

His dream comes true

SPORTS REPORTER



It was long overdue for the talented left-hander. The moment of glory finally came for Yuvraj Singh at the packed Bangabandhu National Stadium last night.

The young Indian sensation struck his maiden one-day hundred in good time. His unbeaten 102 against Bangladesh in the opening match of the TVS Cup was an exhibition of brilliant batting that finally blossomed into the magical three-figure mark after three years and 71 international matches.

It was a typically aggressive knock by the prince of Punjab, with his first 50 coming off 60 balls. But he raced to complete his second 50 off only 28 deliveries.

But his finest hour did not come without drama that saw him stranded at the non-striker's end as two wickets fell in successive deliveries in the penultimate over. With three runs still to be scored and only the last batsman Aavishkar Salvi at the crease, Yuvraj did

not want to be left in the 90s again.

So, he powerfully drove the first ball of the last over by Khaled Mahmud wide off the long-on fielder for four. As soon as the ball crossed the rope he then leapt into the air in child-like ecstasy.

Riding on that magnificent knock, India reached 276 before being all out in 49.3 overs.

Since making his debut in dramatic fashion with 84 against Australia in the 2000 ICC Knockout Trophy in Kenya, the big-hitting left-hander never looked back and has so far scored 1,529 runs in 70 innings.

Yuvraj has a dozen fifties to his credit including 98 not out against Sri Lanka at the Sinhalese Sports Club ground in Colombo.

Dubbed the left-handed Tendulkar of India during his playing days with the under-19 team, Yuvraj, is very confident about his ability and that showed during those exquisite shots on way to his first hundred in the abridged version.

He is now firmly established in the team.



YOU MISS, I HIT: Bangladesh's Mohammad Rafique (M) celebrates the dismissal of Virender Sehwag with team mate Khaled Mashud yesterday. The left-arm spinner trapped the explosive India opener leg before after scoring 63.

SERIES SNIPPETS

HASAN MASOOD



No prize-money will be on offer for the winners and runners-up of the TVS Cup tri-nation series. BCB advisor and

chairman of the Cricket Committee Mahbul Anam disclosed yesterday.

Talking to The Daily Star Sport at the Bangabandhu National Stadium, he said that it was the desire of the sponsors that they would not be putting up any cash award to the winners. Instead the champions will only receive the TVS Cup trophy.

He however said that TVS would be sponsoring the man-of-the-match and man-of-the-series awards.

The man-of-the-match award is worth 1,200 dollars while it would be doubled for the man-of-the-series.

He said that they had a contract with GrameenPhone for providing the prize-money. But the contract could not be realised as ESPN-STAR Sports, who are the tournament sponsors and hold rights to the advertising boards, has also purchased those rights at a cost of 15,000 dollars.

"This is an additional amount we are getting from the sponsors apart from the 11.75 million dollar five-year contract we have with them," Anam

said.

He also said that the sponsorship right for this series was given to ESPN-STAR when the contract was signed two years ago.

DISMAL DEBUT

Gautam Gambhir will want to forget his one-day international debut for India.

The 21-year-old Delhi southpaw was asked to open the innings with Virender Sehwag ahead of captain Saurav Ganguly.

But the young batsman, who was given a chance after master-blaster Sachin Tendulkar opted not to come to Dhaka, was obviously nervous playing his first match after Ganguly won the toss and elected to bat against Bangladesh.

He was caught behind off Tapas Baishya when he was on 11.

Apart from Gautam, Aavishkar Salvi, a right-arm seamer from Mumbai, also made his debut yesterday.

FOREIGN COACH IN MAY

The Bangladesh cricket team will soon have a new foreign coach. BCB president Ali Asghar revealed to a host of reporters at the Bangabandhu National Stadium.

He said that the Board had received a list of possible candidates from the

International Cricket Council (ICC) and had talks with as many as twenty former cricketers for the job.

"The response was tremendous. But after assessing everything we have short-listed them to just four coaches. They are from either Australia or South Africa. Hopefully before May 1 one of them would join us," he said during a visit to the press box.

When asked whether they would be specialised coaches, Asghar said initially they would either concentrate in batting or bowling.

"We have plans to bring some other foreign coaches under our development programme. Then we will look for specialist coaches," said Asghar.

Asghar said that two Pakistani coaches Mohsin Kamal and Ali Zia would return home after their one-year contracts expired on April 30, 2003.

He also disclosed that the Board would soon have a foreign chief executive officer (CEO).

"The ICC is helping us in this regard. I had a talk with ICC president elect Ehsan Mani. He has assured me of providing a CEO. The official would spend a year helping to set up a management structure in the Board," Asghar added.

Proteas' perfect practice

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

South Africa warmed-up for the TVS Cup tri-nation series with a 127-run thrashing of Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) XI at the Bangladeshi Kira Shikha Protisthan (BKSP) ground in Savar yesterday.

Fifties from Jacques Rudolph and Boeta Dippenaar and useful contributions from others in the batting line-up helped the Proteas pile up a huge 294 for 6 in 50 overs after they electing to bat first.

Rudolph made the highest 55 off 58 balls with eight boundaries followed by Dippenaar who chipped in with a quickfire 51-ball 54 that featured one six and three boundaries. Both Rudolph and Dippenaar retired to give batting practice to some other members of the squad.

Captain and opener Graeme Smith scored 42 while Neil McKenzie and Mark Boucher added 35 and 28 runs respectively.

One encouraging news from the home team's perspective was that Mashrafe bin Mortaza, arguably the quickest bowler in

the country, completed his full quota of 10 overs in the match to signal his return to fitness following an ankle injury suffered during the World Cup. Mashrafe made an instant impact by removing the dangerous Herschelle Gibbs for just 10, caught behind by wicket-keeper Anwar Hossain.

In reply, BCB Eleven were all out for



NTINI... 4 for 49

167 in 39.3 overs despite a brilliant opening stand between Aftab Ahmed and Anwar. The two shared a whirlwind 71 runs before Anwar got out. With his

departure, the innings started collapsing.

Aftab scored the highest with a stroke-filled 44 while middle order Nasiruddin added 36 for the BCB selection.

Fast bowler Makhaya Ntini, who had received some rough treatment from the BCB XI openers, came back strongly to finish with four for 49.

South Africa will face India in their opening TVS Cup match at the Bangabandhu National Stadium tomorrow.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard of the practice match between South Africa and BCB Eleven at the BKSP ground in Savar yesterday:

SOUTH AFRICA	
Smith b Arafat	42
Gibbs c Anwar b Mashrafe	10
Rudolph retired	55
Dippenaar retired	54
McKenzie c Kafi b Arman	35
Boucher retired	28
Pollock c Kafi b Enamul jr	27
Hall not out	24
Peterson c Mashrafe b Ziaur	8
Dawson b Ziaur	0

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BANGLADESH-INDIA SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard of the opening match of the TVS Cup tri-nation tournament between Bangladesh and India at the Bangabandhu National Stadium on Friday:

INDIA	R	B	4	6
Gautam Gambhir c K Mashud b T Baishya	11	22	2	0
Virender Sehwag lbw b M Rafique	63	51	11	1
Saurav Ganguly c M Rafique b A Kapali	30	45	1	2
Mohammad Kaif c K Mashud b S Hossain	23	47	1	0
Yuvraj Singh not out	102	85	9	4
Dinesh Mongia lbw b A Kapali	3	8	0	0
Parthiv Patel c and b S Hossain	4	11	0	0
Ajit Agarkar c T Imran b K Mahmud	20	23	0	1
Harbhajan Singh b T Baishya	3	5	0	0
Zaheer Khan b T Baishya	0	1	0	0
Aavishkar Salvi c A Kapali b K Mahmud	0	1	0	0
Extras: (lb-5, w-10, nb-2)	17			
Total: (All out in 49.3 overs)	276			

Fall of wickets: 1-46 (Gambhir), 2-82 (Sehwag, 3-132 (Ganguly), 4-144 (Kaif), 5-162 (Mongia), 6-172 (Patel), 7-264 (Agarkar), 8-271 (Harbhajan), 9-271 (Zaheer), 10-276 (Salvi)

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Manjurul Islam	6	0	31	0
Tapas Baishya	10	0	65	3
Khaled Mahmud	7.3	0	46	2
Mohammad Rafique	8	0	52	1
Alok Kapali	10	0	42	2
Sanwar Hossain	8	0	35	2

BANGLADESH

	R	B	4	6
Mohammad Ashraf c V Sehwag b A Salvi	5	10	1	0
Mehrab Hossain lbw b A Salvi	0	4	0	0
Tushar Imran b Z Khan	2	3	0	0
Alok Kapali c A Salvi b Z Khan	5	29	0	0

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State Minister for Youth and Sports Fazlur Rahman, in presence of the captains of Bangladesh and India and also the BCB president, releasing balloons to inaugurate the tri-nation TVS Cup at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday afternoon.

