

Kumble sure of India win

REUTERS, New Delhi

Leg-spinner Anil Kumble is hopeful India can atone for previous near misses by scoring a rare overseas victory in their Test series in the West Indies.

However, India's highest wicket-taker warns the home team cannot be taken lightly despite their slide to eighth in the Test rankings. The four-Test series starts on June 2.

"It is going to be a tough tour, but I'm looking forward to it," he told Reuters.

"The last couple of (overseas) tours I've been on, we came close to winning the series but couldn't make it.

"Hopefully this time we should be able to do that," he said in a telephone call from his hometown Bangalore.

India have a poor record in the West Indies, winning just three of their previous 38 Tests and one out of eight series. India are bidding for their first major overseas Test series victory since beating England 2-0 way back in 1986.

The 35-year-old will leave on Thursday night on his third Test tour of the West Indies, where his experience could prove vital in a largely young bowling line-up.

"They will always be tough with Brian Lara at the helm and their batting is pretty strong," he said.

"We need to put pressure on their batting by getting runs.

"If we can do that then definitely we should be able to do well in the series."

India also led on their previous West Indies tour in 2002 before losing 2-1.

"We have come close so we have a great chance," he said.

Kumble, Test cricket's fifth highest wicket-taker with 510 scalps, enjoyed contrasting fortunes on his two previous Caribbean tours.

He took 19 wickets in 1996-97 although India went on to lose the five-match series 1-0. His second tour ended in agony.

He suffered a broken jaw after being hit by a Mervyn Dillon bouncer.

With his face swathed in bandages and in pain, he still bowled to claim Lara's wicket before flying home for surgery.



Sri Lankan opener Upul Tharanga's stumps are splattered by English paceman Matthew Hoggard during the opening day of the second Test at Edgbaston on Thursday.

Pauleta stays at PSG

AFP, Paris

Paris Saint Germain striker Pauleta has extended his contract by one year, the French first division club said on Thursday.

The 33-year-old Portugal international, who finished his third season at the club as the league's top scorer with 21 goals, is now linked to PSG till June 2008.

PSG club president Alain Cayzac said: "I am extremely happy for the club and supporters that Pauleta has taken this decision."

Rajshahi ride

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Facing a not-so-daunting target of 138 runs, Sylhet faltered badly as Rana and Jasim shared six wickets for Barisal.

In another low-scoring match, Narayanjang beat favourites BKSP by four wickets at the Osmani Stadium in Fatullah.

Batting first, BKSP were bowled out for 127 runs. Narayanjang had also early trouble, but recovered to reach the target thanks to a well-compiled 42 by Rony.

At the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium, Khulna crushed Comilla by 89 runs despite a brilliant bowling performance by Bappi who took five for 21 for Comilla.

SL bowled out

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ball with a delivery that straightened. Malinga faced 54 balls with four fours.

Plunkett had been England's unluckiest bowler in the drawn first Test at Lord's, the opener in a three-match series, repeatedly beating the bat.

But coming on as first change for Flintoff, the 21-year-old began his spell Thursday with a double-wicket maiden, including the big prize of Mahela Jayawardene for nought after the Sri Lanka captain decided to bat having won the toss.

With his third ball Plunkett had opener Michael Vandort, in for the dropped Jehan Mubarak, who made nought and six at Lord's, safely caught off a loose drive in the gully by county colleague Paul Collingwood for nine.

Three balls later Jayawardene, man-of-the-match at Lord's after leading Sri Lanka's resistance with a battling second-innings century, went for a duck, caught behind by wicket-keeper Geraint Jones. Sri Lanka were now 16 for three in eight overs.

England did not have long to wait for their breakthrough Thursday, with Matthew Hoggard striking fifth ball.

Upul Tharanga had made 140 in Sri Lanka's preceding match, against Sussex, but the left-hander fell for a two-ball duck, bowled between a big gap between bat and

pad by a Hoggard in-swing.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard at close of Sri Lanka's first innings and tea on the first day of the second Test against England at Edgbaston on Thursday:

SRI LANKA: First innings			
Vandort c Collingwood b Plunkett	0		
Sangakkara c Jones b Plunkett	25		
Jayawardene c Jones b Plunkett	0		
Samaraweera c Collingwood b Hoggard	3		
Dilshan c Trescothick b Flintoff	27		
Maharoor c Jones b Mahmood	5		
Vaas not out	30		
Kulasekara c Trescothick b Mahmood	3		
Malinga lbw b Panesar	26		
Muralitharan c Plunkett b Flintoff	1		
Extras: (lb-6, nb-6)	12		
Total: (All out in 51.2 overs)	141		
Fall of wickets: 1-3, 2-16, 3-16, 4-25, 5-46, 6-65, 7-79, 8-82, 9-132			
Bowler			
Hoggard	15	4	32
Flintoff	13.2	4	28
Plunkett	12	1	43
Mahmood	9	1	25
Panesar	2	0	7

ENGLAND: Trescothick, Strauss, Cook, Pietersen, Collingwood, Flintoff, Jones, Plunkett, Hoggard, Mahmood, Panesar.

Toss: Sri Lanka. **Umpires:** Aleem Dar and Darrell Hair.

**4TH INDIA ODI TODAY
Chattergoon, Hinds back for Windies**

BBC ONLINE, undated

West Indies have made two changes to their squad for the final two one-day games against India in Trinidad.

Former skipper Shivnarine Chanderpaul has been ruled out after suffering a small tear in his left hamstring during Tuesday's victory at St Kitts.

The selectors hope he will recover in time for the Test series, which begins on June 2.

Wavell Hinds replaces Chanderpaul and Sevarine Chattergoon has been recalled in place of Runako Morton.

Opening batsman Chattergoon played two games during the recent series against Zimbabwe, scoring an unbeaten 54 and sharing a stand of 156 with Chris Gayle in a 10-wicket win in St Lucia.

He has been given another chance to stake a claim for a place in the squad for next year's World Cup after Morton managed scores of 23, 1 and 0 in the first three matches against India.

The games in Trinidad take place on Friday and Sunday and West Indies go into them holding a 2-1 lead.

SQUAD

Brian Lara (captain), Chris Gayle, Sevarine Chattergoon, Ramnaresh Sarwan, Wavell Hinds, Marlon Samuels, Dwayne Smith, Dwayne Bravo, Carlton Baugh, Corey Collymore, Fidel Edwards, Jerome Taylor, Ian Bradshaw, Dave Mohammed.

Injured Yuvraj may be risked

PTI, Part of Spain

India may risk playing Yuvraj Singh in their do-or-die battle against West Indies on Friday to ensure they do not lose their first one-day series in nine months.

Yuvraj, who was rested for the third match at St. Kitts because of a stiff back, was "feeling better" and team physio John Gloster did not see a problem in him taking the field to bail out the visitors, trailing 1-2 in the five-match series.

However, captain Rahul Dravid preferred to have an open mind on the issue.

"Back spasm is something about which you can't say anything with certainty," Dravid said hoping the break would have helped Yuvraj tide over the injury crisis.

Yuvraj made a valiant 93 in a losing cause in the second match before his back rendered him hors de combat in St. Kitts and Nevis.

The dependence on Yuvraj is a reflection on how much experience counts in the park even though youth has been the rallying call in the recent resurgence of India.

French Open running out of stars

BBC ONLINE, undated

American Andy Roddick has joined the list of casualties ahead of the French Open, which starts on Sunday.

The world number five picked up a foot injury during his match against Chile's Nicolas Massu at the World Team Cup.

Goodwill Ballack

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said Ballack, who earlier this month signed a lucrative three-year deal with Chelsea.

About half of all new HIV infections are in children and young people under 25. Every minute a child dies of an AIDS-related illness and every minute a child becomes infected with HIV, according to Geneva-based UNAIDS.

"I am proud to have Michael Ballack on board as a UNAIDS Special Representative," said Peter Piot, the agency's executive director.

"Through his dedication and eagerness to make a difference, I know he will be a strong voice on HIV and AIDS. Mr Ballack's talent and commitment will inspire young people to be smart about HIV."

