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## 'Tigers need help'

SPORTS REPORTER

It would not be wise to ask the Tigers whether they want to put end to Pakistan's eleven-match winning streak when they play the Kityly Cup opener against Shoaib Malik's side at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur today.

Not because of their recent poor performance, but the question would never arise due to their lack of confidence or belief. The Tigers earned a rare reputation of being a 'dangerous team' in the limited-overs version who can at anytime turn the table after scintillating performances in the last World Cup in West Indies.

But it seems that the self-belief of winning a match is nowhere to be found in the Tigers dressing-room for the last few months. One may find the reasons behind this if he or she took the words of coach Jamie Siddons, who believes that there were 'reasons' behind winning matches against India and South Africa in the World Cup.

The reason behind the Tigers' victories was 'helpful' wickets, said the Australian when asked at the press conference about Bangladesh's gradual decline since

the brilliance in the World Cup. "I have looked closely at the World Cup wins and they were particular reasons for those wins. The wicket was very helpful and we bowled out India and chased down their target. I am sure if we get a wicket that seems around a bit and we are chasing 190, I am sure we will be competitive and probably win the game again," said Siddons.

"There are reasons always for us winning games," he added. So it is better to think about individual and team improvement and take it as a huge learning curve. Siddons however wished that his boys would be competitive and it would be fantastic if they win a match for him.

"We stuck with almost the same

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Bangladesh all-rounder Mahmudullah Riyad pulls a long-hop at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium nets yesterday during a training session on the eve of their Kityly Cup opener against Pakistan.

## Crunch game for Bangladesh

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh need to win their last group match today against hosts Sri Lanka to confirm a semifinal berth in the SAFF Football Championship.

Defending champions India and co-hosts Maldives have already confirmed their last four places from Group A but the competition remained open in the other group following three successive draws.

The equation is however very simple for Bangladesh. If they win the last group match against Sri Lanka at the Sugathadasa Stadium in Colombo then the outcome in the day's earlier Group B match between Afghanistan and Bhutan will have no effects towards their progress to the semifinals.

The match will kick off at 8pm with satellite channel ATN Bangla beaming live coverage of the match.

The records however speak in favour of Bangladesh as they won seven matches out of the last nine encounters and were held to a draw

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## SCB lift bank cricket title

SPORTS REPORTER

Standard Chartered Bank emerged champions of the first-ever Banker's Cricket League after they beat Eastern Bank Limited by three wickets in the final at the Dhanmendi Cricket Stadium yesterday.

The rain-interrupted final saw two days of action after play was suspended on Friday after EBL had batted first and were bowled out for 120 in 30.2 overs. Sanjay (31) and Sujon (25) contributed with the bat but their efforts were cut short by Bobby's inspired spell. The pacer took three wickets giving away only 12 runs.

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Czech Republic super-sub Vaclav Sverkos (L) volleys home the all-important goal against co-host Switzerland in the opening match of the Euro 2008 at St Jakob-Park in Basel on Saturday.

## DHAKA TRI-SERIES Gony in for Sreesanth

AFP, New Delhi

India pacer Manpreet Singh has been ruled out of the upcoming tri-series in Bangladesh due to a side strain, a cricket board official said on Saturday.

"Sreesanth has a left side strain and he will require two weeks to recover from it," cricket board secretary Niranjan Shah said in a statement.

The bowler will be replaced by the uncapped Manpreet Gony, who has impressed in the domestic Twenty20 league recently.

Gony's inclusion takes the number of uncapped players in the 15-member Indian squad to three with Pragyan Ojha and Yusuf Pathan the other new faces.

Pakistan is the third team involved in the Bangladesh tri-series to be played from June 8 to 14 in Dhaka.

Sreesanth, however, will be available for the Asia Cup to be played in Pakistan from June 24 to July 6.

India are already without star batsman Sachin Tendulkar who will sit out of both the tri-series and the Asia Cup due to a groin injury.

## SQUAD

Mahendra Singh Dhoni (captain), Virender Sehwag, Gautam Gambhir, Robin Uthappa, Yuvraj Singh, Rohit Sharma, Suresh Raina, Irfan Pathan, Yusuf Pathan, Piyush Chawla, Pragyan Ojha, Manpreet Gony, Rudra Pratap Singh, Ishant Sharma, Praveen Kumar. Coach: Gary Kirsten.

## LOCAL SNIPPETS

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Hockey Federation (BHF) yesterday announced a 16-member final squad for the 3rd AHF Cup Hockey that will begin on June 14 in Singapore.

Zahid bin Talib, Tapash Barman and Iqbal Nadir were named as standbys while Kamrul Islam Kismat was made the manager while Shahidullah Dolon and Barkatullah Chapal will assist head coach Mahbub Harun.

Mirza Farhad Ahmed and Mahbubul Haq Mitu will accompany the team as umpire and judge.

## SQUAD

Mahbubullah Shakil, Mehrab Hossain, Mamunur Rahman, Isa Mia, Asaduzzaman, Moshir Rahman, Ferdous Goldar, Shahidullah, Musa Mia, Hasan Ahmed, Sheikh Mohammad Nannu, Maksud Alam, Russell Mahmud, Zahidul Islam, Rimon Kumar Ghosh and Krishna Kumar.

## PIONEER LEAGUE

Riding on four goal hero Shamim Reza, Golam Mostafa Lane crushed Ramjan Football Kishore Ekadash 7-2 in a high-scoring West Zone encounter of the Dhaka City Corporation Pioneer Football League at the Outer stadium ground.

Apart from Shamim's four goals, Simon struck twice while Babu netted the other goal. Mohammad Ali and Shiplu netted one goal each for Ramjan.

Central Zone: At the Basabo Tafun Sangha Club ground, Khilgaon Pragati Sangsad beat Ilu Smriti Sangsad 2-1 while Nawabpur defeated Khilgaon Jubo Sangha by the same margin.

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## Czechs steal Swiss party

BBC ONLINE, undated



Jakob Park in Basel yesterday.

Swiss skipper Alexander Frei was twice denied by Petr Cech before he was forced off injured and Hakan Yakin headed a chance wide after the break.

On 70 minutes Sverkos slotted in a low volley from 12 yards after latching on to a ball over the top of the defence.

The Swiss were denied an equaliser when Johan Vonlanthen's volley hit the bar.

And it might prove that the width of the woodland could be the end of the Swiss, with tough matches against Portugal and Turkey to come in Group A.

Realistically the tournament's co-hosts needed to get something out of their opening game, and they started as though they were absolutely determined to.

After three minutes, the Czechs gave the ball away cheaply in midfield but Frei dragged his shot wide and failed to capitalise.

That should have been a wake-up call to the Czechs, but they appeared in no rush to raise their tempo.

As a result, Switzerland - unfancied in the group - grew in confidence and stroked the ball around, but with little cutting edge.

A weak effort from Gokhan Inler was indicative of their toothless attacks up until that point.

Frei, though, looked the liveliest player on the pitch, and despite having no help from his struggling strike partner Marco Streller, he began to cause some problems.

It took a decent stop from Cech to deny him the opening goal of Euro 2008 after he had latched on to a long clearance from his own keeper.

Frei followed that up with a 30-yard shot that Cech opted to use his fists to clear, despite there being little sign of the any movement from ball.

Sadly for Frei it would prove to be virtually his last contribution to the match as he later hobbled off after a jarring challenge.

The Czech Republic had already started showing signs of waking from the slumber before then, and with crisp passing and better movement were dictating the play.

But their final ball was awful and up front, giant striker Jan Koller looked slow and cumbersome.

After the break the Swiss brought on Hakan Yakin for the injured Frei and they started the half positively.

As the Czechs found themselves pinned back, Yakin got himself into the action but was too high with an effort following a free-kick.

But it was clear Yakin was already having more of an impact than Koller and it was no surprise when

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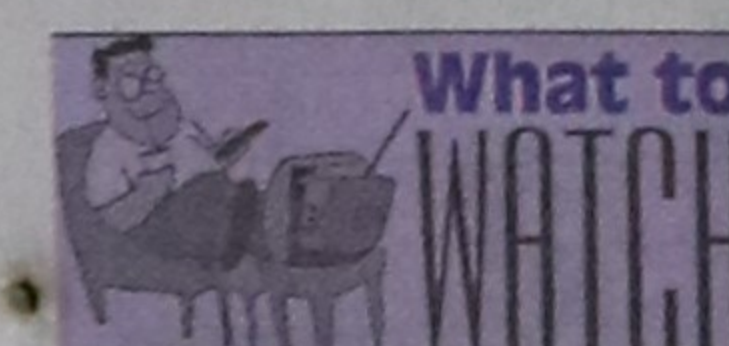
## Did U Know?

The Euro 2012 will take place in Poland and Ukraine. It will become the third jointly-hosted tournament.



## Raymond Domenech

(France football coach)  
"I am optimistic that we can do something special at Euro."



## BTV, NEO Cricket & GEO

Kityly Cup Tri-Series

Bangladesh v Pakistan

Live from 3:00pm

ATN Bangla

SAFF Championship

Bangladesh v Sri Lanka

Live from 8:00pm

ESPN

Euro 2008

Austria v Croatia

Live from 10:00pm

Germany v Poland

Live from 12:45am (Monday)

STAR Cricket

England v New Zealand

Third Test, Day Four

Live from 4:00pm

STAR Sports

French Open Tennis

Men's Final

Live from 7:00pm

## Rain can't stop it

MOHAMMAD ISAM



Kityly Cup will still be possible at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium.

That's the good news that reverberated around the Mirpur ground yesterday as the Tigers warmed up and fielded in sprinkling rain in the afternoon. Even though the groundstaff stumbled as they hurriedly put the covers on the centre, the water never really threatened to gather on the surface. Even the visiting Pakistan team practised on Friday before which there was a downpour.

Armed with the best drainage facility of any sporting ground in the country, three Super Soppers, a noticeable slope, enough covers and plenty of enthusiastic groundstaff, the 'home of cricket' remains the sole reason why this

tournament looks like a meaningful venture.

Holding this tournament right at the beginning of the monsoon season bewildered everyone but as they say, 'the show must go on'. Pakistan have already arrived and so will India today and in all likelihood, the matches would be of the curtailed nature.

For a change, everyone concerned were curious of the by-laws and the playing conditions yesterday and the cricket board deployed someone who knows it all.

According to BCB cricket operations committee member and veteran coach Jalal Ahmed Chowdhury, the option of a reserve day after each of the four matches cuts down the risk of a total wash-out even though weather forecasts point towards possible thunderstorms everyday during the tournament.

"The match will carry over to the reserve day if rain stops the match and the match referee decides that no play is possible on the match

day," said Jalal.

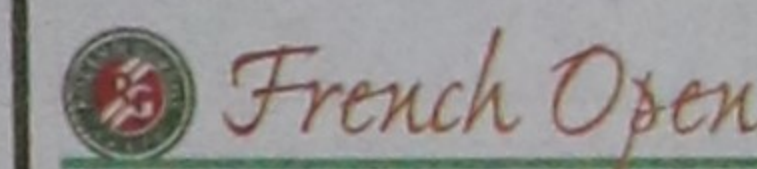
According to the ICC playing conditions, a 20-overs-a-side game constitutes a one-day international but if the second innings does not see out 20 overs, the match will continue the next day.

"If for example it is decided that it will be a 25-overs-a-side match and one innings has been played out but the second innings only has 10 overs before rain takes over, the match will remain a 25-over game with the rest of the overs being played in the reserve day. Again, that would only happen when the match referee decides," informed Jalal.

If there was no rain around, the pitch in Mirpur would garner the most curiosity. Even now the wickets that would remain under cover for most of the non-playing time are slow with even bounce. Someone in the know quipped that predicting the nature of the Mirpur wicket is next to impossible, given the small time it had been used. Wickets across the country have

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## Ana's maiden Slam



AFP, Paris

Serbia's Ana Ivanovic won the French Open on Saturday, her first Grand Slam title, by ending Dinara Safina's heroic run to the final and crowning her elevation to the world number one spot in style.

Ivanovic won 6-4, 6-3 as Russian 13th seed Safina saw her hopes of joining big brother Marat as a Grand Slam champion dashed.

For the second seeded pin-up, it was third time lucky after she had lost both her previous major finals - to Justine Henin here 12 months ago and Maria Sharapova at the Australian Open in January.

"It was an amazing experience and I still don't realise that I have won it," said Ivanovic who celebrated her victory with an acrobatic climb into the VIP box to embrace her coaching team and family.

"It was a very nervous match with lots of chances but I was able to keep my composure until the end. I am very thrilled to be the champion."

Safina had reached her first Grand Slam final in dramatic fashion putting out top seed Sharapova and seventh seed Elena Dementieva in earlier rounds.

In both ties, the 22-year-old Safina had been a set and 2-5 down before carving out memorable wins, saving a match point in each.

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Serbian star Ana Ivanovic holds the winner's trophy after beating Russian Dinara Safina in the French Open final at Roland Garros in Paris yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

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