



Glenn McGrath (R) celebrates with the slip cordon after getting rid of New Zealand opener Lou Vincent during the first semifinal of ICC Champions Trophy at the Punjab Cricket Association (PCA) Stadium in Mohali on Wednesday.

## Aus in final first time



AFP, Mohali

Favourites Australia overcame valiant New Zealand by 34 runs here on Wednesday to enter the Champions Trophy final for the first time in five attempts.

Captain Ricky Ponting and Andrew Symonds hit 58 runs each to help the world champions recover from a disastrous 4-2 to post 240-9 after being sent to bat in the day-night semifinal.

New Zealand were bowled out for 206 in reply after 36-year-old Glenn McGrath dispelled doubts over his future in the game with a superb 3-22 in an unbroken opening spell of 10 overs.

The Black Caps were in danger of falling short of their lowest one-day total of 64 against Pakistan in Sharjah in 1986 when they slipped to 35-6 by the 15th over.

But Daniel Vettori (79) and Jacob Oram (43) gave the Aussies a fright by adding 103 for the seventh wicket as the late evening dew made it difficult for bowlers to grip the ball.

Symonds broke the threatening stand by having Oram stumped in the 36th over before and Vettori was bowled by Mitchell Johnson in the 43rd.

New Zealand added 171 runs for the last four wickets amid full-throated support from some 20,000

Indian fans, but the effort was not enough to secure victory.

It was Australia's 16th win over their trans-Tasman rivals in the last 18 meetings, sending them to Sunday's final in Mumbai against the winner of Thursday's other semi-final between South Africa and the West Indies in Jaipur.

Australia had not made the final in the four previous editions of the biennial tournament despite winning the last two World Cups in 1999 and 2003.

Ponting's men were stunned by hostile Kyle Mills before they pulled themselves out of a deep hole at the Punjab Cricket Association ground.

Mills, the 27-year-old from Auckland, finished with 4-38, but the New Zealand batsmen undid his good work in the second session.

McGrath had Lou Vincent caught at second slip by Ponting for one and Brett Lee bowled Nathan Astle for zero as the Black Caps slipped to 20-2 by the seventh over.

Two more wickets fell in eight balls at the score of 30 to diminish New Zealand's chances of causing an upset.

McGrath forced Hamish Marshall to edge a catch to wicket-keeper Adam Gilchrist, before New Zealand captain Stephen Fleming fell in Nathan Bracken's first over.

Fleming, his team's main hope in the absence of the injured Scott Styris, made 15 off 28 balls when he hung his bat out to Bracken and was snapped up by Ponting in the

slips.

McGrath then bowled Peter Fulton for two and had Brendon McCullum caught by Damien Martyn to leave New Zealand struggling at 35-6.

Earlier, Mills struck twice in the third over of the match when he had Shane Watson caught at mid-off with the second ball and Gilchrist was snapped up at square-leg off the fifth.

Martyn (26) helped Ponting add 66 for the third wicket when he fell to a marginal leg-before decision off Vettori in the 20th over.

Ponting moved to his 55th one-day 50 in the 27th over, but was dismissed two overs later when he holed out to mid-on against Mills.

Michael Hussey put on 65 for the fifth wicket with Symonds, whose run-a-ball knock boosted Australia's lower order before he was bowled by a Shane Bond full

toss.

Bond, showing no signs of the hamstring niggles that hampered him earlier in the tournament, also bowled Brett Lee and ran out Mitchell Johnson with a smart throw on his follow-through.

### SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard of the Champions Trophy semifinal between Australia and New Zealand at the Punjab Cricket Association Stadium on Wednesday:

AUSTRALIA	
Gilchrist c Oram b Mills	3
Watson c Fulton b Mills	0
Ponting c Vettori b Mills	58
Martyn lbw b Vettori	26
Hussey c Marshall b Franklin	35
Symonds b Bond	58
Clarke c Vettori b Mills	14
Lee b Bond	5
Johnson run out	3
Bracken not out	15

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### Did U Know?

The inaugural FIFA Women's World Cup was held in China in 1991, 61 years after the men's World Cup.



### Bob Woolmer

(Pakistan cricket coach) "We are a good side and can play good cricket. It is important we look how we lost, learn from mistakes and look at things carefully before the World Cup."

After his team's early exit from the Champions Trophy.



**BTV & SET Max**  
ICC Champions Trophy  
South Africa v West Indies  
Second Semifinal  
Live at 2:45 pm  
**ESPN**  
Sportscenter India  
Live at 8:30 pm

### Sangakkara for Beximco

#### SPORTS REPORTER

Beximco Group confirmed the service of Sri Lanka vice-captain Kumar Sangakkara ahead of the semifinals of the GrameenPhone Corporate Cricket League in a bid to retain the title.

