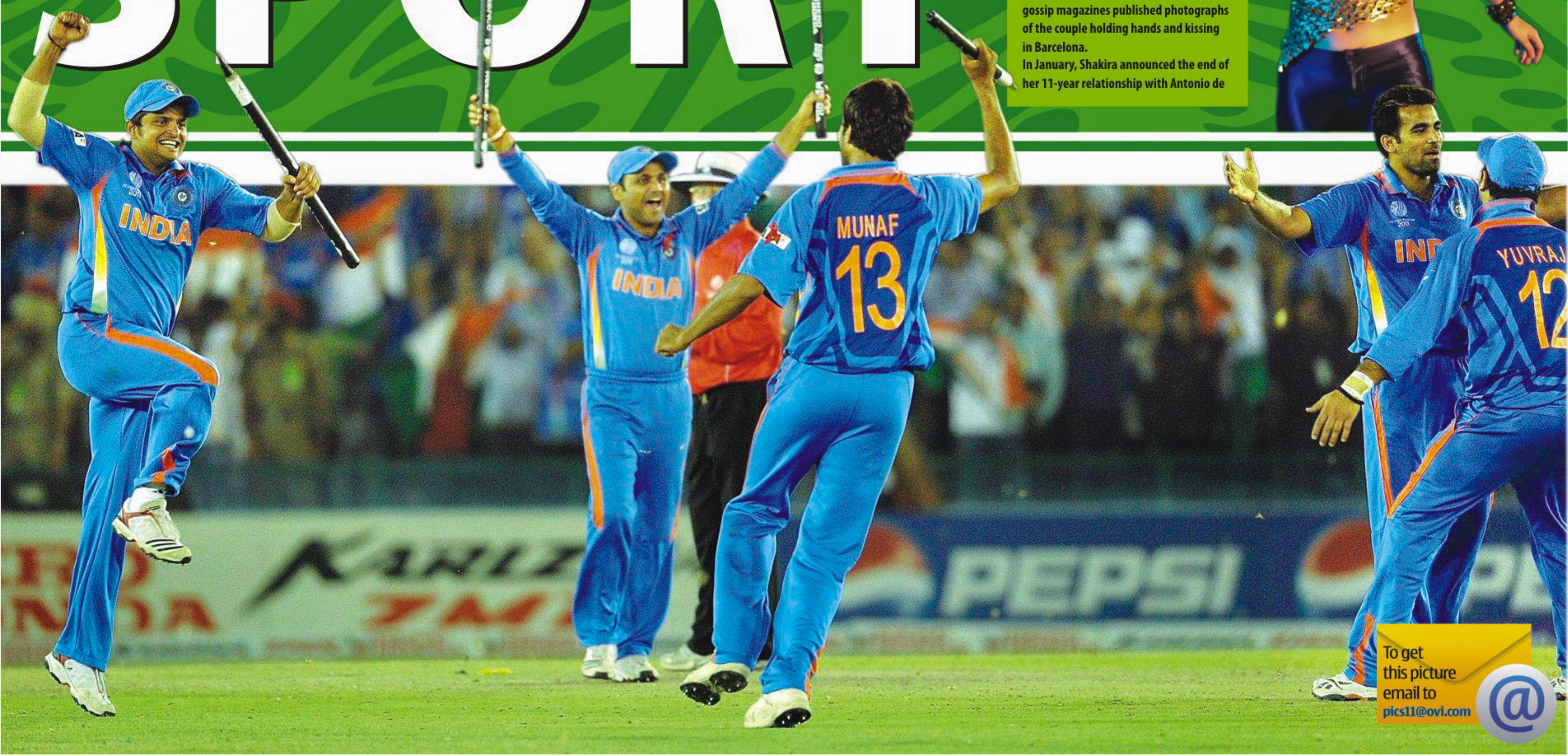
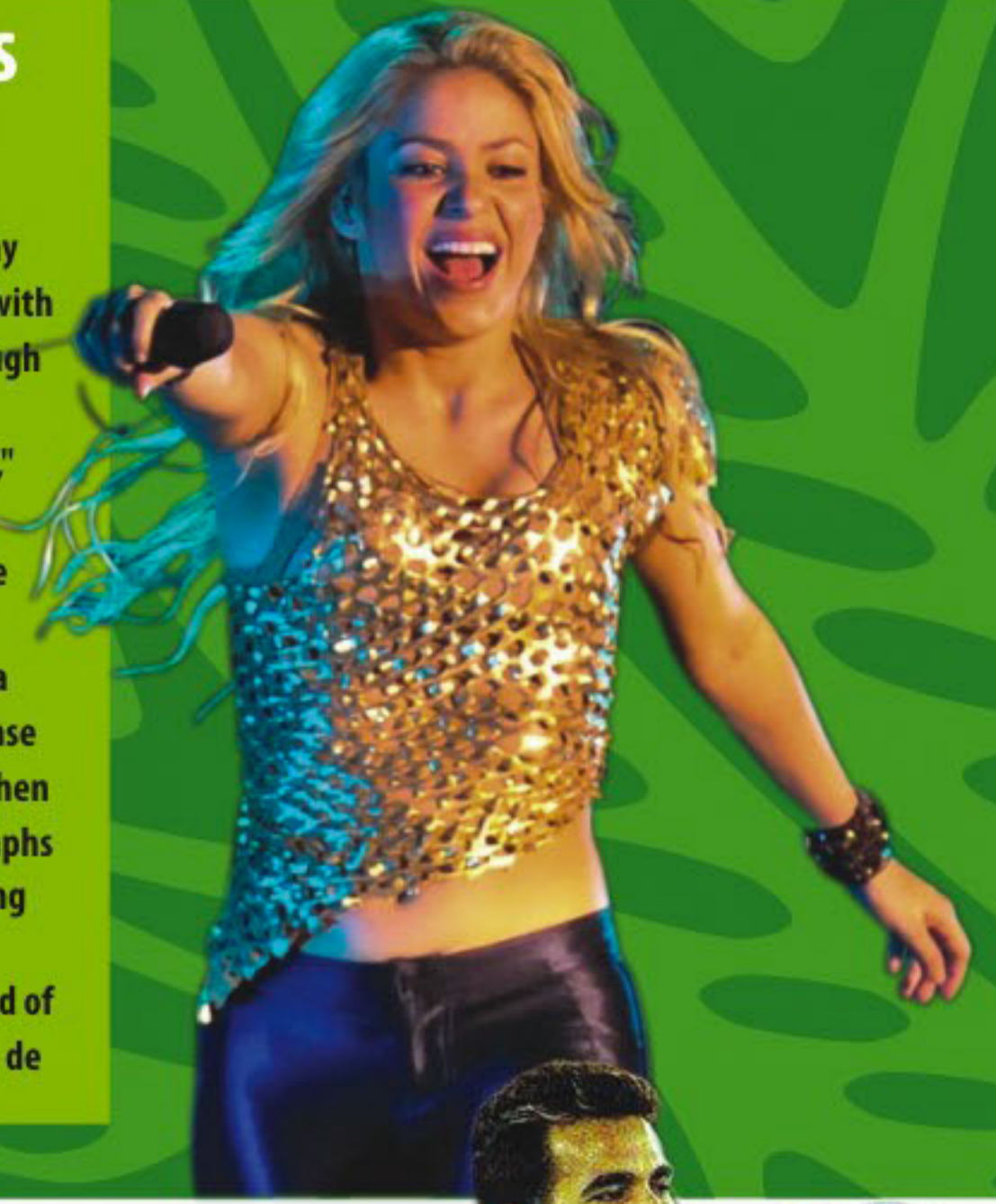


SPORT

Shakira confirms Pique romance

Colombian pop star Shakira on Tuesday confirmed her romantic relationship with Spanish footballer Gerard Pique through a message on her Twitter account. "I present to you my sunshine ... Shak," the 34-year-old singer wrote in the message accompanying a photo of the smiling pair. Shakira and the 24-year-old Barcelona center-back became the focus of intense media attention earlier this month when gossip magazines published photographs of the couple holding hands and kissing in Barcelona. In January, Shakira announced the end of her 11-year relationship with Antonio de



To get this picture email to pics11@ovi.com



Members of the victorious Indian team rush towards each other from every corner of the ground to celebrate the semifinal victory over archrivals Pakistan at the Punjab Cricket Association Stadium in Mohali yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

Sachin eyes glory in Mumbai

AFP, Mohali



India's Sachin Tendulkar led a charmed life to hit a crucial 85 in Wednesday's semifinal win against Pakistan before targeting his first World Cup title in front of his home fans in Mumbai. Tendulkar was dropped four times in his man of the match innings to anchor India to 260-9 against their arch-rivals before his team's bowlers applied the pressure and the brakes to secure a 29-run win in the hotly-anticipated clash. "The final in Mumbai will be a fantastic occasion. We will focus on the job in hand and try to get the job done," said Tendulkar of Saturday's title match against Sri Lanka. Tendulkar again missed out on making 100 international centuries but has the satisfaction of having played in all five of India's World Cup wins over Pakistan. Now he hopes to be at the forefront of Saturday's campaign where India will look to capture a second World Cup title, 28 years after their first and only triumph. "It's always memorable to play against Pakistan and to be on the winning side five times against them is a memory I will always cherish. "But it was a brilliant effort in the field and by the bowlers. When we batted we had to make sure we got a fighting total. I thought 310 or 315 would have been a good par score. "Then the ball started stopping and spinning and something closer to 270 was par." India skipper Mahendra Singh Dhoni, who won the toss and batted, said it was important to treat the slowing PCA Stadium pitch -- and the Pakistan attack for whom left-arm seamer Wahab Riaz grabbed five

wickets -- with respect. "We got off to a fantastic start through Virender Sehwag and Sachin (48 runs in 5.5 overs) but as the game progressed the wicket got slower, and in the middle overs it was difficult to score," said Dhoni. "It was important to just play the bowling with respect. 260 was a good score for this pitch. It was turning. We read the wicket wrong and that's why we went with three seamers, but in the end the seamers bowled really well too. "We don't have bowlers who can bowl 140mph plus, overall we rely on deception - change of length, line and pace." Pakistan captain Shahid Afridi admitted his team had missed their chances to dismiss Tendulkar who was dropped on 27, 45, 70 and 81 in a butter-fingered fielding performance. "I'd like to congratulate the Indian team and the Indian nation for this great victory, and wish them all the best for the final," he said. "We missed some opportunities and they played better than us. We didn't make partnerships and we played some irresponsible shots. "I want to say sorry to my nation - we tried our level best." India off-spinner Harbhajan Singh, who took 2-43, said the semi-final would have made a great title match. "This was like a final. Whenever India and Pakistan play the pressure is always double. It was a big match for us and for them," he said. "We bowled and fielded well and I think we deserved to win. We played good overall cricket. I am looking forward to going to Mumbai and playing in the final."

Rain ruins practice match

SPORTS REPORTER

Rain ruined the practice match between Bangladesh national cricket team and Bangladesh A team yesterday, raising fears that Bangladesh's three-match ODI series against Australia in the month of April. Bangladesh's part of the ICC World Cup was completed without disruptions caused by inclement weather at either Dhaka or Chittagong but there is a possibility of rain playing a part during the Australia series as the CNN weather forecast predicts that thundershowers are likely at different places in Bangladesh over the next 10 days, including on April 8, the day before the first one-day international at Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium. Rains washed out the second innings of the practice game, but before that the senior side enjoyed good batting practice to post 242/9 in 50 overs, after the disappointment of the 78 all out against South Africa in their last group game of the ICC World Cup

SEE PAGE 17 COL 4

Clarke named captain

Aus announce squad for Bangladesh tour



AFP, Sydney


The divisive Michael Clarke began his reign as Australia's new Test and one-day captain on Wednesday by denying that former skipper Ricky Ponting's presence in the side will cause problems. Long seen as heir-apparent, the stylish batsman, who turns 30 on Saturday, was appointed to one of the most coveted roles in Australian sport after Ponting bowed to pressure and quit on the heels of their World Cup exit. Clarke jumps into the role immediately, leaving this week for a tour of Bangladesh as fans remain split on whether he is the right man for the job. Ponting, who led Australia in more than 300 Test and one-day matches, will also be on the plane, taking orders from his former deputy for the first time after being named in the squad to play three one-dayers. "First of all can I say what an honour it is to be named captain and also a huge surprise to see Ricky stand down," Clarke said, denying Ponting's desire to keep playing would overshadow him. "I know Ricky will allow me to do my job to the best of my ability. Bangladesh will be a great test for that to see how it all unfolds." Shane Watson was named as Clarke's vice-captain with Cameron White remaining the Twenty20 skipper. The squad, though, is without David Hussey who has opted to stay at home with the birth of his first child imminent. Xavier Doherty, meanwhile, returns from injury.


With Shaun Tait retiring from one-day cricket, fast bowler James Pattinson has been drafted into the squad and Hilditch is excited about his potential. Clarke's Test reign will start in August when he skips a tour of Sri Lanka. Although he was widely expected to get the job, Clarke is not popular with Australian fans and polls published Wednesday showed the public's coolness towards him. According to the Sydney Morning Herald, only 26 percent of 21,000 respondents in an online poll favoured him as the new captain. In the Sydney Daily Telegraph, a survey of 8,500 readers placed him a distant third behind Shane Watson and Michael Hussey. A part-time underwear model, he regular appears in the social pages and he upset many when he controversially returned to Sydney during Australia's tour of New Zealand in March 2010 for "personal reasons". It followed his model fiancée Lara Bingle deciding to sue her former lover Brendan Fevola for disseminating naked pictures of her, which ended up

in a women's magazine. Clarke later called off his wedding plans. Ponting, though, insisted Clarke was the right choice, and vowed to give him all the support he needed. "He has done nothing wrong when has stood in for me over the past few years and his record in T20 cricket speaks for itself," he said in a column for The Australian newspaper. "I will be there in the background for him if he needs me, but from today the Test and one-day teams will be his and I will be one of many players who follow him onto cricket grounds all over the world." Asked how he will feel taking orders from a man who used to be his deputy, Ponting replied: "I've taken orders most of my life, I'm pretty used to it." Clarke made his professional debut for New South Wales as an 18-year-old in the 1999-2000 Australian domestic season. He made the jump to the national one-day team in January 2003 against England at Adelaide and was chosen to make his Test debut against India at Bangalore in October 2004. He thumped 151, helping Australia to victory, invoking comparisons to past Australian greats Doug Walters and Mark Waugh. Since then, he has gone on to play 69 Tests, scoring 4,742 runs, including 14 centuries, with an average of 46.49. A slow left-arm orthodox bowler, Clarke has captured 21 wickets. In the one-day game, he has collected 188 caps and 5,928 runs at an average of 43.58, with 52 wickets to his name.

SQUAD

Michael Clarke (captain), Shane Watson, Xavier Doherty, Callum Ferguson, Brad Haddin, John Hastings, Mike Hussey, Mitchell Johnson, Brett Lee, Tim Paine, James Pattinson, Ricky Ponting,






ESPNCricinfo Mobicast
by Plusmo

ESPNCricinfo Mobicast delivers live scores, ball-by-ball commentary, one-click access to schedules, breaking news and photos of international cricket matches. It also features Podcasts from renowned internationally acclaimed cricket experts.

Download ESPNCricinfo Mobicast from <http://store.ovi.com>



NOKIA
Connecting People

Be The Nokia Match Analyzer!

Send your expert analysis on the Final match to analysis11@ovi.com

The best analysis will be published on match day.

ovi