

## Mashrafee to be back today

SPORTS REPORTER

Ace paceman Mashrafee-Bin-Mortuza returns to competitive cricket today after a four-month lay-off when Bangladesh A play their first limited-overs match against visiting United Arab Emirates at the Khulna Divisional Stadium.

The right-arm Narail quick had to return home from Sri Lanka in September last year without playing any match due to a back injury and also missed domestic competitions.

Middle-order batsman Rajin Saleh will lead the strong second-string Bangladesh side, who will play another game at the same venue on Friday.

UAE team had earlier lost both their limited-overs games against Bangladesh Under-19 team at Bogra.

## AFC team due here on Feb 8

BDNEWS, Dhaka

A four-member delegation from the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) will arrive here on February 8 to discuss the sponsorship and other issues for the upcoming AFC Challenge Cup.

The AFC will directly rope in the sponsor for the tournament which will take place in Bangladesh and Nepal.

"They have already identified six to seven leading companies. Besides, they will also discuss many other things during their five-day visit," said BFF general secretary Anwarul Haque Helal yesterday.

The Group B and Group C matches of the newly-introduced tournament will be held at the Bangabandhu National Stadium from March 5 to April 9 while the Group A and Group D matches will be held in Nepal.

Bangladesh have been placed in Group C along with Palestine, Cambodia and Guam while the Group B comprises Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bhutan and Brunei.

India, Chinese Taipei, Philippines and Afghanistan have been drawn in Group A while Group D includes Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan and Macao.



## Did U Know?

Motor boating was an official sport at the 1908 Olympics.



## Lindsay Davenport

(American tennis star)  
"I'm not going to argue that I deserve to be number one. I don't want to disrespect it by saying it's low on the priority, but it's not up in my priority list."  
After being knocked out of the Australian Open quarterfinals.



## ESPN

Australia vs Sri Lanka

Seventh ODI

Live at 9:15 am

Sportscentre

Live at 9:30 pm

## STAR Sports

Australian Open

Women's Singles Semis

Live at 8:30 am



PHOTO: AFP

**ANOTHER NEAR MISS:** Pakistan's Younis Khan sweeps one on way to scoring 194 on the fifth and final day of the second Test against India at the Iqbal Stadium in Faisalabad on Wednesday. He was run out on 199 in the first Lahore Test.

## Younis misses 200 again as Test ends in a draw



AFP, Faisalabad

Younis Khan scored a brilliant 194 and Mohammad Yousuf hit 126 in another Pakistan run feast before the second Test against India petered out in a draw here on Wednesday.

Younis and Yousuf put on 242 runs for the third wicket before Pakistan lost their last five wickets in the space of two runs to finally bring smiles to the faces of bowlers.

Pakistan crashed from 488-3 to 490-8 when the innings ended with captain Inzamam-ul-Haq unable to bat because of a back injury and Shoaib Malik mourning the death of his father early Wednesday.

India were 21-0 in their second innings when stumps were drawn on the high-scoring stalemate where Pakistan made 588 in their first innings and India replied with 603.

With the series locked 0-0, the rivals will have everything to play for in the third and final Test starting in Karachi on Sunday.

Inzamam and his Indian counterpart Rahul Dravid hoped they would get a result-oriented wicket for the decider.

"These have not been easy conditions for bowlers because the wicket was so heavily loaded in favour of batsmen," said Dravid.

"A draw seemed evident early in the match. Hopefully we will get conditions to force a result in Karachi."

Inzamam said he looked forward to playing the final Test on a sporting wicket.

"There was no way a result could be had here but I am confident we will get a sporting wicket in Karachi which will produce a result."

"So far it has all been about the bat dominating the ball."

Younis, leading Pakistan in Inzamam's absence, hit 32 fours and a six during his 11th Test century and his fourth in as many Tests against India.

He scored 147 and 267 in India last year and made 199 in the first Test of the current series in Lahore to aggregate 984 runs in only five Tests against the arch-rivals.

Younis found a useful ally in

Yousuf who posted his 16th Test century after Pakistan had lost Kamran Akmal for 78 in the morning session.

Younis, 64 overnight, hit off-spinner Harbhajan Singh for his 14th boundary to bring up his century.

