



## Did U Know?

One athlete ran the 100-yard dash in 14 seconds, not a spectacular time, but he did it running backwards.



## Roberto Carlos

(Real Madrid leftback)  
"The Bernabeu needed a result like this. It has been an important win and now we must continue in the same vein. The key thing was we functioned as a unit, scored five goals and could have had more."  
Roberto Carlos after Real's 5-1 thrashing of Dynamo Kiev in the Champions League.

### What to WATCH

**ESPN**

Sportscenter India  
Sports News  
Live at 8:30 pm

**STAR Sports**

Mumbai Open Tennis  
Live at 5:30pm

## Uzbekistan to play in Sylhet

SPORTS REPORTER

The Asian Football Confederation (AFC) has given the Bangladesh Football Federation green signal to host the 2007 Asian Cup qualifier against Uzbekistan in Sylhet.

"We have yet to receive the official approval from the AFC but verbally, they have told us to take preparation to host the match on schedule on October 11 in Sylhet," informed BFF general secretary Anwarul Hoque Helal yesterday.

The AFC initially cancelled Army Stadium due to lack of standard facilities, forcing the BFF to name Sylhet as an alternative venue to stage the fifth-round game.

Bangladesh have lost all their previous four matches in the qualifiers.

## Wari Div I hockey champs

UNB, Dhaka

Wari Club became the Green Delta Insurance First Division Hockey League champions with one match to spare when they edged Farashganj Sporting Club 1-0 at the Maulana Bhasani National Hockey Stadium yesterday.

Goutam Kumar Das scored the match-winner in the 34th minute from a penalty corner.

The triumph guaranteed Wari Club's return to the Premier League next season. After 11 games, Wari pushed their collection to 27 points while Farashganj remained at 21 points.

In the day's other match, Bachelors Sporting Club outplayed Dhaka Wanderers 4-1 to move to second place with 23 points.

## Pioneer football

UNB, Dhaka

Red Sun KC beat Lalbagh Torun Sangha 2-1 in a super league match of the Pioneer Football League at the Bir Shreshtha Shaheed Mostafa Kamal Stadium in Kamalapur yesterday.

In the day's other match at the same venue, Tongi Krira Chakra defeated Monsur Sporting Club by same margin.

## Rain curtails Tigers' return



SPORTS REPORTER

Rain saved the blushes of the Tigers as the practice match between Bangladesh seniors and the second string side was washed out at the BKSP ground yesterday.

Led by Habibur Bashar, the Team A were in a precarious position when they crashed to 85-7 halfway through their innings while chasing a moderate 209-run target set by Tushar Imran's Team B in the preparation match for next month's ICC Trophy.

The top order remained a worry for the team's think-tank as even Mohammad Ashraful's promotion to the opening slot could not improve the never-ending problem. Shahriar Nafees, who was adjudged the best batsman of 2005-06 and the Cricketer of the Year last week, was dismissed for a two-ball duck while Ashraful, who also failed to open his account, survived three deliveries.

Only Aftab Ahmed (26 off 45 balls) and Farhad Reza (21 off 22 balls) went past the double-figure against the second string Bangladesh attack.

National skipper Bashar, who batted in a match for the first time since picking up an injury in a one-day international against Zimbabwe on July 30, however, shrugged off the poor show.

"The top order has failed but I am overall satisfied because we got a chance to play. The condition was not very helpful but it will fill some gaps in our lack of match practice for a big tournament like this," said Bashar.

"I know there should be no excuses as our opposition, who are also playing a match after a long gap like us, put on a decent total. But it was very hot day and our cricketers were very tired after fielding full 50 overs. Still I feel that it should have not happened this way.

"I am happy with my performance coming to bat in a match after a long time, I felt easy. There was no problem in my hand which means that I have recovered fully," said Bashar who muddled the ball well to score six off 11 deliveries before being bowled by medium pacer Dollar Mahmud.

