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Malcolm Speed
(ICC chief executive)
"I am not going to comment on the book. I don't even read cricket books."
On Nasser Hussain's autobiography.



Did U Know?

England batsman John Edrich was the first person to score a half-century in a one-day international when he made 82 against Australia on January 5, 1971.



STAR Sports

Sportsline
Live at 8 pm
English Premier League Preview
Taped at 8.30 pm
Tennis Masters Cup
Live at 7 am (Saturday)
ESPN
Australia v New Zealand
First Test, Day Two
Live at 5.55 am
Sportscentre
Live at 9 pm
Samsung Cricket Show
Taped at 10 pm
Here We Go
Same day delay at 10.30 pm
Australia v New Zealand
First Test, Day Two
Highlights
Same day delay at 42 am (Saturday)

Kabadi WC starts today

BSS, Dhaka

The first ever Kabadi World Cup begins today in Mumbai. Fifteen nations including Bangladesh are taking part in the three-day competition at the Indian Sports Centre.

The teams are Pakistan, Germany, United Kingdom, the West Indies, Canada, Iran, South Korea, Japan, Thailand, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Afghanistan, Malaysia and the host India.

Mumbai is hosting the biggest kabadi event in the world to celebrate the golden jubilee of South Kanara Sports Club.

The champions will get two lakh Indian rupees, the runners-up 1.5 rupees and the two semifinalists 50,000 rupees each.

Five thousand Indian rupees will be given to man of the matches of each day's play while man of the tournament will receive 50,000 rupees.

Bevan on track

AFP, Hobart

Former one-day international Michael Bevan was just two runs away from his third consecutive century as Tasmania took charge of their Sheffield Shield cricket match against South Australia here on Thursday.

The Tasmanians built their lead to nearly 300 after the third day with Bevan going to stumps at 98 not out.

The 34-year-old left-hander, who moved from New South Wales to accept an assistant coaching position after being dumped from the national one-day side, was the mainstay in a steady Tasmanian second innings which finished the day at 203 for four.

Tasmania claimed their first Shield points of the season, dismissing South Australia for 290 chasing 375, with left-arm spinner Xavier Doherty taking five wickets.

Twenty20 ends today

Biman bank on form, GP target history

SPORTS REPORTER

The GrameenPhone Corporate Cricket League final today throws two Bangladesh mates face-to-face as they try to inspire their teams to glory in the first ever Twenty20 competition in the country.

But it is not a straightforward task of captaining favourites Bangladesh Biman for Sanwar Hossain whose focus has been disrupted by an unexpected recall to the national fold on Wednesday. On the other hand, veteran all-rounder Khaled Mahmud, leading GrameenPhone, was determined not to allow the cup to leave the hands of the title sponsors.

Sanwar, who joined the Tigers' preliminary camp for next month's home series against India yesterday, has found himself in an uncomfortable situation of making a career

choice. "As part of my employment with Bangladesh Biman, I am undergoing a three-month training programme. I have already completed two months of it and if I leave it now to join the national camp, I may have to do the training all over again. I have to have talks with senior officials at Biman before deciding about my future," said Sanwar who last played for Bangladesh 16 months ago.

Sanwar was still upbeat about his team's prospects in the final. "I think we are the favourites to win the Cup. GrameenPhone are a strong side but I am confident because we have been playing good cricket throughout the competition," the Biman captain said.

Mahmud was also appreciating the fact that his opponents were in good form but said the opportunity to make history should spur GrameenPhone on.

"They (Biman) have adopted to

the Twenty20 format very well and that is their main strength. But we are also a competitive side and it will be special to win the first tournament of this kind as everyone will remember the result," said Mahmud.

The day-night final will start at 4pm at the Bangabandhu National Stadium.

TIGERS KICK OFF TRAINING

The preliminary squad for the series against India began its training today with some light fitness workout under BCB's high performance (HP) unit manager and Bangladesh U-19 coach Richard McInnes in the absence of Dav Whatmore, who is in Australia on a break and not expected to join before November 25.

All the 21 probables except captain Habibul Bashar and Nazmul Hossain joined practice yesterday.

SEE PAGE 14 COL 3

Pollock near 'Holy Grail'

Cricket

AFP, Kanpur

South African all-rounder Shaun Pollock has both team prestige and personal milestones to play for in an upcoming two-Test series against India.

The most adept in a team shorn of players with experience on the subcontinent, Pollock is also closing in on a rare Test double that will club him along with four great all-rounders of the past.

Pollock is on the verge of the achievement of scoring 3,000 runs

and taking 300 wickets, which only Kapil Dev, Ian Botham, Richard Hadlee and Imran Khan have done before.

With 349 wickets against his name, the 31-year-old needs just another 68 runs to touch the 3,000-run mark and join the club of all-time greats.

"I just try and get as many runs and wickets and help South Africa win. There are some legendary names in that club but I will probably appreciate it more when I retire and people mention my name along with theirs," he said.

"My aim is always to do well and help the team win and let the

records take care of themselves. I haven't kept aims for myself but want to do my best," said the veteran of 85 Tests matches.

Pollock may have scored just six runs in his three innings in India but getting to the 3000-run mark may not be as difficult as ensuring good results for his team.

The withdrawal of opener Herschelle Gibbs and left-arm spinner Nicky Boje with fears over detention for a match-fixing case that the Delhi Police is still investigating, has added that much pressure on Pollock.

"I may not have a good record as

SEE PAGE 14 COL 4



A TASTE OF OWN MEDICINE: Superstar Ronaldo looks on as Ecuador players celebrate their winner against Brazil at the Atahualpa Olympic Stadium in Quito on November 17.

Brazil conquered in Ecuador

REUTERS, Rio de Janeiro



World champions Brazil crashed to a shock 1-0 defeat in Ecuador on Wednesday while home wins for Peru, Colombia and Uruguay kept the South American World Cup qualifying group wide open.

Peru beat neighbours Chile 2-1 in a pulsating match, Uruguay captain Paolo Montero escaped a red card and then scored in the 1-0 win over Paraguay and Colombia beat Bolivia by the same score.

Argentina's 3-2 win over Venezuela in Buenos Aires took them top of the 10-nation group with 22 points from 11 games, two

more than Brazil who lost their unbeaten record 2,800 metres above sea level in Quito.

Below them, only three points separate third-placed Paraguay and Ecuador, who are both on 16 points, from ninth-placed Venezuela, who have 13.

The top four teams qualify directly for the Germany finals in 2006 while the fifth plays off against the Oceania region winners.

Brazil striker Ronaldo blamed the altitude after his side were sunk by midfielder Edison Mendez's well-struck shot from the edge of the area.

"I had a big headache, I was short of air and I needed oxygen to breathe," said Ronaldo, who nevertheless played 90 minutes and wasted an excellent chance to equalise when he side-footed wide.

Brazil's players arrived from their

European clubs less than 48 hours before kickoff, although several of the Ecuador team also completed transatlantic journeys on Monday.

"It's good, from any point of view, to beat the world champions," said Ecuador coach Luis Fernando Suarez.

"This team has got a lot of good things, a lot of organisation."

Argentina never it easy against Venezuela, despite being gifted a fourth-minute lead in Buenos Aires when Jose Manuel Rey headed into his own net.

Rubert Moran equalised with a brilliant individual goal, his fifth in the last three games, before a Juan Roman Riquelme free kick gave Argentina a 2-1 halftime lead.

Javier Saviola made it 3-1 before Argentina goalkeeper Roberto Abbondanzieri's blunder allowed

Leonel Vielma to pull one back from a free kick.

Peru's 2-1 win over Chile in Lima left both teams level on 13 points, above Venezuela on goal difference.

Second half goals from Jefferson Farfan of PSV Eindhoven and Bayern Munich's Paolo Guerrero put Peru in control.

But there was a dramatic finale as Sebastian Gonzalez pulled an injury-time goal back for Chile, then missed a chance to equalise with the last kick of the game.

Peru defender Santiago Acasiete and Chilean midfielder Rodrigo Melendez were sent off after clashing in the 41st minute.

Montero, who returned to the Uruguay team this year after quitting in 2002, headed home in the 78th minute in Montevideo to lift his

SEE PAGE 14 COL 4

'He wanted to kill Hookes'

AFP, Melbourne

A pub bouncer threatened to kill former Australian Test cricketer David Hookes on the night he was fatally injured during an altercation outside a hotel, a court heard Thursday.

Hookes, 48, died on January 19, a day after he hit his head on the ground during a fight after being ejected from the The Beaconsfield Hotel in the Melbourne suburb of St Kilda.

Bouncer Zdravko Micevic, 22, is charged with manslaughter and assault over the incident and appeared in Melbourne Magistrate's Court for the fourth day of a committal hearing.

Tania Plumpton, who was part of Hookes' group on the night, told the court she grabbed the arm of a bouncer who had put the sportsman in a headlock while ejecting him from the bar.

"It was totally unnecessary force, that's why I grabbed him the way I did," she said.

Plumpton said the bouncer had approached their group and said "tell the bitch to scull (finish) her drink".

In a statement tendered to the court, she said Hookes replied "that's no way to speak to a lady" and the bouncer put him in a headlock and started dragging him out of the bar.

She said a bouncer swore at Hookes and threatened to kill him outside the pub.

"They were shouting threats, the bouncer threatened he was going to kill David, that's when I had my hands on his (the bouncer's) chest and David was behind me, I was in the middle of it," Plumpton said.

She did not identify the bouncer in question.

SEE PAGE 14 COL 4

Kiwis fail to Kasper

Cricket

AFP, Brisbane

Michael Kasprowicz upstaged his elite bowling teammates as Australia kept New Zealand on a tight leash on the opening day of the first cricket Test at the Gabba here on Thursday.

Kasprowicz vindicated the judgment of his skipper Ricky Ponting to take three wickets as the patient Kiwis laboured to build a challenging first innings total for the all-conquering Australians, fresh from their series triumph in India.

The home-town bowling hero, who is keeping tearaway Brett Lee

out of the Australian eleven, removed Mark Richardson (19), skipper Stephen Fleming (0) and Scott Styris (27) to claim first-day honours with 3-54 ahead of world record wicket-taker Shane Warne, 454-Test wicket fast bowler Glenn McGrath and Jason Gillespie (227 wickets).

At stumps, the New Zealanders had crawled their way to 250 for seven after winning the toss with Jacob Oram hitting a defiant half-century with three successive fours off Gillespie to be unbeaten on 63 and Daniel Vettori on 13.

"The New Zealanders are known for being pretty patient players, we knew that would be one of their

plans, it's the way they bowl and bat, that's one of their strengths," Kasprowicz said.

"For us that's a strength as well in knowing that if we did build up that pressure then the chances would come, which they did during the day."

Kasprowicz said even though New Zealand were seven wickets down they batted a fair way down the order and Australian bowlers had to bowl the right line on Friday and be patient.

Warne put behind a wayward spell of bowling to improve his world record tally to 543 wickets with the scalps of Craig McMillan and

SEE PAGE 14 COL 1

Woolmer's view

REUTERS, Dubai

Pakistan cricket coach Bob Woolmer has welcomed proposals for a new throwing rule but says he does not expect it to put an end to controversies in the future.

"Essentially it's a good thing for cricket although I don't know how it will be implemented," he said on Thursday.

"There will always be people who are going to find fault with it, but I know the people involved in putting together the proposed changes and they are all good."

