



33  
DAYS  
TO GO

## The weight of shadows

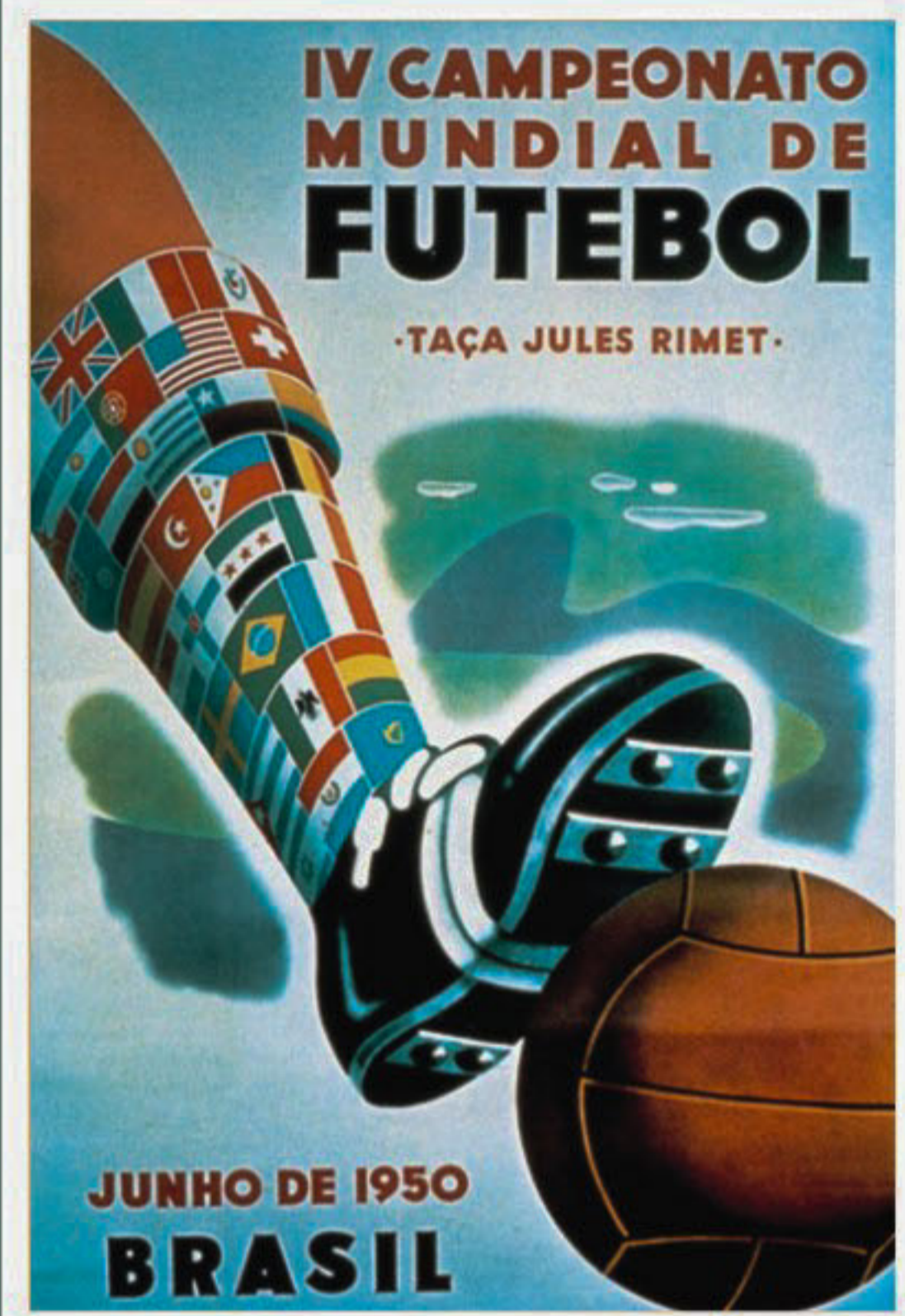
With much of Europe still recovering from the turmoil of World War II, FIFA took the decision to return the championship to South America for the 1950 tournament. Football was fast becoming the religion it remains in Brazil and the home team were reigning Copa America champions.

There were a few changes from the last World Cup 12 years earlier. The home nations at last took their place in the finals and, in place of the pure knockout structure, there would be two stages -- with winners of the first groups qualifying for the final group. In addition, the winners of the new tournament would pick up the retitled Jules Rimet Trophy, named after the championship founder and FIFA president of 25 years.

