

## DC Gold Cup results

UNB, undated

Rajshahi Players Welfare Association (RPWA) emerged champions in the DC Gold Cup football tournament beating Panchagarh Chamber of Commerce XI 5-4 in the tiebreakers after the exciting final ended 1-1 at the jam-packed Panchagarh Stadium yesterday.

Nigerian recruit Elijah Junior, who was the top scorer of Bangladesh's inaugural professional football league, put hosts Panchagarh ahead in the 20th minute while Sumon restored parity for the Rajshahi side on the hour.

Deputy Commissioner of Panchagarh Mohammad Hafiz Uddin distributed trophies among the winners as chief guest.

About 20,000 spectators enjoyed the final at the country's northern town but 5,000 fans failed to enter the venue despite holding tickets.

A total of 16 teams took part in the tournament organised by Panchagarh District Sports Association.

In Habiganj, Habiganj Sadar Upazila clinched the DC Gold Cup for the fourth consecutive time defeating Nabiganj Upazila 2-1 in the final at the Jalal Stadium yesterday.

Kenyan booter Domenic, who played the B. league for Dhaka outfit Arambagh, scored both the goals for the champions while Selim reduced the arrears for the runners-up.

Sufal of Nabiganj was adjudged the player of the tournament while host team's Bablu was the highest scorer.

Deputy Commissioner of Habiganj Mohammad Ataur Rahman gave away prizes as chief guest.

At the Borguna Stadium, Altaf Hossain Smriti Club lifted the 24th DC Kishore Gold Cup with a 1-0 win over Sonakhali Shatata Club in the final also yesterday.

Mithun scored the match winner. Deputy Commissioner Altaf Hossain distributed trophies.

## Ban Shoaib for life: Asif

PTI, Karachi

Lambasting the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) for creating a spoilt brat like Shoaib Akhtar, former captain Asif Iqbal demanded a life ban for the erratic speedster following the Johannesburg brawl that tarnished the country's image.

A furious Asif said Shoaib has done enough damage and should be permanently dumped with a life ban for hitting teammate Mohammad Asif with a bat in Johannesburg.

"The line has to be drawn somewhere and if it is not drawn here, the question has to be asked are we waiting till he commits mass murder?" a livid Asif wrote in his column for the News.

Shoaib, part of Pakistan's Twenty20 World Cup squad, had a spat during the nets in Johannesburg during which he hit pace colleague Mohammad Asif with a bat that left the youngster with a bruised thigh.

The team management promptly sent Shoaib back and on his return, the temperamental pacer claimed he was provoked by Shahid Afridi and apologised for the episode. The PCB has formed a three-member panel to probe the issue.

Shoaib's word of apology, however, could not douse Asif's anger and the former captain advocated a "no mercy" policy while dealing the issue.

"This, of course, is not the first time that a Pakistani cricketer has disgraced himself, his team and his country by resorting to physical violence and unless very stern action is taken, it will not be the last either," he said.

Asif went on to add that this kind of incidents have ramifications that spill well over the boundary of cricket.

## No stopping

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No luck this time, either. Djokovic rocketed a shot that went long and challenged the call. The instant replay showed the ball was out by one millimeter.

"I cannot believe," Djokovic said. "I was asking the crowd what I need to do. Nobody could give me any advice."

Federer kept up the pressure in the final set.

"He was just mentally better -- a little bit. Little bit. It could have been the other way around," said Djokovic's coach, Marian Vajda.

Federer earned a Grand Slam-record \$2.4 million: \$1.4 million for winning the tournament, and a \$1 million bonus because he finished atop the U.S. Open Series standings based on performances at hard-court tuneup events.

He's now reached the final in 10 straight Slams, with his lone losses to Nadal in the last two French Opens.

In this tournament, almost everyone except Nadal took their best shots at Federer. Young John Isner and Andy Roddick brought their booming serves. Nikolay Davydenko ran all over the court and Djokovic showed promise.



PHOTO: AFP

Indian vice-captain Yuvraj Singh is about to aboard the team bus at the Johannesburg airport on Monday. The Indian team is now in South Africa to play the Twenty20 World Championship which starts today.

## No pressure on us: Dhoni

AFP, Johannesburg



India will go into the inaugural Twenty20 world championships fresh and confident despite a mixed tour of England, captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni said on Monday.

The Indians arrived here from London earlier in the day, just two days after losing the one-day decider against England at Lord's which gave the hosts a 4-3 win. India won the Test series 1-0.

Dhoni, appointed skipper after regular captain Rahul Dravid and senior pros Sachin Tendulkar and Sourav Ganguly opted out of the tournament, said the three-month tour of England will be quickly

forgotten.

