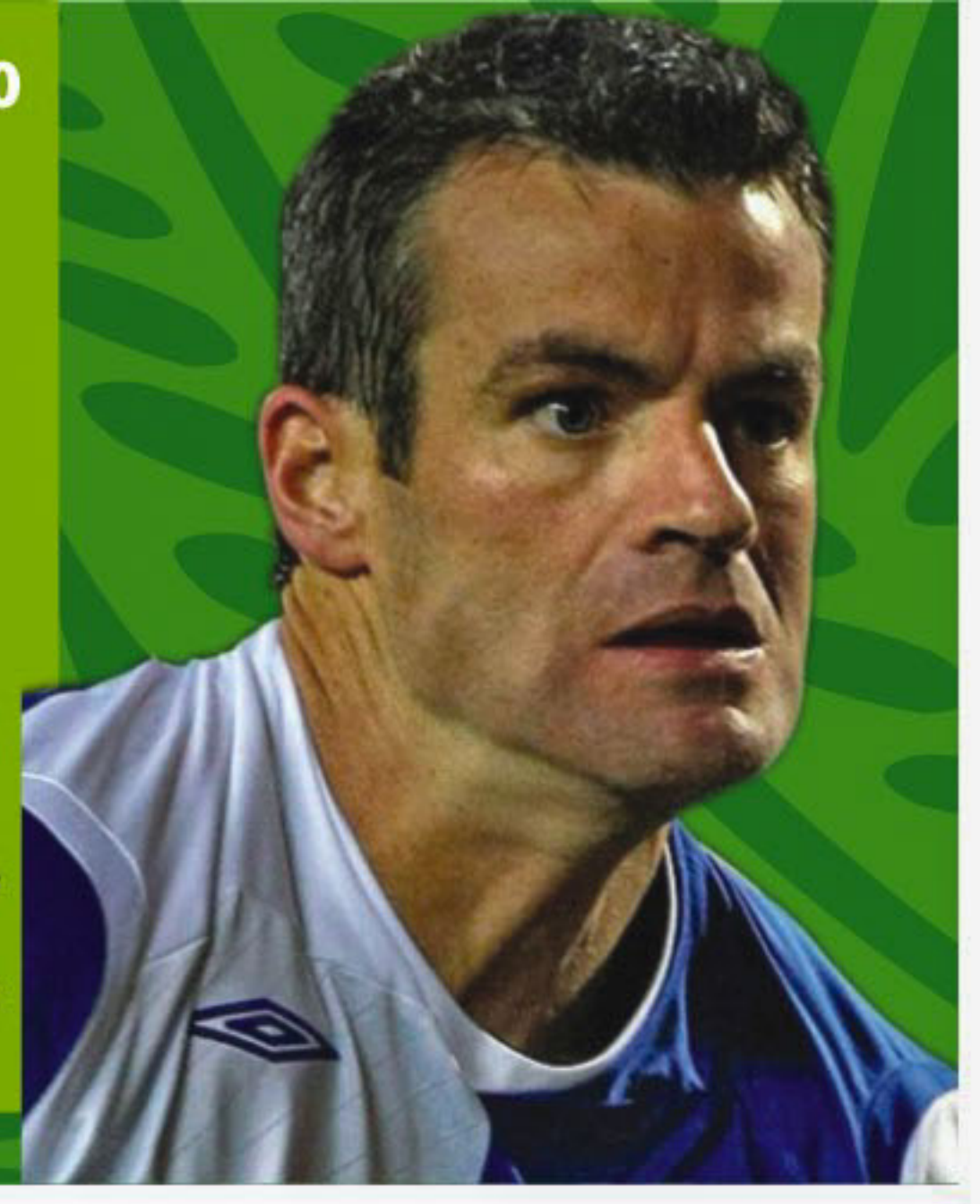


Nelsen's tribute to disaster victims

Blackburn Rovers captain Ryan Nelsen will wear a black armband against Aston Villa as a tribute to those who have died in an earthquake in his hometown Christchurch. The New Zealand international was given the day off by Blackburn as he tried to contact relatives back home. Fortunately his family escaped unscathed from the disaster, although his sister went into labour early. Nelsen said: "I'm going to wear a black armband but I don't know if the rest of my team-mates will be allowed. My heart goes out to everyone, it's just devastating."



