SPORT



Sania Mirza of India plays a forehand against Alicia Molik of Australia during their match of the Hopman Cup in Perth yesterday.

BCB fines 3 cricketers

SPORTS REPORTER

The disciplinary committee of the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) has fined three players for breaching the code of conduct during Monday's 9th National Cricket League match between Khulnaand Rajshahi.

Nahidul Haque and Mohammad Selim of Khulna have been fined 50 per cent of their match fees by match referee Hemayet Ahmed Siddiky during the one-dayer against Rajshahi at the Rajshahi Divisional Stadium. The match referee also fined

Rajshahi batsman Anisur Rahman 25 percent of his match fees.

PIONEER FOOTBALL LEAGUE Registration

from Jan 10

SPORTS REPORTER

The players registration formalities for the Dhaka City Corporation Pioneer Football League will start on January 10.

The competition begins in the city from February 10.

Interested players have been asked to appear before the 'age verifying' committee with three recent passport size photographs.

Subject to approval of the committee, the interested players will have to collect the registration form mentioning the name of their clubs with a fee of Tk 30.

Sonali Bank beat Navy

SPORTS REPORTER

Sonali Bank came from behind to beat Bangladesh Navy 2-1 in the Dhaka Bank Victory Day Hockey Tournament at the Maulana Bhasani National Hockey Stadium yesterday.

Mushtaque put Navy ahead in the 40th minute after a barren first-half, but national colour Mamunur Rahman Chayan levelled the margin for the bankers in the 44th minute from a penalty corner.

Captain Shahidullah Titoo scored the deciding goal in the 53rd minute.

Badda Jagarani edge Jatrabari

SPORTS REPORTER

Badda Jagarani Sangsad made a winning start in the Metropolis Senior Division Football League with a 2-1 victory over Jatrabari Krira Chakra at the Birshreshtha Shaheed Sepoy Mohammad Mostafa Kamal Stadium in Kamalapur yesterday.

The winners led the first-half by a solitary goal

Milan Kumar Barman scored first for Badda Jagarani in the 25th minute while Delwar Hossain Shamim doubled the margin in the 50th

Sohel netted the lone goal for Jatrabari in the 79th minute.

Victoria Sporting Club play City Club today at the same venues.

Donovan leads

FROM PAGE 20

The camp allows US coach Bob Bradley to study talent that could help the US squad when qualifying for the 2010 South Africa World Cup begins in June.

"This is the beginning of a very important year for the national team and we are looking forward to continuing the work of 2007," said Bradley, who went 12-5 with one drawn in his first year in the job.

The Americans will play host to Mexico on February 6 and play a second-round qualifying series in June against either Barbados or Dominica.

Styris, Taylor dropped

Cricket

AFP, Queenstown

New Zealand's 3-0 clean sweep of the one-day cricket series against Bangladesh held no sway with the selectors when they named a newlook side Monday for the upcoming two Tests.

Scott Styris, Jamie How, Ross Taylor and Jeetan Patel have all been omitted in an expected shake up after New Zealand were soundly thrashed in their recent two Tests against South Africa.

Matthew Bell, who has been the form batsman in domestic cricket, earns a recall after six years in the wilderness and will open the batting with Craig Cumming.

cover during the South Africa tour, has been retained for the said. Bangladesh series.

when the squad was named, paying the penalty for a form slump that has seen him average 19.8 in 11 innings since his last Test hundred against the West Indies in March

He scored 59 in four innings on January 4.

against South Africa.

The 30-year-old Bell, who played the last of his 13 Tests in 2001, earned his recall after averaging 103.88 in the state champion-

"Batting has been a concern in recent seasons so we have selected players who we believe can occupy the crease for long periods," selector Glenn Turner said when announcing the team.

It is a requirement that Bell meets in his current form after batting for more than eight hours to score 188 in one match and spending seven hours at the crease for 265 in another. "He can bat time once he gets in,

he can bat for a day and a half. That was obviously an attraction when one looks at the skills for opening Matthew Sinclair, called in as the batting. He's obviously in very good nick at the moment," Turner Leading bowlers Shane Bond

Styris was the notable casualty and James Franklin remain unavailable through injury, as is Mark Gillespie, leaving Michael Mason and Iain O'Brien vying for the third seamer role behind Chris Martin and Kyle Mills.

The first Test starts in Dunedin

SQUAD

Daniel Vettori (captain), Brendon McCullum (vice-captain), Craig Cumming, Matthew Bell, Peter Fulton, Stephen Fleming, Mathew Sinclair, Jacob Oram, Kyle Mills, Iain O'Brien Michael Mason, Chris Martin, Jeetan Patel (second Testonly).

Ricky wary

Harbhajan also has a strong record against Matthew Hayden and Adam Gilchrist, who have been dismissed seven times in eight Tests, but he had less impact in Melbourne, taking three wickets to Kumble's seven. The visiting spinners will have a huge say in whether Australia can equal the world record of 16 consecutive wins, which was set by Steve Waugh and ended by Indiain 2001.

"The only thing wrong with discussing it is that it takes the focus away from the game,' Ponting, who has tried to avoid talk of the achievement, said. "When you're facing a ball, or starting to bowl, you need a nice clear mind. don't mind a bit of talk about it, but if it gets too much, I would like to

Sydney comes alive

Kumble some sleepless nights. So often has the word "suffocated" been uttered in press conferences that you would think they were playing in a gas chamber. "Uptight" was how Kumble described them and wished for a more fluent display here. He's asked them to stay away from practice and try to unwindinstead.

are seen on the field, the better prepared you are," Kumble said. "I'm someone who has played this game and understand what it takes. It's about switching off, forgetting what's happened in the past. One hit in the middle won't make you a good player. It's all in batting. the mind at this level. So it's important that we're tuned in after the break."

Zaheer Khan meant that there was no way Kumble could reveal the playing XI. Zaheer's niggling landing-heel problem cropped up during practice and made him a doubtful starter. He went to a local Sydney hospital for an MRI scan and the team management was awaiting results before taking a final decision. He missed the third and final Test against Pakistan and are in sight of equalling their

recently with the same injury. If he's ruled out, Irfan Pathan is likely

disturb the Australian bowlers' rhythm. But with Sehwag left out and the decision to open with Rahul Dravid not a success in Melbourne, it could be Yuvraj Singh that misses out as India re-jig the combination. In that case, Pathan could even be asked to open the

any discomfort when he turns out in the second Test."

lems. They will play the same XI

record for the most Test wins on the trot. They've won eight of the last 10 Tests in Sydney and possess a bowling attack that's growing in confidence with every hour.

Ponting is talking of "600 contests they need to win in a day" and Mitchell Johnson has been practising his wrist position using a ball that's partly white and partly red. The pitch might have something in it for the faster bowlers and both Stuart Clark and Brett Lee are local boys who would know the conditions. India need to pull out something special to inject some life into this series. Otherwise Sydney could be witness to some funereal scenes after all.

SQUADS

AUSTRALIA (from): Phil Jaques, Matthew Hayden, Ricky Ponting (captain), Michael Hussey, Michael Clarke, Andrew Symonds, Adam Gilchrist, Brad Hogg, Brett Lee, Mitchell Johnson, Stuart Clark.

INDIA (likely): Wasim Jaffer, Rahul Dravid, VVS Laxman, Sachin Tendulkar, Sourav Ganguly, Yuvraj Singh, Mahendra Singh Dhoni, Anil Kumble (captain), Harbhajan Singh, Zaheer Khan or Irfan Pathan, RP Singh.

Can Windies continue?

FROM PAGE 17 Indies out for 175 in the second

innings. We had one bad innings and that happens to teams from time to time.

McKenzie highlights the concerns over the top order, which has failed to perform consistently for a lengthy period of time. Even during their success in Pakistan and easy victory over New Zealand the runscoring was largely in the hands of Jacques Kallis and Hashim Amla. Captain Graeme Smith is desperately in need of a score and return for Pollock would

the price for his pair in the first Test. Gibbs for some time; his last Test been keen to build the attack on the century came in January 2005 three frontline quicks and Paul against England in Johannesburg Harris, with a view to the tough and in the subsequent 26 Tests he tours of England and Australia later

of McKenzie, one of the few high scorers in domestic cricket, to open while he is primarily a middleorder batsman shows the lack of However, the call-up of Neil options available. Boeta Dippenaar was another option, but there has been a push around South Africa to get McKenzie back in the fold for some time.

