

Nowhere to hide Underdogs plot upset

One can perfectly understand the reasons why Khaled Mashud's men returned to the tranquil settings of Pietermaritzburg earlier then expected. It was simply unbearable staying back in Durban after the disgraceful defeat against Canada in their World Cup opener on Tuesday

The devastated cricketers needed a break to recover from the shock of the Canada debacle and regroup before their tough second game against Sri Lanka.

They turned off their cell phones and separated themselves from the media before Mashud decided to have a few words with the persever-

"We can not get back what we lost against Canada. But we can still live with that by fighting to the best of our abilities against Sri Lanka", said the Bangladesh captain.

But the following morning when Sri Lankan captain Jayasuriya won the toss and invited Bangladesh to bat, millions back home painfully discovered that nothing has changed in a team that seriously lacks commitment and application.

Bangladesh lost four wickets for five runs in a sensational first over left-arm paceman Chaminda Vaas, who become the first player in

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Beyond belief

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh's World Cup campaign has gone from bad to worse in the space of three days. After sinking against entrants Canada in their opening game on February 11, Khaled Mashud's toothless Tigers went into the history books to become Sri Lankan Chaminda Vaas' first-over hattrick.

The back-to-back losses have baffled the cricket-loving public. The general feeling is that team has forgotten the game's basics.

"I think we are marching backwards. Based on what I've seen so far they are not playing as a unit," said former national coach Sarwar

Talking to The Daily Star Sport last night, the coach of Bangladesh's inaugural Test team, felt that standards had fallen drastically over the last couple of years.

"Nowadays it seems a score ranging between 100-120 is typical for the team. Compare that to when Bangladesh made 220-plus against England in the ICC Knockout Tournament in Kenya. "They even beat Kenya in Kenya. But now, I dare to dream of such a prospect. That shows how far we have slumped," said Imran.

"We don't talk about the team anymore. We only talk about indi

"It's been good for us to play a have sort of fallen into the same category in the last six months. quality side like Pakistan first. They

AFP, Centurion

Out-of-form India go into Saturday's World Cup clash against Australia as rank underdogs, a tag captain Saurav Ganguly believes will work to his team's advantage.

"It's not a bad thing really, the pressure's off and we can do our own thing," Ganguly said ahead of the high-profile group A match against the reigning champions at the Supersport Park here.

"If we play as well as we are capable of, anything can happen. We can surprise a lot of teams, including Australia."

India have played below their potential in recent times with the star-studded batting line-up, led by world record holder Sachin Tendulkar, performing in fits and

The Indians faced acute embarrassment at not being able to last their full quota of 50 overs in their opening World Cup game against qualifiers the Netherlands and won only due to the inexperience of the Dutch batsmen

Shot out for 204 with seven deliveries to spare, the Indians bowled out the Dutch for 138 at Paarl on a wicket that assisted the spinners.

Australia, on the other hand, showed awesome form with an 82run demolition of Pakistan on Tuesday despite losing the services of star leg-spinner Shane Warne an hour before the start due to a failed drua test. Australia have won seven of their

last 10 one-day internationals against India, but the world champions are not taking victory for "We're up against a side that has

the potential to make a lot of runs," said middle-order batsman Darren Lehmann, who is available for selection after serving out a fivematch suspension due to racist comments made against the Sri Lankans last month.

are up and down like yo-yos.

"They are sometimes really good, sometimes bad and India

"But India are a very dangerous side and one we will be wary of. We will have to play well to beat them."

Harbhajan Singh

32 wickets in three Tests against 4-32 against the Netherlands.

Centurion wicket could work in India's favour

normal South African pitches," he

before and they've won some games in Australia.' If Tendulkar, one-day cricket's

"You've got to get 10 blokes out, he is just one of those guys,

the champions, Lehmann did well to

"But obviously he's an exceptional player. His record speaks for itself and he's played well against

Tendulkar will once again open the batting, like he did against the start in the initial overs.

the highest scorer in World Cup history, adding to the record number of runs (11,598) and centuries (33) in limited-overs cricket.

Rahul Dravid and Ganguly himself to fire if Australia are to be given a LINE-UPS

AUSTRALIA (from): Ricky Ponting (captain), Adam Gilchrist, Michael Bevan, Andy Bichel, Jason

India is banking on the unusually slow and dry wicket to assist their frontline spinners, Anil Kumble and "Slow bowlers will definitely have

a big role to play against Australia," Ganguly said. "And we have two of the best in the business. Off-spinner Harbhajan captured

Australia two years ago, while leggie Kumble returned to form with Lehmann admitted the slow

"It probably suits them more than

"But having said that you've still got to play well. We've won in India

leading batsman and a thorn for Australia in the past, is a worry for

l ehmann said.

Dutch, in a bid to give India a rousing His 52 on Wednesday made him

India, however, need the other batsmen like Virender Sehwag,

India won by 118 runs Australia won by 8 wickets Pune India won by 60 runs India won 20 runs Australia won by 4 wickets Perth Australia won by 152 runs Australia won by 5 wickets Australia won by 28 runs Australia wins 39, India wins 24, Tied/NR: 3



COME AND GET US! Australian captain Ricky Ponting during practice at Centurion yesterday.



Recent head-to-head records for Australia v India ahead of their World Cup Group A match here on Saturday: April 6 2001, Goa: Australia won by 4 wickets Visakhapatnam: Australia won by 93 runs April 3 2001

Mar 31 2001 Mar 25 2001 Oct 7 2000 Jan 30 2000 Jan 26 2000 Jan 12 2000 Total matches played: 66

Indore Bangalore Nairobi Adelaide Sydney Melbourne

'Turbanator' to strike | 'Leave us

Tendulkar Lara's luck

INTERNET, Centurion

He's ba-ack. India's wily off-spinner Harbhajan Singh cannot wait to get stuck into Ricky Ponting again.

The Turbanator almost terminated Ponting's international career two years ago when India won an unforgettable home Test series 2-1 and Australia snuck home 3-2 in an equally exhilarating one-day tour-

They have not done battle since. Ponting played five innings in those Tests, making three ducks, six

His average was an embarrassing 3.4 and on every single occasion he was dismissed by Harbhajan, who finished the series with a phenomenal 32 wickets.

When Ponting walked off MA Chidambaram Stadium at Chennai after the third Test -- head bowed, his world having caved in, Harbhajan celebrating loudly within earshot -- he thought his Test days were numbered.

Ponting recovered by making a century during the one-dayers,

West Indian batting star Brian Lara

is using a special good luck charm to

score runs at the World Cup -- a

Sachin Tendulkar autograph on his

a match-winning 116 against hosts

South Africa in Sunday's opener,

bears the signature of the Indian

superstar above the sponsors' logo.

luck," a grateful Lara said. "I hope

Sachin too will get a lot of runs at the

"Of course it has brought me

Lara's bat, with which he scored

AFP, Johannesburg

averaging 36.6 for the series, and succeeding in not giving his wicket away once to the tall tweaker. Since then Ponting has become Australia's one-day captain and man-in-waiting for the Test job.

"I performed quite well when they were in India ... I am very much looking forward to playing this said Harbhaian before Australia's World Cup match against India on Saturday. "I don't know what they're feel-

ing, but I'm obviously feeling very confident against them. They're a very good side, they play their strokes and whenever a batsman plays his strokes you have a chance of aettina him out.

"When you play the best team in the world you feel confident. When you play against them you perform

Harbhaian claimed before the World Cup he was preparing to unveil a mystery ball that was nowhere to be seen during India's first-up victory over Holland. "I'm still working on it." he said.

rated as the greatest batsmen of the

added another feather to his glitter-

ing cap when he became the lead-

ing scorer in World Cup history,

On Wednesday, Tendulkar

AFP, Melbourne

COULD YOU PLEASE PLAY IN MY WAY FOR A CHANGE? India's coach John

Wright (R) talks to skipper Sourav Ganguly during nets at Centurion yesterday.

Shane Warne's family closed ranks on Thursday and pleaded to be left alone as the embattled cricketer prepared to mount a defence against his positive test at a drugs

manages the leg-spinner, said noone in the family would comment further on the controversy.

Warne returned home from the World Cup late Wednesday after he tested positive for a banned diuretic used to aid weight-loss after a test by the Australian Sports Drugs Agency (ADSA) before the Australian team flew to South Africa earlier this month.

cricket if he cannot prove mitigating circumstances following the positive

Board's (ACB) anti-doping policy, Warne's actions could fall into two categories and attract two different

"prohibited substance" attracting a maximum three-month ban, or as a "prohibited method", which draws a minimum two-year ban for the first

Shane

failing a drug test. Warne returned to Melbourne

from South Africa late Wednesday in disgrace for testing positive for taking a banned diuretic tablet, apparently given to him by his mother. Waugh, speaking after his New

South Wales team beat Western Australia in a domestic one-day game here, said he supported Warne whether the allegations proved true or false.

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World sans Warne

AFP, Johannesburg

Shane Warne's place in cricket history rests not on statistics but on the fact that he single-handedly revived the art of leg-spin bowling in the western world.

When he made his Test debut in 1991-92, the game was dominated by tast bowling. Leg-spin, apart from the occasional sub-continental maestro such as Pakistan's Abdul Qadir, was all but extinct in top-flight

Warne, whose nickname of 'Hollywood' tells its own story, changed all that. With his bleached

blond hair, earring and aggressive lively personality he made leg-spin Although he was characterised

men at Sydney when he finished as the "beach bum made good", with the seemingly hopeless figures of one for 150. after he came back from being But the Australians stuck by him kicked out of the Australian academy, the tag of a rogue never left and they were to be quickly rewarded. But this was to prove a double-

Warne's first delivery in Ashes edged sword. It helped account for cricket, in the first Test at Old Trafford in 1993 was proof that the his huge popularity, especially in Australia, because the public found world had a remarkable talent on its it easy to identify with someone they hands. believed to be much like themselves apart from his extraordinary skill.

Bowling to Mike Gatting, he pitched the ball well outside leg stump, the batsman went to play the ball but it turned extravagantly and clipped the top of off-stump.

All this, though, was far away

when, on his Test debut, he took a

hammering from the Indian bats-

That delivery became etched into English memories and was named "the ball of the century".

Warne, with is top-spinners googlies, guicker balls and stock leg-spinner soon established a mastery over English batsmen he has yet to relinquish.

They were not alone in falling under his spell with South Africa's Daryll Cullinan another regular

After Cullinan had unwisely admitted he had sought psychological help in playing Warne, the Australian told him when the pair next met on the field: "Darvll. I'm going to send you straight back to the couch".

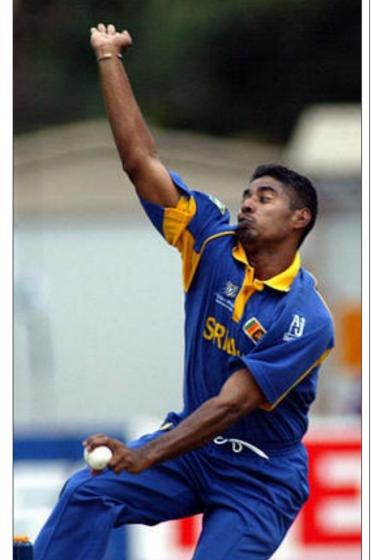
Records were starting to tumble even though his career was interrupted by shoulder and finger inju-

But controversy was starting to attach itself to Warne as well. In 1995, he and Mark Waugh were fined by the Australian Cricket Board for accepting money from an Indian bookmaker after providing pitch and weather information during a tour of Sri Lanka in 1994.

However, the ACB unwisely kept the story quiet and four years later it emerged amidst a blizzard of head-

And that was not the only time Warne was front page news. In 1999, he took flak after snatching a camera from a young New Zealand fan who took a photo of him smoking a cigarette even though Warne had a commercial contract which involved him giving up smoking.

That same year though, he was man of the match in the World Cup final, taking four for 33 as Australia



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VAAS VENOM! Chaminda Vaas in action against Bangladesh at

Chaminda vast

Sri Lankan seamer Chaminda Vaas set a World Cup record on Friday when he grabbed a sensational hattrick with the first three deliveries of the match against Bangladesh in Pietermaritzburg.

The 29-year-old left-armer also claimed a wicket off the fifth legal delivery of the opening over to leave Bangladesh struggling at 5-4 after the first over.

Vaas already holds the record for the best one-day figures in history -he claimed 8-3-19-8 against

Zimbabwe in December 2001 in Colombo That day he removed the top

eight batsmen and took a hattrick on the way as the Zimbabweans were dismissed for 38, the lowest oneday score ever. Vaas finished with 6-25 as

Bangladesh were shot out for 124 in the 32nd over. He bowled Hannan Sarkar with

the first ball, took a return catch off

Mohammad Ashraful with the sec-

ond and had Ehsanul Hague caught

in the slips by Mahela

The Madras-based MRF company, which signed up Tendulkar five years ago at a reported fee of one million dollars to put their logo on his bat, contracted Lara just before the World Cup for an undisclosed amount.

Australia's Test captain Steve Waugh is the only other batsman in the world using the MRF logo on his

"The World Cup is the biggest

stage for any cricketer," Lara said. "I

am sure Sachin too will be hungry to

score big hundreds here.

surpassing Pakistani Javed Miandad's tally of 1,083 runs. The 29-year-old has scored more runs (11,598) and more centuries (33) than any batsman in lim-

ited-overs cricket.

modern era.

from 105 Tests with 31 centuries. Lara, an immensely gifted lefthander, holds double world records for the highest innings in Tests (375) and first-class cricket (501). He has scored 7,572 Test runs

He has also scored 8,811 runs

with 18 centuries and 7,665 one-day runs with 16 hundreds. Waugh, axed from Australia's one-day side but still Test captain, is only the third batsman after compatriot Allan Border and India's Sunil

10.000 Test runs. Lara and Tendulkar form a mutual admiration society, hailing **SEE PAGE 15**

Gavaskar to score more than

alone'

hearing. Warne's brother Jason, who

He faces being driven out of

Under the Australian Cricket It could either be classified as a

Steve behind

AFP, Perth

Australian Test skipper Steve Waugh said teammate Shane Warne had his full support as he fights to clear his name after being ruled out of the cricket World Cup for

"I am just hearing second-hand what is going on, but all I can say is



LIVING A NIGHTMARE: Champion Australian leg-spinner Shane Warne at a news conference in Johannesburg on February 11.