



## Did U Know?

Until 1967 it was not illegal for Olympic athletes to use drugs to enhance their performance during competition.



**Danish Kaneria**

(Pakistan leg-spinner)  
"He is so straight and negotiates almost every delivery with his bat, why does he need pads at all?"  
While indirectly ruling out Rahul Dravid as a likely candidate for lbw.



**ESPN**  
Sportscenter India  
Sports News  
Live at 9:30 pm  
**STAR Sports**  
Australian Open  
Live from 10:00 am  
Men's singles semifinal  
Live from 2:30 pm



## Agrani stay alive, Orient go down

SPORTS REPORTER

Half centuries by Jamal Faisal and Nazmus Sadat kept Agrani Bank alive in the race to keep their Premiership at the cost of Orient Sporting Club yesterday.

In the Premier League relegation play-off at the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium, Agrani recorded a comfortable eight-wicket victory against Orient who were relegated to First Division after two defeats in the play-offs.

Orient, who lost to Indira Road KC in the first play-off, were bundled out for 173 in 48 overs after being put into bat. Agrani leg-spinner Towhid Hossain was the wrecker in chief with 4-26 from nine overs. Number five Sumon made 56 for Orient.

Agrani, who now must beat Indira Road in the last play-off to stay in the Premier League, coasted to 179-2 in 37.3 overs with Faisal (54 off 43 balls), Sadat (61 not out) and Mohammad Kalim (45 not out) spearheading their batting.

## BKSP tennis

SPORTS REPORTER

Henry Prithul Mondol of Bangladesh and Hung of Taipei reached the boys' doubles final of the BKSP International Junior Tennis Tournament defeating Korean pair Chol and Jeong 7-5, 6-3 in the semifinals at BKSP yesterday.

Prithul -- a BKSP student and national champion -- and Hung who ousted Ceban of Malaysia and Biktyaov of Uzbekistan 6-4, 6-3 in the other semis.

Hsin Han Lee of Taipei will meet Joshua Dandan Kyles of Philippines in the boys' singles final while Russian Viktoriya Kamenskaya battles with Uzbekistan's Nigora Sirojiddinova in the girls' singles final today, the concluding day of the competition.

## Cruciani picks 2 rookies

Football

SPORTS REPORTER

Coach Diego Cruciani has picked two new faces for the national camp for Bangladesh's coming Asian Cup qualifier against Uzbekistan.

Bangladesh, who finished runners-up in the SAFF Championship in Karachi last December and later won their Asian Cup qualifying berth with an aggregate 1-0 win over Pakistan under Argentine Cruciani, will take on the mighty Uzbeks on February 22 in Tashkent in the group opener.

Cruciani, who returned to Dhaka on Tuesday night after a deserved vacation, also recalled midfielder Asadur Rahman and fullback Ibnul Siraji to the camp. The two were last-moment exclusions from the SAFF squad and they replace striker Shahajuddin Tipu and defender Faisal Ahmed.

The new kids are Sunny, a prom-

ising centre-back from First Division side Rahmatganj, and Arambagh medio Rintu.

While talking with reporters yesterday at the BFF Bhaban, Cruciani said that he was very happy because Bangladesh will play a number of international matches this year.

"I'll resume my work on Monday (January 30) at the Bangabandhu National Stadium but we have very short time to prepare for the first match. In these 16 days, we are hoping to make a compact job," the 41-year-old said.

"We have a very strong opposition in the first match but I am confident we won't lose big. The result would be 2-1 or 2-0," he said making an optimistic prediction.

"They are a team from a different level and a much superior side. But we will go and play good football. I have very little idea about Hong Kong but as Bangladesh drew 2-2 with them in the Asian qualifiers a few years back, I think we would be able to beat them."

"I have talked with (Argentine

coach) Jose Pekerman's assistant (Hugo Tocalli) in Buenos Aires and he has told me that Qatar are also a good team," he added assessing Bangladesh's three opponents.

Qatar played Argentina last October and Cruciani was eager to do some homework.

"Don't mind if we lose some games to strong oppositions. Playing these matches would do well because we need to play a lot of international matches for exposure. See teams like Togo or Ivory Coast who were losing matches 6-0, 7-0 five, six years ago. They are playing World Cup now."

"It's not impossible for us to be there one day, but we have to do a lot of work and play a lot of international games to reach there. When you play teams of different level, it improves your game in the long run," said Cruciani who still faces the threat of a ban and fine from the AFC for charging the referee after Bangladesh's Asian Cup pre-qualifier against Pakistan in Dhaka.

