

# SPORT

DHAKA THURSDAY DECEMBER 9, 2010, E-MAIL: sports@thedailystar.net

## Most of Sampras's trophies stolen

Tennis superstar Pete Sampras says most of his trophies and other memorabilia were stolen from a West Los Angeles public storage facility. The Los Angeles Times reported Tuesday that Sampras still has 13 of his 14 Grand Slam trophies. But thieves took most of the hardware from his 64 tour title wins, two Davis Cups, an Olympic ring and six trophies for finishing world No. 1 in the year-end rankings from 1993 to 1998. The theft happened three weeks ago. Sampras says he's getting the word out in hopes somebody offers a lead. He says the loss "is like having the history of my tennis life taken away."



**PASS THE FIRST TEST:** The new giant screen, installed at the Zohur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium in Chittagong for the World Cup, was tested on Wednesday. It will have further chance for test as it will be used in the fourth one-dayer between Bangladesh and Zimbabwe on Friday.

## Tickets on sale from Jan 1 LOC yet to iron out many details

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) officially announced yesterday that tickets for next year's ICC World Cup in Bangladesh will go on sale from January 1, 2011 at designated outlets across the country. The decision was taken during a Local Organising Committee (LOC) meeting on Tuesday night but the board has yet to finalize the specific details of where and how, despite taking more than a month to fix a final date. With the showcase event knocking at the door, the fans are increasingly curious about tickets. The common query is not just about when the tickets will go on sale, but how many tickets will be available for general sale, where they will be available from and how the tickets can be purchased. So far, frustratingly for many, the

BCB has provided concrete answers to only one of those queries. "We have decided only on the selling date but I can assure you that everything will be finalized before January 1," said BCB's chief executive officer Manzur Ahmed. It was however learned that some BCB officials are unhappy with the delay in disseminating information about tickets.

**HIGHLIGHTS**

- Match tickets on sale from January 1, 2011
- Tickets to be sold in all 64 districts
- Each individual can purchase only 4 tickets
- No confirmation on where, how many and how tickets will be sold
- Opening ceremony tickets on sale from January 1, 2011
- No confirmation on how many tickets available for opening ceremony

Many expressed their surprise that the local organizing committee is yet to finalize the details for such a burning issue. "Surprisingly the LOC itself has no idea about the details and they called a meeting without any detailed plan. We can't understand why they are dilly-dallying when the fans are desperately looking for detailed information," a BCB official said on condition of anonymity. "We are yet to decide about the details but hopefully we can fix everything within the next two or three days. What I can say is that tickets will be available at an ICC sponsor outlet or bank in all 64 districts. But there might be up to five or six outlets or banks assigned to sell tickets in Dhaka," said Ali Ahsan Babu, host tournament director. He also added that the tickets for the opening ceremony will go on sale on the same day. Babu however could not confirm

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## Shafiul increases pace

PRANABESH CHAKRABORTY, Chittagong

With a 2-1 scoreline in favour of the hosts in the five-match Micromax ODI Cup, both Bangladesh and Zimbabwe arrived in the port city of Chittagong to decide who takes the series in the last two ODIs. The fourth match will be held on Friday while the fifth one will be held on Sunday, both at the Zohur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium. Both teams had their first practice sessions in the stadium yesterday where they already met before on couple of occasions, but they are yet to know what the nature of the wicket will be for the last two matches. Bangladesh's young pace bowler Shafiul Islam tried to predict the nature of the wicket from fresh experience of practising on the ground a few days ago.

"The ground is familiar to us since we practised here a few days ago. The wicket had some turn at that time. We will know after today's practice how the pitch may behave and what the team composition can be." The 21-year-old, who is fast cementing his place in the side as the premier strike bowler in the pace bowling department, was relieved that the pacers bowled well in the last match in Dhaka: "Pace bowlers got back their rhythm and form which is good for the side and the pacers themselves. Especially [Mashrafe] Mortaza's getting back rhythm in the third ODI was encouraging for all of us. "In the first two ODIs, our fast bowlers did not bowl the line and length. We [the pacers] had been facing some problems, which we have succeeded in overcoming with advice from our coach," added the Bogra boy.

