

## Morning will show the day

AFP, Colombo

Sri Lanka's astrologers say the exact moment when the nation's cricketers leave their hotel for the World Cup semifinal against New Zealand will determine if they will win.

It is not only the batsmen's timing at the crease, but also their precise morning schedule that will decide the winner at Jamaica's Sabina Park later on Tuesday.

In a country where even preparing a meal is often decided by the stars, Sri Lanka's fortune-tellers are desperate to know when the team will leave for the ground.

Arisen Ahubudu, an astrologer known for deciding lucky code names for military operations, said the outcome will depend on the planetary position at the time that the Sri Lankans set out for the match.

"They will definitely win if they depart at an astrologically right time," Ahubudu said -- though he declined to say what the ideal time was.

Teams usually leave about two hours before the start of a match. The semifinal starts in Kingston at 9:30am local time (1430 GMT).

Fellow astrologer Priyantha Ratnayake, known for his controversial political predictions, said he saw a Sri Lankan win.

"(Veteran opener) Sanath Jayasuriya's stars are placed on a winning position and his luck should see Sri Lanka through," he said.

Sri Lankan leading politicians, as well as military commanders, are known to consult astrologers, and many have their own personal fortune tellers.

## Younis lets Gulf trip go

AFP, Leeds

Younis Khan has pulled out of the Pakistan squad to play a three-match series against Sri Lanka in Abu Dhabi in May saying he is still suffering from the team's traumatic World Cup.

Younis, the Pakistan vice-captain, said he wants to concentrate on his career with English county Yorkshire but insists he is still available for future Pakistan series.

"I still love my country and do not see this decision as me turning my back on it. I will play for Pakistan again and play with pride, but now is not the right time," Younis said in a statement.

"The last few weeks have been a very difficult time for me. The tragic death of Bob Woolmer remains deeply upsetting. Pakistan's World Cup exit and the nature of the reception I received when I returned to Pakistan was also very tough to deal with."

Since the World Cup debacle, which saw Woolmer murdered in his Jamaica hotel room, and Pakistan make a first round exit, Younis has turned down the opportunity to succeed Inzamamul Haq as skipper.

Shoaib Malik has been appointed as the new national team captain instead.

"It is great to be able to concentrate on cricket. It is important to me to maintain my fitness and form while playing for my county," said Younis who hit a winning century for Yorkshire against Nottinghamshire in a one-day game on Sunday.

"The team has had a terrific start to the season and the players and club have made me feel at home. I will stay here and do my best for my new teammates."

## Ceasefire

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Government sources said there would be no lowering of its guard during the live broadcast from Jamaica of the semifinals overnight Tuesday, even though the rest of the country will virtually shut down.

Official functions were also adjusted for the game.

The government's spokesman on defence, Kehelya Rambukwella, was to host a dinner reception Tuesday, but fearing a low turnout he arranged for a widescreen TV to show the match.

## 1999 is history

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premature celebrations.

Waugh went on to score a century and win the game for his side.

Smith conceded his bowlers needed to contain the rampaging Australian top-order batsmen, especially opener Matthew Hayden who is the tournament's leading scorer with 580 runs in nine matches with three centuries.

"Certainly, it (the top order) has been one of their strengths. Their top four have got off to good starts. Hayden up front has been phenomenal throughout the tournament," he said.

"We'll look at those things and come with a game plan of how we can get into their middle order as quick as we can. But even if they do come off, they are quality players and you've got to have a game plan to cope with them."



Former Miss Universe Natalie Glebova of Canada (R) gives a Thai traditional greeting next to Thai tennis hero Paradorn Srichaphan during a press conference announcing their engagement in Bangkok, on Tuesday.

## Cup farewells

AFP, Bridgetown



Ins and outs of coaches and captains at the World Cup with only four days left in the 2007 tournament:

### AUSTRALIA

On top of the world, the two-time defending champions are already in the semifinals, where they face South Africa in St Lucia on Wednesday, and are odds-on to win a third title in the final here on April 28.

**Coach:** John Buchanan has already announced he will retire after the World Cup and will be replaced by Tim Nielsen, the head coach at the Centre of Excellence in Brisbane.

**Captain:** Ricky Ponting is in the runs, has won back the Ashes thanks to a 5-0 drubbing of England this winter and shows no sign of easing up.

**BANGLADESH** Defeated India in the first round and beat semifinalists South Africa in the Super Eights. But horribly inconsistent and lost to Ireland.

**Coach:** Dav Whatmore, the man who led Sri Lanka to the 1996 World Cup, has resigned but has agreed to oversee the Test and one-day series against India on home soil next month. Whatmore has been linked with the India hot-seat.

**Captain:** Habibul Bashar made a miserable World Cup making just 105 runs in eight innings. "Every captain faces the same kinds of pressures in international cricket," he said. "The truth is that I have not batted well."

**BERMUDA** On their debut appearance losing by 243 runs to Sri Lanka, 257 runs to India and by seven wickets to Bangladesh. Their competitive unglamourous was illustrated by the 255-pound (116kg) spinner Dwayne Leverock.

**Coach:** Former West Indies Test star Gus Logie faced down a player revolt on the eve of the tournament in a row over payments and then saw his team overwhelmed.

**Logie's** next assignment will be to lead the team on tours to Ireland and Holland in August.

**Captain:** Irvine Romaine expected to carry on

**CANADA** First round exit after losing all three matches to New Zealand, England and Kenya. After the tournament, George Codrington and Anderson Cummins, the former West Indies Test paceman, announced their retirement.

**Coach:** Andy Pick was on a sabbatical and returns to resume his former role as coach of the England Under-19 side. His final task is to take charge of the Canadian team at the four-day Intercontinental Cup final against Ireland in May.

**Captain:** Veteran John Davison, who hit the fastest ever World Cup century in 2003, was unable to repeat the magic this time. Fast approaching his 37th birthday, his time at the helm could be running out. Wants to see domestic cricket in Canada become semi-professional.

**ENGLAND** Lost to New Zealand, Sri Lanka, Australia and South Africa with only one two wins over Test playing nations, a laboured affair against Bangladesh and a one-wicket winning finale against West Indies. Their hopes had already ended with a whimper when South Africa cruised to a one-wicket win with 30 overs to spare.

**Coach:** Duncan Fletcher quit after

eight years in charge to be succeeded by highly-respected Academy head Peter Moores. Fletcher had been widely praised in 2005 for masterminding the capture of the Ashes. But a 5-0 drubbing against the Aussies in the winter, as the Ashes were handed back, put him under severe stress.

**Captain:** Michael Vaughan had a miserable World Cup before making 79 against West Indies. Will remain in charge for the Test series against the West Indies in May but whether or not he leads the side for the one-dayers remains to be seen.

**INDIA** Vying with Pakistan for the unwanted title of biggest disappointment in the Caribbean. Defeats to Bangladesh and Sri Lanka condemned them to a first round exit and dealt a huge blow to the World Cup's credibility as the game's financial powerhouse beat a retreat.

**Coach:** Greg Chappell jumped before he was pushed amidst allegations of splits in the squad and fallouts with senior players. Ravi Shastri has been put in temporary charge for the trip to Bangladesh in May.

**Captain:** Inzamamul Haq's tearful Sabina Park farewell was one of the abiding images of the World Cup as he brought the curtain down on his international one-day career.

**Shoaib Malik** has been put in charge after vice-captain Younis Khan turned down the job.

**SCOTLAND** Three defeats in three Group A games with the eight-wicket loss to fellow outsiders the Netherlands particularly disappointing.

**Coach:** Peter Drinnen is still at the helm with the brief to guide the team to respectability at the World Twenty20 Cup in South Africa in September.

**Captain:** Ryan Watson, an international player since 1996, has replaced Craig Wright who resigned after the loss to the Dutch.

**SOUTHAFRICA** In the semifinals where they face Australia on Wednesday.

**Coach:** 38-year-old Mickey Arthur was a surprise choice to take over from Ray Jennings in May 2005 and had a baptism of fire losing to Australia at home and away. Grabbed revenge with one-day series win over Aussies at home in 2006 with the famous record-breaking run chase in Johannesburg the perfect end.

**Captain:** Graeme Smith took over from Shaun Pollock when South Africa were knocked out of the World Cup they were hosting in 2003. At 22, he was his country's youngest skipper.

**SRILANKA** Facing New Zealand in the semifinals in Jamaica on Tuesday.

**Coach:** Roger Harper took over in January 2006 and is expected to be offered a new deal ahead of the World Twenty20 Cup in South Africa in September.

**Captain:** Steve Tikolo maybe 36 years old but has no intention of retiring. "I want to play for Kenya for the next few years to see this team develop into a fine unit," said Tikolo.

**NETHERLANDS** Trounced by 221 runs and 229 runs by South Africa and Australia respectively, the Dutch at least had the consolation of beating fellow Group A makeweights Scotland by eight wickets.

**Coach:** Peter Cantrell stepped down despite the national board wanting him to remain in charge. He said he found it increasingly hard to combine his duties with his job as a golf instructor.

**Captain:** Luuk van Troost retired and it was a low-key farewell. He dropped himself from the match with Scotland because of his poor form and acting-skipper Jeroen Smits seized his chance by leading the team to a win.

**NEW ZEALAND** A team in a seemingly continuous cycle of decline and finished in sixth place in the World Cup Super Eights just above Bangladesh and Ireland.

**Coach:** Australian Bennett King, who took over from Gus Logie in 2004, resigned on Monday and has recommended his assistant David Moore lead the team to England in

May.

**Captain:** Brian Lara bid a tearful farewell from international cricket at a packed Kensington Oval on Saturday. Lara set world records throughout his career but even in his third spell as captain, he was unable to arrest the decline of a once-feared cricket machine. Long-time vice-captain Ramnaresh Sarwan tipped to take over.

**ZIMBABWE**

In complete turmoil, scratched a draw with Ireland but lost to West Indies and Pakistan.

**Coach:** Kevin Curran, who replaced Phil Simmons in August 2005, is in a precarious position and was under pressure even before the World Cup when his team lost 30 of 40 matches played under him.

**Captain:** Prosper Utseya was unexpectedly thrust into the Zimbabwe national team against Sri Lanka at the age of 19 when all the rebel players withdrew. He looked out of his depth in the Caribbean and since returning home has lost the services of promising opener Vusi Sibanda, who has left to play in Sydney, as well as seamer Anthony Ireland who has quit international cricket and now has a two-year deal with Gloucestershire.

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"He is so far from being someone who throws the ball it is ridiculous," Moody told Sky Sports.

"Bowling from the position he bowls from, it is virtually impossible to flex the elbow. In terms of most fast bowlers in the world I think he would have the least amount of flexion."

"We welcome anyone to analyse it. I'd be interested to see if he has one percent flexion, let alone the 15 that is allowed."

Malinga, nicknamed 'The Slinger' for his distinctive action, has missed the last three World Cup matches because of an ankle injury but will reclaim his place in the side for Tuesday's semifinal against New Zealand at Sabina Park.

Moody, who won two World Cups as a player with Australia, has steadfastly refused to get Malinga to alter an action that has given him 15 wickets in six matches in the Caribbean, including a hattrick against South Africa.

"No, definitely not," Moody said when asked if he'd tried to change Malinga's action.

"We have monitored it basically. He was brought up doing that on the beaches."

The new coach's responsibilities will include working closely with the selectors and the director of game development, who was named on Monday as Mudassar Nazar.

Applicants have to send their

## Proteas cross fingers

AFP, Gros Islet



ICC Cricket World Cup WEST INDIES 2007

South Africa have reasons to believe that they deserve better than just two semifinal finishes in the World Cup since their maiden appearance in 1992.

They are now in the semifinals for the third time, with skipper Graeme Smith hoping to do better than his predecessors Kepler Wessels and Hansie Cronje who were unlucky not to lead their sides into the final.

Misfortune has become synonymous with South Africa ever since they were asked to score an absurd 21 off just one delivery in the 1992 semifinal against England in a rain-hit match in Sydney.

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