

## ODIs doubtful

**Sports Reporter**  
The prospect of Bangladesh's one-day matches against two Test-playing nations during the Willis International Cup was overcast by a gloomy shadow after the State Minister for Youth and Sports Obaidul Quader expressed his reluctance to provide financial support for upgrading the four proposed venues outside Dhaka to international standards. The BCB had earmarked Chittagong, Rajshahi, Sylhet and Mymensingh as probable venues for the two ODIs.  
Although the official declaration is yet to be made by the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB), it was learnt that Mr. Quader in a meeting on Monday asked the BCB general-secretary Syed Ashraf Huj to drop the plan of holding the two matches outside Dhaka during the nine-nation knock-out tournament, scheduled to begin at the Bangabandhu National Stadium from October 24.  
BCB on its part will try to convince the minister otherwise as it is very keen to host the two ODIs.

## Schools hockey Armanitola, Maizuddin reach semis

Armanitola High reached the semifinal of the 3rd schools hockey championship beating Yusuf Multilateral by 7-0 goals at the BKSP ground yesterday, reports UNB.  
Earlier, Faridpur Maizuddin High booked a seat for the semifinals.  
In the first match, Manikganj Zilla High beat Comilla Yusuf Multilateral by 2-0 goals.  
Manikganj Zilla High also won their second match defeating Orient Textile Mills School by 4-0 goals.

## Onus on Stoichkov



HRISTO STOICHKOV

**SOFIA, Aug 25 (Reuters/Internet):** Striker Hristo Stoichkov is to play a key role in Bulgaria's new-look squad for their first European championship qualifier against Poland as they seek to put their disappointing World Cup finals behind them.  
Bulgaria coach Hristo Bonev, who has named a provisional 21-man squad for the match in the Black Sea port of Bourgas on September 6, said Stoichkov was "an experienced and respected player" on whom he would rely "in difficult moments".  
The 32-year-old Stoichkov, sacked by Barcelona in March, joined Japanese club Kashima Reysol after the World Cup finals in which Bulgaria finished bottom of their opening round group after losing twice and drawing the other game.  
Bonev left out nine of Bulgaria's old guard, including midfielder Krassimir Balakov, who had already said he would not play for the national team after the World Cup as he wanted to concentrate on his form for VfB Stuttgart.  
Other leading Bulgarian players dropped are strikers Lyuboslav Penev from Spanish Celta Vigo and midfielder Zlatko Yanov from Turkey's Besiktas, Emil Kostadinov and Trifon Ivanov, who both played for CSKA Sofia last season.  
Ivailo Jordanov from Sporting Lisbon kept his place in the team, but the majority are young, six of them between 21 and 23.  
Four who might make their international debut include 22-year-old goalkeeper Dimitar Ivanov and 21-year-old defender Zahari Sirakov, both from Levski Sofia.

### SQUAD

Goalkeepers: Zdravko Zdravkov, Dimitar Ivanov  
Defenders: Ivailo Petkov, Goshko Ginechev, Radostin Kishishev, Milen Petkov, Anatoli Nankov, Zahari Sirakov, Zlatomir Zagorac, Vladimir Yanov  
Midfielders: Daniel Borimirov, Ivailo Jordanov, Georgi Bachev, Stoicho Stoiolov, Ilija Grujev, Mitko Trendafilov  
Forwards: Hristo Stoichkov, Georgi Ivanov, Ilian Iliev, Doncho Donev, Anton Spasov

## C'wealth squad by ministerial order

# Late but welcome decision

**Sports Reporter**

Good sense seems to have finally prevailed on our sports organisers. The Bangladesh Olympic Association (BOA) deserves kudos for taking the decision, belated though it may be, to drastically cut the size of the Bangladesh squad for the forthcoming 16th Commonwealth Games. The BOA actually endorsed the decision of the State Minister for Youth and Sports Obaidul Quader. It seems that the BOA has also been able to decide where our potentialities lie.  
The BOA yesterday in a meeting, chaired by its president Lt. Gen (Retd) Mahabubur Rahman, welcomed the state Minister's desire to only send the cricket and shooting teams for the Kuala Lumpur Games. This was in a bid to cut down on the expenses in view of the grave flood situation prevailing in the country.  
Besides, the president and his secretary general Golam Quddus Chowdhury have also volunteered not to join the revised 39-member Bangladesh team so that some more public

