



## Did U Know?

Martina Hingis of Switzerland became the youngest woman to win the singles title at the Australian Open. She won in 1997, when she was just 16 years old.



**Ronaldo**  
(Brazilian football superstar)  
"The story isn't over. The story goes on. Getting back to the national team is still in my plans and I want to do it on merit."  
Whose next target is to get back into the national side after he moved to AC Milan from Real Madrid recently.



**ESPN**  
Australia v New Zealand  
11th ODI, CB Series  
Live at 9:15 am  
English Premier Football League  
Tottenham v Man United  
Live at 10:00 pm  
**STAR Sports**  
South Africa v Pakistan  
First ODI  
Live at 2:00 pm  
Primera Liga  
Real Madrid v Levante  
Live at 11:55 pm  
Osasuna v Barcelona  
Live at 2:00 am (Monday)



Bangladesh v Zimbabwe  
First ODI  
Venue: Harare Sports Club  
**Premier Division Cricket League**  
City Club v Young Pegasus  
Venue: Fatullah Cricket Stadium  
Kalabagan KC v Indira Road KC  
Venue: BKSP  
Abahani v Partex SC  
Venue: Sher-e-Bangla Nat'l Stadium

## Kenya to fight with Scotland

AFP, Nairobi

Kenya and Scotland, the two best teams in the six-nation World Cricket League Division one tournament in Nairobi, face off Sunday for a place in next week's final.

Both teams registered their third successive wins in spectacular fashion on Friday. The Kenyans came from behind to beat Ireland by one wicket while Scotland overcame the unpredictable Dutch by two runs in a match reduced to 37 overs due to a wet outfield at the Nairobi Jaffreys club.

Kenya twice beat Scotland in a pre-tournament ODI series in Mombasa last month but their resurgent run in the tournament, including the last-ball win over arch-rivals Ireland, is causing concern for the hosts.

"Scotland is not a team to be under-rated," said Kenya's vice-captain Thomas Odoyo. "Initially they struggled to adjust to the local conditions, but they have now won three matches and are proving very strong."

Scotland will have young batsman Omer Hussain reinforcing their batting line-up after being recalled as a late replacement for the disposed spinner Glenn Rogers.

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## Bangladesh want early advantage



SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh will definitely try to draw first blood when they meet Zimbabwe in the first one-day international of the four-match series at the Harare Sports Club ground today.

The first match is crucial for Habibul Bashar's men in consideration of their bitter experience in the previous occasion when they unexpectedly lost the first game by two wickets and thus suffered a heart-breaking 3-2 series defeat in July-August last year.

But inclement weather may mar their hopes as according to team sources, rain might interrupt proceedings as Harare, the Zimbabwe capital, has been rather wet lately.

Though the series considered as a preparation for the coming World Cup, captain Habibul Bashar, who had a very successful last year with 18 wins in 28 matches, has already declared that they were looking forward to ride on their southern African opponents on their own den to complete their mission against the southern African nation.

The current form definitely speaks in favour of the Tigers, especially after their 5-0 thrashing at home in November last year follow-

ing a massive 101-run victory in the ICC Champions Trophy in India but beating Zimbabwe on their own soil is a last frontier at the moment for Bashar's boys to show their hundred percent supremacy.

For leading paceman Mashrafe-bin-Mortuza it is more than just a series of one-day matches as he has another opportunity to erase the nightmare he suffered during the last trip.

The Narail Express's 17-run last over in the third game of the five-match series played a decisive role in his team 3-2 defeat.

On the other hand, it would be a totally different mission for Bangladesh vice-captain Shahriar Nafees because he has a very healthy record against the Zimbabweans.

The left-hander, who achieved a thousand runs in a calendar year as the first Bangladeshi batsman, struggled in the domestic circuit before timely making a hundred, scored all his three one-day hundreds against them.