Akmal, who resumed at 59, fell to a miscued drive off paceman Irfan Pathan which was caught by Anil Kumble at gully.

Akmal, who scored a century in the first Test, hit 13 boundaries during his 152-ball knock and helped Younis add 129 for the second wicket.

Pakistan could have been in trouble had Kumble not spilled a two-handed chance off a miscued drive from Yousuf off paceman Rudra Pratap Singh when the batsman was on four.

Yousuf, who scored 173 in Lahore, reached his century with a flick for two off Pathan before being run out in the second over after tea.

Yousuf compiled 11 boundaries and four sixes during his 179-ball knock and also completed 1,000 runs against India in 11 Tests.

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## Mamun invited or not?

SPORTS REPORTER

When the much-talked about executive committee meeting of the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) takes place at city's five-star hotel on Saturday, mercury will go up for obvious reasons.

The third meeting of Ali Asghar-led new elected body convened following media uproar would be an acid test for the president and his general secretary Mahabubul Anam with the EC members set to raise a few burning issues including the breaching of the constitution.

As per the board's 2003 constitution the executive committee was bound to hold at least one meeting in every three months but they failed to meet the deadline since the last meeting took place on October 20 last year.

It is understood that the board meeting was held back since the sensational disclosure of a secret deal between Asghar and Malaysia-based Aston Moore over the future TV and sponsorship rights that led to the resignation of the board's joint-secretary Reazuddin Al Mamun.

Although the board president accepted his resignation after nearly two weeks, interestingly Mamun has been invited to attend Saturday's meeting.

Meanwhile, Mahabubul Anam while contacted said that Mamun was not supposed to attend the meeting.

"If any letter was issued to Mamun to attend the meeting it was done without my consent," said the BCB general secretary.

Mamun was also surprised after receiving the invitation letter through fax signed by the general secretary a couple of days ago.

"It is really funny that the president had used his constitutional power to accept Mamun's resignation. Funnier even was an invitation to Mamun to join the meeting. Now anybody can guess how the board is running," said a board member on condition of anonymity.

## Rangamati through to semifinals

SPORTS REPORTER

Rangamati completed the Group A semifinal line-up of the JFA Cup Under-16 Football Tournament when they drew 3-3 with Gaibandha in their last match at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

Securing one point from the game, Rangamati bagged four points to reach the semifinals along with Dhaka.

Gyan Chakma struck twice and Laxmi Chakma added one for Rangamati while Mahmudul Hasan netted two and Nabib Newaz scored one for Gaibandha.

In the day's other match, Dhaka blanked Bagerhat 4-0 at the same venue with Jewel, Ranbir, Sajal and Rubel scoring one each.

The Group B semifinalists will be decided today when Tangail face Narayanganj and Kurigram face Sakthira.

## Div I cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

Eskaton thrived on a half-century by Tanhar to score a two-wicket victory over Kathalagan GCC in the First Division Cricket League at the City Club ground yesterday.

Tanhar hit 53 as Eskaton made 155 for eight in 45 overs in reply to Kathalagan's 154.

Meanwhile, the league committee suspended the league matches till January 27.

## 2010 COMMONWEALTH GAMES

## Aishwariya and Shahrukh to promote

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA, New Delhi

The most glamorous of Bollywood, including superstars Shahrukh Khan and Aishwariya Rai, will be used to promote the Commonwealth Games to be held here in the year 2010.

The theme song of the promo "Dilli chalein, chalna hai, chal chala, chalna hai" has been penned by eminent lyricist Gulzar and set to music by Shankar, Ehsan and Loy in keeping with the message Delhi Games will send out: "New Frontiers and New Friendship".

Efforts are on to rope in Shahrukh and Aishwariya among other celebrities for an 11-minute presentation to promote the 2010 Games in the country and abroad, officials of Indian Olympic Association, organisers of the event, said.

## Clijsters halts Hingis

## Australian Open

AP, Melbourne

Martina Hingis found out she can still slug it out with the best of 'em. She also knows she has a lot of work to do.

Second-seeded Kim Clijsters overcame a rash of mistakes and ended Hingis' impressive comeback run at the Australian Open, winning 6-3, 2-6, 6-4 to reach the semifinals and take over the No. 1 ranking.

