

India cricket captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni has signed a marketing deal worth 42 million dollars over two years. The 29-year-old wicketkeeper has signed up with an Indian sports management company Rhiti, which will handle his endorsements, merchandise, corporate profile, patents and digital rights, as well as visibility on social networking sites.

— AFP



PHOTO: REUTERS

Andres Iniesta, who scored the all-important goal in the final against the Netherlands, is the toast of his teammates as they celebrate their first ever World Cup triumph on a stage in Madrid Monday.

## Iniesta is the toast of Spain

AFP, Madrid



Prime Minister Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero singled out Andres Iniesta, who scored the winner during Spain's 1-0 defeat of the Netherlands in the World Cup final, for praise Monday, saying there was no better role model for youths.

"He represents like no one else good football and human qualities. I want to make a special mention of somebody who yesterday remembered someone who is no longer with us when he scored the winning goal," Zapatero said during a reception for the Spanish squad at his official residence.

"There is no better role model for our youths, given his talent and personal qualities. Thank you Iniesta for remembering Dani yesterday during an unforgettable day for Spain."

Zapatero was referring there to the incident immediately after Iniesta scored his extra-time goal, when the 26-year-old took off his blue Spain jersey to reveal a white T-shirt bearing the message: "Dani Jarque: always with us."

Jarque collapsed and died at the age of 26 in August 2009 following a training session in Coverciano, Italy while his Espanyol squad were on a pre-season camp just one month after being named captain of the team.

Iniesta, who was Jarque's teammate on Spain's under-17, under-19, under-20 and under-21 teams, was given a yellow card for removing his jersey during the match.

He gave the prime minister a red Spanish team jersey which was signed by the entire squad.

"Yes, I know he did not score the goal," he joked just before giving Zapatero the jersey.

"I want to talk for a bit. Thank you for the welcome, I am very proud to be a part of this team and this little trophy is for everyone," he added.

## Paul invited to fiesta

AFP, Madrid

A Spanish town which celebrates an annual Octopus Festival has requested that Paul, the "psychic" octopus who predicted Spain's World Cup win, be allowed to join them as a guest of honour this year.

Carlos Montes, mayor of O Carballino, in the north-western Galicia region, said they hoped the eight-legged oracle would be allowed by aquarium staff in Oberhausen, Germany

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## 'Tigers shaping up well'

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

After a scintillating five-run victory in the second one-dayer, Bangladesh crashed to a huge defeat in the third match against England. The home side came hard at the Tigers in the series decider to secure a 2-1 win. But when Mashrafe Bin Mortaza's men would look back to the series they definitely can take inspiration from their first-ever success against the English side in any form of the game. The triumph came in the time when it seemed that the confidence level of the Jamie Siddons charges hit a new low following one defeat after another in this year. Many might not have been focused enough during the FIFA World Cup but the performance of the Tigers in the Asia Cup in Sri Lanka was alarming with the fact that the cricket World Cup is only seven months to go where Bangladesh will play in the mega event as one of the co-hosts.

It was refreshing to see the country's leading paceman Mashrafe, affection-

ately dubbed the 'Narail Express', got back his rhythm during the England trip after a career-threatening knee injury while the top-order batting performance with the presence of dashing opener Tamim Iqbal was also somewhat encouraging.

But the question remains whether the Tigers have been shaping properly as a team ahead of the 2011 World Cup. Chief selector Rafiqul Alam however expressed his satisfaction over the progress of the team although this year's performance has portrayed a sordid picture in terms of result.

"After two and a half years, we can easily say that this is now not only an improving side but also a good team. I am really satisfied with the way the team is shaping ahead of the World Cup," said a confident Rafiqul.

"We didn't make too many changes in the team for the last two and a half years because our focus was on how we can gel as a team ahead of the World Cup and I can confidently say that we are on the right track. There was a slip in the Asia Cup but I think too much cricket might

play a role behind the poor showing as most of the players were tired," he added.

The former national cricketer was also not bothered with the inconsistent bowling and brittle batting in the middle-order as he believed that everything would be okay before the World Cup.

"You know it's a young side but still they were taught enough under the guidance of our national coach (Jamie Siddons) and they already proved one thing that they have the capability to beat any team in the world in any condition. True there has been lack of consistency and all the departments do not click simultaneously. You can say there has been lack of synchronising effort.

"Now we have problem with our middle order and the bowling is also not up to the mark but I believe these problems would be solved before the World Cup. We have to stick with twenty selected players for intense training for the next seven months," he continued.

Bangladesh will get a good break after their one-day matches against Ireland, Scotland and Netherlands as New

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**WORLD CUP POLL**

Who was the best player in the final?

Casillas 63.5%  
Iniesta 25.4%  
Robben 9.5%

**TOTAL VOTES: 63**

**TODAY'S POLL**

Do you think Mueller deserved the Golden Boot?

