

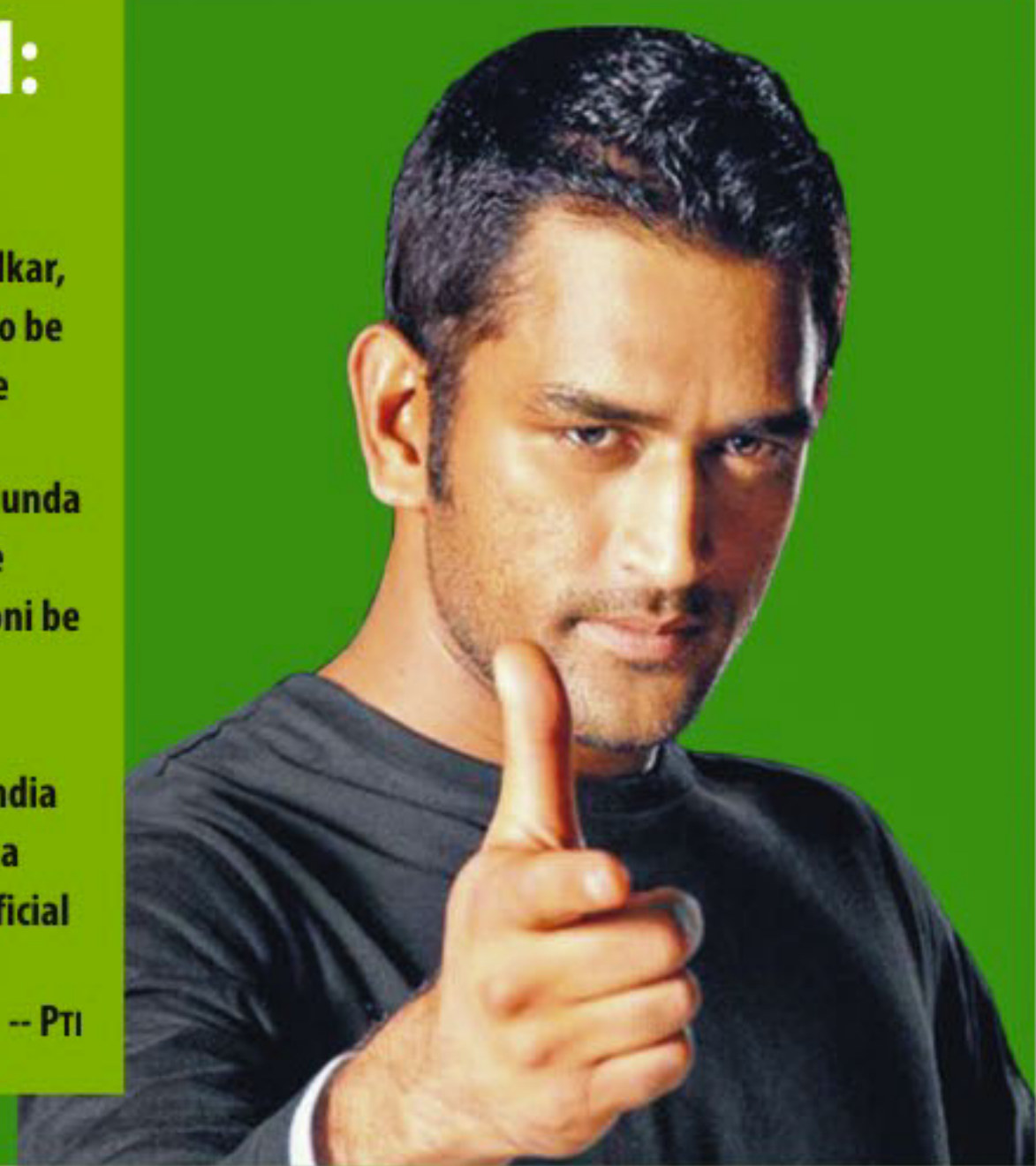
# Star SPORT

DHAKA FRIDAY JUNE 24, 2011, E-MAIL: sports@thedailystar.net

## Make MS Lt Col: Jharkhand CM

After Kapil Dev and Sachin Tendulkar, Mahendra Singh Dhoni is in line to be conferred an honorary rank in the defence forces. Jharkhand Chief Minister Arjun Munda on Thursday wrote to the defence ministry recommending that Dhoni be awarded the honorary rank of Lt Colonel for his stupendous performance and leading Team India to lift the World Cup trophy after a gap of 28 years, a government official told PTI here on Thursday.

-- PTI



**JUST PRIDE AT STAKE:** The Mohammedan (L) and Abahani (R) teams practise yesterday before they face off in today's Bangladesh League match. The match will lack the usual intensity of emotion that these titans of domestic football incite, because after a long time both are out of the title race.

PHOTOS: STAR

## Battle for pride

SPORTS REPORTER

With the title of the professional football league already won by Sheikh Jamal, the two most popular outfits Abahani and Mohammedan square off in the Bangladesh League fixture today with not much more than pride and their places in the league tables at stake.

Three-time Bangladesh League champions Abahani were derailed from their fourth consecutive title hunt at the start of the second leg. Even their second-place aspirations were shattered when they dropped points against Feni Soccer Club and lost to Sheikh Russel in their previous two matches. The Sky Blues are in fourth position with 40 points from 20 matches.

On the other hand, a depleted Mohammedan were always far behind in the race and they fought for fifth place in the 12-team table, though the Black and Whites with a club-record eight defeats in the league, are currently in sixth position with 29 points from 21 matches. A win against Abahani can help them topple fifth-placed Brothers Union.

Although there is less attention than usual surrounding the game, there is still a point to prove as the bitter rivals face off for the eighth time in the professional league.

In the previous seven meetings, Abahani won twice while Mohammedan won once and the rest were drawn.

"It is not a battle of becoming champions or runners-up but it has a different significance to us and we will be looking for a repeat of our first-leg 1-0 win against them," said Abahani

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## Serena sweats, Ana sails

AFP, London



Defending champion Serena Williams needed another three-setter to reach the Wimbledon third round on Thursday while former number one Ana Ivanovic barely

broke sweat in her last 64 encounter.

Four-time champion Williams came back from a set down to defeat Romanian teenager Simona Halep 3-6, 6-2, 6-1.

But the 29-year-old still looked ring-rusty, playing just her fourth match since returning from an 11-month lay-off where she recovered from a foot injury as well as life-threatening blood clots on her lungs.

"I'm hoping to get better as the event goes on," said seventh seed Williams, who had broken down in tears after her first round win against Aravane Rezaï.

"It was really windy out there in the first set. I was tight and I told myself to relax more. I need to play longer matches and get more practice."

The American had been overshadowed by world number 58 Halep in the first set, the Romanian 19-year-old showing off the freedom of movement afforded her by a decision to undergo breast reduction surgery two years ago.

Williams's reward for her victory is a last

32 clash against either Russia's Maria Kirilenko or Thai veteran Tamarine Tanasugarn.

Serbian 18th seed Ana Ivanovic, the 2008 French Open champion and who made the semi-finals at Wimbledon in 2007, eased past Greek world number 121 Eleni Daniilidou 6-3, 6-0.

The 23-year-old next faces either Poland's Agnieszka Radwanska or Petra Cetkovska of the Czech Republic for a place in the last 16.

"I think lots of players tend to peak for this event. It's one of the biggest tournaments in the world," said Ivanovic, who has only dropped just four games in the first two rounds.

"I'm just very happy to manage to win a few matches. I had a good week in Birmingham, then played well in Eastbourne, it helps and builds up for Wimbledon."

Svetlana Kuznetsova, the Russian 12th seed and a two-time Grand Slam title winner, beat Romania's Alexandra Dulgheru 6-0, 6-2 to set up a meeting with Belgium's Yanina Wickmayer, the 19th seed.

Francesca Schiavone, the sixth seed and 2010 Roland Garros winner, was also an early winner beating Barbora Zahlavova

Strycova of the Czech

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MATCH-FIXING

## Probe report next week

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh League Committee looking into a match-fixing allegation will submit its report to the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) next week.

"We have finished our work today [Thursday] and now need a couple of days to prepare the report and put forward our recommendations and findings to the BFF president," informed Abdus Salam Murshedy, chairman of the professional league committee.

The committee on June 16 launched an investigation into the match-fixing allegation involving Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club and Rahmatganj MFS, and the body quizzed players and officials of both clubs after watching video footages of the match in question.

It was however learnt that the committee would

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## Now comes coach number three



Football

SPORTS REPORTER

The farcical situation regarding the Bangladesh national football coaching job took another turn when the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) announced yesterday that it would be Macedonian Nikola Ilievski, and not his compatriot Gjorgji Jovanovski, who will take charge of the Bangladesh team ahead of their FIFA World Cup pre-qualifiers.

The 56-year old coach is expected to reach Dhaka today to take over the reigns of the side.

On June 14, the Bangladesh Football Federation officially named Jovanovski as the national coach but the former national coach of Macedonia seemed reluctant to take charge ahead of Bangladesh's away game against Pakistan in Lahore on July 3.