Another old face pushing for a recall is Shaun Pollock, who hasn't played Tests this season after being left out in Pakistan, and Arthur said "he's definitely in the reckoning." A Herschelle Gibbs appears set to pay strengthen the lower order to a more familiar level for South Africa. The axe has been looming over However, the management has

has averaged 26. But the selection this year. Recent events, though could force a rethink as this series against West Indies, initially thought to be a formality, has now became a major challenge for South Africa.

SQUADS

SOUTH AFRICA (probable): Graeme Smith (captain), Neil McKenzie, Hashim Amla, Jacques Kallis, Ashwell Prince, AB de Villiers, Mark Boucher, Shaun Pollock, Paul Harris, Dale Steyn Makhaya Ntini.

WEST INDIES (probable): Chris Gayle (captain), Daren Ganga, Runako Morton, Marlon Samuels, Shivnarine Chanderpaul, Dwayne Bravo, Denesh Ramdin, Darren Sammy, Jerome Taylor, Daren Powell, Fidel Edwards.

meet BCB boss

SPORTS REPORTER

Senior officials of the Premier and First Division clubs will meet Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) president Major General Sina Ibn Jamali on January 10 to discuss the current crisis over this year's league.

Cricket Committee of Dhaka Metropolis (CCDM) chairman Gazi Ashraf Hossain Lipu said yesterday that the meeting would create an opportunity for the clubs officials to let the BCB president know about their problems of running the show.

"Presidents and general secretaries of all Premier and First Division clubs will meet the president and it would be an open discussion. I think it will help us find a solution about this year's competition," said Lipu, also chairman of the cricket operations committee of the BCB.

All the activities regarding this year's league have been suspended as the High Court ordered a twomonth stay on the upcoming Premier Division Cricket League 2007-08 that was scheduled to begin this month.

A Division Bench comprising Justice Syed Mahmud Hossain and Justice Farid Ahmed issued the stay order following a writ petition filed

by Brothers Union Club. Brothers Union went to court after they were relegated along with Indira Road Krira Chakra after they had failed to turn up for their scheduled Relegation League match at the Sher-e-Bangla Stadium in Mirpur in October last year. City Club were the other team of the league who survived.

Focus on India, urges Ponting

AFP, Sydney

Australia captain Ricky Ponting has urged his players to focus on the home Test series against India and not on any security fears they may have for the March tour of Pakistan.

The assassination last week of Pakistan opposition leader Benazir Bhutto and subsequent unrest that has left at least 58 people dead have placed a question mark over the

Australia are due to play three Tests, five one-day internationals, and a Twenty20 match in Pakistan in March and April. Ponting said Cricket Australia

and the Australian Cricketers'

Association (ACA), the players union, will make an inspection tour of the troubled nation next ACA president Paul Marsh is expected to talk to the Australian players during this week's second

Test against India, which gets underway at the Sydney Cricket Ground on Wednesday. "With the tour being so far away, to the players' credit so far, there hasn't been a great deal of talk about it around the rooms,"

Ponting told reporters on matcheve here Tuesday. "No doubt sitting back and watching the events of last week in the change rooms probably did

create some grave concerns. Ponting said the team would follow the advice of officials in Australia and those sent to Pakistan to review security arrangements, but added: "It's out of our control for the time being."

"With the tour being so far away, we really just have to be thinking about what we've got on now. It's a big series, this Test series against

"If we can keep these things out of our head for as long as we can, it will give us a better chance of play-

Comic

FROM PAGE 17

"We were helpless to pick up Javed because of poor form of Shahriar Nafees. But Nafees returned to form latter and without any doubt he is always our first choice if the left-hander is in form," Akram said.

But whatever the burly former national captain said Javed, who played 40 Tests and 59 one-day internationals, has certainly felt that he was harshly treated this time.