Visit the sports page of [www.thedailystar.net](http://www.thedailystar.net) to cast vote

Follow The Daily Star Sport on **twitter**

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**What to WATCH**

**TEN Sports & SuperSport5**

Pakistan v Australia  
First Test, Day Two  
Live from 3:30pm

## Germans in PR disaster

INTERNET



The German football federation DFB issued a lukewarm apology for the World Cup team's exit through the back door on its return the previous day in what is becoming a PR disaster.

In a letter posted on the national team website (team.dfb.de) and signed simply dfb, and quoting neither a player nor an official, the authors say "the team (team.dfb.de) apologizes to those who came (to Frankfurt) in vain.

"The team doesn't want to alienate its devoted fans."

Several hundred fans had come to Frankfurt airport early Monday to welcome the team of coach Joachim Loew and captain Philipp Lahm which had thrived in South Africa with attractive football and finished third.

However, they never got to see their idols as the players left through the back door for their homes or holiday destinations.

This upset many fans after the whole country had rallied behind the team in a similar frenzy as in the 2006 home edition.

The DFB insisted in the letter that a celebration at the airport had never been planned

because the team did not deem it appropriate to be hailed for a third-place finish.

"This team wants more, for itself and the fans," said the letter.

The airport PR flop came after the team also refused a celebratory reception at the Berlin fanfest for the same reasons.

This was also criticised by fans and parts of the football community including national icon Franz Beckenbauer - even more as there had been such events after the 2006 World Cup and Euro 2008.

The Bild daily on Tuesday quoted midfielder Bastian Schweinsteiger as saying "we got a lot of support and are very thankful," only to add "what a shame that the fans at the airport didn't notice this."

ZDF television on Monday spoke of an "ignominious departure" and quoted one fan as naming the exit "embarrassing... They could have showed up for five minutes and waved."

As a result, the DFB pleaded to the fans not to turn their back on the team after the incidents.

"We really wish that you remain dedicated to your national team. And that you will have the chance in the near future to celebrate a title with this young and hopeful team."

## MSC thump arch-rivals

Hockey

SPORTS REPORTER

Mohammedan Sporting Club completed their first-leg campaign of the Green Delta Insurance Premier Division Hockey League with an all-win record as the title contenders thumped archrivals Abahani 3-0 in their last match at the Maulana Bhasani Hockey Stadium yesterday.

Pakistani forward Mohammad Sabbir gave Mohammedan the lead just before the break while local strikers Jahidul Islam Rajon and Rasel Mahmud Jimmy scored one goal each in the second half to help the Black and Whites top the table with nine straight victories that lifted their point tally to 27 points, three ahead of last year's runners-up Abahani, who tasted their first defeat in nine matches.

Mohammedan, who had to be content finishing behind champions Usha KC and Abahani last season, will start the Super League campaign taking on Ajax SC on Thursday in a bid to regain the title.

Abahani were boosted by five former Pakistani national players, including penalty corner specialist Sohail Abbas, and they began at great pace to press Mohammedan from the outset. They should have taken an early lead but the young striker Hasan Jubair Niloy failed to connect a fierce hit from Pakistani Mohammad Javed.

That was in fact the lone field goal chance for Abahani in the whole game. Though they

picked up four penalty corners, Sohail Abbas failed to convert any of them in the face of good defence from Mohammedan.

Mohammedan gradually grew in confidence to control the midfield and attacked through the wings and found the goal three times.

Jimmy sent the ball to Musa Mia inside the danger zone and the veteran forward pushed it to an unmarked Sabbir, who tapped the ball home from handshaking distance to give Mohammedan a deserved lead one minute from the break.

After resumption, Abahani stepped up the attack to equalise the margin, but they could not break down the defensive wall of the opponents though they twice picked up penalty corners which went begging.

From a counter attack, Abdus Sattar John took a fierce hit from outside the box and Rajon just flicked it home to double the advantage in the 51st minute.

An unmarked Jimmy set free by Pakistani defender Mohammad Atique sealed the fate of the match five minutes from time.

Mohammedan coach Zahirul Islam Mitul said that his charges played accordingly and came out successfully and that they first tried not to concede penalty corners much and went into attack after building up the game through a slower pace.

Abahani coach Kawsar Ali was frustrated with the outcome though he praised his charges for the way they played.

Abbas should have scored at least two goals from four penalty corners and he could not justify his standard, said Ali.



PHOTO: STAR

Mohammedan's Pakistani recruit Mohammad Sabbir (R) tries to slip past Abahani midfielder Ehsan Rana during their Green Delta Premier Division Hockey League match at the Maulana Bhasani National Hockey Stadium yesterday. Sabbir scored one goal in Mohammedan's 3-0 victory over their bitter rivals.