"Also, we could not field our full attack in the absence of Mashrafe (Bin Mortuza) and (Syed) Rasel. I

also had to withdraw (Shahadat Hossain) Rajib after three overs because he was feeling unwell. The important thing is that we are certain to get the services of our leading bowlers Mashrafe and Rajib for the tournament. If weather permits our second match on Saturday, we will try Rasel to see whether he is fit," he said adding that in spite of being fully fit, Mashrafe might be rested in Saturday's game.

Apart from Bashar, Mashrafe and Rasel were also injury worries and chief selector Faruque Ahmed has hinted that Rasel has to prove his fitness in the next game.

Tapash Baisya is expected to replace left-arm seamer Rasel in case his recovery is not satisfactory.

Meanwhile, as it often happens, the rank outsiders tried their best to remind the selectors of their usefulness. Recent national discard Rajin Saleh and rookie Mehrab Hossain Jr, who is expected to make his international debut in the ICC Trophy, were on top gears on a tricky wicket, both scoring 42 in their collection of 208 all out in exactly 50 overs after Tushar had opted to bat first.

Rajin's 60-ball stay at the wicket produced three boundaries while impressive southpaw Mehrab cracked one four and a six during his 67-ball effort.

Farhad Reza maintained his form, the medium pacer being the pick of the attack with 3-30 from ten overs.

## BRIEF SCORES

**TEAM B:** 208 all out in 50 overs (Sadat 17, Rajin 42, Jahurul 35, Mehrab 42, Nadif 5, Tushar 23, Manzarul 2, Mushfiqur 5, Riyadh 1, Tapash 21, Enamul 6 n.o., Farhad 3-30, Ziaur 2-24, Razzak 1-51, Rafique 2-38, Sakib 1-43).  
**TEAM A:** 85-7 in 25 overs (Nafees 0, Ashraful 0, Aftab 26, Sakib 7, Bashar 6, Farhad 21, Mashud 8 n.o., Rafique 7, Uttam 0 n.o., Tapash 2-14, Nazmul 1-21, Dollar 2-20, Enamul 1-23, Manzarul 1-7).



Bangladesh captain Habibur Bashar pulls one towards mid-wicket as wicketkeeper Mushfiqur Rahim looks on during the practice match for the Champions Trophy at the BKSP ground on Thursday.

## CCL now from Oct 7



SPORTS REPORTER

The Corporate Cricket League (CCL) is all set to begin on October 7, after the latest delay, with defending champions Beximco scheduled to take on new boys Chittagong Port Authority in the opening match.

The newly-formed tournament committee of Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) decided on the initial fixture, the number of venues and other major issues during their meeting at the management office in Gulshan yesterday.

On Wednesday, it was announced that the CCL would begin next Tuesday but Ali Hossain, who was re-instated as member secretary of the committee yesterday, confirmed that the start had been delayed once more.

The twelve-team meet was first set for an October 1 start before numerous factors forced a delay. However this time it looks certain to begin, a

week later, after it was learned that mobile phone giants Grameen Phone had agreed to sponsor the tournament. Details of that deal are to be revealed in a few days.

"We will formally begin the tournament on October 7 since we want to have a proper opening ceremony," said Hossain.

The tournament will initially begin at two venues -- Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium and Fatullah Stadium -- as these are the only grounds prepared.

However, the participating teams are also suffering the consequences of unprepared grounds and the inclement weather, which is going to continue for a few more days.

The ground at Dhanmondi, a popular venue for the teams, only has the playing area prepared while the outfield needs a lot of tending.

Meanwhile, the national cricket championship is set to begin on October 15 at different venues across the country.

The participating teams are

being asked to send in their entries by October 7.

The National Cricket League (NCL) will begin on the first week of November with the six divisional teams but with a different format, informed Hossain.

Last season, the NCL was held with a four-day match followed by a one-day game the next day.

"This time, the four-day tournament will take place first. The one-day meet will follow but after it finishes, separating the two forms of the game," said member secretary Hossain.

The limited-overs version of the NCL is likely to begin on the first week of December.

The first phase of the four-day version will start on November with the second and final stage scheduled for February.

The Premier Cricket League is expected to begin after the first stage of the NCL one-day meet, which makes it sure to have a December start.

## No Hair in Champions Trophy

AFP, London

Controversial Australian umpire Darrell Hair will not officiate in next month's Champions Trophy in India because of security concerns.

Hair was at the centre of a damaging row last month over the ball-tampering allegations against Pakistan that led to the Oval Test against England ending in a farce.

Pakistan, incensed that Hair accused them of ball tampering by penalising the team five runs, refused to take the field after tea on the fourth day.

Hair and fellow-umpire Billy Doctrove of the West Indies awarded the match to England, resulting in the first forfeiture in the 129-year history of Test cricket.

Pakistan captain Inzamamul Haq was on Thursday cleared of ball-tampering but found guilty of bringing the game into disrepute and banned for four one-day internationals.

## GM Zia on top despite draw

SPORTS REPORTER

Grand Master Ziaur Rahman stayed on course for title when he maintained solo lead in the 2nd University of Greenwich FIDE Rating Chess Tournament despite a draw in yesterday's seventh round.

Zia, now on six points, split points with International Master Enamul Hossain Rajib.

IM Abdullah Al Rakib followed the leader with 5.5 points after beating FIDE Master Sheikh Nasir.

In the other matches, Shakil defeated Feroz, Emon beat Uten, Tabiur beat Jamal, Sagar beat Monir and Debraj drew with Sohail.

## Inzamam cool on appeal

AFP, Karachi

Pakistan captain Inzamamul Haq Thursday said he was unlikely to appeal against a four-match ban for bringing the game into disrepute, effectively ruling him out of next month's Champions Trophy.

But the master batsman said his young team had been vindicated after the International Cricket Council (ICC) cleared him of ball tampering following a two-day hearing in London and thanked Pakistani fans for praying for him.

"Since this is the minimum possible suspension I don't think we would appeal," Inzamam told private GEO television after he received a ban of four one-day internationals from the ICC.

"And since the next four matches start with the ICC Champions Trophy next month, I won't be able to play the tournament."

Inzamam faced the charges following Pakistan's refusal to return to the field on the fourth day of the fourth Test against England at the Oval last month, which led to them forfeiting the game.

SEE PAGE 22 COL 4

## Inzy cleared of ball-tampering Still banned for four ODIs



AFP, London

Pakistan cricket captain Inzamamul Haq was cleared Thursday of ball-tampering but found guilty of bringing the game into disrepute over his side's refusal to play during last month's fourth Test against England.

Inzamam, who received his ban after a hearing which started Wednesday at The Oval presided over by ICC chief match referee Ranjan Madugalle, was being punished for his role in Pakistan's unprecedented forfeiture of the fourth Test against England at the south London ground last month.

Pakistan refused to take the field after tea on the fourth day of the fourth Test against England on August 20.

They did so in protest at the decision of umpires Darrell Hair and

receiving the request to appoint a code of conduct commission to hear the appeal and seven days from then in which to hold the appeal hearing.

If the 36-year-old batsman does not contest his punishment, the ban will rule him out of Pakistan's opening matches in the Champions Trophy in India where their first fixture is on October 17.

Inzamam, who received his ban after a hearing which started Wednesday at The Oval presided over by ICC chief match referee Ranjan Madugalle, was being punished for his role in Pakistan's unprecedented forfeiture of the fourth Test against England at the south London ground last month.

Pakistan refused to take the field after tea on the fourth day of the fourth Test against England on August 20.

They did so in protest at the decision of umpires Darrell Hair and

Billy Doctrove to penalise them five runs for ball-tampering earlier in the day.

Their stand saw Pakistan forfeit the match -- the first time this had happened in 129 years of Test cricket -- and England were awarded a win, which gave them the series 3-0.

After the match ICC chief executive Malcolm Speed revealed Australian official Hair had sent the world governing body an e-mail saying he would stand down from their elite panel of officials in exchange for 500,000 dollars -- an offer the umpire later rescinded.

It has still to be confirmed if Hair will be umpiring at the Champions Trophy and, if so, whether he will be standing in any Pakistan fixtures after the Pakistan Cricket Board requested, following events at The Oval, that he be banned from officiating in any of their team's future matches.

