



A collage of images show (clockwise from left) Bangladesh middle-order batsman Mohammad Ashraful lofting one over the mid-on region while seam bowler Syed Rasel celebrating the fall of a Bermuda wicket at the Queen's Park Oval on Sunday; rapturous early morning celebrations at the TSC following the Tigers' qualification to the Super 8s on Sunday night; and a tiny tot and his mother rooting for the red and green at the Queen's Park Oval where Bangladesh got the better of Bermuda to create history.



Did U Know?

India recorded the highest total in the history of the World Cup when they amassed 413-5 against Bermuda during a group match of the 2007 World Cup in Port of Spain on March 19.



Greg Chappell

(India cricket coach)
"I think there is a need for a serious introspection, but I don't think it should start today."
After his team, which was eventually knocked out of the World Cup by Bangladesh on Sunday, lost to Sri Lanka on Friday.



BTV & SET Max
ICC World Cup 2007 (Super Eights)
West Indies v Australia
Live at 7:30 pm



B.League
Rahmatganj v Muktiyoddha (4:45 pm)
Venue: Bangabandhu National Stadium
Ctg Abahani v Sk Russel (3:45 pm)
Venue: M A Aziz Stadium, Chittagong
National Cricket League (One-Day)
Rajshahi v Khulna
Venue: Fatullah Cricket Stadium
Dhaka v Barisal
Venue: Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium
Chittagong v Sylhet
Venue: BKSP

This is our moment

TIGERCRIKET.COM, *Port of Spain*



Eight is probably the most heartening moment for the true cricket neutrals and it didn't come easy. Bermuda's opening bowlers particularly the balding 36-year-old Saleem Mukuddem made sure that some fingers and nails would be chewed and classy teenagers and experienced heads would fight as much with the extravagant seam movement as with their inner self before finally completing victory.

It wasn't fun to watch the Bangladesh's chase. The target, a mere 96 from 21 overs became a tricky one because of the nerves involved. When you are approaching history you are bound to feel that. Tamim Iqbal had gone in the second over trying to slash Mukuddem out of the ground only for the breeze to carry the ball near to Kevin Hurdle who did the rest in spectacular fashion. Aftab Ahmed tried to hit his way out of trouble but it was not going to work on this day with Mukuddem spitting fire at 120kph. Shahriar Nafees was another victim of the perfect seam that squares you up and at 37-3 it was still a long way to go for Bangladesh.

Enter Sakib Al Hasan and

Mohammad Ashraful. One without a thing called nerve in his system the other in one of those diamond streaks of his when no one but he himself decides when to get out. They chanced their arms, missed, got beaten and had chances dropped or go through unmanned areas. But in the end it was their determination to write history that saw the Tigers home a fact acknowledged by the men who knew how tough it was.

"This game was the most difficult you could be in to qualify. To wait all day and then play 21 overs against a team that you are supposed to beat and beat well, chasing that total wasn't easy as the ball was doing all sorts of things," said coach Dav Whatmore. "It was very difficult for the boys in the first ten overs. It was the most difficult situation possible. I take my hat off (to the players). Yes it was close and the heart was pumping a little bit but the boys have not been in this situation before and they have done very, very well."

Captain Habibul Bashar couldn't have agreed more. "It was very tense and I would be lying if I said that I wasn't feeling a touch nervous. In a 50 overs game you have a chance to come back. Here with just 21 overs on offer if you lose wickets early and then find the asking run rate going up it just makes the task more difficult, doesn't matter who you are playing against."

Whatmore has seen it all. A miracle-maker with Sri Lanka he knows what his current charges are capable of and the preparation had been laid down accordingly.

"This is very significant for us. This is something I personally knew we had the potential to do and now it is becoming more of a reality," said Whatmore with conviction. "The team came earlier than everyone else. The ICC arranged a couple of extra matches mainly for the benefit of Canada and Bermuda. I think we missed just one practice session due to weather. It was a combination of managing the players on the fitness area and the physiotherapy area and generally building each other up for every match that came along. This is a wholesome answer but there was much more that went into it."

The triumph was also another statement from the team's youth brigade.

"We've got a couple of guys who have good experience but still that is not the experience like some of the others. Apart from Habibul (Bashar) and Rafique the others are all below the age of 23. So it was young, it contains a lot of enthusiasm and energy and it's good to be a part of it and to see some of the results coming through. We still have a long way to go but when you see results like this it's really heart-warming and reassuring that what you're doing is correct," said Whatmore.

So what's next for this gallant side that have stirred the imagination of the people here prompting some to display the banner from the stands, "Bangladesh you have won our Trini hearts?"

"I just feel that the players will have a wonderful, wonderful experience to participate in a major tour-

nament against six of the best teams in the world. We are keen to put our best foot forward. We understand that we are still ranked number nine in the world. Ireland is there also and they have played very well and are ranked below us. We are going to go out there and really enjoy the experience more than anything else and see if we can cause an upset or two or more," Whatmore stated.

The team most hurt from the Bangladesh roll is India who are going home and no wonder Bashar, who has indeed 'sunk a billion hearts' was asked at the post match briefing if the Tigers would miss India and also Pakistan in the Super Eight.

"As long as we are there I won't miss anyone," was the answer as a ripple of laughter spread around the media conference room. This is Bangladesh's moment indeed and the captain was clear about it. "I think we deserve to be in the Super Eight because we have played good cricket. This wasn't a surprise to me because we knew if we do the basics right and play with the spirit that has been the hallmark of this side then we can beat top sides. So let's see what happens in the coming days."

Whatmore is also not particularly pleased with the suggestion

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Tigers leave for Antigua

TIGERCRIKET.COM, *undated*

The Bangladesh cricket team left Port of Spain yesterday morning for Antigua on a chartered aircraft to prepare for their first World Cup Super Eight match against Australia on March 31.

The Tigers qualified for the Super Eight on Sunday after defeating Bermuda by seven wickets at the Queen's Park Oval. Bangladesh are due to meet New Zealand, also in Antigua on the 2nd of April before travelling to Guyana for the match against South Africa on the 7th. Their remaining games will be against England (11 April), Ireland (15 April) and the West Indies (19 April) in Barbados.

NCL 1-dayers from today

SPORTS REPORTER

The one-day competition of the Ispahani Mirzapore Tea 8th National Cricket League begins today at three different venues.

Rajshahi launch their campaign against Khulna at the Fatullah Cricket Stadium to defend the one-day title after losing the four-day championship to Dhaka.

Dhaka host Barisal at the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium and Chittagong take on Sylhet at BKSP in the other opening day fixtures.

It is going to play in a single league basis with colour dress and white ball. Another significant part is the matches will not be played across the country rather at the three Dhaka venues.

Exit the Indians, enter the Tigers

AFP, *Port of Spain*



debutants Bermuda on Sunday and eliminated mighty India in the process.

It was Bangladesh's best-ever performance in the tournament since making their Cup debut in England in 1999. They failed to go beyond the first round in England and then again in the next edition in 2003 in South Africa.

Bangladesh's second win in the four-team Group B also knocked former champions India out of the tournament. Sri Lanka have already advanced to the Super Eights with an all-win record.

India had already finished their group campaign with one win and two defeats and their slim hopes rested on an unlikely Bermudan win.

The Cup debutants lost of their three matches.

Bangladesh had to face many anxious moments chasing a rain-revised target of 96 in the 21-overs-a-side game before entering the next round.

They survived a three-wicket burst from new-ball bowler Saleem Mukuddem before man-of-the-match Mohammad Ashraful (29 not out) and teenager Shakib Al Hasan (26 not out) completed the job in semi-darkness at the Queen's Park Oval.

"We were a little bit nervous chasing the target as it was a very important match for us. Then, Ashraful and Sakib batted very well," said Bangladesh skipper Habibul Bashar.

"I am delighted as the boys showed a positive approach. I hope we continue to perform in the next round. We have been playing good cricket in the tournament. The win has given us confidence to do well in the Super Eights."

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BANGLADESH V BERMUDA SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard of the rain-hit World Cup Group B match between Bangladesh and Bermuda at the Queen's Park Oval in Port of Spain on Sunday (match reduced to 21 overs a side):

BERMUDA		R	B	4s	6s
Outerbridge c Mohammad Rafique b Mashrafe Bin Mortaza	0	4	0	0	0
Pitcher c Habibul Bashar b Shakib Al Hasan	22	47	1	0	0
Borden c Habibul Bashar b Mashrafe Bin Mortaza	2	11	0	0	0
Hemp c Aftab Ahmed b Syed Rasel	0	4	0	0	0
Romaine lbw b Abdur Razzak	11	21	2	0	0
Minors c Tamim Iqbal b Abdur Razzak	23	25	0	1	0
Cann b Shakib Al Hasan	16	6	2	1	0
Tucker c Tamim Iqbal b Mohammad Rafique	9	6	1	0	0
Hurdle b Abdur Razzak	0	4	0	0	0
Mukuddem not out	0	0	0	0	0
Extras: (lb-5, w-4, nb-2)	11				
Total: (For 9 wickets in 21 overs)	94				

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Mandira hurts Tigers sentiments

MOHAMMAD ISAM



If Mandira Bedi is an example of a passionate Indian cricket fan, it's sad. Do the average Indian fans degrade their opponents so much after a defeat? Is it their attitude to make a mockery out of their opponent every time they lose? Questions are being raised because Bedi has been doing all these in front of a live television audience of well over a billion.

On the show she hosts along with Charu Sharma on SET Max, Bedi has repeatedly gestured rudely whenever Bangladesh has shown some promise in the World Cup in the Caribbean. This began on the night of March 17 when Bangladesh beat India, much to her displeasure.

With no sense of duty that she is hosting a show as well as representing her country to the Asian region,

Bedi has made remarks that were ridiculous. Her questions to the panel of experts in connection to Bangladesh have been downright embarrassing for the viewers in Bangladesh. In one of the shows after Bangladesh defeated India, she sniped that 'they are just lucky'.

These repeated critical attacks from a person who has no cricketing knowledge to speak of, quite amazingly, is being encouraged even by the show producers. Definitely in charge of the programme, they have given her the liberty to say and do a lot of things on the show. Her attitude is acceptable, even quite amusing, when India loses, but that's expected from any passionate Indian fan. When Bangladesh lost their second match, sentences used in the show were offensive to say the least.

'Are they good enough?' has been a favourite question in the

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The show must go on

Cup enters second phase

AFP, *Bridgetown*



Eight teams down, eight left and still five weeks to run in this World Cup marathon as the second round Super Eights gets underway on Tuesday. But the murder of Bob Woolmer will overshadow whatever happens on the pitches of Antigua, Guyana, Grenada and Barbados as Australia, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, New Zealand, England, West Indies and Ireland undergo a furious round of inter-island hopping, trying to secure semifinal places.

Former West Indies fast bowler Michael Holding, who played in the 1979 and 1983 World Cups, believes the 2007 tournament will be forever associated with the murder of the Pakistan coach.

"It's not something you should just brush under the carpet," said Holding. "It's a sad occurrence."

The Super Eights, where the

remaining teams play six matches each, start in Antigua on Tuesday with hosts West Indies facing defending champions Australia at the Sir Vivian Richards stadium.

There are high hopes that the wicket at the new venue will have more life than the old Antigua Recreation Ground in St John's which boasted a notorious feather-bed of a pitch.

Australia's attacking batsmen are in fine form having scored 334, 358 and 377 in their three wins over Scotland, Netherlands and South Africa in the first round.

"The West Indies are a very dangerous team, they are on home soil, they should know these conditions very well," said Australia captain Ricky Ponting who became the seventh player to pass 10,000 one-day runs in the win against South Africa.

"It starts now. Every step you take in this tournament becomes more and more exciting."

Bangladesh grabbed the second qualifying place in Group B.

But Sri Lanka skipper Mahela Jayawardene is quick to quash comparisons with the 1996 World Cup winning team.

"That 1996 side was an amazing team," said Jayawardene.

"They just outplayed everybody. They created new waves in one-day cricket. They did a brilliant job."

"But things have changed. There are lots of good sides and you can't make any mistakes."

South Africa captain Graeme Smith, whose team starts their second round campaign against Sri Lanka in Guyana on Wednesday, insists his quest for a first World Cup title is still on track despite the defeat to Australia.

"A victory would have been terrific, but there is still so much cricket to be played in this tournament," said Smith after the Aussies secured an extra two points to take into the Super Eights.

"One of our strengths is our

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TODAY'S MATCH

Team	Time	Venue
West Indies v Australia	7:30 pm	Antigua