PHOTO: STAR

Carl didn't retire

Cricket

REUTERS, London

Axed West Indies captain Carl Hooper said on Thursday that he had not retired from international cricket and intended to fight his way back into the team.

Hooper, sacked as skipper after the World Cup, said he would not be available for the Test series against Australia and Sri Lanka.

But, asked by Sky Television if he had retired, the 36-year-old right-handed batsman said: "Not by a long shot."

"I want to remain active. I don't want to be out for too long."

Hooper was replaced by Brian Lara as captain and then withdrew from the West Indies squad after being selected for the first Test against Australia which started on Thursday in Georgetown,

Guyana.

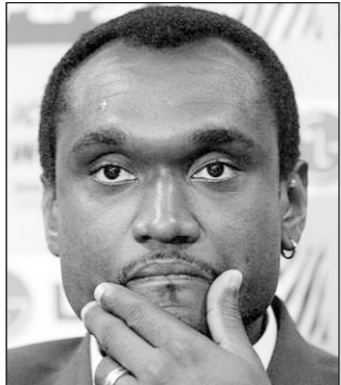
Chairman of selectors Viv Richards responded by saying he was not aware of Hooper's long-term plans but thanked him for his contribution to West Indies cricket.

Hooper, speaking by phone, said he had withdrawn from the squad for personal reasons but declined to discuss them, although he felt it was time for West Indies to select young talent.

He added he would consider playing in England if he was offered a county contract but was aiming to return for West Indies for the tour to South Africa at the end of the year.

West Indies failed to reach the second round of the World Cup in South Africa in February and March.

Hooper has scored more than 5,000 runs and taken more than 100 wickets with his highly effective off-spin in both Test and one-day cricket. He has played



CARL HOOPER

102 Tests and 227 one-dayers.

It is the second time Hooper has opted not to play for the team. He went into a two-year self-imposed exile in 1999, never fully explaining why, before returning as captain.

Jayasuriya quits again

REUTERS, Colombo

Sri Lanka skipper Sanath Jayasuriya handed a letter of resignation to the cricket board on Friday, after telling media at the Sharjah Cup earlier this week that he wanted to step down.

The 33-year-old all-rounder had offered his resignation after Sri Lanka lost to Australia in the World Cup semifinal in March, but he was persuaded to stay on for Sharjah.

"We received a letter this morning. The process is that the selectors will decide whether they are accepting it, and then who should replace him," said Anura Tennecoone, chief executive of the Board of Control for Cricket in Sri Lanka.

Tennecoone said a decision on the captaincy would be made in the next few days.

The cricket board also said on Friday that former Test cricketer Lalith Kaluperuma had been appointed head of the national selectors, replacing Guy de Alwis, who resigned in protest against the ministry's interference in the selection process.

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Nat'l pair bridge begins Apr 17

SPORTS REPORTER

The 22nd Partex national pair bridge competition will begin at the Isha Kha hotel on April 17 under the auspices of the Bangladesh Bridge Federation.

Interested teams have been requested to contact MA Qudus or Mahfuzur Rashid at the federation office on or before April 16 with an entry fee of Tk 600.

However teams from outside Dhaka will be waived of the fee. Moreover, they will be paid an amount of Tk 1,000 as pocket money.

Pak triumph in Sharjah

Cricket

AFP, Sharjah

Pakistan's revamped cricket team under captain Rashid Latif won the four-nation Sharjah Cup with a eight-wicket demolition of Zimbabwe in the final here on Thursday.

The 2,000th one-day international in cricket's history produced a lacklustre contest as Pakistan skittled Zimbabwe for 168 and then romped home easily in the 36th over.

Left-handed opener Taufiq Umer hit an unbeaten 81 and Yousuf Youhana contributed 61 not out during a match-winning stand of 144 for the unbroken third wicket.

Pakistan's 14th title at this off-shore desert venue came without eight senior stars, including Wasim Akram and captain Waqar Younis, who were sacked following the first round exit at last month's World Cup.

The new-look team under Latif and coach Javed Miandad made a promising start by winning all their three league matches against Sri Lanka, Zimbabwe and Kenya before brushing aside Zimbabwe in a one-sided final.

A capacity crowd of 20,000 at the Sharjah cricket stadium saw Zimbabwe crumble in the first session after captain Heath Streak won the toss and elected to bat.

Young wicketkeeper Tatenda Taibu was the lone batsman to defy the Pakistani bowlers, making an unbeaten 74 as seven others failed to reach double figures.

