



Fans take shelter from the driving rain as they wait for the start of the World Cup final between Australia and Sri Lanka at the Kensington Oval in Bridgetown, Barbados on Sunday.

PHOTO: AFP

## SERIES AGAINST INDIA

# Tigers may stick to WC squad



### SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) will announce the one-day team tomorrow for next month's three-match one-day international series against India.

Rahul Dravid's men will arrive in Dhaka on May 7 to play two Tests and three one-day matches against the Tigers, their second full series in Bangladesh.

Chief selector Faruque Ahmed has already hinted that there will hardly be any changes in the one-day outfit after a successful campaign at the World Cup in Caribbean but added that they have to go through a wide-ranging discussions before picking up the Test squad.

"We will sit on Monday to finalise a 14-member squad for the one-day series. The Test side will be announced during the one-day series," informed the former national skipper yesterday.

"It's an advantage for us that we are going to play the one-day series first. Despite the fact that we are yet to sit together, there is hardly any chance of making changes in the current side. But I must say there would be need for extensive discussions on the Test squad because after a long break we are going to play the longer-version," he explained.

Bangladesh played their last Test in April last year against Australia at home.

There had been a problem with the opening slot in the World Cup but selectors might keep their faith on old ones when they reduce the squad from the 15-member World Cup team.

On the other hand, it's now almost confirm that Habibur Bashar, the most successful Bangladesh captain, will lead the team in the three-match one-day and two-match Test series against the wounded Indians, who suffered a

five-wicket defeat at the hands of Tigers in the showpiece event.

But the board are seriously considering a new deputy of Bashar, as Shahriar Nafees's batting form is real concern for them. Ace Mohammad Ashraful can get the vice-captain nod on a view that he can replace Bashar in the near future.

"Actually we are in favour of retaining Bashar as captain but seriously considering about the vice-captaincy post. We made a short-list and Ashraful has a bright chance to get the job because we have to look forward to the next World Cup," said BCB vice-president Shah Nurul Kabir, who is heading most of the important committees.

The cricketers will return to their business on May 3 after one week break after the World Cup campaign.

There were number of meetings held yesterday chaired by Shaheen, the former BNP-lawmaker, including the team performance evolution committee which met the selectors only to get hold of satisfactory explanations.

The BCB's reception committee, also headed by Shaheen, discussed about the national team reception of May 5 at Hotel Sheraton and they also decided that they will give the first priority to the sponsors to host the reception of the team for the brilliant success in West Indies.

On the other hand the board is hopeful that the renovation work in the Mirpur Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium will be completed within the next two days.

The Mirpur venue will host first two one-day matches of the three-match series on May 10 and 12 and the second Test starting from May 25.

"The consultancy firm assured

SEE PAGE 18 COL 1



## Did U Know?

Sri Lanka captain Mahela Jayawardene scored 115 not out from 109 balls in the World Cup first semifinal against New Zealand at Sabina Park in Jamaica on April 24. It was his ninth one-day century, second against New Zealand.



### Steve Bucknor

(ICC's elite panel umpire)  
"I was happy knowing I was umpiring in a World Cup in the Caribbean and now being asked to stand in the final again makes it even more special."



**ESPN**  
English Premier Football League  
Arsenal v Fulham  
Live at 8:55 pm  
**STAR Sports**  
Primera Liga  
Barcelona v Levante  
Live at 12:00 am (Monday)  
Bilbao v Real Madrid  
Live at 1:00 am (Monday)

# Thank God, it's over

AFP, Paris



It should have been a blockbuster which packed in the crowds and attracted rave reviews.

But, for many, the 2007 World Cup was too long, too expensive, too dull and eventually even the International Cricket Council was forced to admit that this particular marathon had left everybody exhausted.

"We listen to criticism, and there has been a lot of it from people saying it's been too long -- so we'll look to make it shorter," said ICC chief executive Malcolm Speed.

"We'll seek to reduce this 47-day World Cup by seven or 10 days, and hopefully we'll get it down to somewhere between five and six weeks next time."

Whether or not the TV moguls will be happy with that arrangement remains to be seen especially with the 2011 edition to be staged in the sub-continent, the

financial engine of the international game.

