

Shantinagar  
Div II hockey  
champs

SPORTS REPORTER

Shantinagar Sporting Club emerged unbeaten champions in the Green Delta Insurance Second Division Hockey League with a 2-1 win over PWD in the last Super League match at the Maulana Basani Hockey Stadium yesterday.

Marzan and Makbul struck one goal each in the first half before Nabib pulled one goal back in the second half. Mumin of Shantinagar was adjudged the best player of the league while Rahim of Dilkusha was the highest scorer in the seven-team league. Shantinagar won all three matches of the Super Four while PWD finished runners-up with two victories.

Additional managing director of sponsor Green Delta NA Chowdhury distributed prizes among the winners while the officials of Bangladesh Hockey Federation were present there.

**Cummins in line for Test call**

ANI, Sydney

Young Australia fast bowler Patrick Cummins, who hasn't played a first-class match in over a year, is expected to be a part of a roster of five fast bowlers for the Test series against the world number one side, South Africa.

According to the Sydney Morning Herald, it is believed selectors want to preserve Cummins for the third and final Test on the bouncy WACA deck, which would allow CA to gradually lift the talented youngster's workload.

Cummins has said he wants to play in at least two Sheffield Shield games before he is given a Test recall, a view echoed by his management, and with Australia considering playing a four-man pace attack at the Gabba.

**Ayub basks**

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the day's play. The batsman, who had earlier reached his hundred with a boundary at the end of the second day, smacked a four to notch his double century.

"I definitely tried to bat on and score more runs, but unfortunately I couldn't continue," said Ayub. With the majority of the national batsmen underperforming so far in the league, Ayub's performance might as well compel the selectors to consider a few new faces in the national squad for the upcoming series against the West Indies next month.

**Crucial**

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first NCL four-day game, could not take the field on the second day (Sunday) as he hurt his head in a head-on collision with teammate Saqlain Sajib. "I feel better than before. There's still a bit of swelling but I'll be fine within a week's time," said the batsman, who was caught behind for 26 in Rajshahi's second innings.

He further stated that the match could have gone their way if Sajib had bowled in the second innings. "He is our best bowler and the pitch assisted the spinners. Had he been there, we could have perhaps bowled them out for cheaper," he added.



PHOTO: AFP FILE

USA cyclist and seven-time Tour de France winner Lance Armstrong was banned for life by the International Cycling Union yesterday.

## Armstrong stripped of Tour de France titles

AFP, Geneva

Disgraced Lance Armstrong's fate was sealed on Monday, as cycling's under-fire world governing body decided to back a life ban for doping and strip him of his record seven Tour de France titles.

The International Cycling Union (UCI) said it supported a decision by the US Anti-Doping Agency (USADA) to erase the Texan's career and his place in the sport's history.

"We will not appeal to the Court of Arbitration for Sport and we will recognise the sanction that USADA has imposed," UCI president Pat McQuaid told a news conference in Geneva.

"The UCI will strip him of his seven Tour de France wins. Lance Armstrong has no place in cycling."

Earlier this month the US body released a devastating dossier on Armstrong, detailing over 202 pages and with more than 1,000 pages of supporting testimony how he was at the heart of the biggest doping scandal in the history of sport.

The revelations, including evidence from 11 of Armstrong's former teammates, plunged a sport which has been working hard to rid itself of its murky doping past into crisis.

McQuaid succeeded Hein Verbruggen as president of world cycling after Armstrong's seventh and final Tour victory in 2005 and is credited with boosting the body's anti-doping programme, notably with the pioneering blood passport programme.

The Irishman was under pressure to answer how Armstrong and his teams managed to dope for so long without being detected. But he rejected calls to quit.

Armstrong's sporting reputation as the cancer survivor who fought back to win cycling's most gruelling and celebrated race has been shattered since the revelations, leading to sponsors leaving him in droves.

There has also been fears of a wider withdrawal of financial backing for the sport after Dutch sponsor Rabobank said it was ending the sponsorship of its pro-

fessional cycling team after a 17-year association.

The sponsor described professional cycling as "sick" to its core and unlikely to recover in the foreseeable future.

