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Did U Know?

Abdul Hafeez played for India before Pakistan appeared on the Test scene. But as Pakistan gained Test status, he led his side in 23 Tests under the name of A.H. Kardar.



Ian Smith
(Former New Zealand wicket-keeper)

"To be heaped with praise over the years and having been named in the best teams in the world then be called a chucker is an absolute insult."



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Australia vs New Zealand
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Football Crazy
Live at 5:00 pm
Sportscentre
Live at 8:00 pm
- STAR Sports**
Tennis Masters Cup
Live at 7:00 am & 1:00 am (Friday)
Sportsline
Live at 8:00 pm
- TEN Sports**
2006 WC Football Qualifier
Brazil vs Ecuador
Repeat at 8:00 pm

Moin, Latif axed

AFP, Karachi

Pakistan selectors Tuesday dropped experienced wicketkeepers Moin Khan and Rashid Latif from a list of 25 probabilities announced for the team's tour of Australia starting next month.

"Kamran Akmal will be the only wicketkeeper on the Australian tour because captain Inzamam-ul-Haq is satisfied with his performance," chief selector Wasim Bari told. "Since we are looking to the future we must try Akmal on this tough tour," he said.

The final squad of 16 will be announced on November 24.

Pakistan will play three Tests and also feature in a tri-series one-day tournament, involving hosts Australia and the West Indies.

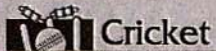
Pakistan will open the tour with a one-day side game on December 7 and then a four-day game from 9-12 December -- both at Perth -- before playing the first Test at Perth from December 16.

The 33-year-old Moin was dropped after a poor run of form with the bat in Pakistan's home series against Sri Lanka last month, making way for the 22-year-old Kamran.

Latif has not played since opting out of the Test series against South Africa for personal reasons last year. Experienced pacer Shabbir Ahmed is listed in the team after fully recovering from a knee operation which forced him out of action for nearly three months.

Opener Yasir Hameed, dropped from last week's one-off limited overs international against India, is also back in the reckoning. **PROBABILITIES:** Inzamam-ul-Haq, Salman Butt, Yasir Hameed, Imran Farhat, Taufiq Umar, Shoaib Malik, Yousuf Youhana, Shahid Afridi, Kamran Akmal, Abdul Razzaq, Younis Khan, Danish Kaneria, Shoaib Akhtar, Mohammad Sami, Shabbir Ahmed, Rana Navedul Hassan, Asim Kamal, Aamir Bashir, Riaz Afridi, Baid Khan, Faisal Iqbal, Ashar Zaidi, Faisal Athar, Misbahul Haq, Mohammad Khalil.

Razzak, Sanwar back



SPORTS REPORTER

Having satisfied skeptics about his bowling action left-arm spinner Abdul Razzak Raj got his place back in the Bangladesh fold but there was a surprise recall for middle-order batsman Sanwar Hossain in the 21-man list of probabilities announced by the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) yesterday for the upcoming home series against India next month.

Left-handed batsman Faisal Hossain and right-arm pacer Alamgir Kabir made way for Razzak and Sanwar.

Right-hander Sanwar last appeared for the Tigers during the tour of Australia last year. Razzak was kept out of the ICC Champions Trophy and the home series against New Zealand to work on his action which was reported during the Asia Cup in Sri Lanka in July.

The preparation camp, with initial emphasis on fitness, begins today at the Bangabandhu National

Stadium without coach Dav Whatmore who is expected to join on November 24 after spending a two-week break in Australia.

India are scheduled to arrive in Dhaka on December 7 to play two Tests and three one-day internationals.

Chief selector Faruque Ahmed said that they wanted to remain true to their policy of not making wholesale changes despite a forgettable home series against New Zealand. He however attributed Sanwar's inclusion to the need for experience in the middle order.

"We had discussed names of potential candidates which included Al-Shariar, Naimur Rahman and Tushar Imran and felt Sanwar was the best choice at the moment," said Faruque.

Sanwar meanwhile, was in a dilemma following the call up. He has become an employee of national flag carrier Bangladesh Biman and was undergoing professional training.

"I will join the camp tomorrow but I am not sure whether it will be possible for me to continue because

I have to get permission from my employer. At the moment my job is as important as my cricket career," said Sanwar.

Regarding Razzak, Faruque said the highly rated spinner had received a clean bill.

"His action has been monitored and corrected under the guidance of BCB's high performance (HP) unit manager Richard McInnes. The Board has told us that there is nothing illegal in Razzak's bowling anymore."

Faruque hinted that there was hardly any possibility of including more players based on the performances in the forthcoming Premier Division Cricket League but did not rule out changes.

"There is always an advantage for the home side as they can give any player a break during a series but performance in one league competition will not be considered a good enough reason to bring in a cricketer," he explained.

Faruque was particularly delighted that speedsters Mashrafe

SEE PAGE 14 COL 1

4 short kabaddi team off to India

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Kabadi Federation (BKF) was forced to send an understrength side for the first ever kabaddi World Cup due to visa complications.

The BKF could send only eight players after the Indian High Commission in Dhaka failed to confirm the visa of other four Bangladesh Army members of the team.

The kabaddi championship will be held in Mumbai from November 19 to 21.

"They are important members of the team and we are hopeful that the Indian High Commission will get the clearance from New Delhi," informed BKF general secretary Munir Hossain yesterday.

Hossain said that those eight players and three officials left Dhaka on Tuesday to take part in the 14-team meet.

Bangladesh will also play five Tests against India after the World Cup.

Karatekas disappear in Ukraine!

SPORTS REPORTER

An otherwise sleepy Bangladesh Karate Federation (BKF) hogged the spotlight on Wednesday following a rumour that a ten-member delegation sent by the federation disappeared in Ukraine.

But the general secretary of BKF Neaz Rahim denied it saying that they did not send any team to the former Soviet State.

"The federation didn't send any team to Ukraine. But I've learnt that an affiliated club of the federation sent a team abroad last week of October. We are trying to find out the details," he said over telephone.

Rahim informed that they sent a team to Germany last September, which has already returned home while another team is now in New Delhi to get the visa for Mexico, which will host the World Karate Championship from November 19-21.

Reefat finishes 10th in Kolkata chess

SPORTS REPORTER

International Master Reefat Bin Sattar finished tenth in the Kolkata International Open chess tournament after sharing point with local Grand Master Bakre in the last round games yesterday.

Reefat collected 7 points from 11 games while Grand Master Niaz Murshed, who lost the last board against his counterpart Romanishin, bagged 6.5 points to take the next slot in the competition.

Indian Grand Master Abhijit Kunte became champion securing 7.5 points while Belarus Grand Master Alesander Aleksey and Chinese Grand Master M Ni Hua also earned 7.5 points but finished second and third respectively in tiebreaker.

Another Bangladeshi Grand Master Ziaur Rahman ended with a frustrating note as he got the 18th place with 6 points and IM Enamul Hossain Rajib also bagged six points but took 16th slot in tiebreaker.

In the last round, Rakib drew with Rajib, Debaraj beat Robin and Zia lost against GM Nguyen.

A total of 48 players from 8 countries including 15 Grand Masters, 9 International Masters and one women Grand Master took part in the meet.

Vaughan and Co in Namibia

BBC ONLINE, London

England's cricketers have landed in Namibia for the preamble to their controversial tour of Zimbabwe.

The squad will play two warm-up matches in the southern African nation, travelling to Zimbabwe just two days before the first one-day international which starts in Harare on November 26.

England play five ODIs in Zimbabwe.

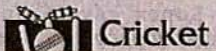
Francois Erasmus, the chairman of Cricket Namibia was excited about the prospect of hosting Michael Vaughan's men.

He said: "This is a big day for Namibian cricket. In fact, it's right at the top of the list other than playing in the 2003 World Cup."

"We've hosted Bangladesh twice, once when they were already a Test nation, but nothing as big as this."

SEE PAGE 14 COL 4

Sourav may play



AFP, REUTERS, London

India captain Sourav Ganguly's appeal against an unprecedented two-Test ban will be heard within the next seven days, the International Cricket Council said on Tuesday.

It announced that New Zealand barrister Tim Castle would hear the appeal.