The ninth World Cup, the first to be held in the Caribbean, started welcoming the 16 teams in the last week of February; two months on, Australia and Sri Lanka were the two left standing, preparing for Saturday's final.

But regardless of who emerges the winner at Kensington Oval, what will the 2007 tournament be remembered for?

Tragically, it will be forever associated with room 374 on the 12th floor of the Jamaica Pegasus Hotel in Kingston where Pakistan coach Bob Woolmer was murdered; the morning after the 1992 champions had been humiliated by Ireland.

The defeat sent Pakistan spinning out of the World Cup and the game of cricket, once a metaphor for all things decent in sport, into a serious bout of introspection amidst dark whispers of the involvement of match-fixing mafias in what became the biggest murder investigation in Jamaican history.

The search for Woolmer's killers is still ongoing while there's been

no end to the fevered speculation as to a motive.

Mark Shields, the man leading the hunt and who briefly became probably the most photographed policeman in the world, hit out at "wild" rumours which continue to surround the case, saying they were "causing a lot of distress" to Woolmer's family.

"The priority is to see the truth," said Shields.

Woolmer's body was on the way back to his family in Cape Town on Friday, six weeks after the slaying.

In the seven-week tournament, sparsely-attended games were a constant bewildering sight as locals, priced out of the market, voted with their feet.

The early exit of Pakistan and India, traditional magnets for battalions of fans, only added to the eerie quiet.

Things improved when organisers dropped their restrictions on musical instruments being brought into the grounds and introduced a right to re-entry.

Fans, however, argued that the measures were too little, too late. England's Barmy Army hit out at

the costs of travel and accommodation, with many Caribbean hotels tripling rates.

English fans paid 5,000 pounds (7,300 euros) for a 10-day stay.

"It's pretty expensive for people and that has been prohibitive to the younger fans," said Barmy Army spokesman Paul Burham.

Steve Laffey, of Australia's Fanatics supporters' group, said fans were disappointed with the atmosphere at matches.

"We expected it to be a lot more lively, calypso cricket, the atmosphere usually associated with cricket in the Caribbean," he said.

It wasn't all gloom in the sunshine and there were some magical moments.

Inzamamul Haq and Brian Lara's tearful farewells will live long in the memory as will the ever-green talents of the likes of Glenn McGrath, Muttiah Muralidaran and Sanath Jayasuriya.

With his bleached-blond hair and eyebrow ring, Lasith Malinga was a revelation with his slinky, round-arm action and his historic

SEE PAGE 18 COL 5

## LOCAL SNIPPETS

### SPORTS REPORTER

Hosts Patuakhali outclassed Barguna 4-0 in a zonal match of the Western Union National Youth Football Championship in Patuakhali yesterday.

In the day's other matches, Dinajpur edged out Lalmonirhat 4-3, Mymensingh beat Sherpur 2-0, Jhenidah defeated Kushtia 2-1, Faridpur beat Narail 2-1, Comilla beat Habiganj 2-1, Kurigram defeated Thakurgaon 2-1, Natore beat Joypurhat 2-1, Shariatpur beat Chandpur 1-0, Sirajganj defeated Meherpur 1-0, Moulvibazar beat Brahmanbaria 1-0, Bandarban defeated Lakshmipur 1-0, Gazipur drew with Netrakona 1-1 and Rajshahi also played to a 1-1 draw against Bogra.

**JUNIOR DAVIS CUP**  
Bangladesh will take part in the junior Davis Cup Asia-Oceania qualifying event in Thailand from April 28.

The sixteen-nation competition will take place in the Thai capital Bangkok where Omar Sunny, Mofazzel Hossain and Yu Suye Suye will represent the country. They will be lead by coach Mohammad Kharsu.

SEE PAGE 18 COL 5

# Dhaka giants register wins



### SPORTS REPORTER

Nigerian Paul Mwachukwu struck twice as Mohammedan Sporting Club came from one goal down to secure a 3-1 victory against Farashganj Sporting Club in a B. League match at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

But their Chittagong namesake suffered a 1-0 defeat against another Dhaka giants Brothers Union at the MA Aziz Stadium in their home game.