"I don't think fatigue will have any impact on the team," the swash-buckling batsman-wicketkeeper told reporters here.

"The England tour was very tiring and exhausting but this is a World Cup and that brings excitement, freshness and confidence to the team."

Dhoni said he was under no pressure to captain the cricket-mad nation, even if only for the Twenty20 tournament.

"I never even dreamt of playing for my country, so to captain India is a massive bonus," he said. "But I am not under any pressure because it is the team that must implement my decisions."

"I only make the decisions and whether they are successful or not

depends on the response of the whole playing eleven.

"I know it is a very big challenge to be captain but success is not just about the captain. Good captains are made by good teams."

Five players who were not part of the touring team in England have joined the team here. They are spinner Harbhajan Singh, all-rounders Joginder Sharma, Irfan Pathan and Yousuf Pathan and aggressive opening batsman Virender Sehwag.

India take on Scotland in Durban in their first match on Thursday. They play arch-rivals Pakistan on Friday at the same venue.

The top two teams in the group will advance to the Super Eights round.

## Swann, Wright for England

AFP, London

England have selected off-spinner Graeme Swann and all-rounder Luke Wright for their forthcoming one-day international tour of Sri Lanka.

Swann has been recalled seven years after his last England appearance, while Wright, who made a half century on his debut against India last week, gets a further chance to impress.

Swann, 28, who bowled just five overs when he made his only appearance of the tour of South Africa in Bloemfontein in January 2000, admitted he thought his England career was over.

"You start to think that at some stage but I hoped it hadn't. I now hope to go to Sri Lanka and get in the team," he told Sky Sports News.

"If the wickets are turning I've got to make sure I bowl well enough to earn a place in the side.

"This season things have gone really well for me for at Nottinghamshire and I'm glad to have got the recognition."

"I got the phone call yesterday. It's been hard to keep a lid on, I've been really excited."

Ravi Bopara and Ryan Sidebottom have both been named in the squad despite nagging injuries. Bopara has a thumb injury and Sidebottom is recovering from a side strain.

Chairman of selectors, David Graveney, said: "The selectors were delighted with many aspects of the team's performance against India. "We have retained Luke Wright in the squad to tour Sri Lanka following his impressive debut last week and made one change to the original squad named for The NatWest Series against India with Graeme Swann replacing Chris Tremlett.

"The local conditions in Sri Lanka are, of course, favourable to spin bowling and Graeme's inclusion in the squad will give us the option of fielding two spinners in our starting line-up if required."

Meanwhile, England wicketkeeper Matt Prior was not given a central contract for the 2007-08 season.

### SQUAD

Paul Collingwood (captain), James Anderson, Ian Bell, Ravi Bopara, Stuart Broad, Alastair Cook, Andrew Flintoff, Dimitri Mascarenhas, Monty Panesar, Kevin Pietersen, Matthew Prior, Owais Shah, Ryan Sidebottom, Graeme Swann, Luke Wright.

## Nadal still

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Federer also says he has finally come to love playing in the US Open.

While Wimbledon will always be dearest to his heart, the US Open is now close behind.

"New York has definitely grown on me the last few years," he said after his win over the fast-emerging Serbian.

"I realize what kind of a big-time event this is, with 24,000 people in the stadium, the city. Just the difficulty to win here."

"I wasn't aware of it in the very beginning when I came on tour really."

Next up for Federer will be playing Davis Cup for his country against the Czech Republic in a World Group relegation battle later this month.

After that, he will head out to Asia for the season-ending Masters Finals in Shanghai and a series of exhibitions against the player who preceded him as the world's best, Pete Sampras.

# Nayeem yet to decide on senior players



### SPORTS REPORTER

Syed Nayeemuddin yesterday said he would consider bringing senior players into the preliminary squad of the national team if he feels the absence of experience.

The 60-year-old Indian, who took over as Bangladesh national coach last month and completed his first assignment in India, the Nehru Cup, joined the team's monthlong residential camp at Cox's Bazar on Sunday after a brief holiday in India.

Nayeemuddin told this correspondent over phone that he felt comfortable in the atmosphere of Cox's Bazar, the country's number one tourist resort.

The beach town has been chosen to enhance the footballers' strength and stamina ahead of the World Cup pre-qualifiers against Tajikistan in October, the Grand Royal Cup in Myanmar the next month and the most important mission of all -- the SAFF Championship in Sri Lanka and Maldives in December.

The players ran on the beach for a couple of hours yesterday morn-

ing and climbed the surrounding hills near the Radio Colony in the afternoon as part of a special physical training programme despite daylong rain.

