

Star SPORT

Federer c Warne b Murray

They say he couldn't catch a cold at this year's Big Bash in Australia but cricket legend Shane Warne rediscovered his golden touch in the unusual surroundings of Rod Laver Arena on Friday. A spectator for Andy Murray's semi-final victory over Roger Federer at the Australian Open, the leg-spinner was seen plucking the ball out of the air. Murray played a lob over Federer's head, and the legendary Swiss player just managed to reach it to play the famous between-the-legs return. It however sailed way long and into the hands of Warne, who leaned over the spectators' barricade to pull off a stunner.



Khulna turned the tide?

NAIMUL KARIM from Khulna

The Bangladesh Premier League's (BPL) Khulna venture can best be described as a tour of two halves. The tournament began on a slow note with swathes of empty stands putting a dampener on modest on-field events, but that gave way to an emphatic ending with a world record being broken and a nearly packed stadium on the last day of the competition.

The matches on Tuesday and Wednesday saw just a few thousand enter the Sheikh Abu Naser Stadium. The scenario on Thursday was a lot worse. The first match, which was re-scheduled to the morning due to the Prime Minister's arrival, was watched by roughly a 100 people in the stadium.

With Dhaka also disappointing in terms of fan turnout in the BPL's opening stages, much more was expected of Khulna, a city that recently was on tenterhooks to catch the action during the West Indies' tour.

Reasons for the poor turnout of course were aplenty, ranging from the cost of tickets to Khulna's bad run in the competition. A number of roadblocks leading to the stadium might have also discouraged fans.

The tide began to turn following Shahriar Nafees's century on Thursday, a match which witnessed Khulna post 197 for no loss. The result was a packed stadium for Friday's evening match between Khulna and Rangpur.

The tournament also seemed to have lifted in quality a

SEE PAGE 17 COL 6

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PHOTO: STAR

AN ALIEN AT HOME! Duronto Rajshahi's Tamim Iqbal (R), who actually hails from Chittagong, looks engrossed in deep thought during his team's training session at the port city's Women Sports Complex yesterday.

Revolt in MSC

SPORTS REPORTER

Mohammedan Sporting Club players refrained from their scheduled practice session at the club premises yesterday, allegedly protesting non-payment of wages and contract money. The practice session, which was scheduled for 3:00 pm, was attended by the head coach and his deputies, but none of the players showed up. They were found in their beds, under blankets in the club tent.

"Most of our players got only 40 per cent of the contracted payment, and monthly wages are due too as well. That is why we opted not to attend practice today, even though we had practised in the morning by ourselves," said one of the player on condition of anonymity.

Head coach Saiful Bari Titu said he was surprised at the absence of the players.

"I don't know why they did not attend practice, although I think it could be due to a lack of understanding between the players and the club officials," said Titu.

The players claimed that the club officials have assured them of paying their pending wages and dues once they return from a week's leave and resume training on January 16. But after waiting for a few days more they were compelled to take such desperate step.

However, the club's director Lokman Hossain

SEE PAGE 17 COL 2



Victoria Azarenka of Belarus poses in the locker room with the Australian Open trophy she just won by defeating Li Na of China in the final in Melbourne on Saturday.

PHOTO: AFP

Victorious Azarenka

AP, Melbourne

Australian Open
The Grand Slam of Asia/Pacific

Victoria Azarenka won her second consecutive Australian Open title, beating Li Na 4-6, 6-4, 6-3 in a dramatic final on Saturday that contained a break for fireworks, two medical timeouts and a nasty fall to the court by Li.

The Chinese star first tumbled to the court after twisting her left ankle in the fifth game of the second set and had it taped.

On the first point after a 10-minute pause in the third set while

MATCH FACTS			
AZARENKA	LI		
1	Aces	4	
78%	1st serves	65%	
4	Double faults	5	
18	Winners	36	
28	Errors	57	
54%	1st serve win	48%	
38%	2nd serve win	42%	
54%	Receiving pts won	49%	

fireworks boomed overhead from nearby Australia Day celebrations, Li fell over again and slammed the

back of her head on the court. The 2011 French Open champion was treated immediately and had another timeout before being allowed to resume the match.

Azarenka, who broke down in tears and sobbed into her towel when the match ended, won five of the next six games to claim her second major title and retain the No. 1 ranking.

The 2-hour, 40-minute match featured 16 service breaks, with Li losing her service nine times.

The win meant that Azarenka will maintain the top spot and Serena Williams, who lost in the

SEE PAGE 17 COL 2

Jurgensen set to continue

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

Shane Jurgensen is likely to continue as interim head coach of the Bangladesh cricket team for the upcoming tour of Sri Lanka as the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) got poor response regarding the appointment of a new coach.

"As far as I know, four to five applications have been received before the January 25 deadline. Now the cricket operations committee will evaluate all the applications and see whether there are any that meet our demands and if not, then Shane Jurgensen is there," said BCB's media committee chairman Jalal Yunus, adding that they are also trying individually to find a suitable coach.



SHANE JURGENSEN

Enayet Hossain Siraj, chairman of BCB's cricket operations committee however said that the response was not satisfactory, which is the reason that Jurgensen is very likely to continue as interim head coach.

"We got some applications but the level of response is not satisfactory. There are no famous or

SEE PAGE 17 COL 4

Shane Jurgensen likely to continue as interim coach for the March tour of Sri Lanka.

Four to five applications for head coach received but the level of response not satisfactory, says cricket operations committee chairman

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