



Victoria Azarenka of Belarus poses with the winner's trophy after beating Maria Sharapova of Russia in the Miami hardcourt final at Crandon Park Tennis Centre in Key Biscayne on Saturday. PHOTO: AFP

# Cup of their own

AFP, New Delhi

The fireworks that exploded after India's scintillating World Cup triumph over Sri Lanka in the final were not the only ones that eventually added sparkle to cricket's show-piece event.

Some thrilling contests, the enthusiasm of the home fans and big money for sponsors and advertisers -- everything added up to make the exhausting, six-week odyssey a success in the eyes of the organisers.

In a fairytale finish, India became kings of the one-day game on home soil -- the first ever team to do so -- and ensured a fitting farewell for coach Gary Kirsten.

Sri Lanka deserved huge credit, making it to the final clash until falling at the title hurdle for the second time in a row.

"It was the character of the individuals that helped us win this trophy," said India captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni.

Saturday's final also

## Energy from

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moments which the cricket fans will remember for a long time.

England might not have progressed but they were the most entertaining team in the competition as Andrew Strauss's side produced most of the close matches in the tournament, while Ireland was the only associate country which showed their potential in the tournament. One can't simply forget Kevin O'Brien's blazing match-winning hundred against England.

The way Pakistan under the leadership of Shahid Afridi put aside all the off-field controversies was simply amazing. They exited from the semifinal but went home with some honour. While this tournament put an end to the Australia's era of domination, the favourite South Africa remained chokers. And most importantly, the competitiveness prevailed because the bowlers had dictated the terms on most of the occasions.

underlined that cricket's power base was in the sub-continent.

Never before had India, Sri Lanka and Pakistan all made it to the semi-finals for the first time together.

"I always say the sub-continent is the place to play cricket in," said Sri Lanka skipper Kumar Sangakkara ahead of the final.

"There's no other place that can match the buzz, the excitement, the hype around the game, the passion and the love for the game as well."

Towards the close, the tournament became a springboard for cricket diplomacy after India's Prime Minister Manmohan Singh invited his Pakistani counterpart Yusuf Raza Gilani to watch the semi-final clash between the arch-rivals.

Singh and Gilani standing side by side and waving to Indian as well as Pakistani fans in Mohali turned out to be one of the most enduring snapshots of the event.

The knockout round helped fans forget the four-week first round stage which featured a series of mismatches and eventually saw the world's top eight teams predictably fill the quarterfinal places.

There were some memorable moments.

England's high-scoring tie with India in Bangalore

## India deserved it

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middle part of the innings but the Indians are great players of spin. We didn't bother them too much today apart from Malinga's two wickets at the start," he continued.

Sangakkara lauded Jayawardene for his great knock which helped them to overcome a sluggish start to set a challenging target.

"It was an exceptional innings. He made this wonderful stage his own. He really showed us what he is capable of and what a classy player he is. He got us to where we reached, otherwise we were looking at a total of 240-250," said Sangakkara.

"It doesn't matter how often you play each other. It is the World Cup final. You need to do something special. We had that in Jayawardene and they had that in Gambhir and Dhoni. They were one step ahead of us," he added.

Sangakkara was happy with the way his side performed in the tournament but branded the defeat to India in Mumbai as "hugely disappointing" as it was Sri Lanka's third defeat starting with the 2007 World Cup in West Indies which was followed by the World Twenty20 in England.

"It is hugely disappointing but satisfying as well in a strange sense because we understand the magnitude of what we've done to get here. We can be proud of the way we played our cricket. We tried exceptionally hard to win games, but today unfortunately we couldn't convert."

Definitely Sri Lanka deserved some praise because it was their effort which made the final of the game's biggest event worthy after some dull and drab affairs in the finals since 1999.

## Miami title Azarenka's

AFP, Miami

Victoria Azarenka defeated Maria Sharapova 6-1, 6-4 here Saturday to win the WTA's prestigious Miami hardcourt crown for the second time.

Azarenka, the 21-year-old eighth seed from Belarus, took full advantage of Sharapova's struggles, as the former world number one held serve just once and committed 43 unforced errors.

"I played real well the first set," said Azarenka, who matched Sharapova shriek for shriek in a battle of two of the WTA's loudest players.

## Paes, Bhupathi inspired by WC

AFP, Miami

Indian doubles stars Mahesh Bhupathi and Leander Paes said their Miami Masters triumph was inspired by watching their country's World Cup win over Sri Lanka.

The duo watched the Mumbai final, where India defeated Sri Lanka by six wickets, on a live stream before going on court to defeat Max Mirnyi and Daniel Nestor 6-7 (5/7), 6-2, 10-5.

"It gave us extra motivation. It's a big deal for our country and kudos to the whole team," said Bhupathi. Paes added: "I just want to congratulate the team, all of them. Great job boys."

## Mash still

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"The only thing that is bothering me is a lack of strength. If I had done that this anxiety wouldn't be there. I still feel my leg is weak while I am running. There is no pain but today I was feeling a click in the knee, something which I feel when I lack strength," he said.

## Aussies arrive

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Squad Michael Clarke (captain), Shane Watson (vice-captain), Xavier Doherty, Callum Ferguson, Brad Haddin (wicketkeeper), John Hastings, Michael Hussey, Mitchell Johnson, Brett Lee, Tim Paine (wicketkeeper), Ricky Ponting, Steven Smith, James Pattinson, Cameron White.

# Bowlers rule in NCL

## Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

First day of the National Cricket League's fifth round certainly belonged to the bowlers as a total of 44 wickets fell in the three matches respectively across the country yesterday.

Rajshahi and Chittagong highlighted probably the most fascinating scorecard of a day. At the Shaheed Chandu Stadium in Bogra, Chittagong and Rajshahi bowled out each other in their first innings, with Chittagong losing four wickets at the end of the day in their second innings as well.

The day also delivered three five wicket hauls, courtesy Barisal's Sohag Gazi, Rajshahi's Forhad Reza and Chittagong's Kamrul Islam.

### CHITTAGONG-RAJSHAH

Forhad, Rajshahi's skipper, won the toss and sent the opponents to bat and led his team from the very first over. The all-rounder started proceedings with the second ball of the match, trapping Chittagong's Mahbulul Karim leg-before before doing the same with the other opener Nafees Iqbal.

Forhad's magnificent spell of ten overs brought him five wickets for just 16 runs as the port city side were all out for a mere 72 runs. Twenty was the highest score coming from Rezaul Karim's bat at No 7.

After Forhad starred for Rajshahi, it was Kamrul Islam, Chittagong's left-arm seamer, who brought the game back to life after his six-wicket haul.

Not as low as the port city side but Rajshahi were bundled out for 151 in 39

overs only with Kamrul taking 6-55. Batting at No 7, Zubair Ahmed scored 34 hitting three boundaries and a six, while earlier Farhad Hossain made 30 off 66 balls with four boundaries.

Trailing by 81 runs, Chittagong started their second innings and lost four wickets for 46 runs.

Once again Forhad caused damage picking up two wickets at the top. Nazmul Islam and Rezaul Karim were the unbeaten batsmen on ten and one respectively and will come out to bat today with their team still 35 runs behind.

Twenty-four wickets fell on the day giving the impression that it probably was a bad wicket to play on with uneven bounce, but match referee Raquibul Hasan had other views.

"It's a perfect wicket for a cricket match. The wicket is very sporting -- little swing for bowlers, even bounce for batsmen," he described.

"It showed the lacking of our cricket. Batsmen failed to put the right application and shot selection was poor," Raquibul added.

### DHAKA-BARISAL

Barisal maintained their bowling consistency in the league after they bowled out Dhaka for just 133 runs at the Sylhet Divisional Stadium.

Off-spinner Sohag and seamer Shafaq Al Jabir once again were among the wickets, picking up 5-32 and 3-18 respectively.

Dhaka's opener Uttam Sarkar played 100 balls for his 60 but he didn't get the support from his teammates as 17 became the second highest score, coming from Mohammad Mazid's bat. Uttam hit nine boundaries in his knock.

As Barisal maintained consistency in their bowling, they also remained the same 'poor batting' side. They lost seven wickets for 173 runs before finishing the day with a lead of 40 runs.

Middle-order batsman Asif Ahmed was the highest scorer with 57 from 76 balls. The youngster hit nine four's in his innings.

Paceman Mahbulul Alam took four wickets for 31.

### KHULNA-SYLHET

Unlike the other two matches, it was a quiet day at the Shaheed Kamruzzaman Stadium in Rajshahi.

Sylhet sent into bat first, finished the day with 226-3 on board against Khulna.

Opener Imtiaz Hossain and Saikat Ali made half-centuries but failed to stretch their innings as they both got out of Tapash Ghosh's bowling after scoring 62 and 51 respectively. Imtiaz hammered six four's and two sixes in his 166 ball knock, while Saikat managed six boundaries.

Golam Rahman and Golam Mabud were the unbeaten batsmen on 46 and 29 respectively.

### BRIEF SCORES

CHITTAGONG: First inns 72 all out (Rezaul 20; Farhad 5-16) and second inns 46-4 (Karim 12; Farhad 2-23).

RAJSHAH: First inns 151 all out (Zubair 34, Hossain 30; Kamrul 6-55, Mamun 2-28).

DHAKA: First inns 133 all out (Uttam 60; Shohag 5-32, Shafaq 3-18).

BARISAL: First inns 173-7 (Asif 57, Faruque 35; Mahbulul 4-31, Tayebur 1-15).

SYLHET: First inns 226-3 (Imtiaz 62, Saikat 51; Tapash 2-44).

# SL press lambast selectors

AFP, Colombo



Sri Lanka's defeated cricket team returned home Sunday to calls from state-run media demanding a probe into "blunders right from the start".

"Who picked the final XI of the Sri Lanka team for the World Cup final against India?" the Sunday Observer asked.

It questioned the dropping of spinner Ajantha Mendis in favour of Suraj Randiv who failed to impress after only joining the squad as an injury replacement on Friday.

The Observer also questioned the wisdom of playing an injured Muttiah Muralidaran, the ace spinner, who was retiring after Saturday's game.

"Was it advisable playing a half-fit Muralidaran?" the state-run paper said.

"Winning the mega-final is much more important than giving a farewell tribute to even a great cricketer of Muralidaran's magnitude."

Captain Kumar Sangakkara defended the team selection and said he had fielded the best possible players and insisted they had "played well".

"The changes we made were good," Sangakkara told reporters at the airport. "Unfortunately, we did not do well enough in bowling and fielding."

"We were unable to maintain pressure on India after their first two wickets. India played very well and that is why we lost."

The privately-run Sunday Times of Colombo said fans were still trying to come to terms with the defeat, but said the World Cup loss should be used to clean up the administration of the game.

"Cricket has been run by successive interim committees, most reeking with corruption, nepotism, political interference and mismanagement," the Times said urging a clean-up of the governing body of the game in Sri Lanka.

The Lakbima News newspaper front-paged a picture

Tillakaratne Dilshan and Lasith Malinga celebrating the dismissal of Indian opener Virender Sehwag.

"Done half the job!", was its headline. The Nation newspaper was more charitable in its front-page headline: "Lost, but not shamed!"

The team was originally due to be driven in an open motorcade, but instead were ferried from the airport in a coach with tinted windows.

Only a few people turned up to greet them along the way despite repeated appeals for support over state television.

Local cricket commentator Hemantha Devapriya blamed the defeat on bad fielding.

"Sri Lanka lost because of poor fielding," Devapriya said on Sri Lanka's national television.

Another sports analyst, Palitha Perera, consoled the deflated Sri Lankans saying that the World Cup still remained in Asia.

"We must be happy that the World Cup was lifted by a fellow South Asian nation," Perera said. "We have only another four years to wait."

## Malinga ends WC career

AFP, Colombo

Sri Lanka fast bowler Lasith Malinga said on Sunday that his World Cup career is over.

"I hope to be of service to my team as long as I can, but I won't be able to play in the next World Cup in 2015. I have been carrying injuries for the past few weeks and with little rest," Malinga, 27, told state-run television.

The seamer with the distinctive slingshot style did not elaborate on his injuries, but a career-threatening right knee injury sidelined him in 2008 and in early 2009.

"I ask the youngsters to play well in the next World Cup," he said after the team arrived from Mumbai on Sunday after losing the World Cup final to India by six wickets.

## CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

<b>ACROSS</b>	1 Humpty Dumpty, e.g.	4 Recede	7 Stroller	11 Let fall	13 Pitch	14 Emanation	15 Comical	16 Cassius Clay, now	17 Foot fraction	18 Follows orders	20 Lascivious	22 Help	24 Understand	28 Self-indulgent spender	32 Cohort of Brahma and Vishnu	33 Owl's call	34 Auction offer	36 Always	37 Draw a conclusion	39 Clothing fasteners	
	21 Villainous sort	23 Luau	26 Bowful	29 Frog's cousin	31 Salts	33 Likely name for a poodle	35 Showbiz job	38 Otherwise	40 Hodge-podge	42 Deposit	44 Characterization	46 Singer Campbell	48 Shady tree	51 Stir-fry pan	53 Cohort of Brahma and Vishnu	54 Owl's call	55 Auction offer	56 Always	57 Draw a conclusion	59 Clothing fasteners	
	25 Bees' home	27 Finished	28 Fourth planet	29 Caprice	30 Notch	31 Claiborne of fashion	32 Quick swim	33 de Janeiro	34 "The Raven" writer	35 American bird	36 Rotary phone feature	37 Time-consuming	38 Norway's capital	39 Timid	40 Visibility hindrance	41 Under the weather	42 "Curse you!"	43 Phys. ed. venue			

**Solution time: 24 mins.**

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**CRYPTOQUIP**

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**Saturday's Cryptoquip:** AUSTRALIAN DUCK-BILLED CRITTER THAT WORKS AS A WAITER IN THE OUTBACK BISTRO: A PLATTER-PUS.  
Today's Cryptoquip Clue: D equals N