

Yuvraj back in reckoning

BBC ONLINE, undated

India batsman Yuvraj Singh and veteran spin bowler Anil Kumble have been recalled for the final two one-day matches against West Indies.

Yuvraj is fit again after missing the whole of the South Africa tour with a torn ligament in his left knee.

Kumble, 36, joins fellow spinners Harbhajan Singh and Ramesh Powar in the squad, with all-rounder Joginder Sharma and seamer Rudra Pratap Singh left out.

All-rounder Irfan Pathan will join the squad for the last match in Baroda.

Dalmiya takes BCCI to court

PTI, Kolkata

Former Indian cricket board president Jagmohan Dalmiya today challenged his expulsion for life from the BCCI in a civil suit in the Calcutta High Court.

Dalmiya, who had to resign from the president's post of Cricket Association of Bengal (CAB) as a result, filed the suit against the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI), its President Sharad Pawar, Secretary Nirjan Shah, Shashank Manohar, Chirayu Amin and N Srinivasan.

Dalmiya claimed in his petition that the reasons given for his expulsion, on charges of misappropriation of funds related to the 1996 World Cup, were totally false, fabricated and made with a pre-determined biased motive.

Dalmiya also claimed that the rule (Rule 38) itself, under which the disciplinary proceeding was initiated, was non-existent in the eye of law.

The former Board president also challenged the legality and validity of Clause 38(V) of the BCCI Rules that provided for removal of the expelled person from the affiliated units of the Board.

He claimed that Clause 38, which was amended in September 2000, has not been registered under the Tamil Nadu Societies Act under which the Indian Cricket Board is registered and as such not legally tenable.

Amateurish

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The top coaches of the country have already welcomed the professional system because they think it will see start of a new practice among teams by giving the coaches full freedom.

"The coach decides the line-up but I don't see any harm in consulting the officials. It's done for the better of the club because I believe in the understanding between the whole management," Nurul told a press conference.

He, however, denied allegations that any middleman had influenced team selection in the past.

"The coach only discussed with me, so there is no chance of any other official intervening," he added.

In the last season, coach Abu Yusuf was reportedly barred from picking up his team due to relentless pressure from Russel officials.

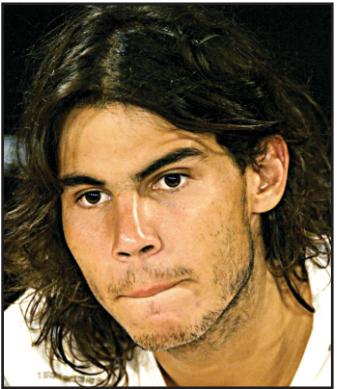
Coach Wajed Gazi, who led Russel to finish runners-up in their Premiership debut, said that he has never faced such pressure.

"I hope it will not happen this time," the veteran said.



Did U Know?

The Australian Open tournament has been played at six different venues since 1905 -- Melbourne, Sydney, Adelaide, Brisbane, Perth and New Zealand.



Rafael Nadal

(Spanish tennis player) "If I am playing bad, you can go home and say 'disappointing'. But today I just say, well, I can't do more. I try my best."

After being beaten in the quarterfinal by Chilean Fernando Gonzalez at the Australian Open on Wednesday.

India stave off Windies



AFP, Cuttack

India's spinners stopped a tense run chase by the depleted West Indies here on Wednesday to help the hosts take a 2-0 lead in the four-match series.

India, dismissed for 189, hit back to bowl out a West Indian side missing their inspirational captain Brian Lara for 169 in the day-night international at the Barabati Stadium here.

Ramesh Powar and Sachin Tendulkar shared five wickets and Harbhajan Singh finished with one for 29 in 10 overs as India recorded a narrow win by 20 runs.

Left-hander Shivnarine Chanderpaul top-scored for the tourists with 67 before he was last man out, finding little support from the other batsmen in the low-scoring game.

The second match contrasted sharply with the run feast in the first game in Nagpur on Sunday, where both teams scored over 300 runs and India squeezed out a 14-run win.