money can be saved. But the noble gesture only came to the fore following a surprise meeting of Mr Quader with the general secretaries of seven sports federations on Monday.  
In a sensational twist of events on Monday, the State Minister, who had earlier approved of a 73-member Bangladesh contingent for the Kuala Lumpur Games, declared that the government can only afford to send to the Games the cricket and shooting teams apart from a few delegates and four sports journalists.  
The surprise but welcome decision at the eleventh hour came as a shocking revelation for the athletics, swimming, hockey, boxing and weightlifting teams. It was learnt that the hockey players in the national camp heard the news while they were assembling for the morning training session yesterday. If one has to feel sorry, perhaps the hockey players need to be consoled for their disappointment.  
The NSC has since ordered the camps of the five excluded

disciplines to close down, but not before it has incurred an expenditure of nearly taka 50 lakh in the last couple of months for the purpose.  
The untimely move however left the BOA in a state of confusion, leaving its secretary-general to hurriedly send faxed messages to the Games organisers in Malaysia as well as to the Commonwealth headquarters in London seeking apology for the late change.  
With the Games beginning from September 11, the BOA may face heavy fines for the late withdrawal.  
"But we are hopeful of skipping any punitive measures since we have withdrawn from some events because of the prevailing situation. It is more of a humanitarian case," said Golam Quddus Chowdhury at his office yesterday.  
The BOA secretary-general also said that the shooting team is likely to leave the capital on September 1 while the cricket team will depart for Kuala Lumpur on September 5.

## Hathurusingha Hammers hundred

# Lanka limber up well

**LONDON, Aug 25:** Sri Lanka's middle-order batsman Chandika Hathurusingha made his claim for a place in the Test team to face England at The Oval with an unbeaten century against Hampshire on Monday, reports AFP.

Hathurusingha made 108 not out and Mehela Jayawardena hit 90 as the Sri Lankans reached their target of 309 with 17 balls to spare and by five wickets.  
Hampshire declared at their overnight 347 for eight, made on the first day after the second was washed out by rain.  
With the Sri Lankans anxious for batting practice they declared their first innings at 39 for four.  
Along the way they lost Test contenders Sanath Jayasuriya, Russel Arnold, Jayawardena and Hashhan Tillakaratne to Hampshire's inexperienced pair Alex Morris and Simon Francis.  
Hampshire captain Robin Smith forfeited his side's second innings, leaving the Sri Lankans 82 overs to reach the target.  
For another Test contender, opening batsman Arnold, the day was a personal disaster. He was out twice without scoring in the space of 75 minutes and nine balls.  
Arnold faced four balls in the first innings and five in the second, out both times to Morris.  
The Sri Lankans soon recovered with Jayasuriya at last finding form in a fluent 40 which included eight fours.  
But the major partnership of the innings was provided by Jayawardena and Hathurusingha who put on 108 for the

third wicket in 28 overs.  
Jayawardena seemed certain to reach his first century of the tour but after making 90 in just under three hours he edged Francis to first slip where Raj Marua clutched the catch.  
Francis later removed Tillakaratne at 246 but by then Hathurusingha was in command and it was he who hit the winning runs off leg-spinner Giles White.  
White had claimed his first wicket of the season in his previous over when he had Upal Chandana caught on the boundary at mid-wicket for 34.  
In total Hathurusingha hit 13 boundaries off 184 balls at it proved crucial in the Sri Lankans, who recorded the second win of their five matches in the Vodafone Challenge Series.

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Morris	12	2	53	1
Francis	15	1	47	2
Mascarenhas	14	0	66	0
James	20	3	78	1
Maru	17	4	55	0
White	11	1	4	1

Result: Sri Lanka won by five wickets.