Rossi: The Comeback

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on the competition's history.

Even though he had been suspended for three months of 1982, it was a great year for Rossi, who was named European Player of the Year (Ballon d'Or) and lifted the Italian championship with Juventus.

The Italian went on to win a host of other European and domestic honours, although the European Cup final victory in 1985 was overshadowed by the disaster at the Hysel stadium, which claimed 39 lives when a stadium wall collapsed.

Rossi left Juventus the next season and finished his career with brief stints at AC Milan and Verona.

Skoko sets Aussies on the way



AFP, Melbourne

Australia gave 95,000 home fans a rousing World Cup send-off with a 1-0 win over European champions Greece at the Melbourne Cricket Ground here Thursday.

Midfielder Josip Skoko, who plays for Stoke City in the English Championship, scored the winning goal in the 16th minute with a cracking left-foot volley from outside the penalty area.

It was perfect tonic for Dutch coach Guus Hiddink as he takes his Australian squad to Holland Friday for a pre-World Cup training camp ahead of another warm-up match against the Netherlands in Rotterdam on June 4.

The Australians make their first appearance for 32 years in the World Cup finals with an opening match against Japan in Kaiserslautern on June 12.

Hiddink's team were full value for their win, showing sharpness on the ball, superior organisation and fluid passing, while Greece looked

slower and off their game in comparison. Skoko stunned Greece with his spectacular volley after a corner from Marco Bresciano in the 16th minute.

Bresciano found Lucas Neill on the far post and his header was directed by Mile Sterjovski into the path of Skoko, who povered a first-time volley into the top left corner of the goal with goalkeeper Antonios Nikopolidis stranded.

Australia dominated the opening half as the Greeks struggled to make their passes with moves often breaking down.

The Greeks' only first-half chance came in the fifth minute when their Euro 2004 goal hero Angelos Charisteas scooped his volley high over the crossbar.

Bresciano almost stretched Australia's lead when his 24th-minute long-range free kick skimmed just past the right post away from Nikopolidis' despairing dive.

Sterjovski, who was proving lively up front with skipper Mark Viduka, brought a diving save from Nikopolidis minutes later in Australia's fourth shot on target.

The Australians believed they had a genuine appeal for a penalty

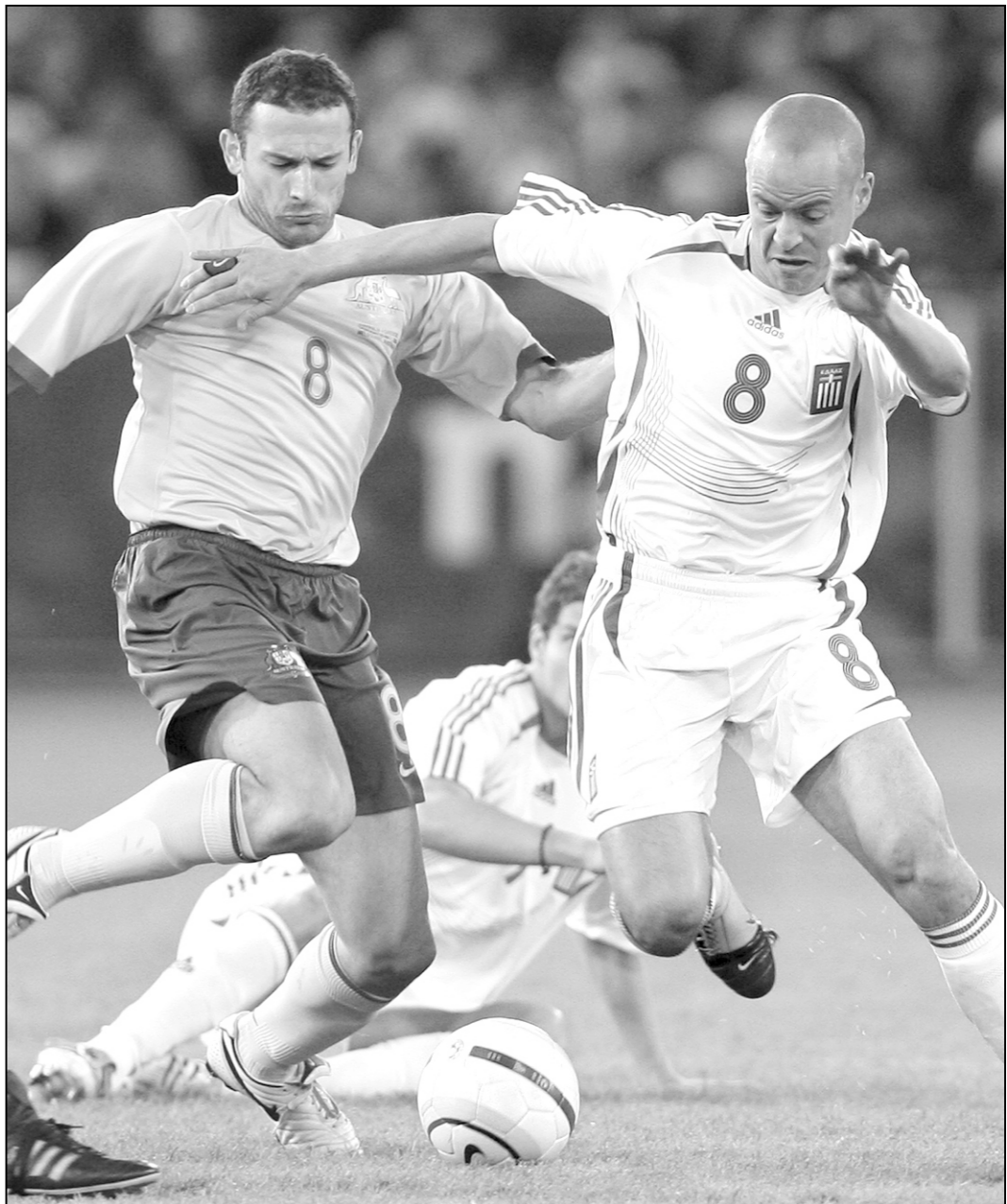
three minutes before half-time when Viduka appeared to have his shirt tugged by his marker Stotirios Kyrgiakos as he chased the ball inside the area, but English referee Mike Riley waved play on.

Coach Otto Rehhagel introduced more urgency into his Greek team for the second half, bringing on four substitutes as the European champions pressed more and gave the Australians less space than the first half.

Skiper Theodoros Zagorakis, who came on in the second half, had a great chance to equalise in the 70th minute but he fired high over the bar.

Sterjovski headed just wide after a neat cross from Bresciano minutes later as Archie Thompson, on for Viduka, added more pace to the Australian front line.

Midfielder Jason Culina brought another sprawling save from Nikopolidis three minutes from time with a full-blooded drive and Australia comfortably saw out the remaining minutes for a morale-boosting win as they head to Europe in the countdown to the World Cup finals.



Australian player Josip Skoko (L) contests for the ball with Greek player Stylianos Giannakopoulos (R) during a World Cup warm up match played in Melbourne on Thursday.

Tendulkar out for six weeks

CRICINFO, undated

Sachin Tendulkar, who recently ruled himself out of India's tour to West Indies, has been advised to wait at least another six weeks before returning to competitive cricket.

Tendulkar met with the same doctors in London who conducted surgery on his shoulder in March, and it has been decided that he will continue with "a structured rehabilitation programme" of his right shoulder.

The medical team at the Hospital of St John and Elizabeth reached the conclusion that Tendulkar, though recovering "well and as expected" was not fit for international competition yet.

In a statement released by the hospital, it was reported that his shoulder was now stable and had regained "a full range of motions although strength remains slightly weak".

Though the doctors said that his biceps repair was good, there was still some discomfort in stressing a "weak" tendon.

Though the expected timeframe for a recovery from a major tendon stress would be 10 to 12 weeks, the doctors said that in Tendulkar's case the priority was to regain strength over the next four to six weeks. Tendulkar will be reassessed after a fortnight but will continue his rehabilitation during this time.

Meanwhile, Tendulkar has dismissed all suggestions of retirement and insisted that he would continue to compete in both forms of the game.

Kallis to have elbow surgery

BBC ONLINE, undated

South Africa all-rounder Jacques Kallis is to have surgery on the elbow problem that has troubled him since November.

Kallis was forced out of a tour of Australia because of the condition "tennis elbow" and though he returned for the home season he still has pain.

"He will be in splints for 10 to 12 days, and will then start his rehabilitation over a period of four to six weeks," a team spokesman said.

"That may rule him out of contention for the tour of Sri Lanka in August.

The decision to have the operation was taken with a long term view, and major tournaments such as the Champions Trophy in October and the World Cup next March on the horizon.

"Everybody is confident that the surgery will do the trick, and that Jacques will be firing on all cylinders again," coach Mickey Arthur said.

The squad for the Sri Lankan tour will be named in June and convenor of selectors Haroon Lorgat said: "We'll watch his progress carefully."

Surprises may shower

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1994 and predicted that the coldest match, at least based on past data, will be the Group E meeting between the Czech Republic and Italy in Hamburg on June 22 -- 14.8 degrees. The hottest will be June 21 in Frankfurt -- Netherlands v Argentina -- with 19.3 degrees, they say.

The driest date will be June 26 in Cologne, where it has rained only twice in the last 11 years on that date. The winners of Group G meet the runners-up from Group H then.

All quarterfinal matches are on days at venues with a high probability of rain. The semi-finals may also be wet. Munich and Dortmund have had heavy rain on the relevant dates for the last 11 years.

Warm and dry weather may be preferable for some teams, fans,

and journalists, but rain has often helped Germany teams -- as seen in their 1974 victory over a great Poland side.

Twenty years earlier, in 1954, outsiders West Germany came from two goals down to beat Hungary in the final in Switzerland - played in heavy rain the Germans called "Fritz Walter weather" in honour of their captain who excelled on wet pitches.

Frank Boettcher is a meteorologist who has studied weather data and match results of the six past World Cup winners and found that Italy and Germany do well compared to Brazil, Argentina, England, and France when temperatures are extremely high.

"If temperatures are over 30 degrees or there is a strong thunderstorm with heavy rain, Germany would almost be on an equal footing

against Brazil," said Boettcher, who studied conditions for 93 matches of those top six teams for "Wetter Magazin".

He said Italy topped the list in hot weather over 27 degrees although Germany did nearly as well in the heat. The two were at the top of the statistics with the average temperature of their wins above 23 degrees. Brazil, by contrast, topped the six-team table when temperatures were below 18 degrees.

Germany fared worst of all in windy conditions.

"Higher temperatures help the outsiders," said Boettcher, theorising that passes may not be as accurate in extreme heat. "Teams with more talent sometimes struggle. But I have a feeling Brazil won't be bothered even if a thunderstorm hits the final."

Spain 1982: Italy provide

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very passable impersonation of the 1970 team: thin in defence, explosively brilliant everywhere else. They'd beaten England at Wembley, and in their last match before the finals thrashed the Republic of Ireland 7-0. The 'beautiful game' was back, and the rest of the field would be hoping to admire it at a distance for as long as possible.

However both the greatest upset and biggest scandal of the first round involved Algeria, West Germany and Austria.

After the unfancied North Africans had slayed the 1980 European champions 2-1, the Germans played out a farcial match against neighbors Austria. The two sides conspired to engineer a 1-0 win for the Germans ensuring both teams qualified at the expense of Algeria.

The resulting uproar surrounding the "fix" forced world governing body Fifa to change the rules and ensure that the final group matches were played simultaneously.

The powerful Brazilians strutted their stuff in their three opening group matches before effectively ending the Argentianians' campaign in the next round, winning 3-1 in a bitterly fought match that saw Maradona sent off.

Paulo Rossi banged home a hat-trick to sink Brazil 3-2 and set up a semi-final against surprise package Poland.

That was not the end of Rossi, and his brace against against the Poles put Italy in the final and one

step from their first title since 1938.

