



GET SET ... The Kingsmead Cricket Stadium in Durban is ready to welcome the world to cricket's newest venture -- the Twenty20 version of the game. The first-ever ICC World Twenty20 Championship begins in South Africa's Johannesburg today.

PHOTO: AFP

## Expect a lost ball or two

MOHAMMAD ISAM



The audacity of international players will be put on show in the next two weeks of cricket. Twenty20 World Championships will be a dream event for the batsmen as much as it is a nightmare for bowlers but it won't do any harm to the reputation of the game.

Apart from loads of sixes and the flying stump, expect a Panther-like display from the best fielders in the world and some rising to that spot in this competition. The next two weeks will be over before you know it and yes, you might miss this

competition and not just forget about it.

Batsmen will call the shots with their array of shots: ambitious, cheeky and the not-so-beautiful would be put on display. Expect a mow towards mid-wicket every four balls just to make sure that the run-rate is over 10. And then there are folks like Aftab Ahmed and Mohammad Ashraful. If they can connect, even a scoop over the wicketkeeper's head for six is on. Only if Doug Marillier was around!

Today will be all about South Africa taking on West Indies though.

Apost-Brian Lara side taking on the Pro20 (Twenty20 is called

Pro20 in South Africa) specialists in a repeat of the World Cup 2003 opener. Then, it was Lara's stunning effort that tilted the game. This time, it will surely be a battle between Chris Gayle and the Proteas captain Graeme Smith. Gayle and Smith bat in Twenty20 as though they are having a party.

It really helps when you are an opener in Twenty20, you know.

Remember what happened in Dhaka back in December last year? A kid called Junaid Siddique took the game of Twenty20 in Bangladesh by the scruff of the neck.

At the Dhanmondi ground, Junaid took the Sonargaon bowl-

ers apart with his pyrotechnics. Smashing as many as eleven sixes, Junaid in his own way told Bangladesh that Twenty20 should be played his way: daring and completely uninhibited. Ashraful though did not let Junaid do all the talking on that chilly afternoon. He almost took his side to victory with a 47-ball hundred but Mohammedan, the eventual champions, had scored too many runs that day.

The shortest form of competitive cricket in Dhaka had quite an inauspicious start when the Corporate League in the autumn of 2004 was suddenly turned into a Twenty20 event. In what was an experimental event, Mahmudullah Riyad ensured that GrameenPhone won the title with a breathtaking finish at the Big Bowl.

Looking around the world, Twenty20 is quite a popular event, mainly because it generates a result within three hours. Originally thought of in England, Twenty20 is now played regularly in almost all the Test nations. Among the Asian countries, Pakistan and Sri Lanka made sure publicity was at its best

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## Academy in driving seat

SPORTS REPORTER

A total of eighteen wickets tumbled on the first day of the Crocodile Cup four-day match but still, the BCB National Cricket Academy (NCA) managed a huge lead against Northern Territory Strike at the University ground in Darwin yesterday.

Dhiman Gosh and Dollar Mahmud guided the visitors to recover from early hiccups and finish the day's play on 247 for eight in 62 overs after wrapping up the local side's first innings for 96.

NCA lost half of their wickets before reaching the 50-run mark but Dhiman slammed an unbeaten 78 off 130 balls and Dollar contributed a quickfire 64 from 58 deliveries to ensure a 151-run lead.

Imrul Kayes chipped in with 34 off 52 balls while Enamul Haque remained not out on five. Lawrence and Kroger claimed three wickets each for the home side.

Earlier, left-arm spinner Enamul and paceman Mahbubul Alam Robin equally shared six wickets between them to tear the local side apart in 31.3 overs after they were invited to field first in their last game of the tour.

Another left-arm spinner Mosharrar Hossain took 2-19 while Nazmul Hossain and Dollar captured one wicket each.

Birrell was the top scorer for Northern Territory Strike with 31.

## Know the bashers

STAR SPORT DESK



Sanath Jayasuriya is one of the world's most uncom-

promising strikers of the ball. His

job over cover and point is his

favourite shot and the first six

overs would be crucial for the

opposition if they hope to stop

this Sri Lankan superstar.

Interestingly, he is the only

player in this tournament to have

played in the 1992 and 1996

World Cups. Sixes: 302.