"The scientific evidence shows that every time your wrist moves, your elbow moves. The point the ICC (International Cricket Council) is trying to make is that no one has a completely straight arm because of the muscle texture."

An ICC chief executives meeting scheduled for February will consider proposals to allow all bowlers to bend their elbows by 15 percent. Current rules allow spinners to bend their arm by five, medium-pacers by 7.5 and fast bowlers by 10 percent.

Recent bio-mechanical studies, however, have shown that most bowlers bend their arms and some by up to 12 percent even though it is not discernible to the naked eye.

SEE PAGE 14 COL 4

India rely on spin

Cricket

AFP, Kanpur

South Africa face a Herculean task of trying to keep up their fine record against India in a two-Test series starting at the Green Park Stadium here on Saturday.

South Africa have done well on previous tours here but their young side will find it hard battling it out on pitches aiding turn, as the one for the opening match here is expected to be.

"This pitch is surely going to help spinners," said India's coach John Wright after a practice session.

"One has to only wait and see when the pitch starts to do things."

South Africa play their first Test series on Indian soil since winning both Tests on their last tour here in 2000 under the late Hansie Cronje.

But the team is young and as many as 10 of them have not played Tests in India before, including 23-year-old skipper Graeme Smith.

Adding to their problems is a side strain to experienced all-rounder Jacques Kallis, whose fitness will be ascertained on Friday.

Kallis shares the major burden with Shaun Pollock after opener Herschelle Gibbs and spinner Nicky Boje withdrawal from the tour fearing

detention by police over match-fixing allegations.

Their names figured prominently in the case by Delhi police during the tour four years ago which led to a life ban on Cronje, who died tragically in an air crash in 2002.

Others like Gary Kirsten, Allan Donald and Jonty Rhodes have retired while wicketkeeper Mark Boucher and all-rounder Lance Klusener, who have also played here, were not selected.

There were no injury worries for India and they only had to wait for the verdict on whether captain Sourav Ganguly would play pending an appeal over a two-Test ban.

Ganguly was served the ban for his team's slow over-rate during a one-dayer against Pakistan at Calcutta last week.

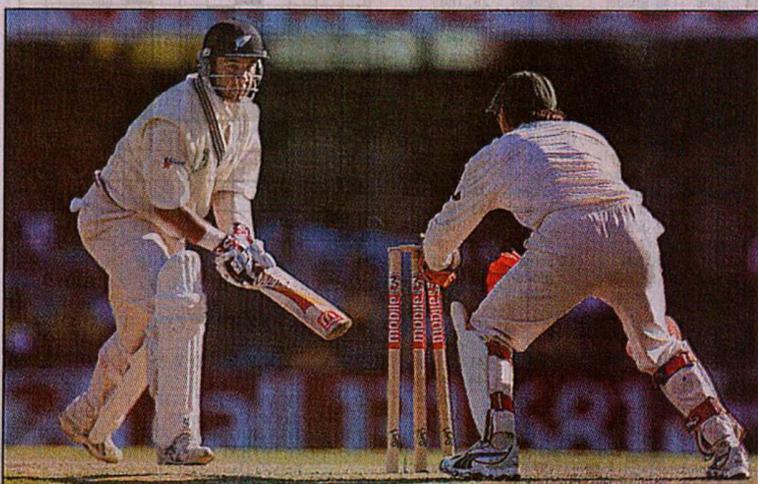
"We have some class players in the side. They may not have been in peak form in the recent past but I am confident they will deliver," said Wright, a former New Zealand opener.

India lost a recent series 2-1 to give Australia their first Test series win in India in 35 years.

"That series is behind us and this pitch gives us confidence for the first match," said Wright.

"We did not give any specific directions to the curators but just

SEE PAGE 14 COL 4



NO WAY BACK: New Zealand's Craig McMillan is being stumped by Australian wicketkeeper Adam Gilchrist on Day One of the first Test at Brisbane yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP