



## Did U Know?

FIFA World Cup 2006, to be held in Germany, is the eighteenth edition of football's premier event.



**Shane Warne**  
(Australian spin wizard)  
"I must have said it 14,000 times. I have retired and I have no aspirations to (ODI) return."

## Tajikistan pull out from Asiad

BDNEWS, Dhaka

Bangladesh will play Indonesia in their opening match of the Asian Games qualifying round hockey tournament following the withdrawal of Tajikistan for financial reasons.

The qualifiers for the Doha Games will be held in Dhaka from May 11 to 19.

"The withdrawal put us in an awkward situation, but we will hold the tournament on time," general secretary of Bangladesh Hockey Federation (BHF) Shamsul Bari told yesterday.

"We have proposed a new fixture to the Asian Hockey Federation (AHF)," Bari informed.

Jamuna Bank, who has come forward to sponsor the event, will pay Tk 10 lakh out of an estimated Tk 16 lakh budget. The federation is expecting to get the remaining amount from National Sports Council (NSC), Bari said.

The Bangladesh team, expected to be announced today, will train on the newly installed turf at the Maulana Bhasani National Hockey Stadium also from today.

"We have decided to send a certain amount of tickets to schools, colleges and clubs to create enthusiasm among the youth about the game," Bari said.

**TEAMS**  
**POOL A:** Bangladesh, Singapore, Indonesia and Sri Lanka.  
**POOL B:** Hong Kong, Oman, Chinese Taipei and Iran.

## Proteas wait on Pollock

CRICINFO, undated

A decision on whether or not to include Shaun Pollock to play against New Zealand in the third and final Test at the Wanderers on Friday will be left as late as possible.

It is likely the South African selectors will give Pollock until the morning of the Test to prove his fitness.

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# Cricket at BNS again?

SPORTS REPORTER

The controversy over the possession of Bangabandhu National Stadium (BNS) was re-ignited when Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) president Mohammad Ali Asghar on Wednesday expressed his desire to get back the country's premier venue for the 2011 World Cup.

"Becoming co-hosts of the 2011 Cricket World Cup is a great achievement in our sports history. So, definitely we want to arrange it at our number one venue. I don't mind if the matches are held anywhere else but I think BNS will be the proper place to host this kind of a big event," commented Asghar while talking to the reporters at the Zia International Airport on his return from Dubai.

"If you consider success, cricket is far ahead from the other sports in the country and you can't compare cricket with any other game, including football. Football is not at a stage where they can claim exclusive rights of the venue. So, what's wrong if we demand it despite a settlement," said the BCB chief during whose tenure the decision to switch

cricket's home to the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur from the BNS was taken.

Asghar also said that they mentioned the venue's name when they had made the joint bid along with three other countries from the subcontinent to host cricket's biggest extravaganza.

"You all know that we mentioned this stadium's name in the bid because it has a long tradition of the game where number of Test and one-day matches took place. Now people in the country will decide where the matches will be held," said Asghar making a U-turn from his previous stance.

It may worth mentioning that the long-standing tug-of-war between the authorities of cricket and football had been settled in October 2004 when State Minister for Youth and Sports Fazlur Rahman penned the historic decision fulfilling Bangladesh Football Federation's (BFF) demand to have exclusive rights of the all-purpose venue.

Understandably, the football authority was surprised by the BCB boss's desire and they found no

reason to involve in further controversy over the 36,000-capacity venue at the heart of the city.

"Government owns all the grounds, so it's up to them what to do with the grounds. We federations have nothing to say. In the past when we wanted to host a tournament at the BNS we had to take the permission of the sports ministry first. I don't know whether the cricket board had done the formalities before submitting their bid for the World Cup," said BFF general secretary Anwarul Haque Helal.

"BCB general secretary (Mahbubul Anam) told me that they had to include the name of BNS and Fatullah Stadium as alternative venues because their first-choice Mirpur Stadium was yet to be completed. He also said that when the Mirpur Stadium would get the International Cricket Council's recognition, everything would fall into places," he said.

"I don't think there is any scope to create any confusion over the possession of the venue. Mirpur is under preparation exclusively for cricket," said Helal.



TICKETS OF THEIR DREAM: A Tunisian woman holding her son shows the tickets for the first three matches of the FIFA 2006 World Cup in Germany on Wednesday.

STAN CHART SCHOOL CRICKET

## Khulna Zilla Champions

SPORTS REPORTER

A brilliant all-round show by Rokonzaman helped Khulna Zilla School to become champions of the Khulna Division in the Standard Chartered National School Cricket tournament at the Khulna Stadium yesterday. They defeated Sammilini Institute of Jessore by exactly 100 runs.

Batting first after they had won the toss, Khulna Zilla were all out for 222. Rokonzaman struck an unbeaten half-century, that was studied by six fours.

Sammilini struggled from the beginning and were duly bowled out for 122 in 33 overs.

Rokonzaman again contributed with the ball as he took 2 for 16.

## McGrath ready for comeback

INTERNET, undated

Australian pace spearhead Glenn McGrath is all set to make his international comeback during the Champions Trophy in India later this year against the wishes of his skipper Ricky Ponting.

National chairman of selectors Andrew Hilditch said McGrath was firming to resume play after missing South Africa and Bangladesh tours to help his ailing wife battle her latest cancer treatment.

Australia captain Ricky Ponting said this week he would prefer McGrath missing the Champions Trophy and pursue an English County stint to prepare for the Ashes showdown against England, which begins one month after the India event.

Asked if the world's highest wicket-taking paceman could play at the Champions Trophy, Hilditch said, "He is certainly back in the gym." "I don't think he's started bowling yet but I think he is gearing himself up to be ready for that," Hilditch told the Australian newspaper The Advertiser.

Hilditch also said everything was progressing really well for the 119-Test speedster from a personal and family point of view.

McGrath has been retained in Cricket Australia's 25-man central contract list announced last day.

## Sachin to bat soon

REUTERS, New Delhi

Master batsman Sachin Tendulkar is set to bat again in the next few days after undergoing shoulder surgery five weeks ago, the Board of Control for Cricket in India said on Tuesday.

"Sachin will commence light batting drills within the week," it said in a statement, raising strong hopes of his playing in the four-Test series in West Indies starting on June 2.

"Today, Sachin underwent an examination and reassessment of his condition and his rehabilitation programme," it said, adding that his strengthening work was progressing smoothly.

The 33-year-old batsman underwent surgery in London on March 29 after the latest in a series of injury setbacks, largely attributed to the wear and tear of constant playing.

## Searchin' in 'Paradise'

APP, Srinagar

Former India fast bowlers Javagal Srinath and TA Sekar Wednesday concluded trials in revolt-hit Kashmir to select boys for a prominent pace bowling academy.

Over 200 Kashmiris aged 15-20 registered for the trials at the Sher-e-Kashmir Stadium in Srinagar.

"The MRF (Madras Rubber Factory) Pace Foundation in Chennai felt the need of conducting trials here after we saw the performance of two young fast bowlers from the valley -- Abid Nabi and Sami Ullah," said Srinath.

Nabi, a tall and well-built youth, has already caught the selectors' eye with impressive performances in domestic cricket.

Srinath said Kashmiri cricketers had "lots of talent" but lacked proper exposure.

"There is also a need to put in place the infrastructure," said Srinath, who bagged 236 wickets in 67 Tests and 315 in 229 one-day internationals.

Kashmir is in the grip of a 16-year-old insurgency against Indian rule that has claimed more than 44,000 lives.

# 'Name will not count'



APP, St. John's

Brian Lara has warned his teammates that performance and not names will get them selected during his third term as West Indies captain.

Lara, who celebrates his 37th birthday on Tuesday, has been laying down the law to his teammates since last Wednesday, when he was confirmed in the position.

"We are not going to play names anymore," Lara said, after West Indies won back-to-back limited-overs internationals by five wickets and 98 runs on Saturday and Sunday respectively at the Antigua Recreation Ground.

"We are going to play to a plan. We are going to have positions. We (are) going to

have requirements to those positions, and it doesn't matter who it is -- Tom Browne, Chris Gayle, Runako Morton, or Shivnarine Chanderpaul -- it doesn't matter.

"If these positions are being fulfilled in the way that we like these players are going to have the opportunity to continue within the team.

"Right now, we are unsettled in terms of the order, but in our minds we have settled on what the exact positions they need to be, and we are working our way to find the right players in the right position."

Lara also revealed he does not intend to play in all of the limited-overs internationals against the Zimbabweans in keeping with his stated objective of forgoing the shorter games in an effort to prolong his international career.

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Chris Dehring, the CEO of Cricket World Cup 2007 organising committee, completes his application form for the World Cup tickets after they went on sale on Tuesday.

# Flintoff the captain?



CRICINFO, undated

Another series, more injuries and another captaincy conundrum: when England's selection panel meets this weekend to finalise the squad for next week's first Test against Sri Lanka, not only will enough fit players have to be found, but a man to lead them will also be announced.

David Graveney, chairman of the three-man selection panel, indicated to reporters that the captain, at least, is likely to be Andrew Flintoff. He did, however, also acknowledge ongoing fears that the extra responsibility on Flintoff's admittedly broad shoulders remains a concern.

"The first thing to be discussed is if Michael Vaughan is out of contention, for how long and how does that affect the captaincy," explained Graveney to reporters.

"We hear what everybody is saying about workload for Freddie. But let's not forget he captained one of the most memorable victories, which was the last Test match we played -- you can draw your own conclusions from that."



ANDREW FLINTOFF

Graveney was referring to England's stunning win against India at Mumbai, one which levelled the series many expected England to lose. England suffered similarly catastrophic luck against India with injuries to key players Marcus Trescothick, Simon Jones as well as captain Michael Vaughan, all of whom missed the entire series.

The list of injured absentees for this Test is equally frightening, though at least there isn't a broken metatarsal anywhere in sight. Vaughan has failed to recover from his knee problem, James Anderson has been ruled out with a back injury, Jones has ongoing knee problems, Ashley Giles remains a long-term casualty and Steve Harmison hasn't recovered from the shin problems that curtailed his tour of India. Thus England will again take to the field against Sri Lanka under an inexperienced captain and team.

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## The Daily Star catches World Cup fever

The FIFA World Cup Germany 2006 kicks off on June 9. While the whole world is preparing to watch the month-long gala event, we here at The Daily Star are no different. But although the showpiece is still more than a month away, we just can't wait for it to begin. In view of the enormous interest of our valued readers, The Daily Star Sport turns into 4-Page, two of them in colour, from tomorrow with extensive coverage on the 'beautiful game', leading up to the start and beyond. Furthermore, The Daily Star inaugurates its first-ever online World Cup Poll the same day. The survey is aimed at letting all the people out there who love the sport express their opinion on a number of varying issues that shall arise in the build-up to the World Cup and during the festival of football itself. The World Cup Poll can be accessed by logging on to our website: [www.thedailystar.net](http://www.thedailystar.net)

Express your opinions as you see fit and be sure to specify with your own comments. The first Poll runs for seven days.

## BITS AND BOBS

### Eng looking at 'Plan B'

AFP, Manchester

Number two Tord Grip has admitted that England are devising a 'Plan B' for the World Cup after injuries to top strikers Wayne Rooney and Michael Owen.

Rooney broke a bone in his foot on Saturday but has refused to give up hope of playing some part in England's World Cup campaign, despite the scepticism of his Manchester United boss Alex Ferguson.

It will be at least six weeks before he can play again, effectively ruling him out of Sven Goran Eriksson's team during at least the opening stages in Germany.

Rooney's injury coupled with lingering doubts over strike partner Michael Owen's fitness are threatening to seriously undermine England's

### appearance in seven months in Borussia Dortmund's 2-1 win at Hannover on Tuesday.

The 32-year-old had been on the sidelines since sustaining a cruciate ligament injury in September last year but returned to action coming on as a substitute in the 71st minute.

Koller, a 12-million-euro signing from Anderlecht in 2001, came through the match unscathed and will hope to play in Dortmund's remaining two league fixtures to improve his match sharpness ahead of the finals.

The giant target-man is his country's record goalscorer with 44 goals in 66 internationals.

The Czech Republic, semifinalists at Euro 2004, are pooled with Italy, the United States and Ghana in World Cup Group E.

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# USA unveil WC roster



AFP, Washington

USA manager Bruce Arena announced his team's 23-man roster for next month's World Cup in Germany on Tuesday, eight days before players gather to start preparations for the global football showdown.

Midfielder Landon Donovan of the Los Angeles Galaxy and Fulham forward Brian McBride figure to be prime scoring threats for a squad that blends US and European club talent as well as

youth and experience.

"Landon is an experienced player," Arena said. "He's a player we will look to not only lead us but to be important in our attack."

The biggest absentee from the list was New England Revolution star Taylor Twellman, last year's Major League Soccer Most Valuable Player and scoring champion. He was among 13 players named as alternates for the squad.

Borussia Moenchengladbach goalkeeper Kasey Keller will get the starting nod ahead of World Cup debutantes Marcus Hahnemann from Reading and Tim Howard of

Manchester United.

Keller, 36, went 10-1 with three draws in World Cup qualifying with a 0.57 goals-against average. This will be his fourth World Cup finals but first as the key man between the bars.

"This is the first time he'll be our starting goalkeeper so I know he will be excited and ready for the challenge," Arena said.

Houston Dynamo forward Brian Ching, who has six goals in five games to lead Major League Soccer, will join McBride and Kansas City teammates Eddie Johnson and Josh Wolff in the forward line.

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