



PHOTO: AFP

Superstar Sachin Tendulkar (R) listens to an animated Virender Sehwag during a practice session at the National Cricket Academy (NCA) in Bangalore on Monday.

India return to routine

PTI, Bangalore

After experimenting with unique training methods for three days, the Indian cricketers were back to the grind of a regular conditioning camp at the National Cricket Academy here on Monday.

The players did some physical exercises in the morning session before undergoing fitness tests.

In the afternoon, the cricketers practised with golf balls, hitting those hard with the stumps. Later, they also played a game of baseball.

In the evening, the team had an indoor training session where they batted to improve their skills in defence.

The Indian team had undergone training at the Pegasus Institute of Excellence on the outskirts of the city under assistant coach Ian Frazer over three days.

The present camp will fold up on August one and the second, concentrating on cricketing skills, would commence on August 6. The team is slated to leave on the night of August 10 for Sri Lanka where the tri-series, also involving South Africa, will begin on August 14.

Coach Greg Chappell, currently on a vacation to the USA, will join the Indian squad on August 4.

Giles gives

FROM PAGE 20

But when that failed to clear up his injury, he needed another at the start of July.

Giles is hopeful of making a return before the Ashes tour, and his plans include the ICC Champions Trophy in India in October.

But for now, he is happy to sing the praises of Panesar, a man nine years his junior who has played just eight Tests.

"Monty is a brilliant technician," said Giles.

"He works extremely hard, he has lovely drift on the ball, puts lots of revolutions on it and turns the ball."

"His consistency is something that has impressed me since he has come into the team."

Khulna, Comilla

FROM PAGE 17

Cox's Bazar outplayed Laxmipur 5-0 to move into the zonal semifinal of the Karnaphuli zone at the Bandarban Stadium and Thakurgaon advanced to the Teesta zone semifinal with a 6-5 victory in tiebreaker over Dinajpur at the Gaibandha Stadium.

Michael frets

FROM PAGE 20

Flintoff, the man England chiefs want to lead the team in Australia in Vaughan's absence, is currently sidelined with a longstanding ankle injury, which has also required recent surgery.

He and Vaughan are on an England injury list which also includes fellow Ashes-winners Simon Jones (knee) and Ashley Giles (hip).

But Alastair Cook, the man presently batting in Vaughan's number three slot, has ensured that while the former captain himself may have been missed his runs haven't, with the left-hander scoring three hundreds in his first seven Tests.

The 21-year-old Essex batsman's 127 was a key factor in England's innings and 120 run win in the second Test against Pakistan at Old Trafford concluded Saturday, a result that left the hosts 1-0 up in the four-match series with two to play.

Victory, with more than two days to spare, also owed much to the performance of left-arm spinner Monty Panesar, Giles's replacement, who took a Test-best five for 72 in Pakistan's second innings.

Selection not Wright

Cricket

CRICINFO, undated

John Wright has expressed his frustration with the selection policy prevalent during his stint as coach of the Indian team. He has also admitted to being perplexed at the decision to appoint Sunil Gavaskar as consultant for the Test series against Australia in 2004-05 and has revealed that it was done at the behest of Sourav Ganguly.

In his book *Indian Summers* Wright says that the selectors were parochial and tried to plug for players from their own zone. "The first six or seven selections were straightforward. But when it got down to the marginal selections, those last three or four spots that determine the balance of the team and your ability to develop new players, the zonal factor kicked in and things would get interesting," Wright was quoted as saying in the book by Mid Day, a Mumbai-based tabloid.

"It was easy to tell when selectors had come to a meeting with an agenda, ie to try their damndest to

get one or two players from their zones into the team. If their boys weren't picked, they tended to cross their arms, clam up and take no further part in the meeting." Wright worked with five selection committees, headed by Chandu Borde (twice), Brijesh Patel, Syed Kirmani and Kiran More.

