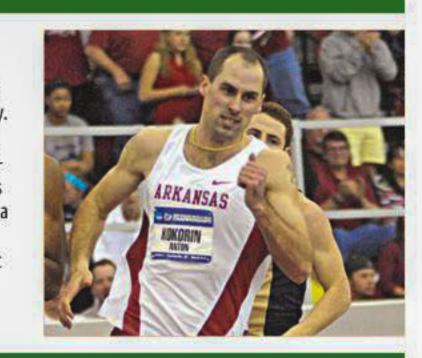
Live from 1:45am (Thursday)

So far only one of the Russian athletes stripped of Olympic medals for doping has given it back to the International Olympic Committee, a senior Moscow sports official said Monday. Runner Anton Kokorin, who won bronze in Beijing in the men's 4X400m relay team, is the only athlete to have returned his Olympic medal, Yelena Ikonnikova, the anti-doping coordinator of the athletics federation (RusAF), told AFP. The IOC has ruled that all the athletes who were stripped of their medals over doping violations must give them back. Ikonnikova confirmed that Russia's athletics federation has received a list of the athletes concerned and passed it on. "We've distributed the list and the IOC demand for the return of Olympic medals to all the athletes and the regional (athletics) federations concerned," she said. -AFP



Women's team fly off to S'pore today

SPORTS REPORTER

The national women's football team will fly out to Singapore today to take part in women's development football tournament. The team, comprising mostly of under-16 players, will play two matches against Singapore and Malaysia as part of preparation for September's AFC U-16 Women's Championship in Thailand.

The tour is being sponsored by Walton Group, who previously sponsored the under-16 team's tour of Japan last month apart from other tours of women's teams.

Meanwhile, the team's pre-tour press conference at the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) House yesterday was boycotted by media in protest of the presence of the federation's women's committee chairman Mahfuza Akter Kiron.

The media houses had on Monday decided to boycott Kiron, also a BFF executive committee member, for her severe criticism of media as she alleged that sponsors were going away from football due to negative reports following the national men's team's poor results against Bhutan.

Ban on Rana, Dolon lifted

SPORTS REPORTER

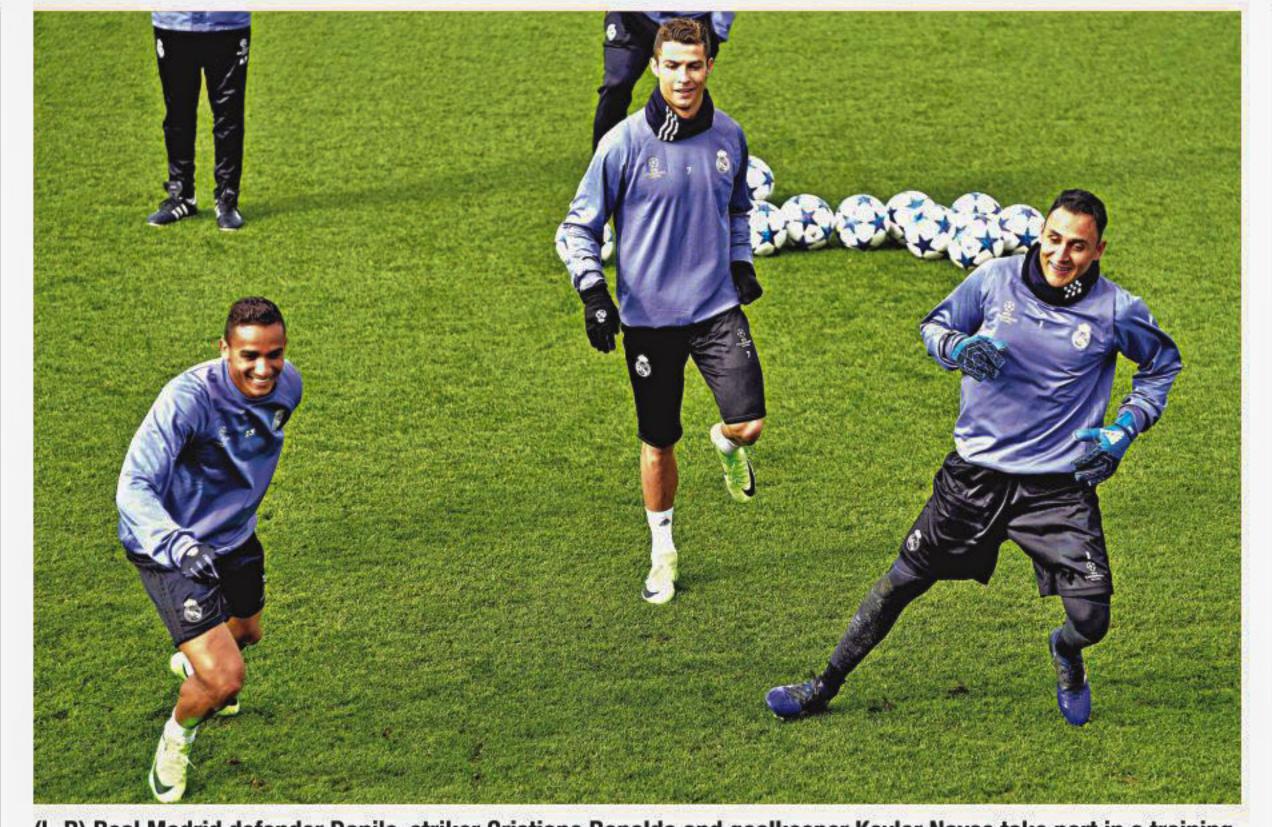
The Bangladesh Hockey Federation (BHF) decided to lift suspension on Mariner Youngs Club's general secretary Ahsanullah Khan Rana and Abahani's former manager Shahidullah Dolon after both officials regretted incidents over which they were suspended.