SEE PAGE 17 COL 5

## Mashrafee's busy return in A team victory

SPORTS REPORTER

Mashrafee Bin Mortuza made a decent return to competitive cricket after a five-month lay-off due to injury when the national paceman took two wickets and made a 15-ball 11 in Bangladesh A's rousing 114-run win over visiting United Arab Emirates in Khulna yesterday.

Dubbed Narail Express, Mashrafee had to return home after the first tour match during Bangladesh's tour of Sri Lanka in August last year for a persisting back pain.

Mashrafee, who bowled six overs to capture 2-21, was the peak of Bangladesh attack which folded the UAE innings for 153 while defending a 267-6 at the Khulna Divisional Stadium.

Captain Rajin Saleh elected to bat after winning the toss and contributed a patient 45 while opening the innings. Golem Rahman made 69 off 89 balls but the real firework came from local boy Tushar Imran, the national cap who smashed a 54-ball 70 featuring seven fours and two sixes coming in at number four.

Mashrafee's bat produced one six in his undefeated knock.

The UAE, who lost three wickets for eight runs during an opening salvo by Mahbubul Alam Robin and Mashrafee, never recovered from the poor start and survived 42.1 overs.

Fahad Usman top scored with 37 while Saqib Ali made 32. Mahbubul and Alok Kapali chipped in with a couple of wickets each.

UAE, who have lost both their previous matches to a young Academy side, will play another limited-overs match today at the

SEE PAGE 17 COL 1

## Four-member Aussie team due Jan 30

SPORTS REPORTER

A four-member team from Cricket Australia and Australia Cricket Association will arrive in Dhaka on January 30 as a pre-tour visit for Australia cricket team's tour of Bangladesh.

The members of the team are Michael Brown, general manager of Cricket Operations, CA, Australian team manager Steve Bernard, ACA official Paul Marsh and Reg Dickson, CA security manager.

During their 3-day stay, the team will be visiting venues in Chittagong on January 31 and Dhaka on February 1 before their departure on the same day.

Australia are scheduled to tour Bangladesh this April.



Pakistani police commandos escort India captain Rahul Dravid (L) and teammate Zaheer Khan (rear) as they arrive at the Karachi International Airport on Thursday.

## Off-colour Aussie win

Cricket

AFF, Adelaide

Sri Lanka's hopes of replacing Australia at the head of the triangular series table were scuttled Thursday but only after off-spinner Muttiah Muralitharan gave the hosts a few heart flutters at the Adelaide Oval.

The Australians eventually ground out an unspectacular five-wicket win, reaching 219-5 in reply to Sri Lanka's 218-8 off 50 overs.

But Muralitharan sent a few late shudders through their camp when he grabbed 2-3 in the 41st over to leave them still chasing 42 runs with 57 balls remaining.

In the end batsmen Michael Hussey and Michael Clarke steered their team home with a 42-run partnership.

The Australians had played a steady but unremarkable innings up to that point, anchored by 52 off 89 balls from opener Simon Katich.

Just as the Sri Lankans before them had failed to set the match alight, so too did the Australians, with Damien Martyn making a sluggish 46 off 72 balls.

Opener Adam Gilchrist with 34 off 33 and Andrew Symonds with 32 off 33 had set a livelier pace.

Nuwan Kulasekera finished with 2-32 off nine overs while Muralitharan took 2-35 from 10, snaring both Symonds and Martyn.

Sri Lanka had earlier struggled without the services of big-hitting opener Sanath Jayasuriya, who has a thigh injury. He was replaced by Upul Tharanga.

Danger man Kumar Sangakkara

and Tharanga dug in for 10 overs to add another 43 when the latter fell victim for 31 to a clearly elated Glenn McGrath.

Acting Australian captain Adam Gilchrist then brought left-arm chinaman bowler Brad Hogg into the attack with immediate effect. Hogg extracted plenty of spin and took a wicket with his fifth delivery.

Sangakkara, on 25, played defensively but caught an inside edge and clipped the ball onto the stumps, putting pressure back on Sri Lanka with the score at 100-3.

Paceman Nathan Bracken then turned up the heat, claiming the wickets of captain Marvan Atapattu for 32 and Mahela Jayawardene for 25 to leave Sri Lanka on 161-5 off 39 overs.

Sri Lanka lost their last five wickets for just 63, with Symonds claiming the final two to finish best of the Australian bowlers with 3-48 from nine overs. He won the man of the match award.

Australia remain at the head of the table with three wins from five matches while Sri Lanka have two from five. South Africa have two wins from four matches.

### SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard in the triangular series limited-overs cricket match between Australia and Sri Lanka at the Adelaide Oval on Thursday:

SRILANKA				
Mubarak c Lee b Symonds	34			
Tharanga c Martyn b McGrath	31			
Sangakkara b Hogg	25			
Jayawardene c Symonds b Bracken	25			
Atapattu c Martyn b Bracken	32			
Dilshan b Hogg	1			
Arnold not out	27			
Vaas c Hogg b Symonds	15			

Ganegama b Symonds 7  
Kulasekara not out 2  
Extras: (b-4, lb-4, w-8, nb-3) 19  
Total: (For 8 wickets in 50 overs) 218  
Fall: 1-53, 2-96, 3-100, 4-155, 5-161, 6-167, 7-195, 8-207

Did not bat: Muralitharan.

Super-sub: Bandara for Atapattu

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Lee	10	0	40	0
McGrath	8	1	26	1
Bracken	10	1	45	2
Symonds	9	1	48	3
Hogg	10	0	35	2
Hodge	3	0	16	0

### AUSTRALIA

Gilchrist c Ganegama b Kulasekara	34			
Katich c Sangakkara b Dilshan	52			
Hodge b Kulasekara	5			
Martyn b Muralitharan	46			
Symonds c Tharanga	32			
Clarke not out	16			
Hussey not out	25			
Extras: (lb-2, w-7)	9			
Total: (For 5 wickets in 48.3 overs) 219				
Fall of wickets: 1-47, 2-73, 3-115, 4-175, 5-177				
Did not bat: Hogg, Lee, Bracken, McGrath				
Super-sub: Clark (unused)				

Man-of-the-match: Andrew Symonds.

Toss: Sri Lanka.

Umpires: Steve Davis and Aleem Dar.

## It's Amelie vs Justine Contrasting ladies in final

Australian Open

AFF, Melbourne

Two more different players couldn't be lining up for the Australian Open women's final than Amelie Mauresmo and Justine Henin-Hardenne.

Once infamously referred to as "half man" by Martina Hingis, the imposing Mauresmo is a power player of the new order, weighing in at 69kg and standing 5ft 9ins tall.

On the other side of the net is the petite Henin-Hardenne, a tigerish baseliner 10 kilograms lighter and four inches shorter.

While their physiques couldn't be more different, they have one thing in common -- they are playing some of the best tennis of their lives.

Henin-Hardenne holds the upper hand in having won their last

two encounters, in the final of the 2004 Athens Olympics and in Toronto last year.

Overall, the Belgian has a 4-3 win record against the French star.

Mauresmo has been in ominous form since winning the season-ending WTA Tour Championship last year and fought her way into the final when Kim Clijsters retired injured down 2-3 in the third set, giving the Frenchwoman a 5-7, 6-2, 3-2 triumph.

As a 19-year-old, she lost in the final here in 1999 to Hingis, when the infamous "half man" comment was made, but she says she has learnt a lot since then.

"I've been waiting for this for so long... like everyone else I grew up, I got more mature and I know a little bit more what I have learned now," said the now 25-year-old.

"Seven years ago I was only 19, so I'm older now and it's good to get into the final again."

It is a major breakthrough for Mauresmo, who despite maturing has subsequently failed to make another Grand Slam final, stretching over 24 attempts.

To win her first Grand Slam title she will have to grind down Henin-Hardenne, who has an amazing record in Australia, unbeaten in 20 matches including her Sydney and Australian Open titles in 2004 and her run in 2006.

She missed the 2005 Open with injuries, which dogged her for much of last year.

"I watched a little bit of the first semi-final," said Mauresmo. "She's a tough fighter, great player, and she has a lot of experience."

"I know it's going to be a tough one, and I know we both want the title, we're both going to fight for it."

On Thursday, Henin-Hardenne again showed the battling qualities

SEE PAGE 17 COL 4

## Cypriot wonder for final

Australian Open

AFF, Melbourne

Young Cypriot Marcos Baghdatis capped an extraordinary Australian Open by reaching his first Grand Slam final with a stirring five-set fightback victory over Argentina's David Nalbandian Thursday.

The 54th-rated Baghdatis added fourth seeded Nalbandian to his list of seeded victims at the year's first slam with a 3-6, 5-7, 6-3, 6-4, 6-4 win in 3hr 27min to reach Sunday's final.

Baghdatis will now face either world number one Roger Federer or German 21st seed Nicolas Kiefer in the final.

The 20-year-old, a junior champion here three years ago, became only the fourth unseeded player in 25 years to play in the Australian Open final.

"It's amazing, I have to wake up, I think, it's just unbelievable," Baghdatis said after his euphoric victory.