"I find this place good and the facilities are okay. Here we will emphasise on power training," told Nayeem, who guided India to two SAFF Championship titles in 1997 and 2005.

When asked about omission of a number of senior players, who could have easily got into the side, especially after the team showed lack of experience during the Nehru Cup where they even failed to win against Cambodia, he said he could consider the idea later.

"We have a squad in hand and I want to see how they go on first," said the ex-Indian international.

The squad's base is at the Cox's Bazar Stadium with Hasanuzzaman Babloo and Golam Jilani assisting Nayeem. Three players -- Maitur Munna, Feroz Mahmud Titu and Mehdi Hassan Ujjal -- out of the 33-member team have yet to join the camp.

Titu has informed the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) about a surgery on his chin. Ujjal is reportedly sick while Munna has yet to get in touch with the

federation.

BFF president SA Sultan and acting general secretary Manzoor Hossain Malu were scheduled to visit the camp today but might delay the trip due to the inclement weather.

"We will visit the camp as soon as the weather clears," said Malu.

He added that he did not want to press Nayeem about inclusion of senior players. "We are not going to get him into this talking. However, if the coach feels the necessity of more players, we will welcome his decision."

The exclusion of Alfaz Ahmed, Arif Khan Joy -- who wished to return from international retirement -- and Aminul Islam -- the number one goalkeeper and national captain who recovered from injury -- has already raised eyebrows of the critics. However, Nayeem reportedly is unhappy with Alfaz's performance in the Nehru Cup and would not consider Aminul as he missed the entire season.

It seems that the BFF has reservation about former captain Joy as the holding midfielder had imposed some conditions about his return.

# Fast & furious

CRICINFO, Johannesburg



Thirty-two years ago, world cricket entered unknown territory when England hosted the first World Cup in 1975 -- the form of the game was called limited-overs internationals, and only 18 such games had ever been played when England and India played the first match of the tournament. On Tuesday, it's time to set into motion another experiment as South Africa and West Indies kick off the World Twenty20 in a format which is only 16 matches old.

Shortened attention spans, the plethora of entertainment options, and quite simply, the lack of time means everything -- even the most laidback of sports -- has had to adapt, and over the next 14 days, we'll see just how successful that adaptation has been on the world stage. Early indications -- in the markets where the format has been tried in domestic tournaments -- suggests nothing should stop it from being a rocking success: the weather in all venues is expected to be fair, the conditions should be excellent, and the domestic Twenty20 tournaments in South

Africa have shown that the people have embraced it completely.

The extraneous factors do make a difference, but ultimately, any tournament needs close games to kick it into life, and the Twenty20 is the perfect format to bridge the gap between the great and the not-so-great teams. Any cricket tournament over the last 15 years of which Australia has been a part has only had one favourite, and while it's no different this time, the ultra-compressed format allows a much greater chance for one of the others teams to knock them over. The injuries to Michael Clarke (lower abdominal strain), Shane Watson (strained hamstring) and Matthew Hayden (back spasms) might not be serious enough to force them to miss games, but South Africa already gave the Australians an early shake-up in the practice game on Sunday. That could either be a boost to all the other teams in the competition, or, more likely, be just the trigger for Ricky Ponting and co to lift their games a notch.

Omit Australia from the list, and the group of contenders suddenly expands to at least six: South Africa and England have the most experience in the format -- and the

players to cause plenty of damage -- while West Indies, New Zealand, Pakistan and Sri Lanka all have the firepower to blow out the opposition if they put it all together for three hours. The format of the tournament means the top should all make it to the next round, but, like in the West Indies, watch out for the group involving Bangladesh. The knockout blow they delivered to India is too recent to forget, and West Indies and South Africa can both do a lot worse than taking them lightly.

The hit-or-miss nature of the game suggests little time for strategy, but there'll be plenty of sub-plots which could be fascinating. It's still early summer in South Africa, and the nip in the air in the evening could offer the swing bowlers some reason to smile -- the Australians already indicated they were surprised by the swing on offer in the practice game, and that could be a trend, especially in the evening games.

What about the spinners, then? The cool conditions might not be to their liking, but in the domestic tournaments the slow bowlers haven't been carved about like you'd normally expect. Despite the absence of Muttiah Muralidaran, the spinners are still reasonably well represented -- Daniel Vettori, Harbhajan Singh, Brad Hogg and Abdul Razzak are just some of the names who could push up their popularity ratings in this tournament.

The cricket will be the showcase, but there'll be much more than that on offer on the grounds. A live band practicing on the outfield suggested a loud opening is in store on Tuesday, while cheerleaders were doing their rehearsing act in preparation for all the fours and sixes which will be witnessed over the next couple of weeks.

The organisers have also done their bit to ensure that the crowds flock to the cricket -- tickets have been priced for as low as 20 rand for some matches (it's usually between 40 and 100 rand), while spectators have been allowed permission to bring in musical instruments to ensure they make themselves heard. "It's a South African tournament being showcased to the world" is the ICC's anthem, and the next two weeks will show just how spectacular it turns out to be.

## Expect a lost ball or two

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by televising the matches and to be honest, they were fun to watch. In West Indies, bats were painted black in the Sanford Twenty20s last year.

In England, it is huge and getting bigger every year. Kids are out in numbers while the women have also taken a liking to this form. Australia and New Zealand jumped in ahead of the English to play out the first international with sides having a lot of fun with funky hairdos and what not.

This September, it will be tough for some of the big teams not to make it past the first round as only Bangladesh's group houses three Test teams. All the others will have one big game and an easy one to step into the Super Eights. Pakistan, Australia, India and the hosts will be ahead of the pack in the second phase with Sri Lanka and the West Indies in hot pursuit. England, with a lot of specialists, could spoil Australia's plans or

even that of South Africa if they get it right.

This competition in South Africa will be trouble-free as far as the game's rulers are concerned. International Cricket Council has banned the five umpires that messed the Australia-Sri Lanka final in Barbados. They have made sure that the tickets are cheaper and thankfully, they have kept it down to a two-week event.

Two weeks of non-stop fun and entertainment that might help ICC cleanse its image as a poor organiser. But will it be held regularly or is it just another gimmick like the Super Series of 2005? ICC has asked all the countries to get Twenty20 competitions as part of the domestic calendar and although Bangladesh have followed suit, it will be interesting to see how far this game goes on around the world and in Bangladesh.

For the moment, let's just wait till the first ball gets lost into orbit.

# Collingwood confident

AFP, Johannesburg



England's 4-3 one-day series win over India last week had given the team confidence to do well in the inaugural Twenty20 World Championship, captain Paul Collingwood said on Monday.

England and India arrived here from London earlier in the day after completing an exciting contest over the last two months in which India won the Test series 1-0 before the hosts extracted revenge in the one-dayers.

Collingwood said the team was excited by the series win and looked forward to doing well in the

Twenty20 event despite lack of adequate preparation.

"We played some fantastic cricket against India and we come into the world Twenty20 with a lot of confidence," Collingwood told reporters here.

"We have got experienced Twenty20 cricketers amongst our squad and hopefully they can give us a little bit of an edge over the other teams."

"We are all looking forward to it, we are buzzing. It has only been a couple of days since we won against India on Saturday and I think that a quick turnaround could work in our favour."

"I think basically the same kind of skills are used in both forms of the game, maybe it's just a little bit

quicker.

"Of course it would have been great to get a couple of games in, but all the players are in good form and confident, and when you are confident you go out and play your best cricket."

"I think that will be a massive advantage to us," Collingwood said.

England, the most experienced team in the 12-nation tournament with a successful domestic Twenty20 competition, are drawn with world champions Australia and Zimbabwe in group B of the preliminary league.

The top two teams from the group will advance to the Super Eights round.

## Know the bashers

FROM PAGE 17  
shots in the burnt copybook of batting! With fast hands, he will take care of the outfield for the Black Caps. Sixes: 139.

### Chris Gayle

Chris Gayle would like to add to his just a single over-boundary in this form of the game. And your bet is as good as mine. He will. His attitude to be the calm person in the middle cannot overwhelm his aggressive batting. His partnership with Shiv Chanderpaul could be the winning factor for West Indies. Sixes: 129.

### Virender Sehwag

Virender Sehwag is on a come-back trail. His opening salvo with Pakistan would be a key battle for himself as well as his side. Once the Tendulkar-look-alike, Sehwag has since moved on and has created his own niche of chipping the ball, lethal drives and yes, the

upper-cut. Sixes: 116.

### Andrew Symonds

Andrew Symonds will smash them a long way. His 16 sixes in an innings is still a world record in first-class cricket. A soft-spoken man, Symonds can shift gears as fast as you can say shift. He must bring his A game -- fielding and bowling included -- if Australia are to become the first T20 champions. Sixes: 103.

### Kevin Pietersen

Kevin Pietersen could have been the most wanted taped-tennis player if he was in Bangladesh. Bowlers find it hard to bowl yorkers at him; he's that good. This competition is supposed to be England's domain and if the inventors (yet again) of this form are to flourish, they'd need KP to strut his stuff out in the middle. Sixes: 82.