T camp

FROM PAGE 17

International Table Tennis Federation will bear the airfare, accommodation cost and allowance for the Indian coach during his stay in Dhaka while Asian Table Tennis Union will provide 2,500 dollars to the Bangladesh Table Tennis Federation. The federation will provide

conveyance, accommodation, food cost of the participants. The federation will also hold the

Victory Day Table Tennis Tournament from January 10 in the men, women, boys and girls sec-To continue the federation's

sports activities in a successful way, its general secretary ATM Shamsul Alam has requested National Sports Council (NSC) to release the first two instalments of the government fund for the fiscal 2007-08.

Premier, 1st Div club officials to 'Forget Melbourne'

Cricket

CRICINFO, undated

India's pace spearhead Zaheer Khan is wishing for a cheerful beginning to the new year as India try to bounce back in the second Test in Sydney, starting on New Year's Eve. "I personally would Wednesday. Preferring to brush aside the 337-run thrashing in Melbourne, Zaheer wanted to concentrate on the "15 days of good cricket" ahead.

series and it happened in 2007," he said on Monday. "It's happened, it's history. We're eagerly waiting for 2008. We have three more to Tests go."

India's series win in England earlier this year, bowling them to a memorable seven-wicket win in Nottingham, Zaheer was eager for a repeat. "There's still a long way to go in the series. Three Test matches the third time Zaheer was bowling is quite a lot. It's going to be a cru- in a Test in Australia. He figured in day on.

cial game for the team. We've done well last time so why not this time?"

Zaheer seemed to be mirroring the attitude of the team when he spoke of the relaxed approach they were taking towards the second Test. "We are all looking forward to the cruise this evening (on Darling Harbour)," he said of their plans for like to keep myself fresh for the Test. You do whatever when you need it the most. I don't see myself going all out in the nets Tuesday. If someone feels he needs to go on batting for an hour or two, so be it. It depends on the individual."

Zaheer echoed Anil Kumble's statements about Rahul Dravid, saying it was only a matter of time before he found form. "We always back our players. That's what is more important at this level. He's a great batsman and that's why he's ready to accept that. He's definitely due and we're all behind him."

The Melbourne Test was only

the Brisbane Test last time around, mixed the next game due to a hamstring injury and played the third Test in Melbourne, though it later emerged that he wasn't fully fit for the game. "I think there's something with me and Australia," he joked. "Last time I was injured during the series, this time I was injured before. But it's all behind me now. I'm glad I played in the first Test and am looking ahead

Did he need to do much to adjust to Australian conditions? "It's a different approach you need here. The grounds are big, and the outfields are sand-based. It takes time to acclimatise. But I don't see anything major apart form it."

Meanwhile the Indian teammanagement was hoping for Sourav Ganguly to recover from his illness. Ganguly was suffering from fever Sunday but MV Sridhar, the assistant manager of the side, said his condition had improved a

"My dad (Gregori) is a hockey

"I missed out three years ago, so

Golovin's win over Dulko helped

player and he taught us how much

the Olympics matter to an athlete

it is definitely going to be a priority."

France to a 2-1 in its opening Hopman Cup tie, raising its hopes of

finally winning the mixed teams

seeded Serbia and Golovin will get a

significant test of where her game is

at when she faces world No.3 Jelena

Arjuna's path

France's next tie is against top-

event at the 15th attempt.

Jankovic in the singles.

and for a career.

Golovin set for big 2008

Tennis

AFP, Perth

Four years after bursting on to the tennis scene as a precocious teenager, France's Tatiana Golovin believes she is ready to make the quantum leap from talented youngster to top-10 player.

Golovin was just 15 when she made her Grand Slam debut at the 2004 Australian Open and stunned the tennis world by reaching the fourth round.

That performance, along with many expected.

