



THERE ARE NO SNAKES AT THE BEACH! (L) The Indian cricket team relaxing at North Beach in Durban while (R) England pace bowler Andy Caddick charms a Taiwanese Rat snake at Durban's Fitzsimons Snake Park on February 24.



PHOTO: AFP

A heir-to-Gough

REUTERS, Durban

Andrew Caddick believes fellow fast bowler James Anderson has the potential to be Darren Gough's long-term successor for England if he can maintain his rapid progress in the international game.

Anderson only made his debut against Australia two months ago but has already established himself as England's leading strike bowler at the World Cup, suggesting the selectors have already found an alternative to the injured Gough.

"You will always miss Darren as he is a world-class cricketer but, thankfully, we have found a player who can hopefully take his place," Caddick said.

"If he continues the way he is going, he will have a very good career ahead of him."

Gough (knee) was one of five injured England bowlers who had to be sent home from the recent tour of Australia and his international career could well be over.

Caddick has since been forced to take on the junior role in his new-ball partnership with the 20-year-old Anderson, who has belied his inexperience by taking nine World Cup wickets and earning two man-of-the-match awards.

Despite the gulf in experience between the two bowlers, Caddick is determined not to confuse Anderson with advice, preferring instead to let him carve out his own niche in the side.

"I've spoken to Jimmy a little bit but, when a bowler is playing the way he is, there is not a lot you can say to him," said Caddick.

"Basically all you can do is keep his confidence up and make sure he is concentrating on every delivery. I will say the odd thing but he doesn't need to change anything as he has had an excellent start to his career."

"I don't want to be a father figure because I want to concentrate on what I'm doing and let him get on with his job. If he wants advice, I will give it to him but, at the moment, it is going well enough for him."

Anderson took four for 29 against Pakistan on Saturday to enhance England's hopes of reaching the tournament's Super Six stage. Once again, he eclipsed the more experienced Caddick, who has taken just one wicket in his first World Cup.

"At the moment, Jimmy has been taking the wickets which is good because we have got one person

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India take lesson from Pak loss

FORM GUIDE

India vs England

AFP, Durban

Form guide for England and India ahead of their World Cup Group A day-night game at Kingsmead on Wednesday:

England (won 5 lost 5)

Feb 22 2003	Cape Town: beat Pakistan by 112 runs
Feb 19 2003	beat Namibia by 55 runs
Feb 16 2003	beat Netherlands by 6 wickets
Jan 25 2003	lost to Australia by 5 runs
Jan 23 2003	lost to Australia by 10 wicket
Jan 19 2003	lost to Australia by 4 wickets
Jan 17 2003	beat Sri Lanka by 19 runs
Jan 13 2003	lost to Sri Lanka by 31 runs
Jan 11 2003	lost to Australia by 7 runs
Dec 20 2002	beat Sri Lanka by 95 runs

Port Elizabeth
Melbourne
Sydney
Adelaide
Adelaide
Sydney
Hobart
Perth

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AFP, Durban

India captain Saurav Ganguly expects a tough contest against England when the teams meet in a key World Cup match under the Kingsmead lights here on Wednesday.

Nasser Hussain's men surprised many pundits with a 112-run thrashing of Pakistan at Cape Town on Saturday.

And Ganguly admitted: "We watched the England-Pakistan game on TV and thought England played really well."

But the Indian captain, who made an unbeaten 112 against Namibia on Sunday as Sachin Tendulkar hit 152, insisted he had full confidence in his side.

"I back ourselves to win," he said. "The batting appears to be looking good, but we have to get a really good score to win."

Although England performed well in the day-nighter against Pakistan, they were handed what appeared to be a key break when Hussain won the toss and decided to bat first.

Evidence suggests that teams who bowl second under floodlights in South Africa are at a significant advantage as the early evening dew and increasingly heavy atmosphere assist movement in the air.

But Ganguly maintained Wednesday's match would not be decided by the spin of a coin. He said: "I don't believe tosses make a difference. The important thing is to play well."

However, coach John Wright admitted the anticipated conditions were causing him a selection problem over whether to recall leg-spinner Anil Kumble.

India's highest wicket-taker in one-day internationals has not played in his side's last two games with off-spinner Harbhajan Singh chosen as the lone specialist slow bowler.

Wright, the former New Zealand batsman, said: "It is always a tough decision. You have to look at the balance of the team and, if you decide to go with one spinner, which one do you go with?"

India also have a doubt about Ashish Nehra, following the sprained ankle he sustained against Namibia. Wright said he hopes to have a better idea of the left-arm seamer's fitness on Tuesday.

When the two sides met last, during September's Champions Trophy in Sri Lanka, India won by eight wickets after Ganguly and Virender Sehwag hit centuries.

Ganguly, however, was unconcerned by history.

"What happened in the past is not important. It only shows we have beaten England and we can do it again."

Meanwhile, England paceman Andrew Caddick was not overawed by the challenge ahead.

"India have been batting well but against the weaker sides," said the Somerset quick, clearly more



PHOTO: INTERNET

POLITICS NOT PLAYING: Zimbabwe fast bowler Henry Olonga speaks during a practice session while captain Heath Streak walks by at the Harare Sports Club on February 18.

Streak clears the air

REUTERS, Bulawayo

Captain Heath Streak denied on Monday that Henry Olonga had been left out of Zimbabwe's World Cup team because of his public opposition to human rights abuses in the strife-torn country.

"No, that's not the reason he's not playing," Streak told reporters, after Zimbabwe lost their Pool A match by seven wickets to defending champions Australia at Queens Sports Club.

"Yes, he is available for selection. He played well in the first game but then all-rounder Andy Blythe came back from injury and, with Henry being an out-and-out bowler, it made it a bit tougher to select him."

"He is bowling well and he could play a big role in the next few games," Streak added.

Fast bowler Olonga and teammate Andy Flower made a statement mourning the "death of democracy in our beloved Zimbabwe" before the team's opening Pool A match against Namibia on February 10.

The pair also wore black armbands.

Reported to the International Cricket Council by the Zimbabwe Cricket Union for bringing the game into disrepute, they escaped censure but were asked not to wear the armbands again.

They duly appeared against India last week wearing black wristbands, although Olonga was dropped to 12th man for that match.

On Monday, Flower took to the field against Australia without the

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Sorrow-suriya

AFP, Nairobi

Angry Sri Lanka skipper Sanath Jayasuriya lashed out at his teammates on Monday after they crashed to a sensational 53-run World Cup defeat to Kenya.

"This was one of the worst matches of my life. I am very disappointed," confessed the captain.

"Their score of 210 was very gettable, but we played like amateurs, not the professionals which we are supposed to be."

"We have to forget this as quickly as possible and get on playing good cricket. This was very bad cricket by all of us."

Jayasuriya was left fuming after his team was bowled out for just 157 in 45 overs at the Gymkhana Club to bring to an end their perfect record in the tournament of three wins out of three.

They also saw Kenya leapfrog them at the top of Pool B from which only three teams qualify for the Super Sixes, a stage of the tournament which veteran Kenyan captain Steve Tikolo was already looking forward to.

"It was a fantastic win. I felt we were 30-40 runs short but the bowlers brought us back into the game and was backed up by some excellent fielding."

"Now we have two games to go, against Bangladesh and West Indies, and we won't be taking them lightly. We want to qualify for the Super Sixes," said Tikolo who was one of six survivors Monday from the Kenyan side which defeated the West Indies by 73 runs in the 1996 World Cup in an upset equally as stunning.

"We were always confident and positive of beating Sri Lanka, especially since we were playing before our home fans," added Tikolo.

"Now we will celebrate and then think about the rest of the tournament."

Kenya now sit proudly at the top of Pool B with 12 points ahead of Sri Lanka courtesy of Monday's result.

Unheralded spinner Collins Obuya was the man of the moment, taking 5-24, the ninth best bowling figures in the history of the World Cup.

He took the scalp of dangerman Aravinda de Silva when the veteran run-getter had made 41 and claimed two catches off his own bowling, the second of which sent Chaminda

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Indian heads spin

REUTERS, Durban

India are uncertain whether to bring back leg-spinner Anil Kumble for their World Cup Pool A match against England on Wednesday.

India's highest wicket-taker in one-day internationals has not played in his side's last two games, but could come into his own on a bouncy Kingsmead pitch against an England team perceived to be weak against spin.

"There are many batsmen who are susceptible to both Kumble and Harbhajan Singh and England are

no different," India coach John Wright told reporters during a training session.

"But it is always a tough decision. You have to look at the balance of the team and, if you decide to go with one spinner, which one do you go with."

Kumble, one of only five bowlers to have claimed at least 300 wickets in one-day internationals with a haul of 308, is not a big turner of the ball and relies mostly on bounce and subtle variations.

He took four for 32 against Netherlands and snapped up the

only wicket during India's nine-wicket defeat by Australia at Centurion.

But Kumble has not played in the last two matches against Zimbabwe and Namibia, off spinner Harbhajan having been included as the sole frontline spinner.

Former New Zealand captain Wright expects Wednesday's game to be a close affair, despite India's recent successes over England.

India have won six of their last 10 one-day meetings, including last year's triangular series final at Lord's, where they chased down 326 to score a thrilling two-wicket victory, and a Champions Trophy league game in Colombo in September.

"We know them and they know us," said Wright. "But the Durban wicket will be a bit different from other South African wickets and it will all depend on how both sides adapt."

India are familiar with the conditions at Kingsmead, having been based in Durban before the start of the tournament.



ANIL KUMBLE



HARBHAJAN SINGH

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Perfect timing

REUTERS, Johannesburg

Pakistani umpire Aleem Dar offered a prayer on Monday after he narrowly avoided being smashed on the face by a full-blooded drive from Indian batsman Sachin Tendulkar.

Dar ducked in time but fell to the ground as Tendulkar straight drove Namibia's Bjorn Kotze during Sunday's World Cup match at Pietermaritzburg.

The ball whizzed past the umpire's head and raced towards the boundary, one of the many shots Tendulkar hit during his knock of 152. "I could have been killed," a relieved Dar said on Monday.

"I got saved because of my good eye sight. I still play cricket, you know. I have not seen a more powerful drive in my four years of umpiring at the international level," the 34-year-old Dar said.

Dar dismissed any suggestion of holding a grudge against Tendulkar for the narrow escape. "I actually quite enjoyed the incident," he said. "Sachin was very apologetic about it and kept saying sorry for the next two overs."

Tendulkar said he may have been denied a boundary if the ball had hit the umpire. "I was looking to hit the ball as hard as possible," he said. "I connected that particular ball and was glad I got four runs for it." India and Pakistan clash at Centurion on Saturday, the first match between the arch-rivals since June, 2000.

Bevan to go up the order



MICHAEL BEVAN

REUTERS, Potchefstroom

Australia batsman Michael Bevan is likely to move up the order for the world champions' next World Cup match against Namibia on Thursday.

The switch is expected to take place to allow the left-hander, who normally bats at number six, the chance to get some time at the crease after he failed to get an innings for the third successive game in Australia's seven-wicket win over Zimbabwe on Monday.

Bevan was ruled out of the side's first Pool A match against Pakistan

with a groin injury, but since his return he has watched on as Australia have lost just six wickets in wins over India, the Netherlands and Zimbabwe.

The match against World Cup debutants Namibia, without a win in four games, represents the ideal chance for Bevan to play a lengthy innings and Australian captain Ricky Ponting admitted it was on his mind.

"Another game has gone by without Bevo having a hit," he told reporters after the Zimbabwe game.

"That was the only thing that was

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Never-ending nightmare

REUTERS, Johannesburg

More than 9,000 runs have been scored at the 2003 cricket World Cup but for South Africans every one of them pales into insignificance when conversations turn to 'The Run'.

The country still seems to be traumatised by the memory of that four-year-old, incomplete 22 yards, the run that got away and cost the team a place in the 1999 World Cup final in England.

The mid-wicket mix-up between Lance Klusener and Allan Donald at Edgbaston, leading to a semifinal tie with Australia, appears to bubble

back to the surface of the collective South African consciousness on an almost daily basis.

The newspapers were back at Edgbaston over the weekend.

"It's as if there's a national psyche hell-bent on searching for that one run," the Sunday Times said. The incident has been turned into "a form of self-flagellation".

The whipping has intensified in recent weeks, after South Africa's poor start to the 2003 tournament.

Donald, struggling for form and rhythm and with only one wicket for 106 runs in two games, has been the

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Night club report later

AFP, Johannesburg

New Zealand cricket chiefs on Tuesday delayed releasing the results of their inquiry into the team's infamous Durban night club brawl.

The fracas at the Tiger, Tiger club in the early hours of Friday morning left star all-rounder Chris Cairns with a cut lip after the incident which was reportedly caused when some players removed their shirts and danced the haka, the Maori war-dance associated with the country's All Blacks rugby team.

A spokesman for New Zealand Cricket (NZC) said that the findings would now be released on Wednesday when the Kiwis face



PHOTO: INTERNET

KANGAROOS RULE: An Australian fan gives a victory sign while carrying a stuffed kangaroo during the match against Zimbabwe at Bulawayo on February 24.