

## Sport

## Wright getting the reins?

NEW DELHI, Nov 1: Former New Zealand Test opener John Wright is likely to be named the first ever foreign coach of the Indian team, a cricket board source said here on Wednesday, reports AFP.

The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) appears to have settled for Wright ahead of former Australian Test stars Greg Chappell and Geoff Marsh, who were also interviewed.

BCCI president AC Muthiah is expected to confirm Wright's appointment on Thursday.

The New Zealander, coach of Indian Test star Rahul Dravid's English county side Kent, was preferred by the senior players, the source said.

"We want to pick the man who the players are comfortable with, and they have indicated they wanted Wright," he said.

The BCCI hunted for a foreign coach when former Indian great Kapil Dev quit midway through his two-year term after being investigated in the match-fixing scandal.

Kapil, Test cricket's leading wicket-taker till West Indian Courtney Walsh overtook him in March, said he had lost interest in the game after being embroiled in the controversy.

## National Cricket League from Nov 17

Sports Reporter

The second National Cricket League will start across the country from November 17. Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) member Alam Chowdhury revealed this yesterday.

There will be some changes to the format of the home and away meet this season. After playing a three-day match, teams will then engage in a limited-overs match on the following day.

Besides, the number of participants will also be increased from six to eight. In addition to the six divisions — Dhaka, Chittagong, Rajshahi, Khulna, Sylhet and Barisal who took part in the inaugural competition — national airliners Biman and Dhaka Metropolitan cricket team will make their debut in the league this season.

BCCB has selected eleven venues across the country to hold the matches. Those are: Dhaka, Mymensingh, Faridpur, Barisal, Jessore, Khulna, Rangpur, Rajshahi, Sylhet, Comilla and Noakhali.

## Qadir keen to tutor English spinners

KARACHI, Nov 1 (Internet report): Abdul Qadir, the great Pakistani leg-spinner of the 1980's, has hinted strongly that he would be prepared to assist in getting a more intense culture of spin into English cricket.

The Times of London reports that Qadir feels England should create a full-time academy for young spinners. And he is willing to consider running it.

He says: "I go to England every year and see you develop great cricketers, so why not spinners? I can guarantee that I would produce spinners if the package is right."

Till the possible "package" gets sorted out, he's on the opposition's side. He is in charge of the Patron's XI playing against England from today.

## Purabi b'ball

Josephine Club defeated Purabi Insurance First Division basketball league at the Dharmodhi Basketball gymnasium yesterday, reports UPA.

The winners dominated the first half 39-15.

Mujib caged 23 and Boni 20 for the winners while Fio 14 and Richard 13 for the losers.

In the other match, Dharmodhi Club crushed Hornets Sporting Club 98-55 after leading the first half 46-27.

Pinto made 28, Masud 24 and Shamir 18 for the winners while Banifas caged 24 and Adnan 14 for the losers.

## Lara

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"MK" (Gupta) discloses that he paid 5,000 pounds to Alec Stewart in exchange for information about pitch, weather, team composition etc whenever England played," the CBI report said.

"MK has further stated that Stewart, however, refused to fix any matches for him."

The report added that Prabhakar had confirmed that he had introduced Stewart to Gupta.

## Coca-Cola

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great enthusiasm for the participation of cricket, he was equally reluctant to back football in Bangladesh.

"Well, we have not thought about sponsoring Bangladesh football team," said Chatterjee while responding to a question whether Coca-Cola has any plan to promote Bangladesh football.

The general secretary of BCB Sved Ashraf Hug, external affairs manager of Coca-Cola Leeuwfield and business operation manager Khalid Raja, also attended the press briefing.



An AFP file photo of former Sri Lanka captain Arjuna Ranatunga (R) and his deputy Aravinda de Silva.

## Pleaded not guilty



UNDATED, Nov 1

(AFP/Internet): Sri Lanka's World Cup-winning skipper Arjuna Ranatunga denied Wednesday accepting bribes and rejected allegations contained in an Indian investigation report into match-fixing.

Ranatunga, 36, who retired from international cricket in August, said he had never had any dealings with bookmakers nor was he ever offered money to throw matches.

"Had any offer of a bribe been made to me at any time I would have promptly reported the matter to the appropriate authorities," Ranatunga said in a one-paragraph statement.

He was reacting to allegations in neighbouring India that he and his deputy, Aravinda de Silva, accepted bribes to fix matches.

"The references to me in the Indian newspaper articles are entirely false," he said. There was no immediate reaction from De Silva, who is still playing Test cricket for Sri Lanka.

Sri Lanka's cricket authorities also expressed dismay over these allegations.

A bookmaker, Mukesh Gupta, had claimed in a testimony published in an Indian Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) report that Sri Lanka's Ranatunga and De Silva helped him fix an Indian victory in the Lucknow Test in 1994.

"Both players are now seeking legal advice on a statement they will be issuing later today," a Board of Control for Cricket in Sri Lanka (BCCSL) official said. "The allegations coming from a questionable character lacks credibility."

## MARTIN CROWE

Former New Zealand cricket captain Martin Crowe admitted today taking money from an Indian bookmaker but strongly denied any involvement in match-fixing.

"I'm obviously surprised about this — in what way has my name been brought up?" Jones told ABC radio.

"In 1992 there was the well-documented situation where I was approached by a bookmaker and by an Indian player — most of the Australian players know who that guy was — so whether they used me to throw a bit of dirt around, I don't know."

"All my books are open, anyone can go through my place."

"There is one player throwing a lot of dirt over there trying to protect his backside at the moment."

## That 'John' is this MK



NEW DELHI, Nov 1: The mysterious Indian bookmaker "John," who paid Australian Test stars Mark Waugh and Shane Warne for providing information, is the same man who bribed former South African captain Hansie Cronje, an Indian federal probe claimed on Wednesday, reports AFP.

He told the New Zealand Press Association he had taken money from a bookmaker but said he had been tricked into believing the man was a joun-

alist.

"John" is also the name of the神秘的印度书呆子"John," who paid Australian Test stars Mark Waugh and Shane Warne for providing information, is the same man who bribed former South African captain Hansie Cronje, an Indian federal probe claimed on Wednesday, reports AFP.

The Central Bureau of Investigation's report, which was made public later in the day, claims bookmaker Mukesh Gupta had admitted to posing as "John" when he approached Waugh and Warne in Sri Lanka in 1994.

The CBI said Gupta, a Delhi-based jeweller, had told their investigators that he had paid 20,000 dollars to Waugh for weather, team and pitch information. But the report does not say how much Warne was paid.

Cronje told the South African commission earlier this year that Gupta had been introduced to him by former Indian captain Mohammad Azharuddin during their series in India in 1996.

The CBI report says Gupta admitted paying 40,000 dollars to Cronje on the third day of the Kauai Test to ensure a "South African loss and as an investment for future."

The report, a copy of which was seen by AFP on Wednesday, is largely made up of testimony from Indian bookmakers, as well as players and does not amount to the levelling of formal charges against any of those named.

Gupta claimed that Sri Lankan veterans Arjuna Ranatunga and Aravinda de Silva helped him fix an Indian victory in the Lucknow Test in 1994, for which De Silva was paid 15,000 dollars.

Gupta also says he paid former West Indian captain Brian Lara 40,000 dollars to under-perform in two one-dayers during the tour of India in 1995.

Ex-Test captains Martin

Crowe of New Zealand and Alec Stewart of England were also named by Gupta as having taken 20,000 dollars and 5,000 pounds respectively for pitch, weather and team information.

However, Gupta reportedly refused his offers to fix matches.

He also said Australia's Dean Jones turned down an offer of 40,000 dollars to provide information to players and fix matches.

The report says that Prabhakar, who first blew the whistle on the scandal back in 1997, was very close to bookmakers and punters both during his playing days and after retirement.

There was also evidence, the report says, of Prabhakar under-performing, passing on information and introducing foreign players to Gupta and other bookmakers.

The CBI said it had found no concrete evidence against former captain and coach Kapil Dev, who was accused by Prabhakar of offering him 25,000 dollars to play badly during a one-day match against Pakistan in Sri Lanka in 1997.

"Prabhakar, in his statement, has accepted receiving money from MK (Gupta) to fix some matches, but has stated he did only two matches for them — Titon Cup match in 1996 and some match in the Asia Cup in Sri Lanka in 1997," the report says.

"This admission of Azhar

that he 'did' only two matches for MK during this period appears a dilution of the actual

facts in the context of the amount of money he had received from MK," the report says.

Jadeja, the report says, provided "assessment of matches" and passed on information to another Indian bookmaker Utam Chand. Gupta claimed Jadeja had "offered his services" for fixing matches and received money from him.

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Alhaj Khabir Ahmed, president of Narayanganj Club, inaugurating the H N Fabrics Snooker Competition at the club's snooker room on October 30.

## BD men win, women lose

Sports Reporter

Bangladesh men's team recorded a comprehensive 3-1 win over Pakistan in the fourth round of the 34th Chess Olympiad in Istanbul yesterday, according to an e-mail received here last night.

In the first board, International Master (IM) Reetab-bin-Sattar beat IM Mahmood Lodhi. IM Ziaur Rahman beat T Gillani in the second while Saifuddin Lovli won the other board against Mohammad Waqar.

IM Abdullah Al-Rakib was the lone loser going down to Pakistan's K Amir.

On completion of the round, the men's team raised their tally to 9.5 points.

Germany are leading the table with 13.5 points followed by Israel who have 12.5.

In the other fourth round matches, Germany beat Hungary 3-1 while Israel recorded an identical win over Cuba.

In the women's group, Bangladesh were beaten 1-2 by Scotland.

IM Rani Hamid and Zakia Sultan lost their boards while Nazrana Khan Iva managed the lone victory for Bangladesh women's team who have earned only 5 points so far out of possible 12 points.

Georgia are leading the women's table with 10 points.

## Delta Life girls' h'ball on

The sixth Delta Life handball championship for girls of different colleges and universities began at the Sultan Kamal Women's Sports Complex at Dhamondi yesterday, reports BSS.

Meanwhile, Alec's father said reports the England batsman/man/wicketkeeper took money from a bookmaker was "in total contrast to the person that he is."

"It's been a very unpleasant thing for my wife and the family to hear and read, and it's all speculation," said Stewart's father, Micky. "As far as Alec is concerned naturally he's got the full support of the family."

## AJAY JADEJA

Indian Test star Ajay Jadeja, playing a first-class match in the northern Indian city of Jamshedpur, denied Gupta's allegations that he had "offered his services" for fixing matches and received money from the bookmaker.

Jadeja's father said he was approached by a bookmaker and by an Indian player — most of the Australian players know who that guy was — so whether they used me to throw a bit of dirt around, I don't know."

"All my books are open, anyone can go through my place."

"There is one player throwing a lot of dirt over there trying to protect his backside at the moment."

Trailing his former pupil by two games as he entered the 14th game of the 16-match championships, Kasparov needed a draw at the very least to stay in the series and strive to keep the title he has held for 15 years.

He must now win both of the remaining games if he is to hold the 25-year-old Russian pretender to a draw, and win by default. Under the rules, the defending champion wins in the event of a tie.

In all 16 halls and colleges, split into four groups, are taking part in the tournament.

On the opening day, Mirpur Girls' Ideal Laboratory Institute and Bangladesh Rifles College won their respective matches.

Mirpur Girls beat Fazlul Huq Women's College 13-0. Farzu and Mithun scored four goals each while Jessy netted three goals.

Bangladesh Rifles College defeated Central Women's College 8-2. Parveen netted five goals.

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