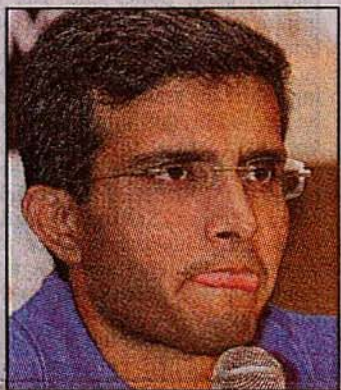
Ganguly was given the ban by ICC match referee Clive Lloyd for his side's slow over rate in last week's one-day against Pakistan in Kolkata.

Lloyd gave an "allowance of 24 minutes" for stoppages owing to on-field injuries and frequent drying of the ball because of the heavy dew on the ground, but ruled that India still fell five overs short.

India begin a two-Test series against South Africa on Saturday in Kanpur and Ganguly will be available to play if his appeal is successful.

Currently, Ganguly will miss both Tests against the Proteas in Kanpur and Kolkata. Vice-captain Rahul

Dravid will lead the hosts against South Africa if BCCI's appeal against Ganguly's suspension is rejected.



SOURAV GANGULY

According to an ICC statement: "Should this appeal not be finalised before the start of the India's first Test against South Africa on November 20, 2004, Ganguly would be able to compete in the match."

The Indian captain was previously punished for slow over-rates when he was fined half his match fee following a one-day international in Australia in January.

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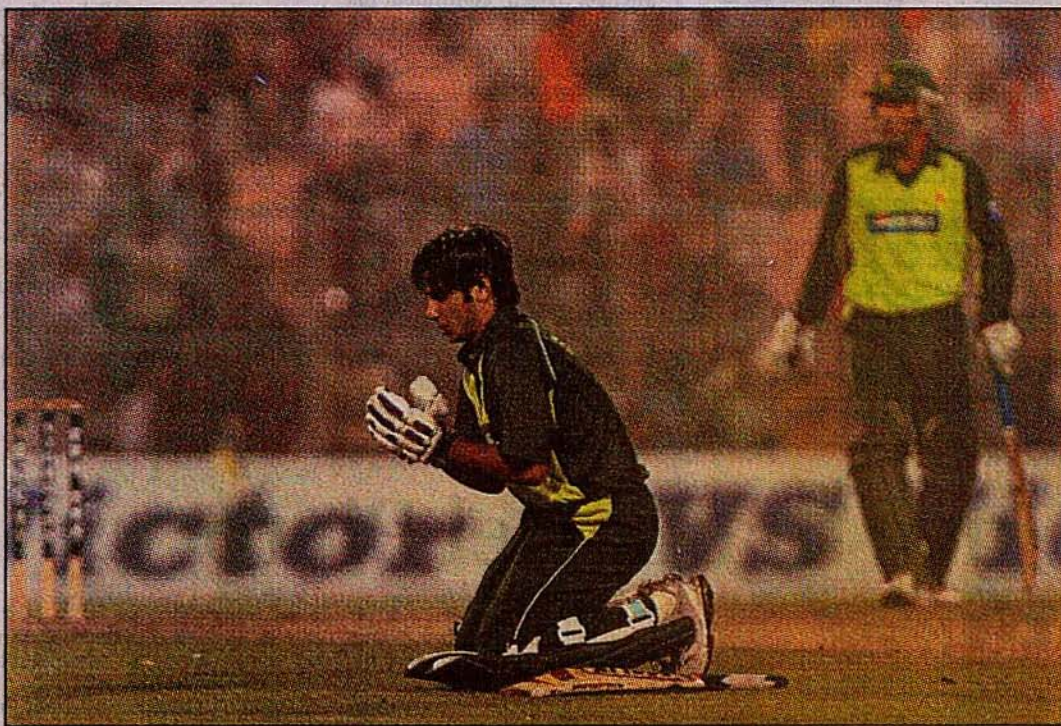


PHOTO: AFP

EID HAS COME EARLY! Pakistan opener Salman Butt kneels on the pitch to pray after reaching his hundred against India at the Eden Gardens in Kolkata on November 13.

Butt spoils Indian party



AFP, Kolkata

Salman Butt overcame a bout of cramps to hammer an unbeaten maiden century as Pakistan beat India by six wickets in a thrilling day-night match here on November 13.

The left-handed opener, 20, smashed 13 fours in his aggressive 108 not out to help Pakistan surpass a big Indian total of 292-6 with one over to spare in front of nearly 100,000 spectators at Eden Gardens.

Butt, playing only his sixth one-day, had retired hurt due to cramps on 68 but returned after the dismissal of Yousuf Youhana to continue in the same vein and steer Pakistan to their fourth successive win against India.

The hosts rode on left-handed Yuvraj Singh's explosive 62-ball 78 to post their highest total at this venue before being surprised by Butt's

fireworks in the one-off match to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the Indian cricket board.

None of the Indian bowlers could pressure Butt, who struck the ball fluently during his match-winning knock.

"I just could not have asked for anything better than this. It's a great gift from God," said Butt, named man of the match.

Butt put Pakistan on the right track with a 113-run stand for the second wicket with Shoaib Malik (61) before steering his team home with a 98-run stand for the fourth wicket with skipper Inzamam-ul-Haq, who scored a responsible run-a-ball 75.

The Pakistani captain hit one six and eight fours in his 73rd half-century, while Malik cracked two sixes and five fours in his 55-ball knock.

"I think every total is chaseable these days, but still India's total of 292 was big," Inzamam said after

Pakistan's first one-day in India in five years.

"But the boys were determined. Credit should go to Butt and Malik for providing us a good start. Butt played a really good knock."

India were indebted to Yuvraj for reaching a big total as the left-hander hit two sixes and 10 fours in his 16th half-century. His hard and clean hitting helped his team plunder 105 in the closing 11 overs.

"We posted a big total but never looked like winning the match," said Indian captain Sourav Ganguly.

"They've won four matches in a row against us and that shows they have been playing better cricket than us. They batted superbly, especially Butt."

India appeared to have lost the momentum after Pakistani leg-spinner Shahid Afridi grabbed two wickets in successive overs, but Yuvraj came to his team's rescue with a quick-fire knock.

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PHOTOS: AFP

A DUEL TO LOOK FORWARD TO: A combo showing (L) Michael Clarke, the exciting Australian all-rounder batting and (R) New Zealand left-arm spinner Daniel Vettori bowling during their respective net sessions at the Gabba in Brisbane yesterday.

Ponting taking no chances NZ-Australia first Test from today



REUTERS, Brisbane

Australia captain Ricky Ponting has warned his players to expect the unexpected when they meet New Zealand in the first Test at the Gabba starting on Thursday.

The world's top-ranked side are favourites to win the two-match series against a Kiwi team down in seventh place in the ICC championship table. Ponting, though, says his players need to be on their guard.

"They are a side that are always well-planned and think things through pretty well," he told a news conference on Wednesday.

"They'll pick our game plan to pieces and think what they can do to combat that."

Although New Zealand have not won a Test on Australian soil since 1985-86, they drew 0-0 three years ago under the captaincy of Stephen Fleming, who frustrated the hosts with clever field placements and astute tactical decisions.

Fleming was typically coy when quizzed about his strategy for this

series but said the fact that few gave his team any hope of winning might work in his favour.

"I think the reason we respond often better than others when we come here is because we're the underdogs and have nothing to lose," he said.

"We can try things without a great deal of consequence."

Ponting, who has lost only one Test since taking over the Test captaincy from Steve Waugh at the start of the year, said he expected New

Zealand's tactics would revolve around slowing down the Australian scoring rate.

"I think we'll be very prepared for anything New Zealand throw at us in this game," Ponting said.

"In the past we've been able to score quickly and get big totals but we know we can bat for long periods as well if we have to."

Obviously, Ponting said the tactics could backfire on the Kiwis. "We also feel that it's about time we really got a big first-innings total," he said.

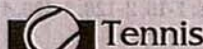
"We've batted well of late without really slowing down that really big score, so that's what we're after."

While Australia have been crushing everything in their path in recent seasons, New Zealand's form has slumped. They lost at home to Pakistan last year, squandered a 1-0 lead in their drawn series with South Africa and were then thrashed 3-0 in England.

They regained lost confidence with a 2-0 victory over Bangladesh last month, only to lose their opening tour match in Australia to New South Wales.

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Year of Sharapova



AFP, Los Angeles

Maria Sharapova's shining year ended in style Monday as she rallied from four games down in the third set to beat an injured Serena Williams in the final of the WTA Tour Championships.

It was the perfect ending to a storybook season, that saw the 17-year-old Russian dethrone Williams

at Wimbledon to become the darling of the tennis world.

"I don't think I could have asked for anything better this year," she said. "It has been an extraordinary year for me... I have had an amazing year."

While Sharapova's blonde good looks have drawn comparisons to fellow Russian Anna Kournikova, Sharapova has shown this year she has the potential to contend with the game's best on a consistent basis.

Something Kournikova never could.

Her Wimbledon triumph completed a grass court season that started with a victory in Birmingham, and she went on to win tournaments in Seoul and Tokyo as well.

Her performance in the season-ending championships, open only to the top eight players in the points race, was an indication of how far she has progressed.

"It just shows that I have come a long way in a short period of time," said the teen, who ended 2003 ranked 32nd in the world and goes out of 2004 at a career high of No. 4.

"It's not really about proving anything to yourself, but to be able

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Champs Trophy goes to Holland

AFP, Rosario

Field goals from Kim Lammers and Naomi van As either side of half-time clinched the Netherlands the Champions Trophy women's field hockey championship in Sunday's final against Germany.

The Dutch continually forced the Olympic champions on the defensive and wingers Fatima Moreira de Melo and Maartje Scheepstra proved a handful.

Germany goalkeeper Yvonne Frank, named player of the tournament, helped keep the scoreline respectable.

World champions Argentina came back from 2-1 down at the interval to beat a young Australia side 3-2 for the bronze medal while Olympic bronze medalists China, who failed to capture their Athens form here, beat New Zealand 3-0 for fifth place.

Cecilia Rognoni scored twice from penalty corners for Argentina with the winner coming from Luciana Aymar after Karen Smith and Suzie Faulkner had given the Hockeyroos the half-time lead.

Wang Yanhui, Ma Yibo and Zhou Wanfeng struck for China against New Zealand.

Next year's Champions Trophy will be played at Canberra.

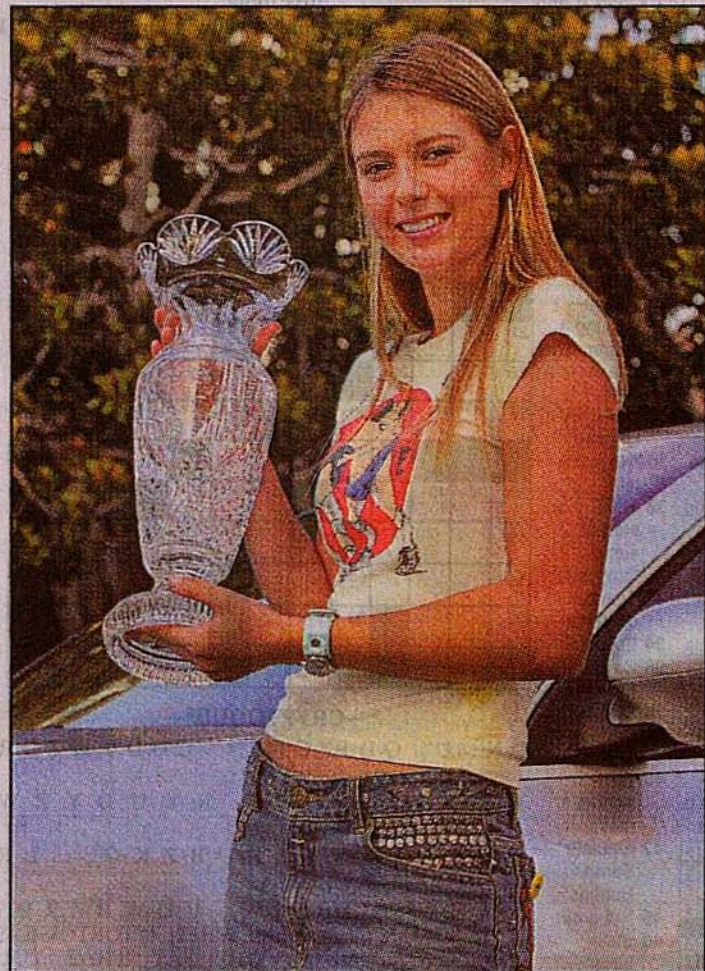


PHOTO: AFP

Russian Maria Sharapova poses with the winner's trophy after beating American Serena Williams at the WTA Tour Championships final in Los Angeles on November 16.