However, a stellar finish to 2007, with narrow losses in successive finals against former world number one Justine Henin in October and a

here Sunday she was full of confidence about 2008. "A lot," she told AFP when asked what confidence she took from her

and it was a shame I had to stop there and have to start all over again. "It's going to take time, but I definitely know what I can do. "I know I can beat the top play-

"Now it is just a matter of really focusing on the Grand Slams, staying healthy, and really believing in

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Golovin has battled various injuries in the last couple of years and was frustratingly sidelined by

ankle and respiratory problems at various times during 2007, while a knee injury prematurely ended her However, she was confident

"It was unfortunate that I had to stop for two and a half months in the middle of the year when I was playing so well on clay," she said. "It takes a while to come back,

those dramas were behind her.

but I was very happy with how I ended (the season) and it gave me something to look forward to." The glamorous Golovin looked in fine fettle as she opened the new season with an impressive straight

sets win over Argentina's world No.38 Gisela Dulko at the mixed teams Hopman Cup. She heads into the new year with a new coach, Glen Schapp, who previously worked with Dinara

known as a strict disciplinarian. ing towards fine-tuning her all-

two weeks ago," she said. day and making me work hard, he's

very professional.

TATIANA GOLOVIN

By Eugene Sheffer

protector

channel?

19 Tardy

20 English

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"We're working on coming in (to the net) and I hit a couple of volleys "My doubles game is improving,

we are working on a lot of things, just little touch ups.' Golovin obviously values repreers, I have beaten them before, and I senting her country and has already marked the Beijing Olympics in her

> "Olympics is like a dream come true, being able to participate," she

made clear AFP, Colombo Sri Lanka's cricket chief Jayantha Dharmadasa on Monday stepped down, clearing the way for former captain Arjuna Ranatunga to take "He has offered his resignation in writing to the Sports Ministry

man Samantha Algama told AFP. Dharmadasa's resignation as chairman of Sri Lanka Cricket's interim committee comes in the wake of a government decision to appoint Ranatunga.

Ranatunga, currently a ruling party legislator, led Sri Lanka to their lone World Cup triumph in 1996. He quit international cricket in 2000 after playing 93 Tests and 269 one-day internationals. He is expected to be appointed

next week, sources close to President Mahinda Rajapakse's office have confirmed. The interim committee will then be reconstituted, with the sports minister nominating members to the new panel. Dharmadasa, a prominent local

businessman, took over as chairman in 2005 after the then government decided to suspend the democratically elected cricket administration headed by Mohan de Silva.

Scotland pays

FROM PAGE 20 However, Aberdeen manager Jimmy Calderwood believes all games should have been post-

poned. "It would have been better for everybody if they had called off all of the games. We all want to win football matches, but when you see the footage of Celtic Park and Fir Park then at that moment you are not really thinking about football to behonest."

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CRYPTOQUIP

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TMOP AMWFXRPXP KXBKGX,

M WNXZZ JBN TMWFV ZRJ XWB-QYMXOPGJ Saturday's Cryptoquip: MUSICAL ABOUT

FOLKS WHO ARE DEVOTEES OF VERDI AND PUCCINI WORKS: "FANDOM OF THE OPERA." Today's Cryptoquip Clue: K equals P

the three batsmen to pad up first, he was eventually left out of the 13. It had been exactly a year since he

"Some people feel the more you

The uncertainty surrounding

One batsman who had a bigger

break than the rest was Virender Sehwag, but though he was one of figured in a Test and the temptation could have been to push him in to

Sachin Tendulkar was forced to practice indoors because of an allergy picked up in Melbourne. "He did so (practice indoors) because he wanted to make sure that he doesn't aggravate it out in the sun," said MV Sridhar, the media manager, talking to PTI. "He should be absolutely fine by evening. We don't expect him to face

Australia have no such prob-

"That was the first game of the

Having been instrumental in

another fourth-round appearance at Wimbledon and a mixed doubles title at the French Open, saw her named tour newcomer of the year, but injuries have meant her emergence has been a little slower than

career-high ranking of 13, has the Russian-born and Miami-based 19year-old poised to make her mark. Golovin also claimed her first two singles titles this year and said

late season form. "I thought I was playing amazing

know I can play consistently for two or three weeks.

Safina and Nadia Petrova and is Golovin said the pair were work- over in the top job. round game. "We started working together secretary and will cease to be in office with effect from this eve-"He's out there with me every ning," Sri Lanka Cricket spokes-