

## Maradona turns 50 today

Former Bangladesh football star Sabbir will cut the cake to mark Argentine legend Diego Maradona's 50th birthday at the Dhaka reporters' unity today. Fans of Maradona are free to attend the celebration. Meanwhile, Diego Maradona has revealed his desire to manage in the English Premier League. He told Sky Sports News: "Yes, I would like to manage in the Premier League. "It has very good teams, an exceptional level and great players. "The only problem is all the teams I like in England have good coaches. "If any important job comes along I will accept it."

- AGENCIES



PHOTO: STAR

Happy Abahani players go through some warm-up routines yesterday at their club ground in Dhanmondi Club ahead of their Federation Cup final against Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club today.

## Abahani, Sk Jamal fight it out today

SPORTS REPORTER

Three-time Bangladesh League champions Abahani will be looking to break a nine-year jinx when they take on star-studded Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club in the final of the Grameenphone Federation Cup at Bishreshtha Mostafa Kamal Stadium in Kamalapur today.

Abahani, who have already achieved the unique feat of reaching the Federation Cup final for record a 15th time, have remained title-less since their seventh and last Federation Cup triumph in 2000. Even though they have been in the final of the last two editions, both times the Sky Blues were beaten by arch-rivals Mohammedan Sporting Club.

This season's first final will not be between familiar foes Abahani and arch-rivals ten-time winners Mohammedan, who were eliminated from the group stage. This time it will be a derby between two brothers. The Sky Blues had Sheikh Kamal

as one of their founders while the Dhanmondi Club has been recently named after the younger brother Sheikh Jamal.

The absence of bitter rivals may give Abahani an edge in the final against Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club, who have 16 national players in their ranks but Abahani manager Satyajit Das Rupu believes the final will be a close affair.

"The players may not suffer from nerves for the absence of Mohammedan but I think the opponents that we are getting are strong enough. But in the end the best performers on the field will come out successful tomorrow (Saturday)," said Rupu. "However, the team spirit will be the key factor as all our players have been trying to give their best in every game."

Abahani had faced Sheikh Jamal in the group match where their Ghanaian striker Twum Prank converted a penalty in the second half to earn a point for the Sky Blues.

"So far the boys have been playing good football although there has been a lack of speed from the players," said Abahani's Iranian coach Ali Akbar.

Despite the poor form of Ghanaian

striking duo Prank and Awudu Ibrahim, who have so far scored only two goals in seven matches including in Federation Cup and Bordoloi Trophy in India, Abahani captain Pranotosh is expecting something special from them in today's final.

"Even though Awudu has not been up to the mark in this tournament, he remains a tested player. I believe he will come up with his best in the final and so will Prank," said Pranotosh, who hasn't still had the taste of the Federation Cup triumph since joining the club in 2001.

Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club too have a scoring problem with national striking duo Enamul Haque and Zahid Hasan Emily looking forlorn in most of the matches. Sheikh Jamal's Serbian coach Zoran Kraljevic said the players should put their full concentration on the game.

"I want full concentration from the boys in the final and if they can assure that, our job will become easy," said Kraljevic, who rates his opponents highly due of their hat-trick of titles in the professional league.

"Both sides have a 50-50 chance in the

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## Zim, Reebok strike \$1m contract

AFP, Harare

Zimbabwe Cricket has signed a one-million-dollar sponsorship deal with Reebok to supply kit for the national team over the next three years, an official said on Friday.

"We have reached an agreement with Reebok to sponsor our national team and domestic league for three years," Zimbabwe Cricket managing director Ozias Bvute told AFP. "The agreement is worth nearly 400,000 US dollars annually."

Bvute said full details of the agreement would be announced later.

The US firm replaces the previous sponsor, local company FaithWear.

The sponsorship deal is part of Zimbabwe Cricket's efforts to revamp its image before the country returns to Test cricket next year.

Since the start of the year, the southern African nation has attracted former star fast bowlers including Australia's Jason Gillespie and South Africa's Allan Donald to undertake domestic coaching assignments.

Chris Harris, New Zealand's former all-rounder, now coaches Zimbabwe's national under-19 team, while batsman Grant Flower -- younger brother of England coach Andy -- has adopted a player-coach role with the national team.

## Lanka close to finalising WC squad

AFP, Perth

Vice-captain Mahela Jayawardene said Friday Sri Lanka's squad was close to what will be fielded in next year's World Cup.

The Sri Lankans will use Sunday's Twenty20 clash at the WACA Ground here as their final tour match preparation for a three-match one-day international series against the top-ranked Australians.

Jayawardene said Sri Lanka would use the three one-dayers, starting in Melbourne next Wednesday, to further develop the squad ahead of next February's World Cup on the sub-continent.

"There's a lot for us to gain in this series in trying a few different combinations and seeing what suits us, Jayawardene told reporters.

"I think [the squad we've brought over] is very close [to what we'll use at the World Cup]. "I think there's only two or three positions up for grabs.

"With a few of the younger boys here for us we want to give them a go against a tougher opposition and see how they come up."

Jayawardene said Australia's youthful T20 line-up possessed plenty of match-winners.

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## Div I cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

Favourites Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club outplayed Young Pegasus by 5 wickets in their First Division Cricket League clash at the Dhaka University Ground yesterday.

Batting first, Young Pegasus put on 173 runs before being bowled out in the 44th over. Sheikh Jamal lost only five of their wickets to overhaul the target within 39 overs, thanks to a 71-run knock from Nahidul Islam. Salauddin was unbeaten on 41.

Jahangir Alam slammed an unbeaten hundred (101 not out) as Azad Sporting beat North Bengal Cricket Academy by 7 wickets at the City Club Ground.

In the other matches of the day, Bangladesh Boys thrashed Agrani bank by 123 runs, Dhaka Wanderers outplayed Khelaghar Samaj Kalyan Samity by 87 runs, while Uttara Sporting defeated Gopibagh Friends Association by 9 wickets.

## Siddikur stands tall

Golf

SPORTS REPORTER

Siddikur Rahman was pleased with his effort in the second round of the CIMB Asia-Pacific Classic yesterday. Finishing at five-under-par 137 at the end of the day, Siddikur said his hitting and long putting was better compared to the first day. He remained equal on seventh place with American Heath Slocum and Thailand's Thaworn Wiratchant as he looks forward to the final two days.

In his own words, the last two days at the Mines Resort and Golf Club in Kuala Lumpur has been a massive learning experience for Siddikur. If some proof was necessary, then Adam Scott is good enough to judge this immense talent coming out from golfing backwoods Bangladesh.

He has earned more than 21 million dollars over ten years and has won 17 professional titles. Scott, who is often hyped as a natural successor to Greg Norman in Australian golf, is a former world No 3. He was paired with Siddikur yesterday and he was quite impressed with the new boy. "He's got a really solid game. He's not tall but hits it very straight and that's something I'm very jealous of," said Scott of the world No 300.

"He looks like he's got a good attitude. I'm sure he's got a bright future if he keeps his confidence up."

Siddikur and Scott had a fine battle throughout their stint together, with the youngster leading on the tenth hole. Had it not been for a missed putt that miraculously swung around the edge of the hole, he would have been in a better position. Both missed important short putts at the end of the day but Scott remained

three places below Thailand's Pariya Junhasavasdikul and American Ben Crane, who are leading with six-under-par. Pariya is the same man Siddikur lost to in a championship-deciding playoff in the Mercuries Taiwan Masters earlier this month.

While that would give Siddikur a lot of hope for the next two rounds, Siddikur also noticed the difference between him and the field's best players.

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PHOTO: STAR

Siddikur Rahman tees off as leading Australian golfer Adam Scott looks on during the second round's play of the CIMB Asia-Pacific Classic at the Mines Resort and Golf Club in Kuala Lumpur yesterday.

## Barisal's 3rd in a row

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

Fazle Rabbi hit an unbeaten hundred after Kamrul Islam's five-for as Barisal continued their winning streak with a massive nine-wicket victory over Chittagong in the National Cricket League at the Shaheed Chandu Stadium in Bogra yesterday.

Mahmudullah Riyad also hogged part of the spotlight with a century in Dhaka's two-wicket success against Rajshahi at the Shahid Kamruzzaman Stadium in Rajshahi while in a low-scoring match Khulna posted a six-wicket victory, their first success inspired by Shakib Al Hasan, over Sylhet at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur.

Barisal secured a maximum of six points from three games while Dhaka shared second position along with Rajshahi securing four points each and Chittagong remained on two points. Sylhet predictably have lost all three games.

BARISAL-CHITTAGONG

A 141-run undefeated second wicket partnership between Rabbi and Shahriar Nafees gave Barisal a convincing victory as Barisal reached 222 for one in reply to Chittagong's 218-9.

Rabbi, also a left-hander, stuck eight four and two sixes during his 135-ball 100 while Nafees was not out on 80 with eight fours and two sixes.

Nasiruddin Faruque was the other notable scorer with 35.

Earlier pacer Kamrul claimed five wickets for 64 runs to restrict Chittagong for 218 runs. Gazi Salahuddin and Nafis Iqbal made a good start associating 44 runs in 6.5 overs but they failed to keep the momentum.

The highest 41-run knock came from number seven batsman Mahmudul Hasan.

DHAKA-RAJSHAHI

Riyad capitalised on his last opportunity to bat in domestic cricket ahead of the Zimbabwe series to the maximum. The right-hander scored 116 off 122 balls that contained seven fours and four sixes while former captain

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## Day of Sonia & Sabura

Swimming

SPORTS REPORTER

Six more new national records were broken on the second day of the Walton 24th National Swimming Championships with Sonia Akhter and Sabura Khatun together creating four records at the National Swimming Complex in Mirpur yesterday.

With six records, a total of 13 new national marks were created in two days with Bangladesh Ansar dominating the medals table on the second day too with nine gold, eight silver and two bronze medals. Bangladesh Army stay at second place securing four gold, six silver and two bronze followed by Bangladesh

Navy's four gold, five silver and two bronze.

Sonia was focused on the second day after making three records as the swimmer from Bangladesh Ansar, who made two records in 200m butterfly and 400m individual medley on the first day, crafted records in the women's 100m butterfly, 50m backstroke and 200m individual medley to raise his personal gold tally to five.

Sonia made the day's first record in the women's 100m butterfly with a timing of 1:12.93 seconds to improve her own old mark of 1:13.85 made in 2008 and then she created second record in the 50m backstroke clocking 35.16 seconds to better the old record of 35.56 seconds made by Sabura Khatun in 2007.

Sonia made the third record in the 200m

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PHOTO: STAR

Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club players jog during their training session at the BUET ground yesterday.

## Pakistan out for 203

Cricket

AFP, Abu Dhabi

Lanky South African paceman Lonwabo Tsotsobe carried his Twenty20 form into the 50-over game with a career-best feat to derail Pakistan to 203 in the first day-night international here on Friday.

The 26-year-old from Eastern Province took 4-27 off his ten tight overs as Pakistan lost their last eight wickets for a mere 46 runs after winning the toss and deciding to bat on a flat Abu Dhabi Stadium pitch.

Tsotsobe, who took five wickets in South Africa's 2-0 win in the Twenty20 series which finished here on Wednesday, rocked the Pakistan middle-order with a burst of three wickets off just nine balls during his second four-overs spell.

Tsotsobe's effort backed by disciplined spin bowling by Johan Botha (2-40) put brakes on Pakistan's innings after Mohammad Hafeez (68) and returning Younis Khan (54) put on 114 for the second wicket.

Tsotsobe removed opener Asad Shafiq (19) in the eighth over before Younis -- returning to

the side after being cleared by Pakistan Cricket Board last month following a ban on discipline violation, joined Hafeez in a damage repair act.

Hafeez hit seven boundaries during his 84-ball sixth one-day fifty before cutting Botha straight into the hands of Charl Langeveldt. Four overs later, Younis was trapped leg-before by Botha.

Younis hit two boundaries during his 75-ball knock.

Tsotsobe's triple strike followed as he removed Misbahul Haq (14), Shahid Afridi (one) and Abdul Razzaq (two) to complete Pakistan's slide on a similar pattern of Twenty20 matches in which they were restricted to 119 and 120-9.

Tsotsobe's previous best bowling figures were 4-50 against Australia on his one-day debut at Perth last year.

SCORES IN BRIEF

PAKISTAN: 203 (Shafiq 19, Hafeez 68, Younis 54, Misbah 14; Langeveldt 2-47, Tsotsobe 4-27, Botha 2-40)

SOUTH AFRICA: Graeme Smith (captain), Hashim Amla, AB de Villiers, JP Duminy, Colin Ingram, David Miller, Jacques Kallis, Johan Botha, Morne Morkel, Charl Langveldt, Lonwabo Tsotsobe.

**SPORTS POLL**  
**TODAY'S QUESTION**  
 Do you think the rewards given to the Tigers are over the top?  
 Visit the sports page of www.thedailystar.net to cast vote  
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 www.twitter.com/dssport

**What to WATCH**

**BTV**  
 Federation Cup Final  
 Abahani v Sk Jamal Dhanmondi Club  
 Live from 5:00pm

**ESPN**  
 English Premiership  
 Arsenal v West Ham  
 Live from 7:55pm

Man United v Tottenham  
 Live from 10:25pm

**STAR Sports**  
 English Premiership  
 Blackburn v Chelsea  
 Live from 7:55pm

**TEN Action**  
 Primera Liga  
 Valencia v Zaragoza  
 Live from 10:00pm

Hercules v Real Madrid  
 Live from 12:00am (Sunday)

Barcelona v Sevilla  
 Live from 2:00am (Sunday)

**DAY'S EVENT**

**GP Federation Cup**  
 Abahani v Sk Jamal Dhanmondi Club  
 Time: 5:00pm  
 Venue: Kamalapur Stadium