

Rudolph full of regret

Cricket

INTERNET, Sydney

South African batsman Jacques Rudolph said he was disappointed at being deselected for the third Test against Australia.

The 20-year-old was originally picked to play in Sydney, but was replaced by Justin Ontong at the insistence of the United Cricket Board (UCB) of South Africa president Percy Sonn.

Sonn said at the time that the selection of Rudolph "amounts to exclusion of a person of colour who has the right to be given the opportunity."

The U-turn sparked an angry response from chairman of selectors Graeme Pollock.

"I am obviously disappointed at not having been given the opportunity to represent my country in the third and final Test Match in Sydney," said Rudolph.

"I do, however, not wish to involve myself in any political or selection policy debate, and quite simply just wish to continue playing the game I love.

"I do believe, however, that should I be able to perform consistently on the field of play, my chance to represent my country at the highest level will surely come."

It was the second time that Rudolph had been denied a chance to win his first cap for South Africa.

Politics had again intervened when he made his debut at Centurion Park in November.

The International Cricket Council

(ICC) refused to recognise the "Test" after match referee Mike Denness had been barred by the UCB from officiating.

Rudolph burst into form at the start of the season, making five first-class centuries for his club side Northerns.

The club said in a statement that they still expect Rudolph to make the breakthrough in the Test side in the future.

"The Northerns Cricket Union hereby wishes to confirm that Jacques Rudolph enjoys our full support."

"We are confident that, although he has had this set-back early in his career, he is strong and talented enough to bounce straight back into action."

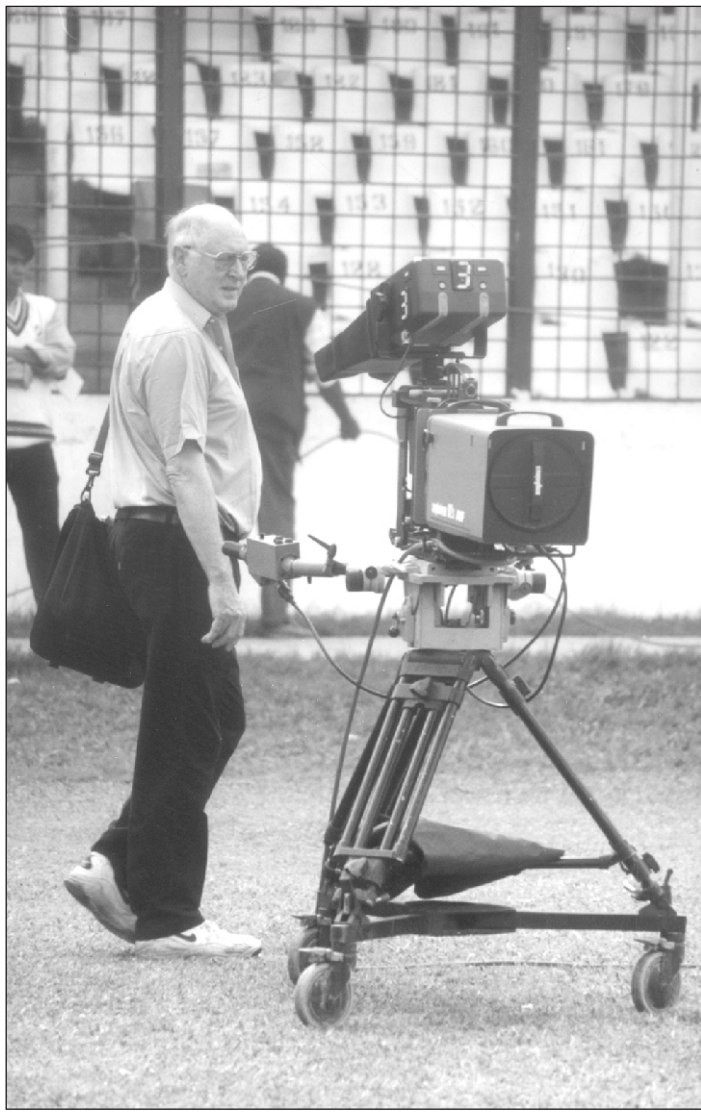
Ontong however said, "I was shocked. I thought Jacques (Rudolph) would play in the third Test. In fact, Jacques had to calm me down after I heard I was included in the team."

In mid-sentence he put his arm around the shoulders of his disappointed roommate and good friend, Rudolph.

