



Did U Know?

Most tennis injuries actually happen after the game when the winner tries to jump over the net.



Shane Warne
(Master Australia leg-spinner)
"You can fry an egg on his (Smith's) face within two minutes."
While taking yet another dig at South Africa captain Graeme Smith.



TEN Sports

India vs Pakistan
First Test, Day Two
Live at 10:45 am
ESPN

English Premiership
Blackburn vs Bolton
Live at 11:10 pm
STAR Sports

English Premiership
Man City vs Man United
Live at 6:40 pm
Liverpool vs Tottenham
Live at 8:54 pm

Harper new Kenya coach

Kenya on Tuesday named former West Indies all-rounder Roger Harper as the new national coach until after the 2007 World Cup.

The former West Indies national coach Harper, who took his team to the quarterfinal of the 2003 World Cup in South Africa, will start his 15-month contract with Kenya on January 20.

"He's a player of good technical skills. A brilliant fielder," Kenya Cricket Association chairman Samir Inamdar told AFP.

Inamdar said Harper beat five other candidates in the selection process started last year following the sudden departure of former coach Andy Moles in March 2005.

But he said the choice was an added advantage for Kenya - surprise semifinalists in the 2003 World Cup - given that next year's world cup will be played in the West Indies.

"We couldn't have asked for a better selection. His knowledge on the ground and his experience as a West Indian will be invaluable to our players," said Inamdar.

Harper, who coached the West Indies between 2000-2003, played 105 one-day Internationals and featured in 25 Test matches.

He also led the Caribbean team on their first-ever tour of Kenya in 2003.

Headingley to get new name

AFP, Leeds

Yorkshire's famous Headingley ground in Leeds is to get a new name and stadium upgrade in a deal that will ensure it hosts international cricket for the coming 15 years.

Headingley, one of England's traditional Test grounds, is to be known as the Headingley Carnegie Stadium after an agreement was struck with Leeds Metropolitan University for naming rights.

Under the plans to re-develop the venue, the university's Carnegie faculty will be sited at the ground which also houses Leeds Tykes rugby union club and Leeds Rhinos rugby league team.

Kottan bids adieu Leaves second home forever?

Football

SPORTS REPORTER

George Kottan has blamed the football officials for lack of foresight and planning which defied Bangladesh from winning another trophy in regional football.

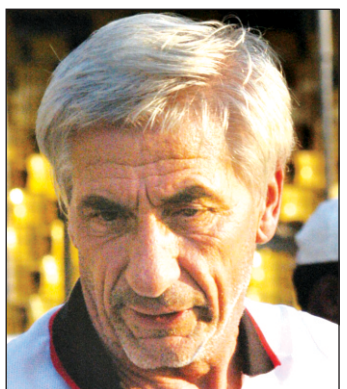
The 57-year-old Austrian, who leaves Dhaka today after a six-month stint as Muktiyoddha Sangsad coach, said yesterday that had the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) not slept over their SAFF Championship triumph in 2003, the country would have retained the title.

"The BFF did not have a coach for the national team between the two SAFF tournaments. This is one of the main reasons behind Bangladesh's failure in Pakistan," said Kottan, who guided Bangladesh to their first SAFF title but was shown the door by the local football's governing body immediately after the tournament at home.

"You are in good hands now," he told over phone referring to Bangladesh's new coach Diego Cruciani from Argentina.

"But any good coach needs time to prepare a good team. Also, the national footballers have to play on regular basis, not like the present structure that sees them have long

lay-offs. Most of the current national footballers played under me and my suggestion to them is not to get frustrated and always fight for their rights. They also have to make fresh starts every time they are defeated," told Kottan, who lost



GEORGE KOTTAN

his mother during the recently concluded National Football League.

"My six-month contract with Muktiyoddha is over. They have not asked me to stay so I am going home. I have lost my mother and I need to spend time with my family. I'll go back to work for FIFA again," said the Austrian, who works for FIFA's Goal-Project but took a

leave to join Muktiyoddha in early July last year in the middle of the Premier Football League.

Kottan, who will stay three days in Dubai en route to Germany, thought there was no reason for Muktiyoddha to extend his contract.

"I have failed to deliver them results. I can defend myself but nobody wants to keep an unsuccessful coach."

"We were victim of poor and biased refereeing in the National League. I said it once and saying it again: it was simply cheating. Otherwise, we would have played the final. I still question the role of the referees who worked on purpose. Despite constant complaints, the BFF turned a deaf ear. I don't know why."

In reply to a question, Kottan informed that no other team has shown interest in him.

"No one knows when the next competition starts. With the next season uncertain, the teams can not even talk with players. How could they confirm a coach? If football goes on like this, there is no chance the game will develop here. And life for a coach is very, very difficult here. I don't see any chance of me returning," said a frustrated Kottan, who once termed Bangladesh his second home.

Australia abase Lanka

Cricket

AFP, Melbourne

World champions Australia overwhelmed Sri Lanka by 116 runs in the opening tri-series limited-overs cricket match at Melbourne's Telstra Dome on Friday.

Australia, propelled by a whirlwind 106-run partnership from Damien Martyn and Andrew Symonds, amassed an impressive 318-5 off their 50 overs while Sri Lanka could muster only a lifeless 202-5.

The Australians were helped in their quest by some dubious tactical moves by the Sri Lankans who, faced with the massive total for victory, chose to drop their more experienced batsmen well down the order.

Captain Marvan Atapattu and veteran Mahela Jayawardene were brought in at seven and six respectively but by then the game was well and truly over for Sri Lanka.

Super-sub Michael Vandort, making his debut for Sri Lanka, had been the only player to offer serious resistance, but his excruciating 48 off 117 balls hindered rather than helped the visitors' cause.

The tactics drew criticism from Australian captain Ricky Ponting, who said his team had realised very early on in Sri Lanka's innings that they would win.

"It was a bit strange," he said of Vandort's innings.

"Especially considering he's their super sub -- you'd probably expect a bit more out of him. But he's probably a young guy trying to find his feet."

"I'm not sure if anyone on their side got a lot out of their batting tonight to tell the truth. To bat their 50 overs out for 200 -- I'm sure they'll be disappointed with that and a lot of the crowd will be disappointed as well."

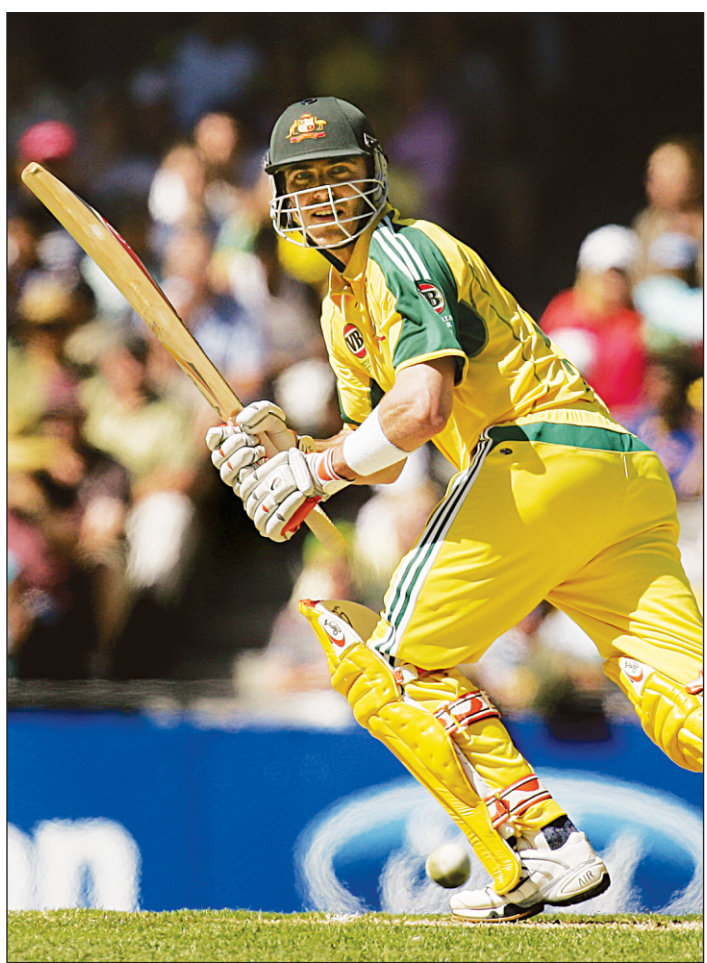
Ponting said he had no idea why Jayawardene, who made 50, and

Atapattu had been brought in late. "I couldn't really understand that either," he said. "They had to come out with their best players at the top of the order I thought to try and get off to a flying start if they were any chance of winning the game, and they actually went the other way."

"I'm not sure if they were just

trying to give some of their experienced players some time in the middle and a few runs under their belt but I think the runs that were scored by Jayawardene and those guys late in the game were pretty cheap runs anyway."

The out-of-form Sri Lankans. SEE PAGE 13 COL 2



Australia's Damien Martyn sets off for a single on way to scoring a stonky 70 against Sri Lanka during the first ODI of the triangular series at Melbourne on Friday.

Vaughan sure of Barmy Army support

AFP, London

England Cricket captain Michael Vaughan is confident that Australian plans to limit the number of away fans at the next Ashes series in Australia will prove futile.

England's Barmy Army have been hit by the news that Cricket Australia will try to limit the number of tickets available to English support to ensure the home side benefits from a partisan following in the same way England did last year.

But Vaughan is backing the Barmy Army to find ways and means to overcome the potential ticket crisis and provide healthy support for England's bid to retain the Ashes in the five-Test series at the end of the year.

England's unexpected Ashes triumph in 2005 -- their first since 1986-87 -- has led to an unprecedented demand for tickets with up to 40,000 fans expected to travel Down Under.

"I think it's great for the game that it looks like there will be sell-

Champions Trophy venues revealed

Cricket

AFP, Karachi

The International Cricket Council (ICC) on Thursday selected venues for the Champions Trophy to be held in India later this year and discussed the snoballing crisis in Zimbabwe cricket.

The Indian cities of Kolkata, Mumbai and New Delhi will host matches in the 10-team Champions Trophy limited-overs tournament which starts on October 7 and ends with the final in Mumbai on November 5.

The top eight nations in the ICC's one-day rankings on April 1 will be joined by two qualifiers in the tournament, the ICC said in a statement after a meeting of its executive board here.

ICC president Ehsan Mani and chief executive Malcolm Speed also held a private meeting with Peter Chingoka, the chairman of the government-appointed com-

mittee responsible for running cricket in Zimbabwe.

"In this meeting Mani and Speed highlighted a number of areas of concern which the ICC expects the committee to urgently resolve in an open and transparent manner," the statement said.

"These include addressing allegations of financial mismanagement, ensuring disputes between players and the board are effectively addressed and providing certainty for other ICC members that the strongest possible Zimbabwe cricket team will fulfill future international commitments."

The Zimbabwe team last month went on strike over pay issues and demanded the dismissal of Chingoka and Zimbabwe Cricket managing director Ozias Bvute.

The ICC also held meetings with various television channels to discuss the Indian government's ruling that major sporting events involving the national team must

India cricketers visit Imran's hospital

AFP, Lahore

India's cricket team met patients and handed out sweets at former Pakistan captain Imran Khan's cancer hospital on the Muslim festival of Eid al-Azha on Wednesday.

Led by their skipper Rahul Dravid, the tourists stayed at the Shaukat Khanum Memorial Hospital for an hour.

"It was a great gesture from the Indian team and a great boost for my hospital, staff and, above all, to the patients of the hospital," Imran told reporters.

Imran named the hospital after his mother, who died of cancer in the late 1980s. "When India came to Pakistan in 1989 we launched this hospital and it is an auspicious occasion that they have revisited it," said Imran, who played 82 Tests for Pakistan until his retirement in 1992 and is now a politician.

"Sachin Tendulkar was a 15-year-old boy then, and now he is an icon and some of the young patients adore him and were thrilled to see him among them."

Seven-year-old Osama Shahzad, who is suffering from leukaemia, said he was overjoyed after meeting the Indian batting star.

"I am thrilled. Tendulkar is my hero and I was waiting for him since I got to know that the Indian team were coming," Shahzad said.

The hospital won the World Health Organisation award for excellence in 2004 and is the biggest charitable organisation in Pakistan, serving 500 patients a year.

The Indian team are on their second tour of Pakistan in two years and will play three Tests and five one-day internationals. The first Test starts in Lahore on Friday.

Aussies did not change

AFP, Melbourne

Australian crowds continued to torment brilliant Sri Lankan off-spinner Muttiah Muralitharan here Friday, repeating the taunts that once angered him so much he pulled out of a 2004 Test tour of the country.

Muralitharan, who has signalled he may retire from cricket next year, was greeted by chants of "no ball" from large sections of the crowd at Melbourne's Telstra Dome as he bowled during Sri Lanka's opening tri-series one-day match against the host nation.

The taunts came despite appeals by Sri Lanka's Australian coach Tom Moody for his compatriots to recognise Muralitharan's rare talent and welcome the 33-year-old.

The biggest jeers came as Muralitharan, whose tally of 584 Test wickets is second only to Australia's Shane Warne, began his first and second spells.

Muralitharan was no-balled for throwing in the 1995 Boxing Day Test against Australia in Melbourne and later forced to undergo a series of tests by human movement specialists to clear his bowling action.

Last year he was warmly received while playing for an Asian XI during a charity game to raise money for victims of the 2004 Boxing Day tsunami at the Melbourne Cricket Ground.

That welcome, combined with the generous response of Australians to the plight of those affected by the tsunami, helped convince Muralitharan to play here again.

But what may now be his last appearance in Melbourne was marred by a vociferous section of the crowd determined not to forget the allegations once levelled against him.

He finished the match with less-than-impressive figures of 0-67 off 10 overs.

SEE PAGE 13 COL 1

Warne ponders playing WC '07

AFP, Melbourne

Record-breaking Australian leg-spinner Shane Warne said on Wednesday that he was considering coming out of retirement from international one-day cricket to play in next year's World Cup.

Warne said he had not ruled out a surprise comeback in the Caribbean unless it would jeopardise his longevity at Test level, where he has come off a record-breaking year.

"Whatever I want to do in Test cricket, that will dictate what happens in the World Cup," he told a press conference.

Warne said before the 2003 World Cup that he would stepping down from the limited-overs game after the tournament to concentrate on Test cricket.



BACK WITH A BANG: Pakistan's Younis Khan, who had a poor series against England recently, raises his arms on reaching his hundred against India on the opening day of the first Test at Lahore on Friday.

Younis powers Pakistan

Cricket

AFP, Lahore

Younis Khan cracked a fluent 147 not out as Pakistan posted a formidable 326-2 on the opening day of the first cricket Test against India here on Friday.

The Pakistani vice-captain led the hosts' belligerence with his 10th Test century as the Indian bowlers struggled to contain runs on the slow wicket at the Gaddafi Stadium.

It was Younis' third landmark knock in as many Tests against the Indians, having made 147 in Kolkata and a match-winning 267 in Bangalore in March last year.

Younis put on 124 for the second wicket with opener Shoaib Malik (59) and a scintillating 190 in 163 minutes for the third with Mohammad Yousuf, who was unbeaten on 95.

Younis' return to form after failing to get a half-century in the

previous home series against England was marked with glorious strokes on both sides of the wicket.

He reached his hundred soon after tea with a superb straight drive off Irfan Pathan for his 12th boundary and ended the day by adding seven more fours.

Yousuf also looked in supreme touch with 10 fours and a six over mid-wicket against Anil Kumble.

"The wicket is not lifeless. It's just that we batted well and it was our day," Younis told reporters after the day's play.

"It is the same kind of pitch on which we beat England. It is now up to the bowlers to bowl well, but we must get in excess of 500 runs first."

Indian coach Greg Chappell said it was one of the best batting wickets he had come across.

"Most bowlers will struggle on it," he said. "It will stay dry for three days and take turn after that. It was only in the final session that we did not bowl well."

"But I must give credit to the Pakistani batsmen for performing so well."

The brownish wicket dispelled the pre-series hype that the hosts, eager to avenge the 2-0 defeat at India's hands two years ago, would prepare fast tracks to suit their pace spearhead Shoaib Akhtar.

India, who included former captain Sourav Ganguly in the playing eleven, managed just two wickets during the day before play was called off five overs early due to fading light.

Kumble was the most expensive Indian bowler conceding 92 runs from 23 wicketless overs, but none of the others were spared by the rampaging Pakistanis.

Irfan Pathan took 1-76 and new ball partner Ajit Agarkar went for 0-59 and spinner Harbhajan finished with 0-64.

India's lone success in the extended 150-minute morning session came in the third over of

SEE PAGE 13 COL 5

India had to pick Ganguly?

Cricket

AFP, Lahore

Sourav Ganguly was included in the Indian team for the first Test against Pakistan here on Friday due to pressure from cricket board chiefs, a team source told AFP.

Coach Greg Chappell and captain Rahul Dravid did not want Ganguly to open the innings and could not fit him in the middle-order either without disturbing a trusted combination.

But team manager Raj Singh Dungarpur, under instructions from the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI), is understood to have spoken to Chappell and urged him to field the experienced Ganguly for the match.

"The manager was asked to convince Chappell to play Ganguly," the source said, declining to reveal which BCCI official wanted the former captain in.

"All I can say is there was pressure from the top to include Ganguly because of his vast experience."

The left-hander was preferred

over two regular openers, Gautam Gambhir and Wasim Jaffer, but there is no certainty that Ganguly will open the innings with Virender Sehwag.

Dravid himself or Irfan Pathan, who opened in the second Test against Sri Lanka in New Delhi last month, could partner Sehwag at the start, the source said.

There was no immediate need to make a decision as Pakistan captain Inzamam-ul-Haq won the toss and elected to bat at the Gaddafi stadium.

Chappell had told a media conference on Tuesday that two batsmen from the selection of Sehwag, Gambhir and Jaffer would open the innings.

"Any two of the three will play because all three are in good form," he said.

During pre-match training on Friday morning, Dravid, Chappell and Ganguly were seen having a heated argument in the middle, apparently over the batting order.

"We were talking cricket," Chappell told reporters after the first day's play. "I don't know why you are reading so much into it."

"Yes, we do have three openers

in the squad but we have tried to put the best batting order in the match taking into account the playing conditions and experience."

The 33-year-old Ganguly, a veteran of 86 Tests with 5,150 runs under his belt, was a controversial selection for the Pakistan tour.

When India dropped Ganguly for the third Test against Sri Lanka last month, it created such a public outcry that cricket board chiefs were forced to step in to cool tempers.

Indian cricket board president Sharad Pawar met Ganguly and senior players like Sachin Tendulkar before declaring that India's most successful Test captain was not a "disruptive influence" in the team.

Chappell, who had accused Ganguly of just that in a leaked e-mail to the previous regime in Indian cricket, took the hint and did not oppose the left-hander's selection for the tour.

Ganguly, India's most successful Test captain with 21 wins, was sacked from the job after the spat with Chappell in October and removed from the one-day squad.

There was no official comment from the Indian team on the composition for the first Test here.

End of road for Gough?

England announce India tour sides

Cricket

AFP, London

Darren Gough's hopes of reviving his international career and appearing in next year's World Cup suffered a major setback after the 35-year-old fast bowler was left out of England's squad for the forthcoming tour of India announced here Friday.

Gough, now a one-day specialist at international level, ruled himself out of the first half of England's winter programme, the tour of Pakistan, and subsequently appeared on the BBC celebrity dance programme, Strictly Come Dancing, which he won.

However, the Essex paceman -- formerly at Yorkshire -- made himself available for the seven-match one-day series in India which follows the three-match Test encounter.

But the performances of Lancashire's James Anderson and

Liam Plunkett of Durham in a losing cause in Pakistan, plus the return from injury of Ashes star Simon Jones, have seen England stand by them and instead omit Gough.

England's chairman of selectors, David Graveney explained: "Darren asked the selectors not to consider him for the tour of

ITINERARY	
Feb 12	Depart London Heathrow
Feb 13	Arrive in Mumbai
Feb 18-20	3-dayer Mumbai
Feb 23-25	3-dayer Baroda
Mar 1-05	1st Test Nagpur
Mar 9-13	2nd Test Mohali
Mar 18-22	3rd Test Mumbai
Mar 25	1-dayer Jaipur
Mar 28	1st ODI Delhi
Mar 31	2nd ODI Faridabad
Apr 3	3rd ODI Goa
Apr 6	4th ODI Cochin
Apr 9	5th ODI Guwahati
Apr 12	6th ODI Jamshedpur
Apr 15	7th ODI Indore

Pakistan for personal reasons and we respected his wishes.

"With Liam Plunkett and James Anderson performing well in Pakistan and Simon Jones now available for selection again, the selectors feel the priority is for these players to gain as much experience of one-day cricket as possible ahead of the World Cup."

Gough, who played the last of his 157 one-day internationals against Australia at the Oval last July, has been left out of England's one-day squads before, including the tours to Bangladesh and Sri Lanka two years ago.

He returned for the West Indies later that winter and had kept his place in the side since but his omission now calls into question his participation at the 2007 World Cup in the Caribbean.

Durham quick Plunkett is included in both squads for the first time after impressing in Pakistan while Test regular Ian Bell gets his one-day call-up at the expense of

SEE PAGE 13 COL 2