

India takes guard against Zimbabwe

Saurav drops down

AFP, Harare

Sachin Tendulkar will continue to open while out-of-form captain Saurav Ganguly drops down the order as India ring the changes to resurrect their World Cup campaign against Zimbabwe here on Wednesday.

Ganguly's team need a win to stay in contention for a place in the Super Six, and the desperate situation has forced a reshuffle of the struggling batting order.

Virender Sehwag, who batted at number three in the first two games, will partner Tendulkar at the top with

Dinesh Mongia coming in at number three and Ganguly at four, team officials said on Tuesday.

India, regarded as one of the finest batting outfits in the game, failed to last 50 overs against the Netherlands and were shot out for 125 by Australia.

The Indians beat the Dutch, but the nine-wicket loss to Australia means Ganguly's men must win all their remaining key games against Zimbabwe, England and Pakistan to ensure a place in the Super Six.

Tendulkar, one-day cricket's leading batsman, was given back his opening berth for the World Cup

and responded with top scores of 52 and 36 in the first two games.

But Ganguly has managed just 75 runs in his last nine innings, and coach John Wright was hoping the turnaround in the team's fortunes will come on Wednesday.

"Two months ago this batting order was successful, but since the start of the tour to New Zealand we've had nine one-day performances where we haven't finished the 50 overs," Wright told reporters.

"We've got to put it right if we are to be successful in this competition, and it has to start from this game and be carried through.

"We must beat Zimbabwe.

"We have to regain our belief, our commitment and our determination to get the job done. That is critical to our success."

The rest of the batting order will not be disturbed even though Mohammad Kaif, the hero of India's one-day final victory over England last year, has a best of 31 in his last 15 innings.

India will name their playing eleven just before the toss on Wednesday, the only change being considered is Ajit Agarkar or Ashish Nehra coming in place of one of the

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HEAD TO HEAD India v Zimbabwe

AFP, Harare

Recent head-to-head record between Zimbabwe and India ahead of their World Cup Group A clash at Harare Sports Club here on Wednesday:

Sept 14 2002	India won by 14 runs	Colombo
Mar 19 2002	India won by 101 runs	Guwahati
Mar 16 2002	India won by 5 wickets	Hyderabad
Mar 13 2002	Zimbabwe won by 6 wickets	Cochin
Mar 10 2002	India won by 64 runs	Mohali
Mar 7 2002	Zimbabwe won by 1 wicket	Faridabad
June 27 2001	India won by 4 wickets	Bulawayo
June 24 2001	India won by 39 runs	Harare
Dec 14 2000	India won by 39 runs	Rajkot
Dec 11 2000	India won by 9 wickets	Kanpur
Total matches played: 42		



PHOTO: STAR FILE

Shane Warne

Positive again

INTERNET, Sydney

Australian leg-spinner Shane Warne faces a maximum two-year ban from cricket after a second urine test tested positive for a banned diuretic.

The Australian Sports Drug Agency is believed to have informed Warne on Monday that the second sample also tested positive.

The B-test came from the same test conducted by the agency at the SCG on January 22 this year.

Under ASDA protocol, Warne has seven days to ask for an internal inquiry or appeal to the Administrative Appeals Tribunal.

Warne who spent the day locked in talks with lawyers and public relations advisers is preparing a defence to explain how the diuretic came to be in his system.

Diuretics are banned under International Cricket Council laws

because of their ability to mask performance-enhancing and muscle-building drugs, including steroids. But Warne claims he was given a single diuretic tablet by his mother Brigitte for vanity purposes on the eve of a press conference to announce his pending retirement from one-day cricket on January 22.

His mother sometimes uses the prescription blood pressure pills as a weight-loss aid.

It emerged that Warne's lawyers are expected to argue that the type of diuretic used by Warne was not strong enough to hide traces of steroids. He faces a possible two-year ban from all cricket unless he is able to prove exceptional circumstances.

ASDA spokesman Shawn Winnett said yesterday he could not comment on the result of Warne's second sample.

"Technically the process is still

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SOMETHING GOT TO GIVE! (L) The Indian squad warming up during a training session at Harare. (R) Zimbabwe's pace spearhead Henry Olonga bowling in the nets yesterday.



PHOTO: AFP

Indian MPs concerned

AFP, New Delhi

Parliament called Tuesday for security for India's beleaguered cricket team as angry fans seemed to be in no mood to forgive their team for its poor showing at the World Cup.

MPs raised the issue of attacks on the homes of players in the World Cup tournament after their loss Saturday to Australia.

India faces a make-or-break match against Zimbabwe in Harare Wednesday.

Speaker Manohar Joshi said the "fullest protection" should be given to players.

"They should be given the fullest protection so that their minds are free and they do better. We wish them good luck," Joshi said.

"Nothing should be done to put

players under pressure," added cricketer-turned-MP Kirti Azad, a member of Kapil Dev's team that lifted the 1983 World Cup.

Dejected fans took out their frustrations Sunday by throwing oil and black paint at the house of batsman Mohammad Kaif in the northern town of Allahabad.

Members of his family, who were asleep during the incident, have requested security cover.

Police in cricket-mad Calcutta have provided security to relatives of captain Saurav Ganguly, vice captain Rahul Dravid and bowlers Anil Kumble and Javagal Srinath

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Two-man club

REUTERS, Benoni

Going into the 2003 World Cup only one batsman in history could boast scoring at faster than a run a ball in one-day internationals.

But West Indian Ricardo Powell made that two on Tuesday after hammering a 31-ball 50 against Bangladesh to join Pakistan's Shahid Afridi in an exclusive two-man club.

The 24-year-old Jamaican clubbed four sixes to take his tally to 61 in 57 internationals on the way to the fastest half-century of the tournament.

Not even the likes of Australia's Adam Gilchrist (91.08), widely regarded as the most exciting one-

day batsman in the world, or South Africa's explosive all rounder Lance Klusener (90.81) get their runs as fast.

Even West Indian great Viv Richards only hit 90.20 runs off every 100 deliveries he faced.

Powell, like Afridi, was hailed as a prodigy after his one-day debut, but has taken much longer to establish himself since making his debut in 1999 and announcing himself with a 93-ball 124 against India that included eight sixes.

His explosive knock against Bangladesh took his career strike rate from 99.69 to 101.12. He averages just over 27.

African treats

AL-AMIN from Benoni

It was very inspiring to see around two hundred Bangladeshi fans turning up at Willomoor Park to cheer the cricketers.

Waving the green and red national flag and circling the ground, a group of youths made their presence felt in Benoni after a low turnout at Kingsmead and Pietermaritzburg. And for a change, their team gave them something to cheer about by restricting the mighty West Indies to 244 for nine in 50 overs.

"We were disappointed after the defeats against Canada and Sri Lanka. But we have travelled a long way to watch the match against the

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Down in dumps

AL-AMIN from Benoni

Watching on television at the Standton Sun hotel as his teammates enjoy their best day under the sun against West Indies yesterday brought tears down Mashrafeeb-bin-Mortuza's face.

After the teenage speedster burst on to the scene with a fiery spell of bowling against Zimbabwe in November 2001 and was praised by none other than great West Indian Andy Roberts, it was only natural for him to be playing in the World Cup.

Unfortunately a freak training accident 24 hours before the Tigers' third Pool B match made sure he would no longer be part of his team's

World Cup battles this time.

"I don't know why it is happening with me all over again. It was my fault when I first got injured while skipping back home at Narail. But after working so hard for the past year this has to be unfair," wailed the 19-year-old bowler.

"I talked to my mother last night. She was crying and I could not console her," he said.

"Nobody knows the amount of effort I had to put to recover from the initial back injury followed by a broken leg. I have to learn how to use the computer to maintain an online recovery schedule in India. Since there was no local qualified physiotherapist it took me longer than expected to recover."

With his eyes transfixed on the set, Mashrafeeb saw Talha Jubair trying to fill his shoes 50 kilometres away from the posh hotel and wondered how he would have utilised the overcast conditions at Willomoor Park.

In a dismal campaign he captured two wickets against Canada and used the long handle against Sri Lanka very well to score 28.

Mashrafeeb may consider himself jinxed as his earlier mishap put him out of action for over a year leading to speculation he was surely going to miss the showcase event.

But so soon after making a

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Get things Wright

REUTERS, Harare

India have their backs to the wall going into the World Cup Pool A match against Zimbabwe on Wednesday, according to their coach John Wright.

Saurav Ganguly's side beat the Netherlands and lost to Australia in their first two games, leaving them needing three victories from matches against Zimbabwe, Namibia, England and Pakistan to be sure of reaching the second round.

Pool leaders Zimbabwe, by contrast, have been buoyed by a comfortable win over Namibia and the four points they were awarded after England refused to honour their

fixture in Harare because of safety concerns.

"Two months ago this batting order was successful, but since the start of the tour to New Zealand we've had nine one-day performances where we haven't finished the 50 overs," Wright told reporters on Monday.

"We've got to put it right if we are to be successful in this competition, and it has to start from this game and be carried through. We must beat Zimbabwe.

"We have to regain our belief, our commitment and our determination to get the job done.

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JOHN WRIGHT

WHAT WENT WRONG

STAR SPORT SPECIAL

The disastrous start to the 2003 World Cup by the Bangladesh cricket team has shocked the whole nation. Pundits have already started their research to expose the reasons that led Khaled Mashud and company to disintegrate in front of the whole world.

It has now become the principal topic of discussion for each and everybody at each and every corner. Some blame the organisers for not being able to handle the cricket team of a newly recognised Test playing nation, some blame the players for not being fully committed to the game and the country while some others think that the coach, Mohsin Kamal, is not competent enough to handle a team at this level. But each and everyone agreed on one point that the decline began after the government upset the going of the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) by appointing Ali Asghar MP as the president in late 2001. And the performance of the boys in South Africa was nothing but the result of what has happened in the last one and a half years.

The Daily Star Sport looked into the past 16 months with a bird's eye and tried to identify the reasons that might have brought down the standard of the game in the country.

Three main reasons have been identified: Poor understanding amongst the players as a team, poor team management and poor organisation. Today, in presenting part one of this analysis, we look into the first two factors.

THE PLAYERS AND THE TEAM

Khaled Mashud's announcement that he would resign as captain after the World Cup just before the squad left for Namibia was a big blow to the morale of the team.

Although Mashud said that he wanted to give more time to his family, many believe that the man more popularly known as 'Pilot'

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GO BANGLADESH, SOUTH AFRICA IS WITH YOU! A South African national (C) joins the Bangladeshi fans at Benoni in cheering the Tigers against the West Indies yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP