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**3 DAYS TO GO**

**SOUTH AFRICA 2010 FIFA WORLD CUP**



Argentina coach Diego Maradona (R) knows it well that the glory of his side in this year's World Cup will depend heavily on his star striker Lionel Messi, who is dribbling with the ball during a practice session at the Pretoria University High Performance Centre on Sunday.

## Argentina fully fit

REUTERS, Pretoria



Injury-free Argentina are in better shape than Nigeria ahead of the teams' World Cup Group B opener on Saturday, central defender Martin Demichelis said.

"We are having the good fortune that other teams are not," Demichelis told a news conference at Argentina's base in the University of Pretoria sports complex.

"I'm confident that in the remaining days we'll be able to get there in very good shape," he said of the match at Ellis Park in Johannesburg.

The build-up to the tournament that kicks off on Friday has been hit by a spate of injuries to leading players including Nigeria midfielder John Obi Mikel.

"Some teams have played too many friendlies. Luckily Diego Maradona's squad practiced in front of a crowd of about 3,000 Argentine and local fans on Sunday.

"We've had no injuries and that gives the coaching staff the confidence to demand the maximum from us," he added after Diego Maradona's squad practiced in front of a crowd of about 3,000 Argentine and local fans on Sunday.

"I'm confident that in the remaining days we'll be able to get there in very good shape," he said of the match at Ellis Park in Johannesburg.

The crowd allowed in to watch, including groups from local schools, learnt favourite chants from Argentina fans while waiting for the practice to start.

They then gave the squad and particularly Lionel Messi and Maradona a rapturous welcome when they came out onto the pitch.

Demichelis said such attention on Maradona from fans and

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## LOCAL SNIPPETS

SPORTS REPORTER

Nine players advanced in the men's singles of the Citycell 30th National Badminton Championship beating respective rivals at the newly-built Wooden Floor Gymnasium yesterday.

The winners are Rais, Pesta, Enam, Hannan, Zahid Mian, Osmani, Enayet, Javed and Muktar.

In the men's doubles events, the Nuru Hossain-Luku Khan pair, the Enamul-Jamil pair and the Mamun-Liton pair defeated their respective rivals to move into the quarterfinals.

Elna moved into the semi-finals of the women's singles with a 2-1 and 21-4 win over Bristi.

### INT'L CHESS

FM Aminul Islam took a solo lead in the Six Seasons International Chess Tournament at the end of seventh round at NSC Tower Auditorium yesterday.

Aminul beat WFM Zakia Sultana to secure 5.5 points from seven games while Russian Minina Veronika was in the second position with five points as she beat Enkhtuul Altanulzii of Mongolia.

FM Mohammed Abdul Malek was in the third position with 4.5 points as he drew against Chandrasekhar in yesterday's round and lost to Shamima Akter Liza in the sixth round board.

Liza also beat FM Syed Mahfuzur Rahman Emon in the seventh round and Indian Manodip Dhar drew with Minhaz Uddin Sagar.

### RCC'SWC PLAN

Our Rajshahi Correspondent reports, the city dwellers will be able to enjoy the FIFA World Cup matches on giant screens as the Rajshahi City Corporation

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## Drogba joins mates

AGENCIES, Geneva



Ivory Coast striker Didier Drogba rejoined his teammates at their training camp in the Swiss Alps on Monday following surgery on his broken forearm, a team spokesman said.

No decision has yet been taken on the African footballer-of-the-year's fitness for the World Cup though, according to spokesman Ouattara Hegaud.

Doctors operated on the fracture at a hospital in the Swiss capital Bern on Saturday, after the Chelsea player was hurt during the Ivorians' 2-0 win over Japan in a friendly the day before.

The Chelsea star rejoined the group in the early afternoon ahead of an evening friendly match against a Swiss



DIDIER DROGBA

second division side in the Swiss city of Lausanne, Hegaud said, with Drogba set to watch from the sidelines.

The Ivorian squad departs for South Africa on Wednesday. They conclude their preparations in Switzerland with a friendly against Lausanne Sports in Nyon on Tuesday.

The Ivorian Football Federation earlier said that the first results of the operation had been "extremely encouraging" and that there were high hopes that he would recover swiftly.

Drogba hopes to get back to fitness within ten days to enable him to play in Ivory Coast's Group G opener with Portugal on June 15 in Port Elizabeth.

Under FIFA rules, a replacement can be drafted in until the day before a team's first game.

Ivory Coast will play in Group G, where they will also

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## Siddons hopeful



AFP, London

Bangladesh coach Jamie Siddons insists his side can one day develop into a unit capable of challenging the world's top sides despite their spiriting defeat against England in the second Test at Old Trafford.

The Tigers suffered a 2-0 series defeat after being dismissed for 123 to surrender the second Test in Manchester by an innings and 80 runs.

Bangladesh lost all 10 of their wickets inside a session twice in the match and their Test record now reads 59 defeats in 68 matches.

However, Australian Siddons believes those two collapses shouldn't detract from the improvements made by his team, especially the free-flowing play of Tamim Iqbal, who hit cen-

trury in the first innings.

"Whatever they say we've heard it before, no doubt about that," Siddons said.

"When conditions are good and not doing too much we are competitive with any team in the world and can take them to five days. But we haven't got enough match-winners to win the games yet.

"We've got a couple of players who are standing up but others aren't and we need consistency.

"I definitely want to carry on. I'd love to go back and do their academy and make sure the next group of players aren't getting smacked around like this group.

"I've had two years of developing cricketers I didn't think were ready and now I've got three or four and a couple getting closer."

Bangladesh now traveling to Sri Lanka for the Asia Cup tournament before returning to

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## WC on BTV

SPORTS REPORTER

The planet's biggest sporting extravaganza, the FIFA World Cup 2010 is around the corner. The month-long tourney starts with the game between hosts South Africa and Mexico at the Soccer City Stadium of Johannesburg on June 11 while the final will be held on July 11 at the same venue.

The 64 matches of the tournament will be held at three different times -- 5:30pm, 8:00pm and 12:30am Bangladesh time. Though Bangladesh are mere spectators, enthusiasm surrounding the event is at its peak as always. To cater to the demand of the viewers state-run Bangladesh Television, the only terrestrial TV channel, will provide live coverage of 25 of the matches.

Twelve matches of the first round including the opening game will be telecast live while all but three matches from the Round of 16 onwards will also be broadcast live. Due to some rights-related issues the BTV won't be able to show two quarterfinals and the third place play-off.

However, all three group matches of Brazil and Argentina, the

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## NATIONS CUP FINALS Tangail, Khulna book South Africa ticket

SPORTS REPORTER

Tangail emerged the Bangladesh champions to qualify for the finals of the Danone Nations Cup in South Africa as they along with last year's champions Khulna will represent the country in the finals to be held in Johannesburg in September-October this year.

The kids from Tangail thrashed Jhalakathi 3-0 in the final of the Grameen-Danone Nations Cup at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday, thanks to a brace from forward Shuvo Khan. Captain Biswanath Ghosh struck the other for the champions, who remained unbeaten on way to the title in their eight matches in the tournament.

Last year, the organisers of Danone Nations Cup postponed its scheduled 40-team

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## ASIA CUP Tigers may name team tomorrow



SPORTS REPORTER

The national cricket selectors are likely to announce the 15-member team tomorrow for the coming Asia Cup that will start from June 15 in Sri Lanka.

The Tigers are scheduled to return home on June 10 after a disappointing Twenty20 World Cup in West Indies which was followed by a frustrating Test series in England. They will leave for Colombo on June 12 for the regional championship which will start with the match between Sri Lanka and Pakistan on June 15.

"The team is returning home as per earlier schedule because early tickets could not be arranged for them after the second Test finished on the third day. The team think-tank talked about their failure in the second Test and tried to find out the problems. The main prob-

lem was that the players failed to adjust to the changed condition on the day," told Jalal Yunus, head of delegation, over telephone last night.

Bangladesh made a meek surrender inside three days in the second Test at Old Trafford after an impressive performance in the first Test at Lord's. Despite the early finish there was hardly any chance for the Shakib Al Hasan's men to return home early because the team management could not arrange tickets for next available flight.

"We will announce the team day after tomorrow [Wednesday]. There would be some changes in the one-day squad but there is no chance to see any fresh face this time," said chief selector Rafiqul Alam yesterday.

Mashrafe Bin Mortaza, Nazmul Hossain, Syed Rassel, Sohrawardi Shuvo, Nazimuddin and Rokibul Hasan, the right-hander who was available for selection after the three-month ban was lifted, has been practising for the

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**WORLD CUP POLL**  
Who do you think is the best player in the world?

Messi	57.9%
Kaka	20.4%
C Ronaldo	17.1%
Rooney	3.9%
Others	0.7%

**TOTAL VOTES: 152**

**TODAY'S POLL**  
Who do you think will be the top scorer in South Africa 2010?

Visit the sports page of www.thedailystar.net to cast your vote

## Beware of vuvuzela!

REUTERS, Johannesburg



South Africa's vuvuzela, the trumpet that will be a fixture at World Cup matches, is the loudest of all fan instruments and can cause permanent hearing loss, a global hearing foundation said on Monday.

Soccer governing body FIFA has okayed the plastic trumpet for the tournament, which starts on Friday, after organisers did tests at a match at Johannesburg's 95,000-seater Soccer City due to worries the din could drown out emergency announcements. While normally reserved for local games, the vuvuzela can now also be heard at warm-up matches and practice sessions ahead of the tournament, even those not involving South Africa's Bafana Bafana.

The Hear the World Foundation -- an initiative formed by Swiss hearing products group Phonak to raise awareness about hearing loss -- said tests showed it produced a dangerously loud sound, far out-blazing a chainsaw.

The tests, conducted late last month in a sound-proof studio, found the vuvuzela emitted 127 decibels, more than the air horn -- 123.5 decibels -- and the Brazil's samba drums.

A referee's whistle was fourth while the cowbell, a favourite in Switzerland and Austria,

trailed at 114.9 decibels.

"To put it in perspective, when a sound is increased by ten decibels our ears perceive it as being twice as loud, so we would consider the vuvuzela to be more than double the volume of the cowbell," audiologist Robert Beiny said in a statement.

Hear the World said extended exposure to 85 decibels risked permanent hearing loss and urged fans to use protection, such as ear plugs and ear muffs.

The vuvuzela can be heard across South Africa as football fever grows ahead of the June 11-July 11 tournament, from airports to shopping centres, but at stadiums tens of thousands of people will blow the trumpet, such like constant car hooters in a traffic jam.

Some foreign players complained at last year's Confederation Cup about the din, and Thailand manager Bryan Robson that he was unable to communicate with his players during a friendly against South Africa.

FIFA president Sepp Blatter has defended it, though, saying it as much a part of local soccer as bongo drums and chanting in other countries.

South Africa coach Carlos Alberto Parriera wants even more noise to help inspire the world's lowly 83rd-ranked Bafana Bafana through its tough Group A matches against

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WE DON'T HAVE ANY PROBLEM WITH IT: A tiny tot plays with his vuvuzela, a traditional South African trumpet that is set to take the centre stage during the World Cup, near Paraguay's base camp in Balgowan yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP