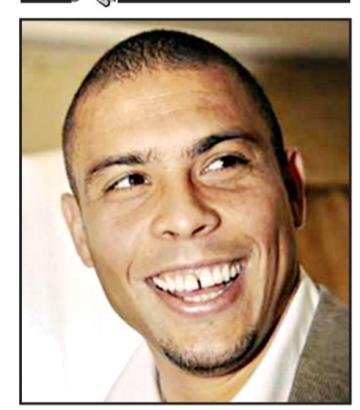




Did U Know?

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.

What to WATCH

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)

DAY'S EVENT

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

Cricket

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-

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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 Mashrafee-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 seeming 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



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

PHOTO: STAR

Abahani's eyes on title

Football

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.

"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

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.

"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

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

Biplab Bhattacharjee, Atiqul Islam Tariq, Nazrul Islam, Prodip Poddar, Mohammed Sujan, Mahiuddin Ibnu Siraj, Wali Faisal, Obaidur Rahman, Rokibul Islam Ruku, Jahangir Alam Mintu, Arif Khan Joy, Pranotosh, Abu Hossain, Zahed Pervez Chowdhury, Abdullah Al-Parvez Salas, Zahid Hasan Emily, Mehedi Hasan Uzzal, Shahajuddin Tipu and Anwar Hossain.

Bhola, Khulna reach final

SPORTS REPORTER

Khulna romped into the final of the first-ever women's cricket championship when they defeated Jahangiragar 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, Bhabla 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 Bhabla, Chameeli, Sraboni and Panna took a wicket each. In reply, Bhabla 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 developer AlDar Properties.

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Mohammedan closing in

SPORTS REPORTER

Mohammedan and Victoria moved to second position behind DOHS by 17 runs. Apart from number seven Dollar Mahmud who hit a 6-ball 50, none of the DOHS batsmen succeeded in their pursuit of 222 runs in 26 overs.

BROTHERS VS SONARGAON

In another match interrupted by fog, Brothers opener Imran Ahmed played a lone 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 Dhaman 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.

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 exper-

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 6-ball 50, none of the DOHS batsmen succeeded in their pursuit of 222 runs in 26 overs.

Mohammedan won by 17 runs.

DOHS 204-8 in 26 overs (Shamsur 10, Mahmud 20, Farrukh 24, Akram 14, Nadif 38, Mazhar 7, Dollar 50, Nazmul 19 not out, Enamul 0, Shahin 9 not out, extras 13; Manjurul 1-47, Hasibul 1-34, Arafat 1-30, Monirul 2-54, Sharma 3-26)

Result: Mohammedan won by 17 runs.

BROTHERS 174-8 in 29 overs (Javed 43, Nafis 0, Forhad 1, Sanwar 26, Zahoor 77 not out, Mushfiqur 29, Sajid 0, Mosharraf 4 not out, extras 6; Rasel 2-52, Forhad 1-27)

Result: Victoria won by 7 wickets.

BROTHERS 174-8 in 29 overs

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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.

Hsin-Ying Peng stormed into the final thrashing Indian Sudhansu Sitaran 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, Marharta Maisak of Belarus beat South African Madolie Van Rensburg 6-2, 6-2 and Russian Marina Lushchina defeated Nicha Lertpitaksinchai of Thailand 6-2, 6-3 sets.

The pair of Uzbek Sarzuddinova and Agra of Phillipine defeated the Indian pair Kakhandi 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, Gabtanda

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.



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

Cricket

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.

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-cent