

## Vermeulen gets bail

AFP, Harare

Former Test player Mark Vermeulen was granted bail of 2,000 US dollars after he appeared in court Friday charged with arson attacks on the Zimbabwe cricket association's boardroom and training academy.

Vermeulen was also ordered by magistrates in Harare to surrender his passport, report on a daily basis to police and stay away from any cricket facility in the country ahead of his trial on November 14.

The 27-year-old, who is facing two counts of arson, was formally charged on Thursday, and if convicted he faces 25 years in prison with hard labour.

Outlining the prosecution case, state attorney Tawanda Zvekare said Vermeulen had threatened to "destroy" the governing body Zimbabwe Cricket (ZC) after being told to play for a local club to have his form assessed before he could be considered for selection for an upcoming tour of Bangladesh.

"This did not go down well with the accused who verbally threatened that he was going to destroy Zimbabwe Cricket in two weeks," he said.

He first tried to torch the association's boardroom at the Harare Sports Club ground on Monday by sprinkling methylated spirit on the curtains and then setting it alight, said Zvekare.

But when that fire caused only minor damage, he went the next day to the training academy where he managed to burn down the pavilion, the prosecutor added.

Vermeulen was not asked to enter a plea but his lawyer, David Dhumbura, complained to the court that his client had been forced to "make indications to the police without the presence of his defence team."

Vermeulen, who played the last of his eight Tests in 2004, recently returned to Zimbabwe after a stint playing league cricket in England where he was slapped with a lengthy ban for throwing a ball at spectators.

## Bashar, Aftab

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three wickets for 16, being his only contribution to the victory. Fast bowlers Alamgir Kabir and Monjurul Islam took two each in the first hour when the ball moved considerably.

### SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard of the GrameenPhone Corporate Cricket League semifinal between Acme and Epyllion at the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium on Saturday.

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Kabir	7	0	35	2
Salahuddin	8	2	31	2
Nafees c Manjar b Monjurul				2
Imran c Kabir b Sharma				88
Sakib c Manjar b Hasibul				3
Reza c Ghosh b Monjurul				15
Salim lbw b Manjar				5
Baisya b Rafique				8
Samad c Manjar b Sharma				6
Aziz b Sharma				8
Haque not out				1
Extras: (lb-3, nb-4, w-24)				31
Total: (all out in 43.5 overs)				206
Fall of wickets: 1-21, 2-46, 3-53, 4-76, 5-97, 6-127, 7-140, 8-184, 9-201				

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Baisya	7	0	28	0
Aziz	5	0	38	1
Samad	5.4	0	41	0
Haque	8	0	39	0
Sakib	3	1	13	0
Reza	6	0	16	1
Imran	5	0	23	1
Sadat	1	0	5	0

Result: Acme won by 7 wickets.  
Man-of-the-match: Habibul Bashar.

## Bosnia coach

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resignation in September following a defeat in one of the qualifiers, but later changed his mind and stayed on.

Recently 13 top players threatened to leave the squad unless FA leaders resigned, accusing them of "wrongdoings and degrading the reputation of the national team."

Sliskovic ended his 20-year-long career as a player in 1998 after spells with Bosnian side Velez Mostar, Hajduk Split of Croatia, Marseille in France and Pescara in Italy.

Sliskovic also played 26 matches with the national team of the former Yugoslavia, before the federation broke up in 1991.

Since the end of Bosnia's 1992-95 war, the country's national football team had failed to qualify for either the World Cup or the European Championships.

# Hair is controversy

Cricket

AFP, London

Australian umpire Darrell Hair, who has been sacked from the International Cricket Council's elite panel according to an unnamed ICC source, is no stranger to controversy.

Hair is a love-hate figure within the cricket world. And the beginning of the end of his elite career came as he took centre stage in the furor over Pakistan's forfeited Test match against England at London's Oval in August.

As he came under a hail of criticism in Pakistan, he followed that up by delivering a bouncer to the ICC by offering his resignation in return for a payment of 500,000 dollars.

To his supporters the 54-year-old Australian, whose appearance at The Oval threatens to be his 76th and last Test, is one of the last top-flight umpires confident enough to back his own judgment and uphold the game's laws in full, whatever the cost.

To his critics, he is a spotlight-seeking pedant.