Mehdi Hasan Tapu netted the all-important goal for the traditional all orange in the 55th minute. The victory took the Brothers tally to 12 points in eight matches while Chittagong Mohammedan

remained on eleven points from same number of outings.

On the other hand the day's success improved Dhaka Mohammedan tally to 14 points and Farashganj stayed on nine points from eight outings.

In Dhaka, spirited Farashganj drew the early blood when Mohammad Robin capitalised a one-to-one move with Mohammad Ali in the 19th minute with a stunning right-footer from the middle of the box.

The same duo was close in the 39th minute to double the margin but Mohammedan Nigerian custodian Paul James saved Ali's shot with a brilliant diving effort.

After five minutes Farashganj however conceded a penalty when Riyad Mohammad brought down opponents striker Ariful Kabir Forhad in the danger zone and leading goal-scorer Paul Mwachukwu made no mistake to convert the spot-kick to level the score.

SEE PAGE 18 COL 5

# McGrath leaving happy

AFP, Bridgetown



Glenn McGrath believes he is retiring from cricket safe in the knowledge that there are plenty of fast bowlers waiting to take his place in the Australia side.

"I'm happy to walk away from the game," McGrath told a Kensington Oval news conference ahead of Saturday's World Cup final against Sri Lanka.

"I feel it's in a good state, there are a lot of good young fast bowlers coming through in Australia and I'm happy with what I've achieved and what the team has achieved as well."

"Stuart Clark, Mitchell Johnson, Shaun Tait, Brett Lee and Nathan Bracken, there's so many guys coming through. The fast bowling

cupboard is very full and the selectors have got plenty of options."

McGrath, 37, has enjoyed an illustrious career since making his international debut 14 years ago.

He is the most successful pace bowler in Test cricket history -- only spinners Shane Warne and Muttiah Muralidaran are ahead of him -- with 563 wickets and in all international cricket he has taken 943 wickets.

This World Cup has seen him become the tournament's most successful bowler of all-time.

Ahead of Saturday's final, he had 70 wickets in tournament history; the 25 in the 2007 edition was already a record for a single event.

But the New South Wales seamer, whose English-born wife Jane has suffered several bouts of cancer, was in no doubt about the timing of his decision to bow out.

"I'm looking forward to retirement. But I still love playing. This tour, I've probably felt more relaxed

than I ever have. I've enjoyed it and maybe that's the reason why I've played well. The team playing well also helps."

"When I get back home, the first thing is to spend some time with the family and get away from cricket."

McGrath's Test career ended at his home Sydney Cricket Ground in January.

Along with fellow retirees, Warne and batsman Justin Langer, he had helped Australia wrap up a 5-0 Ashes series thrashing of England.

But he said the lure of a World Cup had kept him going.

"I probably would have finished my career before this if it hadn't been a World Cup," said McGrath who was appearing in his fourth straight final on Saturday.

He played in Australia's defeat to Sri Lanka in 1996, followed by trophy-winning triumphs in 1999 and 2003.

"I've got a lot of memories of

SEE PAGE 18 COL 2

# Anwar sinks SL Academy

### SPORTS REPORTER

Superb bowling from Anwar Ali propelled Pakistan Academy to a huge 88-run victory over Sri Lanka in the Academy Cup at the Fatullah Stadium yesterday.

The young fast bowler took five wickets as the islanders were booked for 166 runs, in their pursuit of 255 in 46 overs after rain interrupted the match.

Put into bat first, Pakistan Academy scored 251 for 6 in their 50 overs. National team prospect Fawad Alam struck 56 while Sarfraz Ahmed was unbeaten on a run-a-ball 53. The captain of the Academy side struck three fours and two sixes in his 56 while wicketkeeper-batsman Sarfraz struck a four and two sixes.

For the Sri Lankans, only right-hander Harsha Vithana played with some conviction as his 68 was the highest score of the innings.

The win confirmed that Pakistan move to the final and play this same opponent at BKSP on April 30.



PHOTO: STAR

Mohammedan captain and striker Paul Mwachukwu (C) slots home a spot-kick against Farashganj Sporting Club in the B. League encounter at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.