English football had long borne an air of superiority and its dignitaries had scoffed at the value of the World Cup, never doubting that they boasted the world's best team. To say that it fell flat on its face would be an understatement. A routine 2-0 win over Chile was followed by arguably England's most embarrassing defeat ever -- 1-0 to the USA in the northern industrial town of Belo Horizonte.

The decisive goal was scored, somewhat luckily, by Haitian immigrant Joe 'Larry' Gaetjens, who later sadly fell victim to the terror regime of Francois 'Papa Doc' Duvalier in his country of origin. The result was such a shock at the time that many newspaper readers in England actually thought the scoreline was a misprint of 10-1. After losing to Spain, England were out of the tournament, and the arrogance that came with them was removed forever in just a week.

TO BE CONTINUED



## Tigers take on Surrey today

SPORTS REPORTER

The Tigers will start their campaign in England today when they meet county side Surrey in a three-day match at The Oval.

Shakib Al Hasan's men reached England on Friday after they were eliminated from the first round of the World Twenty20 in West Indies losing both their group matches against Pakistan and Australia.

Bangladesh will play two Tests and three one-day matches against England.

Before the first Test, which starts on May 27 at Lord's, the Tigers will play one more three-day warm-up game against Essex from May 14 in Chelmsford and a four-day match against England Lions, which will start at Derby from May 19.

Left-handed batsman Junaed Siddiqui along with uncapped pacesman Robiul Islam, Shahadat Hossain and Mahbubul Alam joined the team in England while pace spearhead Mashrafe Bin Mortaza returned home yesterday along with Syed Rassel, Aftab Ahmed and Sohravardi Shuvo from the Caribbean.

Mashrafe is likely to play for Bangladesh A in the ongoing tri-nation tournament against West Indies A on May 12 at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur.

## BCAS ride on Mahi

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Manikganj

Bangladesh Cricket Academy and School (BCAS) defeated Green Valley Club by 29 runs in the Col (ret) Malek Smriti First Division Cricket League at the Shaheed Miraz-Tapan Stadium here yesterday.

Batting first, BCAS made 195-8 in 40 overs with Mahi top-scoring with 73 runs from 75 balls while Tutul and Sowan scored 24 runs each respectively.

Ajmir and Liton took two wickets each.

In reply, Green Valley managed 166-9 in 40 overs. Kuntal scored 36 from 88 balls while Mithun made 31. Tutul and Jony took two wickets each for BCAS.



BT

Asian Games Hockey Qualifiers  
Bangladesh v Thailand  
Live from 2:00pm

BTV, STAR Cricket  
& SuperSport2

SUPER EIGHTS  
West Indies v India  
Live from 7:30pm  
Australia v Sri Lanka  
Live from 11:30pm

SuperSport3  
English Premiership  
Chelsea v Wigan  
Live from 9:00pm

SuperSport5  
English Premiership  
Burnley v Tottenham  
Live from 9:00pm

SuperSport6  
English Premiership  
Hull City v Liverpool  
Live from 9:00pm

SuperSport7  
English Premiership  
Man United v Stoke City  
Live from 9:00pm

## Big wins for Dhumketu, Europa

SPORTS REPORTER

Dhumketu Club and Europa Youth Club registered big wins in the Premier Bank First Division Basketball League at the Dhanmondi Basketball Gymnasium yesterday.

Dhumketu trounced The Shaons Club 165-43 with Mithun netting 50 points while Europa crushed Old DOHS Club 136-38. For Europa, Nahid scored 42 points.

In the day's other match, Eagles Club beat Mohammadpur Basketball Club 78-43. Shuvo netted 17 points for the winners.



Bangladesh A opener Nazimuddin flicks on his way to a rapid 89 against West Indies A in the tri-nation tournament at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

## A-TEAM TRI-NATION SERIES

# Hosts keep losing



SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh A continued their poor run of form in the ATN Records tri-nation tournament, suffering a 29-run defeat at the hands of West Indies A in their second game at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

Some exciting top-order batting created an opportunity for the home side to bounce back from their humiliating 203-run defeat in the first match against South Africa A, but none could carry their innings to finish the game in reply to a challenging target of 260 runs.

The second successive defeat almost dashed the hosts' chances for the final. They take on South Africa A today at the same venue.

After brilliant half-centuries from Darren Bravo and Brendan Nash, right-arm pacesman Nelon Pascal caused the late-order damage by

taking four wickets to make sure West Indies A winning their second consecutive game to brighten their chances of playing the final.

The second-string Bangladesh side lost their last four wickets for 14 runs to be bundled out for 230 in 46.5 overs. West Indies dropped a few catches in the fag end of the match but it was not helpful enough for the home side to win the match.

The home team made a disastrous start as Uttam Sarker offered a return catch to pacesman Lionel Baker with the scoreboard reading nought in the first over. But captain Shamsur Rahman joined Nazimuddin to repair the early damage.

The 84-run second wicket stand was broken when Shamsur (23) misread a delivery from off-spinner Shane Shillingford to give a simple catch to wicketkeeper Chadwick Walton.

But Nazimuddin and Rokibul Hasan batted brilliantly to keep the home team alive but both

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Pakistan left-arm spinner Abdur Rehman (L) exchanges high-fives with Umar Akmal after taking the wicket of New Zealand batsman Martin Guptill during their World Twenty20 match at the Kensington Oval on Saturday.

# NZ win a nailbiter

CRICINFO, undated

In a tournament of largely one-sided matches, New Zealand pulled off their second nailbiting victory and their first Twenty20 win over defending champions Pakistan, who are now on the brink of elimination.

After rescuer-in-chief Daniel Vettori had revived New Zealand after the big names at the top flopped again, they survived an Abdul Razaq onslaught and Salman Butt's level-headed batting to come through by one run and boost their chances of making the semifinals.

Pakistan's army of spinners was outstanding in Barbados to keep New Zealand down to what seemed a below-par total, but once their middle-order collapsed and captain Shahid Afridi was dismissed in the 10th over, the score was 58 for 5 and New Zealand looked in charge.

Butt and Razaq were the last recognised batting pair, and they played calm cricket, pick-

ing 19 off four overs, during which New Zealand's advantage increased. Razaq had patiently made 5 of 16 deliveries when he gave yet another exhibition of his ability to transform Twenty20 matches, blitzing two mammoth sixes and a four off Vettori in four balls. He had trouble against Bond's short slow deliveries, missing four in a row, before finishing off the over with a humongous hit that just about stayed in the stadium.

With 26 needed off 18, and two dangerous batsmen at the crease, the Pakistan dug-out was a happier place. Time for the match to swing again: Nathan McCullum, who has been New Zealand's best player this tournament, got one to bounce extra and Razaq's attempt to again clear long-on ended up as a catch to deep midwicket.

Butt reached his half-century off the next delivery, and caressed the first ball of the penultimate over beyond deep extra cover for six to keep the game on edge. A series of singles rounded off

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Players and officials of GP-BCB Academy celebrate after their 2-1 series win against South Africa Academy at the BKSP in Savar where the home side won the final game by 67 runs.

## Academy take one-day crown



SPORTS REPORTER

A hundred from Asif Ahmed Ratul and Rony Talukdar's whirlwind 88 ensured a series win for GP-BCB National Cricket Academy (NCA) after they defeated South Africa Academy by 67 runs in the third and final one-day match at the BKSP in Savar yesterday.

The win made the scoreline 2-1 in favour of the home side after GP-BCB Academy crushed the South Africans in the first match by 191 runs but lost by 15 runs in the second game. In the all-important third game, the visitors were bowled out for 238 in 46.3 overs, falling short of the 305-8 made by the home side in 50 overs.

The right-handed opener Rony gave NCA the best start possible, hitting nine boundaries and five sixes in a 71-ball 88. He was involved in an 83-run second wicket partnership with Asif, who took it easy during the partnership.

But after Rony fell to Cobus Pienaar in the 24th over, Asif took over and reached a steady half-century off 71 balls. He played the anchor role to perfection, with skipper Mohammad Mithun (24), Shuvogoto Hom (17) and Nasir Hossain (38) going for the big shots.

Asif eventually made 107 off 120 balls with the help of four

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## HOCKEY QUALIFIERS

# Bangladesh face Thailand today

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh will take on Thailand in the Robi Asian Games Hockey Qualifiers at the Maulana Bhasani Stadium today. This will be Bangladesh's opening match of the campaign while second for Thailand who had lost their first game against Singapore 5-2.

Bangladesh, the highest ranked team in the competition, are expected to have an easy outing as their opponents showed very little in terms of quality, speed or technique in their first match. The home advantage, apart from the higher ranking, is expected to be a big bonus for the hosts. Bangladesh are currently ranked 34th in the latest international rankings, 26 places above their today's opponents.

Bangladesh's German coach Gerhard Peter Rach has his eyes set on the Asian Games and expects Bangladesh to become champions for the third consecutive time in the qualifiers. However, he has pointed out Singapore, Chinese Taipei and Sri Lanka as potential threats to the title. He is expected to opt for an attacking formation and try as many players as possible during the course of the tournament.

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## BANGLADESH LEAGUE Arambagh earn full points

SPORTS REPORTER

Arambagh leapt three places in the points table as they beat Muktiyoddha 2-1 in their mid-table clash of Bangladesh League at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

After a goalless first-half, the game rolled into action as Arambagh took a deserved lead in the 49th minute through their Nigerian forward Subair Mohammad Omobalaji. And they doubled the lead when four minutes later veteran striker Alfaz Ahmed rolled back the years to score his tenth goal of the campaign.

For their credit, Muktiyoddha did not let the chips down as they persisted to get back into the match. And they pulled one back in the 67th minute through Guinean striker Raphael Sagno. They might have equalised, but the Arambagh keeper Mitul Hasan was up to the task to keep them at bay and earn three vital points for the Motijheel-based club.

This victory takes Arambagh to 19 points from as many games while Muktiyoddha stay on 20 points from same number of games.

## 28 selected for U-19 camp

SPORTS REPORTER

Twenty-eight Under-19 players have been selected for a three-week camp to be held in BKSP, Savar from May 10.

The selected players should report to BCB Game Development Logistics officer Shahidul Islam at the BKSP by 5pm on the given date.

All players are instructed to carry their cricket kits and practice clothing.

The selected players are: Ahmedul Kabir Rudra, Joyonto Das, Aslam Hossain, Md. Al-Amin, Arafat Ratan, Deedar Hossain Imran, Al-Amin, Touhid Tareq Khan,

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## Mahela's loving it

AFP, Bridgetown

Sri Lanka's Mahela Jayawardene is relishing the "freedom" that comes with opening the batting after another superlative display at the World Twenty20.

And he insists his appetite for runs is far from sated ahead of the islanders' upcoming clash with Australia on Sunday.

The 32-year-old made an unbeaten 98 as Sri Lanka, last year's losing finalists, began their second round Super Eights campaign with a crushing 57-run win over hosts the West Indies at the Kensington Oval here on Friday.

It was the stylish right-hander's third big score in as many innings this tournament and left him with 279 runs at a colossal average of 139.5 after knocks of 81 against New Zealand and 100 against Zimbabwe.

Former captain Jayawardene has come late in his career to opening, although he has always been a top-order batsman.

And for those who dismiss Twenty20 as a game for sloggers only, Jayawardene's essentially orthodox approach provides evidence cricket's

fundamentals still hold good in all forms of the game.

While the likes of other senior international batsmen such as Australia's Ricky Ponting and India's Sachin Tendulkar have opted out of international Twenty20 in a bid to extend their Test careers, Jayawardene is relishing the chance it is giving him to reinvigorate his game.

"I am enjoying it," said Jayawardene, who faced 56 balls with four sixes and nine fours in a Sri Lanka total of 195 for three -- the best of the tournament so far -- against the West Indies.

"For me it was about me pushing myself with my technique and ability to see how it would suit for me to play T20 cricket.

"You tend to analyse and see what works for you and what doesn't."

"Batting in the middle [order] was a challenge, I adapted and I did different things but I think opening the batting has given me much more freedom to go out and express myself -- guys need to find that."

"Yes, I am scoring runs, you are not sure how long you are going to be in this game so every time I go out I want to score runs."

And he insisted he'd tweaked rather than transformed his game for Twenty20 cricket. "I haven't changed a lot but, having said that, I am playing a few more different shots than I am used to in one-day or Test cricket because of different tactics."

"You tend to analyse and see what works for you and what doesn't."

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Former Sri Lanka captain Mahela Jayawardene has so far made the ICC World Twenty20 a tournament of his own. Here he plays one over mid-wicket during a Super Eights match against West Indies on way to scoring 98 at the Kensington Oval on Friday.