Both sides would probably have been unshaken in their views when Pakistan captain Inzamamul Haq was found guilty of bringing cricket

into disrepute, for leading his side off the pitch, but not guilty of ball-tampering, which Hair had signalled with the award of five penalty runs -- a decision which sparked Pakistan's protest.

ICC chief match referee Ranjan Madugalle, who presided over the hearing, subsequently told reporters that he would want "concrete evidence" before accusing anyone of ball-tampering.

The inference was that Hair hadn't produced any, even though cricket's rulebook doesn't set a standard of proof.

This was not the first time Hair found himself caught up in controversy.

In 1995/96 he was centre stage at the Melbourne Cricket Ground where he called Sri Lanka off-spinner Muttiah Muralitharan, whose career has been dogged by questions over the legitimacy of his action, for throwing.

Hair then further enraged Sri Lanka supporters, and many cricket fans within the Indian sub-continent especially, by branding Muralitharan's action "diabolical" in his autobiography.

In 1994 Peter Kirsten, the South Africa opening batsman, was fined 65 per cent of his match fee for what Wisden Cricketers' Almanack, the sport's bible, called an "animated conversation" with Hair over lbw

decisions.

Even before the drama at the Oval, Britain's Independent on Sunday newspaper reported that Pakistan had made an official complaint about Hair after England's third Test victory at Headingley.

Pakistan had also objected to him standing in the series-finale with the tourists saying they found his manner towards them "dismissive" and "rude".

When the inaugural elite panel was announced in 2002, the experienced Hair, who umpired his first Test in 1992, was left off the list, although he did join it a year later.

That led him to move to England to cut down the time he spent travelling around the world.

Hair made the news again last November when he upset Pakistan by ruling that Inzamam had been run out by a throw from England fast bowler Stephen Harmison back to the wicketkeeper during the Faisalabad Test, even though the batsman appeared to be taking evasive action.

Hair first stood in first-class cricket in 1988-89, having previously been a fast bowler for North Sydney and Mosman in the Sydney grade club competition.

## Athletes go

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Rahim, M Omar Ali, Moshir Rahman Kajal, M Nadim Hossain and Suruj Bangali (boxer); and Syed Tanvir Hossain, Mohammad Nure Alam, M Sajjad Hossain, Anjum Ashraf Mahin, Omi Chakma, Rina Chakma, Latika Chakma and Khadija Mushtari Mahin (archer).

While staying at the academy, the archers will take part in the 2nd Commonwealth Archery Championship to be held over November 7-11.

## Ricky being

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The period under consideration was August 1, 2005 to August 8, 2006.

The ICC Tests and one-day teams were picked by a selection committee comprising former Test stars Sunil Gavaskar of India, Ian Healy of Australia, Sri Lankan Arjuna Ranatunga, Waqar Younis of Pakistan and Allan Donald of South Africa.

## NCL from Nov 9

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Rajshahi has been asked to report at their respective Divisional Stadiums at 9am on November 6 while Dhaka and Barisal players at the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium at 9am and 3pm respectively.

**DHAKA:** Al Shahrar, Uttam Kumar, Nadif Chowdhury, Marshal Ayub, Shamsur Rahman, Arfat Sunny, Sajjad Kabir, Mahmudullah Riyad, Mosharaf Hossain, Mohammad Sharif, Talha Jubair, Mohammad Azam, Anwar Hossain Monir, Mohammad Shakil, Zabid Hossain, Javed Omar, Mohammad Ashraf, Mohammad Rafique, Mehraj Hossain Jr, Shahadat Hossain, Anwar Hossain, Rezaul Islam, Mahbulul Alam. Coach: Sarwar Imran

**CHITTAGONG:** Ensanul Haque, Tamim Iqbal, Nazimuddin, Gazi Salahuddin, Faisal Hossain, Sabbir Khan, Dhiman Ghosh, Nadimuddin Mintu, Tareq Aziz Khan, Gazi Alamgir, Kamrul Islam, Ilias Sunny, Sadid Khan, Ashiqur Rahman, Nafis Iqbal, Aftab Ahmed, Debroto Paul, Sajju Duttal, Raihanuddin Arfat and Mahmudul Hassan. Coach: Minhazul Abedin.