Zimbabwe were struggling at 133-9 before last man Douglas Hondo (nine) helped Taibu add 35 runs.

Seamer Mohammad Sami and off-spinner Shoaib Malik finished with three wickets apiece. Danish Kaneria and Mohammad Hafeez picked up two each.

Zimbabwe never recovered after the three-wicket burst from Sami reduced

them to 36-4 by the 13th over.

Taibu and Sean Ervine dug in to retrieve the situation, but their 46-run stand for the fifth wicket was rudely cut short by Indian umpire Avi Jayaprakash, who ruled Ervine caught down the leg-side by Latif as the batsman attempted to sweep.

Television replays showed the ball clearly miss the edge of the bat. Ervine made 25.

Zimbabwe moved to 122-5 when three wickets crashed in the space of five runs as Kaneria dismissed Dion Ebrahim and Hafeez got rid of Streak

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Pakistan captain Rashid Latif holds aloft the Sharjah Cup after the final against Zimbabwe on April 10.

PHOTO: AFP

Wright amazed

AFP, Christchurch

India cricket coach John Wright said Friday he was surprised to hear via the media that his coaching contract had been extended by a year.

Wright, a New Zealander, is home following the death of his father.

Wright sought an extension of the job, which seemed likely after India reached the World Cup final, but was not expecting the news to have come through yet.

"I am going to be meeting with Mr Dalmiya (Indian board chairman Jagmohan Dalmiya) in the next week or so and will know more then. Until then all I know is what I read and hear," Wright said.

Wright leaves Christchurch Saturday to rejoin the Indian team, who are involved in a tri-series with South Africa and Bangladesh in Dhaka.

Gayle can play in remaining Tests

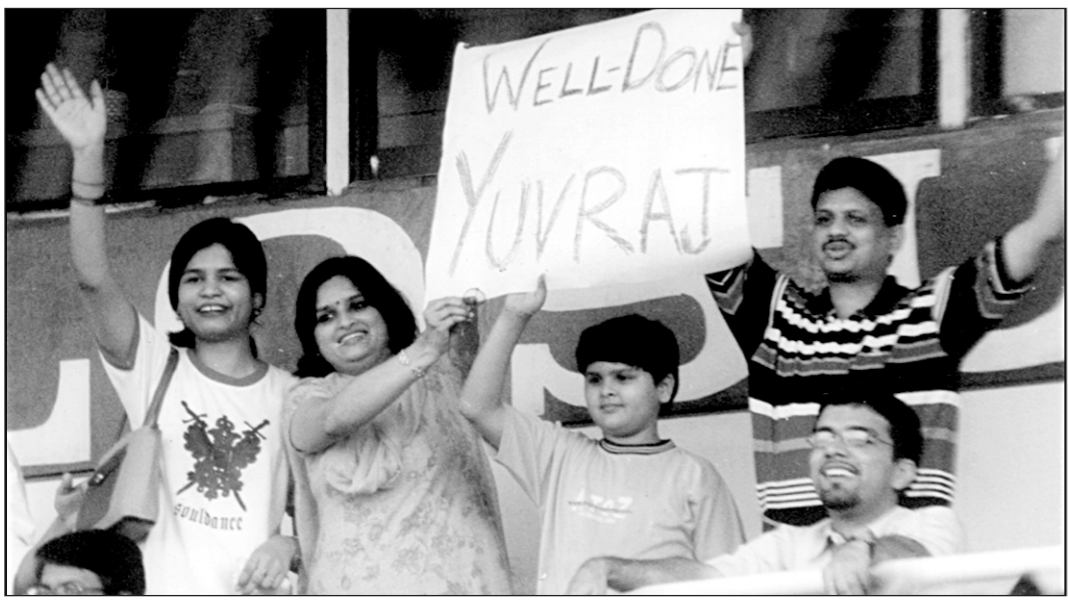
REUTERS, St John's

Jamaican opening batsman Chris Gayle will be eligible for selection for the West Indies team for the remainder of the Australian series, the West Indies Cricket Board (WICB) said on Thursday.

Gayle was left out of the first Test side after choosing to play in a special double-wicket tournament instead of for Jamaica in the final of the West Indies first class competition.

The WICB said at the time that according to their rules a player must be available for their country in any match immediately prior to a West Indies game to be eligible for selection for the team.

However on Thursday the WICB decided after an investigation that Gayle had received permission from Jamaican officials to compete in the tournament and to miss the final against Barbados.



Yuvraj Singh enjoyed well-deserved support all through his century innings.

PHOTO: STAR