

Sport

Thilanga sets his target

Star Sport Monitor
Newly elected Sri Lanka Cricket Board president Thilanga Sumathipala said that he wanted to resolve the dispute regarding the controversial WorldTel deal as soon as possible in order to ensure the board did not lose good money, according to news reports there.

"We have a very important tour in hand. In May, New Zealand are going to be here followed by the Independence Cup tournament. The revenue we expect from them will be more than two and a half million US dollars, which is enough to govern this country's cricket for more than a year on the minimum," said Sumathipala.

Inzaghi eyes WC shirt

MILAN, Mar 31 (AFP/Internet): Filippo Inzaghi is counting on Juventus to get him a place in this summer's World Cup finals, after the latest goal rush from the Italian striker.

Inzaghi scored twice in Saturday night's 4-1 victory over AC Milan and bagged a hat-trick against Ukrainian champions Dynamo Kiev in Kiev to book Juventus into Wednesday night's European Cup semifinal against Monaco.

"I don't think there will be any problems," he said. "Especially if I continue to play at this level with Juventus. I'll be honest, with performances like these, I hope that I deserve a place." However, Inzaghi faces stiff competition for a ticket to France.

Three leave the Family Circle

HILTON HEAD, South Carolina, Mar 31: Three seeds left at the Family Circle Cup women's tennis tournament on Monday as players struggled to make the transition from Hampton's hard courts to clay at the Sea Pines resort, reports Reuters.

Eleventh seed Sandrine Testud of France, 12th-seeded German Anke Huber and 13th seed Ai Sugiyama were all bounced from the tournament on the opening day of the 1998 clay court season.

May be she likes to play on clay a little more than me, but still it shouldn't happen," Huber said after her 7-5, 7-6 loss to 53rd-ranked Magui Serna of Spain.

Testud was picked off by Ruxandra Dragomir of Romania, also in straight sets, while Alexandra Fusai of France upended Sugiyama in three sets.

Lara's ready for the world

Brian Lara's tremendous hundred a fortnight ago failed to inspire West Indies to win the first one-day international against England at Bridgetown, Barbados. But now the home side has the chance to put things in order as they entertain the Englishmen in the second game of the five-match series at the same venue today.



West Indies captain had been more diligently groomed for the post, more actively promoted for it or more openly coveted it.

None came to it by a longer and more contentious route, none at a more troubled time.

So how has Brian Lara fared in his first series at the helm? The simple answer is that he won and won by the irrefutable margin of 3-1.

As Michael Atherton, his beleaguered counterpart on the other side, and Richie Richardson and Courtney Walsh, his immediate predecessors, all painfully discovered, it is the one criterion by which all captains are ultimately judged.

In Lara's case, instant success was even more critical. The West Indies had just returned from the disastrous series in Pakistan, heavily beaten in all three Tests, when Pat Rousseau called Lara into his apartment at the Jolly Harbour Resort in Antigua in January and informed him that the West Indies Cricket Board (WICB) had finally accepted the selectors' recommendation to install him as captain in place of Courtney Walsh.

During the shambles of Pakistan, Walsh and tour manager Clive Lloyd, the former revered captain, had spoken of a lack of pride and commitment. There were snide suggestions that Walsh and Lara were at odds and that Lara (average 21.50) didn't pull his weight.

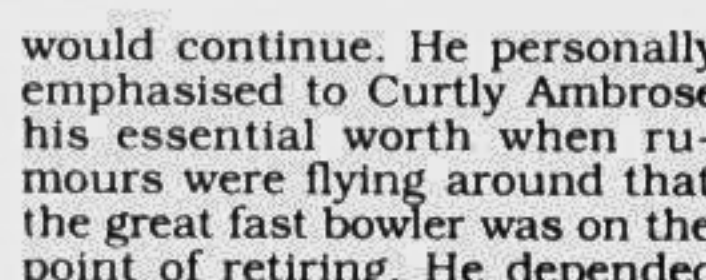
Not everyone was convinced that Lara was yet ready to replace the widely-admired Walsh or would ever be the WICB disciplinary committee were, in the typically expressive phrase of Wes Hall, like an albatross around his neck.

People are looking to you to ensure the West Indies get back on top," he said prior to the series. "The life of West Indies people almost depends on how well we do. It is a burden on every individual, every member of the team to ensure that we do."

On the field, Lara has handled that burden without fault. The old petulance has been replaced by a smiling face and an easy manner. From the moment he sat before the TV cameras at the conference press, he has been co-operative and comfortable with the media and clearly at ease with his players.

Realising, better than many, the utter need to have tried and trusted men around him, he courted Walsh when the disappointed, displaced, captain took a week deciding whether he would continue. He personally emphasised to Courtney Walsh his essential worth when rumours were flying around that the great fast bowler was on the point of retiring.

With seemingly insignificant gestures, he encouraged his newer players, too. When Philo Wallace, recently recalled to the team, was out for his dazzling 92 in the final Test, he returned to a standing ovation from all around the Antigua Recreation Ground.



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And Lara relied on spin more than any recent West Indies skipper has done, a legacy of his upbringing in Trinidad. The upshot was that, between them, Hooper and new leg-spinner Dinanath Ramnarine claimed 24 wickets, and sent down a combined 85 overs in England's second innings in Antigua.

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In Georgetown his delay in calling up Ambrose for the second new ball with England tottering at 84 for seven was as puzzling as the lengthy neglect in Bridgetown of Hooper against Graham Thorpe who hadn't handled him capably in the earlier Tests.

As new captain with a long-term future, Lara would have appreciated the luxury of being able to blood a few more younger players but the object, first and foremost, was to win.

He would have appreciated a few more runs for himself, too. Even with 47 at an average of 52.12, he always seemed capable of more and he has, after all, now gone eight effective Tests without a hundred.

He has made it plain that this was a build-up for the big one and that his sights are set mainly on Australia next year. "By the time they come here, it would mean that, if I keep my place, I would have had ten Tests in charge," he said.

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Schools h'ball Rajarbagh, Shaheed Nabi in final

Rajarbagh Police Lines High School and Shaheed Nabi High School moved into the final of the ninth Bata schools handball tournament for boys defeating their respective opponents in the semifinals at the court adjacent to Dhaka Stadium yesterday.

In the first match, Rajarbagh eliminated BAF Shaheed School marginally by 33 to 31 goals.

After both the halves finished tied on 12-12 and 26-26, the winners scored seven goals in the extra ten minutes allowing their counterparts to score only five.

Nazmul topscored for Rajarbagh with 14 goals while Mahiuddin and Shariful chipped in with eight goals apiece. On the other hand, Saiful and Ishtiaque were the leading scorers for Shaheed with ten and nine goals each.

In the final which will be held after the Eid-ul-Azha, Rajarbagh will take on Shaheed Nabi who won the day's other match against Rajdhan High School 2-13.

The winners led the first half 11-2.

Bobby fancies Latin chances

BUENOS AIRES, Mar 31: The growing number of South Americans playing in Europe will mean Brazil and Argentina have a great chance of overcoming Europe's historic home advantage and winning the 1998 World Cup, Sir Bobby Charlton said on Friday, reports Reuters.

"I think South Americans in Europe for the first time can expect to do better because so many South American players now play in Europe. I think they will feel a lot more comfortable maybe than they have done in the past," England's 1966 World Cup-winning captain told a news conference at the British ambassador's residence in Buenos Aires.

"Brazil may well be the favourites before the start of the competition. I think simply because they play so often together," Charlton said.

Charlton was in Argentina as part of a delegation to campaign for support for England to stage the 2006 World Cup finals. English officials said they had received Argentine and South American backing for their bid.

Charlton, a household name in Argentina, embraced a former rival, Argentina's 1966 captain Antonio Rattin, and had encouraging words for his hosts.

Only once has a South American side won a World Cup played in Europe, when Brazil triumphed in the 1958 finals in Sweden. No European side has ever won in the Americas.



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Triangular tourney starts Friday SA call up two new caps



PRETORIA, South Africa, Mar 31: South Africa have included two new caps in a 15-man squad for a triangular limited-over series against Pakistan and Sri Lanka starting in Durban Friday, reports AFP.

The newcomers are pace bowlers Steve Elworthy, 33, and Roger Telemachus, 25.

The squad includes all-rounder Shaun Pollock, who is unlikely to play in the early matches of the series because of a groin strain, and fast bowler Allan Donald, who is likely to be used sparingly. South Africa will face Pakistan in the opener.

The SA squad also includes six other players who did not play in the Tests against Sri Lanka and Jonty Rhodes, Herschelle Gibbs and Mike Rindel, Derek Crookes and Lance Klusener, and off-spinner Pat Symcox.

Left out of the side that won the second Test against Sri Lanka Monday were Gerhardus Liebenberg, H D Ackerman, Paul Adams and the first African to play for the national squad, Makhaya Ntini.

It was announced that Ntini was not considered because of a side strain.

Meanwhile, touring Sri Lankan captain Arjuna Ranatunga, after the series loss, said that his team played well despite losing both Tests.

Speaking after South Africa had won the second Test at Centurion Park by six wickets, Ranatunga said, "Overall it was a good tour for us. We played pretty well."

He said the second Test had been lost when Sri Lanka collapsed to 42 for six in their second innings on Sunday after holding a 103-run first innings lead.

He defended his decision to keep bowling off-spinner Muthiah Muralitharan in the face of an onslaught by South African captain Hansie Cronje, who hit 82 off 62 balls.

"Murali was the only bowler who could get wickets," said Ranatunga. "I don't want to take anything away from Hansie, but when you play like he did you need a little luck. He could have got out at any time."

Ranatunga acknowledged that Cronje's innings had swung the match South Africa's way after the home team had been struggling at 99 for three.

"We thought Murali could win it for us. We needed only one more wicket at that stage. Jacques Kallis did not look confident against Murali and after that it was the tail."

Cronje said he had gone to the crease determined to be positive. "I have seen too often how teams get into trouble when they are chasing low targets," he said.

"Daryll Cullinan set the tone when he took Muralitharan on in the first Test at Newlands. You have to be positive against a bowler like him because he always has a chance of getting you out and you must play shots while you can."

Cronje added: "I got a bit of a fright when I looked at the scoreboard and saw I had made my 50 off 31 balls. It was certainly enjoyable."

SQUAD: Hansie Cronje (capt), Gary Kirsten, Daryll Cullinan, Jacques Kallis, Jonty Rhodes, Mike Rindel, Herschelle Gibbs, Shaun Pollock, Mark Boucher, Lance Klusener, Pat Symcox, Allan Donald, Derek Crookes, Roger Telemachus and Steve Elworthy.

SIX NO TRUMPS

A K Sayeedul Huq
Dummy Reversal (Hand # 5)
North (D)
West
East
South
Bidding (Neither Side Vulnerable)
The Play
Last opens a Diamond. Dummy's 9 was the trick. A small Spade is played from Dummy. West plays low while North ruffs high dropping East's Queen. Dummy is entered with 10 of Diamond to play another small Spade, which was again ruffed high dropping the Ace from East. Dummy is entered again with J of Diamond. South played the J of Spade which was covered by North. The Club Ace provided the entry to Dummy to cash three good Spades. Ultimately, the declarer surrendered a Heart and a Club and made the doubled contract.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer
ACROSS: 43 Pinnacle, 44 Siskel or Ebort, 47 Comedy components?, 51 Gigantic lock, 52 Button-down 'What?' sweater, 54 Nisan, 55 Work with do-over, 56 Humourist, 57 Kegler's targets, 58 'Awesome!' e.g., 59 'Edward' in Scissor-hands' star, 60 Actor Wallace, 61 Information, 62 Take place, 63 Got, 64 Inquisitive, 65 Designer, 66 Germbeck, 67 Storybook beast, 68 Freeway access, 69 Break, 70 Suddenly, 71 Middle center

CRYPTOQUIP
EZY OJCUQEWU HFWTY. EZCRBYC BJO JUULOYI RT SJHWFV OUIJO RT ULEWVFV CYSJCHO
Yesterday's Cryptoquip: GRADUALLY, THIS ONE TARDY LANGUAGE STUDENT HAS TO START RUSIAN.
Today's Cryptoquip clue: U equals C
The Cryptoquip is a substitution cipher in which one letter stands for another. If you think that X equals O, it will equal O throughout the puzzle. Single letters, short words and words using an apostrophe give you clues to locating vowels. Solution is by trial and error.

Hussain leads case for his own defence
Michael Atherton, who has captained England a record 52 times in Test, stepped down from the hot seat soon after his side lost to Brian Lara's West Indies in the sixth and final Test in Antigua on March 25. After the 3-1 series loss, Atherton, who had been widely criticised for his unimaginative captaincy and poor form with the bat, said, "It's a job I held dear but knew I had to give up..."

Div I b'ball to begin in May
The Metropolitan First Division basketball league will begin in the first week of May at the Dhanmondi gymnasium, reports UNB.
Participating teams have been asked to send their entry and affiliation fee of Tk 200 by April 16.

The Daily Star World Cup Quiz '98
Win These Breathtaking Prizes !!! from PHILIPS
Consolation Prizes: Caps & T-Shirts
2 Dozen Philips Bulbs
Official Licensee of Philips Electronics N.V. for lighting products, radio and TV sets.
Competition Information, Prizes and Rules
Information
A. The Daily Star World Cup Quiz '98 is a series of competitions on World Cup Soccer being held in France from June 10 to July 12, 1998.
B. There will be nine rounds of competition.
C. Each round will have a separate draw with attractive prizes from the house of Transcom Electronics Ltd. as per announcement.
D. Participants of all the nine rounds will automatically qualify for the Bumper Draw, which will have even bigger prizes.
E. For each round, sets of questions will be published in The Daily Star Sport Pages.
F. Names and addresses of all prize winners will be published in The Daily Star.
G. Winners will have to collect their prizes from The Daily Star office after satisfactory authentication of their identity.
H. Any taxes or levies, as per law, for all the above prizes will have to be borne by the prize winners.