

## Rossi signs new Yamaha deal

AFP, Paris

Former world champion Valentino Rossi will stay with Yamaha for the next two years despite seeing his crown snatched by America's Nicky Hayden on a Honda in 2006.

The next two seasons will see Rossi ride as part of Yamaha's official factory team, with whom he has already won two MotoGP world championship titles since joining in 2004.

The Italian, who turns 28 this month, has won 25 Grand Prix during his three seasons with Yamaha and currently stands third in the all-time Grand Prix winners list.

Rossi, who is spearheading the rider development of Yamaha's new 800cc motorcycle in the run-up to the new MotoGP season, will be back in action next week for Yamaha's second test of the year in Sepang, Malaysia.

## WC booklet kicks up race row

AFP, Georgetown

An allegedly racist photograph caption in a brochure for the 2007 Cricket World Cup has opened up longstanding racial tensions between Guyana's East Indians and its African-descendant population, an official said Friday.

The International Cricket Council (ICC) ticket brochure captions a photograph of the India-financed Providence stadium being built for coming games, saying that "with Guyana's distinct Indian heritage you are sure to experience the fusion of West Indian and East Indian culture."

Following outcries by the main opposition Peoples National Congress Reform-One Guyana, which is mainly supported by descendants of African slaves, as well as by Georgetown Mayor Hamilton Green, the government has written the ICC seeking an explanation.

"The words on the brochure are unfortunate. It was never the intention of the LOC (Local Organising Committee) or anybody in Guyana to have any sort of division," said Sports and Culture Minister, Frank Anthony, a member of the mainly East Indian-supported government.

Guyana's political landscape is divided between East Indians -- descendants of migrants from India -- who make up about 43 percent of the 751,000 citizens. Meanwhile, some 30 per cent are descendants of African slaves.

Anthony said copies of newspaper articles and letters have been dispatched to the Cricket World Cup (CWC) 2007 chief executive Chris Dehring and Guyanese authorities have asked for an explanation.

Denying claims by Green that Guyana's local organizing committee had contributed to the offending caption, Anthony blamed CWC for unilaterally publishing marketing and promotion materials.

India's Vice-President, Bhairon Singh Shekhawat in November flew to Guyana to participate in dedicating the stadium being built at a cost of 25 million dollars to host CWC games.

## Malik's ban maybe lifted

PTI, Karachi

Former Pakistan captain Salim Malik could have the life ban on him for alleged involvement in match fixing lifted by the Supreme Court, Cricket Board (PCB) sources said on Saturday.

Malik moved the Supreme Court after his appeal was rejected in all the lower courts of the country. His petition is now being heard by a bench headed by the Chief Justice of Pakistan.

The Supreme Court had said Friday that it would examine all important documents before giving a ruling on the punishment to the PCB.

"The Chief Justice appears keen to reach a conclusion on the appeal. At the first hearing on Thursday he made it clear he wanted to know under which laws the board or the International Cricket Council (ICC) was Malik banned and also talked about the evidences to support the ban," a PCB source said.

The Chief Justice also noted that Malik had made a big contribution to Pakistan cricket and that the court wanted to know the reasons and laws under which the player had been banned.

"The full bench said they wanted to examine the evidence and circumstances and the laws justify the ban on Malik," the source said.

Unfortunately, Malik had hired a weak lawyer to represent him in the case, the source added.

Malik played in 103 Tests before being banned in 2000.



PHOTO: INTERNET

Martina Hingis of Switzerland waves to the crowd after her semifinal victory over Elena Dementieva of Russia at the Pan Pacific Open in Tokyo on Saturday.

## SHARPOVA PULLS OUT Hingis-Ivanovic final

Tennis

AFP, Tokyo

Former world number one Martina Hingis beat defending champion Elena Dementieva on Saturday for a place in the final of the Pan Pacific Open tennis tournament against Ana Ivanovic.

The Swiss second seed, seeking a record fifth Tokyo indoor title this week, avenged her loss in last year's final with a 6-4, 6-3 victory over the Russian third seed.

Ivanovic, the fifth seed from Serbia, received a free ticket to the final after current world number one Maria Sharapova of Russia pulled out of her semifinal match with a left hamstring injury at 6-1, 0-1.

"I know I'm playing 10 occasions and it's my eighth appearance in the final and the chance to make it a record five, so of course I'm excited about it. I'm gonna play my best tennis tomorrow against Ana," said Hingis.

Hingis attacked Dementieva's

backhand side and chalked up a 5-1 lead in first set. She was never in danger afterwards, forcing a break in the eighth game of the second set and wrapping up the win in 70 minutes.

"That's my strategy for most of the time," Hingis said of her attack on Dementieva's backhand -- because I feel like my backhand is a stronger part. "She also hit a lot of backhand cross-court rallies. I also tried to change up to go down the line. It's definitely my big weapon, my backhand cross court."

Dementieva said: "She was solid. She was very consistent during the whole game, playing very smart as usual."

"I think I didn't play my best. I made too many unforced errors. I just didn't take an advantage of short balls to come to finish the points. I think she was better by playing a lot of rallies," she added.

Sharapova said: "It's always disappointing to end a tournament that way. I definitely tried to find the way, hoping the pain was settled and would get better. That's why I tried to play the first set."

win a match.

"From the beginning of the match, I didn't notice anything, because she was moving pretty well and also serving OK," said the Serbian.

"I was really surprised that at the end of the set she called a physician and straight away retired. It was surprising that she had a problem."

Ivanovic added: "It's never nice to win the match that way. I felt pretty confident and I was happy that each match I played better and my serve was working really well -- that's very important to play against top players."

"I also think I was moving pretty well on the court and I was very aggressive, which is very important to play against Maria, not to give any time, and I was pretty happy with my performance today."

Sharapova said: "It's always disappointing to end a tournament that way. I definitely tried to find the way, hoping the pain was settled and would get better. That's why I tried to play the first set."

Rather like Samson, the lack of hair seemed to sap the strength from the Zimbabweans as they crashed to a heavy defeat at the hands of South Africa last month.

"The accepted wisdom was that England had been so bad for so long that this physically and mentally deficient team would simply roll over, have no chance of playing in the finals and make a dash for the airport by the middle of next week," the Australian said.

It said that before the match, many cricket fans disgruntled at the lack of competition had attempted to sell their tickets at a fraction of their face value and more than 5,000 failed to turn up to the sold out venue.

But the Telegraph said the absent fans missed an England win that was nothing short of a miracle, noting the embattled side produced its second highest one-

## Abu Dhabi

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The first phase of the project is due to be completed in 2008 and the entire venture will be completed in 2014 on the 2,500-hectare island which has a 32-kilometer (20-mile) Gulf shoreline.

It is part of a series of multi-billion-dollar ventures launched by Abu Dhabi in a bid to claim a larger share of the region's booming tourism industry.

## Bangladesh

FROM PAGE 17

years following multiple groin injuries.

Bangladesh have named a 12-member squad for the game leaving out middle-order batsman Tushar Imran, opener Tamim Iqbal and paceman Tapash Baisya as the team think-tank wants to have a look at the overnight condition before deciding whether they will prefer a seamer.

It was learnt that there is a good chance for Sharif, who made his international debut in the country, as the condition would favour the seam bowlers and he has also the good ability to contribute with the bat in the late order. In that case veteran left-arm spinner Mohammad Rafique will be sidelined.

## SQUAD

Habibul Bashar (captain), Shahriar Nafees (vice-captain), Mehrab Hossain, Aftab Ahmed, Sakib Al Hasan, Mohammad Ashraful, Mushfiqur Rahim (wicketkeeper), Mashrafe Bin Mortaza, Mohammed Rafique, Abdur Razzaq, Shahadat Hossain and Mohammad Sharif (12th man to be named).

## Symonds out of tri-series

Cricket

AFP, Sydney

Andrew Symonds has ruptured the biceps tendon in his right shoulder and will miss the rest of the triangular one-day cricket series against New Zealand and England, Cricket Australia said Saturday.

Symonds was forced to retire hurt during Australia's innings in their 92-run defeat to England here on Friday.

The all-rounder had scans Saturday and is facing surgery, possibly on Sunday, team doctor Trevor James said in a statement just weeks ahead of the World Cup.

"Andrew Symonds has ruptured the biceps tendon in the right shoulder and will receive surgery -- probably as early as Sunday -- to repair the tendon," James said.

"Andrew will certainly miss the remainder of the tri-series and will undergo intensive physiotherapy following surgery."

Symonds, who is a key member of Australia's team for next month's World Cup in the West

Indies, said he was unsure how long he would be out of cricket.

"We won't know how bad this injury is until after surgery. I felt it go during the game but I didn't realise how bad it was," Symonds said in the statement.

"I batted on but the pain was considerable and I was advised by the team physio to come off."

"I feel optimistic about the future because I know I'm a good healer -- my wrist injury healed quicker than expected and is fine now."

"I'll do whatever it takes to get back as quickly as possible."

skipper Ricky Ponting has recovered from a hip injury which forced him out of the England loss and leads the side against New Zealand in Melbourne on Sunday with Brad Hodge and Shaun Tait holding their places and Brett Lee coming in for Nathan Bracken.

## SQUAD

Ricky Ponting (captain), Adam Gilchrist, Matthew Hayden, Michael Clarke, Brad Hodge, Mike Hussey, Cameron White, Brett Lee, Mitchell Johnson, Stuart Clark, Shaun Tait, Glenn McGrath (12th man).

"His return to cricket will depend on his progress."

Symonds, who is a key member of Australia's team for next month's World Cup in the West

## 'Mother Teresa changed my life'

PTI, Melbourne

A meeting with Mother Teresa proved to be the "turning point" in Australian legend Steve Waugh's life providing him the inspiration he needed to walk away from cricket and devote his life to charity.

"The turning point for me was meeting Mother Teresa," Waugh said ahead of the official opening of his Australian children's charity. "I was in Calcutta and went along to meet her at the Mother (Teresa) House."

"I witnessed an early morning mass and it was an overwhelming experience. I felt something special with her giving to the poorest of the poor," the former captain said.

Waugh, who has been associated with Udayan, a home for children of leprosy patients, has now taken his charities to the needy in his home country.

"I never see myself as a cricketer. I see myself as being involved in charities," Waugh told The Daily Telegraph on Friday.

The first charity of its kind in Australia, the Steve Waugh Foundation has been established for sick kids who slip between the cracks of established support organisations.

The 41-year-old former cricketer decided he wanted to help the sickest of the sick and spent months researching where charity funds were missing in Australia.

## Have your hair cut, now!

CRICINFO, undated

While some may argue that Zimbabwe Cricket has not got enough on its plate, what with continuing internal unrest and a national side that has lost 12 ODIs on the trot, it has decided to take a firm stand on one of the game's more serious issues.

It has emerged that three of the national side -- Keith Dabengwa, Tawanda Muparirwa and Christopher Mpofu -- were ordered to have their hair cut or be dropped as part of a new board dress code. Mpofu and Dabengwa were the first to be chopped, although Muparirwa tried to resist and even wrote a letter to a ZC board member explaining why he wanted to keep his hair. However, he eventually gave up on Saturday evening and was seen sporting his new look when he took to the field for Zimbabwe on Sunday.

It is not yet clear whether pace bowler Douglas Hondo, who has been sporting locks since he started playing for Zimbabwe in 2001 and is eyeing a comeback after injury problems, will agree to comply.

A stakeholder, who did not wish to be identified, said that it was a surprising move given the rather more pressing concerns facing ZC. He added, tongue firmly in cheek, that the ZC leadership were not likely to be affected by the new rules as neither Peter Chingoka, the chairman, or Oziias Bvute, the managing director, are overly hirsute. On a more serious note, he also asked whether national selector Vumindaba Moyo, who is dreadlocked, would be asked to cut his locks since he is a full-time employee of Zimbabwe Cricket.

Rather like Samson, the lack of hair seemed to sap the strength from the Zimbabweans as they crashed to a heavy defeat at the hands of South Africa last month.

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## Odoyo brings amazing win

REUTERS, Nairobi

Kenya vice-captain Thomas Odoyo slogged an unbeaten 61 off 36 balls with three sixes and two fours to hand his side another victory in the World Cricket League tournament on Friday.

Opponents Ireland had posted 284-4 after centuries from William Porterfield (104 not out) and Kevin O'Brien (142).

At 231-9, it all looked over for Kenya but Odoyo turned the game on its head, hitting two successive sixes, a four and a two in the 49th over to clinch victory on 286-9.

It was the Kenyans' third win of the pre-World Cup tournament after successes over Bermuda and the Netherlands.

The tournament has served as a strong warning for Bermuda, the Americas Trophy champions, ahead of their debut in the World Cup, which should expect the worst against bigger teams including former champions Sri Lanka and India.

Bermuda, coached by former West Indies star batsman Gus Logie, has lost all their three matches in the series and remained at the bottom of the table.

The last over provided the drama

## Onus on the Kiwis

Cricket

AFP, Melbourne

New Zealand can make resurgent England's task of reaching the finals even harder if they can build on recent form and hand tri-series leaders Australia a second successive loss in their one-day here.

The Kiwis must win at least one of their two remaining pool matches, against Australia and against England in Brisbane on Tuesday, to play in the tri-series finals.

Captain Stephen Fleming said England's breakthrough 92-run win over Australia in Sydney on Friday made things tougher for his team but the Black Caps have to get used to winning when it matters.

New Zealand and England are

locked on nine points behind Australia's 27 points heading into the final two pool matches.

"This is what we wanted," Fleming said Saturday. "We want it to be a semi-final, a pressure game, where we continue the momentum we build."

"That's what the World Cup's about, so if anything we couldn't ask for much more."

"It's uncomfortable because you want to win these next two games, but we certainly don