

## HIT IN THE RIBS Sehwag to see doctor

AFP, New Delhi

Big-hitting Indian opener Virender Sehwag is seeing a doctor in New Delhi after being struck in the ribs during a net session last week, a report said Tuesday.

"He is going to see a personal physician and is expected on Wednesday," Ranjib Biswal, the India team manager, said, according to the Hindustan Times.

"There is no major concern as such, but it seems he doesn't want to take a chance."

Sehwag is also carrying a shoulder problem that has prevented him from bowling, the report said. Biswal said he had a "niggle in his shoulder."

Sehwag, who hammered 175 in India's opening win over Bangladesh, was struck by a delivery from a net bowler on Friday before India's dramatic tie with England on Sunday, in which he scored 35.

## Haddin calls it a joke

AFP, Colombo

Australia on Tuesday dismissed as "laughable" claims that the International Cricket Council (ICC) was investigating their World Cup match against Zimbabwe for slow batting.

"It's quite a laughable story. It's a joke," Haddin told reporters during the team's net session at Colombo's Sinhalese Sports Club on Tuesday.

Australian openers Brad Haddin and Shane Watson made sedate progress against Zimbabwe's spinners early in their innings in the February 21 Group A game in Ahmedabad, reaching 5-0 from two overs and 28-0 off the first 11 overs.

The pair eventually added 61 in 18.4 overs as Australia made 262-6, with Haddin scoring 29 off 66 balls before falling lbw to Prosper Utseya.

"It's not a case [of match-fixing], we just got off the mark a bit slowly," said wicketkeeper Haddin.

The Times of India website on Tuesday said the slow start in the first two overs were "scrutinised by the International Cricket Council anti-corruption and security unit".

"Sources aware of developments said the ICC ACSU [Anti-Corruption and Security Unit] had carried out a quiet review of the match after questions were raised over the slow start taken by Watson and Haddin."

## Murali not going down under

PTI, Melbourne

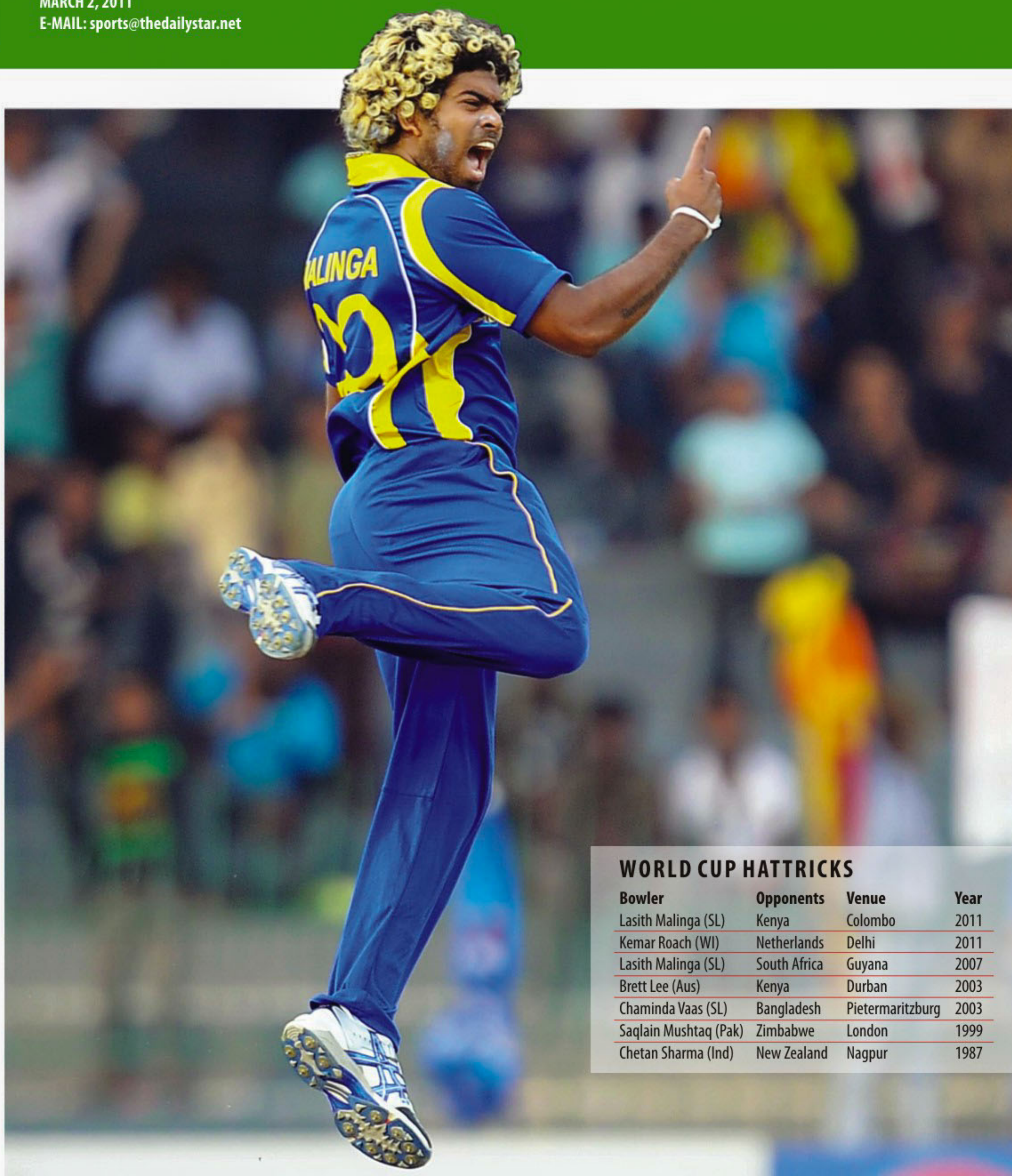
Sri Lankan off-spinner Muttiah Muralidaran will not be able to mentor the next generation spin talents down under because of prior commitments, which includes playing in the Indian Premier League in May.

The veteran of 800 Test wickets was supposed to spend some time at Cricket Australia's Centre of Excellence in Brisbane tutoring the budding spinners of the country.

"Unfortunately, Murali will not be able to make it," said the cricketer's agent, Kashi Gunasekera.

"Cricket Australia wanted him to come down for a particular period of time but it doesn't go down well with the IPL and his Gloucestershire assignments.

"They [CA] wanted him to come at the end of May but then everything changed with prior commitments he had undertaken. They were trying to figure out another time, but it just couldn't be finalised," Gunasekera told Daily Telegraph.



### WORLD CUP HATTRICKS

Bowler	Opponents	Venue	Year
Lasith Malinga (SL)	Kenya	Colombo	2011
Kemar Roach (WI)	Netherlands	Delhi	2011
Lasith Malinga (SL)	South Africa	Guyana	2007
Brett Lee (Aus)	Kenya	Durban	2003
Chaminda Vaas (SL)	Bangladesh	Pietermaritzburg	2003
Saqlain Mushtaq (Pak)	Zimbabwe	London	1999
Chetan Sharma (Ind)	New Zealand	Nagpur	1987

**MAXIMUM IMPACT:** Sri Lankan pace demon Lasith Malinga missed the first two games but he returned yesterday with a dream spell only to blow Kenya away with his trademark slinging action. Here he celebrates his hat-trick wicket at the R Premadasa Stadium in Colombo, a day after West Indies paceman Kemar Roach claimed the first hat-trick in this World Cup against the Netherlands in New Delhi.

PHOTO: REUTERS

## BOOST MOMENT OF THE DAY

# Bell's thanks to Gooch

AFP, Bangalore

England's Ian Bell has hailed the influence of batting coach Graham Gooch, saying he'd wished he'd worked with the former Test opener earlier in his career.

Bell, who made a composed 69 during England's thrilling World Cup tie with India here on Sunday before getting out going for a big shot under the influence of cramp, has long been regarded as one of the most technically gifted English batsmen of his generation.

But there have been times when the 28-year-old Warwickshire right-hander has appeared overwhelmed by the intensity of international sport.

However, during the last year-and-a-half Bell has produced some of his best performances for England.

Bell said the advice he'd received from Gooch, brought back into the fold by tea coach Andy Flower, had been invaluable.

"He has been fantastic for me since he has come back," said Bell. "He is someone I wish I had worked with a lot earlier in my career."

"The experience he brings into our unit is something we can't replace," added Bell of Gooch, who swept India's spinners to distraction with a match-winning century

in the 1987 World Cup semifinal in Mumbai.

"Not only that, but his work ethic with the players. I can't speak highly enough of him."

"He is just an incredible guy who adds a lot of experience and knowledge into our group and the way he played in World Cups in the past in the sub-continent, the experience he passes on to us is really important and he is a massive part of our group in Test cricket as well as one-day cricket."

One thing that wasn't around though when Gooch played one-day internationals was the batting

Powerplay and here Bell suggested England follow the example of India batting great Sachin Tendulkar.

England made a mess of their Powerplay late on against India, losing four wickets for 25 runs as they replied to a total of 338 all out from the co-hosts that featured a record fifth World Cup hundred from Tendulkar.

"As soon as you try and hit the ball too hard and hit sixes every ball, both teams seemed to lose wickets at the back end," Bell said.

"The way Tendulkar played in the middle by just trying to play proper cricket shots seemed to be the more effective way on that wicket."

"It is something we will learn from and maybe look to score off more balls rather than hit every ball to the fence."



## What's on off the pitch

SPORTS REPORTER



The World Cup so far has been played on first gear and the fourth. While a few matches have been close finishes, one-sided games have been abundant throughout the tournament.

A string of yorkers from Lasith Malinga to the broad bats of Virender Sehwag, Mahela Jayawardene World Cup has been a nightmare for the minnows with only the Netherlands acquitting themselves with an inspired show against England, who also played out that classic tied game with India.

Seven hundreds have been hit so far while Malinga and Kemar Roach have chalked up hat-tricks on consecutive days, but the story of the World Cup has been some of the incidents that have happened off the field of play.

### THE PLAYERS

Tamim Iqbal, Wayne Parnell, Shanthakumaran Sreesanth and some others have remained in the headlines for a variety of reasons that range from the benevolent to comical.

After seeing the picture of amputee Titu in The Daily Star's February 21 edition, Tamim gave a team jersey and promised a monthly payment to the teenager. Imrul Kayes also gave Titu a practice t-shirt but the other Tigers were not too far away in their effort.

Junaed Siddique, Mah-mudullah Riyad and Shahriar Nafees went to the Kishalay Girls School and College in Mohammadpur to attend the closing event of the 'Reading Festival' while the Ireland players visited street children in Rampura in another charity institution.

Being hosted in the sub-continent for such a long period, the World Cup also gives opportunities to some players to venture out, something made famous by the Australian legend Steve Waugh. South Africans Parnell and Hashim Amla visited the Taj Mahal while their teammates thought it was too long a ride to Agra.

But it hasn't been all rosy as Sreesanth and Ricky Ponting pointed out. After a terrible time against the Tigers, Sreesanth knocked off Yuvraj Singh with a beamer and an hour later, his shot hit India's bowling coach -- both on the wrist.

Ponting returned to his dangerous ways after he flung his 'box' at the television in the dressing room during Australia's game against Zimbabwe.

A book of caricatures of the Indian World Cup squad -- Stumped -- too was unveiled by MS Dhoni, aided by Harbhajan Singh, Virat Kohli and Piyush Chawla.