## MCC to re-ballot again for 'yes'

**LONDON, Aug 25 (Reuters/Internet):** MCC, the world's most famous cricket club, is to vote again on whether to allow women members for the first time in its 211-year history.  
The decision to re-ballot Marylebone Cricket Club members on September 28 was announced on Tuesday despite the motion being rejected earlier this year.  
If passed, women will be able to enter the famous Long Room at cricket's traditional headquarters at Lord's for the first time.  
The MCC committee is supporting a "yes" vote and a glossy brochure has been sent to all 18,000 MCC members outlining their reasons for wanting women to join.  
Secretary Roger Knight said: "Should the vote go through in September, the club could create 10 honorary women members - and they could be in place by the end of next summer's World Cup final (at Lord's)."  
Last February, 56 per cent of MCC members voted in favour of women joining, short of the required two-thirds majority needed to alter club rules.  
MCC fear they have since lost out on major sponsorship and national lottery funding, partly due to its status as a men-only club.  
MCC president Colin Ingleby-Mackenzie, former captain of Hampshire, said: "deny completely that we are being motivated by political correctness. Tony Banks and Tony Blair are supporting our decision, but we are not in any way following their lead at all."  
"This issue was first voted on in 1991, long before the advent of New Labour. I have been to clubs all around the world - in Zimbabwe, Australia and the West Indies - and, with the exception of Trinidad, they all have women members and no problems at all."

## Vieri on the move?

**MADRID, Aug 25 (Reuters/Internet):** Italy's World Cup marksman Christian Vieri could be on his way out of Atletico Madrid following a row with new coach Arrigo Sacchi and president Jesus Gil.  
The striker is believed to have fallen out with Sacchi after arriving late for training ahead of Sunday's friendly against Italian club Lazio. Vieri did not play in that game and the club are said to have lost patience with him.  
Sacchi is quoted in Madrid-based sports daily Marca on Tuesday as telling his compatriot: "You will never play for this club again while I'm here."  
In Italy, Turin-based newspaper Tuttosport quoted Gil as telling Spanish radio that Vieri had disappointed him deeply.  
"After I invited him to spend the holidays on my yacht in Marbella he returned to Italy he wasn't interested in staying with us," the paper quoted Gil as saying.  
"I know that Juventus want him back. The clause to rescind his contract is worth 100 billion lire (\$56 million) but I'd return him to his sender for half that."  
Tuttosport also quoted Gil's son Miguel Angel, Atletico's director general, as saying Vieri wanted to return to Italy for personal reasons.  
Vieri was the top performer for Italy in the World Cup, scoring five goals in five games, and Atletico subsequently received an offer from Lazio, reportedly worth a staggering \$39.47 million. But the club were determined to hold on to their prized asset, who scored 24 goals in his

first season in Spain and had been expected to resume his partnership with Brazilian Juninho this year.  
The main bar to Vieri leaving Atletico is that the deadline for players' registration for European competition has passed. Atletico have his name on their list of players eligible for the



CHRISTIAN VIERI

## Inter-college handball

Dhaka Polytechnic and Government Shaheed Suhrawardy won their respective matches in the Power inter-college handball championship at the court near Dhaka Stadium yesterday, reports UNB.  
In the day's first match, Dhaka Polytechnic defeated RK Choudhury Degree College by 21-12 goals after leading the first half 13-7.  
Ariful Haq scored highest 10 goals and Saïdul Haq netted 5 for the winners while Sabir Masud, Mutaleb and Mamunur Rahman netted two goals each for the losers.  
In the second match, Shaheed Suhrawardy outplayed Dania College by 11-5 goals. Winners led the first half 5-3.  
Raja netted highest 7 goals for Suhrawardy while Zahid scored 3 for Dania.

## Seven beats Nine!

**SYDNEY, Aug 25 (Reuters/Internet):** Seven Network Ltd said on Tuesday that it has secured the broadcast and subscription television rights to the Australia-England Ashes cricket series in England in 2001.  
Terms were not disclosed in the statement issued by Seven nor whether the Nine Network was a bidder for the 2001 cricket series.  
Nine, which is controlled by Kerry Packer's Publishing and Broadcasting Ltd, usually shows Australian Test matches from England.  
Seven, which is a distant second to Nine in the free-to-air television market, said it would broadcast all Test matches and one-day internationals in the 2001 series based on a deal struck with the England and Wales Cricket Board.  
Seven has the exclusive TV rights to the Sydney 2000 Olympics.

