

## Alamgir new MSC chief

SPORTS REPORTER

Mohammedan Sporting Club reconstituted their cricket committee for the 2007 season with Engineer Golam Mohammad Alamgir has been named chairman and Habibullah Don as the secretary.

Mahbubul Anam, Khondokar Jamiluddin, Mizanur Rahman Mizan, Lutfur Rahman Badal and Mohammad Younus are the five vice-chairman in the 20-member committee.

The members are Enayet Hossain Siraj, ASM Faruque, ASM Raqibul Hasan, Dr Nizamuddin Ahmed, Hanif Bhuiyan, Azhar Hossain Shantoo, Tasmin Delwar, Mohammad Nurul Islam, Ashish Roy, Fakhru Alam, Mohammad Monir Hossain, Wasim Khan and Tahirul Islam Titoo.

## Rule bent

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Mahmud was not doing that bad as manager but BCB general secretary Mahbubul Anam said that there was a reason behind the latest decision while advocating for Asif's appointment.

"Mahmud is working as an operation manager of our Academy and we only considered him as a makeshift arrangement for manager. We thought that there is lot of things to do with the Academy right at the moment that's why we have decided to appoint a new one," said Mahbub.

"Asif applied for the job and we just appointed him on a trial-and-error basis. I think he has the capability of doing the job as he has the managerial experience in an international agency. Most importantly he played cricket and have had the experience as an organiser," said the bearded organiser defending the decision. But when asked whether the board allowed other candidates to apply, his response was negative.

"You know we are looking for a permanent manager for this post and we will definitely consider him for long term if he does well in Zimbabwe," said Mahbub.

BCB general secretary however did not address that Asif has already developed a very good rapport with coach Whatmore.

Mahmud understandably didn't want to make any comment on the issue because he was a loyal servant of the board.

He served as team operations manager during ICC Champions Trophy and two home series against Zimbabwe and Scotland.

Meanwhile, the meeting also discussed India's visit in Bangladesh after the World Cup. India is likely to arrive in Dhaka on May 7 to play two Tests and three one-day internationals.

Besides, the confusion over the naming of the board was also put to rest following a gazette notification on December 27 which amended the name of Bangladesh Cricket Control Board (BCCB) to Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB).

## Civil war

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It is unclear how Abramovich will react to Shevchenko's deliberate relegation. Any attempt to force his coach to field the striker could push an already strained situation into meltdown.

The former European footballer of the year has scored only five goals in 29 appearances since joining from Milan last summer. He missed Wednesday's Carling Cup tie at Wycombe with what was described as a slight hamstring injury, forcing Lampard to be called up at the last minute. Mourinho's camp suspect the injury was contrived because the Ukrainian feared more negative publicity should he fail to score against a fourth-tier side.

Last night Chelsea issued a formal denial of reports that Mourinho had told a friend he was definitely leaving the club by the end of the season. Tellingly, the manager did not deny the story was correct.

"I love Chelsea for just 2½ years but I love Chelsea," said Mourinho. "I want to win always the next game and the next game is against Wigan. We have to be together to win that game and we have to forget the stories, we have to forget what the press is saying. It's easy for me. I'm self-motivated, always at the top. If results are not what we want, that is even a bigger motivation to fight."

## Sarwan not fit

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Bravo, Patrick Browne, Shivnarine Chanderpaul, Corey Collimore, Narsingh Deonarine, Travis Dowlin, Fidel Edwards, Reyad Emrit, Chris Gayle, Ryan Hinds, Wavell Hinds, Sylvester Joseph, Rawl Lewis, Dave Mohammed, Runako Morton, Daren Powell, Keiron Pollard, Denesh Ramdin, Darren Sammy, Marlon Samuels, Ramnaresh Sarwan, Lendl Simmons, Wayne Smith, Devon Smith, Jerome Taylor, Gavin Tonge.

