

## Fine start for DCA

SPORTS REPORTER

Dhanmondi Cricket Academy (DCA) got off to a winning start in the Second Division Cricket League after they beat Kalabagan Cricket Academy (KCA) by 40 runs at the City Club ground yesterday. Mohsin Ali performed with both bat and ball as his 28 was crucial in DCA's modest score of 147 made in 39.3 overs.

Later, his leg-spin snared three wickets, as KCA were bundled out for only 107 runs in 38.2 overs. Rezaul took two wickets while Mahmudul Hasan of KCA scored 27 runs.

In the other match of the day, Mirpur Cricket Club (186-7 in 35 overs) posted an easy 47-run victory over Rajshahi's Al-Rashid Cricket Club (139-10 in 31 overs) in a rain-reduced match. For Mirpur, Asad took four wickets and scored 31 runs.

## Locals demand better facilities

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Manikganj*

A month-long cricket training programme, organised by the district sports office, concluded on Wednesday.

A total of 30 children, who participated in the training under Sayeed Khan Mazliz, Shahidul Haque Khokon and Sarker Mohammad Masud, were given certificates in a simple ceremony at the Manikganj Government High School playground.

But players, coaches, organisers have voiced their dissatisfaction over the inadequate facilities for cricket in Manikganj. They said that there are no cricket grounds in the town and that hampers opportunity of playing for the locals.

They demanded 5-6 nets, mats and concrete pitches so that practice can be held smoothly.

Police superintendent Sheikh Muhammad Maruf Hasan, chief guest, said, "There is no alternative of training Children need involvement in sports and culture besides their education."

## Windies not coming to Pakistan

CRICINFO, *undated*

The Pakistan Cricket Board's (PCB) effort to host a home series received another jolt with the West Indies turning down an invitation to play a one-day series later in the year.

After being rejected by Australia, India and Sri Lanka for security reasons and scheduling problems, the PCB has now been told by the West Indies Cricket Board (WICB) that they can't undertake a tour in August due to prior engagements.

The PCB had invited West Indies and New Zealand to play a three-match ODI series in August to give its team some practice before the Champions Trophy in September. This would have also helped the PCB recover from the financial setback suffered due to the postponement of Australia's tour in March. Bangladesh are currently in the country for a five-match ODI series and a Twenty20 international to cover for Australia's pull-out.

"Yes, the West Indies board has informed us that since they are already committed to play some games in Canada in August, they can't accept our invitation," Shafiq Nagni, the PCB's chief operating officer, said. "We have sent a fresh invitation to New Zealand asking them to come and play a full five-match one-day series instead of three ODIs. We are awaiting a reply from them."

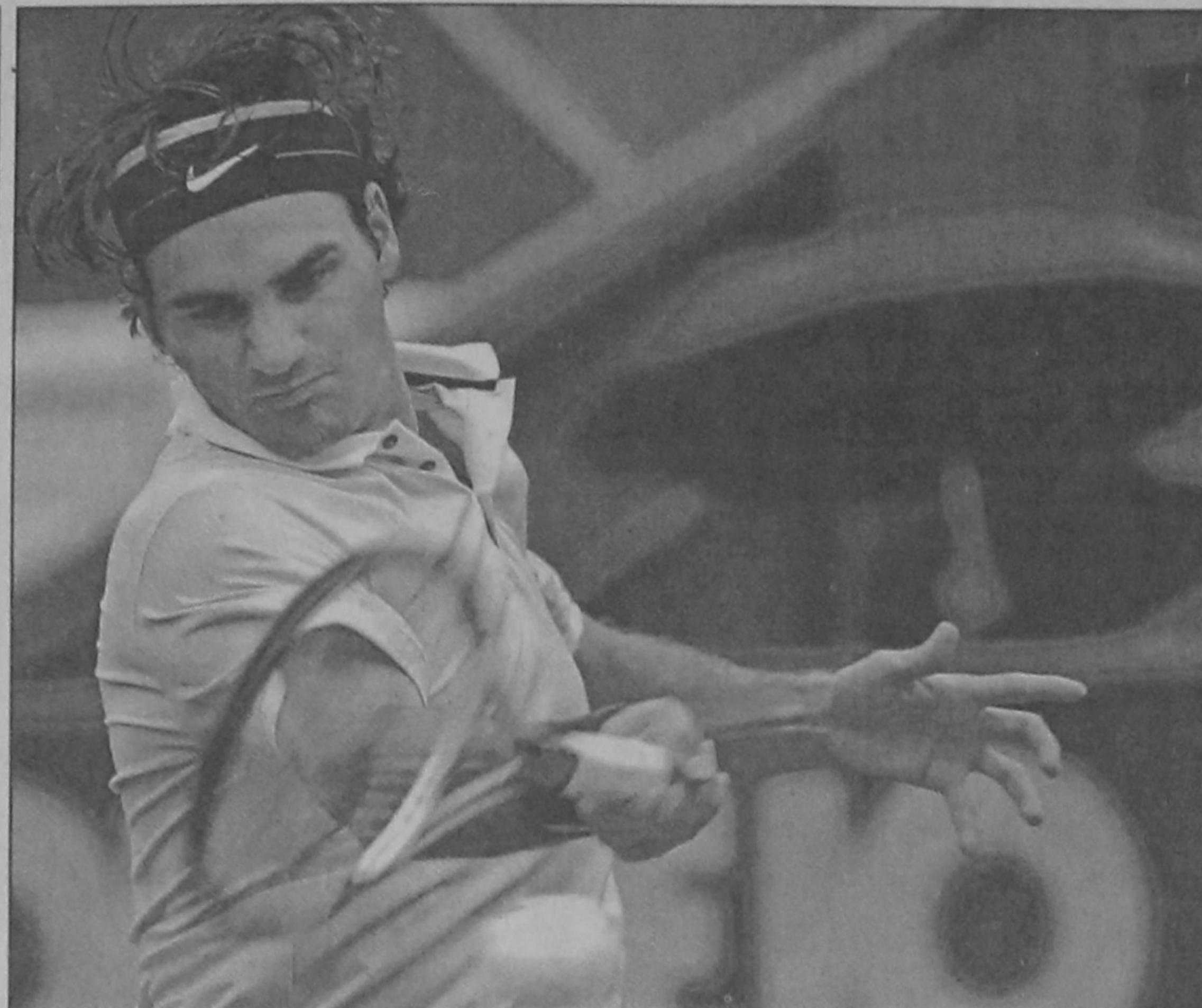


PHOTO: AFP

Swiss world number one Roger Federer makes a forehand return against Romanian Victor Hănescu during the Estoril Open in Lisbon on Thursday.

## Federer reaches quarters



AFP, *Estoril*

World number one Roger Federer breezed through irritating showers to shrug off Romania's Victor Hănescu 6-3, 6-2 and reach the Estoril Open quarter-finals on Thursday.

With conditions at their worst, the top seed needed just 59 minutes to dispatch the world number 68 in the claycourt vent.

"It was rainy throughout the match, that's always a hard thing," said 12-time Grand Slam champion Federer.

"The balls have a very dead feel, the kick serve is non-existent. You have to play in a different way. Victor had a hard time today, he struggled to hit winners and I didn't make too many mistakes."

"I played offensive and he didn't know what to do. It was a good match. I'm very happy but it's not a match to over-rate. It was a solid performance though."

Federer, playing this low-key event for the first time as he pre-

pares for a new assault on the French Open, the only Grand Slam title to elude him, was watched by his new coaching brains trust headed by Spain's Jose Higueras and Swiss Davis Cup coach Severin Luethi.

Federer is hoping to lift his first title of a troubled season having seen his start to 2008 overshadowed by a battle with glandular fever.

He has Higueras, who coached Michael Chang and Jim Courier to Roland Garros titles, on trial to reach a comfortable 4-0 lead and moved into a winning position with three match points in the eighth game.

But Hănescu had other plans, saving all three and forcing the Swiss to fire his third ace on a fourth opportunity to get the job done.

In other second-round matches, Czech Jiri Vanek defeated German eighth seed Michael Berrer 6-3, 3-6, 7-5 while Denis Gremelmayr took a win for Germany over Russian Teimuraz Gabashvili 7-6 (8/6), 6-1.

Women's second seed Maria Kirilenko, reached the last eight with a defeat of Czech Petra Cetkovska 6-3, 6-2 while Ukrainian Olga Savchuk put out Sweden's seventh seed Sofia Arvidsson 6-2, 6-2.

"My practise weeks are in December, January and February. Here, there is a match always around the corner."

"It's a bit harder but so far so good. I'm happy the way it's going and we'll see what happens in the future."

The world number one took an early lead in Thursday's drizzle, advancing to 3-1 in the

opening set at the Estadio Nacional.

Federer clinched the opening set in half an hour with a service winner, then showed he was hoping for a quick afternoon by breaking to start the second set.

The Swiss, who next faces either Joao Sousa or Federico Gil, both of Portugal, reached a comfortable 4-0 lead and moved into a winning position with three match points in the eighth game.

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On the other side of the draw, top seed and defending champion Jelena Jankovic needed just 52 minutes to defeat Russian Anastasia Rodionova 6-0, 6-2.

Seeking her first title of the season, Jankovic will face ninth seed Vera Zvonareva of Russia in the quarter-finals.

Zvonareva advanced with 6-4, 4-6, 6-1 victory over sixth-seeded Frenchwoman Marion Bartoli.

Fourth-seeded Elena Dementieva of Russia beat Victoria Azarenka 6-4, 7-5 and will meet seventh seed Patty Schnyder 6-3, 6-2 winner over Poland's Agnieszka Radwanska.

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## LOCAL SNIPPETS

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Rifles beat East End Boys Club 3-0 in the inaugural match of the Premier Division Volleyball League that began at the Volleyball Stadium yesterday.

Bangladesh Volleyball Federation vice-president Morshed A Chowdhury formally inaugurated the meet as chief guest.

In today's matches, Titas Gas face Sonali Bank, Water Development Board take on Fire Services Sports Club and Power Development Board are up against Wari Club.

### MANIKGANJ CRICKET

Our Correspondent: A four-wicket victory over Victoria in the semi-finals gave Dashara Palli Mangal Samity (DPMS) a place in the final of the Col Malek Smriti First Division Cricket League at the Shaheed Miraz-Tapan Stadium here yesterday.

Batting first, Victoria were skittled out for only 86 runs in 26.5 overs. Lal took four wickets while Obaidur snared three as well.

Lal also top-scored for DPMS, as they reached their target in 19.1 overs.

### NATIONAL CAROM

UNB adds: Farhana Banu Shilpi and Farhana Priti of Friends Dramatic Club clinched the women's doubles crown of the 5th National Carom Championship beating Farzana Akhter and Afsana Nasreen of Eden Girls College in the final at the NSC gymnasium.

The mixed doubles title went to Manirul Haque and Shamsun Nahar Maksooda of Dhaka who beat Farhana Nasreen Lipi and Salahuddin.

The men's singles and women's singles finals will be held today, the last day of the three-day meet.

## Shoaib to file fresh appeal

CRICINFO, *undated*

Shoaib Akhtar has been allowed to file a fresh appeal by the appellate tribunal conducting his hearing against the five-year ban imposed on him after his lawyer said he hadn't received some documents from the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB).

The three-man tribunal, headed by retired High Court judge Aftab Farrukh and including former Test player Haseeb Ahsan and former federal minister Saleem Taseer, held its first meeting on the appeal on April 17 but adjourned after 45 minutes when Shoaib's lawyer contended the PCB hadn't provided them with all the documents regarding the matter.

The hearings will now resume on April 26 but Farukh didn't mention any date for the providing a verdict. "I can't give a date on when we can reach a judgment."

## Tigers fined

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imposed the fine after Mohammad Ashraful's side was ruled to be one over short of its target.

Ashraful was fined 10 per cent of his match fee while each of his players received five percentines.

In a separate incident, Shahriar was found to have breached clause 1.2 of the ICC Code of Conduct which relates to "abuse of cricket equipment or clothing, ground equipment or fixtures and fittings."

The incident took place in the 21st over of Pakistan's innings when, after misfielding, Shahriar kicked and damaged an advertising hoarding.

The opener, who got a duck in Bangladesh's 23-run defeat, pleaded guilty at the hearing.

"It was Shahriar's third misfield in the innings and he was obviously frustrated as it was a crucial game because Bangladesh was playing to stay alive in the series," said Procter.

"But it is not the sort of example that players should be setting at any time. Shahriar pleaded guilty, apologised for the incident and promised not to repeat it again."

The fifth and final ODI takes place in Karachi on Saturday with a one-off Twenty20 international taking place at the same venue on Sunday.

David Hussey, who sold for 625,000 dollars in February, is one of the Australians who has not received the 15 per cent payment for their auction price, which was reportedly due on April 1.

It has begun investigating how many players have not received their initial IPL fees and has warned if the problem is widespread they could walk away from their contracts.

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Star names Tendulkar, Anil Kumble and Nathan Bracken are injured and out of the opening exchanges.

The most exciting fast bowler around, South Africa's Dale Steyn, is playing domestic cricket for the Titans back home and will also miss the next some time in May.

Meanwhile, England's only representative, Dimitri Mascarenhas, will only be released from his contract with the Age.

TEAMS

BANGALORE: Praveen Kumar, Wasim Jaffer, Jacques Kallis, Rahul Dravid (captain), Virat Kohli, Cameron White, B Akhil, Mark Boucher (wk), Zaheer Khan, Ashley Noffke, Sunil Joshi.

KOLKATA: Brendon McCullum (wk), Sourav Ganguly (captain), Ricky Ponting, David Hussey, Debabrata Das, Mohammad Hafeez, Laxmi Ratan Shukla, Ajit Agarkar, Murali Kartik, Ishant Sharma, Wridhiman Saha.

They were the main attraction on Thursday for many of the journalists covering the build-up to the inaugural match.

And there have also been reports that Mally is keeping a staggering 40 per cent of the tickets for Friday's first match to give to his private business associates - that may explain why it's sold out.

It will certainly be a new experi-

## 'Cricket needs IPL'

CRICINFO, *undated*

and having the chance to take that and turn your back on international cricket is the biggest danger that will be posed out of this event," Ponting said. "For those young guys starting out who haven't had a taste of international cricket, they might not want to put themselves through the rigours of travelling the world for the next 15 years.

"And the guys at the end of their careers have family at home and it's getting harder and harder for them to go away on tours every year. For them, they could make the equivalent amount of money in only seven weeks."

Ponting highlighted the exodus faced by countries such as New Zealand, with key players like Shane Bond having joined the unsanctioned Indian Cricket League. "I know it has lost a couple of its bigger and better players because of the difference in pay around becomes very appealing to young kids coming into the game."

Ponting expressed concern that players might choose the lucrative Twenty20 league over national duties. "Seeing the big dollars there

You would hate to see a situation where New Zealand is no longer playing international cricket because it has no players."

John Buchanan, the former Australia coach who is with the Kolkata Knight Riders, expressed similar concerns in the Sydney Morning Herald. He said cricket needed to sort out its finances and the likes of Allen Stanford, the Texan billionaire hoping to revive West Indies cricket, should be welcomed.

"With the exception of Australia, England and India, every country in world cricket is struggling to pay their players sufficiently," he said. "For example, we have Brendon McCullum with us, and there's no way New Zealand Cricket could be paying him in a day what the IPL is."

"But there shouldn't be any debate in terms of him playing for his country. That is of utmost importance. But administrators should allow the IPL to subsidise his income with New Zealand Cricket."

"That's where the dangers are.

## 'Lure not disloyalty'



AFP, *London*

Kevin Pietersen has insisted England players' interest in appearing in the Indian Premier League is not a sign of disloyalty but something "anyone in their right mind" would consider seriously.

It has been reported that Pietersen, the most gifted batsman currently in the England side, was offered a seven-figure sum to take part in the inaugural IPL, a domestic Twenty20 tournament in India, which starts on Friday.