"It's been a long time since I played her," Clijsters said after Hingis, a three-time champion here, exited Rod Laver Arena to a loud ovation. "She's improved a lot since she was at her best."

But that was when the power surge in women's tennis was just picking up momentum. While Hingis showed that she wasn't overmatched from the baseline, her weak serve let her down, setting up easy winners for Clijsters.

Asked if she learned anything, Hingis said: "Speed is important." Despite the loss, she said she was satisfied with her first Grand Slam event in three years.

"I think I can be proud of myself," Hingis said. "You just can't think you're going to go out there and win everything. Losing to Kim today still gives me so much to look forward to. I just have to work harder. I have to start believing."

The victory guaranteed that reigning US Open champion Clijsters will take over the top ranking from Lindsay Davenport, who lost in the quarterfinals.

"After the year I had last year, this is the cherry on the cake," she said. "It was never a goal. Keep working hard and good things happen."

She next plays No. 3 Amelie Mauresmo, who reeled off the last nine straight games in a 6-3, 6-0 quarterfinal win over No. 7 Patty Schnyder of Switzerland.

Hingis quit the tour in 2002 due to persistent foot and heel injuries. Ranked No. 349 and playing on a wild-card entry, she returned to competitive tennis on January 2 and was 7-2 coming into the match.

But the best player that she had

beaten here was 30th-seeded Vera Zvonareva in the first round, and everyone was eagerly waiting to see what would happen when she faced a top player like Clijsters.

Hingis looked nervous, tentative and overmatched at the start, as Clijsters won 12 of the first 16 points and jumped ahead 4-0.

With shadows creeping across the court, the crowd began almost evenly split for the two players but shifted quickly to the beleaguered

Hingis, who twice angrily whacked balls into the net after missing easy volleys.

Clijsters was picking up easy points off her serve and pouncing on Hingis' weak serves, which often were 20 mph slower.

Although she faltered early and often found herself lunging for stinging groundstrokes deep in the corners, Hingis stayed in the match with her defence.

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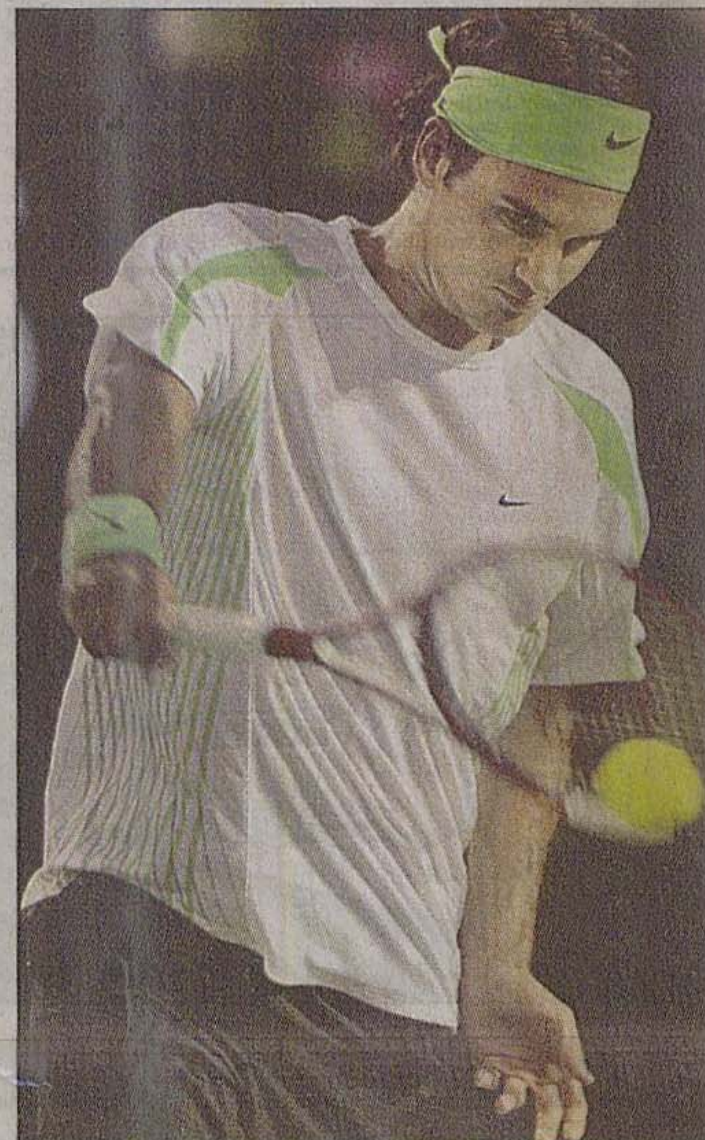


