



## Did U Know?

The semifinal of the 1996 Cricket World Cup between India and Sri Lanka at Eden Gardens was the first to be awarded to a team by default, the crowd disturbance that forced match referee to award the match to Sri Lanka.



### Courtney Walsh

(West Indies cricket legend)  
"I don't just believe they will do well, I believe they have what it takes to win the World Cup."

**On West Indies' chances to win the cricket World Cup on home**



### TEN Sports

UEFA Champions League  
Barcelona v Liverpool  
Live at 12:30 am (Thursday)  
Porto v Chelsea  
Live at 4:00 am (Thursday)

## LOCAL SNIPPETS

### SPORTS REPORTER

Faisal turned on a magnificent all-round show, carrying Mugdapara Kazi Zafar Ahmed School to an emphatic 148-run victory over high-flyers Dhanmondi Tutorial in the Standard Chartered Young Tigers National School Cricket tournament at the Iqbal Road ground yesterday.

Opting to bat first, Mugdapara whipped up 377 runs in 47.4 overs with Faisal hitting 165 off only 81 balls. Chinaman bowler Shamsul Arefin took three wickets.

Only Sakib stood out hitting 70 as Dhanmondi Tutorial were bowled out for 229 in 47.1 overs. Al Amin and Faisal took three wickets each for the winning side.

Kurmitola High School prevailed in a high-scoring affair when they won by 23 runs against Residential Model School at the Kalindi ground.

Khairul struck 73 as Kurmitola scored 278 all out in 45.4 overs. Sharif chipped in with four wickets. In reply, Residential were bowled out for 255 with Ahsanul missing a century by a run. Saiful took four wickets to clinch the match for Kurmitola.

In other matches, BCSIR School and Nawabpur Government High School won against The Scholars and Happy Times respectively.

### GAIBANDHA SCHOOL CRICKET

Ratul and Ishaque struck half-centuries as Gaibandha Government High School crushed Gobindaganj High School by 175 runs at the Gaibandha Stadium.

Batting first, Gaibandha Govt scored 269 all out in 43.5 overs. In reply, Gobindaganj could only muster 94 runs before being bowled out in 27.1 overs.

### SHAHEED SMRITI HOCKEY

Bangladesh Army and SBSL won at the Holybest Energy Bulb Shaheed Smriti Hockey Tournament at

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# Anwar steadies Dhaka

### SPORTS REPORTER



Wicketkeeper Anwar Hossain almost carried the bat throughout

the day for a hundred as second-placed Dhaka got off to a solid start against Chittagong in the seventh round of the Ispahani Mirzapore Tea National Cricket League at the Fatullah Cricket Stadium yesterday.

If Dhaka stood out with a brilliant top-order batting to finish the day on 300-3, then league leaders Rajshahi rode on a six-wicket burst by out-of-favour seamer Forhad Reza to rule the first day against Sylhet at the Rajshahi Divisional Stadium.

Away at the Khulna Divisional Stadium, Barisal thrived on two half centuries by Hannan Sarker and Rokibul Hasan to score 272-9 against Khulna.

### DHAKA-CHITTAGONG

Wicketkeeper-batsman Anwar occupied the crease for nearly six hours during his 108-run essay that featured sixteen boundaries in 252 balls to lay the foundation for a big total after skipper Al Shahriar decided to bat first at the placid wicket.

The right-hander first shared a 125-run partnership with fellow opener Uttam Sarker, who scored 62 off 121 balls with nine hits to the fence, and then got valuable support from his skipper Shahriar during a 119-run second-wicket stand.

Dashing Shahriar clobbered eight fours and two sixes to make an 88-ball 71.

Shamsur Rahman was batting on 39 and Mahmudullah Riyad was yet to open his account when the stumps were drawn for the first day of the four-day match.

Spinner Sabbir Khan took two wickets for 84 runs in 27 overs.

### RAJSHAHI-SYLHET

Forhad bowled his season's best figure of 6-54 only after seeing himself out from the World Cup squad to wrap up the Sylhet innings for 200 runs in only 66.5 overs.

The right-arm seamer took charge after Shafaq Al-Jabir started the carnage removing Golam Rahman for a duck in the very first over and one down Saif Mahmud (14) with the scoreboard reading 73-2.

Only opener Imtiaz Hossain and Golam Mowla shone in an otherwise disappointing batting display of Sylhet. Imtiaz top-scored 88 off 123 balls that saw ten fours and three sixes while Mowla was unbeaten on 48.

Hasibul Hossain gave Sylhet an early breakthrough but Rafiqul Islam (35) and Forhad kept their cool as the home team boosted by discarded wicketkeeper Khaled Mashud finished the day's play for 56-1.

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# Tigers: A shock will do

AFP, New Delhi



Bangladesh will be praying for at least one shock victory in the World Cup to boost hopes of giving their best-ever performance in the mega one-day event.

The biggest challenge is that an upset win has always been a rarity in their one-day history, thanks largely to their inconsistency against big teams.

Bangladesh are grouped with former champions India and Sri Lanka, and debutants Bermuda, with the top two teams advancing to the next round. They have beaten India and Sri Lanka, but just once.

They have never gone beyond the preliminary round since making their Cup debut in 1999 in England. They have won just two of their 11 games, including one against Pakistan in 1999 which later sparked match-fixing allegations.

Bangladesh hit rock-bottom in the next edition in South Africa when

they failed to win a single match, losing even to non-Test-playing nation Canada in their opening game.

They have beaten big sides, including defending champions Australia in 2005, but have failed to build on these successes. In the event, just when they promise to take one step forward, they take two back.

Bangladesh have fine batsmen in Shahriar Nafees, skipper Habibul Bashar and Mohammad Ashraful who are capable of playing a stunning knock on their day. Aftab Ahmed and Saqibul Hasan can also chip in useful contributions.

What they still need is a collective effort, so essential in setting or chasing a stiff target.

Bangladesh will be looking forward to a solid start from young left-handed opener Nafees so that middle-order batsmen could perform under less pressure.

Nafees, 21, blossomed last year when he hammered three centuries, the only Bangladeshi with more than one hundred in one-day internationals.

He played a big role in his team's winning eight successive one-

dayers last year, albeit against lowly Scotland (two) and Zimbabwe (six). They need to prove their mettle against stronger sides.

Bangladesh have recently clinched a four-match series in Zimbabwe, but will still have to raise their performance in the Caribbean.

Bashar is the most experienced batsman who provides solidity to the middle order, having played nearly 100 one-dayers. Ashraful is a stroke-maker who can be a big asset if he succeeds in converting good starts into big knocks.

Veteran left-arm spinner Mohammad Rafique is the key bowler, having the ability to keep batsmen quiet with his tidy line and length.

Rafique, the only Bangladeshi with more than 100 wickets in one-dayers, and fellow-spinner Abdur Razzak have often dried up runs in the middle order. They require support from pacemen to make their contributions count.

Mashrafe Bin Mortaza spearheads the attack and has the pace to rattle the opposition, but Bangladesh will need an all-round effort to change the last edition's script.



PHOTO: AFP

**THREE MUSKATEERS:** India captain Rahul Dravid (C) with teammates Sachin Tendulkar and Sourav Ganguly (R) pose wearing their official team jersey for the upcoming Cricket World Cup in Mumbai yesterday.

# Batting holds India's key

AFP, New Delhi



If India manage to match their last World Cup runners-up finish in the latest edition in the Caribbean, it will be considered a big achievement considering their horror story in 2006.

India have been experimenting with their batting order ever since Australian Greg Chappell took over as coach in 2005, but have yet to hit upon a winning combination.

Fans began to lose faith in the team which tasted failure at home as well as abroad last year despite the presence of exciting stroke-makers in Sachin Tendulkar, Virender Sehwag and Mahendra Dhoni.

However, despite the pains of 2006, there are signs that things are on the upturn with a 2-1 series win over Sri Lanka this month which saw former skipper Sourav Ganguly making three impressive half-centuries.

Chappell, also a former Australian Test captain, has said in a recent interview that a semifinal

berth is a reasonable ambition and beyond that the World Cup is anybody's tournament.

"We have the ability, but we will have to play well and we will have to have some luck along the way," said Chappell, who was under fire last year for his team's dismal performance.

Rahul Dravid's Indians will require luck as well as pluck to leave a mark in the mega one-day event as little went right for them in 2006.

The new year began well when they thrashed an under-strength West Indies side 3-1 in a home series in January, but the triumph still failed to iron out all of their flaws.

India's problems begin when their strength -- batting -- deserts them. This was precisely what happened with them last year.

Opener Sehwag's form was a major cause of concern as he could manage just 254 runs in 14 matches before he was axed for the West Indies series.

His presence is vital to the team's balance because specialist opener Tendulkar was asked to bat in the middle order in the twin series against the West Indies and Sri Lanka ahead of the World Cup.

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## BCB lets Mashud go

### SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) officially released Khaled Mashud from the A team and named Sahagir Hossain as his replacement for the two four-dayers against touring England A.

The board took the decision following a formal request from the long-serving stumper who also assured them that he will be available for selection after the series against the second string English side.

Out-of-favour Mashud expressed his non-availability after national selectors had drafted him in the 13-member Bangladesh A team saying that he could not be able to play with full commitment in the series.

The first Test (4-day) of the two-match series will start tomorrow at the Mirpur Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium.

### SQUAD

Tushar Imran (captain), Sahagir Hossain (wicketkeeper), Mehrab Hossain, Jahirul Islam, Nasiruddin Faruque, Marshall Ayub, Nadif Chowdhury, Enamul Haque, Dollar Mahmud, Mohammad Sharif, Ziaur Rahman, Mosharraf Hossain, Nazmul Hossain.

## Bima stun Jatrabari

### SPORTS REPORTER

Newcomers Sadharan Bima started their Kai-Altech First Division campaign with an 18-run win over big-spenders Jatrabari at the City Club ground yesterday.

In their first match of the campaign, Bima rode on Bikash Chandra's unbeaten 51 to score 237-5 in 50 overs. Jatrabari were bowled in 47.4 overs for 219 runs, in reply.

On the small Mirpur ground, spinners Arman Haider and Mohammad Lal took three wickets each to give the promotees a good start in their bid to stay alive in the league.

Jatrabari skipper Touhid Hossain batted with purpose, scoring 47.

At the Dhaka University ground, Jahangir Alam's rapid 73 at the top of the order gave Gazi Tank the impetus to notch up 269-9 in 50 overs against Lalmatia. Veteran spinner Suja Erfan took five for 51.

Half-centuries from Arafaat Chowdhury (57) and Adil Ahmed (55) were not enough as Lalmatia were bowled out for only 189 in 44.5 overs. Ataur Rahman took five wickets for Gazi Tank while Sanjay took two.

## Yardy puts emphasis on performance

### SPORTS REPORTER

The visiting England A team attended a press conference yesterday at the residence of the British High Commissioner to Dhaka Anwar Choudhury where captain Michael Yardy stressed the importance of the tour and on the impact it would have on the players who were vying to be future England internationals.

"This is a vital tour for us as regards to the players who want to put themselves in the shop window so to speak. The conditions are inherently different from what we are used to at home and anyone who can perform well here will stand in good stead with the selectors back home when the time comes to pick England squads in the future," said left-hander Yardy who is on his first tour to Bangladesh.

As the timing of the function coincided with the team's practice session, only Yardy and all-rounder Alexander Loudon turned up alongside coach Peter Moores and manager Guy Jackson on behalf of the whole squad.

That however did little to deter the enthusiasm of the diplomat who besides voicing his obvious love for the game also mentioned how he saw cricket as a means of bridging the two nations together.

"Relations between our two countries are better than they have ever been but one thing I feel where we can always improve is interpersonal relationships and this tour should establish that beyond sporting competitiveness. I believe that people to people links are the enduring ties between nations and this is an excellent opportunity to do just that," said Choudhury.

Moores agreed and said that he was very satisfied with the hospitality that they had been shown on the tour. He also ventured a judgement on the local players based on the three-day game that they had participated in.

He said, "I was quite impressed

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PHOTO: AFP

**THE MAC 'N MAC SHOW:** New Zealand batsman Craig McMillan (L) lets go after hitting a blistering century as batting partner Brendon McCullum watches during the third and final match of the Chappell-Hadlee series against Australia at Seddon Park in Hamilton yesterday.

# Macs seal whitewash

## Hayden's 181 goes in vain



AFP, Hamilton

Craig McMillan and Brendon McCullum blasted New Zealand to a stunning series clean-sweep over Australia, negating a magnificent 181 from Matthew Hayden here Tuesday.

In a high-scoring match which produced 26 sixes, New Zealand chased down Australia's 346 for five with one wicket and just three balls to spare.

This was only Australia's second whitewash after losing 3-0 in a three-match series back in 1997 against England.

McCullum struck the winning runs, fittingly another boundary, to end unbeaten on 86 off 89 balls while Craig McMillan engineered the victory with a career-high 117 off 96.

The result further demoralised the world champions Australia, who have now lost five matches in a row just a month out from the World Cup.

When Hayden walked from the pitch unbeaten on 181 -- the highest score by an Australian in one-day cricket -- the Australians were in sight of a consolation win in the

Chappell-Hadlee Trophy series.

New Zealand, already 2-0 up, had been set the second highest one-day run chase to win.

Australia's confidence grew as New Zealand stumbled to 4-41 with the new glamour batsman Ross Taylor -- the hero of the second match in Auckland -- already back in the pavilion.

But out strode McMillan and the tide turned dramatically.

He joined Peter Fulton to put on 75 in 46 balls for the fifth wicket before Fulton fell for 51.

Enter Brendon McCullum, back to his rightful place down the order after a failed experiment as an opener, and between them the Macs blasted New Zealand into contention.

By the time Watson bowled McMillan, New Zealand had the scent of victory with nine overs left and only a further 66 runs required.

Australia came back into the reckoning as Mitchell Johnson winked out James Franklin and Daryl Tuffey reducing New Zealand to their last two wickets with 44 runs required in five overs.

Mark Gillespie atoned for bowling New Zealand's most expensive 10-over spell in limited-overs cricket

-- 2-83 -- with a quickfire 28.

When he departed, McCullum hit a six and four off the first three balls of the final over to complete the series rout for New Zealand.

Despite the heroics of McMillan and McCullum, Hayden was the man-of-the-match for his outstanding innings as he cashed in on New Zealand's decision to lay off their two most experienced bowlers, Shane Bond and Daniel Vettori.

His 181 came from 166 balls and included 10 sixes -- an Australian record and one short of the world record of 11 sixes jointly held by Pakistani Shahid Afridi and Sri Lanka's Sanath Jayasuriya.

Shane Watson chimed in with 68, but none of the other Australian batsmen were in long enough to post scores of note.

Brad Haddin made 38 from 65 balls, while Mike Hussey and Cameron White both made 13 and Brad Hogg 12.

Adam Voges, in his first one-day international, was not out five.

### SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard in the Chappell-Hadlee series third and final match

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PHOTO: STAR

**British High Commissioner Anwar Choudhury (L)** speaks during a press conference at his residence in Gulshan yesterday. Also seen are England A team coach Peter Moores, captain Michael Yardy (C), Alex Loudon and manager Guy Jackson (R).