The West Indies badly missed Lara, who skipped the Cuttack game after a chronic left knee injury flared up again, leaving opener Chris Gayle to lead the tourists' bid to draw level in the series.

Lara is expected to play the third match in Chennai on Saturday and the fourth game in Vadodara on January 31, the last two matches for the West Indies before they host the World Cup in March-April.

The West Indies enjoyed a great start when seamer Daren Powell picked up a career-best 4-27 to restrict India to 189 on a slow, lifeless wicket.

The 28-year-old Jamaican seamer ripped through the top order with the wickets of Sourav Ganguly, Tendulkar and captain Rahul Dravid in his first four overs.

Powell had taken just eight wickets in his previous 12 one-dayers, including a best of 3-33 against Pakistan in Multan in December.

India, reduced to 69-6 at one stage, were revived by a battling 63 from 21-year-old Dinesh Karthik and his 62-run stand for the eighth wicket with Ajit Agarkar.

Agarkar was last man out for 40 after the final four wickets added a valuable 120 runs for the hosts.

The West Indies lost quick wickets just when it appeared the batsmen had settled in.

Chanderpaul, who hit a magnificent 149 in Nagpur in a losing cause, once again finished second-best without support from the other end.

Dwayne Bravo hit 31 in a fourth-wicket stand of 43 with Chanderpaul, while Dwayne Smith made 25.

The West Indies, who were 139-5 in the 38th over, lost their last five wickets for 30 runs as India turned on the screws in the crucial final overs.

"It is great to win another one against the West Indies," said Dravid, whose team had lost six of their last seven matches against Lara's team before this series.

"It was not one of the best wickets to play on, but Karthik and Agarkar batted very well to give us a decent total to defend.

"It was a great team effort in the end."

Gayle praised the bowlers for keeping the Indian batsmen in check, but lamented the lack of batting support to Chanderpaul.

"Shiv was his usual solid self, but no one hung in there enough to build a good partnership," the stand-in captain said.

"We have had two close games and hopefully the remaining two will go in our favour."

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard of the second one-day international between India and the

West Indies at the Barabati Stadium on Wednesday:

INDIA: 189 all out in 48.2 overs (Karthik 63, Agarkar 40, Dravid 22; Powell 4-27, Bravo 2-36, Bradshaw 2-38)

WEST INDIES

Gayle lbw b Agarkar 5
Chanderpaul b Zaheer 67
Devon Smith run out 15
Samuels c Gambhir b Harbhajan 1
Bravo c Gambhir b Powar 31
Morton b Powar 0
Ramdin b Powar 25
Bradshaw c Gambhir b Tendulkar 2
Powell run out 1
Taylor not out 2
Extras: (b-6, lb-3, w-5) 14
Total: (All out in 48.2 overs) 169
Fall of wickets: 1-5, 2-41, 3-42, 4-85, 5-89, 6-139, 7-151, 8-163, 9-166

Bowler **O** **M** **R** **W**
Zaheer 8.2 0 25 1
Agarkar 8 2 23 1
Sharma 4 0 16 0
Harbhajan 10 3 29 1
Powar 10 0 42 3
Tendulkar 8 0 25 2

Result: India won by 20 runs.

Man-of-the-match: Dinesh Karthik.

Toss: India.

Umpires: Billy Bowden and Amiesh Saheba.

Sharapova blows

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firing, allowing Sharapova to score a decisive lead to take the first set.

The Russian snatched another break early in the second, running Clijsters ragged with her accurate placement and consolidating to go 3-0 up.

The Russian opened the door for Clijsters mid-way through the set with a series of double faults that gave the Belgian an opportunity to break.

But a desperate Clijsters fluffed her chances and the Russian fired back to reach the final.

Sachin closing in on duck record

PTI, Cuttack

Sachin Tendulkar is fast approaching a record he would not like to be either mentioned or remembered.

The world's most successful batsman registered his 17th duck in 376 matches against the West Indies in the second one-day international at Cuttack.

The Mumbai batsman is fast catching up on this count with Javagal Srinath and Anil Kumble, who however are not known for their batting prowess.

Srinath leads the Indian list with 19 ducks, just ahead of Kumble on 18.

The dubious world record for the highest number of ducks in one-dayers is surprisingly held by Sri Lankan marauder Sanath Jayasuriya (29). Wasim Akram (28) and Ramesh Kaluwitharana (24) come next.

Ronaldo closer

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Adriano Galliani had written to Madrid chief Ramon Calderon on Wednesday, asking him to allow the player to undergo the routine medical tests in Italy before finalising an offer.

"This is not the normal procedure, a player can undergo medicals only after he signs a contract, or at least he receives an offer," replied the Spanish giants via fax.

Galliani, however, met sporting director Franco Baldini again on Wednesday night, finally reaching an agreement.

Milan have allegedly offered the former Golden Ball winner an 18-month contract worth 5.3-million-pounds, plus his entire image rights worth a lucrative 8-million-pounds a year -- which he previously shared with Real.

Experience

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squad and you can say it is more or less a World Cup team. There would hardly be one or two changes from this team. We will consider tested players only," he said adding that all the players would be given chance to play in the coming series.

"Tushar failed to capitalises the opportunities he had been given but we also have some responsibilities not to give him the chance to settle properly. We thought he is the best choice as a back-up player in the middle-order not only for his experience but also due to impressive performance in domestic circuit.

"This time we considered domestic performance and that is one of the reasons behind including Sharif and Tapash. Forhad has failed to fulfil the demand as a bowler and we think Sharif came under consideration in his place because he could be useful as third seamer in favourable conditions. Tapash is also in good form with bat and ball."

Faruque termed hard-hitting Tamim, nephew of former Bangladesh captain Akram Khan and younger brother of Nafis Iqbal, as the most promising opener in the country.

"We had two experienced guys (Javed and Rajin) in our hand but they are out of touch while we thought that Tamim would be a good back-up opener. He has already proved his ability in the age level besides playing some good knocks in domestic circuit. Actually we have blended a mix of experienced and young players this time," he added.

Andy feeling

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Open decider. After Thursday's hammering, Roddick can claim just one win in 14 matches against Federer with his last success nine matches ago in 2003 in Montreal.

Federer had sympathy for his opponent, admitting even he was amazed at how well he had played.

"It was just one of those days for me to remember and for him to forget," said Federer.

Roddick though was not backing away from his belief that the gap is closing, with coach Jimmy Connors adding a new dimension to his game that has helped him perform more consistently.

"That's honestly the way I felt," he said of the gap, adding that the first thing Connors did after the match was hand him a beer.

"You ask me a question, I'm going to give you an honest answer. I'm going to try to keep fighting. That's what I will do on a daily basis. I wake up and work my butt off on a daily basis. I'm going to continue to do that."

"He outplayed me. He deserves all the praise that he gets, not only for how he plays, but how he handles himself. I thought it was a good tournament. I've proven to myself that I can get to the semifinals of Grand Slams. I'd love more than anything to get past that, to get over that hurdle for sure."

Changes on the cards

Pakistan-South Africa final Test from today



AFP, Cape Town

Both teams are expected to make changes in crucial positions for the decisive third and final Test between South Africa and Pakistan starting at Newlands Friday.

Pakistan will be without injured fast bowler Shoaib Akthar who had a meteoric impact on the series in what was effectively a single day of action.

Shoaib's express pace sent South Africa crashing to 124 all out on the first day in Port Elizabeth, setting up Pakistan for their eventual series-levelling five-wicket win. He took four for 36 but apart from a brief innings with the bat Shoaib took no further part in the match because of a hamstring strain.

Discussions were due to be held Wednesday evening about the possibility of resting key bowlers

bowler Umar Gul, who did not play in either of the first two Tests because of an ankle injury, went home after Port Elizabeth to undergo rehabilitation treatment.

Shabbir Ahmed was expected to arrive in Cape Town Thursday as a replacement for the fast bowlers but captain Inzamamul Haq said he was unlikely to play in the Test. He said Shahid Nazir, who was disappointing in the first Test, was likely to earn a recall.

South Africa will also have changes in their fast bowling attack. Dale Steyn, the country's fastest bowler, is expected to return after recovering from a thigh strain and Andre Nel, who bowled poorly in Port Elizabeth, seems sure to sit out the final Test.

Discussions were due to be held Wednesday evening about the possibility of resting key bowlers

Makhaya Ntini and Shaun Pollock, with a five-match one-day series and the Cricket World Cup ahead.

"There's not a lot left in the tank for them," said captain Graeme Smith after the Port Elizabeth Test. The problem is that neither is believed to be particularly keen to sit out, especially as a look at the pitch Wednesday indicated it would be more pace friendly than it was when South Africa clinched a series against India earlier in the month.

The pitch appeared hard and had a good covering of grass, unlike the pitch for the India match which Smith likened to Kolkata's Eden Gardens.

Batsman Boeta Dippenaar, who joined the squad Wednesday as cover for Herschelle Gibbs, will come in as an opening batsman, with AB de Villiers moving down the order to fill Gibbs's place.

Gibbs ban upheld

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that offends, insults, humiliates, intimidates, threatens, disparages or vilifies another person on the basis of that person's race, religion, colour, descent or national or ethnic origin."

The original sanction was a ban of two Tests but the Code specifies that the ban should apply to the next matches in which the player is scheduled to play.

In Gibbs's case the ban therefore becomes one ruling him out of one Test and two ODIs as those are the next fixtures for South Africa.

The appeal was rejected by ICC appeals commissioner Richie Benaud.

In rejecting the appeal, Mr Benaud wrote: "It was put to me that the fact the remarks in question were heard through stump microphones on the ground should invalidate the whole matter.

"(This is) because of ICC's memo of 12 April 2006 which pointed out that there had been some problems with stump microphones not being switched off at the right times.

"That though is ICC policy rather than a Law or Playing Condition of the game and Chris Broad, in his decision, gave Herschelle Gibbs full mitigation for the fact that the stump microphones had been left on by the television network.

"With the benefit of some experience I am able to add that players, no matter where they may be, should always bear in mind that a microphone could be 'live.'"

"That does not just apply to stump microphones used by television networks, but it could be in a radio studio or in a press conference with the print media.

"There is no malice about it, but it could happen just because some-

one has not pushed a button or pulled a switch.

"It is precisely the same in the television commentary box for a television commentator. If you do not use the words, they do not get to air."

Despite rejecting the appeal, Benaud was explicit in his view that it did not mean Herschelle Gibbs was a racist.

"At Chris Broad's hearing (Pakistan team manager) Talat Ali spoke about the offence the words used by Herschelle would give to the whole Pakistan nation. I am not surprised.

"(However), as an Appeals Commissioner and a person, I certainly do not consider Herschelle to be a racist and I take great exception to the suggestion, in the same way I believe Chris Broad would object (to suggestions his finding would do the same)."

Abahani surge ahead

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Tareq Aziz picked up four wickets while Pakistani recruit Wasim Nayeem and Sirajullah Khadem took a wicket each.

ABAHANI v BROTHERS

Talha Jubair vindicated his captain Khaled Mashud's decision to bowl first as he ripped open the Brothers batting line-up. He snared Imran Ahmed and Abul Bashar at the top of

the order, before returning in his second spell to pick up the prized scalp of Shahriar Hossain. Mashud was back to the field after his hand injury that kept him sidelined for three matches.

The former national opener hit five fours and three sixes to score 83. He pretty much scored half the runs put up by the Gopibagh outfit. When he was dismissed as the seventh wicket on 157, the Brothers tail catapulted as Talha picked two more wickets soon.

With national paceman Mashrafe-bin-Mortuza playing the match solely as a batsman after being advised not to bowl by the Bangladesh team management, Mohammad Shahjada also contributed with the ball picking up a wicket. Sri Lankan spinner Sujith Fernando took a wicket as well and later, contributed with 41 in the small chase. Opener Jahurul Islam hit 54 while Naeem Islam scored 43.

Mashrafe aside, Tushar Imran and skipper Mashud also had almost nothing to do in the match. It was pleasing for the team as the rest of the players stood up ahead of their big clash against Mohammedan on January 28.

KALABAGAN v BIMAN

Paceman Syed Rasel and all-rounder Forhad Reza vented their frustration at not making the Zimbabwe-bound national squad by sharing five wickets for Biman as they piloted their side to a win over Kalabagan.

Put into bat, only Rezaul Karim scored a boundary-less 37 to take the Kalabagan total past the 100-mark as the batting completely failed. Fast bowler Niaz Murshed also took two wickets as Biman only needed 116 to win.

Once again it was Mushfiqur Rahman to the rescue after a slight flutter at the top of the order for the national airliners. Mushfiq struck an unbeaten 47, hitting six fours.

BRIEF SCORES

CITY CLUB: 275-9 in 50 overs (Salahuddin 24, Nafees 132, Wasim 8, Mustafiz 16, Sajjad 4, Khadem 21, Sonnet 5, Anwar 24, Zakir 2*, Tareq 3, Kamrul 1*, Extras 35, Shahadat 3-60, Mahmud 1-51, Razzaq 2-62, Enamul 3-34).

DOHS: 276-6 in 49.1 overs (Tamim 60, Mehrab 132, Shamsur 23, Ensanul 0, Akram 35, Nadif 1, Mahmud 5*, Razzaq 0*, Extras 20, Tareq 4-48, Khadem 1-45).

Result: DOHS won by 4 wickets.

KALABAGAN: 115 all out in 48.2 overs (Golam 2, Alman 1, Karim 0, Nahidul 8, Butt 10, Rezaul 37, Monirul 23, Rashedul 5, Arafat 3, Sikdar 6, Mahmud 11*, Extras 19, Rasel 3-19, Niaz 2-12, Reza 2-21, Mosharraf 1-23).

BIMAN: 116-4 in 34.2 overs (Omar 2, Iqbal 19, Mosharraf 0, Elahi 6, Mushfiqur 47*, Sanwar 29*, Extras 13, Mahmud 1-25, Arafat 2-24).

Result: Biman won by 6 wickets.

BROTHERS: 168 all out in 47 overs (Shahriar 83, Hannan 0, Imran 27, Bashar 0, Kalim 6, Ghosh 2, Lablur 17, Haq 22, Kabir 0, Dutta 2*, Shafiuol 0, Extras 9, Talha 5-30, Shahjada 1-30, Fernando 1-25, Shuvo 1-32).

ABAHANI: 172-2 in 42.2 overs (Jahurul 54, Naeem 43, Fernando 41*, Nazimuddin 16*, Extras 18, Ghosh 1-30, Dutta 1-44).

Result: Abahani won by 8 wickets.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS		38	Factor	DOWN	
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4	amount	43	Marsupial	4	skirt
5	Bat a		that looks	4	Turn
6	gnat		like a	5	blue?
7	12 Met	45	small bear	5	Carte
8	melody	46	Blood	6	lead-in
9	13 Whopper		line?	6	Zero
10	14 Snap-	50	Others	7	Scream
11	shots		(Lat.)	8	One
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13	pected		opposite	10	black
14	gain	54	Sediment	11	suit?
17	Kourni-	55	Wall	9	Trachea
18	kova of		climber	10	Dermat
19	tennis	56	"Heavens"		ogy
20	Insinu-	57	Golfer's		case
21	ating		target	11	Despot
29	19 Elope		Golfer's	16	Shriner
30	21 Pound		starting		cap
31	of verse		point	20	Pinnac
32	24 Energy	59	Agents,	22	Harts'
33	25 Stitched		for short		mates
34	28 Sly look				
35	30 Doctrine				
36	31 Panisian				
37	pal				
38	34 Suits				
39	35 Shell				
40	game				
41	item				
42	36 Revolver				
43	37 One side				
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45	Urals				

SOLUTION TIME: 21 mins			
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