Meanwhile, on the other side of the draw, West Germany continued to ride their luck, sneaking into the semi-finals courtesy of a better goal difference than England, while their opponents France were hitting form, dominating a group that included Austria and the surprising team from Northern Ireland.

It would be heartbreaking in Seville for the French as they blew a 3-1 lead in extra-time to allow the Germans to win on penalties and book a date against Italy in the final.

Did we say processionals? Already without their midfield general, Italy lost their centre-forward almost immediately, missed a penalty, and still won with plenty to spare. Conti and Tardelli took over the playmaking, and again the quality of their defensive players made a vital difference, contributing to all three goals. The strapping Briegel, a former decathlete, had been seen as the future of the game -- but every Italian goal came down his flank and he gave away a penalty after 24 minutes by crudely hauling down Conti. Cabrini, who'd once had a spot kick saved at Highbury, became the first player to miss one in a World Cup Final, scuffing the ball low and wide. But West Germany's name wasn't written on the Cup this time.

Rummenigge still wasn't fully fit (Stielike was furious about it afterwards), so Bearzot let Gentile loose on Littbarski, who disappeared without trace. Meanwhile the mope-haired Collovati sealed his excel-

lent tournament by completing dominating Fischer and preventing an equaliser by stopping Rummenigge from reaching a low ball that had sneaked past Zoff.

At the other end, a quickly taken free kick found Gentile in yards of space on the right, and his low cross would have been put in by Cabrini if Rossi's head hadn't got there first; he'd now scored all of Italy's last six goals. The next being with Conti carrying the ball and Scirea backheeling it deep in the German penalty area, then pushing the return pass across to Tardelli, who turned away from a defender before lashing in the cross shot. His celebration, all fists and larynx, was the most vivid in any Final. Altobelli scored the third by calmly going round Schumacher. Breitner's low shot made him only the third player to score in two Finals but it was the merest coat of gloss. West Germany lost to European country for the first time since the 1978 finals.

Like Menotti in 1978, Bearzot had been vindicated, though he owed even more to his defenders (there were an awful lot of them) than to Rossi, whose rehabilitation was remarkable. At the start of the tournament, an even greater striker, Denis Law had been adamant that "You can't be out of the game for two years and come back in a tournament like the World Cup." Now the Germans were left wishing there were longer bans for fixing the results of Italian football matches.

BITS AND BOBS

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"I have to be prepared, although I do believe that competition, in every sense, is good for the team."

Basten concerned with defence

INTERNET, undated

Holland's defensive line-up appears to be the only area of their World Cup side still to be decided by coach Marco van Basten.

The Oranje squad has played a series of practice games amongst themselves at their training camp in Switzerland, and van Basten seems to have settled on his favoured options in midfield and attack.

He has consistently partnered Ruud van Nistelrooy with Dirk Kuyt and Arjen Robben in a front three, and Mark van Bommel with Rafael van der Vaart and Phillip Cocu in midfield.

And although Edwin van der Sar seems assured of his place in goal, Van Basten admits he is still not sure who to play in front of him.

Jan Kromkamp, Joris Mathijsen, Andre Ooijer and Tim de Cler are the main defensive candidates so far but van Basten is waiting for his whole squad to recover full fitness and to give them all a run-out in their forthcoming friendlies.

"The core formation that I have in my head can, of course, change," he said.

"Kew Jaliens and Giovanni van Bronckhorst haven't trained yet so I can indeed make a switch (in defence).

"Players can get in real good form, while others fall through the ice - that is why I want to see all players play in the three practice games."

Separate training for Ronaldo

INTERNET, undated

Brazil striker Ronaldo has been training separately from the rest of the squad in order to build up his fitness.

The Real Madrid forward has not played since hobbling out of the Galacticos' 1-1 draw with Real Sociedad at the start of April and indicated that he needed more time to get to the same level as his international teammates.

"As I've played less than this time season, I have to train more than them to be in form," Ronaldo said.

"They have played the whole season and have had only one week break. I've had more free time but due to injuries, it's natural that I train more."