Shafiul himself was a star in the third match taking four wickets for 43 runs on what was a very spin-friendly wicket. Having taken his only wicket in the first two matches, Shafiul bounced back and credited bowling coach Ian Pont for this: "I am working on my bowling speed and trying control in speed and swing, as per directions from the coach. My highest bowling speed was 143 km per hour as far as I know," said Shafiul with an air of promise. The Zohur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium has historically produced low and slow wickets. Zimbabwe's veteran left-arm spinner Ray Price pointed out the fact: "The wicket seems low and slow. And there is huge grass in the wicket. The outfield is different too from that of Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium. So it is difficult to predict how the wicket will behave." One man who has stood out from his

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## Bangladesh target last four

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh women's football team left Dhaka for Cox's Bazar yesterday morning to take part in the first ever SAFF Women's Football Championship with a hope of making it to the semifinals. Bangladesh have been placed in Group A along with favourites India, Sri Lanka and Bhutan while Group B consists of Nepal, Pakistan, Maldives and Afghanistan. Maldives were the second side to arrive in Chittagong yesterday after Bhutan, who came on Sunday and lost a warm-up match against

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## ICC CRICKET WORLD CUP HISTORY

### Lankans conquer the world

The 1996 World Cup was the second to be hosted in the sub-continent, with Sri Lanka, India and Pakistan the co-hosts. The big change to the format was that there were 12 teams involved. Nine were Test nations -- Zimbabwe had been awarded Test status in mid-'92 -- and three associate members (Holland, Kenya, U.A.E) qualified through a separate tournament. There were six teams in each group with each team playing all its group members once and the top four progressing to the quarterfinals; the first time there would be an eight-team knockout round in a cricket World Cup. It was also the first World Cup to have third-umpire referrals for run-out appeals. **Champions: Sri Lanka** If India's triumph in '83 was an upset, this was a

fairytale. On, the field everything went right from the start for the second-youngest Test nation. They had only just begun challenging the big boys on a consistent basis, having impressed on their tour of Australia in late '95 and early '96, where they made the final of a tri-series involving Australia and West Indies. Still, no one seriously thought them a genuine contender when the Cup started. Over the next month, they proved without doubt that they were the best team on view. They were the first team since the West Indies in the '70s to go through a World Cup undefeated. The churlish might point to West Indies and Australia refusing to travel to Sri Lanka citing political unrest in the country and thereby forfeiting their matches against the co-hosts.

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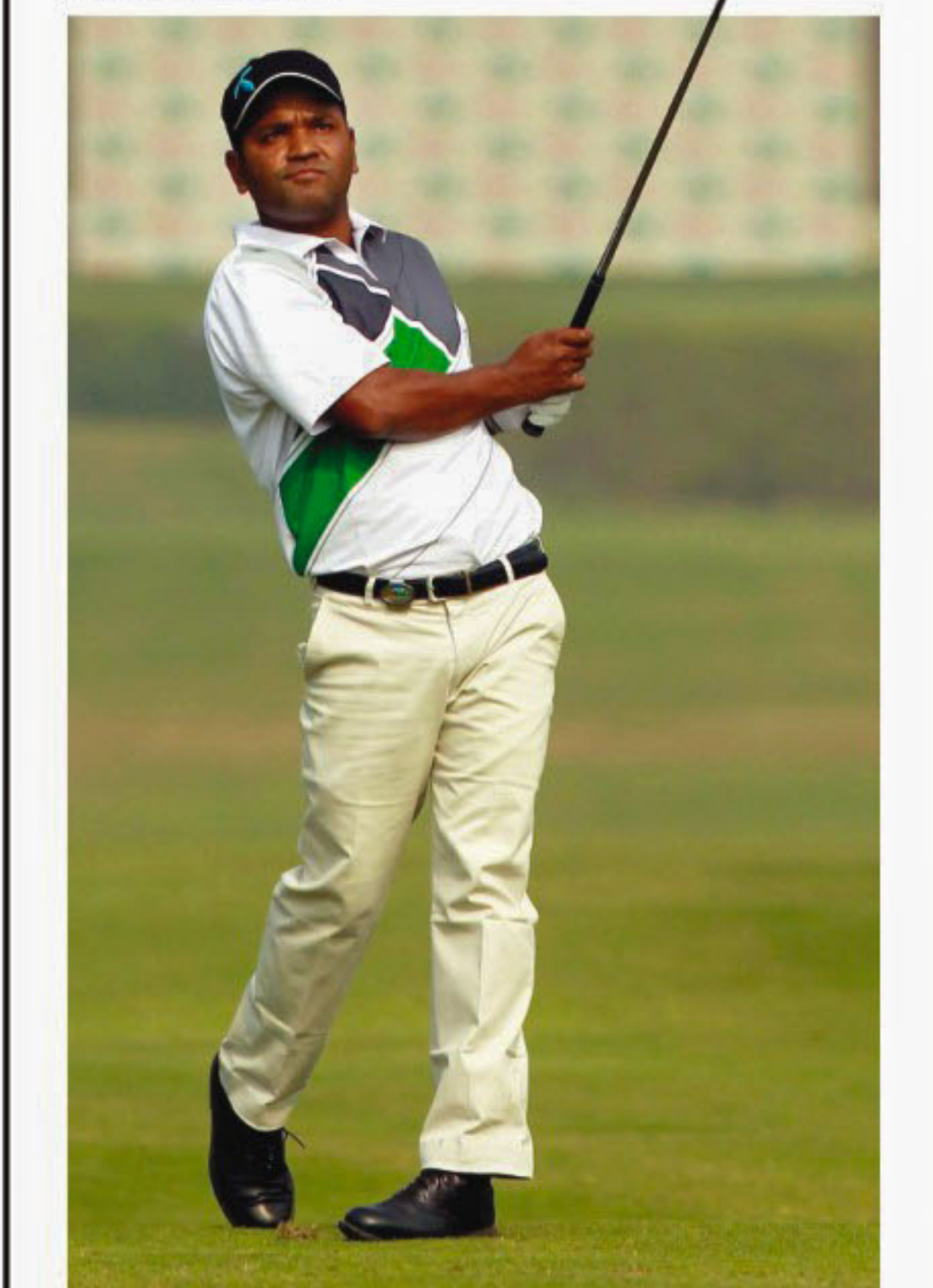
**SPORTS POLL WEEKLY QUESTION**  
Do you think Bangladesh will win the ongoing series against Zimbabwe?  
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Sri Lanka v West Indies  
First ODI (D/N)  
Live from 3:00pm

## CAMBODIAN OPEN BEGINS TODAY

### Siddikur takes aim

AFP, Siem Reap  
Bangladeshi history-maker Siddikur Rahman hopes to live up to the tag as an inspirational role model for his countrymen when he tees off at the Johnnie Walker Cambodian Open today. Since graduating from the Asian Tour Qualifying School in 2009, the 26-year-old has ignited the dreams of many in the country who yearn to find similar success on the Asian Tour. Siddikur became the first man from Bangladesh to win a title on the Asian Tour at the Brunei Open in August. After his historic win in Brunei, Siddikur narrowly missed out on his second Asian Tour title in Taiwan after losing in a playoff to Thailand's Pariya Junhasavasdikul in October. But he continued to show his potential by outperforming some of the best players in the world in high-profile events in Malaysia, Singapore and Hong Kong in the following months. He had another noteworthy tied-fifth finish in India last week and will start the week in Cambodia as one of the hot favourites to win the 300,000-dollar event that is now into its fourth edition.



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**THE CHASE:** Zimbabwe coach Heath Streak playing with a RAB dog at the Zohur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium in Chittagong during practice on Wednesday where the Zimbabweans will chase the series over the final two one-dayers.