The strongly-worded comments went to the heart of claims of failings at the UCI and in particular to McQuaid, who has been criticised for failing to see the extent of doping within the sport.

Verbruggen, who stepped down in 2006 but remains honorary president, ran the UCI during Armstrong's golden era -- a time when USADA's report says Armstrong and team-mates evaded dope tests either by hiding or being tipped off in advance.

The Dutchman has also been accused of protecting Armstrong -- even accepting a donation to cover up a positive dope test.

The cyclist's cancer backstory and Tour triumphs from 1999 to 2005 were seen as key to restoring cycling's tattered image after a string of high-profile doping scandals in the 1990s.

Armstrong's Tour victories are unlikely to be re-awarded, the race's director Christian Prudhomme has said. The void avoids further headaches, given that the majority of riders who finished on the podium have also been implicated in doping.

On the eve of the UCI decision, Armstrong spoke for about 90 seconds to a record 4,300 bikers at the Livestrong Challenge charity benefit, a 100-mile (160-kilometre) race in his hometown of Austin, Texas.

"I've been better, but I've also been worse," Armstrong told the riders. "Obviously it has been an interesting and difficult couple of weeks."

Since the USADA report, sponsors have fled Armstrong and he was forced to resign as chairman of the Livestrong cancer-fighting charity he founded in 1997 over concerns his tarnished reputation could hurt the cause.

Armstrong, who overcame testicular cancer that had spread to his brain and lungs to achieve cycling stardom, inspired more than \$500 million in donations to Livestrong and pushed other cancer survivors to battle the condition.

## Toasting their maiden

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to bring Sheikh Russel back in to the game.

"I am getting a lot of help from my teammates, coach and management and it has helped me to regain my form and I will want to keep this momentum going in the upcoming professional football league," said Emily.

"I am very happy because the team won the trophy," said a barely legible Sony. "It was the third man-of-the-match trophy in my footballing career, of which one was in Boca Juniors."

Sony was named the best player of the final.

"We did not play football to lose the game and we were confident of winning the game. We went out to create history and we wrote it," said Mamunul Islam adding that all of the players were committed to give Sheikh Russel their first silverware from the beginning of the season.

Mamunul Islam was adjudged man of the tournament. About his personal performance in the final, Mamunul said that he always tried his best to give hundred percent in each match regardless of the opposition.

Sheikh Russel coach Maruf Haque dedicated the trophy to the memory of the younger son of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, Sheikh Russel.

While the Sheikh Russel players were celebrating their triumph by throwing their jerseys to the galleries, the players of Sheikh Jamal were dejected and teary-eyed.

Maruf's counterpart Joseph Afifi however didn't want to blame his defenders to keep Emily unmarked during the equaliser, rather he said that it was a defeat the entire team had to bear.

"They played nice football in the last five minutes and I would love to congratulate them," said Afifi, adding anything can happen in football.

## Azarenka eyes No. 1 spot

AP, Istanbul

Serena Williams returns to the WTA Championships with the Wimbledon and US Open titles, plus the Olympic gold medal, yet with no chance of finishing the year as the No. 1 in the world.

Williams has not played since beating top-ranked Victoria Azarenka in the US Open final in September and her sparse schedule is one of the reasons she won't have a chance of overtaking the Belarusian despite dominating the major events in the second half of the year.

Azarenka needs only two wins in the elite, eight-player WTA Championships in Istanbul to end 2012 as No. 1.

Williams and Azarenka have been drawn into the same round-robin group. Play starts Tuesday.

## Four out of four for Sixers

INTERNET, Durban



Sydney Sixers, without Watson for the first time, weren't as powerful with the bat, but their bowling and fielding skills were sharp enough to win their fourth consecutive game comprehensively, and send the defending champions Mumbai Indians home without a victory.

Sydney's batsmen weren't able to impose themselves on a pitch with bounce that was steep and spongy. Only three of the top seven batsmen made it out of single digits for Sydney: Michael Lumb's 28 was full of mis-timed pulls but gave the innings a satisfactory start, Nic Maddinson's 27 was at breakneck speed and attempted to blaze his team out of trouble, and Steve Smith's run-a-ball 41 was a repair job that did not grow into more.

A target of 137 might have been easier to achieve against most other teams but Sydney's pace attack and their exceptional fielding never let Mumbai stage a breakaway. The margin of victory was only 12 in the end, but the game was lost long before that.

Earlier, Badrinath was the anchor and MS Dhoni the aggressor as Chennai Super Kings defeated Yorkshire by four wickets with one over to spare at Kingsmead on Monday to end their Champions League Twenty20 campaign on a high with their second consecutive win.

Chasing a target of 141 on a slowish track, CSK lost their opening batsmen - Faf du Plessis and Murali Vijay - inside the first five overs with only 26 runs on the board. But, Yorkshire didn't help their cause with some sloppy fielding and lack of penetrative bowling.

CSK ended their campaign with two wins and two defeats, while Yorkshire lost three matches and had one no result in their maiden CLT20 appearance.

### SCORES IN BRIEF

**SYDNEY SIXERS:** 136 for 7 (Smith 41, Lumb 28; Patel 2-17, Malinga 2-36)

**MUMBAI INDIANS:** 124 for 8 (Smith 26; Cummings 2-16, Heniques 2-29, Starc 2-32)

**Result:** Sydney won by 12 runs.

## Pak put off Zim tour

AFP, Karachi

Pakistan on Sunday put back their tour to Zimbabwe, scheduled for December, to next year as it clashes with the limited over series against arch-rivals India.

"We have written to the Zimbabwe cricket board to put off the tour to next year as the dates were clashing with our tour to India," a Pakistan Cricket Board official told AFP.

Pakistan was due to tour Zimbabwe for two Tests, three one-day and two Twenty20 matches from early December.

India have invited Pakistan for a three one-day and two Twenty20 match series starting from December 25 -- the first bilateral series between the two countries since 2007.

India had stalled all bilateral cricket with Pakistan in the wake of the November 2008 attacks on its commercial hub Mumbai, attacks which killed 166 people.

New Delhi blamed the attacks on militants based in Pakistan and refused to send its team to Pakistan a month after the Mumbai attacks.

Since then India have played Pakistan in multi-national events only, the two recent matches were played in the World Cup in Mohali last year and the World Twenty20 Super Eights match in Colombo earlier this month.

## Pakistan safe for cricket: World XI stars

AFP, Karachi

Players from the visiting International World XI Monday said overseas teams should return to tour Pakistan soon, after two Twenty20s against an all-star home side passed off successfully at the weekend.

The exhibition games were the first appearances by high-profile foreign players in Pakistan since deadly militant attacks on the Sri Lankan team bus in Lahore in March 2009 led to the suspension of international matches in the troubled country.

Security was tight as capacity crowds of 32,000 packed into Karachi's National Stadium -- evidence, if it were needed, of the Pakistani public's desperation to see top level cricket at home.

## No more Brit on English jerseys

REUTERS, London

England's cricket team, deposed by South Africa as the world's top Test side, has begun the search for a new shirt sponsor after Brit Insurance said it would not renew its contract when it expires in early 2014.

The company's name appears on all England playing and training kit under a four-year agreement signed in 2010. The contract is due to expire at the end of the 2013-14 Ashes series in Australia.

"We hope to find someone before spring 2014," England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) commercial director John Perera told Reuters.

"If the logistics work and someone came in early we could do something in time for the (2013-14) Ashes down under," he added, estimating the existing deal was worth up to 18 million pounds.

Brit Insurance said the decision to end the sponsorship was because of changes to its business. It sold many of its British domestic operations this year and is focusing on global underwriting.

There is growing evidence that companies are looking closely at what they are getting from their sponsorship agreements when corporate budgets are tight.

UK Athletics is yet to announce a new sponsor after insurer Aviva said it was ending a 13-year partnership.

Shohag ran through the

### SPORTS REPORTER

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## AFC women's football

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### CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

#### ACROSS

1 Cookie container

4 Acknowledge

8 Work units

12 — Khan

13 Part of N.B.

14 Panorama

15 Acted as a go-between

17 Sicilian volcano

18 Data

19 Armada

20 Propaganda pamphlet

22 Utu

24 Solemn pledge

25 Haphazardly

29 Cravat

30 Square dance group

31 Ostrich's cousin