"It's a dream to play and win this tournament... I'm very proud of myself, it's been an amazing career for me, it's like a story."

"Everything is like first time here for me. Getting to the quarters was a first time and the semis and now I hope it continues on Sunday night."

Yet again Baghdatis belied his young years to serve out for the final under incredible pressure and even had to contend with the disruption of a rain break just three points from victory.

Even then he had to regather his composure after an overrule by chair umpire Andreas Egli on match point forcing him to win on his second match point with an ace.

Baghdatis, cheered on by a large group of chanting Greek expats, underlined his rich promise with his second win over Nalbandian after beating him in the semi-finals at Basle last year.

His win over Nalbandian improved his record against top-10 players to 5-3, with all three losses coming against Federer.

The Cypriot has been a breath of fresh air in the men's tournament with his victories over seeds Radek

Stepanek (17), Andy Roddick (2) and Ivan Ljubicic (7) and his current 54 ranking will jump inside the top 30 after the tournament.

His infectious grin and passion on court has won fans throughout Australia and made him a hero in Cyprus.

"I think everybody is going crazy back home. I had heard that a lot of people had stopped working and watched my last match (against Ljubicic) and I say thank you very

much to everybody in Cyprus," he said.

"I love my country, I love being a Greek Cypriot."

Meanwhile, Cyprus erupted into jubilant celebrations its after homegrown star Baghdatis made tennis history by reaching the final of the Australian Open in a five-set thriller.

Cypriots took to the streets, honking car horns and waving

SEE PAGE 17 COL 5



Marcos Baghdatis of Cyprus is all smiles after his victory in the Australian Open semifinal against Argentina's David Nalbandian in Melbourne on Thursday.

PHOTO: AFP

## Heated on field, cool off it: Inzy

Cricket

PTI/REUTERS, Faisalabad

Pakistan captain Inzamam-ul-Haq has said that the relationship between his players and the touring Indians remained cordial despite the war of words in the drawn second Test here.

Inzamam said such verbal exchanges, as on the third day of the match when Pakistan held the upper hand after reducing India to 281 for five in reply to hosts' 588, happened as each player tried to upstage the other but it did not mean the relations between the players were "strained".

"Whenever the Pakistan and Indian cricket teams are pitted against each other, every player aims to hit the headlines with one outstanding performance or the other."

"While trying to upstage the others, some at times get emotional and fail to keep a grip on their behaviour," Inzamam wrote in a newspaper column on Thursday.

"All this, however, does not mean that the relations between the two teams are strained," he said insisting that "off the field there was cordial relationship with players of one team visiting the other players' hotel rooms."

Meanwhile, ICC match referee Ranjan Madugalle has told Pakistan vice-captain Younis Khan to keep his players in check after several were involved in verbal exchanges with the Indian team

during the Faisalabad Test.

"Yes, Younis was called for a meeting and the match referee said he wanted the series to be played in a good spirit between both sides and would take action if any future incidents occurred," Inzamam told Reuters on Wednesday.

Shahid Afridi and Shoaib Akhtar were among some of the Pakistan players involved in verbal confrontations with the Indian players. Umpires Rudi Koertzen and Simon Taufel at one stage spoke to Younis on the field.

"If it had been serious the ICC (International Cricket Council) match referee would have taken action against the players."

## Sharapova doesn't like it

AFF, Melbourne

Russian starlet Maria Sharapova lashed out at the media Thursday for focusing too much on her grunting and what she is wearing and not enough on her tennis.

The 18-year-old, who makes millions of dollars in endorsements, complained that the focus was shifting from what she was achieving on the tennis court.

"I know you are reporters and I know this is your job, but take your note pads, take your pencils down, take your grunt-o-meters down, the fashion police, put everything

SEE PAGE 17 COL 1

**Join us as Merchandisers With Epic Group**

**Make the best move of your Career**

**Requirements:**

- Post graduate in any discipline. Additional qualification in garments (Diploma from NIFT/ BIFT) will be an added advantage.
- Minimum 3 years experience in Merchandising in a Buying office or a Factory
- Hands on experience in sampling, costing and correspondence with buyers.
- Should have knowledge in Woven/Knit garments
- Should be able to follow-up on fabric & Accessories
- Excellent communication skills in English and must be computer literate. Must be below 35 years of age.

**We offer: Attractive compensation and unlimited opportunities to the right and deserving candidates.**

E-mail your bio-data with all details to [jobs@epicdesigners.com](mailto:jobs@epicdesigners.com) or send to **Epic Designers Ltd**, Abedin tower, Plot No. 35, Road No. 17, Banani, Dhaka within 7 days. Preference will be given to candidates who can join immediately.