### Aftab Ahmed

Aftab Ahmed could be the smallest of

the big-hitters but this pocket dynamo from Chittagong riles the opposition. With lightning fast hand-eye coordination and a penchant to use the inner-circle restrictions, Aftab is a gift when it comes to this fast-paced game. He will also be responsible for patrolling the 30-yard circle because he is the best fielder in Bangladesh. Sixes: 51.

### Elton Chigumbura

Elton Chigumbura enjoys the lofted drive. For Zimbabwe to make a stir in this competition, big Elton should play that lofted drive everytime he has to. He is 21 but don't let age judge his maturity. With the likes of Brendan Taylor and the returned Tatenda Taibu in the batting line-up, Elton can share the load of six-hitting. Sixes: 41.

## U-14 tennis

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The participating countries are Sri Lanka, India, Pakistan, Vietnam, Japan, Myanmar, Malaysia and hosts Bangladesh.

Sponsor Prime Bank will provide Tk 4,00,000 out the Tk-4,50,000 total budget.

Meanwhile, the Asian Open Development Fund (AODF) will donate US 2,000 to 40 host countries per year through Asian Tennis Federation (ATF) to run the tournament.

Bangladesh will receive US\$2,000 for the tournament as the host country. Bangladesh Tennis Federation general secretary Sanaul Haq disclosed the details of the tournament at a press conference at the Ramna Tennis Complex yesterday afternoon.

Prime Bank managing director M Shajahan Bhuiyan was also present on the occasion.

## ICC T20 WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP SCHEDULE

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### PRELIMINARY ROUND GROUPINGS

GROUP A: South Africa (A1), West Indies (A2) and Bangladesh

GROUP B: Australia (B1), England (B2) and Zimbabwe

GROUP C: New Zealand (C1), Sri Lanka (C2) and Kenya

GROUP D: Pakistan (D1), India (D2) and Scotland

### SUPER EIGHTS GROUPINGS

(if seeded teams advance only):

GROUP E: A1, B2, C1, D2 (South Africa, England, New Zealand, India)

GROUP F: A2, B1, C2, D1 (West Indies, Australia, Sri Lanka, Pakistan)

SEMI-FINALS: E1 v F2 and F1 v E2.

### FORMAT

Twelve teams -- the nine nations currently playing Test cricket and Zimbabwe, Kenya and Scotland - divided into four groups of three teams each in the preliminary league. Two teams from each group advance to the Super Eights league. The seeded teams in each group are placed 1 or 2. They will retain these places for the Super Eights stage, irrespective of whether they finish first or second in their group, unless they are knocked out by the third team in their group. In that case, team 3 replaces the position of the team they knock out. The Super Eights league will comprise two groups of four teams each with the top two in each group advancing to the semifinals.

(All times are Bangladesh Standard Time. Satellite television channel ESPN will show all the matches live)

### CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS  
1 Hiatus  
4 Night-marish street?  
7 Montana city  
12 Picks out of a lineup  
13 Carnival city  
14 Wan  
15 By way of Beginning  
18 Wet wiggler  
19 Doesn't go straight  
20 Senseless?  
22 Squid squirt  
23 Love-letter acronym  
27 Disen-cumber  
29 Really good joke  
31 Criminal  
34 Egg deliverer?  
35 Start of time

DOWN  
1 Taken for granted  
2 "See ya"  
3 Church rendition  
4 Formerly, formerly  
5 Free-flowing  
6 Grieve  
7 Candy  
8 Work with  
9 Nevertheless, in verse  
10 X rating? pt.  
11 Compass  
17 Egyptian cross

21 Children  
23 Bearcat maker  
24 Tri-umphed  
25 -- Arbro, Mich.  
26 Crucial  
28 B&B  
30 Sapporo sash  
31 Dime portrait  
32 Water (Fr.)  
33 Old soap ingredient  
36 A deadly sin  
37 Panoramamas  
40 Flora and fauna  
42 Sequence  
43 "G.W.T.W." heroine  
44 Computer accessory  
45 Particular  
46 Look for  
48 Pitch  
49 Teeny  
50 Mound stat  
51 Zero

Solution time: 25 mins.

MAH LOJAF PALE  
EBO ATIE AVIO  
BUND SHI BOD  
NOD SAWWY  
GADGET WIS  
END BUS GOFOR  
ATOU SHI LOGE  
RIGID BUS ORN  
SOB MOANED  
HARDHAT OOD  
ERIE SUNG OFO  
RILE SSAFE GUL  
BALLE ODOOR TOH

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