At that time, the BFF stated that Jovanovski did not want to travel to Pakistan for the security fears but it was later revealed that the 55-year old coach is one of the candidates for the Macedonian national team role following the termination of Mirsad Jonuz.

After the departure of Croat coach Robert Rubcic over a row about unpaid wages, it seems that the BFF is determined to appoint a coach at any cost to fill the vacuum.

The energetic football officials however never seemed to take initiative to address the problem of the Croat coach. Rather, the same officials showed their activeness to name two coaches in the space of only nine days and the question is how much the new coach

could deliver just five days before Bangladesh's home match on June 29 in Dhaka.

"Yes, we were determined to appoint a

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NIKOLA ILIEVSKI

## Citycell b'ball from today

SPORTS REPORTER

The Citycell Basketball League gets underway today at the Dhanmondi Basketball Gymnasium with 10 teams taking part in the single-league meet.

Holders The Gregorious take on Mohammadpur Boys Club in the opening match of the Premier Division. Rangers and Mohammadpur BC qualified for the premier division after emerging champions and runners-up respectively in the first division league that concluded recently.

Other participating teams are last year's runners-up Dhumketu, Europa Youth, Flame Boys, The Greys, Hornets SC, Eagles and Bakhibazar.

## 18 picked for U-19 camp

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) picked eighteen cricketers for a three-week long preparation camp for the Bangladesh Under-19 team.

The camp will start from Saturday at the GP-BCB National Cricket Academy in Mirpur and the selected cricketers have been asked to report at the academy building at 5pm today.

The selected cricketers are Soumya Sarkar, Aslam Hossain and Anamul Haque (openers), Al Amin, Mosaddek Hossain, Yasir Ali

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Serbian tennis player Ana Ivanovic celebrates winning a hard-fought point over Germany's Eleni Daniilidou during their Wimbledon singles match at the All England Club in London yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

## Robin scrapes thru' Rafael, Andy storm into last 32

AFP, London



Swedish fifth seed Robin Soderling came from two sets down to defeat Australia's Lleyton Hewitt and reach the third round at Wimbledon here

Thursday.

Soderling looked to be heading for an upset defeat after losing the opening two sets before digging out a gutsy 6-7 (5/7), 3-6, 7-5, 6-4, 6-4 victory before an enthralled Centre Court.

Soderling had never won a match after trailing by two sets before but insisted he had stayed cool under pressure as 2002 Wimbledon champion Hewitt appeared poised for an upset.

"You just have to take it one point at a time," Soderling said. "But I felt that if I could raise my game a little bit I would have a chance."

Soderling now faces either Australian youngster Bernard Tomic or Russia's Igor Andreev in the next round.

Novak Djokovic continued his red-hot form with a straight sets victory over South Africa's Kevin Anderson.

The Serbian second seed did not take the match without a fight as Anderson showed plenty of determination but was too good for the world number 36 in a 6-3, 6-4, 6-2 win on Court 1 which took just under two hours.

Despite Anderson's efforts, Djokovic, who has only lost one match all year, outclassed his opponent at both the baseline and the net.

Djokovic faces either Cypriot number 32 seed Marcos Baghdatis or Italy's Andreas Seppi in the third round.

"I served well, I played well, I returned really well. That was the key," Djokovic said.

"Every tennis player is looking for perfection all the time, trying to play the best possible tennis."

"Even though I may be hard on myself sometimes I'm satisfied with my performance."

Twice a semifinalist here, if Djokovic reaches the Wimbledon final or if Spain's Rafael Nadal does not retain the title, the Serb is guaranteed to become the world number one.

Anderson took a while to get his game going, with Djokovic racing into a 5-0 lead.

The South African number one then got it back to 5-3, breaking the Serb, and held off two set points with excellent returns before Djokovic finally sealed the set.

On Wednesday, Rafael Nadal sailed into the last 32, playing under the Centre Court roof for the first time, while Andy Murray waited for the rain to stop before joining his rival in the third round.

Defending champion Nadal eased past Wimbledon debutant Ryan Sweeting of the United States 6-3, 6-2, 6-4.

The world number one, bidding for a third Wimbledon title and 11th career Grand Slam crown, goes on to tackle Luxembourg's Gilles Muller, who beat him here in 2005.

Muller made it through when dangerous Canadian 31st seed Milos Raonic retired after just five games of their second round clash when he fell awkwardly and injured his leg.

Murray, seeded fourth and scheduled to meet Nadal in the last four, was equally untroubled, racing to a 6-3, 6-3, 7-5 win over Germany's Tobias Kamke.

The Scotsman, a semifinalist for the last two years, next takes on Croatian veteran Ivan Ljubicic for a place in the last 16.