Rana was handed a oneyear suspension in July last year following vandalism at the stadium during the premier league's last match between Mariner Youngs and Usha Krira Chakra. His club was also fined Tk 5 lakh.

Dolon was banned for five years due to different incidents including threatening hockey team's captain Rasel Mahmud Jimmy in 2013.

"As both officials regretted those incidents and sought apology, the executive committee lifted their suspensions on Monday," BFF vice president Khaza Rahmatullah said.

"The fine of Dhaka Mariner Youngs Club has also been reduced to Tk 2 lakh from Tk 5 lakh and the exemption of Rana will be effective from the time his club deposits the fine."



(L-R) Real Madrid defender Danilo, striker Cristiano Ronaldo and goalkeeper Keylor Navas take part in a training session at the Valdebebas training ground yesterday on the eve of their Champions League match against Napoli. PHOTO: AFP

Tigresses face Ireland in Super Six today

SPORTS REPORTER



The Bangladesh women's team will take on their Irish counterparts in their opening Super Six fixture of the ICC Women's World Cup Qualifier at the Colombo Cricket Club ground

tomorrow.

India, Sri Lanka and Ireland advanced from Group A while South Africa, Pakistan and Bangladesh made it through from Group B. Bangladesh beat Papua New Guinea and Scotland but lost to South Africa and Pakistan in their group matches.

In the Super Six stage sides will play qualifiers from the other group, with the top four at the end of this stage qualifying for the ICC Women's World Cup 2017 as well as the ICC Women's Championship. The teams which have qualified carry points gained against other sides that have

SUPER SIX SCHEDULE

February 15 South Africa vs India Sri Lanka vs Pakistan Bangladesh vs Ireland February 17 Sri Lanka vs South Africa

India vs Bangladesh Ireland vs Pakistan **FEBRUARY 19** India vs Pakistan Sri Lanka vs Bangladesh South Africa vs Ireland

advanced from their group.

This means that India and South Africa not only topped the standings but also have a four-point cushion as they won all their league matches.

Sri Lanka and Pakistan crossed-over with two points each, while Ireland and Bangladesh advanced without any points since they beat sides that did not qualify.

All six sides with One-Day International status at the ICC Women's World Cup Qualifier 2017 have retained their grade for the next four-year cycle by qualifying for the Super Six stage.

Preparation for HWL

BHF looking to Egypt, Malaysia

SPORTS REPORTER

Hosts Bangladesh are trying to bring one of the participating teams for a few practice matches ahead of the Hockey World League Round-2 after the proposed tour to South Africa was cancelled due to the visa complications.

The Bangladesh national team were supposed to play eight to nine matches in South Africa as part of their final preparation, but the charges of Oliver Kurtz failed to obtain their visas and then the effort to arrange an alternative tour to Kenya did not materialise. "As we can't go to either South Africa or Kenya, we

requested China, Egypt and Malaysia to come here one week before the start of Hockey World League to play a couple of matches," informed Bangladesh Hockey Federation vice president Khaza Rahmatullah yesterday. "China have already expressed their inability to come

here early. Now we are waiting for responses from Egypt and Malaysia," said Rahmatullah adding that the team would not have any opportunity to play practice matches against any foreign team before the competition if both Egypt and Malaysia turn down the proposal.

The Dhaka phase of Hockey World League, one of three venues of Round-2, will get underway from March 4 at the Maulana Bhasani Hockey Stadium, with eight participating teams.

India remain the same for Aus Tests

REUTERS, Mumbai

the 16-man squad that cruised to victory in the one-off Test against Bangladesh for the first two matches of the home series against Australia starting next week.

India have kept faith with

The world's top-ranked Test side are unbeaten in their last 19 contests and completed a comprehensive 208-run win against their South Asian neighbours on Monday in an ideal warm-up for the four matches to come against Australia.

Fast bowler Mohammed Shami, who missed the last two Tests of the recent fivematch series against England with a leg injury, was not considered fit enough for selection to the side named on Tuesday.