## Warne on target for Ashes series

**SYDNEY, Aug 25 (Reuters/Internet):** Shane Warne is recovering more quickly than expected from shoulder surgery and should be fit for the forthcoming Ashes series, the manager of Victoria's state team said on Tuesday.  
Shaun Graf said he expected the leg-spinner would be back in action by the start of the domestic Sheffield Shield competition in October.  
"We're certainly trying to set that as his first game," Graf said. "If he can make it back by then that would be a bonus but we've got another game after that against New South Wales in early November."  
That's most probably the more realistic one that we'd be looking at because that gives him an opportunity to still prepare himself for the first Test, which is in late November."  
News of Warne's recovery comes less than a month after the world's most successful wrist-spinner said there was a slim chance he might never bowl again.  
Warne, 28, has 313 Test wickets but is in danger of being worn out after being Australia's



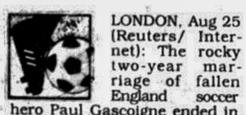
most used bowler in recent years.

He has already been ruled out of the tour to Pakistan starting next month.  
England arrive in Australia in late October and the first of five Tests starts in Brisbane on November 20.

## Fanie fantasy

**DURBAN, South Africa, Aug 25 (Reuters/Internet):** Fanie de Villiers wants to set up a fund to pay fines imposed on South African players by International Cricket Council (ICC) match referees.  
The former South Africa paceman has proposed establishing a national supporters club whose membership fees could be used to reimburse players for perceived unjust fines.  
De Villiers criticised the standard of umpiring in the recent series between England and South Africa, as well as Allan Donald's fine for commenting negatively on umpire Mervyn Kitchen's performance in the fourth Test.  
"We could pay the fines of players who are not too guilty, like Donald, but that will be for the (supporters club) members to decide in each specific case," De Villiers said on Tuesday.  
"We could even start an umpiring academy or pay former players a salary to become umpires."  
De Villiers plans to approach the United Cricket Board of South Africa (UCB) with his idea, and is prepared to tone down some of its more radical elements.  
"I can't go against the UCB if they say I will be challenging their authority - I'll have to join them."

# Gazza's marriage over



hero Paul Gascoigne ended in

**LONDON, Aug 25 (Reuters/Internet):** The rocky two-year marriage of fallen England soccer player Paul Gascoigne ended in



An AP file photo of controversial English football star Paul Gascoigne, his wife Sheryl and son Reagan in front of their Stanstead Abbots residence in May 1998. The couple were reportedly divorced yesterday.

the London divorce courts on Tuesday over his unreasonable behaviour.  
A judge granted Gascoigne's wife Sheryl, 33, an uncontested divorce after she alleged that the soccer player's behaviour was so bad she could no longer be expected to live with him.  
Gascoigne, 31, married Sheryl in July 1996. But four months later she appeared in public bruised and with a black eye. Gascoigne admitted to losing his temper and hitting her during a domestic dispute.  
Divorce papers were first filed a year ago but the couple appeared to be trying for a reconciliation in June when the distraught Gascoigne was sensationally thrown out of the England squad on the eve of the World Cup soccer tournament in France.  
They then spent a holiday in Florida with their two-year-old son, Reagan, but friends later said the attempt to save the marriage had failed.  
Flamboyant and outspoken, Gascoigne was once regarded as England's most talented soccer player. But widely-publicised bouts of drinking and partying as well as injury have taken their toll on his health and popularity.

England manager Glenn Hoddle recounted earlier this month how the midfielder, nicknamed Gazza, smashed a bedside lamp in a rage when he was told he had been left out of the World Cup squad because of doubts over his fitness.  
Gascoigne, who now plays for English Premier League side Middlesbrough, later admitted he had been drunk the night before he was axed.  
Neither Gascoigne nor his wife were in court for Tuesday's hearing when their marriage was ended with a rubber stamp along with a batch of 33 others.  
The couple still have to agree to a financial settlement and child custody arrangements - a process which could take months.

# Spurs reject takeover talk



rejected speculation that the club was in takeover talks.

**LONDON, Aug 25 (Reuters/Internet):** Premier league strugglers Tottenham Hotspur on Tuesday

rejected speculation that the club was in takeover talks.  
Tottenham's poor early season form - two defeats from two matches - has triggered talk that Chairman Alan Sugar is prepared to sell his 40 per cent stake in the club.  
Other reports have suggested that Swiss coach Christian Gross, appointed less than a year ago, could be dismissed.  
A Tottenham spokesman said on Tuesday there was "no substance" to reports that Rupert Murdoch's News International and Bahamas-based billionaire Joe Lewis were potential rival bidders for the club.  
A News International spokeswoman denied a story in The Guardian newspaper that the company was in preliminary takeover talks with Tottenham. "It's not true," she said.  
Sources close to Lewis also said that he was not interested in buying the north London club. They noted that Lewis had recently distributed his shareholding in European soccer club owner ENIC Plc to his son and the company's management.  
Stock analysts said that a

## Real Betis coach quits real quick

**SEVILLE, Spain, Aug 25 (Reuters/Internet):** Antonio Oliveira resigned as coach of Real Betis on Tuesday after just 23 days in charge.  
Chilean Vicente Cantatore, former coach of Sporting Lisbon, is expected to take over at the Seville-based club.  
Oliveira, who coached the Portuguese national side during Euro '96 and last year led Porto to a League and Cup double, joined Betis at the start of August after the surprise resignation of veteran boss Luis Aragones.  
Oliveira, and in particular Portuguese, have received a welter of criticism over the summer for their mediocre displays in pre-season games.  
The club began their Spanish first division campaign away to newly-promoted Alaves on Saturday.

# PCB assures Aussies



with them last week before the bombings when the Americans began pulling their people out."

**KARACHI, Aug 25:** The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) Monday said the Australian cricket team should not worry about security during their forthcoming visit to Pakistan following the US missile strikes in Afghanistan, reports AFP.  
"The tension is between America and Afghanistan. Pakistan is not involved in it and there is complete peace," PCB official Rafi Naseem told the news agency.  
"We expect the tension will defuse in a couple of weeks" and the Australian players should go ahead with the tour, he added.  
The Australians are due to play three Tests and three one-day games in Pakistan with a mini-World Cup to be played in Bangladesh in between.  
Commenting on reports that last week's US military strikes on suspected terrorist bases of Saudi dissident Osama Bin Laden had made the Australia Cricket Board (ACB) jittery about the team's tour to Pakistan next month, Naseem said there was no trouble in Pakistan.  
"We do not expect any disturbance, rather cricket lovers are very anxious to witness the battle between the two best sides of the world," Naseem said.  
Earlier the ACB contacted Australian foreign affairs officials to assess safety in Pakistan.  
"We have sent a letter off to foreign affairs officials although we had been in touch

party to the tussle, and secondly the tension will ease by the time the Australians arrive here for the three-test series," he was quoted as saying.  
Foreigners are keeping a low profile in Pakistan. No attacks on foreigners have been reported, but there have been largely peaceful anti-US demonstrations across Pakistan. Protesters accusing the United States of violating the sovereignty of a neighbour and a fellow-Muslim country.  
Australia's second Test in the upcoming tour will be played in Peshawar, a city near the Afghan border that has been scattered violence during anti-US protests in recent days.  
Australian players were hit with bottles and other debris during a one-day game against South Africa the last time they travelled to Pakistan, in 1994.

## Inter-club open tennis from Sept 4

The inter-club open tennis tournament, the first ever holiday meet, will begin on September 4 at the Ramna National Tennis Complex, reports UNB.  
Four events - men's singles, men's doubles, women's singles, and women's doubles - have been included in the meet to be played only on every Friday and Saturday.  
The entry fee for the men's singles, men's doubles and women's singles have been fixed at Tk 100 each while Tk 200 for the team event.