

## LOCAL SNIPPETS

### SPORTS REPORTER

International Master Abdullah Al Rakib maintained his solo lead in the 33rd National Chess Championship after his 10th round win over FM Taibur Rahman at the NSC hall-room yesterday. Rakib's win took him to 8.5 points while GM Ziaur Rahman was shocked by Aminul Islam, who won his first IM norm on the previous day. Zia now shares the second place with IM Enamul Hossain Rajib on seven points.

#### KAI-ALTECH CRICKET

Gazi Tank recorded a comprehensive six-wicket victory against Agrani Bank in the Kai-Altech First Division Cricket League at the BKSP. Having booked Agrani for 94 in 37.2 overs in a rain-affected game, Gazi Tank rattled 96 for four in just 15.3 overs. Kotton topscored 29 for the winners.

In second division, Sinha Textiles (162-6) beat Gulshan Youth (160) by four wickets, Kalindi KC (168-3) defeated Badda Ekota (165) by seven wickets while the match between Wari and Young Ones was abandoned due to inadequate light with both sharing points.

#### U-14 CRICKET

Tuhin Bannerjee grabbed four wickets for 18 to help visiting (CAB) Cricket Association of Bengal bowl out Rajshahi Division North for 143 in their Under-14 two-day exhibition match at Bogra.

After a 50-run opening stand, the local side lost their way with Priyank and Writick chipping in with two wickets each for the tourists, who reached 98-4 in 37 overs at stumps at the Shaheed Chandu Stadium. Avishek Raman made highest 30 for the CAB U-14s.

#### INTER-SERVICE HOCKEY

First half goals from Didar and Alo helped Bangladesh Army blank Bangladesh Air Force 2-0 in the opening match of the Inter-service hockey meet on Wednesday. Earlier, Principal Staff Officer of Armed Forces Division Maj Gen Mohammed Jahangir Alam Chowdhury inaugurated the three-team meet at the BAF Base Matlur Rahman hockey ground in Jessore.

#### GO-KART

Asad Kibria of HS Enterprise emerged champion in the Chery Go-kart Competition 2007 held at the Go-kart Centre in Ashulia recently. Akhter Iqbal of MBA Club finished runners-up while Martin of Simed International clinched third place. HS Enterprise sponsored the competition for the corporate houses with co-sponsors Aktel and Rahimafrooz.

## Was there

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Rafique, in particular, was at his wily best.

Brought on when half of the runs in the chase were scored, the 36-year-old left-arm spinner brought England down to their knees with his nagging line and immaculately placed arm-balls. Razzak, faster through the air, again showed that he is the man in form. If only Rahim's wicketkeeping complemented the fielding, a win was a possibility.

With just a few days left before their Ireland match at the same venue, the management should be well aware that one slip-up in relentless international cricket is as bad as making a hundred big mistakes.

## Silky Shakib

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darting around, but Bashar didn't look for excuses. "We didn't adapt," he said simply. "It was a new wicket and we knew something was going to happen." Some of the shot selection wasn't too clever either, but Bashar justified it by saying: "We thought attack was the best defence."

It was Shakib Al who showed how aggression and caution could go hand in hand, adding 47 with Mortaza, whose restraint finally gave way to an ugly hoick, and 24 with Razzak. But 143 was never likely to be enough and for the spinners to create an impression, there needed to be a dent or two with the new ball.

Once again, it was a left hand that provided the opening. Syed Rasel wasn't set the pulse racing with raw speed, but his line and length are impeccable, his changes of pace canny. Mortaza worked up a fair head of steam at the other end, but it was Rasel that did the damage, allowing Bashar to bring on Razzak as early as the 13th over. After that, it was spin all the way, with Razzak and the wily Mohammad Rafique probing to reveal many of the old English frailties against the turning ball.

"If we could have got one or two more wickets, there would have been three tailenders," Bashar said when asked if he'd harboured any visions of an upset with England 110 for 6. "But Nixon and Collingwood batted very sensibly."

Even with all the permutations possible, their poor run-rate effectively rules Bangladesh out of the running for a last-four place. "Our chances are very slim," Bashar said, "but the Super Eights are getting interesting." They would have been even more intriguing if he and his boys had put a few more runs on the board.



PHOTO: AFP

Australia captain Ricky Ponting having a throw-down during a practice session at the Kensington Oval in Bridgetown on Thursday.

# Hayden eyes big one

AFP, Bridgetown



Sachin Tendulkar's record of most one-day international runs made in a year.

The veteran Australian opener is the top scorer in the World Cup with 436 runs which has taken his total for 2007 to 1,042.

Tendulkar holds the record of 1,894 set in 1998 but that mark is in danger because of Hayden's pyrotechnics.

The 35-year-old Australian batsman had already set one record at the World Cup by becoming the fastest man to reach 1,000 one-day runs in a year.

He achieved that when he made an unbeaten 47 against Bangladesh on March 31, almost two months faster than the previous best set by India captain Rahul Dravid in 1999.

AFP, St George's



South Africa captain Graeme Smith says playing with freedom and natural flair holds the key to his team's revived Cricket World Cup campaign.

He said an aggressive policy paid off in the 67-run Super Eights win over the West Indies at the Grenada National Stadium Tuesday after what he described as a tentative performance when they suffered a shock defeat by the same margin against Bangladesh in Guyana Saturday.

"We felt we were a little bit tentative against Bangladesh and we wanted to come out and express ourselves and not to put ourselves under pressure and restrict ourselves in the way we play," Smith said.

"We've got ourselves into the top ranking playing a certain style of cricket."

"Against Bangladesh we put ourselves under pressure by not sticking to what we naturally know how to do and what's worked for us. We wanted to go back to that, to relax and just allow ourselves to play with freedom but obviously

It took Hayden just 18 matches to reach the 1,000-mark; Tendulkar took one match more in 1998.

The left-handed Hayden has enjoyed a remarkable World Cup, hitting two centuries and one fifty in six innings as defending champions Australia have won all six matches played.

Against the West Indies in the opening Super Eights match, he made 158, the highest ever World Cup score made by an Australian player.

But it has been a rocky road to the top for the muscular Queenslander.

He was dropped from the one-day side for the best part of a year after the 2005 tour of England with Phil Jaques, Shane Watson and Simon Katich all given a run instead.

But he forced his way back in and in February scored an Australian one-day record 181 not out against New Zealand in Hamilton -- a match where his toe was broken by fast bowler Mark Gillespie.

"I've had a lot of commitment and passion, to get back into the side,"

said Hayden, who played in the 2003 World Cup winning team.

"In particular, to represent Australia at the World Cup is an enormous privilege and honour. It's a special side to be a part of -- and it's never meant to be an easy thing to play for Australia.

"I said when I got dropped a couple of years back that I didn't feel I was ready to let the (one-day) game go -- that world-class players play both forms of the game. I'm just very happy that it's coming off right now."

His opening partner Adam Gilchrist has described Hayden as an "intimidating" talent.

"Matty has been the standout performer," said Gilchrist earlier in the tournament.

"He's in really intimidating form at the moment and to be part of that partnership is really pleasing."

Hayden has a golden opportunity to add to his tally here on Friday when Australia face Ireland.

# Smith rallies for flair

you've got to put some brains to it."

Smith strongly denied there was any disunity in the South African camp, which might have contributed to the defeat against Bangladesh.

"We just played very badly against Bangladesh. We knew we let ourselves down and it was nice to pick ourselves up. Some of the stuff that went around back home about the team being divided and fighting was all a load of crap."

South Africa's chances of reaching the semifinals were improved by their win over the West Indies, which effectively eliminated the host nation, and England's defeat against Australia in Antigua Sunday.

If they win their two remaining Super Eights games, against leaders New Zealand in Grenada Saturday and England in Barbados Tuesday, they will definitely qualify.

But even if they lose to New Zealand they can still get through by beating England.

"New Zealand is a big game," said Smith.

"They have played well in this tournament. They are a pretty balanced team and they play well together. They bat pretty low and they've got a lot of options in the bowling department."

But Smith said South Africa had

a good record against New Zealand and if his team played the way they had against the West Indies they would be confident.

With a seam-based attack, South Africa have struggled to get their 50 overs bowled in time and they have also conceded plenty of runs in the closing overs -- 89 in the last ten against Australia, 80 in the same period against Bangladesh and 70 against the West Indies.

They were fined five per cent of their match fee, with captain Smith losing ten per cent, for not completing their overs in time against Bangladesh.

With time running out against the West Indies, Smith brought himself on to bowl some expensive off-spinners to get the overs completed before the side incurred another penalty.

"We knew the first 20 overs would be the key for us," he said to explain his tactics against the West Indies.

"We took our time because we wanted to be a little more precise. We knew if we could take wickets we could control the game from there. The death bowling wasn't really an option because the game was won by then."

Of his own bowling, he said: "It was a matter of rushing it to get the overs done."

## Symonds wants longer innings

CRICINFO, undated

Andrew Symonds might be suffering from a lack of batting time as Australia's top-order dominates at the World Cup, but he feels ready for a long innings if his teammates allow it. Matthew Hayden, Adam Gilchrist, Ricky Ponting and Michael Clarke are in the top 15 run-scorers for the tournament and while the success has been great for the team, it has prevented Symonds from starring in his preferred discipline after returning from arm surgery.

Symonds has bowled in each game and he was able to employ medium pace in the win over England on Sunday, which is a huge bonus for Australia with Shane Watson out injured. However, his batting at No. 5 has been limited to cameos of 18, 13, and 28 not out.

## Bird irate at ECB

PTI, London

England and Wales Cricket Board's latest announcement that players would be able to challenge umpires' decision in a limited-overs tournament has irked Dickie Bird, who said it signalled the age of "glorified hat stands".

The ECB has announced plans which allow county players to refer decisions to the TV umpire, in this season's 50-over Friends Provident Trophy.

Only the captain of the fielding side and the batsman involved in the dismissal may refer a decision, under the new plans each team is allowed two unsuccessful referrals per innings on all modes of dismissal, except batsmen being timed out for taking more than two minutes to reach the crease at the fall of a wicket.

But Bird said the Board were taking away umpires' integrity.

## Inzamam slams hotel security

AFP, Islamabad

Former Pakistan cricket captain Inzamamul Haq criticised the security at the Jamaican hotel where coach Bob Woolmer was strangled during the World Cup last month.

Woolmer was found dead in his hotel room in Kingston, Jamaica on March 18, a day after cricketing giants Pakistan suffered a shock defeat at the hands of minnows Ireland, knocking them out of the World Cup.

Inzamam -- who quit as skipper after Pakistan's exit and also announced his retirement from one-day internationals -- said if the murder had happened in Pakistan there would have been a big fuss abroad.

"Four international teams were staying in one hotel -- what security arrangements were made for them? There should be an investigation," Inzamam told private Geo television in an interview broadcast Thursday.

"We should raise this question" with the World Cup hosts, he added.

## Facile win

**FROM PAGE 21**  
**PAKISTAN ACADEMY:** 225 and 143 all out in 52.1 overs (Rahim 0, Latif 1, Yousof 2, Fawad 47, Adnan 7, Tanveer 5, Sharfaraz 21, Rauf 0, Zhaob 33, Maqbool 18, Najaf 0 n.o. extras 9, Zia 3-32, Sajidul 2-23, Mosharraf 3-50, Mehrab 2-21). **Result:** Bangladesh Academy won by 77 runs.

## Marcus is back

**FROM PAGE 24**  
predicting when that will be. "I believe I will play for England again, but only when the time is right for all concerned."

Trescothick was sorely missed in Australia where Ricky Ponting's men regained the Ashes with a 5-0 whitewash.

"I wouldn't have gone to Australia if I hadn't felt convinced in my own mind that I could handle an Ashes series there," he added. "Now I know that feeling was wrong."

"While viewing the Ashes matches I really wished I could be out there helping the team, but knew deep down that I needed to be at home."

Trescothick has been missed in the Caribbean where the top order has found runs hard to come by.

"With the World Cup it has been different in that I just wish I was there full stop, which in itself demonstrates progress," said Trescothick.

## Vaughan looks

**FROM PAGE 24**  
"It was tighter than we'd have liked but we got the two points, we've got a few days off now and we have to make sure we go into that South Africa game hopefully playing a little bit better," he said.

"We know a little more about the Barbados wicket now we've played on it. It's quite a tricky pitch and it's not the flat track everyone thinks it is so it's going to be quite interesting to see how it plays against South Africa."

Vaughan praised man-of-the-match Sajid Mahmood whose 3-27 helped England restrict Bangladesh to a meagre 143 all out.

"Sajid bowled tremendously well but we just didn't quite get our lines and lengths consistent but still restricted them to a very low total."

"They made it very difficult, bowled very straight and those three spinners were a hard option and you can see how they've won games in this World Cup," said Vaughan of the Bangladeshi slow bowlers who helped engineer an upset 67-run win over South Africa in Guyana last week.

Mahmood, who took a career-best 4-50 against Sri Lanka last week, hoped he can improve.

"It's a quick and bouncy wicket and hopefully in the next couple of games I can get the ball in decent areas. I think I'm hitting quite good areas and I'm working hard on my consistency in the nets," said the 25-year-old.

# Chittagong derby today



### SPORTS REPORTER

Port city rivals Abahani and Mohammedan will be pitted against each other in the first Chittagong derby of the B. League today with the latter favourite to win the first match of Week 7 and put pressure on the top four.

Chittagong Mohammedan, the surprise package of the 11-team competition, are still unbeaten at home and are currently fifth in the table with eight points.

The match will kick off at 3.45 pm at the MA Aziz Stadium.

In Dhaka, Mohammedan will look forward to improve their position when the struggling giants from the capital host bottom-table Rahmatganj.

Having collected just five points from as many matches, Mohammedan had a welcome rest

last week. However, when Shafiqul Islam Manik's side return to the Bangabandhu National Stadium, they will start at third from bottom, an embarrassing situation the mighty club have had never experienced before.

With a score of mediocre players, the black and whites got off to a good start when they edged Arambagh in the opening round but that remains their only win as they slumped to two defeats and two draws.

Even the four Nigerians have not managed to hide the weaknesses that have been troubling the Motijheel outfit, who were lucky to win a point in their last game when they held local Mohammedan 0-0.

Rahmatganj, having conceded 11 goals in six outings, have the second weakest defence and lost their last four games. Their only point came from a goalless draw with Arambagh in the second round but the old-Dhaka club were unfortunate to lose 1-0 to Abahani, who snatched the match winner in stoppage time two weeks earlier.

Sheikh Russel are still on top with 12 points, followed by

Muktijoddha and Abahani who are just one point adrift.

Abahani, who have played a match less than their title rivals, will play Farashganj on Sunday as their tomorrow's match has been rescheduled due to the Bengali New Year.

It would be an interesting clash, Farashganj not only held Abahani twice in the last Premier League but also are in good form this season having drawn with heavyweights Russel and Muktijoddha in the previous two games.

Russel have an easy draw against Khulna Abahani at home on April 17 while the round ends with the mega clash between Muktijoddha and fourth-placed Brothers on the next day.

## FIXTURES

**April 13:** Chittagong Mohammedan v Chittagong Abahani (MA Aziz Stadium)  
**April 15:** Abahani v Farashganj (BNS)  
**April 17:** Sheikh Russel v Khulna Abahani (BNS)  
**April 18:** Muktijoddha v Brothers Union (BNS)

# Time for changes: Gordon

CRICINFO, undated



Changes are already being made to the West Indies cricket team prior to their tour of England in May, according to West Indies Cricket Board (WICB) president Ken Gordon.

"You better believe that they have started already", Gordon said when asked whether changes would be made to the team prior to the upcoming tour to England in the face of their dismal performance in the current World Cup tournament. He however declined to go into details.

And, asked to respond to a call being made in the Express editorial for the resignation of the WICB, Gordon said: "Well, that is par for the course. I can only say that if newspapers feel that is the best judgment they can make, who am I to tell them not to make it. But it just goes to exemplify the kind of very poor judgment of which I am speaking."

He added, however, he would have "absolutely no hesitation in resigning, if I thought for one moment that it would assist the situation. He said that such a call "absolutely doesn't demoralise me, and it doesn't demoralise the board".

Gordon was fully in defence of the West Indies team and its captain Brian Lara, even while conceding that all was not well with the team and its performances in the current Cricket World Cup. In an interview at his hotel Suite in Grand Anse, it was a combative Gordon who hit back at critics of the team and its captain, including journalists and commentators in the regional media have been calling for Lara's resignation.

Nothing is wrong, Gordon said, with proper and full analysis of the team's performances "but when you make that almost like an agenda item, this attack, attack attack, it is

not in anybody's best interest. Not at this time". Saying there was going to be ample time for such full scale, hard hitting analysis at the end of the series, Gordon said the force of the sustained criticisms at this time had the effect of demoralising the players.

He had not spoken with or seen the players in the previous two days, certainly not after their fourth straight defeat to South Africa at the National Stadium on Tuesday. But, he said it was "almost unnatural that it would not have some kind of effect," referring to what he described as the potentially demoralising commentary being carried on in parts of the regional media.

"It is palpably unfair to be criticising the team and its captain in the middle of a series like this, he said. There was going to be the time when "no holds should be barred in the analysis that is necessary. But for the moment, he said what was required was an exercise of "some care, judgment and timing."

Calls for Lara's resignation, he said, were premature and unjustified. "Let's face it. He was put there by the management, and I would be prepared to take whatever responsibility for it, when the time comes," he said, disputing the basis on which those calls were being made at the moment. Nothing fundamental about what Lara brings to the game had changed since he was reappointed captain, he added.

Granting that Lara had been committing "errors of judgment" during the series up this point, Gordon said, however he was going to make no criticism of those decisions at this time. "Do you want to see them get out for 50 runs in a game?" he asked rhetorically, in answer to a question that on the basis of the loss to South Africa the West Indies was not effectively out of the series. "They have to continue to play the best game they can," he said, adding that for too long now

# Bashar revises target

**FROM PAGE 24**  
The skipper praised his bowlers for making England struggle for victory.

His team reduced England to 110-6 before Paul Collingwood and Paul Nixon steered their side home.

When asked whether his team had a chance after grabbing six England wickets, Bashar said: "We knew if we could take one or two more wickets at that stage, that would have made it interesting."

"But we knew it was not going to be easy as we didn't put enough

runs on the board."

Bangladesh may not reach the semifinals, but have the satisfaction of putting in their best-ever performance in the event since making their Cup debut in 1999.

They had won just two games in the first two editions, but looked a vastly-improved side this time as they stunned former champions India in a group match and then South Africa in the Super Eights.

## SLADESH V ENGLAND SCOREBOARD

<b>FROM PAGE 24</b>						
Extras: (lb-3, w-10, nb-2)		15				
Total: (All out in 37.2 overs)		143				
Fall of wickets: 1-9 (Iqbal), 2-23 (Bashar), 3-26 (Nafees), 4-40 (Rahim), 5-47 (Ashraf), 6-65 (Aftab), 7-112 (Mashrafe), 8-113 (Rafique), 9-137 (Razzak), 10-143 (Rasel)						
<b>Bowler</b>	<b>O</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>W</b>	<b>NB/W</b>	
James Anderson	8	0	30	2	4w	
Sajid Mahmood	8.2	0	27	3	2w	
Andrew Flintoff	8	0	38	1	2nb/4w	
Monty Panesar	7	2	25	3		
Paul Collingwood	4	0	14	0		
Ravi Bopara	2	0	6	0		
<b>ENGLAND</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>4s</b>	<b>6s</b>		
Ian Bell c Aftab Ahmed b Syed Rasel	0	10	0	0	0	
Michael Vaughan c Habibul Bashar b Abdur Razzak	30	59	3	0	0	
Andrew Strauss lbw b Syed Rasel	23	37	2	1	1	
Kevin Pietersen c sub (Forhad Reza) b Abdur Razzak	10	25	0	0	0	
Paul Collingwood not out	23	74	1	0	0	
Andrew Flintoff b Mohammad Rafique	23	21	3	1	1	
Ravi Bopara b Mohammad Rafique	0	4	0	0	0	
Paul Nixon not out	20	39	1	1	1	
Extras: (b-4, lb-8, w-6)		18				
Total: (For 6 wickets in 44.5 overs)		147				
Fall of wickets: 1-7 (Bell), 2-48 (Strauss), 3-70 (Vaughan), 4-79 (Pietersen), 5-110 (Flintoff), 6-110 (Bopara)						
Did not bat: Sajid Mahmood, James Anderson, Monty Panesar						
<b>Bowler</b>	<b>O</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>W</b>	<b>NB/W</b>	
Mashrafe Bin Mortaza	8.5	3	28	0	3w	
Syed Rasel	10	3	25	2		
Abdur Razzak	10	1	30	2		
Mohammad Rafique	10	3	33	2	2w	
Shakib Al Hasan	6	0	19	0		
<b>Result: England won by 4 wickets.</b>						
<b>Man-of-the-match: Sajid Mahmood.</b>						
<b>Toss England.</b>						
<b>Umpires Steve Bucknor and Simon Taufel.</b>						

## TV footage

**FROM PAGE 24</**