



Mohammad Kaif (L) and MS Dhoni try their hand at badminton during BCCI Corporate Trophy in Mohali on Wednesday.

PHOTO: AFP

## Rajon may have op

SPORTS REPORTER

Zahidul Islam Rajon, the captain of the national hockey team, reportedly sustained a knee injury merely a couple of days ahead of their practice match in Holland.

Rajon, who left here on August 24 for Germany to play for Munchen Glabba, a First Division team of the German hockey league, played the first match successfully in Germany, but got hurt during the second match on Dutch soil.

After sustaining the injury, the national striker called Khondokar Hasan Ahmed, who is also scheduled to leave for Germany today, to inform him about it.

However, Anvir Adel, an executive member of the Bangladesh Hockey Federation, said that Rajon needed a surgery and was expected to return to action after two weeks.

## Manikganj football

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Manikganj

Newcomers City Club held champions Sonali Atit to a goalless draw in the Hafizul Islam Khan Uttu Smriti First Division Football League at Shahid Miraz-Tapan Stadium in Manikganj yesterday.

With the first draw in three outings, City stay top with seven points, two points ahead of Sonali Atit, who secured five points also playing three matches.

## 16 district

FROM PAGE 17 Cricket Stadium for the 2011 ICC World Cup.

It was also learnt that many members of the committee expressed their frustration over the snail's pace of the construction and renovation work of the South Asian Games establishment and the NSC planning and development section sought two more months to complete all by December ahead of the SA Games to be held over January 29-February 9.

NSC had earlier said that all renovation and construction work would be finished by October this year.

## Nielsen takes

FROM PAGE 17 his professional development by stepping up as acting coach for the remainder of the tour.

Nielsen is not alone in taking a break. Australia captain Ricky Ponting returned home after the Ashes series but is due back in England midway through the one-day campaign.

The one-day series starts at the Oval on Friday after the teams endured two washed out no-result Twenty20 internationals on Sunday and Tuesday in Manchester at Old Trafford.



## Did U Know?

Sports command the biggest television audiences, led by the Summer Olympics, World Cup Football and Formula One racing.

# 'No move for 4-day Tests'

Cricket

CRICINFO, undated

Haroon Lorgat, the ICC chief executive, has said there is no move to reduce Tests from five days to four days. The idea of reducing the longest format had earlier been floated by ICC President David Morgan to make Tests more attractive to the spectators. Morgan had said the move would also protect and enrich Test cricket in the face of lucrative Twenty20 leagues like the IPL. "Morgan must have been putting a thought on the table," Lorgat said.

Speaking at a ceremony in Mumbai, where the nominations for the 2009 ICC awards were unveiled, Lorgat also lent his support to the 50-over game and said the format would continue at the international level even though the ECB had recently reduced matches to 40 overs per side in its domestic set-up. "ECB has done it as it

suits their domestic schedule," Lorgat said. "But at the international level the 50-over format will continue. But we are open to changes if it works for the betterment of the game." Lorgat pointed out that the format of the Champions Trophy, in South Africa later this month, had been revamped to make it more exciting.

Indian batsman Virender Sehwag, who was also present on the occasion, said he preferred to play Tests and ODIs more than Twenty20 matches. "Personally I would like to play more Tests and ODIs than T20 games which I know have become extremely popular," Sehwag said. "I would like to play at least eight to ten Tests in a year."

"The Twenty20 game is big and in future and the message I would like to give to the ICC is to introduce a World Championship of Tests. Every cricketer would like to play Tests against every other country and perform well. Test cricket is the true test (of a cricketer's calibre)."

## Rain spoils T20 series

AFP, Manchester

Rain washed out the second and final Twenty20 international between England and Australia without a ball being bowled at Old Trafford on Tuesday.

It meant the series ended 0-0 after Sunday's opener at Lancashire headquarters also finished as a no-result washout. Heavy overnight rain, and fresh downpours on Tuesday, had left the outfield saturated ahead of the start of what should have been a day/night fixture.

Umpires Peter Hartley and Nigel Llong held an inspection at the scheduled local start time of 7pm (1800GMT), and looked again 45 minutes later, but ultimately decided conditions were so bad there was no prospect of even a five overs per side match, the minimum length required to produce a positive result.

Rain washed out the first Twenty20 at Old Trafford here on Sunday with England four for two in 1.1 overs in reply to Australia's 145 for four.

After this match, England and Australia face each other in a seven-match one-day international series starting at the Oval on Friday.

# Safina scrambles thru'

FROM PAGE 17 Open runner-up, beat Italy's Roberta Vinci 6-2, 6-3 in her opener.

But the star was former world number one Sharapova, booking a second-round date with US wild card Christina McHale in only 73 minutes.