PHOTO: AFP

World number one Roger Federer of Switzerland plays a backhand against Nikolay Davydenko of Russia in the quarterfinals of the Australian Open in Melbourne on Wednesday.

## Federer, Kiefer in semis

## Australian Open

AFP, Melbourne

World number one Roger Federer stuttered to an unconvincing error-strewn four-sets victory over Russian fifth seed Nikolay Davydenko to reach the Australian Open semifinals Wednesday.

The Swiss top seed downed Davydenko 6-4, 3-6, 7-6, 7-6 in 3hr 13min to set up a semifinal with 21st German seed Nicolas Kiefer on Friday.

But Federer needed two tie-

breakers to finish off the gritty Russian, whose tactics of slowing down the play forced Federer out of his rhythm.

"I always have tough matches against Nikolay and tonight was the same. He plays well on this surface and he definitely pushed me tonight," said Federer, who made an uncharacteristically high 52 unforced errors to Davydenko's 48.

Kiefer clinched his first Grand Slam semifinal appearance with an epic five-set win over Frenchman Sebastian Grosjean, 6-3, 0-6, 6-4, 6-7, 8-6, in the longest match here in 15 years at 4hr 48min.

The Swiss star's victory ensured a seventh successive Grand Slam semifinal, second only to Ivan Lendl's 10 from 1985-1988.

It was also his 50th consecutive win on hardcourts, extending the record he established when he won last September's US Open final. Pete Sampras is next with 34.

"It was hard out there. He returned very well and I changed my game in the second set and I thought that was an error and tried to finish the points too quickly," Federer said.

"I thought he got a little tired in the second, third and fourth sets

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## Aus-SL return tie today



AFP, Adelaide

Australia has dropped bowlers Brett Dorey and James Hopes for their return tri-series clash with Sri Lanka here Thursday after the pair were clobbered around the ground in their last encounter.

Instead they will bring in spinner Brad Hogg and install pace bowler Stuart Clark as super-sub for the crucial fixture.

Exactly halfway into the competition and after playing four matches apiece, Australia, on 10 points, are one clear of Sri Lanka with South Africa one point further adrift. Each side has beaten the other two.

In Sydney last Sunday, Sri Lanka humbled the world champions by 51 runs.

In that match, veteran opener Sanath Jayasuriya, who had arrived

in Australia just two days earlier after recovering from a shoulder injury, carved up the Australian attack in tandem with Kumar Sangakkara.

Hopes and Dorey, who was playing in just his second one-day international, paid the heaviest price. Hopes was carted for 65 runs off six overs while Australian captain Ricky Ponting substituted Dorey after just four overs. He had been belted for 35 runs.

The Australians did not use veteran pace bowler Glenn McGrath, who was being rested under the selectors' policy of giving senior players a break.

On Thursday it will be Ponting's turn to take a rest and he will be replaced as skipper by wicket-keeper-opener Adam Gilchrist, who comes back after a week off.

The policy has drawn criticism from some former players, including former captain Steve Waugh, but Gilchrist defended it staunchly

in Adelaide on Wednesday. He denied the selectors were rotating players without regard to on-field results during the series.

"We're not rotating players. We've rested myself and we've rested Ricky Ponting, purely to keep fresh for the games coming up," Gilchrist said.

"We'd love to make the finals. We want to make the final in everything we play in, but let's not get caught up in reporting it incorrectly that it's a rotation policy."

"It's very tight on the table now to get into the finals, but we've made it clear we need to keep an eye on the big picture and keeping guys fresh and trying to make sure we're playing at as high a level as possible and not peaking and burning out."

Waugh was reported in the Sydney Daily Telegraph newspaper as saying that the selectors were resting the wrong players.

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