The wicketkeeper cum elegant left-handed batsman is expected to arrive in Dhaka tomorrow to play the second semifinal for the defending champions against Partex on November 5 at the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium.

"We confirmed Sangakkara for

## Akhtar 2 yrs, Asif 1 yr

### Doping tribunal bans Pak pacers



AFP, Lahore

Pakistan fast bowler Shoaib Akhtar was banned for two years and teammate Mohammad Asif for one year after they tested positive for a banned steroid, an official said Wednesday.

A three-member doping tribunal appointed by the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) ruled the pace pair out of all international and domestic cricket following hours of deliberations in the eastern city of Lahore.

Akhtar, 31, and Asif, 23, were

sent home in disgrace from the Champions Trophy in India on October 16 after the PCB said the performance-enhancing drug nandrolone had appeared in their samples.

The pair, now set to miss next year's World Cup, insisted they did not take any banned substances knowingly, but they waived their rights to have their 'B samples' tested.

The doping scandal is international cricket's first involving performance-enhancing drugs and Asif's ban is the heaviest ever for drugs in cricket.

"We gave a full chance to both

the pacemen to fight their cases and after a thorough inquiry we feel they failed to prove their innocence," tribunal chief Shahid Hamid told reporters.

"The process of doping was investigated carefully. We made sure the tests were conducted properly, samples reached the laboratory in Malaysia safely and there was no error in testing in the laboratory.

"Both the players were satisfied and accepted the tests and gave their point of view but after a thorough inquiry and bound by the WADA (World Anti-Doping

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## No pay no play



SPORTS REPORTER

The Mohammedan tent was rocked by players' revolt on the eve of their crucial match against Abahani after key players - defender Yamin Mia, striker Maksud Alam Habul and midfielder Mamunur Rahman Chayan - threatened to sit out today's Premier Hockey League game if the club do not pay the rest of their contract money.

These three shaped Mohammedan's Club Cup triumph against all odds with outstanding performance but found themselves in troubled waters since the start of the Premiership.

"I was paid one third of my contract money in cash and recently, the club gave me a cheque for the rest. But it bounced back. I will not play tomorrow if I do not get the money

before the game," told Yamin. "I am a professional and I can't get along if am not paid in time," the tall defender added.

Habul, who set an equaliser and slammed the match winner in their 2-1 win over favourites and archrivals Abahani in the final of Club Cup tournament in the start of the season, said it was difficult to continue playing with tension in mind.

"The league is being held after two seasons and this is our only income source. So we cannot concentrate on our work if we are not paid," said Habul adding that many of the black and whites squad have already been paid in full.

The cash-starved Mohammedan who have already changed the chairman of their hockey committee immediately after the Club Cup, are fourth in the table after one draw and one loss in five outings. They must win today to stay in contention for the title as they have fallen eight points

behind joint leaders Abahani and Usha, who are level on 18 points with straight six wins.

Mohammedan officials were confident that talks with the players could solve the crisis.

"We have played only five matches and how could they demand full payment?" asked Mohammedan official and former player Tariqzaman Nannu.

"They have practised with us today and we have set a strategy. If they do not play tomorrow it would be unfortunate and we will be bound to take disciplinary action (against them). But I think things would not go that far and we would be able to solve the problem before the important match," said Nannu.

In spite of fund crisis, Mohammedan have three Pakistani stick welders in their roster. Khalid Salim and Mohammed Irfan have

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## Full house for Whatmore

#### SPORTS REPORTER

The national cricket camp saw a full house on the second day at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

Habibul Bashar's men started their preparation for this month's home series against Zimbabwe on Tuesday with only eight cricketers out of the selected 23.

Most of the cricketers from outside Dhaka failed to report on the opening day as they could not catch any vehicle for the country-wide blockade.

The Tigers were only performing light practice under the supervision of coach Dav Whatmore and are expected to go into nets from November 7.

Zimbabwe will arrive in Dhaka on November 23 to play a Twenty20 match and five one-day internationals against the home side.

## BCB meeting postponed

#### SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) postponed its Wednesday executive committee meeting in absence of president Ali Asghar.

It was learnt that the ex-lawmaker of BNP could not reach the capital from his Khulna constituency due to current political crisis. But the BCB had to postpone it as he has expressed his desire to preside over the meeting.