Mazid's four-hour vigil

SPORTS REPORTER



Walton Central Zone opener Abdul Mazid scored only 36 runs but he occupied the crease

for more than four hours and that paid huge dividends as his side drew their third round Bangladesh Cricket League match against Prime Bank South Zone at the Fatullah Cricket Stadium yesterday.

Resuming the day on seven for one, Central Zone required 270 more runs on the final day to win the match. However, they fought it out for draw after reaching 190 for five at the end of the day. Man of the match

POINTS TABLE Teams North Zone

East Zone South Zone Central Zone Shuvagata Hom, who claimed match haul of ten wickets and scored a

century in the first innings, also

contributed to Central Zone's second

Rubel Hossain and Shohag Gazi took two wickets each while Mustafizur Rahman scalped one.

innings with 52 runs.

The draw helped Central Zone secure their first points as they earned three points while Prime Bank South

Zone slipped to third position with nine points.

At the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium in Chittagong, the match between BCB North Zone and Islami Bank East Zone ended in draw as expected. The outcome helped North Zone stay on top and increase their tally to 11 points, while East Zone improved to second position with nine points.

Naeem Islam's hundred was the highlight of the final day. The righthander added exactly 15 runs on the final day to complete his hundred as North Zone scored 404 runs in their first innings before being bowled out. East Zone then made 92 for one before stumps were drawn for the final day.

SCORES IN BRIEF

ISLAMI BANK EAST ZONE VS BCB NORTH ZONE ISLAMI BANK EAST ZONE: 490 and 92-1 in 21 overs (Imtiaz 44, Tasamul 32; Nasir 1-15).

BCB NORTH ZONE: 404 all out in 151.1 overs (Nazmul 35, Junaed 28, Naeem 100, Dhiman 40, Shuvo 59, Sunzamul 54 not out; Abul 3-66, Kapali 2-17) Result: Match drawn Man-of-the-match: Afif Hossain. PRIME BANK SOUTH ZONE VS WALTON CENTRAL ZONE PRIME BANK SOUTH ZONE: 260 and 317.

WALTON CENTRAL ZONE: 299 and 190-5 in 79 overs (Mazid 36, Hom 52, Taibur 39 not out; Mustafizur 1-13, Rubel 2-41, Gazi 2-54). Result: Match Drawn. Man-of-the-match: Shuvagata Hom

Sledging? Go for it: Smith

AFP, Mumbai



Australian captain Steve Smith raised the temperature Tuesday ahead of the first Test against India, calling on his

players to "go for it" with the verbal volleys and on-field aggression. India-Australia series are notori-

ously feisty affairs -- the 2008 contest Down Under was almost called off following the infamous "Monkeygate" incident as animosity between the old foes threatened to boil over. There was then further bad blood

during India's Test and one-day series in Australia prior to the 2015 World



Cup when heated on-field exchanges led to several players being penalised. But the day after his team landed,

Smith urged his players to do whatever it takes for Australia to win their first Test match in India since 2004 when the sides clash on February 23 in Pune.

"I think each of our individuals play the way they play and if they want to

get into a battle verbally then, if that gets the best out of them, go for it," he told reporters in Mumbai.

"It's all about us making sure that as individuals we're in the right mindset to go out and succeed and if guys want to get in those kind of battles then go for it.

"But in the end it's about us playing on skill and making sure that our skills are in the best place for us to succeed in these conditions," added the 27-year-old.

Relations between the old foes neared breaking point nine years ago when Indian spinner Harbhajan Singh was suspended for three matches for allegedly calling Australian allrounder Andrew Symonds a "monkey" during the New Year's Test in Sydney.

Six Tigers in IPL auction

SPORTS REPORTER

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A total of 351 players, vivo including six Bangladeshis, will feature in the Indian Premier League (IPL) 2017 players' auction which is scheduled to be held in Bangalore on February 20.

Bangladesh opener Tamim Iqbal led the list of Tigers that have entered their name for the players' auction.

Alongside Tamim, Anamul Haque, Sabbir Rahman, Taskin Ahmed, Mahmudullah Riyad and Mehedi Hasan Miraz have thrown their hats in the ring.

All of the players will command a reserve price of 30 lakh rupees.

The final roster was pruned down to 351

from an initial list of 799 players after the eight franchises presented their wish list.

Two other Bangladeshis, Mustafizur

Rahman and Shakib Al Hasan, have been retained by defending champions Sunrisers Hyderabad and former champions Kolkata Knight Riders respectively. Other high-profile players, with

reserve prices ranging from 1 crore to 2 crore, include England players Ben Stokes, Eoin Morgan and Jason Roy, Sri Lanka's Angelo Mathews, New Zealand's Trent Boult, Australia's Mitchell Johnson and the West Indies' Marlon Samuels and Jason Holder.

The list also includes six players from associate nations -- five from Afghanistan and one from the UAE.



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