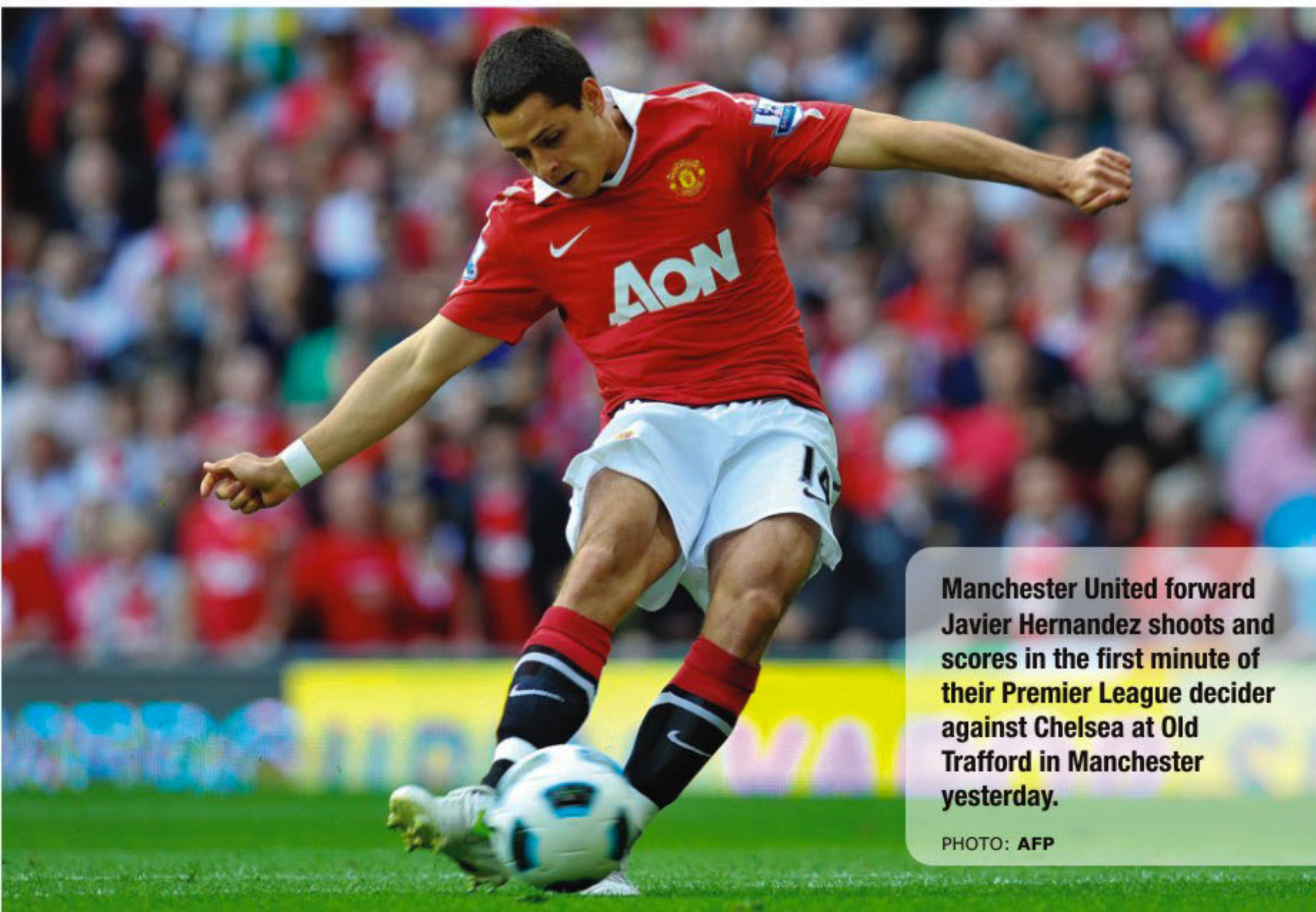
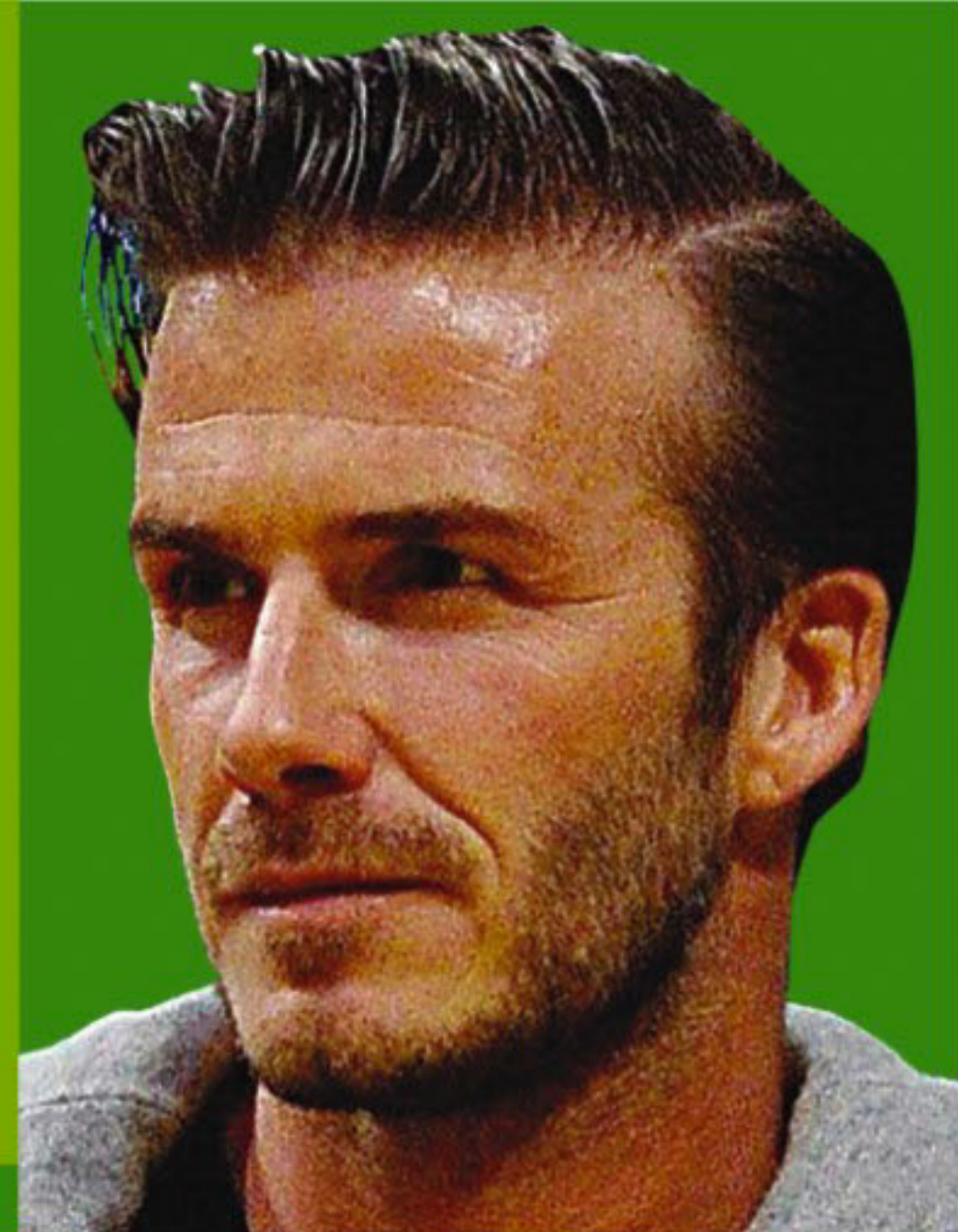