### THE VENUES

From ambush marketing to ticket fiascos, the grounds have been the venue of more than a cricket match of the World Cup and the Eden Gardens and Feroze Shah Kotla are testament to that.

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## Borren frustrated by inconsistency

AFP, New Delhi



Netherlands must learn to be consistent if they are to match quality teams, skipper Peter Borren said after a 215-run mauling by the West Indies in the World Cup.

The Dutch showed a lot of promise when they stretched England in their opening game but gave up meekly against the West Indies in their second outing on Monday.

The West Indies feasted on some wayward bowling and poor fielding to pile up 330-8 before bundling out the Netherlands for 115 inside 32 overs.

"Inconsistency is very frustrating," said Borren. "We will obviously have to sit down and analyse what went wrong. We certainly have more potential than what we showed against them [West Indies]. We have showed it in the past. Now we've got to forget this performance and look forward to the upcoming games."

Borren refuted suggestions that his players were carried away after their praise-worthy performance against England when they scored 292-6 before going down to defeat.

"We didn't get carried away. We had things to work on after the first match and now, we will have more things to work on."

"In the last game Ryan [ten Doeschate] batted well and others built around him. In this match Tom [Cooper] did a good job but there was no support for him."

"We need to play well as a team and that is the only way we can win."

## Razzaq has no regrets

AFP, Colombo



All-rounder Abdul Razzaq on Tuesday said he was ready to play his part for Pakistan at the World Cup after a quiet opening to the tournament in which he has performed a peripheral role.

The 31-year-old veteran of 256 one-day internationals batted at number eight during Pakistan's thumping 205-run triumph over Kenya and again in their 11-run win over co-hosts Sri Lanka.

"Definitely, when you get to bat your confidence goes high, but our batting lineup is very strong and I am not getting many chances but whenever I do I am ready to play my part," said Razzaq.

Razzaq faced just six balls during Pakistan's 317-7 against Kenya, scoring an unbeaten eight, and played just four deliveries against Sri Lanka, scoring three.

Sharing the new ball with Shoaib Akhtar, he bowled five overs in each game, failing to take a wicket.

Razzaq, who is playing his fourth World Cup and has 262 wickets in ODIs, said subcontinental pitches favour the batsmen.

"If you look at other teams, number

seven and eight batsmen are not getting many chances but that is part of the game because the pitches here are slow and help batting.

"I am keeping myself ready in the nets so whenever the team needs me I will be playing my part and do my job of lifting the run rate," said Razzaq, who hit a 72-ball 109 not out against South Africa in Abu Dhabi last year.

"It is my wish to bat up the order but that's up to the team requirement, it's team unity that everyone is doing what is needed, and the aim of every player is to perform when needed," said Razzaq, who has 4,970 ODI runs.

Razzaq said his role with the new ball was to keep things tight and support Akhtar.

"My role with the new ball is to do five or six overs and take one or two wickets. If I do that it's good for the team. These are tough wickets for bowlers but I am fit and have experience of bowling on such tracks," he said.

Pakistan next play Canada in Colombo on Thursday. They top Group A with two wins out of two.



**Pakistan all-rounder Abdul Razzaq was under-bowled and hardly got the chance to show his batting prowess in the first two games. He might still be under-utilised when Pakistan take on World Cup punching bags Canada in Colombo tomorrow.**

PHOTO: AFP

## Afridi wants consistency

PTI, Colombo

Pakistan captain Shahid Afridi on Tuesday asked his unpredictable team to be more consistent and make winning a habit if they hope to go all the way in the ongoing Cricket World Cup.

Pakistan had a tumultuous build-up to their World Cup campaign, which was ridden by captaincy issues and a spot-fixing scandal.

But once the World Cup kicked off, Afridi's men zoomed to top of Group A after notching up a 205-run victory over Kenya and an 11-run triumph against Sri Lanka.

The green brigade will next take on Canada on Thursday, looking for another two points and Afridi ordered his team to carry on the momentum.

"We must show consistency because we are not known for that."