If seaming all-rounder Mohammad Sharif plays the game then it would be a memorable comeback for him as he was out of the national team for the last five

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Victoria's Mahmudullah Riyad pulls the ball against Bangladesh Biman in the Kai-Altech Premier League at the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium yesterday.

## Junior tennis finals today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

The final matches of the GrameenPhone International Junior Tennis Championship will be held at Rajshahi Tennis Complex today.

Hsien-Ying Peng stormed into the final thrashing Indian Sudanwa Sitaram 6-1, 6-4 and Hsu Chun Huang of Chinese Taipei beat Russian Damion Hume 6-3, 2-6, 6-3 sets in the boys singles semifinals.

In girls' singles, Marharita Maisak of Belarus beat South African Madolie Van Rensburg 6-2, 6-2 and Russian Marina Lushchina defeated Nicha Lertpitakinsinchai of Thailand by 6-2, 6-3 sets.

The pair of Uzbek Sarizuddinova and Agra of Philippine defeated the Indian pair Kakhandki and Sweta Solanki 6-0, 6-2.

Indian pair of Chumpet and Pakpoom Kamol beat South African pair of O Brine and Hume by 6-4, 4-6, 6-4 sets in boys' doubles.

## DCP crush Adhunik

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha

DCP Club earned a massive 123-run win over Adhunik Sporting Club in the second division cricket league at the local stadium yesterday.

Adhunik were bundled out for 42 runs in 12 overs in reply to DCP's 165-9 in stipulated 30 overs.

## Abahani's eyes on title



SPORTS REPORTER

Abahani set a target to make history by clinching the title of the first-ever Professional Football League, scheduled to kick off from February 15.

"We want to make history by clinching the inaugural title and we believe that we have a team to make the dream come true," team manager Satyajit Das Rupu told newsmen at the BFF Bhaban yesterday during a presentation ceremony of the famed club ahead of the much-awaited competition, shortly called B.League.

"We don't want to underestimate any team in the competition but if our local players play up to their potential and the foreign players land their support then nothing would be impossible to achieve," added a confident Rupu.

He also informed that former Bangladesh coach Diego Cruciani will take over the charge of the Sky

Blues soon.

"We hope that we can complete few formalities within a week to bring the Argentine (Cruciani). We have decided to give Cruciani the job as he has a very good understanding with most of the players because they trained under him in the national team," he informed.

Cruciani was at the helm of the Bangladesh national football team for more than a year before being relieved in August last year.

Rupu also said that they are trying to bring four foreign booters -- two from Argentina and two from Africa -- to strengthen the team.

Abahani officials have also urged the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) not to defer the league again.

"My only expectation right at the moment from the federation is that they will stick to the current schedule because everybody is eagerly waiting to see the competition roll onto the pitch," said present Abahani coach Amalesh Sen who started the preparation twenty days back.

Captain Arif Khan Joy also spoke

on the occasion where he expressed his desire to put aside all the political activities that he has been involved recently.

"I want to concentrate more on play. I don't know whether I would be selected in the playing eleven for every match because there are some good players in my position (midfield)," he said adding that players were very much excited to play the first-ever professional league.

Dhaka Mohammedan Sporting Club will meet the press at 3 pm on Monday at the same venue.

### SQUAD

Biplob Bhattacharjee, Atiqul Islam Tariq, Nazrul Islam, Prodip Poddar, Mohammed Sujon, Mahiuddin Ibnul Siraji, Wali Faisal, Obaidur Rahman, Rokibul Islam Ruku, Jahangir Alam Mintu, Arif Khan Joy, Pranotosh, Abul Hossain, Zahed Pervaz Chowdhury, Abdullah Al-Parvez Salas, Zahid Hasan Emily, Mehedi Hasan Uzzal, Shahajuddin Tipu and Anwar Hossain.



Dhaka Abahani footballers Nazrul Islam (L) and Arif Khan Joy (2nd from L) show the team jerseys while the officials display the club flag at a B. League presentation at the BFF Bhaban yesterday.