Together with Belgian Kim Clijsters, who took a two-year break to start a family, the draw has a pair of former US Open champions and world number ones making compelling comebacks.

"Comebacks are great for the sport," Sharapova said. "We're both still very young. It creates excitement and buzz, considering we're contenders. We've won Grand Slams. We're big competitors. We love the big stage."

Safina, who next faces

Germany's 67th-ranked Kristina Barrois, took two hours and 35 minutes to dispatch 167th-ranked wildcard Rogowska, who would have been the second-lowest woman in rankings to ever beat a top seed in a Slam.

"If I would lose that match, it would be like I lost to myself. It was me, myself and I playing on the court," Safina said. "It would hurt a lot."

The worst showing by a US Open top seed came last year when Ana Ivanovic lost in the second round. The Serbian made an earlier exit this year, the 11th seed dropping her opener to Ukraine's Kateryna Bondarenko 2-6, 6-3, 7-6 (9/7).

Sixth seed Kuznetsova, who ousted Germany's Julia Goerges 6-3, 6-2, and Sharapova, 22, are the only US

Open winners in their draw half. Kuznetsova was down a break early but won 10 of the last 12 games.

"First match is always tough," Kuznetsova said. "It's very difficult when you don't know what to expect."

Safina, 23, will stay atop the rankings after the Open regardless of how she fares in the Open, even if second-rated reigning champion Serena Williams takes her third Slam crown of the year and 12th of her career.

Safina lost to Serena Williams at this year's Australian Open final and to Kuznetsova in the French Open final. But Rogowska, an 18-year-old from Melbourne, made Safina look far from such lofty levels.

# Shakib in running for top

FROM PAGE 17 "It is also a chance for followers of our great sport to reflect on some of the great cricketing feats they have witnessed over the past year. This will be the sixth time the awards have been handed out and yet again there are so many great performances to recall. Selecting the winners will no doubt test our selectors and voting academy."

The LG ICC Awards ceremony is now in its sixth year and this year it will be held in Johannesburg to coincide with the ICC Champions Trophy 2009. Previous ceremonies were held in London (2004), Sydney (2005), Mumbai (2006), Johannesburg (2007) and Dubai (2008).

**NOMINATIONS**  
**Cricketer of the Year:** Shivanine Chanderpaul (WIS), Tillakaratne Dilshan (SRI), Mahendra Singh Dhoni (IND), Gautam Gambhir (IND), Shikib Al Hasan (BAN), Mitchell Johnson (AUS), Graham Onions (ENG), Thilan Samaraweera (SRI), Kumar Sangakkara (SRI), Harbhajan Singh (IND), Graeme Smith (RSA), Andrew Strauss (ENG), Daniel Vettori (NZL), AB de Villiers (RSA).

**Test Player of the Year:** Stuart Broad (ENG), Michael Clarke

(AUS), Mahendra Singh Dhoni (IND), Tillakaratne Dilshan (SRI), Gautam Gambhir (IND), Shikib Al Hasan (BAN), Mitchell Johnson (AUS), Venkatesh Laxman (IND), Jesse Ryder (NZL), Thilan Samaraweera (SRI), Ramnaresh Sarwan (WIS), Peter Siddle (AUS), Harbhajan Singh (IND), Graeme Smith (RSA), Dale Steyn (RSA), Andrew Strauss (ENG), Graeme Swann (ENG), Daniel Vettori (NZL), AB de Villiers (RSA).

**ODI Player of the Year:** Shivanine Chanderpaul (WIS), Mahendra Singh Dhoni (IND), Andrew Flintoff (ENG), Chris Gayle (WIS), Umar Gul (PAK), Martin Gupthill (NZL), Michael Hussey (AUS), Nuwan Kulasekara (SRI), Ajantha Mendis (SRI), Muttiah Muralitharan (SRI), Yuvraj Singh (IND), Virender Sehwag (IND), Thilan Thushara (SRI).

**Emerging Player:** Martin Gupthill (NZL), Ben Hilfenhaus (AUS), Phillip Hughes (AUS), Amit Mishra (IND), Graham Onions (ENG), Kumar Sangakkara (SRI), Harbhajan Singh (IND), Graeme Smith (RSA), Andrew Strauss (ENG), Daniel Vettori (NZL), AB de Villiers (RSA).

**Associate and Affiliate Player of the Year:** Rizwan Cheema (CAN), Khurram Chohan (CAN), Alex Cusack (IRL), Ryan ten Doeschate (NED), Trent Johnston (IRL), Neil McCallum (SCO), Kevin O'Brien (IRL), Niall O'Brien (IRL), William Porterfield (IRL), Boyd Rankin (IRL), Edgar Schiferli (NED), Steve Tikolo (KEN), Regan West (IRL), Bas Zuiderent (NED).