PHOTO: STAR

## Pioneer League starts

SPORTS REPORTER

The DCC Pioneer Football League was inaugurated yesterday in the presence of participating 80 teams at the Birshreshtha Shaheed Mostafa Kamal Stadium. However, the organizers could not ensure when the matches would get underway. "We have not finalized the fixture yet because the examinations of the players is going on and we will finalize it after discussing the matter with all concerned," said Harun-ur Rashid, chairman of the pioneer league committee. With the financial assistant from Dhaka City Corporation, the pioneer league returned to business after a three-year gap as the DCC promised to continue it for the next 10 years. "The government has allocated Tk 10 lakh for the training of the players to be selected through this league,"

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## England gloat

Cricket

AFP, London

Newspapers in England were overjoyed on Wednesday after their cricketers trounced Australia in the second Ashes Test, saying victory in the series was within touching distance. "Australia simply cracked," gloated one headline, while others declared "Aussies on their knees" and "England are masters now." Commentators urged England to take advantage of their emphatic triumph -- they beat Australia by an innings and 71 runs at the Adelaide Oval on Tuesday -- and push ahead to retain the Ashes. "Australia are in turmoil, so go for the jugular," said the Daily Mail. "Don't take a step back. It's England's time now." And the Independent urged: "The Ashes are there for the taking." England's win gave them a 1-0 lead in the series over Australia, and it was the country's first Test victory in Adelaide since 1995. Australia now must win two of the remaining three Tests to overhaul England and win back the Ashes they

lost last year, while England are in line to win an Ashes series in Australia for the first time since 1986-87. England's superb all round performance was praised to the rafters, while commentators did not pull their punches when laying into the Aussies' woeful showing. "England outplayed Australia in just about every department of the game," noted The Times, adding: "It was as complete a performance as I have seen from an England side." The Daily Mail heaped scorn on the Australians, calling them a "laughing stock" who "can't bat, can't field, can't bowl." Others saw the victory as a watershed which could herald a fundamental shift in world cricket, with Australia's dominance of the game under threat from a resurgent England. "Australia as a great cricketing power are unravelling before our eyes," said the Daily Mail. But for many England fans, noted some commentators, it was just a relief their team did not screw it up. "England supporters steeped in history wondered gloomily, as they walked to the ground on the final day, exactly how England would contrive to mess it up from here," said The Times.

## Aussies lament

Cricket

AFP, Sydney

Australian newspapers Wednesday said the country's cricket team was in a parlous state and the coveted Ashes series all but lost after Ricky Ponting's men were smashed by England in Adelaide. Australia were comprehensively outplayed in the second Test -- losing by an innings and 71 runs Tuesday -- and commentators said they saw little prospect of a reinvention that would turn their fortunes around. "The Ashes are all but gone," Malcolm Conn wrote in The Australian. "So too, it appears, are the last vestiges of Australia as a Test force after England's imposing second Test victory in Adelaide." The post-mortems were damning, admitting that Australia was unlikely to win the remaining three Tests in the series given its beaten, broken and injury-hit team. "The Ashes? Forget it -- this side would be lucky to beat Bangladesh," opined a headline in The Sydney Morning Herald, while the Sydney

tabloid Daily Telegraph ran with: "Get used to it" above a photo of a joyous England team. "Australian cricket has not been in such a parlous state for two decades," said the Daily Telegraph, which in a column described the Adelaide Test as a "massacre". Four years ago an Australia squad boasting now retired greats Shane Warne, Glenn McGrath and Adam Gilchrist beat England 5-0, and commentators said selectors must make changes to the team now ranked fifth in the world -- and dropping -- if is to return to that success. "However, the cupboard appears all but bare, with a constant rotation of fast bowlers and spinners bringing little joy, and promising young batsmen failing to put their hand up consistently at state level," wrote Conn. England's thumping win at Adelaide -- in which Australia scored only 245 in their first innings and then looked on as England replied with a huge 620 for five declared -- formalised England's custody of the Ashes, Greg Baum said in The Age. Even before Australia's batting order collapsed on Tuesday in their second

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