



## Did U Know?

Pakistan bowling great Waqar Younis holds the record for the quickest 300 wickets, having taken only 186 matches to reach the milestone, followed by Australia's Glenn McGrath (199), Sri Lanka's Muttiah Muralitharan (202) and compatriot Wasim Akram (208).



**John Buchanan**  
(Australian cricket coach)  
"If we go through the usual scenario of snapshot versus movie length, we are in a period in Matthew's movie where we are in an ad-break. Right at this time, we are waiting for the ad-break to finish and get back to the real movie."  
On opener Matthew Hayden's slump in form.



## NAT'L JR CHESS

### Parag going strong

#### SPORTS REPORTER

Mehdi Hasan Parag continued to lead the points table with maximum 6 points at end of the sixth round of the BASIC Bank 26th National Junior (Under-20 Years) Chess Championship yesterday.

Nahid Parvej Sagar of Kushtia is in second position with five-and-a-half points.

Six players -- Mahtabuddin Ahmed Robin, Golam Mostafa Bhuiyan, Shamima Akter Liza, Abdullah Al Saif, Mahfuzur Rahman and Sharif Hossain -- were sharing third place with five points each.

In this round Parag beat Ali, Nahid beat Bashir, Robin beat Evana, Mostafa beat Shirin, Liza beat Reza, Saif beat Jubir, Sharif beat Salimon and Mahfuz beat Nazir.

There are no matches today.

### Pathan waiting for Pakistan

#### PTI, New Delhi

Seamer Irfan Pathan has said that he has fully recovered from a side strain and is raring to take on Pakistan in the upcoming series starting later this month.

"I'm fully fit and feeling really good. I had a good workout with physio Andrew Leipus and he did a wonderful job with me," he said.

On the much awaited series, Pathan said India have more fire-power than Pakistan and they only need to perform to their potential.

The Baroda youngster hoped that India would repeat their winning performance in Pakistan in the upcoming series.

"I think the same feeling is going to be there, the same intensity and the same pressure as there is not going to be a single empty seat in the stands," Pathan told in an interview yesterday.

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## ICC straightens upto 15

### Cricket

AFP, Melbourne

Cricket's governing body here Saturday endorsed recommendations to relax the game's contentious chucking laws for bowlers.

An International Cricket Council (ICC) committee comprising former Test players and chaired by former India captain Sunil Gavaskar last November recommended a new rule allowing bowlers to straighten their arms by up to 15 degrees.

Under the new ruling almost all modern bowling actions would now be deemed legal.

A meeting of the ICC Chief Executives' Committee Saturday formally approved proposals by the panel to overhaul the current system.

The ICC said the committee's decision would lead to changes in the testing, analysis and review

procedures used at the international level to standardise and streamline the analysis of bowlers with suspected illegal actions.

The head body said the new regulations would deal with the reality established during the ICC research programme that most bowlers were likely to straighten their arm to a level undetectable by the naked eye during the bowling action.

Among the new regulations, all bowlers will be permitted to straighten their bowling arm up to 15 degrees which has been established as the point at which any straightening will become visible to the naked eye.

There will also be the introduction of a shorter, independent review process under the central control of the ICC with immediate suspensions for bowlers found to have illegal actions.

The ICC will also ensure that the overhaul and standardisation of the bio-mechanical testing of bowlers are consistent in the way that they

measure the degree of arm straightening in delivery.

ICC chief executive Malcolm Speed said he was expecting the radical overhaul to the chucking issue to offend some cricket purists, but that the new measures provided cricket with its best opportunity to deal with an issue that has beset the game for more than 60 years.

"This issue has afflicted the game for over 60 years. Try as it might, the sport has never properly come to terms with it," Speed said in a statement released after the Melbourne meeting.

"Every time it comes up there are emotional reactions from people around the world based on fear and ignorance and I've no doubt we will see them all again this time."

"The reality is that this new process provides the game with a sensible way forward to properly protect against people breaking the rules while providing every opportunity for players with illegal actions to remedy any problems and return to

the game."

Changes to the process were initially proposed by an expert cricket panel comprising Aravinda de Silva, Angus Fraser, Michael Holding, Tony Lewis and Tim May along with the former South African vice-captain and now ICC general manager David Richardson.

The proposals were put before the ICC's Cricket Committee, comprising former international players and umpires and chaired by Gavaskar.

It was the Gavaskar-chaired panel which made the final recommendations to the ICC Chief Executives Committee after scrutinising the proposal and making some amendments to the process.

"These recommendations have come from people who have played the game at the highest level and who have a deep appreciation of the issues," Gavaskar said in a statement.

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LEADING FROM THE FRONT: South Africa captain Graeme Smith, later adjudged man-of-the-match, celebrates his maiden hundred in the third one-day international against England in Port Elizabeth on Friday.

## A tough balancing act

### Divisional squads named

### Cricket

#### SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) yesterday approved the roster of the six divisional teams for the Fifth National League but not before the national selectors gave a long look into it.

The selectors for the first time were involved in scrutinising each divisional squad in an effort to bring qualitative change to the country's first-class competition, which has from the outset been branded nothing more than 'picnic cricket' because of the imbalance between the sides and in some cases nepotism by certain divisional officials.

The League sponsored by MM Ispahani will commence from February 8 with country's six divisions -- defending champions Dhaka, Chittagong, Rajshahi, Khulna, Sylhet and Barisal -- playing on home and away basis. All teams will first play a one-day game and then a four-day fixture.

Each team will comprise 20 players and chief selector Faruque Ahmed said that they tried to ensure only players on merit were chosen for the premier competition.

"We have also tried to make sure that the balance of the participating teams is not affected whenever players are called up on national duty," said Faruque after completing a marathon eight-hour scrutiny.

The former national captain, however, admitted that Barisal as usual came out as the weakest of the six teams.

"But we have tried our best to place players from other divisions to bolster their strength," he said.

Dhaka's right-arm paceman Mohammad Sharif, who is now touring with the Bangladesh A team in the UAE, has been included in the Barisal squad.

Besides, two more cricketers of Dhaka Division -- former national opener Jahangir Alam and all-rounder Neeyamur Rashid have been placed with Sylhet.

Traditionally, Dhaka and Chittagong have produced the best

outfit every year. But this time around Khulna led by national captain Habibul Bashar and wicketkeeper Khaled Mashud's Rajshahi served notice of their strong presence.

The involvement of the selectors this year is certainly a timely step towards injecting new life in an otherwise run of the mill league. But without the total involvement at the regional level the league will always be missing the all-important sense of belonging, which is evident in the domestic leagues of other cricket playing nations.

Presently, the divisional officials are only seen busy during the National League. But once it is over they are nowhere to be found due to the Board's inability to set up proper regional centres.

Following are the six divisional squads:

**DHAKA**  
Khaled Mahmud, Javed Omar Belim, Al-Shariar, Rashedul Haq, Mohammad Ashraf, Halim Shah, SEE PAGE 14 COL 6

### 'If anyone can do it, it'll be Tendulkar'

PTI, Dubai

Former Australia captain Steve Waugh believes Sachin Tendulkar could become the first batsman to score 100 centuries in international cricket.

"If anyone can score 100 centuries in international cricket, it will be Sachin Tendulkar," said Waugh, who is on a business visit here, on Friday.

"Tendulkar has already got 71 hundreds from Tests and one-dayers. He has it in him to score

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### UAE 134 all out

#### SPORTS REPORTER

The United Arab Emirates were bundled out for 134 in 45 overs against Bangladesh A in the third limited-overs match at the Sharjah Stadium yesterday.

The home side, trailing the four-match series 2-0, again failed to put up a decent total after Syed Russell followed up his five-wicket burst in the previous game with three wickets. Rajib and Shakib took two wickets each.



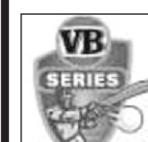
ON A ROLL: Russian Maria Sharapova in action against Japan's Shinobu Asagoe during the women's singles semifinal of the Pan Pacific Open in Tokyo yesterday. Sharapova won 6-1, 7-6 and will meet American Lindsay Davenport in the final.

PHOTO: AFP

## Aussies aim to do it now

### Razzaq found not guilty of dissent

#### BBC ONLINE/AFP, undated



Australia will look to continue their ruthless record in the triangular VB Series by beating Pakistan in the second final at the Sydney Cricket Ground on Sunday.

Since the annual tournament adopted a best-of-three finals format, the hosts have taken just two matches to win in 15 of 19 opportunities.

But after Friday's 18-run win in Melbourne, captain Ricky Ponting admitted: "They're making us work."

"We're still nowhere near our best yet -- hopefully that will come in

Sydney."

Australia are likely to continue with Michael Clarke at the top of the order, in preference to Matthew Hayden.

But at the spin-friendly SCG, wrist-spinner Brad Hogg could make a case to replace seamer Shane Watson.

Pakistan's injury woes continued as left-armers Mohammad Khalid dislocated his shoulder in an on-field collision.

Pace bowler Shoaib Akhtar, who has a hamstring problem, and batsman Younis Khan, whose father died last week, have already returned home.

But coach Bob Woolmer said the side had gained in confidence from last week's group win over Australia.

"I think the same feeling is going to be there, the same intensity and the same pressure as there is not going to be a single empty seat in the stands," Pathan told in an interview yesterday.

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their first on an arduous tour.

Pakistan were beaten 3-0 in their Test series, and conceded two one-day games against the hosts before last Sunday's three-wicket win.

"We know how to beat Australia now," Woolmer told the Sydney Morning Herald.

"We also know that we've gelled together really well after what was a nightmare of a tour for a while."

Meanwhile, Pakistan all-rounder Abdul Razzaq has been found not guilty of dissent during Australia's 18-run victory in the opening match of the VB Series finals in Melbourne on Friday.

Razzaq faced the charge under the International Cricket Council (ICC) code of conduct "for showing

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### Cricket

AFP, Port Elizabeth

Captain Graeme Smith hit a maiden one-day international century as South Africa levelled the series against England with a three-wicket win in the third limited-overs international at St George's Park on Friday.

In a second successive tense finish, following the tied second match in Bloemfontein on Wednesday, South Africa won with five balls to spare.

Chasing a challenging England total of 267 for eight, Smith made 105 before he was sixth out in the 43rd over when 54 runs were still needed.

Mark Boucher slammed 33 off 21 balls and Ashwell Prince batted calmly to make 17 not out off 18 deliveries, hitting the winning runs when he lofted Darren Gough for a boundary over mid-on off the first ball of the final over.

Smith, who has hit seven Test centuries, had a highest one-day score of 99 in 58 previous matches.

He had not reached a half-century in 13 matches leading up to Friday's match, while his team had endured a dismal run, losing 12 and winning only one of their previous 14 matches.

The lone win was against minnows Bangladesh and it was South Africa's first victory against credible opponents since they beat New Zealand in Auckland last February.

The South African captain had some luck in the middle of his innings. On 53 he was dropped by England captain Marcus Trescothick when he top-edged a pull against Paul Collingwood.

Five runs later he should have been run out when wicketkeeper Geraint Jones failed to gather a flick from Kevin Pietersen at cover with Smith well short of his ground.

"It was terrific to get a win," said Smith. "I had a bit of luck in the middle but sometimes you need some luck to get home."

Smith said a 107-run fourth wicket stand between himself and Herschelle Gibbs (50) had put South Africa on top but when they were both dismissed it put pressure on the lower order batsmen.

"They handled the pressure superbly," said Smith.

Trescothick, standing in for regular captain Michael Vaughan, admitted that his own dropped catch had probably been the turning point.

But he said England would regroup before the next match of the seven-game series in Cape Town Sunday.

"We'll be fine," he said. "We'll travel down to Cape Town tomorrow, have a think about this game tomorrow night and hopefully play well on Sunday."

Vikram Solanki anchored the England innings, hitting top score of 66. He replaced Vaughan, still suffering from a stomach illness which prevented him from fielding in Bloemfontein. Vaughan decided after

taking part in the pre-match warm-up that he was not fit enough to play.

Batting at number three, Solanki shared half-century stands with Jones, Andrew Strauss and Pietersen before he was caught at long-off in the 40th over.

Fast bowlers Andre Nel and Makhaya Ntini both took three wickets for South Africa, with England losing momentum towards the end of the innings.

Trescothick got England off to a quick start on a ground where batting first in day-night matches is usually an advantage, hitting five fours and a six as he made 33 of the first 49 before he skied a catch off Nel to Smith at mid-off, a similar chance to the one he later put down off Smith.

Pietersen, who again got a hostile reception from the crowd in the country of his birth, was out for the first time in the series when he was caught at mid-wicket off Nel for 33, hit off 37 balls.