

Steve does not buy it

BBC ONLINE, undated

Steve Harmison has dismissed as "ludicrous" suggestions Andrew Flintoff was named England captain because only he can inspire the fast bowler.

Harmison also denied he pulled out of the series with Pakistan because he does not enjoy the one-day game.

"To suggest he has been made captain just because of me is ludicrous.

"Some people have said Fred can get the best out of me but that's not the reason he was picked. I always try to get the best out of myself," he said.

"At the end of the day, I've got to walk off the field and know I've tried everything I can. If a player needs somebody to be captain to get the best out of him, he shouldn't be playing."

Oblique references, concerning the captaincy and the pace bowler's fitness, have been made in the media about Harmison since he pulled out of last month's one-day series.

He has struggled with homesickness in the past, and suffered a year of indifferent form before rediscovering his attacking instinct in the Test series against Pakistan with an 11-wicket haul at Old Trafford.

"I'm not really bothered what people say about me - life is about opinions," he said.

"I had a sore side and I don't think I could have played in the one-day games. That's why I was pulled. I would probably have done myself more harm than good."

England's first net session was disrupted on Monday after the practice ground made available to them was double-booked by South Africa.

Andrew Flintoff's men arrived at the Sri Fort Sports Complex at 10am to find the South Africans warming up, playing football on the outfield.

The venue was arranged by the International Cricket Council, and having two teams practising in tandem has been usual practice this week.

England coach Duncan Fletcher appeared far from happy with the arrangement, however, and was involved in a lengthy exchange with South African counterpart Mickey Arthur.

Judgment day

FROM PAGE 20

The scandal began in May after newspapers published transcripts of intercepted telephone conversations between the then Juventus general manager, Luciano Moggi, telling the head of Italy's referees association which officials to appoint to specific Juventus games.

Moggi was banned from being involved in sport for five years for using his considerable power and influence at Italy's most successful club to assert control of the pool of referees and high-ranking FIGC officials.

River thump

FROM PAGE 20

midfielder Juan Sebastian to win 3-0 at Lanus and go third with 19 points.

Mariano Pavone scored twice early in the second half and set up the third for Peruvian Juan Comings.

Arsenal (18 points) went fourth by beating Quilmes 2-1, thanks to a spectacular effort from Lucas Valdemarin who volleyed home a cross from Ugandan midfielder Ibrahim Sekagya in the 87th minute.

Independiente's chances suffered a severe blow when Jorge Burruchaga's team lost 3-1 at Godoy Cruz, who recorded their first win of the competition at the ninth attempt.

Mauro Poy put Godoy Cruz ahead in the 39th minute before Hernan Bujan and David Villar pounced on poor defending to make it 3-0 early in the second half at Mendoza's Malvinas Argentinas stadium.

Daniel Montenegro scored Independiente's consolation with his eighth goal of the competition.

Independiente (16 points) dropped to sixth and were overtaken by their neighbours and bitter rivals Racing Club, who beat Colon 2-1 to go fifth.

SL serious

FROM PAGE 17 selves," he said. "We want everyone to be fresh. We might think of rotating a few guys, but we have not finalised that yet."

TEAMS SRI LANKA (from): Mahela Jayawardene (captain), Kumar Sangakkara, Sanath Jayasuriya, Marvan Atapattu, Upul Tharanga, Tillakaratne Dilshan, Chamara Kapugedara, Farveez Maharoof, Chaminda Vaas, Ruchira Perera, Dilhara Fernando, Lasith Malinga, Malinga Bandara, Muttiah Muralitharan.

ZIMBABWE (from): Prosper Utseya (captain), Stuart Matsikenyeri, Brendan Taylor, Tafadzwa Mufambisi, Elton Chigumbura, Hamilton Masakadza, Terry Duffin, Tawanda Mupariya, Ed Rainsford, Piet Rinke, Anthony Ireland, Gregory Strydom, Chamu Chibhabha, Tafadzwa Kamungozi.



Sommilito Nagarik Samaj organized a human chain at the Central Shaheed Minar in the city yesterday protesting the police attack on the national shooters.

Flemo has fully-fit side



AFP, New Delhi

New Zealand captain Stephen Fleming is raring to get into the Champions Trophy in India because he finally has a fully-fit team at his disposal.

"I am excited about my side because we are approaching a tournament in full strength and that is something we haven't done for a long time," Fleming said after the former champions arrived in New Delhi on Monday morning.

"With (Shane) Bond, Daniel (Vettori) and (Jacob) Oram all fit and raring to go, we know what we want to do and what we can do," said the 33-year-old with 7,184 one-day international runs under his belt.

New Zealand, who won the second edition of the championship at Nairobi in 2000, have not played

one-dayers since March, when they handed a 4-1 drubbing to the West Indies in a home series.

"We have not played a lot of cricket but we have the experience to adapt to conditions here as many of our players have been here before," said the left-handed opener.

"We generally know what we are capable of doing what for our team and a reason why we don't experience so much is because our resources are limited unlike those of Australia, India and Pakistan.

"We too have introduced some players in the recent past but our timeline is different and we don't see a lot of things changing in the near future," added Fleming, who has led New Zealand in 191 one-dayers.

But nine years at the helm had not changed his desire to win.

"You need different energy levels to lead in one-dayers. You have to keep getting better and improve on leadership qualities and this tournament is just another opportunity to

show my ability," he said.

New Zealand coach John Bracewell too felt his team was equipped to do well in Indian conditions.

"The dew factor might be a consideration here since all matches are day-night affairs but we have a lot of swing bowlers with us," said the former Test off-spinner.

Bracewell said he was expecting some huge scores, especially since the 400-run mark has been crossed four times this year.

"The 400-run mark is like the four-minute mile clocked by Roger Bannister. Once you have hit it, it is likely to be repeated again and again, especially because of the amount of cricket being played," said Bracewell.

New Zealand take on South Africa in their first group match in Mumbai on October 16.

Cassano 'perfect

FROM PAGE 20

"For this reason, Napoli could offer him the perfect stage to express his high levels."

Cassano joined Real in January after a 3.5-million-pound fee was agreed with Roma given that his contract had just six months left to run in Rome.

However, the man nicknamed 'Talentino' by the Spanish media, has struggled in Madrid even following the appointment of Fabio Capello as boss.

As a result, Bronzetti feels that the ex-Bari starlet's time with the European giants may be coming to an end.

"We all know that Cassano gets long faced when he's not playing and he tends to relax mentally," he added.

"Unfortunately there is a relatively clear situation in Madrid with Ruud Van Nistelrooy and Ronaldo the first choices, with Raul and Robinho the second reserves."

Cassano's lack of recent use by Capello, his former Roma mentor, has also cost him his place in the Italian squad.

Sachin supports

FROM PAGE 17

"You have got to improve your team all the team," he insisted.

"Otherwise, you are going backwards because everyone around you is constantly improving."

Chappell warned there would be more chopping and changing and said he did not expect the team to be ready until next year's World Cup.

"We're not looking to be settled probably until then," he added.

"If other teams are settled, that is their concern - our concern is to be settled when we need to be."

India play England in their opening Champions Trophy game next Sunday.

Neville accepts

FROM PAGE 20

head in despair.

"In games such as Saturday's, you might only get one chance," he said.

"That was the big one and I should have taken it. It was a fantastic opportunity. It almost felt like an open goal in front of me."

"The ball did sit up a little bit but at the very least I should have hit the target. I could have also squared it to Wayne Rooney, although I didn't see him until after I shot."

"It is very disappointing because if I had scored, I would have made it more comfortable for us and they would have had to change the way they approached the game."

As it turned out, Macedonia were able to rely on a counter-attacking style which saw them carve out just as many clear-cut chances as England in the 0-0 stalemate.

Partex shock

FROM PAGE 17

Epyllion: 164 all out in 45.1 overs (Salahuddin 69, Tushar 13, Dickens 10, Mushfiqur Rahim 26, Sonnet 11, extras 21, Mahbubul 2-26, Palash 2-26, Kamrul 2-26, Shuva 3-32).

Blossom Hotel: 131-8 in 50 overs (Kalim 13, Raju 30, Sajjadul 43, Rana 17, extras 19, Mushfiq Babu 2-12).

Biman: 134-6 in 45.5 overs (Tamim 14, Sanwar 49 n.o., Mushfiq 13, Mosharraf 26, extras 26, Azim 2-36).

Ispahani: 217-7 in 50 overs (Junaid 53, Sadid 68, Riyad 38, Arif 10, Sajju 14 n.o., Yasin 10 n.o., extras 24, Mahmud 3-32, Jalaluddin 2-43).

Raju Fish: 151-9 in 50 overs (Rabiu 11, Sajjadul 54 n.o., Jalaluddin 10, Bishwanath 41, extras 12, Ashiqur 3-17, Mohibul 4-17, Riyad 2-17).

PCB, Inzamam at odds?



BBC ONLINE, undated

Sacked team manager Zaheer Abbas claims regular captain Inzamamul Haq has lost the confidence of officials in Pakistan cricket following The Oval debacle.

Abbas told BBC Radio Five Live that the refusal to play on the fourth day of the Test was Inzamam's own choice.

He said: "Pakistan's management is not happy with Inzamam at the moment."

"I requested him to go into the field at The Oval, chairman Shaharyar Khan requested also, and a few members of the cricket team, but he refused."

Shaharyar resigned from his post on Friday night, and the following day Younis Khan was named Pakistan's captain for the ICC Champions Trophy with Inzamam serving a four-match ban.

The International Cricket Council

had served the suspension on him for bringing the game into disrepute at The Oval after the on-field umpires had alleged the ball had been tampered with.

But only last Thursday, Younis had said he refused to be a "dummy" captain, and for two days the captaincy passed to Mohammad Yousuf.

Abbas said Younis's had had a difficult relationship with Shaharyar since the England tour.

"Once when Shaharyar was in his room, Younis wanted to meet him. He had to wait 15 minutes to go and talk to him."

"A few other things cropped up and all of a sudden he said: 'I don't want to become a puppet captain of the Pakistan team' -- and that's why he resigned."

"The ICC Champions Trophy was upon us, an important tour, and he wanted to set out the problems he was facing at that time."

"He felt that the chairman was not giving him enough time so decided to resign."

On the separate issue of Inzamam's actions at The Oval on August 20, Abbas said: "After having protested we should have gone into the field and started playing."

"But Inzamam said to me 'I don't want to go in the field; if the boys want to go in the field then they can'."

"We know the captain didn't listen to us at that point in time. Loads of people were there waiting for us to go and show our ability to them and see us playing."

Asked if it was likely that Inzamam may be asked to step down as captain when he returns from his ban, Abbas replied: "It looks like it but I'm not sure."

Former star batsman Abbas was sacked on September 13 by the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) after just six months in the role.

The PCB initially said it was "resting him" but has made no indication that he will be given the job back.

WOMEN'S WORLD CUP

Dutch delight



AFP, Madrid

Hot favourites Netherlands, the world's top-ranked team, outplayed Australia to win the women's field hockey World Cup final 3-1 here Sunday.

The victory was set up by Miek Van Geenhuizen's superb skills controlling midfield while her combination with Minke Smabers cut off Australia's main attack throughout the match.

The title also improved on the Netherlands' previous two second places.

Netherlands had their opponents under pressure early in the game with Australia's defensive trio of Angie Skirving, Emily Halliday and goalkeeper Rachel Imison battling hard to keep out the many raids.

But gradually the Dutch midfield,

led by Van Geenhuizen and Smabers, and backed by keeper Janneke Schopman, started to take control and near the break it was up to Imison to keep Australia in the match.

The Netherlands tactics almost paid off when striker Sylvia Karres claimed a goal from a quarter line hit deflection.

However the umpires referred the incident to the TV umpire with Australia claiming the deflection. Replays showed the Australians were correct, and the goal was disallowed.

After the break, the Netherlands went ahead when Maartje Paumen hit a low corner shot over the glove of Imison.

But then an Australian break led to a superb shot at goal.

