



Did U Know?

India's Abbas Ali Baig was the first batsman to hit a century on debut against England in England.



Inzamamul Haq

(Pakistan cricket captain)
"It's not good news for Australia as I can remember a couple of occasions when they didn't play and they found it very tough."

After star Australian bowlers Shane Warne and Glenn McGrath announced retirement.



ESPN

Australia v England
Fifth Ashes Test, Day 3
Live at 5:15 am

STAR Sports

South Africa v India
Third Test, Day 3
Live at 2:00 pm

Inzy denies rift with Shoaib

CRICINFO, undated

Inzamamul Haq, the Pakistan captain, has denied all speculation that Shoaib Akhtar's exclusion from the touring squad to South Africa had anything to do with personal differences between the two.

The Pakistan media had reported an alleged rift shortly after the squad was announced, saying that Inzamam was unhappy when Shoaib was discussed at the selection committee meeting. Speaking to reporters prior to the team's departure for Johannesburg, Inzamam insisted that Shoaib was left out purely for cricketing reasons.

"I do not want to comment on this, but all that is being reported is not correct," said Inzamam.

"The selectors feel he needs more time to regain match fitness and we are hoping he will join us for the one-day series in South Africa. Shoaib has not played cricket for the last three months, but I have no doubt that if he proves himself match fit after playing domestic cricket, he will get a chance to come back."

Looking ahead to the tour, Inzamam said he was happy with the composition of the team as Mohammad Asif returns to boost the pace-bowling department. Asif is one among five fast bowlers in the 17-member squad.

"The selectors have picked a balanced squad particularly in the pace department," said Inzamam. "We are up to the task and know how important this tour is for us. I am confident that the team will do well and be ready for the World Cup."

Both Asif and Shoaib got their drugs bans overturned by a Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) tribunal, making them eligible for selection. While only Asif made the cut to the Test squad, Shoaib was on the list of reserves submitted by the PCB and was in the preliminary one-day squad. Cricket South Africa clarified that it had no objections to either of them being selected.

The tour kicks off with a three-day warm-up match at Kimberley on Saturday before the first Test at Centurion on January 11.

One-man show!

Table tennis

SPORTS REPORTER

In an unprecedented move, Bangladesh Table Tennis Federation (BTTF) president Solaiman Chowdhury abolished the elected body of the federation just before the Eid holidays, replacing it with an ad-hoc committee.

Solaiman Chowdhury, a former cabinet secretary who is now the chairman of the Privatisation Commission, dissolved the executive committee under Section 20, Clause A of the sports federations' constitution, the so-called 'black law' that has never been used previously.

His attempt to disband the committee failed when he could not get the consent of ex-sports adviser CM Shafi Sami but the BTTF chief finally managed to convince sports adviser Shafiqul Haque Chowdhury.

The move has surprised all concerned as this section of the constitution, even not used by partisans in the past, saw light during the tenure of the neutral caretaker government. Many raised eyebrows about the existence of this law and asked the inevitable question -- If the president can dissolve an elected body on his own then what is the necessity of elections? In the past, in case of replacement of committees, the EC used to take decisions.

It can be mentioned that the

federation activities all but stopped for the last one and a half years after its president failed to hold the election according to a 'controversial' voter-list that excluded the outgoing vice-president and general secretary.

The National Sports Council (NSC) did not endorse the voter-list and asked the president to send a revised one. Since then, the relationship between the EC and the president deteriorated, leading to cessation of all major domestic competitions. Not only that, the national team's camp for the 10th South Asian Games last year was hampered when a section, most of whom are included in the 13-member ad-hoc committee, influenced a number of players' withdrawal from the camp.

The ad-hoc committee has been given the task of holding an election within 90 days and one of its vice-presidents defended the president's decision saying that 'it had to be done because there had been no elections' at the federation.

It can be noted that polls are due at the Bangladesh Olympic Association for over two and half years but the organisation has decided to go for elections once the new government takes over.

The temporary body has already asked the outgoing general secretary to hand over charge. With the BTTF office at the Bangabandhu National Stadium under renovation, the new committee had its first meeting at Solaiman Chowdhury's office on the New Year's Eve.

Morgan, Pawar to fight it out

CRICINFO, undated

The ICC have revealed David Morgan, the chairman of the ECB and Sharad Pawar, the BCCI president, as the two nominees to succeed Percy Sonn as president of the board.

Sonn, 57, began his two-year term at the ICC's annual conference in 2006. The board has the option of extending his contract to three years but, if not, his successor will take office at the annual conference next year. Pawar, who became the BCCI's president in November 2005, has the backing of five member boards, including the Asian bloc.

The voting process, however, is not restricted only to the 10 full-member boards. There are also the votes of the 32 associate members of the ICC, and the 55 affiliate members. Naturally the votes cast by the full members count for more than those of the others. The winning candidate needs to secure a two-thirds majority among the full-member countries, and a simple majority overall. The votes are weighted 75 per cent in favour of the member boards, with 25 per cent going to the associate and affiliate members. The 55 affiliate members only get five votes between them. It sounds rather complicated, but, basically a two-thirds majority of the full members will do the trick.

A new nominations committee, put in place in July 2005, will meet soon to consider the nominations.

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5-0 stays reality

Cricket

AFP, Sydney

Australia will look to recover from the setback of skipper Ricky Ponting's run out and seize an innings lead in the final Ashes Test after England hit back on Wednesday's second day at the Sydney Cricket Ground.

Ponting's miscalculation provided England with an unexpected opportunity to get back into the fifth Test before Mike Hussey and Andrew Symonds helped restore the innings late on the rain-hit day.

At stumps, Australia had worked their way to 188 for four and trailed England by 103 runs with the consistent Hussey on 37 off 98 balls and Symonds on 22 from 34 balls.

England, 4-0 down and facing a rare series whitewash, are defending what appears a below-par 291 in their first innings.

Australia were 118 for two when the Australian captain attempted a risky single off spinner Monty Panesar.

Ponting, cruising along without threat from the English bowlers, was caught out of his ground by a throw from James Anderson, fielding at mid-off.

Australia's big batting threat, with two centuries and 576 runs in the series, was sent on his way by the video umpire for 45 to give the tourists a crack at Australia's middle order.

There were further repercussions when No.5 Michael Clarke was caught behind to give a recharged Steve Harmison his second wicket.

"England have got a bit of an opportunity. We'll see how things go in the morning. If we can put on a good partnership first off then we can take it away from them," retiring Australian paceman Glenn McGrath said.

"We feel we can turn things

around from almost any situation and win a Test match. The guys are pretty positive. Early runs tomorrow and who knows?"

Harmison, who bowled with the zest and bounce missing from the early Tests in the series, taking 2-34 off 16 overs, said England were trying to spoil the farewell party for retiring Australian stars Shane Warne, McGrath and Justin Langer.

"I think I'm the only one left that's been in this position before, 4-0

down going to Sydney and we won here last time (2002-3 tour), so we can draw on some of that," Harmison said.

"We have to give it one last effort."

Australia lost both openers -- Langer for 26 and Matthew Hayden for 33 -- before tea.

Langer followed up his three dropped catches in his 105th and final Test by gloving a leg-side catch

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PHOTO: AFP

Glenn McGrath (C) of Australia is congratulated by teammates after taking the wicket of English batsman Paul Collingwood on the second day of the final Ashes Test at the Sydney Cricket Ground on Wednesday.

Yardy to lead Eng A

Cricket

BBC ONLINE, undated

England international Michael Yardy has been named captain of the England A team for their tour to Bangladesh.

The appointment provides compensation for all-rounder Yardy after he was left out of the senior squad for the forthcoming one-day series in Australia.

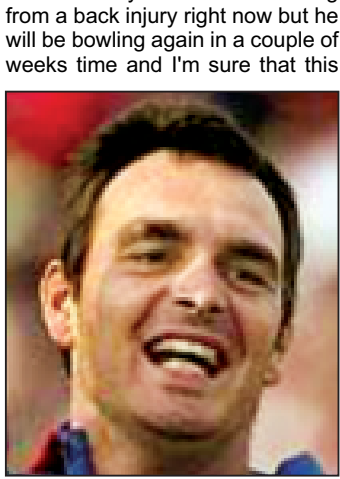
Yardy will lead a 14-man party featuring some interesting new names.