From hope to expectation

BISHWAJIT ROY

The mood was altogether different prior to Bangladesh's battle against Ireland today; unlike in the opening match against India. It's not only that the buzzing, the madness, and the euphoria from the fans that was missing ahead of the Tigers second Group B match but Bangladesh captain Shakib Al Hasan was also not in his usual joyous disposition while addressing a press conference at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

There had been tremendous hype surrounding the match against India but the common sentiment was that there was nothing to lose for

the Tigers in the high-voltage game. This however is no longer the case when they play Ireland, an ICC associate member. Whether Shakib admits it or not, Bangladesh go into this match as favourites, so anything other than a victory would be a huge upset for the home side because it will jeopardize their chances of playing in the quarterfinals of the show-



SHAKIB AL HASAN

piece event. The world's number one all-rounder was also not ready to brand Ireland an underdog and the whispering was all around that Bangladesh will face a stiff challenge from the Irish side; not only because that they had a sweet memory against the Tigers in the last World Cup but also because they had acclimatized well with the subcontinent conditions. So, the obvious question was whether Bangladesh was under pressure? Shakib however dismissed the notion. "There is no pressure. We are looking forward to the match," said a confident sounding Shakib. But he was quick to take into account the importance of the match for them. "It's a must win situation for us because we have to win the match if we want to qualify for the second round. It will be really difficult for us if we lose the game," he observed. The young Bangladesh skipper however said that his side was ready to take the challenge. "The boys are up and the preparation is really good. We don't have any different planning against Ireland rather we need to play our normal game which would be good enough for us to win the match. We must stick to our game plan and make sure that we execute it in the middle," said Shakib adding that they failed to execute the plan while bowling against India but the fielding and batting was quite satisfactory. When Bangladesh played against India, the talking point was whether they can



DIFFERENT SIZES, SAME ZEAL: From human torsos via mannequins to buildings, cricket fever has spread like wildfire. A building overlooking the GP-BCB Cricket Academy Ground in Mirpur, where the Ireland team practised yesterday, has been draped in the Tigers' jersey.

TICKETS WORRY ICC Police beat up cricket fans in Bangalore

AFP, Bangalore

Police used bamboo sticks to beat back cricket fans trying to buy tickets in Bangalore on Thursday as World Cup organisers criticised Indian officials over growing ticketing chaos. Fans queuing for seats at India's game with England in Bangalore on Sunday were baton-charged by police as huge crowds pushed towards the gates of the M Chinnaswamy Stadium. Several people were injured and taken away on stretchers as police attempted to keep order among the throng of several thousand fans, an AFP reporter witnessed. All 7,000 tickets put on sale on Thursday sold out within hours, leaving many disappointed fans who had waited at the ground overnight. A letter from the International Cricket Council (ICC) to organising committee chairman Sharad Pawar was leaked early Thursday airing "serious concerns" over distribution and sales of tickets for the tournament. There was particular concern over plans to sell the remaining 4,000 tickets available for the April 2 final in Mumbai over the counter. "With the significant demand and little availability... there is potential for chaos and physical injury when the box office sales open," the ICC warned. "For this reason we strongly recommend that this sale of tickets be cancelled." The ICC's worst fears were quickly realised when huge numbers of excited fans descended on the stadium in Bangalore to

BANGLADESH-IRELAND ENCOUNTERS

Matches	Bangladesh won	Ireland won
6	4	2

Top-score: Tamim Iqbal (129 in March 2008)
Best bowling: Forhad Reza (5/42 in March 2008)
Abdur Razzak, Shakib Al Hasan and Tamim Iqbal have

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TODAY'S MATCHES

Match	Time	Venue
Australia v New Zealand	10:00am	Nagpur
Bangladesh v Ireland	2:30pm	Dhaka

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Bangladesh Vs Ireland
Md. Shofiu Alam

It will be a late opening game for Ireland. Whereas, Bangladesh were pummeled but not disgraced in the first game of the tournament by India. They will look to quickly get back into straps to try and win this one. In many ways, this game will be a banana peel match for Bangladesh. Theoretically, this, along with the Netherlands game are the two Bangladesh have to win apart from surprising one of the other major nations. Ireland would be hoping for a lot if they think that they can repeat their feat from the last World Cup

Send your analysis (in 100 words) on Sri Lanka - Pakistan match to analysis11@ovi.com. The best analysis will be published tomorrow.