## Smith pounds Pakistan



AFP, Johannesburg

Graeme Smith and Loots Bosman pounded the Pakistan bowlers as South Africa raced to a 10-wicket win in a Twenty20 international at the Wanderers Stadium Friday.

Pakistan struggled to 129 for eight after being sent in, with only two batsmen reaching 20 against South Africa's all-pace attack on a hot, humid evening in which the bowlers were able to swing the ball and get movement off the pitch.

But any demons in the pitch seemed to disappear as Smith and Bosman went on an all-out attack.

They took South Africa to 132 for no wicket off only 11.3 overs. It was the highest partnership in the short history of 20-overs internationals.

Smith smashed 71 not out off 40 balls with nine fours and four sixes, finishing the match with a six off Shahid Afridi, while Bosman was unbeaten on 53 off 32 balls with five fours and two sixes.

The two sides meet again on Sunday at Centurion in the first of a five-match one-day series.

Smith said his bowlers had set up Friday's win.

"There was a little bit in the wicket with the new ball and I thought we bowled superbly," said the skipper.

New cap Alfonso Thomas, who took a wicket with his first ball in international cricket, took three for 25.

Smith, playing in his fifth 20-overs international, became the first batsman to score three half-centuries in the shortest form of the international game.

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## Bhola, Khulna reach final

SPORTS REPORTER

Khulna romped into the final of the first-ever women's cricket championship when they defeated Jahangirnagar University by 113 runs at the Dhaka University ground yesterday.

Salma slammed 67 off 47 balls and she was well supported by Shuktara who struck an unbeaten 43 as Khulna piled up 179 for six in 28 overs.

The university side were then restricted to 66 for seven with some tight bowling from Jahanara Alam and Rubina who shared three wickets.

At the Ansar and VDP ground, Bhola snuck a three-wicket win against Dhaka to escalate themselves to the final against Khulna.

Dhaka could only muster 87 for seven after the match was curtailed to 25 overs-a-side due to heavy fog early in the morning.

Ayesha struck 29 while for Bhola, Chameli, Sraboni and Panna took a wicket each. In reply, Bhola won with 22 balls to spare with Panna again leading the score with 33 off 44 balls.

## Abu Dhabi to host F1 GP

AFP, Dubai

The United Arab Emirates capital of Abu Dhabi will host its first Formula One Grand Prix in 2009, Formula One boss Bernie Ecclestone announced Saturday.

The race will be held on a track now under construction on Yas, a leisure island off oil-rich Abu Dhabi, he told reporters.

Ecclestone signed the agreement granting Abu Dhabi the right to host the race for seven years starting in 2009 with a representative of the emirate's government in the presence of Crown Prince Sheikh Mohammad bin Zayed al-Nahayan.

Abu Dhabi is the largest and wealthiest of seven emirates making up the UAE.

The contract can be extended beyond seven years, Ecclestone said.

The signing followed a show by Formula One drivers led by world champion Fernando Alonso of Spain watched by thousands of fans.

The UAE will become the second country in the Middle East to host the race after Gulf Arab partner Bahrain, which hosted its first Grand Prix in 2004.

The track on Yas island will be 5.5 kilometers (3.5 miles) long, with 2.5 kilometers (1.5 miles) reserved exclusively for the race.

The plan to hold the Formula One Grand Prix on Yas is part of a project, announced in November, to turn the island into a premier leisure destination at a cost of 40 billion dollars.

The island will have "a Ferrari-themed park, museum and theater... linked to a top quality motor race track on which visitors can experience the thrill of the exclusive Ferrari Driving School (Pilota Ferrari), kart track and dune buggies," according to project developers AIDar Properties.

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SPORTS REPORTER



Premier Cricket League yesterday.

All three matches on the day were delayed due to thick fog, which hovered over Dhaka throughout the day. Still it was a victorious day for Brothers Union who registered their first win in the league this season when they beat Sonargaon by 10 runs through Duckworth-Lewis method.