## Mirza takes sweet revenge



AFP, Seoul

Top seed Martina Hingis crashed out of the Korea Open in spectacular fashion on Thursday, losing to India's Sania Mirza in the second round 4-6, 6-0, 6-4.

Just five days after the world number eight swept the 19-year-old aside in the semifinal of the Kolkata Sunfeast Open, a competition that she went on to win, the Swiss star encountered a much-improved Mirza at Seoul Olympic Park.

"It is my third time to play her this year and I guess that it is third time lucky," said a smiling Mirza.

"Every match is a different match and every week is a different week -- this proves that."

When the Indian produced some stunning strokeplay to twice come back from 0-40 to win the game in the opening three games, the crowd sensed an upset.

Mirza's below-par service let her down, however, with four double faults early on that interrupted her momentum. Hingis, who had been struggling to impose herself on the game, took advantage to win a hard-fought first set 6-4.

The second set was an entirely different affair as the Mumbai-born Mirza stormed back in style to overpower her bewildered opponent and take the set without dropping a game.

The third set was a much closer affair but the world number 59 was always in control and dominated play, producing four exquisite returns to win a Hingis service game to love.

Mirza's serve threatened to let Hingis back into the game but although the top seed survived two match points, it was third time lucky for the outsider.

"She was too good today

(Thursday), she played too well," a tired Hingis told a press conference.

"She played very well today, much better than last Saturday. I gave her more chances today. In the beginning I lost two 40-0 games. Sometimes that's professional tennis and little things can make matches."

Hingis said her opponent "hits

the ball very hard. Some of the angles she was able to play were really amazing."

But the Swiss, who returned this season after a three-year layoff due to injury, said there was not a big gap between her and Mirza. "I beat her last week so I am not going to beat myself up about this."

Mirza attributed her success to

SEE PAGE 22 COL 4



PHOTO: AFP

**SURPRISE!** India star Sania Mirza is ecstatic after beating Swiss star Martina Hingis at the Hansol Korea Open in Seoul on Thursday. Mirza won 4-6, 6-0, 6-4.



Pakistani students in Multan hold placards during a demonstration in support of national captain Inzamamul Haq on Thursday.

## Legends slam ICC decision



AFP, Islamabad

Pakistan legend Imran Khan on Thursday called for action to be taken against Australian umpire Darrell Hair after Inzamamul Haq was cleared on ball-tampering charges.

Khan welcomed Inzamam's acquittal and dismissed the International Cricket Council (ICC) decision to ban Inzamam for four matches on a charge of bringing the game into disrepute after the Oval Test fiasco last month.

"I welcome the acquittal of Inzamam and the team of ball tampering charges. Pakistan have been cleared of very serious allegations of cheating," Khan told AFP.

"The other offence is quite minor and I think the punishment is also minor."

Pakistan forfeited the fourth Test at The Oval after refusing to take the field after tea on the fourth day in protest at the decision of umpires Darrell Hair and Billy Doctrove to penalise them five runs for ball-tampering.

Khan, who branded Hair a "mini-Hitler" in a newspaper column after the Oval Test, added: "Now the next question is what to do with the man who created the whole controversy at the first place."

"If Inzamam is cleared of ball tampering allegations, now clearly some sort of action should be taken against the man who was responsible for such serious allegations."

"That allegation caused the big incident where Pakistan ended up

forefeiting the match."

Former Pakistan captain Ramuz Raja agreed that the ICC needed to take action against the umpire.

"The ICC need to pull up their socks and take a firm decision now on Darrell Hair," he said, adding that he thought Pakistan should appeal against the verdict.

"Pakistan's lawyers now would be arguing that if he was not guilty of ball tampering, why has he been handed out a four-match ban punishment? I think this case is not over yet and Pakistan should contest this decision aggressively because they are in the right."

Meanwhile, another Pakistan legend Wasim Akram said captain Inzamam must automatically be cleared of bringing the game into disrepute if charges of ball tampering

SEE PAGE 22 COL 1