## Beckham unhurt in car crash

English midfielder David Beckham was not injured in a two-car crash in which he was driving a car that rear-ended another vehicle on a busy freeway near Los Angeles, police said Saturday. The accident Friday morning involving Beckham's Cadillac left the other driver, an unidentified 40-year-old man from Los Angeles, hospitalized after complaints of neck pain. The other driver's Mitsubishi was stalled in the carpool lane on the heavily traveled 405 freeway in Torrance, California. Beckham, 35, did not receive a ticket over



Manchester United forward Javier Hernandez shoots and scores in the first minute of their Premier League decider against Chelsea at Old Trafford in Manchester yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

## Red Devils on brink of 19th

AFP, London

Manchester United defeated Chelsea 2-1 at Old Trafford on Sunday to leave themselves on the brink of a record 19th Premier League title.

First-half goals from Javier Hernandez and captain Nemanja Vidic clinched a deserved victory which means Sir Alex Ferguson's side need just one point from their remaining games against Blackburn and Blackpool to clinch the title.

Man-of-the-match Ryan Giggs admitted United were tantalisingly close to clinching the Premier League, a championship triumph that will see them pass Liverpool as English football's most successful club.

"It's a massive step forward," Giggs told Sky Sports.

"Mathematically it's not done yet, but we're nearly there. We've just got to finish the job next week."

Giggs, who is on course to collect an

astonishing 12th Premier League winners medal, said supplanting Liverpool would be a "great achievement."

"Fifteen or 20 years ago you'd have never thought it. It's a great achievement by the team and the manager to overhaul our biggest rivals of the 70s, 80s and 90s," the 37-year-old veteran added.

Chelsea -- whose lone goal came from the boot of Frank Lampard -- had clawed back a 15-point deficit to leave themselves only three points behind United heading into Sunday's heavy-weight encounter.

But the reigning champions were blown away in a devastating opening period which saw United take a 2-0 lead within 23 minutes, Hernandez scoring after only 37 seconds to spark delirium at Old Trafford.

South Korean international Park Ji-Sung surged into space from midfield before sliding a pass through to the young Mexican international, who nipped in behind David Luiz and slotted past Petr Cech.

It got better for United in the 23rd

minute, when a short corner routine saw Park feed Giggs, who jinked past Salomon Kalou before whipping over a cross for Vidic, who shrugged off Branislav Ivanovic to nod home.

The double strike left Chelsea reeling although the Londoners did have their chances to get back in the game, United goalkeeper Edwin van der Sar blocking Kalou's close-range header superbly.

The veteran Dutch international was pressed into action again soon afterwards, blocking a long-range Luiz shot with his midriff.

Lampard gave Chelsea hope on 68 minutes, prodding in from close range after Ivanovic knocked down a deflected Ramires cross, but United were not to be denied.

Earlier Sunday, Arsenal were eliminated from the title race after slumping to a 3-1 defeat at Stoke.

First-half goals from Kenwyne Jones and Arsenal old boy Jermaine Pennant followed by a late Jonathan Walters strike secured a deserved win for the Potters at the Britannia Stadium.

## Cyclone Gayle hits KTK

AGENCIES, Undated



INDIAN PREMIER LEAGUE

Chris Gayle hammered 36 runs in an over in his 16-ball 44 to fire Royal Challengers Bangalore to a nine-wicket win over Kochi Tuskers Kerala in an Indian Premier League match on Sunday.

Elsewhere, Pune Warriors finally ended their horror run of seven defeats by limiting fellow stragglers Kings XI Punjab to 119 in Mohali. It was a target they overhauled for the loss of 5 wickets with nearly three overs to spare.

Disciplined bowling by Pune saw Wayne Parnell, Rohit Sharma, Mitchell Marsh and B Kumar equally share the eight wickets to fall.

Shaun Marsh scored 32 while Dinesh Karthik put up 30.

Pune never looked in any trouble chasing down the total as Yuvraj Singh and Manish Pandey scored 35 and 28 respectively to see them coast to victory.

In the day's earlier match, West Indies Gayle put on 67 for the opening wicket off just 3.5 overs with Sri Lankan Tillakaratne Dilshan (52 not out off 31 balls) as Bangalore achieved a modest 126-run target with more than six overs to spare.

It was Bangalore's sixth victory in 10 matches and Kochi's sixth defeat in 11 games of the Twenty20 tournament.

Mumbai have already made sure of the semi-finals with 16 points. They are followed by Kolkata (14), Bangalore (13), Chennai (12), Rajasthan (11), Kochi (10), Delhi (eight), Deccan (six),

Punjab (six) and Pune (four).

Gayle, the only batsman to have made two IPL centuries, went on the rampage in the third over when he hit seamer Prasanth Parameswaran for four sixes and three fours in a seven-ball over, including a no-ball.

His flourish ended in the next over when he was bowled by seamer Vinay Kumar, but not before putting his team on course for victory.

Dilshan also went for shots early in the innings, cracking one six and three fours in an over from off-spinner Ramesh Powar. He completed the victory with an unfinished 61-run stand for the second wicket with Virat Kohli (27 not out).

New Zealand left-arm spinner Daniel Vettori and pacer Sreenath Aravind earlier shared four wickets to restrict Kochi to a small total.

Kochi made a steady start when Australian Michael Klinger (24) and New Zealander Brendon McCullum (22) added 43 for the opening wicket before losing their way. Ravinder Jadeja was the other main scorer with 23.

### SCORES IN BRIEF

**KINGS XI PUNJAB:** 119 for 8 in 20 overs (Marsh 32, Karthik 30; Parnell 2-12)  
**PUNE WARRIORS:** 120 for 5 in 17.1 overs (Yuvraj 35, Pandey 28; Srivastava 2-20)  
**Result:** Pune Warriors won by five wickets

**KOCHI TUSKERS KERALA:** 125-9 in 20 overs (Klinger 24, Jadeja 23, McCullum 22; Aravind 2-20, Vettori 2-24)  
**ROYAL CHALLENGERS BANGALORE:** 128-1 in 13.1 overs (Dilshan 52 not out, Gayle 44, Kohli 27 not out)  
**Result:** Royal Challengers Bangalore by nine wickets.

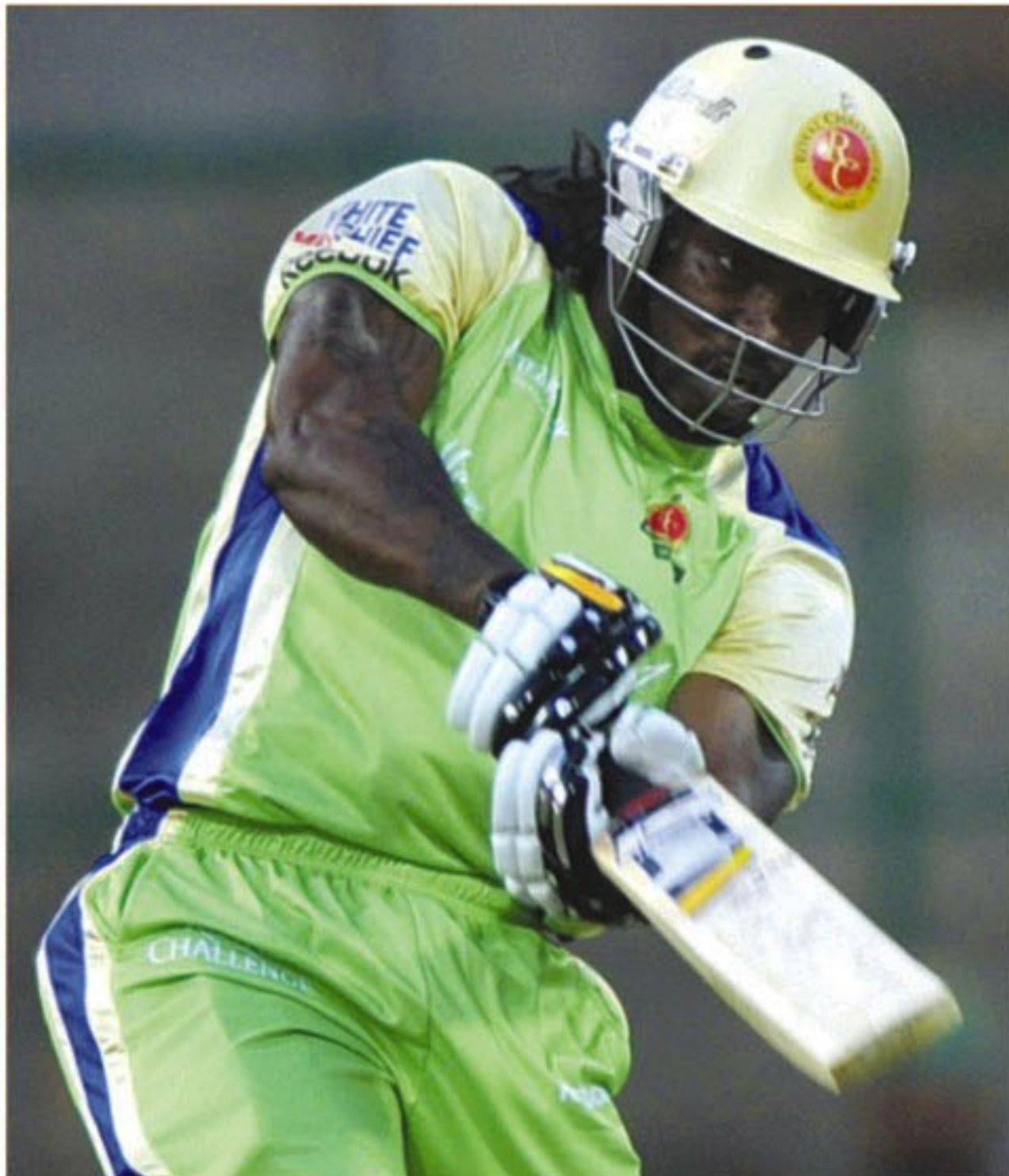


PHOTO: AFP

Royal Challengers Bangalore batsman Chris Gayle is in the process of pulverizing the confidence of Kochi Tuskers Kerala medium-pacer Prasanth Parameswaran as the big West Indian carts one more six in a 37-run over at the M Chinnaswamy Stadium in Bangalore yesterday.

## Different routes to success

### Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

The moment Nasiruddin Faruque chose to stop thinking too much about his game, he reaped the rewards.

On the other hand, a deeply motivated Mosharraf Hossain Rubel is also on his way to reaching his pre-season target.

"I used to think too much about everything," Faruque said. "There is less negativity now because I think less about it. There can be far worse things than getting out."

Even if he got out twelve times out of the 14 times he went out to bat, the Barisal batsman did justice to his talent as he scored 632 runs at an average of 52.66, the highest among batsmen at the National Cricket League.

"I felt more confident this season. My goal was to think match-by-match and not the entire season. I think I was more consistent because of that, unlike 4-5 years ago when I used to score big once and then the next one came after a couple of games," said Faruque.

There was a time when he was the only left-hander to talk about and as much as Bangladesh cricket has changed, so has this southpaw's technique and method.

"In one-day cricket you have to play a lot of shots, sometimes too many. What I do is I play just two shots in the longer version," added Faruque.

Though he struck two centuries and three half-centuries, he was not entirely pleased with his conversion rate.

"I didn't get to play more than two months last season. I was injured and I think that worked as an incentive. I wanted to make up for what I missed last season," he said.

For Rubel however, there was a lot of motivation to do well.

With his left-arm spin, he has taken

picked for the Tigers for the one and only time).

Both Faruque and Rubel are 27 and 29 respectively, supposedly the peak for cricketers, but only in this country can anyone above 25 be considered a has-been, a lost talent, someone who could have made it when he was young but not anymore.

Despite scoring a decent amount of runs, Faruque would hardly be in the reckoning for a spot in the national

team but he could hope for the next best, the Bangladesh A team. But he believes that the structure isn't the best. "I think, for the last two years, the structure hasn't been that impressive. Last year there was just that one series each against South Africa and West Indies. And it is performance based, just like the Academy team these days," he said.

"If there was a 6-month camp for A team players, it would have been much better. Even when you consider future national players, this bonding is important and they can know each other well if they have long camps for the Academy or A team," said Faruque.

Though the season is over for him, Rubel has one last chance to remind everyone all is not lost, in tomorrow's NCL final against Rajshahi. "I think it is very important, this final match. If I can end up with 40 wickets and reach 400-plus runs, it would bring me some attention," said Rubel.



MOSHARRAF HOSSAIN



NASIRUDDIN FARUQUE

33 wickets while with the bat Rubel has scored 320 runs at an average of 46.71.

"There's only one way I can make it to the national team and that is through performance at the domestic level. I prepared myself to play for the national team and I think that's why it has been good so far," said the Dhaka left-arm spinner, adding that he has eyed the 'double' of being the highest wicket-taker as well as the best all-rounder of the tournament, a feat he reached in the 2007-08 season (just before being

# SHARE ON

at a **HOT**

new price ~~7,160/-~~  
**6,690/-**

**Ch@t 322**

Email, SNS link  
Dual standby  
Optical touch-pad  
1.3 MP Camera  
Memory up to 8 GB  
1 GB Memory **Free**

easy operating   innovative design   long-lasting battery

SAMSUNG mob!le