**Shahid Afridi**

Shahid Afridi is a favourite of everyone, almost. With a bat in hand, he is no short of a bully and a bowler is having his worst nightmares when he sees a mistimed straight hit ending up in the stands. In T20s, he smashed a hatrick ball over the bowlers head. Plain and simple, T20 was made for him. Sixes: 283.

**Herschelle Gibbs**

Herschelle Gibbs is one of those

batsmen who can hit 36 of you and still have a straight face. And after that, he will hit you for some more! Gibbs drives home the point that T20 is a batsmen's game. He is the best fielder of this lot and will be a vital player for the hosts to win this. Sixes: 157.

**Craig McMillan**

Craig McMillan is not as old as he looks. His batting may be unattractive but mighty effective when it comes to this version. He has all the

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JAYASURIYA



AFTAB



PIETERSEN



SEHWAG



Gayle



GIBBS



SYMONDS



McMILLAN



CHIGUMBURA



AFRIDI

## Mashrafe cautions Tigers

SPORTS REPORTER



Bangladesh vice-captain Mashrafe Bin Mortaza served a warning for his teammates to learn from the mistakes of their disappointing six-wicket defeat to Kenya in the last ICC World Twenty20 warm-up game on Sunday.

"It is a very disappointing result and it should serve as a warning to us that we can not let our standards drop for even one moment. In this form of the

game a match can be lost in the blink of an eye," the pace spearhead told the TigerCricket.com.

But he still believed that the Tigers are very much capable to show better performance in the tournament proper which starts today.

"We know that we are a capable team with strong players and if everyone does his job then we can get a good result against the West Indies. That should be our priority and we have to learn from the wrongs in this match so that we don't repeat them again," he added.

Bangladesh will play their first match against West Indies on September 13 and take on hosts South Africa on September 15 in their last Group A encounter.

The Tigers, however, will desperately looking forward to see Abdur Razzak match-fit before the opening tie as the key left-arm spinner was nursing a minor strain on his left hamstring.

Razzak did not travel with the team to Benoni on Sunday as he underwent a rehabilitation programme designed by the team physio.

## U-14 tennis from tomorrow

UNB, Dhaka

The Prime Bank Asian Under-14 Tennis tournament, organised by Bangladesh Tennis Federation, will begin tomorrow at the National Tennis Complex in Ramna.

Thirty-two boys and 21 girls from eight countries will take part in singles and doubles events.

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**TODAY'S MATCH**

Team	Time	Venue
South Africa v West Indies	9:45pm	Johannesburg

## T20 WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP SCHEDULE

### PRELIMINARY ROUND

Date	Match	Venue	Time
Sept 11	South Africa v West Indies	Johannesburg	2200
Sept 12	New Zealand v Kenya	Durban	1400
Sept 12	Pakistan v Scotland	Durban	1800
Sept 12	Australia v Zimbabwe	Cape Town	2200
Sept 13	West Indies v Bangladesh	Johannesburg	1400
Sept 13	Zimbabwe v England	Cape Town	1800
Sept 13	India v Scotland	Durban	2200
Sept 14	Sri Lanka v Kenya	Johannesburg	1400
Sept 14	Australia v England	Cape Town	1800
Sept 14	India v Pakistan	Durban	2200
Sept 15	Sri Lanka v New Zealand	Johannesburg	1800
Sept 15	South Africa v Bangladesh	Cape Town	2200

### SUPER EIGHTS ROUND

Date	Match	Venue	Time
Sept 16	C1 v D2	Johannesburg	1400
Sept 16	B1 v A2	Cape Town	1800
Sept 16	A1 v B2	Cape Town	2200
Sept 17	D1 v C2	Johannesburg	2200
Sept 18	C1 v B2	Durban	1400
Sept 18	B1 v D1	Johannesburg	1800
Sept 18	A2 v C2	Johannesburg	2200
Sept 19	A1 v C1	Durban	1800
Sept 19	B2 v D2	Durban	2200
Sept 20	B1 v C2	Cape Town	1400
Sept 20	A2 v D1	Cape Town	1800
Sept 20	A1 v D2	Durban	2200

### SEMIFINALS

Date	Match	Venue	Time
Sept 22	E2 v F1	Cape Town	1700
Sept 22	E1 v F2	Durban	2200

### FINAL

Date	Match	Venue	Time
Sept 24		Johannesburg	1800

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