It appeared to be brilliantly saved by Schopman on the line. After consultation, the TV umpire was called, a penalty stroke was

awarded and converted by Rebecca Sanders for the equaliser.

Australia's defence held until a great backstick goal by Karres got behind Imison and the Netherlands led again.

With four minutes remaining Netherlands put the result beyond doubt when Fatima De Melo broke through into the left circle and a shot was fired which hit Skirving.

Paumen made no mistake with the penalty stroke and Netherlands powered home 3-1.

Maria Hernandez grabbed a hatrick as former champions Argentina brushed aside hosts Spain 5-0 to take third place.

England clinched seventh place when they defeated Germany 2-1.

The final rankings were Netherlands, Australia, Argentina, Spain, Japan, USA, England, Germany, Korea, China, India, South Africa.



The Netherlands team celebrate their Women's World Cup Field Hockey World Cup victory after their 3-1 win over Australia in the final in Madrid on Sunday.

FORMULA 1

Schumacher concedes title

THE GUARDIAN

An unusually philosophical Michael Schumacher admitted defeat in his quest for one last world championship on Sunday, after his first mid-race engine failure for more than six years handed Fernando Alonso victory in the Japanese grand prix. Renault's defending champion now leads by 10 points with only the Brazilian grand prix remaining.

"The drivers' championship is over," Schumacher conceded. "We all know Fernando only needs one point and we all know what a good

driver he is, so that should be no problem for him. It'll be more or less a walk in the park for him now and he can go easy on everything in Brazil." However, Ferrari's president, Luca di Montezemolo, said his team would keep fighting "to the very last metre. Ferrari know how to accept defeat just as they know how to celebrate victory," he said, "and a day like today gives us even more determination for the future."

Schumacher was a comfortable leader with 16 laps to go when smoke began billowing from the back of his car. Behind him, Alonso

had been so resigned to Ferrari's bullet-proof reliability that he could not believe it was the German in trouble. "At the beginning I thought it was one of the Spyker cars because from a long distance I didn't know it was red. I thought it was orange," the Spaniard said. "I hit the brakes and didn't want to go off the track with the oil, so I was concentrating on that. I didn't realise until we were side-by-side that it was Michael."

Alonso punched the air as he went past, then cruised home 16sec ahead of Felipe Massa in the other Ferrari. Schumacher made a point of hugging every member of the Ferrari crew who, in contrast to the German, looked shell-shocked at their car's failure. While the team's sporting director, Jean Todt, said the result left a "really bitter taste in our mouths", Schumacher was more sanguine.

"Just because it didn't work out here it doesn't mean it's the end of the world," he said. "We brought back to life a championship that had already seemed to be decided; we've improved so much in the last few months. That's why there's no reason for me to cry any bitter tears; rather I feel only joy because until the engine went we were clearly in front. We did everything right. That's why I'm very content. That's life. It has its ups and downs. That's what makes it so interesting."

Inzi wishes Pakistan well

FROM PAGE 17

enforced in the Trophy, even after completing his four-match ban, Inzamam will not feature in the tournament as once a player is replaced he cannot be later reinstated.

Inzamam was replaced by Faisal Iqbal. If Pakistan suffer any injury problems they can only draft a player from a provisional squad of 30 players.

ICC spokesman Brian Murgatroyd told AFP that rules state that once a player is replaced he cannot be reinstated later in the tournament.

"Clause 6.9 of the participating agreement clearly states that," Murgatroyd said. "I am afraid Inzi will not be able to play in this Champions Trophy."

Younis had hoped Inzamam would be able to play in the final.

"It will be really good if we win our first four games and then Inzi comes back," Younis had told reporters on arrival in India last week.

"I will be ready to stand down as captain. I will be really happy to see him lift the Trophy while I am standing behind him. He has been one of my heroes right from the 1992 World Cup."

In the latest turmoil to effect Pakistan's cricketing set-up, the newly appointed PCB chairman announced earlier Monday that Mushtaq Ahmed was being sacked as assistant coach for the Trophy.

"The situation regarding Mushtaq was not clear, it was tough on him," said Inzamam after the PCB chairman announced that the veteran spinner would not be required for the short tour.