**KHULNA:** Nazmus Sadat, Sajjadul Hasan, Salauddin Ujjal, Shaful Alam, Mohammad Selim, Sahgir Hossain, Jamal Uddin, Ziaur Rahman, Dollar Mahmud, Shiplu, Monjurul Islam, Mazhar Uddin, Asadullah Khan, Humayun Kabir, Fahim Muntasir, Sadiq Khan, Nasir Hossain, Manjarul Islam Rana, Tushar Imran, Habibul Bashar, Mashrafe Bin Mortaza, Sakib Al Hasan, Abdur Razzak and Syed Rasel. Coach: Abdul Hadi Ratan.

**RAJSHAH:** Naeem Islam, Zahurul Islam, Hasanuzzaman, Farhad Hossain, Anisur Rahman, Mushfiqur Rahman, Rezaul Islam, Zunaid Siddique, Shafaq Al-Jaber, Mohammad Shahajada, Alamgir Kabir, Sunon Saha, Sohrawardi Shuvo, Arif Hossain, Arif Reza, Mohammad Nirala, Mahbul Alam Mustaqim, Rafiqul Islam, Khaled Mashud, Forhad Reza and Mushfiqur Rahman. Coach: Wahidul Gani.

**SYLHET:** Golam Rahman, Imtiaz Hossain, Ejaj Ahmed, Alok Kapali, Golam Mowla, Golam Mabud, Sirajullah Khadem, Mohammad Rana, Ahmed Saquibur Rahman, Rezaul Haque, Hasibul Hossain, Zakwan Ahmed, Enamul Haque (Jr.), Nazmul Hossain, Nabil Samad, Saif Mahmud, Moniruzzaman, Mitun Ali, Rajin Saleh and Tapash Baisya. Coach: Golam Faruk Suru.

**BARISAL:** Hannan Sarkar, Imran Ahmed, Nasir Uddin Faruque, Rakibul Hasan, Humayun Kabir, Arman Hossain, Mehdi Hasan, Mohammad Shafin, Israq Sonet, Abul Bashar, Sajidul Islam, Arafat Salauddin, Ali Arman, Ahsanullah Hasan, Ariful Haq, Mokhtar Ali, Tahshir Ghosh, Lablu Rahman and Shahriar Nafees. Coach: Md. Emdadul Haque.

Hrbaty booked his semi-final place by beating defending champion Tomas Berdych, the eight seeded Czech, 6-4, 1-6, 6-2.

# Ponting 'disappointed'

Cricket

AFP, Sydney

Australian captain Ricky Ponting says Darrell Hair's reported removal from the ICC elite umpiring panel is surprising and disappointing.

A highly-placed ICC source told AFP Friday India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh, together with South Africa, Zimbabwe and the West Indies, voted for Hair's dismissal at executive board meeting of the International Cricket Council (ICC) in Mumbai and which was to be formally announced later.

It comes after Pakistan lodged a complaint against Hair for his role in the forfeited Oval Test against England in August and demanded an inquiry into his conduct.

Hair awarded the first forfeited match in Test cricket's 129-year history when Pakistan refused to return to the field in protest at being

accused of ball-tampering.

Ponting, announced Friday as the ICC's Player of the Year, defended the English-based Australian umpire saying he simply stood up for what he thought was right.

Speaking to Australian reporters in Mumbai ahead of Sunday's Champions Trophy final against defending champions West Indies, Ponting said: "I'd be disappointed for him if that's the case."

"He's obviously done lots of good things right over a long period of time, I'm sure he'd be disappointed."

Ponting said he didn't feel Hair had been "trying to make a name for himself" by taking a firm stand against Pakistan.

"He's done what he believed was right at the time for the good of the game. Nothing to do with himself," Ponting said.

"I'm surprised by it. I think that's been shown by being on the panel

as long as he has (since 2003).

Hair also received support from cricket's leading umpire Simon Taufel.

Australian Taufel, who won his third successive ICC Umpire of the Year Award in Mumbai on Friday, said Hair not acted in isolation.

"No, I haven't spoken to Darrell directly about (events) post The Oval," Taufel told a news conference, speaking before news of Hair's ban had broken.

"Obviously, it's an issue that we are all aware of."

"I'll say to you what I said at the time. It was both umpires who made those decisions on the day to award the penalty runs and to also award the match."

"It wasn't just one umpire. And those umpires actually followed the laws of playing the game."

"So I think what's really important is that umpires continue to learn, continue to be better and continue to add value to the game."

# Haas sends Safin packing

Tennis

AFP, Paris

Germany's Tommy Haas kept up his unlikely late bid for a place in the Masters Cup on Friday when he reached the semifinals of the Paris Masters.

Haas defeated former triple champion Marat Safin of Russia 7-6, 3-6, 6-3 to move closer to America's James Blake who currently sits in the eighth and last qualifying place for the end-of-season Shanghai tournament.

Despite his win, 10th seeded Haas still needs to win the final on Sunday to leapfrog Blake, whom he beat in the third round, in the standings.

Earlier Friday, Croatia's Mario Ancic saw his hopes of making the trip to China dashed when he was comprehensively defeated 6-3, 6-3 by fourth seeded Russian Nikolay Davydenko.

Haas will face Slovakia's 17th seed Dominik Hrbaty in the semifinals on Saturday while Davydenko takes on Spanish sixth seed Tommy Robredo.

Davydenko and Robredo have

already made sure of their places at the Masters Cup, which starts on November 12, as have Roger Federer, Rafael Nadal, Ivan Ljubicic, Andy Roddick and David Nalbandian who all decided to sit out the Paris tournament.

The 28-year-old Haas had beaten Safin in five sets in the fourth round of the US Open in August and edged the first set tiebreak on Friday despite the Russian not having faced a break point.

Safin, the champion in 2000, 2002 and 2004, broke in the eighth game of the second set on his way to levelling the tie but Haas enjoyed the crucial breakthrough to lead 3-1 in the decider and he wrapped up the match when Safin hit long.

It was only Safin's third defeat in the tournament in 26 matches.

"He got a break out of nowhere in the final set," admitted Safin.

"But I didn't put enough on his serve. I had chances to fight back but at one stage he hit a second serve ace."

"Overall I am pretty happy. I've been pretty strong at the end of the season but it's a little too late now."

Despite missing out on Shanghai,

Ancic said he was proud to have got so close after battling back from a knee injury suffered in a jet-ski accident in July which kept him off the tour for three months.

"After what happened, not too many guys gave me a chance of qualifying," said the ninth-seed.

"I missed three Masters series events and the US Open and I was a long way out. Then I won the title in St Petersburg last week and I knew that to qualify for China I had to keep winning matches. It was unbelievable pressure."

Davydenko was an impressive victor sending down 22 winners to Ancic's nine.

The solid, steady Russian, who spent just 36 minutes disposing of Christophe Rochus without losing a game in the second round, will now face Robredo after the Spanish sixth seed reached his third Masters Series semi-final of the season by beating Finland's Jarkko Nieminen 6-7, 7-6, 6-4.

Hrbaty booked his semi-final place by beating defending champion Tomas Berdych, the eight seeded Czech, 6-4, 1-6, 6-2.



PHOTO: COURTESY

Senior officials of the Rangs Group and senior members of the JGCC pose with the GOC, 55 Infantry Division and Jessore Area Commander and president of Jessore Golf and Country Club Major General Sharif Uddin Ahmed at a "Tea Up" photo session in the Rangs Cup Golf Tournament 2006 in Jessore recently.

# Andy eyes 'best series ever'

Cricket

AFP, London

England captain Andrew Flintoff believes that his side's upcoming defence of the Ashes in Australia could be "the biggest series ever" in cricket history.

Flintoff, speaking as the team flew out from Heathrow Airport here Friday for Sydney ahead of the first Test against Australia in Brisbane on November 23, was the star of the 2005 Ashes with 402 runs and 24 wickets in England's 2-1 series victory.

That represented England's first series success against Australia in 19 years sparked a huge surge in cricket interest in the land of its birth.

But Flintoff said he wasn't sure if the same sense of 'Ashes fever' that gripped the British sporting public a year ago could ever be recaptured.

"It is going to be tough. We know that 2005 was something special and whether that can be recreated I am not quite sure," said the

Lancashire pace bowler and hard-hitting batsman.

"In England each Test match got bigger and bigger and we got a real feeling of what the Ashes was about."

"It was the first time I had played in them and this is the first time I will have played an Ashes series in Australia; so too for a few of the lads and there is a real excitement. "This is the reason we play. We are going over there to play in what could be the biggest series ever so there is an excited group of lads."

Australia, revitalised by a run of 11 wins in 12 Test since the Ashes are likely to provide likely to provide an even sterner challenge for England on home soil.

But Flintoff said his side were up to the task of becoming the first England team since Mike Gatting's men in 1986/87 to win a Test series in Australia.

"Having the chance to go to Australia and compete against the best side in the world again is something the lads are very excited about," he said.

"We have got a young, talented side looking forward to Tests

against Australia, the best side in the world, in front of Australian crowds.

"There will be some late nights for people (back in England) because the games start quite early but hopefully we can do something special."

"It is something which we are looking forward to doing and hopefully we can create that buzz about cricket again over the next few weeks."

Although inspirational all-rounder Flintoff has been cleared to bowl, doubts remain over how his ankle will hold up to the stresses of an Ashes tour.

Meanwhile Ashley Giles may have been passed fit following a hip problem but the left-arm spinner hasn't played Test cricket for some 12 months and fellow 2005 Ashes-winner Marcus Trescothick's well being remains a concern after the opening batsman missed the Champions Trophy event in India because of a "stress-related" illness.

England are due to arrive in Sydney at 2000GMT Saturday (7am Sydney local time).

# Equal pressure on Aus, Eng

Cricket

AFP, Sydney

Australia are entering this month's Test cricket series under as much pressure as holders England to win back the Ashes, according to England's World Cup-winning rugby coach Clive Woodward.

The English touring party, led by Andrew Flintoff, are scheduled to touch down here early Sunday for the five-Test and limited-overs tri-series with their opening game against a Prime Minister's XI in Canberra on November 10.

Woodward, who was knighted for his role in England's 2003 World Cup victory here -- their first in a major sport since Alf Ramsey's footballers in 1966 -- is now the elite performance manager with the British Olympic Association.

But he is well aware of the feelings England's cricketers will experience as they defend the Ashes they took off Australia in last year's epic home series.

"For England to win the Ashes

away from home would be as big, or bigger, than us winning the World Cup here in 2003," Woodward told The Sydney Morning Herald Saturday.

"You just have to look at history to understand that. I was living in Sydney when (England as holders won the Ashes series) in 1987 and it was just fantastic."

"I think it will be a hostile environment, but you have to remember that it's going to be hostile for the home side, too."

"Australia is under pressure. We hold the Ashes. They've got to win it. I understand that Australia are starting favourites for the Ashes, but England really have to turn all that around. We are the defending champions."

Woodward is hopeful that the lessons of England's 2003 World Cup rugby final triumph over Australia's Wallabies might help coach Duncan Fletcher's cricketers.

"You can lose an entire Test series if just one player in your squad can't handle it. It can destroy a team on the field," he

said.

"I think there are a lot of similarities between the greats, like (England rugby captain) Martin Johnson or Andrew Flintoff."

"They thrive in those kind of environments. Some guys will when things get heated. But when I picked the team for the World Cup, I couldn't afford to have one person like that on board."

"The English (cricket team) would not want to admit it, but I think that on a subconscious level, they have been waiting for this series since the last ball at The Oval (last 2005 Ashes Test)."

"That has probably limited them in the series in between, but it shows how much this means to them."

In Fletcher and Flintoff, Woodward believes England have the leadership required for victory in Australia.

"The only character trait a coach needs to have is that he knows how to win. So far, Fletcher has shown that he can do that. He is a winner," Woodward said.

# 'Value your opportunity'

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**DS: What is your ultimate goal?**

KS: In my view, it is very important for a player to understand the value of opportunity. I am hopeful that I can play at least another three years for my country. I would love to keep scoring runs. My goal is to bat at century whenever I possibly can. I think twenty Test centuries is a benchmark for a good player and I am hopeful that I can score over that at the end of my career.

**DS: How does modern cricket compare with the past?**

KS: These days it is not easy to be successful as every team is now more or less professional. There are so many good players in world cricket so you are always under pressure to score.

But I think it is good for cricket because it doesn't make you complacent and it doesn't make you believe that you have done everything. You should always tell yourself that you have to achieve something otherwise someone will take your place in the