He reveals that VVS Laxman and Mohammad Kaif were the ones who felt the heat of the selectors' whims the most. "VVS Laxman and Kaif are examples of outstanding performers who always seemed to be only one or two failures away from having their places questioned."

Wright felt that the time was right for a change of leadership towards the end of his tenure. "As much as I respect Sourav Ganguly and acknowledge his record as captain and his contribution to Indian cricket, I believe there were sound arguments for a change in leadership towards the end of my stint. There might well have been times when he favoured a change in a coach. What really mattered was the two of us saw the bigger picture, worked as a partnership to provide leadership on and off the

field and got results. In that last season, though, the results dried up."

He reveals the hand of Ganguly behind Gavaskar's appointment as consultant in the home series against Australia and admits to being unhappy with the move.

"Two days before the first Test (in Bangalore) I was notified that the legendary Sunil Gavaskar would be joining us as a batting consultant. I couldn't work out how it had happened," Wright says, also indicating that he had in fact asked for some assistance for the bowlers, not the batsmen. "Gavaskar solved the mystery by revealing in a team meeting that he had a text message from Ganguly. I was far from happy because as the head coach I should have had the final say on support staff issues."

"The more people in the room the more shoulders to cry on, the more chance of mixed messages and the more potential for players to go off in different directions. But if the captain decides to bring someone into the camp two days out from a Test against the best team in the world, there's not a hell of a lot you can do about it."

Kim-Patty showdown

Tennis

AP, Stanford

Kim Clijsters took a little something off her inconsistent serve and turned her focus to placement over pace.

One in particular, a perfect second serve down the middle, helped change her fortunes on a day Clijsters hardly had her best game.

The top-seeded Belgian overcame a rocky first set to beat Czech teen Nicole Pietrangeli 7-5, 6-2 on Saturday to reach her fifth straight

championship match at the Bank of the West Classic.

Clijsters will face second-seeded Patty Schnyder, a 7-6 (4), 6-1 winner over unseeded Tatiana Golovin in Saturday's late match to set up the first final between the top two seeds in two years.

Clijsters' timely ace in the 10th game allowed her to even the score at 5-5.

"I don't know what I was thinking," Clijsters said, smiling. "Sometimes it just comes into your mind. Without thinking about it, you do it. Sometimes that's better. There, I

just decided to go for it. Lucky enough, it hit the line."

Clijsters and Schnyder haven't played since the 2005 Berlin Open, where Clijsters retired because of a knee injury. Schnyder is in her first final in this tournament and has never won a set from Clijsters on hardcourts.

"She's the defending champion, the defending U.S. Open champion," Schnyder said. "She's just on hardcourt. I'll just try to play a good match. ... She gives you a hard time with all her strokes."

Mahela

FROM PAGE 17

minutes and 950 balls. "Kumar and I are very good friends on and off the field and I am privileged to be involved in this with him."

Sangakkara added: "It's a great feeling to do things that no-one has done."

Crowds grew steadily as news of the impending record spread around the Colombo region, and when it arrived courtesy of four leg-byes it was greeted by firecrackers. Jayawardene passed Sanath Jayasuriya's 340 to record the highest score by a Sri Lankan batsman.

He fell short of Brian Lara's world record 400, posting the fourth-highest individual Test score of 374.

Sri Lanka coach Tom Moody, however, believes his captain will have another realistic chance of eclipsing Lara's landmark and said: "These guys have a lot of cricket left in them, they may have another day."

Jayawardene insisted that there was no talk of records when the pair resumed on Saturday at 485-2.

"When we went out to bat, the focus was on pressing home the advantage and not records," he said.

"We thought we would bat until lunch and then decide. We never had any individual targets but we are happy with what we have achieved. However, the important thing is the team's position."

Sangakkara admitted to twinges of regret that he was dismissed 13 short of a triple century.

Security up for Sachin

AFP, New Delhi

Security for Indian batting icon Sachin Tendulkar has been tightened following reports of terrorist plans to target the country's leading figures, police said Sunday.

Armed bodyguards are now shadowing him and his residence in Mumbai is under police guard, officials said.

Tendulkar, the world's leading scorer in one-dayers with 14,146 runs and a record 39 centuries, is currently in the southern city of Bangalore training for next month's triangular one-day series in Sri Lanka.

Television news channels flashed footage of Tendulkar being tailed by two hulking security men.

Sri Lanka will be his first international assignment since the third and final Test against England at Mumbai in March. A shoulder injury forced him out of one-dayers against England at home and then a tour of the West Indies.

The media on Sunday quoted intelligence sources as saying a plan to target personalities emerged during the interrogation of suspects in the Mumbai train blasts which left 183 dead this month and were blamed on Muslim extremists.

"It is a routine alert from the Intelligence Bureau. We have taken care of Tendulkar's security at the hotel where cricketers are staying," senior Bangalore police officer GB Chebbitt told The Times of India.

The master batsman has been provided with two personal security men and an armed guard around the clock, the official added.

Tendulkar and other top cricketers were also named on a hit-list by an Islamic militant group in 2004, just before India's tour of Bangladesh.

Police have also stepped up security for Bollywood stars Amitabh Bachchan and Shah Rukh Khan, industrialist Mukesh Ambani, and software czars NR Narayanamurthy and Azim Premji, media reported.

Indian cricketers face Sri Lanka on August 16 in their opening match of the tri-series, also featuring South Africa.

Frank verdict

FROM PAGE 20

the manager gave us days off when I'd rather have been training.

"The day before we were due to return from Portugal we were due to take the day off so Rio Ferdinand and I did some work on our own."

"Though I was told I was the fittest player in the squad when we were in Portugal, I knew I was a bit short of my optimum level."

"Sometimes a manager needs to trust his players to know what they need. In retrospect maybe I should have been more forceful."

Another bone of contention with regards England's failed challenge was the inclusion of just four strikers, with two of those - Michael Owen and Wayne Rooney - still in the process of recovering from serious injuries and another, Theo Walcott, entirely untested at the highest level having yet to even make his Premiership bow.

Calls for the inclusion of Defoe, or alternatively Darren Bent fell on deaf ears and this is another folly Lampard believes Eriksson committed.

"Questions had been asked about why we didn't have five strikers in the final in this tournament and how fitness," he added.

"Personally, I'd have included Jermain as well. I played with him at West Ham and he is a natural goalscorer."

"In terms of the line-ups for each match, I don't think they would have been affected."

"I'd have preferred some insurance though, and it would have given us more options. In that respect I would have taken Defoe."

Proteas force

FROM PAGE 17

captain Mahela Jayawardene making the fourth highest Test score of 374 after sharing a world record partnership of 624 with Kumar Sangakkara (287).

The batting feast came after South Africa were dismissed for their lowest total against Sri Lanka on the opening day.

SCOREBOARD
Scoreboard at stumps on the fourth day of the first Test between Sri Lanka and South Africa at the Sinhalese sports club on Sunday:

SOUTH AFRICA: First innings 169 (De Villiers 65; Fernando 4-48, Muralidaran 4-41)

SRI LANKA: First innings 756-5 decl (Sangakkara 287, Jayawardene 374; Steyn 3-129)

SOUTH AFRICA: Second innings (overnight 43-0)

Rudolph c Kapugedera b Fernando 90
Hall lbw b Muralidaran 64
Amlabw b Fernando 2
Prince not out 60
De Villiers lbw b Muralidaran 24
Boucher not out 38
Extras: (b-10, lb-1, w-2, nb-20) 33
Total: (For four wickets in 105 overs) 311
Fall of wickets: 1-165, 2-171, 3-185, 4-234

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Malinga	14	0	77	0
Maharroof	11	2	30	0
Fernando	16	4	49	2
Muralidaran	40	6	83	2
Dilshan	4	1	10	0
Jayasuriya	20	4	51	0

Rich and famous

Football

INTERNET, undated

More proof that sports is one of the biggest businesses on earth. This year's Sports Illustrated's list of the 20 best-compensated athletes who are not US citizens is again topped by Formula One driver Michael Schumacher. But this time around, he's joined by two of his colleagues. The International 20 also features six footballers and one motorcycle racer.

TOP 20

1. Michael Schumacher (Germany) Auto Racing 80,000,000 dollars
2. Valentino Rossi (Italy) Motorcycle Racing 30,000,000 dollars
3. Ronaldinho (Brazil) Football

4. Maria Sharapova (Russia) Tennis 25,421,283 dollars
5. David Beckham (England) Football 22,500,000 dollars
6. Ichiro Suzuki (Japan) Baseball 22,500,000 dollars
7. Roger Federer (Switzerland) Tennis 22,137,018 dollars
8. Ronaldo (Brazil) Football 21,600,000 dollars
9. Hideki Matsui (Japan) Baseball 21,000,000 dollars
9. (Tie) Christian Vieri (Italy) Football 20,000,000 dollars
11. Vijay Singh (Fiji) Golf 19,959,746 dollars
12. Wayne Rooney (England) Football 19,900,000 dollars

13. Yao Ming (China) Basketball 19,436,880 dollars
14. Zinedine Zidane (France) Football 18,700,000 dollars
15. (Tie) Ralf Schumacher (Germany) Auto Racing 18,000,000 dollars
15. (Tie) Fernando Alonso (Spain) Auto Racing 18,000,000 dollars
17. Sergio Garcia (Spain) Golf 16,446,573 dollars
18. Magglio Ordonez (Venezuela) Baseball 15,150,000 dollars
19. Chan Ho Park (South Korea) Baseball 15,125,000 dollars
20. Pedro Martinez (Dominican Republic) Baseball 15,000,000 dollars

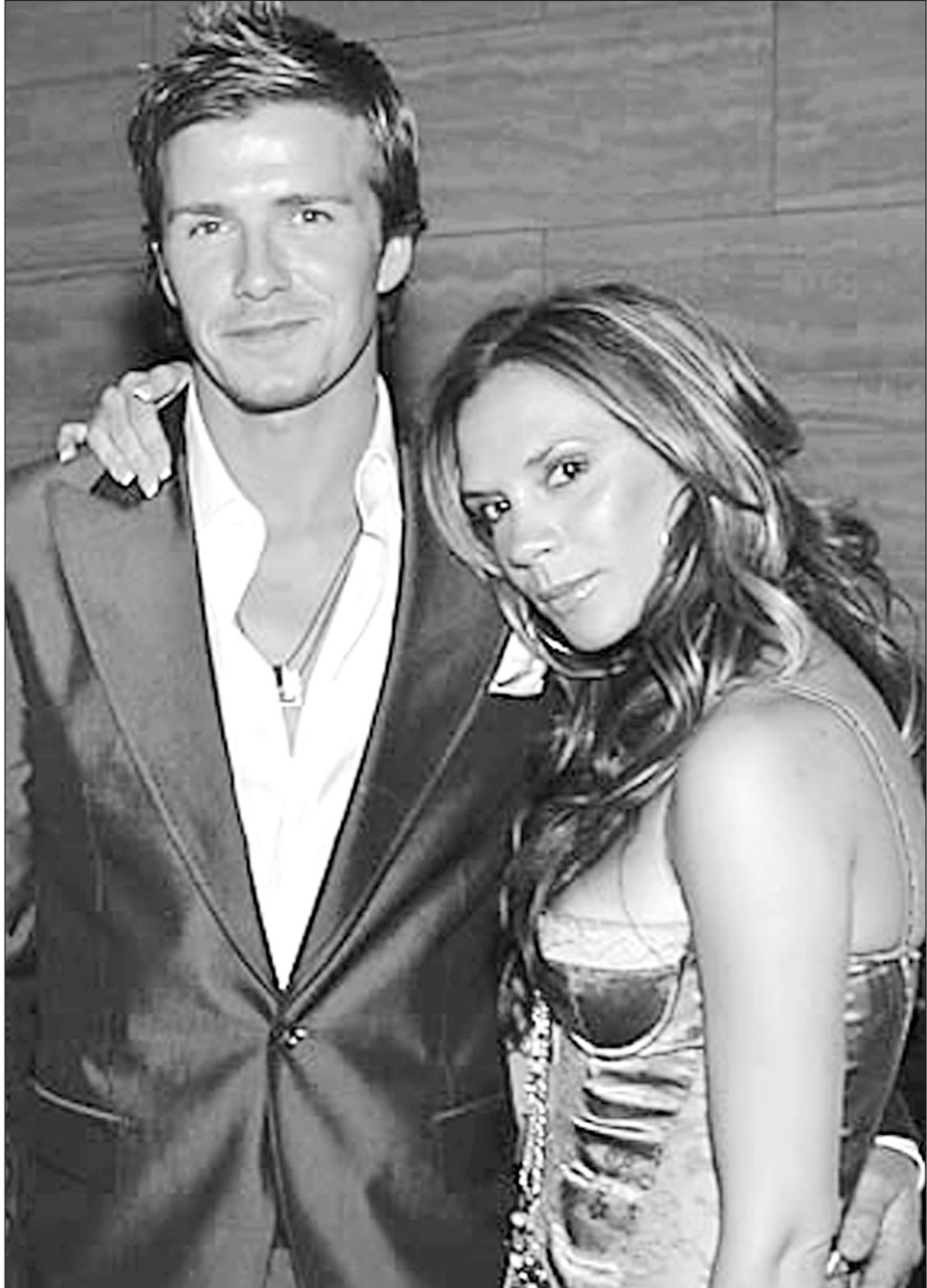


PHOTO: INTERNET

With a Spice Girl wife and a glitzy lifestyle, David Beckham is football's biggest celebrity.

FORMULA 1

Schumacher blasts title race wide open

REUTERS, Hockenheim

Ferrari's Michael Schumacher blasted the Formula One title race wide open on Sunday with a commanding one-two victory in his home German Grand Prix.

While the 37-year-old celebrated the 89th victory of his incredible career, serenaded by air-horns and his jubilant army of red-shirted fans, Renault's world champion Fernando Alonso limped home fifth.

The Spaniard's overall lead was slashed from 17 points to 11, leaving his championship hopes on a knife-edge with six races remaining and barely time to breathe before the next clash in Hungary in a week's time.

"The next races won't present any problems for us," said Schumacher.

"If we can keep this up, the championship will be really, really exciting. We hope to have our nose in front at the end."

Renault's lead over Ferrari was cut to 10 points in the constructors' championship.

In what could be his final race appearance in Germany, with his manager Willi Weber advising him to retire if he wins the title, Schumacher took the lead after 10 laps when McLaren's Kimi Raikkonen pitted.

The rest was straightforward. Schumacher's third win in a row, and fifth of the season, was one of his most important on what the seven-times champion could only

describe as a "superb weekend".

On a blazingly hot afternoon, Schumacher and Brazilian team mate Felipe Massa were in a race of their own as they anchored the team's second one-two finish in three starts and tyre partner Bridgestone's 100th grand prix success.

They crossed the line in close formation, just 0.7 seconds apart, with Schumacher becoming the first driver to win the German Grand Prix four times.

"We have the edge on the other guys for three races," declared Schumacher. "We have to keep this advantage for as long as we can."

"The numbers are very important but at the moment, probably the most important is 11. And it's 11 points left in terms of the championship lead for Fernando."

"We had a superb weekend, our car just functioned really great," he said.

"It's the right moment in time, where we need to have such a performance in order to bring down the gap in the championship and keep pressure on." Raikkonen, who had started on pole, was out of sight in third place and 13.2 seconds behind as he ended a jinx and finished at engine partner Mercedes's home track for the first time in six attempts.

"Bridgestone have a slight advantage, but you could say we're up there," said Mercedes motorsport director Norbert Haug. "We're going on the right way."

We were clearly behind Renault before and now we're clearly in front of them. We'll see what happens now."

Alonso, who had qualified a disappointing seventh on his 25th birthday, made up two places at the start but then faded and was never in contention.

He has 100 points to Schumacher's 89.

The Spaniard would have been staring at his worst result in almost a year had Australian Mark Webber, wrestling every scrap of performance from his Williams, not retired eight laps from the finish while ahead of him.

Alonso also survived a big scare five laps from the end when he went wide, the car bucking and jumping over the gravel before he regained the track just in front of Italian team mate Giancarlo Fisichella.

Briton Jenson Button was fourth for Honda, ending a run of five races without points.

Fisichella finished sixth, with Toyota's Italian Jarno Trulli seventh and Austrian Christian Klien taking the final spot for Red Bull.

Germany's Nico Rosberg failed to get past the first lap, crashing his Williams into the tyre wall, while Canadian Jacques Villeneuve also had a crash in the BMW Sauber.

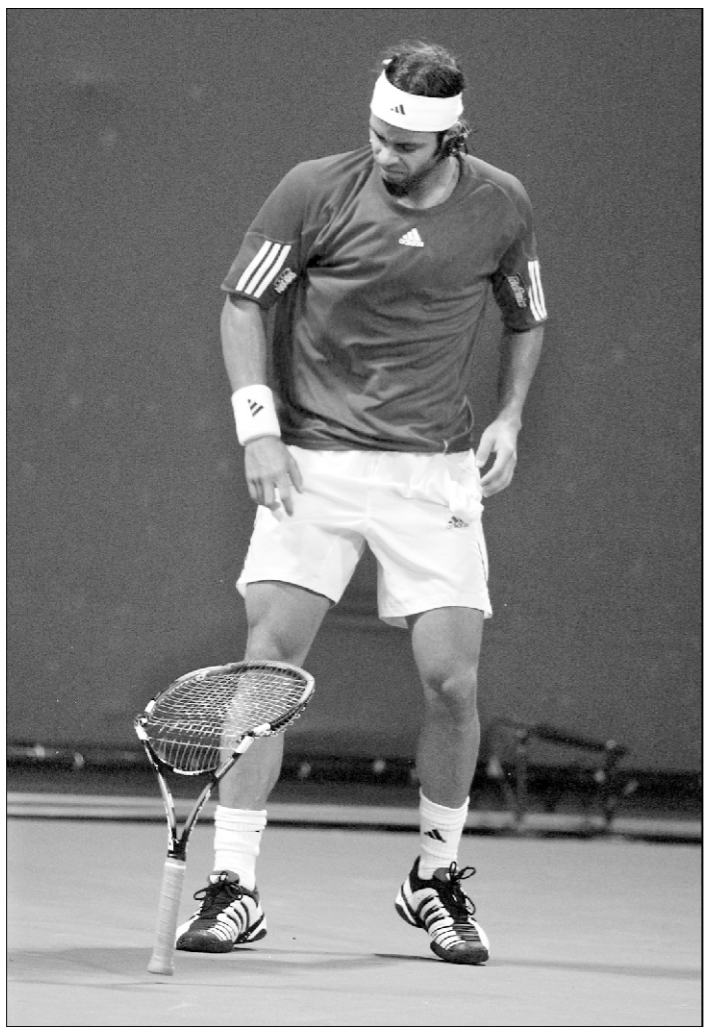


PHOTO: AFP

THE RACQUET LOST: Chilean Fernando Gonzalez vents his anger on the racquet after being defeated by Russian Dmitry Tursunov during the semifinals of the Countrywide Classic at the LA Tennis Center in California on Monday.