They include Middlesex batsman Nick Compton, the grandson of England legend Denis Compton, and Yorkshire's teenage leg-spin prospect Adil Rashid.

Compton hit five centuries during the 2006 season, while Rashid, who has recently recovered from a stress fracture in his back, picked up 25 wickets in five Championship appearances and scored a century against India for the England under-19 team.

"It is testament to the hard work of our coaching staff that we have such a strong pipeline of talent emerging from our Academy and it is satisfying to see this being recognised by the ECB," Yorkshire chief executive Stewart Regan told the club's website.

"Obviously Adil is still recovering from a back injury right now but he will be bowling again in a couple of weeks time and I'm sure that this



MICHAEL YARDY

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call-up will be a great incentive for him to get back to full fitness as quickly as possible."

Among the other new faces are Kent's Danish-born pace bowler Amjad Khan, who was granted British citizenship last month, and batsman Will Jefferson and Michael Carberry.

"The squad will also offer another chance to Alex Loudon and Tim Bresnan, who have both been in the England set up during the last 18 months," said National Academy director Peter Moores.

There is no room for Robert Key and Owais Shah, two of the most experienced members of the Academy squad, which spent the first part of the winter training and playing games in Perth.

"Owais Shah and Robert Key remain very much in our thoughts and their non-selection reflects the fact that they have already had extensive experience of touring with England A and the National Academy squad and provides valuable opportunities for other



PHOTO: AFP

Indian batsman Sourav Ganguly lifts the ball on the off-side on the second day of the third Test against South Africa at the Newlands in Cape Town on Wednesday.

Warne claims 1000 wickets

PTI, Sydney

Australian spin wizard Shane Warne reached another milestone in his farewell outing as he grabbed his 1000th international wicket in the fifth and final Ashes Test here Wednesday.

Warne became the second bowler in the history of the game to claim 1,000 international wickets as he trapped Monty Panesar before the stumps during England's first innings at the Sydney Cricket Ground.

The leg-spinner, who is the highest wicket-taker in Test cricket having scalped 707 batsmen so far, has claimed 293 one-day international wickets.

Sri Lankan Muttiah Muralidaran was the first to claim 1000 international wickets. The off-spinner, who is the second highest wicket-taker in Test cricket with 674 scalps, has captured 1104 international wickets so far.

Meanwhile, Australian paceman Glenn McGrath, who is also playing his last Test here, got his 900th international wicket yesterday.

Kiwis limp to victory

AFP, Christchurch

New Zealand had to work hard on Tuesday to reach a paltry target of 110 for victory against Sri Lanka and take the lead in their one-day international series.

The third match in the series at Jade Stadium was shortened to 46 overs and New Zealand's victory target was reduced to 110 from 113 under the complicated rules used for rain-interrupted matches.

The home side appeared set to saunter to victory after Sri Lanka were dismissed cheaply for 112 off 35.2 overs. But by the 15th over, New Zealand had tumbled to 70-6 and the result was in the balance.

Peter Fulton came in at number four and steadied the innings with an unbeaten 43, finally clinching the match with a massive pull shot for six. The tall 27-year-old hit a series of elegant drives and pulls as he compiled five fours and two sixes in his 57 ball innings.

Allrounder James Franklin, who led New Zealand to victory with a composed 45 in the previous match against Sri Lanka, was again on hand to score an important 15 not out on the way to the total, reduced using the Duckworth-Lewis method.

Captain Daniel Vettori said he felt New Zealand always had Sri Lanka under pressure, despite the collapse early in the New Zealand innings.

"Maybe we were a little aggressive in going after the runs," Vettori said.

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Proteas peg India back

Cricket

AFP, Cape Town

India lost their last five wickets for 19 runs as South Africa fought back on the second day of the third and final Test at Newlands Tuesday.

South Africa were 25 for one at tea in reply to India's first innings of 414. Sachin Tendulkar and Sourav Ganguly made half-centuries but India's tailenders collapsed against the accurate bowling of Shaun Pollock and debutant left-arm spinner Paul Harris, who both finished with four wickets. Pollock took four for 75 and Harris four for 129.

With the series locked at 1-1, India looked on course to bat South Africa out of the game as Tendulkar made a carefully-crafted 64 and India reached 337 with four wickets down. But Tendulkar was caught at slip off Harris shortly before lunch.

Ganguly and the hard-hitting Virender Sehwag put on 58 in 49 minutes for the sixth wicket before Sehwag's dismissal sparked a collapse. Sehwag had raced to 40 off 50 balls with six fours and a six when he swept against Harris and Makhaya Ntini took a diving catch at deep backward square leg.

Pollock's persistence paid off when he trapped Anil Kumble leg before for nought and Harris picked up his fourth wicket when Mark Boucher pulled off a smart stumping as Zaheer Khan stretched forward and lost his balance.

Ganguly went for his shots and hit a six over long-on off Harris before Pollock picked up the last

two wickets. Shanthakumaran Sreesanth was caught at gully before Ganguly lofted a catch to mid-off. Ganguly made 66 off 75 balls with nine fours and a six.

Tendulkar started in watchful mode when he resumed on 28 not out. It took him more than an hour to hit his first boundary of the day but in an ominous sign for the South Africans he struck four sweetly-timed fours within 10 deliveries on either side of reaching his second half-century in successive matches.

But then Harris made a ball spin out of the rough outside leg stump and Tendulkar edged it to Jacques Kallis at slip. Tendulkar batted for 187 minutes, faced 130 balls and hit 11 fours.

South Africa, seeking to make good use of the second new ball, were only able to claim one early wicket, when Dale Steyn bowled VVS Laxman for 13 with a fast, straight delivery which uprooted the off stump. The breakthrough came in the eighth over of the morning.

Ganguly ducked into a Steyn bouncer and was hit on the helmet before he had scored, requiring treatment on the field, and was dropped on 22 when Shaun Pollock could not hold a diving chance at mid-off, halfway to the boundary, off Harris.

Captain Graeme Smith hit the first ball of the South African innings for six when he top-edged a pull off Zaheer Khan over fine leg, following up with a solidly-struck pull for four off the last ball of the same over.

Sreesanth claimed his 17th wicket of the series when AB de Villiers was caught behind by

Dinesh Karthik off an inside edge.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard at tea on the second day of the third and final Test between South Africa and India at Newlands on Wednesday:

INDIA: First innings (overnight 254-3)

Jaffer c Kallis b Steyn	116
Karthik c Amla b Harris	63
Dravid c Bacher b Pollock	29
Tendulkar c Kallis b Harris	64
Laxman b Steyn	13
Ganguly c Amla b Pollock	66
Sehwag c Ntini b Harris	40
Kumble lbw b Pollock	0
Zaheer st Boucher b Harris	1
Sreesanth c Gibbs b Pollock	3
Patel not out	0

Extras: (b-5, lb-4, nb-8, w-2) 19
Total: (All out in 131.1 overs) 414
Fall of wickets: 1-153, 2-202, 3-240, 4-269, 5-337, 6-395, 7-395, 8-398, 9-407.

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Steyn	27	12	58	2
Ntini	26	4	107	0
Pollock	29.1	9	75	4
Kallis	12	4	36	0
Harris	37	3	129	4

SOUTH AFRICA: First innings

Smith not out	21
De Villiers c Karthik b Sreesanth	1
Amla not out	3
Extras:	0
Total: (For 1 wkt in 7 overs)	25

Fall of wicket: 1-14

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Zaheer	2	0	14	0
Sreesanth	3	2	5	1
Kumble	2	0	6	0

To bat: J Kallis, A Prince, H Gibbs, M Boucher, S Pollock, M Ntini, D Steyn, P Harris



PHOTO: AFP

Black Caps seamer Michael Mason (R) bowls as Sri Lankan skipper Mahela Jayawardena during the third one-day international at the Jade Stadium in Christchurch on Tuesday.