**Twenty20 International Performance of the Year:** Shahid Afridi (PAK), Saeed Aijmal (PAK), Dwayne Bravo (WIS), Alex Cusack (IRL), Tillakaratne Dilshan (SRI), Chris Gayle (WIS), Umar Gul (PAK), David Hussey (AUS), Sanath Jayasuriya (SRI), Zaheer Khan (IND), Ajantha Mendis (SRI), Wayne Parnell (RSA), Abdur Razzak (BAN), David Warner (AUS).

## Another BWF ad-hoc body

SPORTS REPORTER

Well-known organiser Tabir Rahman Pahlon was appointed general secretary of the Bangladesh Wrestling Federation's (BWF) new ad-hoc committee as the National Sports Council yesterday dissolved the previous ad-hoc committee.

The 25-member previous committee, which was appointed in July in 2007, was disbanded under Section 20 of the NSC 1974 Act, but its secretary Shafiq Anwar told reporters that the committee was dissolved due to their inactivity.

Mahbubul Amin Jibon, general secretary of the previous committee, denying the allegation, said that they had organised three national meets and took part in Indo-Bangladesh Bangla Games twice and the Asian meet once.

Jibon also claimed that they completed the councilors' list and asked the authority to hold the election, but they did not get any response from NSC.

## WICB-WIPA mediation process fails

AFP, Georgetown

Mediation efforts between the West Indies Cricket Board (WICB) and the West Indian Players Association (WIPA) in a pay dispute collapsed at the brink of resolution, officials said late Tuesday.

Former Commonwealth Secretary General Sir Shridath Ramphal, who had been appointed to mediate the mess, warned that the feared labour shutdown might happen as a result of the breakdown in talks.

"It was another bad day for West Indian cricket which, without fundamental changes, is now likely to deteriorate further," Ramphal said in a statement from the Guyana-based Caribbean Community (Caricom) headquarters.

The latest dispute erupted in July when 13 of the leading West Indies players made themselves unavailable for the first Test against Bangladesh in St. Vincent, citing pay and contract issues.

## Isinbayeva wins Spanish prize

AFP, Madrid

Russian pole vault queen Yelena Isinbayeva, the double Olympic champion and world record holder, has been awarded Spain's prestigious Prince of Asturias prize for sport, the jury announced on Wednesday.

"Considered the best pole-vaulter of all time, Yelena Isinbayeva has achieved historic records and has become the only female pole vaulter ever to clear the 5.00 metre barrier, setting a total of 27 world records in this sport," the jury said.

The 27-year-old set a world record of 5.06m at a meeting in Zurich last week, bettering her own mark of 5.05m set when she won a gold medal at the Beijing Olympics.

# Clarke defends T20 call-off

Cricket

AFP, Manchester

Australia captain Michael Clarke insisted the umpires were right to call-off the second Twenty20 international against England here at Old Trafford without a ball being bowled.

The day/night match was abandoned after two pitch inspections by umpires Peter Hartley and Nigel Llong, much to the disgust of a 19,500 capacity crowd and the fury of Lancashire chief executive Jim Cumbers.

Afterwards, the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) promised to hold an inquiry into the abandonment, which meant the series ended 0-0 after Sunday's opener at Lancashire headquarters also finished as a no-result washout.

Umpires Hartley and Llong decided conditions were so bad there was no prospect of even a five overs per side match, the minimum length required to produce a positive result.

Despite 600,000 pounds being spent on a new ground drainage system during the close season, the bowlers' take-off area at the Brian Statham End was deemed unplayable following heavy rain Tuesday.

Afterwards an ECB spokesman said the board would be "holding an inquiry into the circumstances surrounding the abandonment of the match".

Clarke, speaking to reporters, said: "We're all disappointed with the result but I think the decision that's been made is the right decision."

"We've got specialist Twenty20 players that have flown over from Australia to take part in these two games so we really wanted to play."

However, he added: "There's no game I play for Australia that I'm willing to just go out and bowl some full-tosses so the crowd get a great spectacle. You're representing your country."

"The ground just wasn't fit enough for everybody to play the type of cricket that's played in Twenty20 or any form of cricket."

England captain Paul Collingwood backed Clarke's view, saying: "The umpires came up to

us and said they think it's unfit for international cricket. When you've got a lot of people in the crowd, it's a brave call to make but it's good they are making those calls."

"It is entertainment, but you've got to have the surface in the right condition to play an international game."

But Cumbers was adamant conditions were fit and said different standards needed to be applied to Twenty20, launched professionally in England in 2003 as a means of attracting new fans to cricket.

"I'm angry, bitterly disappointed," Cumbers told reporters. "Angry, because to my mind we were told when we started playing Twenty20 cricket several years ago that you should be expected to play in conditions which you wouldn't normally play in first-class cricket."

