



Did U Know?

The first ever one-day international was held between England and Australia at Melbourne in 1971.

What to WATCH

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



Mohammad Ashraful
(Bangladesh batting star)
"I never think about the bowlers when I am batting. I just watch the deliveries."
After his match-winning knock of 87 in the World Cup Super Eights match against South Africa on Saturday.



B.League
Farashganj v Mukti Jiddha (4:45 pm)
Venue: Bangabandhu National Stadium

Bashar hits out at the killjoys

AFP, Dhaka

Bangladesh captain Habibul Bashar hit out Monday at World Cup killjoys who bemoan the absence of India and Pakistan saying the sub-continentals do not have a right to be in the final.

"Someone asked me whether the World Cup has become stale after the exit of India and Pakistan," Bashar wrote in his column in the Prothom Alo newspaper.

"It seems that at any cost India and Pakistan should be included in the Super Eight. They are not saying that India and Pakistan lost two out of their three first round matches," the skipper said.

"They don't have the right to play in the Super Eight," he insisted. "If this attitude persists, one should organise Top Ranking Cup instead of the World Cup, where the teams will play according to their rankings."

"The World Cup is not a property of one or two teams. It belongs to every one and the best team will win the Cup."

Bashar was clearly irked after Bangladesh pulled off a major upset by beating what was the world's top ranked team South Africa by 67 runs.

He wrote in the Bengali daily that the win over South Africa would silence some of the "noises" heard after Bangladesh lost their first two matches of the Super Eight round.

"I think this victory will stop all these things. Instead of spoiling the show, Bangladesh has made the World Cup more interesting. There are now plenty of teams now fighting for the semifinals," he added.

"We have a bright chance to play the semifinal if we can beat England. The English team has some good players but they are not playing well in the World Cup. So it will not be impossible to beat them," he predicted.

Bangladesh meet England in their next match at Barbados on April 11, followed by Ireland and the West Indies at the same venue.

Timing was right: Dav

AFP, Georgetown



ranked number one in the world. "They are a very good side, but I felt the conditions suited us a lot more than the conditions at the other venues we have had. Once we saw that, we really made merry and played extremely good cricket to win the game."

"That's another very significant win in the progress of Bangladesh cricket," said Whatmore, whose side pulled off one of the major upsets in the tournament with a 67-run win over Graeme Smith's South Africans here on Saturday.

This was not the first time Bangladesh had turned the form-book upside down in the ongoing event, having whipped India in a group match in Trinidad last month.

"It was a very significant victory (against South Africa). We did well to make the Super Eights," said Whatmore, whose team had lost to defending champions Australia and New Zealand in the first two matches.

"After the previous two matches where we were beaten pretty badly, it is great to turn it around and win against a team which is currently

Providence Stadium here.

"If we have conditions like these, I would be very happy. I don't know what the conditions are. I have a suspicion that the Barbados wicket will have a lot more grass than this," he said.

"We have to wait and see, but we have given ourselves a very reasonable chance."

Bangladesh, who picked up their first two points and moved off the foot of the Super Eights table with the win against South Africa, will now meet the West Indies, England and debutants Ireland in their remaining matches.

Whatmore said his spinners were instrumental in keeping the pressure on South Africa, who were dismissed for 184 chasing a 252-run target on a slow pitch.

Left-arm spinners Abdur Razzak, Mohammad Rafique and Shakib Al Hasan shared six wickets and never allowed the batsmen to take liberties during their tight spells.

"We played three left-arm spinners because that is our best combination. It's just like if you got your best three batsmen are all left-handers, you don't change that," said Whatmore.

Whatmore said his team had a chance to advance in the tournament if the conditions were similar to those they encountered at the

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PHOTO: AFP

Ireland's Eoin Morgan jumps backwards to take a catch off New Zealand batsman Hamish Marshall to dismiss him during their Super Eights match of the World Cup at Guyana National Stadium in Georgetown yesterday.

Indians befriend Tigers

AFP, New Delhi



Bangladesh's stunning progress in the World Cup has given cricket lovers in India reason to cheer again after their own team was knocked out in the first round.

The giant-killing feats of Habibul Bashar's men have revived interest in the tournament for millions of Indians, who now want both Sri Lanka and Bangladesh to advance to the semifinals.

That Bangladesh caused India's World Cup exit with a shock five-wicket win in the preliminary round mattered little as fans shared the joy of their unheralded neighbours. "They deserve their success," said Delhi student Shoumik Bose. "I had stopped watching the World Cup after India were defeated, but Bangladesh had forced me to switch to the semifinals."

Everyone is harping on how India poorly fared at the World Cup, but one must give credit to

Bangladesh who played so well," said Indian cricket board treasurer N. Srinivasan.

India, who helped Bangladesh gain Test status in 2000, is the only Test-playing nation that has not hosted their neighbours in the belief that a series against them will be a financial disaster.

"After years of being snubbed by big brother, the little 'un' turned around and administered an embarrassing slap in the face," The British daily, The Guardian, wrote after India's defeat in the World Cup.

"The minnow talk can end here and now. Bangladesh cricket has arrived and, with 150 million passionate followers, is here to stay."

"What price an invitation to India now? And wouldn't it be priceless if the subcontinent's new Tigers turned it down?"

India are due to play three one-day internationals and two Tests in Bangladesh next month, a tour that has assumed greater significance after the World Cup debacle.

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Aaquib impressed

Cricket

BISHWAJIT ROY

Former Pakistan pace bowler-turned-coach Aaquib Javed sees Bangladesh cricket team's splendid run in the World Cup in the Caribbean as the outcome of a good system.

Aaquib, who is here as coach of the Pakistan Cricket Academy team, said he has his eyes set on the Pakistan job and also criticised Bangladesh coach Dav Whatmore for showing his untimely interest in India.

It was, however, a different feeling for the former international to see the Bangladeshi people exuberant with their team's World Cup success while his countrymen remained shell-shocked by the national team's first round exit.

"I heard that there are some political problems in Bangladesh but your cricketers have given the nation good reasons to smile. That's why sports is very important," he said while talking to this reporter at the Mirpur Sher-e-Bangla National

Stadium yesterday.

Aaquib rated Bangladesh's 67-run victory against South Africa highly and said that it gave him the impression that the Tigers could win matches at the highest level on their own.

"I saw the match on TV and I think it's a boost for Bangladesh

cricket. After beating India many told that India didn't play well. Rather than praising Bangladesh they were busy criticising Indian cricketers.

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AQUIB JAVED

Barbados-leg begins for Tigers

TIGERCRICKET.COM, Bridgetown

Two islands and one country visited and all three won over through cricket and the charm of youth, exuberance and modesty. That has been the Bangladesh cricket team's progress report in this World Cup.

Just like Trinidad, Guyana also danced and rose to the Tigers' beat.

After the demolition of South Africa, the Bangladesh team became the celebrity group everyone wants a piece of. Even the normally easy-going Taj Restaurant, where the Tigers usually had their dinner, had to be closed off for public because of the excitement and rush the Bangladesh team evoked on reaching there after the South Africa game.

People stood up and applauded on the streets, some managed Bangladeshi flags from God knows where and a significant contingent of Indians, who had purchased match-tickets in advance anticipating India would be playing there, spontaneously converted to Bangladeshi fans.

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Both WI, SA need to win

AFP, St George's



The West Indies and South Africa go into their World Cup Super Eights match at the Grenada National Stadium Tuesday, both knowing that a defeat could end their chances of reaching the semifinals.

South Africa's shock 67-run defeat against Bangladesh in Guyana Saturday transformed them from one of the sides most likely to reach the last four to a team hanging on to a slim hope of going through.

The West Indies, meanwhile, are by captain Brian Lara's admission, "in a crisis situation".

To be sure of reaching the semifinals, both teams need to win all three of their remaining matches, although it is possible that two wins and a healthy run-rate could be enough.

Both South Africa and the West Indies have negative run rates so would need some big wins to get

through in the event of a tie.

South Africa captain Graeme Smith admitted the defeat against Bangladesh had meant the loss of two points his team were banking on.

"It's a big loss for us," he said.

But Smith said his team had the ability to bounce back.

"It's still in our control and the next three games are important. We don't want to be relying on other people to get us through."

Smith said South Africa had failed in the basics against Bangladesh.

"We put ourselves under pressure by not doing the simple things right. We've got the players, we've got the team and we have to show a bit of character."

Adding to the uncertainty ahead of the first match of the World Cup to be played in Grenada is that a new pitch has been laid at the National Stadium, rebuilt after the original Queen's Park ground was devastated by the hurricanes of 2004 and 2005.

Lara said after his team's 113-run defeat by Sri Lanka in Guyana last Sunday that his team were physically

drained by having four games on sandy outfields in ten days.

They will play South Africa after a break of nine days between matches.

Some of the players took time off before reassembling in Grenada and the team have been heavily criticised with Lara's captaincy singled out for derision.

But they will be buoyed by their record against South Africa in big tournaments, although in all matches between the two teams South Africa have a big lead.

The West Indies knocked out South Africa in the quarterfinals of the 1996 World Cup after their opponents had been unbeaten in group matches.

Then they won the opening game of the 2003 tournament in South Africa at the start of a sequence of events which saw the hosts eliminated in the first round.

The West Indies beat South Africa on the way to winning the 2004 Champions Trophy in England and in their most recent clash won a Champions Trophy.

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Ravi wants a happy team

Cricket

AFP, New Delhi

India's new interim cricket manager Ravi Shastri said on Monday his major task was to ensure players recovered from the World Cup disaster and enjoyed the game again.

"I make no promises. What my endeavour is to see a happy Indian team playing cricket," Shastri told the CNN-IBN news channel from Singapore where he is working as a TV expert during the tournament.

"Watching India playing in the last three to four months just gave me the impression that they were doing a 9-5 desk job with huge weight and expectations on their shoulders. "What I want to tell them is that this is sport and they should

go out there and enjoy it. And if you lose in that fashion then I am ready to take it on the chin."

"So, no promises whatsoever. I just want India to play happy and



RAVI SHASTRI

good cricket. And you guys watching should enjoy it too."

Shastri, a former Test star-turned-commentator will serve as the team's manager for a tour of Bangladesh next month after Australian coach Greg Chappell declined to renew his contract.

India, World Cup champions in 1983 and finalists in 2003, were knocked out in the first round of the ongoing tournament in the Caribbean after losing to Bangladesh and Sri Lanka.

Shastri, 44, said his role was confined to the Bangladesh tour to give India's cricket chiefs sufficient time to find Chappell's successor for matches in England and Ireland in July.

"I love challenges," said Shastri. "So, when I was asked whether you will put your hand up, I said yes. I

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Bangladesh inspire Irish

AFP, Georgetown



Ireland captain Trent Johnston believes Bangladesh's shock win over South Africa can inspire his team to pick up at least one victory in the World Cup Super Eights.

"(Bangladesh win) has given us probably some motivation to compete with these bigger teams," said Johnston of lowly-ranked Bangladesh's surprising 67-run defeat of Graeme Smith's men here on Saturday.

Johnston said Bangladesh's win was set up by their spinners. "We watched the match and Bangladesh performed fantastically well and their three spinners are crucial to their plans and set up the win. It's (playing spinners) probably one area that we need to work hard on in the middle overs."

Bangladesh, who set South Africa a target of 252 to win after being put into bat, were spurred on by their three left-arm slow bowlers who shared six wickets between them to shoot their opponents out for just 184.

While Bangladesh now fancy their outside chances of a place in

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