his last two matches were scheduled on the smaller Louis Armstrong court, instead of at Arthur Ashe Stadium.

Van Persie stars FROM PAGE 24 It was Van Persie's 17th cap and he has scored four of his five goals in the last six matches.

Burning like an inferno

Cricket

AFP, Sydney

Justin Langer says his hunger to retrieve cricket's Ashes from England later this year is akin to a raging inferno.

The much-awaited hearing will be conducted by chief match referee Ranjan Madugulle of Sri Lanka at a yet unspecified venue, ICC chief executive Malcolm Speed told reporters here.

Inzamam faces charges of ball-tampering and bringing the game into disrepute following the Oval Test fiasco when Pakistan refused to take the field in protest at accusations of cheating by umpires Darrell Hair and Billy Doctrove.

The umpires awarded the match to England, the first forfeit in the 129-year history of Test cricket.

Inzamam, who has been retained as captain for next month's ICC Champions Trophy in India, faces a ban of 2-4 Test matches or 4-8 one-day internationals if found guilty.

Speed, who regretted the delay in the hearing, clarified that it was not entirely accurate to say that Pakistan will be cleared of ball-tampering charges simply because there was no video evidence.

Cricket

BBC ONLINE, undated

England are contemplating opening the batting with big hitters Andrew Flintoff or Kevin Pietersen in future one-day internationals.

Flintoff could return as a batsman only as early as next month's ICC Champions Trophy as he builds up his fitness following ankle surgery.

And Pietersen may also be given a chance at the top of the order as England look for an aggressive start.

The changes could come about because of Marcus Trescothick's withdrawal.

It was confirmed on Wednesday that regular opener Trescothick would not be heading to India for next month's Champions Trophy as he is having treatment for a stress disorder.

But England stressed he would be available for selection for the Ashes squad, which is being announced on Tuesday.

England coach Duncan Fletcher said: "We've just got to come up with a method of making sure players don't pick tours," he said.

"I would want my players available for all tours that are played. Continuity is important."

However he conceded England were considering making changes up the order as they try and reverse a torrid run of form in the one-day game.

They have won only once in the last 10 completed one-day internationals and that was against Ireland.

Jones gets all-clear

Athletics

AFP, Los Angeles

Triple Olympic champion Marion Jones has been cleared of potential doping charges for use of EPO after the "B" sample analysis of her test was negative, a statement issued by her attorneys said Wednesday.

"I am absolutely ecstatic," Jones said in a statement released by her attorneys after she had been informed of the negative backup sample analysis on Wednesday.

"I have always maintained that I have never, ever taken performance enhancing drugs, and I am pleased that a scientific process has now demonstrated that fact. I am anxious to get back on the track."

Jones' A' urine sample from the US Track and Field Championships on June 23 in Indianapolis, where she won the 100 meters, had been reported positive for the banned endurance-booster EPO.

Jones said when she learned of



State Minister for Youth and Sports Fazlur Rahman is seen with winners of UIU banglalink table tennis championships after the prize giving ceremony at the UIU yesterday.

Nadal knocked out

FROM PAGE 24

This was his ninth career meeting between the two former world number ones with Hewitt still holding a 7-2 lead overall.

"He came out serving so well didn't give me too many looks at second serves," Hewitt said. "When Andy is serving that well you have got to clean up your own service games and I didn't do that."

Roddick posted an 80 per cent success rate on his first serve points and survived a key set point to win the second set in front of a crowd of about 21,000 at the Arthur Ashe Stadium.

The American won seven straight points on serve late in the first set then broke Hewitt in the last game of the first to clinch it.

He broke Hewitt again in the third game of the second set but the Australian returned the favour in the next game. They stayed on serve

Les Bleus

FROM PAGE 24 build-up play by France almost led to their third goal, however Buffon this time managed to push away Govou's low drive across the goalline.

GOVU WAS REPLACED BY SYLVAIN WILFORD IN THE 74TH MINUTE.

Italy looked determined. Three minutes after Govou's exit a well-struck Piri free-kick found the head of Cannavaro whose effort was punched out by Coupet.

Coupet was called to action again in the final minute of regulation time, rising to catch a lob from Piri after the midfielder surprised the entire French defence.

Qatar blank

FROM PAGE 21 today," he added. Bangladesh coach Hassanuzzaman Babloo was also content to keep the scoreline rather slim.

"I said on Tuesday that we came here to play football, not win a match. With the kind of (ageing) players we have in the team, we simply could not have beaten a strong team like Qatar. Before this match, we had played three games and lost all of them. We were in no condition to compete against the hosts.

"Seven or eight of the players from this match will quit the national team soon. We will pick a new team for our next match against Hong Kong. Our next target is Asian Games and you will see a young team for that event. Our players haven't played much football in the last two years. After our loss against Qatar in Chittagong, we have been simply training at home.

"We had no match practice before coming to Doha. And when you don't have match practice, you can't beat a team like Qatar. I am hopeful that a professional league -- which will be introduced soon in Bangladesh for the first time -- will help us produce quality players and achieve better results," the former national winger said.

Meanwhile, reigning champions Japan, three-time winners Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates joined Australia -- the first qualifiers -- and co-hosts Indonesia, Vietnam, Malaysia and Thailand next year's finals.

The Japanese earned their place in South East Asia with a 1-0 win over Yemen in Group A while Saudi Arabia maintained a perfect record in qualifying as they came back from a goal down to pummel India 7-1 in Jeddah.

Mehrab in, Javed out

FROM PAGE 21 levels like Under-19 competition, with the A team and the domestic competitions.

"He is basically an opener but we used him as a middle-order batsman in the last Under-19 competition because there were too many openers in the team. It's a great quality that one player can bat in any position," he added.

Coach Day Whatmore said that the youngster had the prospect to represent the national team.

"I have seen him in Under-19 competitions and some other tournaments and what I have seen is that he has a very bright future. But lot depends on him whether he wants to realise his potential," said Whatmore.

"Mehrab is a very methodical player. He can make up for a slow start, ending with a strike rate of over 70," he added when asked about the strengths of the all-rounder that prompted the final inclusion.



Mohammedan Sporting Club general secretary Lokman Hossain Bhuiyan (R) addressing a press conference at the club tent yesterday.

every Test bar two draws since we got beaten (in England), so We've obviously learnt our lesson.

"If you do that you get better and that's where the challenges come up."

"We're ready to face up to this challenge. We are ready for them. We've had 12 months of brilliant preparation, guys have had a good off-season.

"We've had the boot camp which is one of the great five days of my life in terms of personal development. It was an incredible experience.

"We've learnt our lesson and were ready for this next challenge."

But Langer is deeply respectful of England and their chances of holding on to the Ashes in this year's series.

"We expect the danger. We are expecting them to be better against us than they were last summer," he said.

"I'm not sure that's possible because they were at their peak. We expect them to be better but I can assure you we'll be better as well."

"What's happened in the last Ashes, since the Ashes, is irrelevant. It's going to be about momentum during this series."

Flintoff is not available for Friday's day/nighter against Pakistan but he could be a shock call for the ICC Champions Trophy squad, which is being revealed on Sunday.

Fletcher said: "All the time we're thinking about changes because I don't think you can stand still in the game."

"We've considered Fred and we've considered Pietersen up there, but you have to get the balance of the side right."

"You can have a flexible batting order, but I don't think it's ideal to keep chopping and changing every day. Now and again you can spring a surprise and that's when it pays dividends."

They have won only once in the last 10 completed one-day internationals and that was against Ireland.

attorneys.

That kind of question is nothing new for the 30-year-old sprint star, whose five medals at the 2000 Sydney Olympics included three golds.

Jones has never faced a formal doping charge, but even so she was effectively declared persona non-grata in Europe last season after being linked to the BALCO steroid distribution scandal that erupted prior to the 2004 Athens Olympics.

Her former partner Tim Montgomery, who is the father of Jones's young son, was banished and his world 100m record run erased based on evidence collected in the BALCO criminal investigation.

But Jones has soldiered on, and mounted a comeback this season that she has said she hopes will see her contend at the Beijing Olympics in 2008.

At the Golden League meeting in Paris on July 8, Jones broke the 11-second barrier for the first time since 2002 to win the women's 100m in 10.92sec.