### INDIA TOUR SQUAD

Brian Lara (captain), Ian Bradshaw, Dwayne Bravo, Shivnarine Chanderpaul, Reyad Emrit, Chris Gayle, Runako Morton, Daren Powell, Denesh Ramdin, Darren Sammy, Marlon Samuels, Lendl Simmons, Devon Smith and Jerome Taylor.



PHOTO: AFP

American tennis star Andy Roddick (R) shares a joke with the crowd after defeating Roger Federer of Switzerland in the final of the Kooyong Classic in Melbourne on Saturday.

# Roddick breaks Federer jinx



AFP, Melbourne

Andy Roddick notched only his second career victory over arch-nermesis Roger Federer by winning the Kooyong Classic 6-2, 3-6, 6-3 on Saturday.

The victory in one hour, 20 minutes at the eight-man special event snapped an eight-match losing streak against the Swiss world number one going back to 2003.

Handing Federer his first defeat in 31 matches was the perfect tonic for Roddick, rejuvenated by coach Jimmy Connors, ahead of the Australian Open which starts on Monday.

"It really needs to be done on a

big stage," Roddick said. "But that said, it is nice, my game's going pretty well. I feel good going into the Open.

"My returns are working well and that will get me some looks at some breaks."

Roddick struggled throughout against a swirling wind, but held together in the third set, firing over a pair of aces to claim victory after breaking Federer for 5-3 lead.

Federer, holder of a dozen titles in 2006, had not lost since his shock defeat to Andy Murray at Cincinnati.

Federer still holds a dominating 13-2 record over Roddick and said he had no worries ahead of the season's first Grand Slam, where he will play German Bjorn Phau in the first round.

"Andy played very well, he had me worried early on. I could have

been out of it very quickly, he had such a good start," he said.

"But I'm ready for the Australian Open. That's exactly how I want to feel after this event. I couldn't win it, but we had some entertaining matches this week."

Roddick won the first set on a double break, then could only watch as Federer clawed back to take the second. The third turned on a few shots, with Roddick's late break the key to success.

"They were hard conditions," said Federer. When the wind is blowing it's going to be hard to return Andy's serve.

"But I'm happy with the way it all came out. Andy got the crucial break for the win. But the match was still good."

# What went wrong in 5-0

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West Indian side that won a closely fought 2-1 Test series in 1992-93 that last scored a Test series success in Australia. Since then, touring sides have occasionally managed a draw, or have otherwise lost. Indians' 1-1 all draw in 2003-2004 is perhaps the most gallant effort seen on Australian soil in a long time.

In this context, England's defeat in 2006 becomes a little more understandable. England were also up against the number one Test playing nation who were at full strength and had once again found their form. Ricky Ponting's Australian side has had an impressive 2006 and including the Ashes whitewash has now won 12 consecutive Test matches to reconfirm their number one status. The Australian cricket team who arguably took the mantle of world number one after Mark Taylor's side defeated the West Indies in the Caribbean in 1995 and has scarcely looked like giving it back since.

Both at home and abroad, both in Test and ODI cricket, Australian cricket has been at the top of international standings almost unchallenged. In many respects, this was what made England's success in 2005 so stunning. This is an Australian side that has accomplished nearly everything there is to accomplish in international cricket over the past decade, and although no self-respecting Australian would ever call England's Ashes victory a fluke, or anything short of outstanding, there were many both in Australia and abroad felt that despite the loss, Australia remained the number one side in the world. It was always going to be a difficult task for England to come to Australia and defend the Ashes in Australia given the history of the past 10 years, and the task was simply too grand for them.

There are many who would stop there, happy with the explanation that 'Australia have been the best team for a long time, and although they slipped up briefly, they have restored themselves to the top of the heap once again'. There are, no doubt, those in Australia who feel this way, as can be seen by the fanfare and euphoria that has followed the Sydney Test. Yet this attitude does a disservice to the England side on two counts. Firstly, it says that they never had a chance out here and were doomed from the outset, which is both unfair and untrue. Secondly, such an attitude is to belittle their achievements in 2005, and to discard them as a fluke. If an Ashes victory had been achieved in 2005, then what had changed that made Ashes 2006 such a complete failure?

Firstly, this touring English side was missing a few of their key contributors from 2005. The most notable was the absence of their inspirational and talented captain Michael Vaughan. One can imagine how the loss of Ricky Ponting, clearly the most talented and experienced of the current Australian Batsmen, would have affected the performance of the Australian side.

Vaughn had been the brains trust behind the 2005 victory and has long been the rock of the English top-order, something that was clearly absent for England this series. No more was this present in England's second innings collapse in Adelaide, where England showed a complete absence of grit, resolve and leadership. Vaughan's experience in tough situations the like of which the English found themselves right throughout this series would have perhaps guarded against the repeated English collapses of this series. His captaincy was also sorely missed. Although the talent and credential of Andrew Flintoff cannot be doubted, his captaincy was marked by a lack of experience and some poor decisions at key periods. It must also be stated that the pressure of the captaincy was detrimental to his own personal performances, and his batting and bowling were a long off what they had been in 2005. England also missed the contributions of the talented opening batsmen Michael Trescothick and the promising seamer Simon Jones. The England batting line-up which really only has their performances in Adelaide to boast off, could have used a seasoned and solid opening batsman. It was at Adelaide also, where after having the Australians 3-65, their bowling lacked the depth to deliver the crucial blow. It is true that Adelaide was a batsmen's wicket, and yet the ease with which the Australian middle-order scored hundreds and clawed their way back is illustrative of the fragility and weakness of the English attack. In England in 2005, Jones had contributed as the key first change bowler and had contributed to an English attack that was relentless and menacing. In this series England's bowling was undisciplined, erratic and with only a few exceptions failed to put any sustained pressure on the Australian batsmen. Each of England's bowlers displayed promise for periods, but were generally a long way off from the menacing form they had displayed in 2005. In Melbourne also, after having Australia at 5-84, England left the situation drift out of their control such that Andrew Symonds and Matthew Hayden came together to pile on 279 for the sixth wicket.

The English simply didn't have the personnel to compete with Australia, session by session, over the five days. I think after Adelaide it was plain for all to see, perhaps even the English themselves knew it, that they were never going to threaten Australia. Finally, Australia had demons to expunge. The last time that Australia had lost an Ashes series was 1987. The significance of that fact is not simply that the national conscious had been forced to go back to the era of bad hairstyles and power ballad rock to remember an Ashes defeat. More importantly, none of the current crop of players had experienced Ashes defeat, and I dare say that they were not entirely thrilled with the sensation that it had

left them with. No doubt they weren't thrilled about being amongst the group that handed the Ashes back to the old enemy either, regardless of how exciting the series had been, or how it was to be remembered. Make no mistake, this side had demons to exercise, as was witnessed by their publicly-pronounced desire to make it a 5-0 whitewash.

It was simply the result of a rejuvenated champion team, who had all the answers and who were relentless in their pursuit of vengeance against an under strength and out-of-form English side that explains the 5-0 whitewash. Yet despite England's humiliating defeat, the 2008 Ashes series, although perhaps too far off now to really know, still has the promise of being the series that 2005 was. There will be too very different teams in 2008. For their part, England have a lot to look forward to. Kevin Pietersen stands as the shining light of hope for England and already shows the marks of a dominating batsman. Ian Bell showed a lot of promise in this series and seems to be well in his way to being a very solid middle-order player. The discovery of Monty Panesar is also good hope for England, and his performances and enthusiasm are something for English fans to look forward to. The next series is also far away enough for the English to regroup and it will be on English soil and in more favourable conditions. There is also the impact of the dual retirements of Australia's two greatest ever bowlers. The fallout of these retirements is still to be witnessed. Many see Australia falling back to the bunch, and this may well yet happen. So there is hope that Ashes 2008 will be the same spectacle as 2005 was. With two sides recovering and rebuilding from their own personal tragedies, let us hope that it is.

*(Stewart is a freelance writer who lives in Melbourne, Australia. The pony-tailed Stewart is now in Dhaka working for The Daily Star)*

## Robben-Owen

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signing Arjen Robben.

The German giants are looking for a new winger and had been reported to be making enquiries about French midfielder Franck Ribery - but manager Felix Magath has also admitted an interest in Robben.

"He is a good player, very good dribbler and quick," Magath said. The Munich chairman Karl-Heinz Rummenigge has also admitted his admiration for the Dutch international.

"He is an interesting player, one that every team would fear to face," he told the press.

Robben has often found himself sidelined this season as Chelsea have struggled to incorporate Andriy Shevchenko and Michael Ballack into their team.

The former PSV Eindhoven player has two years left on his current contract, and has also been linked with a move to Real Madrid.

## Lee sings into Indian hearts

BBC ONLINE, undated

Australian cricketer Brett Lee is enjoying success in the Indian charts after recording a soulful duet with Bollywood legend Asha Bhosle.

Lee wrote lyrics, sang and performed in the video for the part-Hindi song: You're the One For Me.

The fast bowler went into the studio between games in the Champions Trophy tournament in India in November.

Lee, who has a band in Australia, has reportedly turned down roles in Bollywood films.

The song's video, which features Lee playing guitar and singing to an Indian girl in an office, has become a hit on YouTube.

Lee was reported as saying recording with Bhosle was an "amazing" experience, calling the Indian star the "Aretha Franklin of India".

Samir Tandon, who composed the music, said: "We had a great time recording the music.

"As a musician, he is nothing like the aggressive fast bowler that he is on the field. He is extremely polite."

The song has climbed to number three on the music charts of popular FM station Radio City, which broadcasts in several Indian cities.

## Hair back in action

CRICINFO, undated

The ICC has appointed Darrell Hair to stand as an official umpire in the triangular one-day series in Mombasa involving Kenya, Scotland and Canada which starts next week.

In November, Percy Sonn, the ICC president, announced that Hair would "not be allowed to officiate in any future international games until the end of this contract". He added: "The board has discussed this matter with great sincerity and gave lots of attention to it and they've come to the conclusion that they've lost confidence in Hair."

While the news does not open the door to Hair standing in any major matches involving full member countries, it will leave the ICC with some questions to answer about what has changed between then and now. The announcement, which came from Cricket Kenya, clearly caught the ICC unprepared, and a spokesman told Cricinfo that there would be no formal media release until Sunday. The ICC added that this news did not represent an about-turn, while insisting that Hair is still banned from officiating in any matches involving full member sides.

## 23 is the magic

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in America for me would be special," Beckham said.

But Alexi Lalas, a former US team star now the general manager of the Galaxy, said no number had as yet been assigned to Beckham. "I've always said the most important part of the jersey is who's playing inside it," Lalas said. "It'll be up to David as to what the number is. Some other players may have the number he wants. Given his contract, I would think he'd pay handsomely for the number."

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## Game not glitz

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Beckham himself said he thought his experience could be a benefit to his new teammates.

"I've been lucky in my career," Beckham said. "I've been gifted with great experience, playing for Manchester United, one of the best managers in soccer.

"Playing with some of the best teammates that I've played with, to have the experience of winning European Cups, Premier Leagues, FACPUs.

"Then going to another team like Real Madrid ... just having the experience of playing for two of the best teams in the world. Hopefully that's what I can pass on to my teammates."

Beckham, who has already opened a youth football academy at the Home Depot Center, home of the Galaxy, said he also hopes he can be an inspiration to young enthusiasts of the game in the States, many of whom turn to other sports as they get older.

"I'm not saying my coming to the States is going to make soccer the biggest sport in America," Beckham said. "There are so many great sports. But I think soccer has huge, huge potential. This is something I believe in."