"We postponed the meeting as our president (Asghar) informed us that it was impossible for him to attend the meeting," said Reazuddin Al Mamun, BCB's joint-secretary and chairman of the media committee, yesterday.

Asghar had earlier told the media that he would quit the board

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## Usha gun down Mariners

#### SPORTS REPORTER

Defending champions Usha Kirra Chakra joined Abahani on top of the Green Delta Insurance Premier Hockey League table with a 4-1 win over Dhaka Mariners Youngs Club at the Maulana Bhasani National Hockey Stadium yesterday.

Usha pushed their collection to 18 points, thanks to a brace by Pakistani forward Delwar Hossain and a goal apiece by his compatriot Shafiqat Rasool and Rafiqul Islam Kamal.

Mariners, who stuck to 12 points after six rounds, pulled one goal back through Mohammed Arshad but must consider themselves unlucky to not leave the field with a win as they wasted a series of second half chances in their second loss.

Kamal rushed early blood when he flicked home a pass by Titu in the second minute but Mariners struck back two minutes later when Pakistani medio Arshad pulled off the equaliser, placing the ball past onrushing goalkeeper

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West Indies captain Brian Lara (L) jokes with seamer Ian Bradshaw as they arrive for a training session in Jaipur on Wednesday.

## Volatile WI worries SA

### Second semifinal today



AFP, Jaipur

South Africa skipper Graeme Smith said Wednesday adaptability would be the key to success against an unpredictable West Indies in the Champions Trophy semifinal here.

"The unpredictable nature can count against them, but it can also be a major bonus for them. The key for us is to adapt to the conditions better than the other team," Smith said ahead of Thursday's match.

The West Indies beat South Africa in the 2003 World Cup and in the Champions Trophy in England the following year. The defeats contributed to South Africa's failure to enter the semifinals on both occasions.

But Smith denied it was a grudge match.

"I am sure it is going to be very competitive. The teams have had a mixed relationship on and off the field. Certain guys get on well with each other, but otherwise we don't know each other too well," he said.

Defending champions West Indies began their group matches on a sensational note when they

defeated world champions Australia. They also beat India before losing to England in a 'dead' match.

The South African captain said his team needed to stick to their plans and keep pressure on the West Indies, who had more than one match-winner in their ranks.

"The West Indies have match-winners and, in one-dayers, one match-winner can win you a game. They have got the likes of Chris Gayle, Ramnaresh Sarwan, Brian Lara and Jerome Taylor," said Smith.

"If you can really get them under

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## Debutants' brief sojourn



#### MOHAMMAD ISAM

When one of the six debutants StarTel entered the hallway of the Fatullah Stadium three weeks ago to play their first match of this season's GrameenPhone Corporate League, confusion reigned.

"Won't we get to play today?" asked one to the other as they saw hundreds of policemen waking up from sleep and some just lazing around. Apparently, this was not a police hostel or any emergency shelter. They were brought to the area as the Prime Minister was scheduled to visit.

The funny side of this was quickly picked up and the incident had to be forgotten fast as the match ahead was crucial for this young side.

Nobody yet knows if the cricket board, which has some authority on

this ground, has any idea as to how these are being used. Last time StarTel played a match at Fatullah on October 18, the players had to share the dressing-room area with an army camp. Bemused, as everyone was this is nothing compared to the poor facilities and scheduling meted out to the players. When it comes to comfort level, the cricketers get the smallest bit of the pie.

But the players are professionals and just move on. Protests in the form of written complaints are usually handed to the match managers but nothing seems to be taken care of.

Most matches have been one-sided, to say the least. When the new teams played, it seemed that they were just enjoying the step-up and not giving enough competition. But you can't blame them.

Small companies (can't even be called corporate houses) were introduced this time around and all they could afford was small-time players. The gulf of difference

between the established teams and the debut teams were enormous. Unknown quantities have a certain romance to them, but it quickly fades away to the reality.

Coming back to the cricket, the pitches ought to be better for the semifinals, otherwise two big matches will be spoiled.

Dhanmondi has offered a Jekyll and Hyde of surfaces adding to the woes of most of the batsmen and as both the semifinals are lined up in this open-ended ground, one can only hope for good wickets.

But the likes of Javed Omar, Tushar Imran and Alok Kapali didn't let all this affect them as all of these discarded batsmen proved their weight. Omar struck three fifties while Imran and Kapali were entrusted to rescue Epyllion and Beximco on a number of occasions.

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Two-goal hero Delwar Hossain (L) of Usha Kirra Chakra tries to get one past a Mariners' defender during their Green Delta Premier Division Hockey League encounter at the Maulana Bhasani Hockey Stadium yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR