

## Tickets at BNS counters from 10am

SPORTS REPORTER

Tickets for the exhibition football match between under-16 sides of Abahani and Mohammedan in honour of French football legend Zinedine Zidane will be available at the counters of the Bangabandhu National Stadium from 10am today.

Zidane is expected to arrive at the ground shortly before 5pm and don both the Abahani and Mohammedan colours in the match which is scheduled to kick off at 5.15pm.

Gallery tickets will cost Tk 40 while VIP tickets Tk 300, 200 and 100 for different gates.

There was huge demand for tickets at the Bangladesh Football Federation last evening but the federation has already sold the selling rights to an event management group, which is expected to print about 30,000 tickets for the mega event.

## INDO-BANGLA GAMES Kolkata to host inaugural event

SPORTS REPORTER

Kolkata will host the inaugural Indo-Bangla Games in the third week of January 2007.

The decision was taken yesterday after a meeting of the Bengal Olympic Association and the Bangladesh Olympic Association (BOA) officials at the BOA office.

BOA's acting secretary general Kutubuddin Ahmed presided over the meeting. Bengal Olympic Association vice-president HP Ghosh, general secretary Kamalesh Chatterjee and BOA officials were present.

The two parties agreed on eight disciplines -- four proposed each association -- for the five-day first edition. The men from West Bengal proposed football (u-19 male and women's), volleyball, basketball and kho kho (all men's) while Bangladesh named shooting (men's and women's air rifle), swimming (men's and women's), kabaddi (men's) and athletics (men's and women's).

The organisers believe that the yearly event will foster friendship of Bengali speaking people on both sides of the border and give exposure to the youth.

## Pillay in city

SPORTS REPORTER

Former Indian international Dhanraj Pillay arrived in Dhaka yesterday morning to play for Abahani in the Premier Hockey League.

Pillay, who last played for Abahani in 2002, will take the field tomorrow in their crucial first-leg finale against defending champions and league leaders Usha Kirra Chakra.

After a day's break, the league will resume today with Mariner Youngs Club taking on Sonali Bank at the Maulana Bhasani National Hockey Stadium 2.45pm.

Tomorrow, Mohammedan Sporting Club will take on bottom-table Bangladesh Sporting Club at 1.30pm while Usha and Abahani clash at 2.45pm at the same venue.



## Did U Know?

Triathlon and taekwondo were first introduced in the 2000 Sydney Olympic Games.



**Mohammad Azharuddin**  
(Former India cricket captain)  
"I am deeply humbled by the honour bestowed on me. It makes me a very happy man."

After being honoured by the Board of Control for Cricket in India for his services to the sport.



Convener of Sammito Kriya Paribar Mubashar Hossain (3rd L) addressing a press briefing at the DRU auditorium yesterday.

## Steve's Ashes regret was putting Ricky in stitches

Cricket

AFP, Sydney

England's pace spearhead Steve Harmison made a surprise admission Monday that his big regret from last year's epic Ashes victory was his apparent uncaring attitude towards a bloodied Australian skipper Ricky Ponting.

It was a towering Harmison bouncer that pounded into Ponting's helmet in the opening Test of last year's series at Lord's that set the tone for one of the mightiest battles in Test cricket.

Harmison's rising delivery forced the grille of Ponting's helmet into his cheek and nicked a cut that required stitches.

Soon after that, the shaken-up Australian skipper was caught in the slips giving Harmison the prized wicket of the batsman he rates as the best player he's ever bowled at.

But the 28-year-old Durham paceman remains remorseful about the pain he inflicted on Ponting that day, and spoke of his lingering regret at the England team's media day at the Sydney Cricket Ground on the tourists' first full day in Australia ahead of this month's series.

Harmison is not the archetypal fast bowler who enjoys nothing more than intimidating opposing batsmen with short-pitched deliveries and occasionally hitting the batsmen, sometimes drawing blood.

"As a bowler and as a person I was disappointed with myself the way it came about," he told reporters Monday.

"I didn't realise the extent of the injury until I got back to my (bowling) mark, and by then it was too late. It was probably the one regret of the whole Ashes series."

Ponting still bears the scar a year on, and Harmison said he had never spoken to the

Australian skipper about the incident, yet it still played on his mind.

"I respect the bloke for what he is, as a cricketer and as the Australian captain," he said.

"As much as I am a fast bowler and the ball does come out of my hand at decent speeds, and the ball does bounce, and it is a dangerous thing, nobody likes to see anyone get hurt."

"I'm not a big one for (blood on the pitch) to be honest. But it's my job. I bowl at 'X' miles an hour, the ball bounces, it goes through. It's a man's game, people do get hit."

But Harmison was not going soft and said he had no intentions of changing the way he bowled with his high arm action in the coming five-Test series, which gets underway in Brisbane on November 23.

"I don't think it's going to stop me from bowling short balls at anybody, and I don't think I'll be slowing up because of it," he said.

"It's just something that happened. I'm not somebody that is in the business to hurt people. I'm in there to take wickets any which way possible."

Although he won't nominate particular Australian targets, such as his Australian rival Glenn McGrath often does before a series, Harmison spoke of his respect for Ponting.

"The one player I obviously enjoy (getting out) is Ricky Ponting, because in my opinion he's the best player I've ever bowled at. And it probably lifts you just a little more when you come to bowl at him," he said.

"But I'd never target anybody, because if you get Ricky Ponting out, then Damien Martyn comes in, Adam Gilchrist comes in after that. Good players come in. You lose focus if that happens."

Harmison did not feel he had a singular responsibility to lead the England attack against the Aussies.

"We hunt as a pack. We hunt as a group," he said.

"We won the Ashes because of four fast bowlers and Ashley Giles as the spinner."

While champion leg-spinner Shane Warne took 40 wickets for Australia, Flintoff's 24 wickets was the most by an Englishman. Harmison snared 17 wickets.

"We all clipped in. And we did it as a group, as a pack, and it will be the same again," he said.

## CA calls

FROM PAGE 20  
England in August and demanded an inquiry into his conduct.

CA chief executive James Sutherland said public confidence in the objectivity of umpiring, and in the ability of umpires to make decisions without fear or favour, was one of the key issues underpinning cricket's ambitions.

"We don't agree with the ICC's decision and are concerned about the implications which could see international umpires concerned about off-field consequences of calling decisions as they see them," Sutherland said in a statement.

Sutherland said his organisation believed Hair was still one of the best umpires in the world.

But he said CA believed, more importantly, that appropriate processes should be followed if there were performance concerns about umpires.

"World cricket needs champion cricketers, but it also needs world-class umpires who are equivalently skilled at what they do," he said.

"To aspire to these heights, those umpires need to have confidence in the system -- that they are supported by best-practice administration and processes."

Sutherland said CA regarded Hair as one of the best umpires in the world and, if available, it would welcome him back to officiate in Australian interstate cricket.

## Urge to change sports fed bosses

SPORTS REPORTER

Five years ago, the then caretaker government changed the heads of sports federations immediately after taking over because the presidents of all associations were political appointments.

Although everyone expected similar moves from the current caretaker government, it has yet to take such moves in the sports arena in spite of going for reshuffling in every other administration.

The Sammito Kriya Paribar (SKP) yesterday handed over a memorandum to CM Shafi Sami, the advisor to youth and sports, requesting him to follow in the footsteps of the past caretaker government.

"The chiefs of the sports federations should be removed at once because all of them are partisan. For transparency, we also demand that all the elected bodies of different federations should not take any long-term decisions during this period. The federations should also not try to make any financial deals because it might be harmful and individuals could serve personal interests," told SKP convener Mubashar Hossain at a press conference at the DRU auditorium yesterday.

In reply to a question, Mubashar said that they were worried about Bangladesh Cricket Board's international TV deal and believed that there was scope for corruption with an outgoing lawmaker of BNP being the president of the board.

Former Bangladesh Football Federation general secretary Harunur Rashid suggested that it would be better to hold the federation polls after the national elections because the focus of every one would be on it.

Former national footballer Dewan Shafiqul Arefin Tutul demanded justice on the police assault and torture on sportsmen and sportsjournalists.

"It is the best time to punish the guilty and I believe that the caretaker government can make an instance by doing it so that no one even dares to repeat such barbaric acts in the future," Tutul said.

The SKP also demanded investigation into all corruption and irregularity and publish white papers on them.

## Dhaka gears

FROM PAGE 17  
Bashar for the first time sounded unhappy for being a cricketer.

"It is a pity that I have to play cricket tomorrow while people will watch Zidane. I would have been happy if the match (Corporate Cricket League final) was deferred," he said echoing the sentiment of fellow cricketers.

"I wish he was here with Real Madrid's full 'galactico' squad but still, it is the biggest thing to hit Bangladesh since Muhammad Ali's arrival in 1981," said Rabeed Imam, Editor of tigercricket.com.

Rasheduzzaman, a student of NSU, said: "I'm very excited. A world renowned hero like Zidane is a great inspiration to our country at this time."

His NSU mate Saaolat hoped the arrival of Zidane would boost the country's game. "It's great but I think he's coming due to a commercial reason only. But I really hope that this visit will give our dwindling football hope in some way."

"I just hope that his visit gives us a sudden boost of some sort. But as he's a red passport holder (UN goodwill ambassador), I hope he uses it to good effect to Bangladesh in the future," said Tasnib Ahmed, a student.

Tanvir, service holder, said, "It would have been great if he came just to play football."

"Zidane's visit must be lauded as he's here to promote a product that is for children's health. Nonetheless, he's a great footballer and surely this is a proud moment for Bangladesh," BUET student Parvez Mahmood commented.

## Same old

FROM PAGE 20  
Essien's face. They always have an excuse. He has perfect vision... two matches with him, and five points we have lost. I have had in my mind for a long time that referees should come to press conferences after the game to explain their decisions. But it would be a fake press conference, because they would come with their excuses -- and you can do nothing about it."

## Spurs too hot

FROM PAGE 20  
after he was felled by a coin thrown from the crowd. It struck the back of his head as he waited to take a throw-in late in the first half.

It was the second such unsavoury incident in the top flight this weekend. On Saturday, Fulham's Claus Jensen was hit on the head by a coin during their 1-0 victory over Everton, leading manager Chris Coleman to call for a prison sentence for the perpetrator.

## Jayawardene captain till World Cup

Cricket

AFP, Colombo

Mahela Jayawardene will lead Sri Lanka at the World Cup in the Caribbean next March, chairman of selectors Asantha de Mel told AFP on Monday.

"Mahela has done a decent job since taking over from Marvan Atapattu and he will continue till the World Cup," De Mel said.

"We've been working towards the World Cup and we want to make sure that Mahela feels comfortable ahead of the tournament which is not too far away."

De Mel said the decision to reappoint Jayawardene was made before he was named the Captain of the Year at the International Cricket Council's awards ceremony in Mumbai last week.

Jayawardene, 29, beat other high-profile nominees like Ricky Ponting of Australia and Rahul Dravid of India for the prestigious award.

The selectors persisted with Jayawardene despite Sri Lanka's failure to make the semifinals of the Champions Trophy in India, although the team had been one of the favourites.

World champions Australia won the tournament in Mumbai on Sunday, defeating the West Indies by eight

wickets in the final.

The Sri Lankan media reported that Jayawardene's authoritarian leadership during the Champions Trophy was not liked by the senior players. It was alleged that Jayawardene failed to consult senior players when making crucial decisions.

Jayawardene denied the allegations at a post-tournament media briefing in Colombo.

He had been accused of the same fault during Sri Lanka's tour of England in May when he declined to play veteran Sanath Jayasuriya in the second Test at Edgbaston despite the senior players wanting him in the side.

Jayawardene was made stand-in captain in March when Atapattu suffered a back injury during the home series against Pakistan and subsequently captained Sri Lanka in England and at home against South Africa.

Jayawardene has averaged 62 with the bat in Test cricket since taking over as captain even though his career average is 46.38.

In one-dayers, Jayawardene's average as captain is 46 against a career average of 32.47.

He also hit Test cricket's fourth highest individual score of 374 in July against South Africa while leading Sri Lanka to a 2-0 sweep.

## Nikolay's maiden Masters

Tennis

AFP, Paris

New world number three Nikolay Davydenko set his sights on Roger Federer and Rafael Nadal after claiming his first Masters title with a 6-1, 6-2, 6-2 victory over Dominik Hrbaty in Paris on Sunday.

The Russian assured himself of his highest ever ATP ranking when the new list is published next week and only world number one Federer and French Open champion Nadal will be looking down on him.

Now Davydenko, who still has the Masters Cup final to come in a week's time followed by December's Davis Cup final, wants to focus on challenging for the biggest tournaments next

season -- although he is not setting any targets.

"I don't want to say anything for the future. Last year I finished in the top five and for me this year it was important to stay in the top 10," said Davydenko.

"But after winning here in Paris and reaching the top three, for me this is great and the season is still not finished."

"Next year I want to play good tennis to fight with Federer and Nadal to be playing in the finals of Masters Series events and winning Grand Slams."

"It's very important for me to play well in the Grand Slams."

Davydenko is close to the end of the most amazing year of his life. As well as reaching a career high ranking and winning a first Masters title, he will

## Asif appeals against ban

AFP, Lahore

Pakistan paceman Mohammad Asif Monday said he had filed an appeal against a one-year ban imposed on him by the Pakistan Cricket Board for a failed drug test.

"I have filed my appeal through my lawyer, Aftab Gul, and submitted it to the PCB's medical officer, Doctor Sohail Saleem, and I hope my ban will be reviewed by the appeal committee," Asif told AFP.

A PCB tribunal last week banned Asif for one year and fellow pacer Shoaib Akhtar for two years after the pair tested positive for the banned steroid nandrolone.

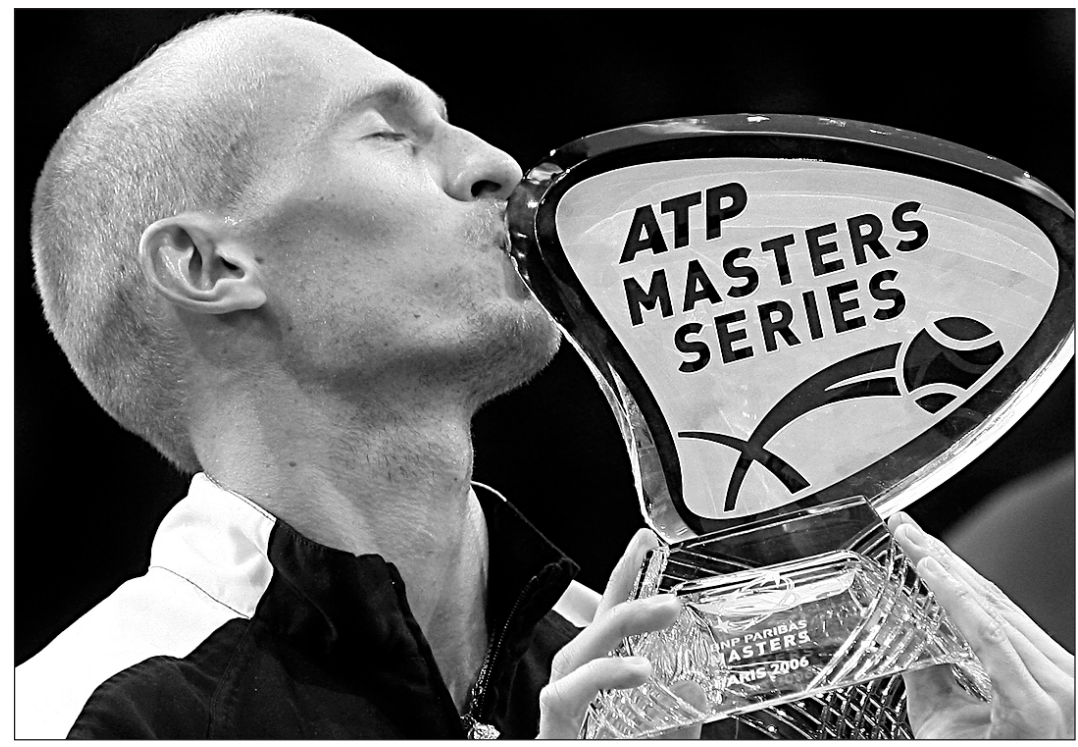
The tests were conducted in September and once the results were known, in mid-October, the PCB suspended the pair, pulling them out of the Champions Trophy in India.

The ban also means both are ruled out of next year's World Cup in the West Indies.

The PCB had already announced a two-man appeal committee comprising former High Court judge Fakhrudin Ibrahim and former Test cricketer Haseeb Ehsan.

Asif's lawyer, Gul, is a former Test opener who played six Tests for Pakistan between 1969 and 1971.

"This is a case of mitigation and we have questioned the quantum of sentence to our client," Gul told AFP.



Russian Nikolay Davydenko kisses the Paris Masters Trophy after beating Slovakia's Dominik Hrbaty in the final at Bercy Indoor Tournament on Sunday.

## CCL final today

FROM PAGE 17  
already made his mark in Beximco's 61-run success against Partex in the second semifinal on Sunday.

"It is nice to come back in Bangladesh to play cricket because there is a real excitement about the game in the country. And another reason is I always love to share experience with the young guys and I know that there are some very good young talents here," added Jayasuriya, who along with his former skipper Arjuna Ranatunga appeared in the Damal Summer semifinal for Mohammedan immediately after winning the World Cup back in 1996.

He assured that he would give hundred per cent effort in the match as a professional cricketer.

"I came here because we have got a two-week break. We are professionals and our job is to play cricket -- be it your own club, your country or any other club," said the prolific batsman, who is only the fourth player in ODI history to have scored more than 10 thousand runs.

The leading Sri Lankan batsman expressed his disappointment over his side's failure in the ICC Champions Trophy but said that he was looking forward to winning the second World Cup in 2007.

"I think it was disappointing for us because we couldn't reach the last four, but our batting actually

let us down in the tournament. But I am looking forward to taste the second World Cup success because we have been playing good cricket for the last few months," said Jayasuriya, who was instrumental in Sri Lanka's 1996 World Cup victory.

With the arrival of the ace Lankan batsman, both Beximco captain Akram Khan and Acme and national skipper Habibul Bashar were looking forward to a fitting CCL final.

"I hope it would be a very exciting final because both the teams have number of good local players to their arsenal besides the quality foreign recruitments. I hope our main batsmen rise to occasion tomorrow," said former national skipper Akram.

"I am really excited about the final. Sanath (Jayasuriya) already talked with me about the final match and it is really encouraging that he is very serious about the match. We are looking forward to a very exciting final," said Bashar, whose side handed a seven-wicket defeat on Epyllion on their way to the title match.

He however was little bit disappointed with the security arrangements and other facilities in the open-ended ground. "I'm really concerned with the security. And you all know the dressing rooms here are not quality ones to accommodate the players like Sanath and Kumar."

## Hameed, Khan given call-ups

CRICINFO, undated

Yasir Hameed, the opening batsman, has been recalled to Pakistan's squad for the first two Tests against West Indies while Samiullah Khan, the young left-arm pacer, has also been included.

SQUAD

Inran Farhat, Mohammad Hafeez, Yasir Hameed, Younis Khan, Mohammad Yousuf, Inzamamul Malik (captain), Faisal Iqbal, Shoaib Malik, Abdul Razzaq, Kamran Akmal, Danish Kaneria, Samiullah Khan, Shahid Nazir, Abdul Rehman, Umar Gul.

## Sevilla go

FROM PAGE 20  
van Nistelrooy failed to make the difference.

Ronaldo would then make way for Beckham, but before the Brazilian tramped off he tested Pinto again with a drive from the left.

Fabio Cannavaro then saved Real by dispossessing Nene as he was about to beat down on Casillas.

Celta manager Fernando Vazquez then replaced Canobbio with Jorge, and that proved to be an inspirational substitution.

In the 82nd minute Real's Jose Antonio Reyes, on as a second half substitute, gave up possession cheaply and Jorge pounced to beat Casillas.