No stranger to hype and the attention of the tabloids, Beckham said the interest fanned by his decision had surprised him.

"It has been an incredible experience the last two days," he said, "Bigger than I ever thought it could get."

Part of it is surely the 250 million-dollar bottom line. Lewiwe acknowledged the figure in a round-about way, but declined to go into specifics.

"A lot," he said when asked point blank what the AEG group - more specifically the Galaxy - would be paying Beckham.

# Bond raring to go

## Australia-New Zealand tie today



BBC ONLINE, undated

New Zealand begin their tri-series campaign against Australia in Hobart on Sunday, with paceman Shane Bond hoping to continue an impressive record.

The 31-year-old paceman took 14 wickets in four matches against Australia in the corresponding series five years ago, including 5-25 at Adelaide.

"They're a team I have done well against so I feel pretty confident going into this match," said Bond.

"Psychologically it's about not getting daunted and coming hard at them."

Like England, New Zealand have a dismal record against Australia, losing 15 of their last 17 meetings.

Skipper Stephen Fleming saw his side draw the Test, one-day and Twenty20 series at home to Sri Lanka prior to this tournament.

"We're not exactly brimming with confidence, but we've got a good understanding of our one-day game," he said.

Meanwhile, Bond, who captured a memorable 6-23 against Ricky

Ponting's team in the 2003 World Cup Super Six match in Port Elizabeth, is preparing his teammates for a daunting mental challenge.

"Australia like to take on new players especially and I'm sure they'll target some of our new players in this series, but if you keep coming hard at them it creates opportunities," he said.

Bond was left out of the early stages of the Champions Trophy last year because of injury concerns and took five wickets in three matches.

He also missed the opening two matches of the home series with Sri Lanka, before taking three wickets in two matches.

"The encouraging thing for me is that I haven't bowled as well as I'd have liked but I've still taken wickets," he said.

The paceman has taken a total of 24 wickets in seven matches against the Aussies, dismissing key man Ponting six times, but is well aware of their strength in depth.

"Their top seven is very strong but if you put pressure on any team they can crack."

"You can't just restrict these guys to four an over and not take wickets -- we have to take wickets

and be aggressive."

Australia and New Zealand could meet as many as 10 times over the next few months, both at home and away.

And batsman Michael Clarke realised the importance of striking the first blow.

"They're a very good one-day team, they always seem to step up against Australia and we've had some very tight battles," he said. "We've got to play them here and then we go to New Zealand before the World Cup, so we'll be looking to hopefully get our first win against them here."

### TEAMS

**AUSTRALIA** (from): Ricky Ponting (captain), Adam Gilchrist, Nathan Bracken, Stuart Clark, Michael Clarke, Matthew Hayden, Brad Hogg, Michael Hussey, Mitchell Johnson, Brett Lee, Glenn McGrath, Andrew Symonds, Cameron White.

**NEW ZEALAND** (from): Stephen Fleming (captain), Andre Adams, Nathan Astle, Shane Bond, James Franklin, Peter Fulton, Mark Gillespie, Hamish Marshall, Michael Mason, Brendon McCullum, Craig McMillan, Jeetan Patel, Ross Taylor, Daniel Vettori.

# Chappell to stay on



CRICINFO, undated

Greg Chappell is likely to stay on as India's coach irrespective of the team's performance in the World Cup, contrary to the widely held belief that his future with Indian cricket is linked to the World Cup.

Cricinfo has learnt that the Board of Control for Cricket of India (BCCI) is keen to retain the services of Chappell, whose two-year tenure comes to an end in May, for the large-scale rebuilding of the team if it fails to perform well in the World Cup.

A senior member of the Board told Cricinfo on Saturday that it will not be the coach, but the non-performing players who will come under the scanner.

The national selection committee has already sent a strong message -- perform or be dropped - to India's cricketers but the case of Virender Sehwag is not an isolated one. Sections of the BCCI have

grown increasingly worried about the team's stagnation and the recent poor performances and are no longer willing to sit back and watch.

Traditionally the office bearers of the BCCI have taken a back seat when it comes to the actual business of bat and ball, preferring to concentrate on administering the game and raising funds while leaving cricket to the selectors, the coach and the captain.

However, indications are that they have had enough, and are raising serious questions about the attitude of certain senior players who have failed to deliver as expected.

In the past, senior players have been virtually untouchable, despite suffering from poor form or carrying nagging injuries. But, if a senior Indian board official is to be believed, this is set to end quickly.

"The way we see it, the World Cup could be a last hurrah for certain players," he said. "If the performance in the World Cup is not up to our expectations, then you

can expect a number of changes. No one will be spared, no matter how big he is."

Critically, in all this, the Board has given events a complete twist by strongly suggesting that Greg Chappell, the coach, could continue after the World Cup.

"He is a good coach. What can he do if players are not performing?" asked the official. "It is media speculation and an assumption among the players that Chappell's contract will not be renewed after the World Cup."

Only recently Dilip Vengsarkar and Chappell had visited Shashank Manohar, a vice-president of the BCCI who has repeatedly called for more accountability from the players and has been in the forefront of implementing a system where players will be paid in correlation to the performance of the team.

That system is set to be put in place shortly and the latest round of assurances from the board to the coach could well result in a scenario where no player can take his place for granted.

# Prince, Gibbs put

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cloudless day but Kaneria followed up the wicket of Prince with two more to finish with three for 97, while Naved-ul-Hasan improved otherwise disappointing figures by taking two wickets in nine balls.

Prince's innings was ended when he went down the pitch and missed a ball from leg-spinner Kaneria. With an easy stumping chance, Akmal missed with his first pass at the stumps before knocking off the balls at the second attempt.

Prince almost got back but was given out on a television replay decision. He batted for 347 minutes, faced 213 balls and hit 19 fours.

Gibbs has not scored a Test hundred since he reached three figures against England in Johannesburg on January 15, 2005.

Naved, who had conceded 72 runs in 12 overs, trapped Gibbs lbw with the first ball of a new spell. Gibbs batted for 279 minutes, faced 205 balls and hit 15 boundaries.

It was reported that leading Pakistan batsman Mohammad Yousuf, who missed the first Test because his wife was having a baby, would be in South Africa in time for the remaining two Tests following the birth of a daughter Friday.

### SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard at tea on the third day of the first Test between South Africa and Pakistan at Centurion Park on Saturday:

**PAKISTAN:** First innings 313  
**SOUTH AFRICA:** First innings (overnight 254-4)

De Villiers c Younis Khan b Asif	
Smith c Akmal b Asif	0
Amla c Akmal b Asif	71
Kallis c Younis Khan b Asif	18
Prince st Akmal b Kaneria	138
Gibbs lbw b Navedul	94
Boucher c and b Kaneria	2
Pollock not out	39
Hamis b Kaneria	3
Nel b Navedul	5
Ntini c Younis Khan b Asif	5
Extras: (lb-13, nb-25)	38
Total: (All out in 117.5 overs) 417	

Fall of wickets: 1-3, 2-8, 3-53, 4-143, 5-356, 6-358, 7-383, 8-386, 9-391.

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Asif	27.5	4	89	5
Navedul	17	2	92	2
Nazir	20	1	96	0
Kaneria	41	8	97	3
Hafeez	11	1	24	0
Farhat	1	0	6	0

**PAKISTAN:** Second innings

Hafeez not out	9
Farhat not out	3
Extras:	
Total: (Fornow wkt in 5 overs) 2	

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Nel	3	2	2	0
Ntini	2	0	10	0

# Ayala wants new deal

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in Valencia. That is my intention. If I left the door open [for a move], then something could happen, but so far I have not."

Ahead of Saturday