



HARD WORK IN VAIN: Sheikh Russel's Moroccan midfielder Khoubache Mohamad kisses the ground to celebrate his goal against Khulna Abahani with his teammates but yesterday at the Bangabandhu National Stadium but the B.League match was abandoned with ten minutes remaining due to lack of floodlights.

## Shoaib says he was dropped for injury

PTI, Karachi

Controversial Pakistani speedster Shoaib Akhtar insisted he was dropped from Pakistan's World Cup team due to injury and not because he had flunked a private dope test in London.

Shoaib and his new ball partner Mohammad Asif were ruled out of the World Cup on the day the Pakistan squad was due to fly to the West Indies for the tournament.

The Pakistan Cricket Board said they had fitness problems but speculations have persisted that both had failed private dope tests for which they had gone to London.

Shoaib, however, vehemently denied the allegations. "I was dropped from the team because of my injury. We underwent no private dope tests," Shoaib insisted.

Both Shoaib and Asif had tested positive for Nandrolone last year in October, which saw them being sent back from the ICC Champions Trophy in India.

Initially they were banned by a drugs inquiry tribunal for two and one years respectively, but an appellate committee later upheld their appeals against the bans.

Both were subsequently picked for the World Cup despite doubts over their clearing dope tests as traces of nandrolone remains in an athletes body for up to six months.

Speculations were rife again that both were dropped after failing the private dope tests as the International Cricket Council had made it clear they would be tested as soon as they landed in the Caribbean.

Shoaib, who is training under Mudassar Nazar, the chief coach at the National Cricket Academy in Lahore, said that he had given himself four months to recover from a knee injury.

## Lanka may

FROM PAGE 17 below Denmark. Now we are ranked above all the Associates (junior nations) and that is very satisfying."

### SQUADS

IRELAND (probable): William Porterfield, Jeremy Bray, Eoin Morgan, Niall O'Brien, Kevin O'Brien, Trent Johnston (captain), Andrew White, Dave Langford-Smith, Andrew Botha, Kyle McCallan, Boyd Rankin.

SRI LANKA (from): Upul Tharanga, Sanath Jayasuriya, Kumar Sangakkara, Mahela Jayawardene (captain), Chamara Silva, Tillakaratne Dilshan, Russell Arnold, Farveez Maharoof, Chaminda Vaas, Muttiah Muralidaran, Dilhara Fernando, Lasith Malinga, Nuwan Kulasekara, Malinga Bandara, Marvan Atapattu.

Umpires: Billy Doctrove and Mark Benson.

## Ricky wants full NZ

AFP, St George's



Australia captain Ricky Ponting expects to face a full-strength New Zealand side on Friday after his team cruised to a seven-wicket win against a Sri Lanka team missing two rested senior bowlers.

The two-time defending champions made light work of chasing down a target of 227 for victory against the highly regarded Sri Lankans here Monday, finishing on 232 for three with 44 balls to spare.

But it was against an attack stripped of Chaminda Vaas and Muttiah Muralidaran, as well as the injured Lasith Malinga, who between them have taken 41 wickets at the tournament so far.

Victory meant Super Eights table-toppers Australia had gone 26 games unbeaten at the World Cup and stretched their winning run at the tournament to 20 matches.

"It doesn't worry me one little bit," said Ponting of the decision to rest Vaas and Muralidaran, who Sri Lanka skipper Mahela Jayawardene subsequently said had a groin problem.

Both were subsequently picked for the World Cup despite doubts over their clearing dope tests as traces of nandrolone remains in an athletes body for up to six months.

Speculations were rife again that both were dropped after failing the private dope tests as the International Cricket Council had made it clear they would be tested as soon as they landed in the Caribbean.

Shoaib, who is training under Mudassar Nazar, the chief coach at the National Cricket Academy in Lahore, said that he had given himself four months to recover from a knee injury.

## King for changes

AFP, Bridgetown



West Indies coach Bennett King believes Caribbean cricket needs to introduce fundamental changes if there is to be a return to the team's glory days.

Only a series of freak results can save the West Indies from World Cup elimination after a dire Super Eights campaign which has seen them lose four second round matches.

King said he put forward proposals more than two years ago, but he said he was still awaiting an official response from the cash-strapped West Indies Cricket Board in establishing an academy to nurture young talent.

"Our performance will stay the same if we don't make a move and change some of the issues worrying at the moment," King told the Caribbean Media Corporation.

"It's going to take time. Certainly the boys have the skill, but they need a supportive environment when they are back at home, and when they are going to international events.

"People are still talking about what is going to happen after the World Cup.

"We have to find out whether these

## Murray out of Monte Carlo Masters

Tennis

AFP, Monte Carlo

Frenchman Marc Gigué.

"This is an important time of the year for me because I didn't play so well on the clay last year and I wanted to start off well this year," said the eighth seed.

"I've been playing way better in practice than I was on the clay last year, so I'm a little bit disappointed in that."

The muscular injury was the third for the Scot in a month after falling over at Indian Wells and injuring his hip, then tweaking his groin muscle in Miami a fortnight ago.

Murray recovered from the second problem to play one rubber in Britain's Davis Cup win the Netherlands.

Murray was to have opened in the second round after a singles bye against experienced

## Ireland in the big league

AFP, Bridgetown

Ireland's World Cup wins over Pakistan and Bangladesh have earned them a place on the International Cricket Council (ICC) ODI championship table.

Their 74-run win over Bangladesh here on Sunday means they will be on the official rankings list that will be updated after their final Super Eights game, against Sri Lanka on Wednesday.

Ireland graduate from the ICC Associate rankings and joins Kenya as the only non-Test countries in the ODI championship.

An Associate can be promoted when it has played at least ten one-day internationals and has beaten two Full Members, or has defeated one Full Member and won more than 60% of its games against other Associates.

Having upset Pakistan in their group match, Ireland needed only one more win to take the next step.

In accordance with a previous ICC decision, Ireland has ODI status until 2009, along with the other top Associate Members -- Kenya, Scotland, Netherlands, Canada and Bermuda.

### Russel kept

FROM PAGE 17

The league committee has also decided to hasten kick-off time of all matches in Dhaka to 4pm from 4.45pm to avoid such incidents. Today's Brothers-Muktijoddha clash of the titans has been rescheduled for tomorrow.

### Pak Academy

FROM PAGE 17

He also associated in an 83-run stand with Nadir Chowdhury (32 of 42 balls) for the fourth wicket.

Earlier, the visitors added 78 runs to their overnight score of 401-6 before being bundled out for 469.

Left-arm spinner Mosharraf Hossain picked up three more wickets on the day to return with figures of 6-127 while skipper Mehrab Hossain took the other wicket to finish with 2-78.

### SCORES IN BRIEF

**BANGLADESH ACADEMY:** 243 and 214 all out in 43.2 overs (Sadat 9, Mehrab 12, Nazimuddin 16, Rokibul 79, Nadir 32, Riyad 2, Sahair 0, Mosharraf 7, Ziaur 31, Arif 6, Sajidul 0 n.o., extras 20, Atif 5-56, Nafaj 4-63, Anwar 1-39).

**PAKISTAN ACADEMY:** First innings 469 all out in 131 overs (Manzoor 64, Naeem 57, Latif 33, Yusuf 73, Alam 82, Raza 89 n.o., Tanvir 5, Sarfraz 13, extras 36, Mosharraf 6-127, Mehrab 2-78, Riyad 2-100).

**Result:** Pakistan Academy won by an innings and 12 runs.

## Smith rubbishes drinking claims

AFP, Bridgetown

facilities are going to be available to the players after the tournament. That's a question I can't answer."

The West Indies have two more matches left to play -- against Bangladesh on Thursday and England on Saturday.

They need to win those games and also hope other results go their way to allow them to make the semifinals.

However, if South Africa beat England here on Tuesday, then all hope will be lost.

King called on the public to get behind Brian Lara's team.

"We have to rally around the boys and support them," King said.

"Our performances will stay the same if we don't change some things. Everyone has the will to win, but we need the people of the region to continue to support the players and make sure some of the structures we are hoping to put in place off the field are there."

"We talk a good game, but we have to go out and put the runs on the board, so to speak."

"People are still talking about what is going to happen after the World Cup."

"We have to find out whether these

are going to be available to the players after the tournament. That's a question I can't answer."

The West Indies have two more matches left to play -- against Bangladesh on Thursday and England on Saturday.

They need to win those games and also hope other results go their way to allow them to make the semifinals.

However, if South Africa beat England here on Tuesday, then all hope will be lost.

King called on the public to get behind Brian Lara's team.

"We have to rally around the boys and support them," King said.

"Our performances will stay the same if we don't change some things. Everyone has the will to win, but we need the people of the region to continue to support the players and make sure some of the structures we are hoping to put in place off the field are there."

"We talk a good game, but we have to go out and put the runs on the board, so to speak."

"People are still talking about what is going to happen after the World Cup."

"We have to find out whether these

are going to be available to the players after the tournament. That's a question I can't answer."

The West Indies have two more matches left to play -- against Bangladesh on Thursday and England on Saturday.

They need to win those games and also hope other results go their way to allow them to make the semifinals.

However, if South Africa beat England here on Tuesday, then all hope will be lost.

King called on the public to get behind Brian Lara's team.

"We have to rally around the boys and support them," King said.

"Our performances will stay the same if we don't change some things. Everyone has the will to win, but we need the people of the region to continue to support the players and make sure some of the structures we are hoping to put in place off the field are there."

"We talk a good game, but we have to go out and put the runs on the board, so to speak."

"People are still talking about what is going to happen after the World Cup."

"We have to find out whether these

## Hogg delights Ponting

AFP, St George's

Brad Hogg is bowling at his powers, according to Australia captain Ricky Ponting, who is elated with the left-arm wrist spinner's form at the World Cup.

Hogg's happy knack of taking important wickets continued against Sri Lanka on Monday when, after a third wicket stand of 140 between skipper Mahela Jayawardene (72) and Chamara Silva (64), the former postman removed both men.

The 36-year-old Western Australian also held his nerve after being attacked early on to finish with an economical two for 35 from his 10 overs.

Hogg, who rose to prominence at the 2003 World Cup after Shane Warne's shock withdrawal for a doping offence, now stands fifth in this tournament's bowling averages with 15 wickets at an average of just over 17 apiece.

This compares well with a haul of 13 at 24 during the whole of the

last edition in southern Africa.

"Right through the middle period I always felt he was going to be our best wicket-taking option which is why I kept him going," Ponting explained after a seven-wicket victory which saw Australia, the only team with a 100 percent record at this event, stretch its overall World Cup unbeaten run to 26 games.

"He's bowled beautifully through the tournament, bowling as well now as he ever has and he's beating a lot of batsmen with his variations."

"He's taking a lot of wickets with his 'wrong'un' and he's bowling it very well. More importantly, he's probably thinking through his bowling a lot better now than he ever has."

The 36-year-old Western Australian also held his nerve after being attacked early on to finish with an economical two for 35 from his 10 overs.

Hogg provided the spark for a middle-order collapse which saw Sri Lanka, like Australia already ready qualified for the semifinals, lose four wickets for 16 runs.

"We took those four wickets in next to no time and really slowed down their run-rate and scoring,"

Ponting added. "Left-arm quick Nathan Bracken, rested from the nine-wicket thrashing of minnows Ireland to give Stuart Clark a game, enjoyed success at both ends of the innings on Monday on his way to an impressive return of four for 19."

Australians occupy four of the top seven spots in the World Cup bowling standings.

Fast bowler Glenn McGrath, in his final competition before retirement, heads the list with 20 wickets in four days.

The World Cup's all-time leading wicket-taker is now just three short of the tournament record of 23 set by Sri Lanka left-arm seamer Chaminda Vaas, controversially omitted

Wednesday, four years ago.

In second place is express quick Shaun Tait, with 16 wickets at 22.12 while Bracken is seventh having taken 14 wickets at a miserly 13 apiece.

Australia, through to the last four before the Sri Lanka match, end their Super Eights programme against fellow semifinalists New Zealand here Friday.

## 2010 Asiad to have cricket

AFP, Kuwait

Cricket will be included as a new sport on a 2010 Asian Games in Guangzhou that features more events than ever before, the head of the Olympic Council of Asia (OCA) said Tuesday.

The decision to include cricket was taken at the OCA congress here, with heavyweight nations like India