Cumbers, a former Lancashire pace bowler, added: "I know the umpires have tough decisions to make and I'm perfectly aware of the safety of players, Christ I played the game for 20 years myself."

"But there are times when you've got to think about the people who've paid 50 quid (pounds) to come into this game."

"Sometimes I think we'd rather play in front of empty stadiums. I really thought when I went out there and had a look at 7pm (1800GMT, the scheduled start time), I thought great we will be out there in half an hour's time."

Cumbers said Australia pace great Jeff Thomson, working at Old Trafford as a commentator for BBC Radio, said: "I was talking to him (Thomson) about it and he finds it a mystery too."

Tuesday's abandonment left England with just two scheduled Twenty20 internationals, against South Africa, before the World Twenty20 starts in the Caribbean in April.

Meanwhile Australia have just three Twenty20s of their own before that event, one against Pakistan and the other two against the West Indies.

Ashes-winners England and Australia now face each other in a seven-match one-day international series starting at the Oval on Friday.

# Murray off and running

FROM PAGE 17

exactly what I need."

Tsonga was even more expedient, defeating American wildcard Chase Buchanan 6-0, 6-2, 6-1 in an early mismatch out on the Grandstand Court.

The 24-year-old from Le Mans failed to get past the third round in his two previous appearances at Flushing Meadows, but he won the boy's title here in 2003 and he is the only player to defeat Roger Federer since May.

That came in the quarterfinals at the Montreal Masters, where he remarkably won from 1-5 down in the deciding set.

The Frenchman, runner-up to Djokovic in the 2008 Australian Open, went through in 78 minutes and will next play the fit-again Jarkko Nieminen of Finland, who defeated Fabio Fognini of Italy 7-5, 7-6 (8/6), 6-4.

Spain's Verdasco served up 12 aces and hit 36 winners on the way to a 7-5, 6-4, 7-5 win over Benjamin Becker of Germany, while Berdych of the Czech Republic saw off Wayne Odesnik of the United States 7-5, 6-4, 6-4.

Gonzalez, whose best showing at the US Open was a quarterfinal appearance in 2002, saw off Nicolas Massu 6-3, 6-3, 6-3 in an all-Chilean clash.

There were only two slight diversions from the script.

Veteran Ecuadorian Nicolas Lapentti upset Federer's Swiss doubles partner and close friend Stanislas Wawrinka, the 19th seed, 4-6, 3-6, 7-6 (8/6), 7-6 (7/3), 6-3.

American qualifier Jesse

Witten, a former collegiate standout, had earlier stunned 29th-seeded Russian Igor Andreev 6-4, 6-0, 6-2.

"It's my first ATP victory -- it

has been a lot of years," he said.

"The last couple of weeks I've been playing well and I am not even sure why, but I am just going to roll with it."



PHOTO: AFP

Second-seed Andy Murray of Britain celebrates a point against Latvia's Ernests Gulbis during their first round match of the US Open at the Flushing Meadows in New York on Wednesday.

## CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS			DOWN		
1 Traffic light color	41 Constitution letters	1 Actress ruins			
6 Prevent	43 Raw rock	19 Mythical reveler			
9 Pump up the volume	44 Hathaway or Heche	21 Enervate			
12 Price	45 Be that as it may	22 Japanese pond carp			
13 Mid-afternoon hour	47 Radiant	24 Towel designation			
14 Powell co-star	49 Skip a sound	26 Shun			
15 Old market-place	52 "Platoon" locale	28 Chump			
16 Decelerating	53 Bill's partner	30 Ancient boy king			
18 Defeats	54 Blanket carrier in comics	32 Circulating			
20 Paper quantity	55 Sailor's assent	33 Rowboat need			
21 Schuss	56 Conclusion	34 Reuben holder			
23 Scratch	57 Trade-mark pictures	36 Ra, e.g.			
		38 — Carta			
		39 Dentist's task			

Solution time: 25 mins.

ROAR	KEY	ABED
OGRE	AGE	NAVE
BLEED	NOW	GLIB
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GETALOXAN	POKY	
EMU	DAY	
SHRUGS	ASTRAL	
TALL	OWL	MORO
ALOE	LOO	OPUS
BLOT	ONO	NETS

## CRYPTOQUIP

K U H U L Z B O S G V P K S B V J  
K M H Y C M K M S E U S N S N H X X L G C  
K M S P H J O S K L P J P H Y G K S N.  
X Y K L K U V J H G Z E V N H Y C S.

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: IF A PERSON TELLS MANY FIBS AS HE IS DRIFTING OFF TO SLEEP, ONE MIGHT SAY HE'S LYING IN BED.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: K equals T