Old DOHS suffered their fourth defeat, this time at the hands of Mohammedan, who are just two points adrift of Abahani, by 17 runs at the Fatullah Stadium.

In the other match, Victoria convincingly defeated Bangladesh Biman by seven wickets at the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium.

It seems that DOHS and Sonargaon are the worst affected in terms of loss of senior players to the Tigers' ongoing Zimbabwe tour.

### MOHAMMEDAN-DOHS

Indian import Sandeep Sharma turned on a good all-round performance but it was his 140-run second wicket stand with burly Rashedul Haque, who struck ten fours and four sixes in his 66-ball 89.

Nabil Samad took three expen-

sive wickets for 50 runs after given a chance to play in place of Tigers spinner Abdur Razzaq.

Sandeep hit 86 off 64 balls and then took three wickets to down DOHS by 17 runs. Apart from number seven Dollar Mahmud who hit a 26-ball 50, none of the DOHS batsmen succeeded in their pursuit of 222 runs in 26 overs.

BROTHERS V SONARGAON  
In another match interrupted by fog, Brothers opener Imran Ahmed played alone hand, scoring a run-a-ball 74. Brothers ended at 174 for eight in 29 overs.

As Sonargaon batted in very poor light, they were 10 runs short of the Duckworth-Lewis target when play was stopped in the 26th over by the umpires. With Dhiman Ghosh and Fahim Muntasir at the crease, Sonargaon's pursuit was halted as light deteriorated considerably.

Earlier, makeshift opener Elias Sunny struck a chancy 54 while skipper Alok Kapali scored 31 but both batsmen failed to up the run-rate throughout the innings.

### BIMAN-VICTORIA

Victoria opted to bowl first but apart from paceman Shahnewaz Kabir and skipper

Sabbir Khan, none of the bowlers made any impression on Biman who posted 189 for six in 37 overs at the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium.

Pakistani recruit Zahoor Elahi top scored with 77.

## Sehwag's last chance



AFP, Mumbai

Indian batsman Virender Sehwag was handed his last chance to regain form ahead of the World Cup when he was recalled on Saturday for the one-day series against Sri Lanka.

The hard-hitting batsman was dropped for a recent home series against the West Indies following his poor performance on the South African tour, with chief selector Dilip Vengsarkar advising him to "sort out his batting."

Sehwag has so far scored 4,756 runs in 163 one-day internationals with seven centuries.

"He needed a break because he was not in good form. He has gone back and worked on his batting. We'd like him to bat in the middle-order and I hope he does well," Vengsarkar told reporters here.

Sehwag returned to domestic cricket after the South African tour, scoring a century for Delhi in the only first-class match available to him.

The four-match series against Sri Lanka is India's last before the World Cup tournament starts in the Caribbean in March.

Fast bowler Munaf Patel was also named in the 15-man squad for the first two one-dayers after missing the four-match series against the West Indies due to an ankle injury.

"He has been declared fit to play

by team physio John Gloster in his report," said Indian cricket board secretary Niranjan Shah.

Batsmen Gautam Gambhir and Suresh Raina, and off-spinner Ramesh Powar failed to find a place in the squad after playing against the West Indies.

The series against Sri Lanka begins in Kolkata on February 8, with the remaining games in Rajkot (February 11), Goa (February 14) and Visakhapatnam (February 17).

The World Cup squad will be named on February 12.

### SQUAD

Rahul Dravid (captain), Sachin Tendulkar, Virender Sehwag, Robin Uthappa, Yuvraj Singh, Sourav Ganguly, Dinesh Karthik, Mahendra Dhoni, Irfan Pathan, Ajit Agarkar, Anil Kumble, Harbhajan Singh, Zaheer Khan, Shanthakumaran Sreesanth, Munaf Patel.



Sri Lankan batsman Marvan Atapattu (L) sprints as teammate Tillakaratne Dilshan looks on during a practice session in Mumbai yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP