

Kaneria's secret weapon?

CRICINFO, undated

Pakistan leg-spinner Danish Kaneria has said that he will target Rahul Dravid in the upcoming India tour. Kaneria, who will be the frontline spinner, reckoned Dravid to be the greatest threat and disclosed his plans to unleash a secret delivery during the series.

"I respect Dravid a lot. He is a great player and my favourite too," Kaneria told the BBC Hindi website.

"I don't think any other Indian batsman will be difficult to bowl at. He has got the class and he would be the main wicket for me. He is truly the Wall and if I get him it will be an achievement for me"

Kaneria also said that the Indian tour would be a huge challenge and disclosed his plans to unveil a secret weapon to counter the Indian batsmen who are reputed to be masters of countering spin bowling.

"I have developed a secret delivery that I intend to use during the series against India," Kaneria told The Nation, a Pakistan based daily.

"I have been successful in honing that delivery and will use in the matches against India. I have set a target of 20 to 25 wickets in the series because the tracks in India have always been spin friendly."

Kaneria along with veteran off-spinner Arshad Khan who was recalled to the Test side after five years, will boost the thin bowling line-up. He was confident of performing better in India than in the recent Australian tour, where he manfully led the attack with 15 wickets in three Tests.

Magura cricket

OUR CORRESPONDENT

Patriot Sporting Club defeated Sreepur Rising Star Cricket Club by seven runs in the Econo First Division Cricket League at the Magura Stadium yesterday.

Patriot SC batted first and scored 171 in 36 overs. In reply, Sreepur Rising Star made 164 all out in 37.2 overs.

Chelsea

FROM PAGE 13  
boss Sir Alex Ferguson had put pressure on referee Neale Barry at half-time and that this affected the official's performance after the interval.

That match finished in a goalless draw before Chelsea won the second leg 2-1. They face Liverpool in the League Cup final at the Millennium Stadium on Sunday.

The second leg of their last 16 Champions League clash against Barcelona is at the London club's Stamford Bridge home on March 8.

Big defeat

FROM PAGE 13  
**BCB XI:** 1st innings 142 all out in 41.1 overs (Ashrafu1 40, Al-Shahriar 33, Aftab 24; Paul 6-45, Mangaraj 2-24)  
**BCB XI:** 2nd innings (overnight 123-8 in 33 overs)  
Al Sahaniar lbw b Paul 0  
Shabbir lbw b Sanyal 0  
Aftab Ahmed b Paul 8  
Ashrafu1 c Das b Bose 1  
Alok Kapali lbw b Sanyal 13  
Manjarul lbw b Sanyal 26  
Sahagir c Das b Shahid 34  
Razzak not out 58  
Shahzada lbw b Bose 0  
Monir b Bose 4  
Talha c sub b Paul 9  
Extras: (b-1, lb-3, nb-6) 10  
Total: (All out in 40.3 overs) 163  
Fall of wickets: 1-0, 2-9, 3-10, 4-14, 5-44, 6-65, 7-122, 8-123, 9-132  
**Bowler** **O** **M** **R** **W**  
Paul 11.3 3 30 3  
Bose 13 6 50 3  
Sanyal 7 0 34 3  
Mangaraj 6 0 35 0  
Shahid 3 1 10 1  
**Result: East Zone won by an innings and 149 runs.**

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

**ACROSS**  
23 Comes together  
4 Mel of Coopers-town  
7 It goes without saying  
8 Binge  
10 "The wonder-ful, won-derful cal"  
11 Acces-sory for that little black dress  
13 Prosper-ity, for many  
16 Two, in Tijuana  
17 Talk a blue streak?  
18 Through  
19 Toil  
20 Suspend-ers alter-native  
21 With 1-Down, patron of cripples

**DOWN**  
1 See 21-neighbor  
2 Eastern  
3 Dictionary  
4 Starts busi-ness  
5 Profes-sion-ist  
6 Region (Abbr.)  
7 Interoffice e-mail, maybe  
8 Friction  
9 Football team  
10 Craze  
11 See 21-neighbor  
12 Across  
13 Singer  
14 Dictionary  
15 Starts busi-ness  
16 Profes-sion-ist  
17 Region (Abbr.)  
18 Interoffice e-mail, maybe  
19 Friction  
20 Football team  
21 Craze

**Solution time: 21 mins.**  
SELF LAY SLAP  
FALL USE LODI  
ECRU CHARADES  
CHARLIE HYENA  
RED WEE  
PRAYS CHARGES  
FAN MAIL  
CHARMED BODGE  
OIL SOD  
SALAD CHARLOT  
CHARISMA IDLE  
ADONE PIP FEES  
DYED AXE TIGAS



A group of cricket fans brought out a protest procession yesterday demanding international cricket matches in the future at the Bangabandhu National Stadium which has been handed over to the Bangladesh Football Federation.

Mushtaq labels 'em 'weakest'

CRICKET

INTERNET REPORT, Karachi

The Pakistan team selected to tour India is the "weakest-ever" and resembles a club side, according to Mushtaq Mohammad who is rated as one of the shrewdest captains that the country has produced.

The former player also said that after learning about the make-up of the Pakistani squad, Indian skipper Sourav Ganguly "must be laughing" while Inzamamul Haq must be having his fingers crossed.

"This is the weakest ever Pakistan team selected for any tour. The team that visited England in 1978-79 under Wasim Bari was definitely weak but it was because of unavoidable reasons as there was ban on cricketers who had signed for Kerry Packer," Mushtaq said in an interview on Wednesday.

"But I am sorry to say that this Pakistan team looks like a club team to me," he said as Pakistan gear up for their first full-fledged series, involving three Tests and six one-day internationals, in India in six years.

"Sourav must be laughing and

Murray extends Surrey stay

INTERNET REPORT, London

Former Zimbabwe batsman Murray Goodwin has agreed a three-year deal to stay at Sussex.

The 32-year-old, who topped his side's batting averages in the 2003 title-winning squad, is expected to sign under the 'Kolpak' ruling where cricketers from countries associated with the European Union are not deemed overseas players.

However, the deal is pending confirmation of his Kolpak status, with Sussex officials confident of securing Goodwin's services for next season.

Sussex director of cricket Peter Moores said: "Our decision to sign Murray as a Kolpak player was not taken lightly due to the need to keep places available for our own home-grown players.

"Murray's commitment to the club and his ability as a player are without question and we are delighted that he has decided to commit to us for the foreseeable future.

"Regarding the overseas berth, we are hoping to be able to announce something in the next couple of weeks."

feeling very confident because he has seen most of the players in Pakistan last year and knows their weaknesses. As far as Inzamam is concerned, he must have his fingers crossed. He will be hoping that his boys put up a better performance than what they showed in Australia."

Mushtaq was unsparing in his comments on the Pakistani batsmen saying "barring a couple of them, there are no quality batsmen in the side. They have faulty techniques, are too flashy, have no footwork, no temperament and consequently they are inconsistent," he said. Other than Inzamam and Yousuf Youhana, there were no batsmen in the team who could survive two sessions, the 62-year-old Mushtaq said.

"The little that I have seen of the Pakistani batsmen, I have noticed that they put their bat behind the pads. They need to put their bat in front of the pad. That is the basic."

Equally unimpressed by the bowlers, Mushtaq said, "To win Test matches, you need to take 20 wickets and I don't see any bowler capable of running through the innings.

Danish Kaneria has been bowling well recently but he needs support. Besides, figures of five for

140 will not win you Tests. You need to have figures of five for 50 to win you a Test. And how regularly Danish can do this?"

Nevertheless, Mushtaq hoped that his assessment of the team would prove wrong and Pakistan would come out with flying colours.

"I desperately want my country to do well in India and win the Test series because this series means a lot to the people of Pakistan. But sadly, cricket is not played with emotions. It is played with talent and skill. I hope my assessment about the team is incorrect and if they (Pakistan team) prove me wrong, I will be the happiest man on this planet."

Adjudged Wisden Cricketer of the Year in 1963, Mushtaq was the Pakistan captain on the ice-breaking 1978-79 series against India at home, the first cricket series between the two countries in nearly 18 years.

Mushtaq's men beat Bishen Bedis team 2-0 in that three-Test series. But a year later, he was elbowed out by Asif Iqbal as captain in controversial circumstances for the return tour that eventually brought the downfall of Iqbal after Pakistan returned vanquished.

Clarke to open at Hayden's expense

CRICKET

BBC ONLINE, undated

Michael Clarke is set to return to the top of the Australia batting order after Matthew Hayden revealed he would not play again until he was fully fit.

Hayden admitted he was recovering from the shoulder injury he picked up in the second one-dayer against New Zealand.

But the opener, who has returned to form with scores of 71 and 114, said: "I'm not going to play half-baked. That would hurt the side and hurt me."

It paves the way for Clarke to open the innings in Auckland on Saturday.

Australia's rotational policy during the recent VB Series at home saw Clarke shift to the top of the order, where he excelled with 334 runs at an average of 67.

But Hayden's return has pushed

the 23-year-old back down to number six, where along with fellow middle-order batsman Andrew Symonds he has been starved of opportunities.

"What we've got to do now is get Clarke and Symonds a bit more time in the middle," skipper Ricky Ponting said.

"They're just a bit frustrated with the amount of time they have had to bat in the first couple of games."

Hayden, who sustained the injury taking a diving catch, had an MRI scan on Wednesday which revealed no bone damage.

It was initially feared Hayden could be out for up to three weeks, built despite his gradual improvement he refused to say when he would be back in action.

"I can't put a time frame on that because we don't know the extent of the injury yet," he said.

"We've got another five or six weeks of this tour left and there is a lot to achieve for us before we have a long break, so I really want to get among it."

"Obviously, my priorities have changed now because I have to make sure I get this right."

Reigning World Cup champions Australia lead the five-match series 2-0.

Full points for Shishu Kishore

SPORTS REPORTER

Shishu Kirshore Sangha defeated Victoria Sporting Club 3-1 in the First Division Hockey league at the Maulana Bhashani National Hockey Stadium yesterday.

The first half was locked 1-1. Moniruzzaman, Jahangir and Mobashwer scored for the winners while Ujjal struck the lone goal for Victoria.

The day's other match between Mukta Bihanga and Combined SC ended in a goalless draw.

'Ashes loss won't harm Aussies'

REUTERS, London

Former Australia wicketkeeper Rodney Marsh says it would do his country no harm if they surrendered the Ashes to England later this year.

"In the big picture, England need to be strong," said Marsh, who is due to step down as director of England's national academy in September. "So, it won't do Australia or the game any harm if they lose the Ashes."

"If people back home (in Australia) cannot understand that, that's tough," he told the Daily Telegraph as his England 'A' team flew out on Wednesday to Dubai for their tour of the United Arab Emirates and Sri Lanka.

"By the time I leave the ECB (England and Wales Cricket Board), I would like to think I had played a small part in making England more competitive, though the players are the ones who have done the work," said Marsh.

Marsh will return to Australia in September having spent four years as the ECB's first director of the academy which helped mould half of the England senior squad who won the recent test series in South Africa 2-1.

Australia, who have won the past eight Ashes encounters and are the world's top-ranked team, take on England in the first test of a five-match series at Lord's in July.

TV dispute over

FROM PAGE 13

The Indian government banned all home and away cricket with Pakistan in 2000 due to political tensions, but reversed its decision after a thaw in relations.

India toured Pakistan after a 14-year-gap last year, winning the Tests 2-1 and one-dayers 3-2.

Pakistan arrive in India on Monday for three Tests and six one-dayers. The first Test starts in Mohali on March 8.

PCB lets Woolmer

FROM PAGE 13

The comments were deemed to be a violation of the ICC code of conduct, which deals with "public criticism of, or inappropriate comment on a match-related incident or match official".

The ICC had said the matter would be dealt with by the PCB.

"I have great respect for the umpires. It's a difficult job they do and at no stage have I criticised the umpires," Woolmer said.

Woolmer, who played 19 Tests for England and also coached South Africa, took over as Pakistan coach in June last year.

Zia faces

FROM PAGE 13

and IM Refaat Bin Sattar are direct qualifiers.

This year's championship will be recognised as an International Masters tournament.

Any player who earns 9.5 points will win an IM norm, speakers said at a press briefing held the NSC conference room yesterday.

Sponsors Mercantile Bank will provide Tk two lakh out of the Tk 2.5 lakh budget.

Bangladesh Chess Federation general secretary Syed Sujauddin Ahmed, additional managing director of Mercantile Bank M Nurul Islam also addressed the briefing.

The number draw was held after the briefing.

Afridi's ambition

CRICKET

CRICINFO, undated

Pakistani all-rounder Shahid Afridi has said that he harbours ambitions of making a century while batting in the lower-order and has cited Adam Gilchrist's fantastic 113 at Sydney recently, against Pakistan, as a knock that inspired him. He added that he was not planning to change his dare-devil approach to batting, which brought him success on the tour, and hoped that he could boost Pakistan's chances of upstaging India in the much-anticipated forthcoming rubber.

"I want to continue with my style of batting which is extremely simple: hit the ball back with same force," he

"I think I've been selected for this

tour as a bowler who can bat instead of 1999 when I was picked as a batsman who could bowl," Afridi told the Press Trust of India on Wednesday.

"Which means batting down the order and bowling more than before."

Afridi had a scorching run in the VB Series, where Pakistan lost in the final, with 231 runs at a stunning strike-rate of 167.39. His power-hitting proved crucial in a number of games, he even notched up the record for the most sixes in ODIs, as fields were reduced to spectators in the big Australian grounds.

"I want to continue with my style of batting which is extremely simple: hit the ball back with same force," he

added.

"I like hitting the ball into stands and want to hear the cracking sound that comes out of my bat. I don't know why but that sound [of wood] and sight of seeing the ball land in enclosures gives me immense pleasure and satisfaction."

Afridi has had success in India earlier: he scored a match-winning 141 in the Chennai Test in 1999 and helped Pakistan clinch an epic encounter. He has tormented India regularly and has one century and four fifties against them. The last tour of India saw Afridi display his destructive ability. This series, though, may see Afridi the leg-spinner and lower-order dynamite prove a point or two.

2007 WC seedings in April

CRICKET

REUTERS, London

Seedings for the 2007 World Cup will be based on one-day international team standings on April 1 this year, the International Cricket Council (ICC) said on Wednesday.

The five teams who do not hold official one-day status will be seeded on their performances at the ICC Trophy in Ireland from July 1-13.

However, champions Australia, England, India and West Indies have already been pre-ranked into four separate groups to facilitate

transport and accommodation arrangements during cricket's showpiece tournament.

"The ICC Cricket World Cup West Indies 2007 will involve a record 16 teams that will be split initially into four groups of four," ICC chief executive Malcolm Speed said in a statement.

"The top two teams from each of these groups will progress to the Super Eights stage from which four teams will qualify for the semi-finals.

"The LG ICC ODI Championship has proved to be a robust mechanism for rating teams since it was introduced in October 2002 so it is the obvious base from which to determine the seedings for the ICC

Cricket World Cup," he added.

"With two qualifying places in each group, I believe the format gives a fair chance to all participating teams."

Australia will be based at St Kitts & Nevis for the tournament's preliminary round while India, losing World Cup finalists in 2003, will be in Trinidad and Tobago.

England will be based in St Lucia and hosts West Indies in Jamaica, which will stage the tournament's opening match.

Antigua, Barbados, Grenada and Guyana are the other venues for the event, whose 51 matches will take place between February and April 2007.

Shahin lone fighter

FROM PAGE 13

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| Manjurul not out   | 2   |
| Extras: (b8, lb4, nb1)   | 13  |
| Total: (All out in 58.2 overs)   | 153 |
| Fall of wickets: 1-17, 2-17, 3-32, 4-63, 5-70, 6-72, 7-90, 8-101, 9-147, 10-153. |     |

| Bowlers   | O   | M | R  | W |
|-----------|-----|---|----|---|
| Mahmud    | 9.2 | 5 | 17 | 3 |
| Mahbub    | 14  | 3 | 36 | 2 |
| Niaz      | 9   | 3 | 22 | 1 |
| Sunny     | 16  | 7 | 39 | 1 |
| Mehrab Jr | 10  | 4 | 27 | 2 |

DHAKA: 1st innings  
Mehrab Jr c Asadullah b Manjurul 8  
Anwar c Sazzad b Dollar 9  
Mehrab run out 12  
Jahangir lbw b Manjurul 1  
Sajjad Kadir batting 25  
Halim Shah batting 5  
Extras: (nb5) 66  
Total (For 4 wkts in 31 overs) 66  
Fall of wickets: 1-9, 2-26, 3-32, 4-33.

| Bowlers    | O  | M | R  | W |
|------------|----|---|----|---|
| Manajurul  | 10 | 4 | 15 | 2 |
| Mashrafe   | 11 | 1 | 34 | 0 |
| Dollar     | 6  | 2 | 15 | 1 |
| Jamaluddin | 4  | 3 | 2  | 0 |

CHITTAGONG-BARISAL  
BARISAL: First Innings  
Imran c Rabbi b Wayaskarani 10  
Humayun c Rabbi b wayaskarani 3  
Hannan lbw b Alamgir 1  
Nahidul b Ehsanul 4  
Shahin not out 119  
Nasiruddin c Rabbi b Ehsanul 0  
Salahuddin c Rabbi b Ehsanul 4

| Bowlers   | O   | M | R | W |
|---|-----|---|---|---|
| Nayan b Yasin   | 1   |   |   |   |
| Nadif c Yasin b Sunny   | 14  |   |   |   |
| Sonnet c Sunny b Alamgir  | 10  |   |   |   |
| Extras: (b18, lb3, nb2, w7)   | 30  |   |   |   |
| Total: (All out in 86.3 overs)  | 238 |   |   |   |
| Fall of wickets: 1-11, 2-19, 3-204, 37-5-37, 6-50, 7-164, 8-170, 9-218, 10-238. |     |   |   |   |

| Bowlers     | O    | M | R  | W |
|-------------|------|---|----|---|
| Alamgir     | 19.3 | 4 | 55 | 2 |
| Wayaskarani | 12   | 1 | 42 | 2 |
| Ehsanul     | 14   | 1 | 47 | 3 |
| Yasin       | 24   | 7 | 32 | 2 |
| Sunny       | 9    | 4 | 28 | 1 |
| Faisal      | 8    | 2 | 13 | 0 |

CHITTAGONG: 1st innings  
Tamim batting 21  
Salahuddin batting 2  
Extras: (w2) 2  
Total: (For no loss in two overs) 25

| Bowlers | O | M | R  | W |
|---------|---|---|----|---|
| Sonnet  | 1 | 0 | 3  | 0 |
| Nadif   | 1 | 0 | 22 | 0 |

RAJSHAHI-SYLHET  
RASJAHHI: 1st innings  
Naeem batting 75  
Jahurul c Babel b Rezaul 0  
Nuruzzaman c Babel b Hasibul 7  
Anisur lbw b Hasibul 26  
Forhad lbw b Hasibul 0  
Mashud c babel b Nabil 98  
Rosel batting 24  
Extras: (b9, lb3, w1) 13  
Total: (For 5 wkts in 93 overs) 243  
Fall of wickets: 1-2, 2-19, 3-19, 4-91,

| O  | M  | R  | W |
|----|----|----|---|
| 18 | 4  | 40 | 0 |
| 17 | 8  | 36 | 1 |
| 11 | 0  | 46 | 3 |
| 30 | 11 | 52 | 1 |
| 1  | 0  | 7  | 0 |
| 2  | 0  | 19 | 0 |
| 14 | 2  | 31 | 0 |

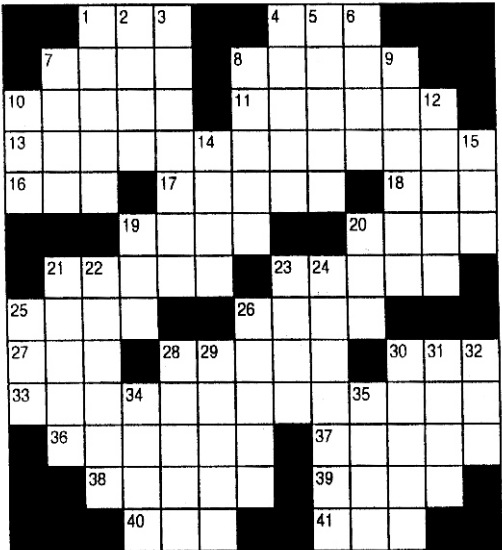
Rebels set

FROM PAGE 13

A spokesman for Zimbabwe Cricket said that negotiations were still ongoing and, therefore, it would be premature to comment.

It would seem that the main stumbling block in the way of a settlement -- the criteria under which selectors are chosen -- has been overcome, and it is thought that Zimbabwe Cricket has agreed to review this. That could mean that Max Ebrahim, the head of selectors and the man identified by the rebels as being the main source of contention, would step down.

All four rebels have been playing local cricket, and so while they might be lacking first-class practice, all of them are thought to be ready to resume straight away.



CRYPTOQUIP

M K W P H F X G B L K Y P H H Q  
C M I V W Y T P B B M D X  
Z G B Z G L F C W D I L Z C M B ' C

L T Z G B B Q B M Z M D X B L C V  
Yesterday's Cryptquip: WHEN A SKELETON PARTAKES OF DINNER, WOULD IT BE A SURE BET THAT HE PREFERS RIBS?

Today's Cryptquip Clue: B equals T

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.

Federer, Agassi move on

TENNIS

AFF, Dubai

US veteran Andre Agassi coasted into the quarterfinals of the Dubai Open as world number one Roger Federer survived an opening round scare against Czech qualifier Ivo Minar.

Agassi, who turns 35 years in April, outplayed 23-year-old Spaniard Feliciano Lopez 6-1, 6-3 in their second round tie.

But defending champion Federer was within a point of going a double break of serve down in the final set of his first round tie against his 20-year-old opponent from Prague before surviving 6-7, 6-3, 7-6.

"I had confidence after winning Rotterdam, but it was very different conditions, indoors, and this is outdoors, and I was struggling a

little. But he played well; he served well and hit well," said the Swiss player.

"He had already won three matches here in the qualifying competition, which gave him a longer and better preparation."

It took the champion almost two hours to quell the bold, aggressive Czech, who had only previously played seven matches on the main tour and yet was within three points of a sensational win when he led 4-3 in the deciding tie-break.

Minar's uninhibited flat hitting frequently put Federer under pressure and although the favourite was not at his best after travelling to the Middle East only two days before, he was a long way from his worst as well.

Federer was 1-3 down in the final set and advantage point down on his serve in the next game before the tide began to turn in his favour for a second time.