"I very nearly cried when Polly (Shaun Pollock) handed my cap to me," Ontong proudly said.

Ontong was relaxing next to the Sydney Cricket Ground dressing room where he made his debut for South Africa. He defended his wicket for 48 minutes and faced 44 balls for his nine runs.

The two jovial friends have thus far handled Ontong's elation and Rudolph's disappointment with a remarkable maturity for such young players.



WorldTel has installed cameras at the Bangabandhu National Stadium to help Bangladesh Television operate smoothly while covering the series between Bangladesh and Pakistan.

PHOTO: STAR

ICC, India again on collision path

AFP, New Delhi

Cricket's world governing body was on Tuesday battling another crisis after India rejected the composition of a commission to probe the Mike Denness affair.

The commission was to have been set up last month to determine whether match referee Denness was justified in penalising six Indian players, including superstar Sachin Tendulkar, for misconduct during the Port Elizabeth Test against South Africa in November.

The International Cricket Council (ICC) put forward the names of two former players, Majid Khan (Pakistan) and Andrew Hilditch (Australia), as members of the commission.

India's cricket chief, Jagmohan Dalmiya, last week rejected these names, and proposed two former Australian captains, Richie Benaud and Ian Chappell, instead.

"It's a problem because neither side is backing off," a cricket source told AFP.

Dalmiya confirmed a consensus had not been reached, but refused to say if a compromise was in the offing.

Setting up the commission was part of the deal between the ICC and Dalmiya to diffuse the crisis over Denness' decisions which threatened England's recent tour of India.

Both India and South Africa took the unprecedented step to dump Denness for the final Test, forcing the ICC to declare the match unofficial.

India refused to drop batsman Virender Sehwag, who was handed a one-match suspension by Denness, for the first Test against England, but changed its stance after the ICC promised to set up the commission.

There was no immediate reaction from the ICC over the rejection of its nominees by India.

Liza lifts Open chess title

BSS, Dhaka

Shamima Akhter Liza of Narayanganj clinched the Open chess tournament title for women organised by the Bangladesh Women Sports Federation securing five points yesterday.

There was no immediate reaction from the ICC over the rejection of its nominees by India.

Hasan Imam Ali Imam Trust sponsored the three-day tournament held at the Sultana Kamal Mohila Krira Complex.

State Minister for Youth and Sports Fazlur Rahman was present as the chief guest at the closing ceremony of the meet and distributed prizes.

Bond bad news for Black Caps

REUTERS, Brisbane

New Zealand's preparations for the triangular limited-overs series in Australia has started badly after fast bowler Shane Bond was taken to hospital suffering from dehydration.

Bond was rushed from the field during the warm-up match against Australia A.

"He's just having some treatment at the hospital," New Zealand team manager Jeff Crowe told this news agency on Tuesday.

"He's fine, he'll be returning to the ground. He's unlikely to play again today, although he may have to bat."

"The doctor said he should be fine for Friday. The heat won't be quite as bad in Melbourne. We'll see."

The limited overs series that includes Australia and South Africa starts on Friday when Australia host New Zealand at Melbourne Cricket Ground.

Crowe said Bond had gradually shown signs of distress and accepted advice to seek medical assistance after bowling four overs in Tuesday's day-night match at the Gabba in Brisbane against Australia A.

"He just slowly got worse and came off," Crowe said.

Besides, the Bangladesh Sports Journalists Association (BSJA) will reward its man-of-the-matches for the two Tests and three ODIs.

Pakistan probe ends Jan 31

Cricket

REUTERS/INTERNET, Karachi

A Pakistani commission investigating allegations of match-fixing at the 1999 World Cup said it would soon release its findings.

The commission, headed by the Lahore High Court's Justice Karamat Bhandari, has taken a one-month extension to complete its inquiry into allegations that Pakistan fixed World Cup matches against Bangladesh and India.

Pakistan lost both games before progressing to the final where they lost to Australia.

Former South African cricket head Ali Bacher, who raised suspicions of foul play in the two matches, has been asked by the commission to present evidence.

However, reports suggest Bacher may not be giving evidence.

"We are going to wind up our inquiry and prepare our report by January 31, even if Dr Bacher cooperates with or declines our request for a statement," Kazim Ali Malik, registrar of the commission told Reuters from Lahore on Tuesday.

Malik said the commission would write to Bacher one more time to ask for a statement.

"The Justice will prepare his report on the basis of witnesses examined so far by the commission. We will not be calling any more witnesses to record their statements," Malik said.

"But we are keen that Dr Bacher give us a statement or share any more information he might have on the two matches with us."

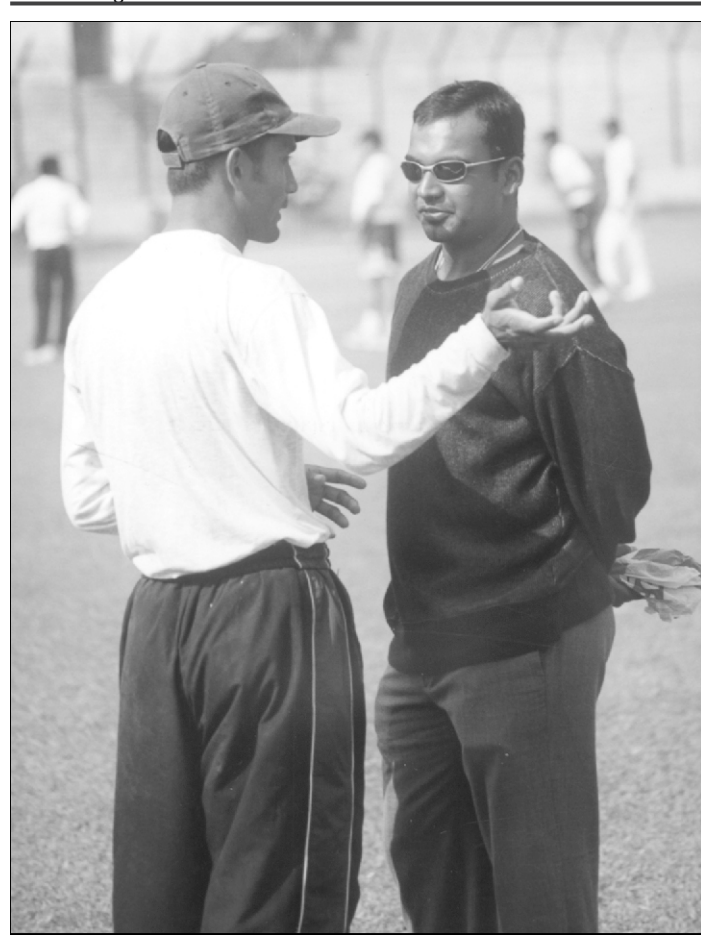
Bacher, now executive director for the 2003 World Cup, said in mid-2000 he had been told Pakistan played "fixed" World Cup matches against Bangladesh and India.

The commission began its inquiry on September 23 and has questioned a number of present and former Pakistani internationals.

Pakistan Cricket Board officials, a bookmaker and journalists.

Current Pakistan captain Waqar Younis and Wasim Akram, who captained the team at the World Cup, together with World Cup players Inzamamul Haq, Saeed Anwar, Moin Khan and Mushtaq Ahmed have all denied the match fixing allegations.

No Pakistan player has admitted match-fixing.



TALKING OF FUTURE? Naimur Rahman (R) and Khaled Mashud, former and present national captains respectively, have a discussion during Bangladesh's practice session at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

Muralitharan speaks highly of Lankans

Cricket

INTERNET, Kandy

Muttiah Muralitharan believes Sri Lanka can challenge Australia's world dominance if they can emulate their home performances overseas.

Sri Lanka won their seventh

straight match at home by beating Zimbabwe in the second Test at Kandy on Monday.

But Muralitharan said Sri Lanka must now concentrate on improving away from home.

"We have won seven Tests in a row. I think we are the best along with Australia in home conditions, but we have to prove ourselves abroad."

"If we win overseas, then we are not second to Australia," said the star spinner.

Sri Lankan captain Sanath Jayasuriya praised young fast bowler Charitha Buddhika, who took four of Zimbabwe's second innings wickets in only his first Test.

The 21-year-old ended with figures of 4-27 as Zimbabwe collapsed to 175 all out to hand Sri Lanka the match.

"Buddhika bowled well throughout the second innings with Muralitharan," said Jayasuriya.

"He can reverse swing the old ball and this is what he did today. We have now found a good all-rounder."

"We have a few tough series coming up this year against England and South Africa and it is a big responsibility on all of us to perform well outside the country."

Zimbabwe captain Stuart Carlisle said his team failed to come to terms with the Sri Lankan pitches.

And he said his players gave Sri Lanka too much respect during the series.

"It was very disappointing. There were a couple of careless shots, but I think we were a bit too tentative and sometimes negative," he said.

"It is not easy to place Sri Lanka, because their seven wins have been at home, where they are extremely hard to beat as they prepare pitches to suit Muralitharan."

The third and final Test starts at Galle on 12 January.

Hit Channel-i

FROM PAGE 13 worth 300 dollars for the lucky batsman.

Besides, the Bangladesh Sports Journalists Association (BSJA) will reward its man-of-the-matches for the two Tests and three ODIs.

BFF seeks

FROM PAGE 13 the January 8 deadline expired. They have asked AFC to give them until February 8 so that they can hold the SAFF Championship and the election within that time.

Shaun sees SA

FROM PAGE 13 team was well prepared physically they were not ready for the mental pressure, from the media especially.

"We thought that one or two individual performances would be enough to make the difference as it did in previous series. However, what we needed was to form a united front and perform as a team," Kirsten said.

"What disappointed me was our inability to be competitive. The old South African courage and fighting spirit was lacking. We only competed well in the follow-on innings of the last Test," Kirsten said.

Nevertheless Kirsten believes that South Africa would compete well in the upcoming one-day international series, especially with Jonty Rhodes in the team.

"He will make a big difference to the team," Kirsten said hopefully.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

1 Bread
5 Tears
9 Boar's mate
12 Melville book
13 Rue the run
14 Seesaw quorum
15 "West Side Story" composer
17 "A mouse!"
18 Stops
19 Reuben ingredient
21 Alimony recipient
22 Spick and span
24 Tackled the weeds
27 Jacket eponym
28 Ugly duckling
31 Single (Prof.)
32 In earlier times
33 Altar constellation
34 Crooked
36 Buddhist sect

DOWN

1 "The Georgia Peach"
2 U.S.
3 Marsh bird
4 Hit the horn
5 "Darn it!"
6 Lemieux millieu
7 - Beta Kappa
8 Logic
9 Baldwin competitor
10 Hasn't paid
11 Stir-fry equipment
16 Driver's license
20 Elated
22 "Know Why the Bird Sings"
23 Symbol of craziness
24 Gist
25 Inseparable
26 Smart guy?
27 Lab rats
29 Illustrations
30 "Unh-unh"
35 Fix the road
37 Fail to enunciate
39 Hornets' kin
40 Erstwhile boy
41 "Zounds!"
42 Lawless character
43 Sediment
44 Borscht base
45 Dermatologist's case
46 Vail gear
49 Youngster
50 Guido's high note

Solution time: 25 mins.

LEINT MHO AMEN
AVIOW EAIR BITTE
MILLITANT ALIAN
ALLIGS HADIE
ALTEMU OLDE
TOM PRO POWER
AVISI ESP NEVA
RIALPH URIN DIEM
LUAUD EIE
CRITINGE SICA THE
HUNG MILKWAYAY
ABELL ODE LACE
PYRE NAY ASKIS

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	
12					13				14		
15				16					17		
18							19	20			
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24	25	26				27		28	29	30	
31						32			33		
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41	42					43			44	45	46
47						48	49	50			
51						52			53		
64						55			56		

CRYPTOQUIP

ME N QW FXXB QVKILSV ZXV
ALJT KSNV M QENW V XJT
ZJNILQ, HXKBI VFLT CL
CLBXH W BLALB?

Yesterday's Cryptquip: WHEN YOU'RE WAKENED QUICKLY WITH QUITE A START, IT MAY BE BECAUSE YOU ARE ALARMED.

Today's Cryptquip Clue: W equals C

The Cryptquip 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.



Vice-president of Kurmitola Golf Club Maj Gen Jiban Kanai Das addressing a press conference in connection with the Partex 17th Bangladesh Amateur Golf Championship yesterday. Also in the picture are KGC captain Manzoor Ahmed (L), chairman of the tournament committee Air Commodore Fakhru Azam (2nd from R) and vice-chairman of Partex Group AA Kaiser Tito (R).

PHOTO: STAR

17th BAGC ready to roll

2 former champs in the fray

Golf

SPORTS REPORTER

Mohammad Siddiq puts his title on the line when the Partex 17th Bangladesh Amateur Golf Championship (BAGC) begins at the Kurmitola Golf Club course today.

The four-day event features a host of local golfers and amateur players from South Asia as well as South Korea, United Kingdom, Brunei and Japan.

The strong field also sees the return of two former winners Anura Rohana of Sri Lanka who won here two years ago and Bhutan's Karma Rangdol, a champion in the second edition way back in 1983.

The tournament will be chief-off by the KGC president and Tied-off by Army Staff Lt Gen M Harun-Ar-

Rashid at 7.15 in the morning.

Finance Minister Saifur Rahman is expected to distribute trophies on Saturday.

Until last year the prestigious amateur event in the country was organised by the KGC, but now Partex Group is taking up the challenge. The leading business house has agreed to promote it for the next five years.

They will be spending Taka fifty lakh during the period.

A press briefing was held at the Club House of the KGC yesterday. It was addressed by, vice-president of the club Maj Gen Jiban Kanai Das, chairman of the tournament committee Air Commodore Fakhru Azam and vice-chairman of Partex Group A Kaiser Tito. Club captain Manzoor Ahmed was also present.

Jiban Kanai Das said that local players - Siddiqur Rahman Chand Mia, Shawat-uz-Zaman and Siddiq

Quddus would be considered the favourites.

The vice-chairman of the sponsors thanked the media for their extensive coverage of the last edition and hoped it would be even better this time.

Among the participants Nepal, Bhutan and South Korea have sent five-member teams. Besides, the Royal Calcutta Golf Club, one of the world's oldest clubs, is taking part with four players.

The BAGC is a stroke-play open event. The men's tournament is played over four rounds while the ladies feature in two rounds. Though the main championship is on the basis of gross score, a full handicap 72-hole stroke play competition for men and a 36-hole stroke play competition for ladies, will be held concurrently. The maximum allowable handicap for men shall be 18 and 27 for ladies.

Serena sends Anna packing

Tennis

AFP, Sydney

Serena Williams was taken to three sets by Anna Kournikova as she stepped up her Australian Open preparations at the Sydney International tournament Tuesday.

The world No. 6 took two hours to put away the 66th-ranked Russian 6-2, 4-6, 6-3 to set up a quarterfinal with Amelie Mauresmo of France.

Kournikova, still searching for her first singles title in over five years on the WTA Tour, returned to the circuit in October after suffering a stress fracture in her left foot in late February.

It was 20-year-old Williams' first match of the season and it looked to be going along sweetly when she wrapped up the opening set in 29 minutes, only for Kournikova to hit back breaking the American's serve twice in the second set.

But the 1999 US Open champion proved the stronger in the deciding set, breaking Kournikova's serve and holding off four breaks against her.

"I'm not at all happy with how I played," said Williams. "My returns, serves, first and second, I don't know how many double-faults I hit today (five), errors... it's really no excuse."

"I have been practising well, when I practise I'm a totally different person."

Williams rated Kournikova's form highly ahead of next week's Australian Open.

"She did a lot of good things, she's ranked 60-something in the world, she shouldn't be ranked that because she's a better player than that, for sure."

Williams dismissed claims that she looked tired during her first match in Australia, saying: "No, I wasn't tired at all... I don't get tired, I'm too young, maybe when I'm 40 I'll be tired."

Kournikova's kicked off the year in Auckland, New Zealand, last week where she strung together four matches only to bow out to Israel's 69th-ranked Anna Smashnova in the semi-finals.

Her ranking has dropped to 66, but she has been granted a wild card into the Australian Open.

Former world No.1 Martina Hingis kicked off her new season with a spanking 6-1, 6-1 win over

American Lisa Raymond in 46 minutes.

Hingis, who has not won a grand slam tournament since the 1999 Australian Open, is back on the circuit after missing eight weeks with torn ankle ligaments last October.

She will play either Sandrine Testud of France or Henrieta Nagyova of the Slovak Republic in the quarter-finals.

Testud put away Tina Pisnik of Slovenia, 6-0, 6-2, while Nagyova ousted Spanish campaigner Arantxa Sanchez-Vicario, 6-1, 2-6, 6-3.

Elsewhere, Wimbledon finalist Justine Henin of Belgium was too strong for Austrian Barbara Schett, 7-6, 6-3, while sixth-seeded Mauresmo eliminated South African Amanda Coetzer 6-3, 5-7, 6-3.



Reaz Ahmed performs Kata during the belt-awarding ceremony of the Martials Garden at Mirpur recently.

PHOTO: STAR