



Howard has no doubts

CRICINFO, undated

Tony Howard, the West Indies manager, has spoken boldly of his side's chances in the World Cup ahead of their warm-up match against Kenya on Monday.

"We have some quite detailed plans for the tournament and we plan to come hard," he said. "We will think hard and play hard. We are in it to win it. We want it all. We want to win in front of our home supporters. We are prepared to beat the best no matter what. We have no real doubts about our ability at this stage."

Few can forget Kenya's remarkable win in the 1996 World Cup when they skittled the West Indies for just 93, recording their first one-day win. A decade on, Roger Harper -- who made 17 batting at No.7 in that humbling match -- is

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Did U Know?

CA Reid and RB Terry of Australia were the two umpires to officiate the very first Test ever in March, 1877.



Bob Woolmer

(Pakistan cricket coach)
"It is always disappointing as a team not to achieve the ultimate goal, but it was not for the lack of trying. Cricket is a game where anything can happen and nothing should ever be taken as granted."

DAY'S EVENT

National Cricket League
Day-2 (Four-Day)
Rajshahi v Barisal
Venue: Rajshahi Divisional Stadium
Chittagong v Khulna
Venue: Chittagong Divisional Stadium
Dhaka v Sylhet (Day-1)
Venue: Fatullah Cricket Stadium

Tushar stands up



SPORTS REPORTER

National discard Tushar Imran once again reminded the selectors that he was in good touch as the Bangladesh A team skipper alone stood tall with an unbeaten hundred to lead his team into a draw in the second and final four-dayer against the visiting England A at the Shaheed Chandu Stadium in Bogra yesterday.

With the captain's unconquered knock of 128 Tushar was the pick of the home team batsmen after his back-to-back half-centuries in the first game at Mirpur but his efforts were not enough to stop a 1-0 series defeat as the visitors won the first four-dayer by five wickets.

The home team made a disastrous start in the second innings when Mike Yardy made a bold declaration with the overnight score of 251-8 with the lead of 99 runs to test the nerve of the local batsmen on the final day.

Paceman Graham Onions caused early damage when he removed both openers Mehrab Hossain and Jahurul Islam in the second over with the scoreboard reading one. Mehrab edged to the gloves of Mathew Prior while Jahurul pulled Onions only to find Nick Compton who took a simple catch.

Tushar then joined Nasiruddin Faruque to initiate the rescue act but he was lucky enough before sharing a 127-run third wicket partnership. The effort of these two batsmen helped the home team to go for lunch without further damage and ultimately forced their opponents to accept a draw with 14 overs remaining of the day's play. Bangladesh A finished at 218-7 in 84 overs in their second essay with Dollar Mahmud not out on the other end.

The right-handed Tushar survived twice in an over of Onions when he was just out six as Tim Bresnan and Will Jefferson floored easy catches in the slip cordon. Recovering from the early nervousness the inform batsman showed his character during his match-

saving knock as he clung to the crease for nearly six hours to execute 13 well-struck boundaries in his 256-ball innings.

The valuable partnership was broken when Faruque was caught behind of the spin of Alex Loudon but not before the young left-hander had made a valuable contribution of 31 runs that came from 130 deliveries.

With the dismissal of the third wicket stand, the hosts got another jolt but Tushar survived in one end to make sure that his

team would not lose the rain-interrupted match after the entire first day's play was washed out. Wicketkeeper Sahagir Hossain (7) was promoted up the batting order but Jefferson caught him at third slip after Bresnan rising delivery slightly shaved his bat. Also, Nadif Chowdhury and Marshal Ayub continued their frustrating shows after returning to the dressing room cheaply.

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PHOTO: STAR

CAPTAIN FANTASTIC: Captain Tushar Imran (R) walks back after peeling off a superb 128 not out that helped Bangladesh A earn a draw against visiting England A on the final day of the second four-dayer at the Shaheed Chandu Stadium in Bogra yesterday.

Form a neutral BCB: directors

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) 'directors' urged the sports adviser to the caretaker government to form an interim committee to clean up the cricket board.

"We met the Sports Adviser (Tapan Chowdhury) today (Sunday). We requested him to cancel the present illegal committee and form an interim committee to run the country's most affluent sports body," said architect Mobashsher Hossain, one of the deposed directors who were thrown out of the board following a court ruling during the four-party government, at a press conference yesterday.

"We also demanded formation of a judicial inquiry committee to investigate all the wrongdoings of this current committee," he added.

In a long statement they raised questions on a number of issues like TV deal, huge amount of money spent as staff salary including a fat package for the CEO.

They however faced a volley of questions on their observation on the immediate past political government's influence in the board, especially the involvement of Arifat Rahman, as they also have some organisers with political identity.

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Saju brings Ctg back

SPORTS REPORTER

Khulna batsman Imrul Kayes slammed a rapid 85 but Saju Dutta had the last laugh taking four wickets in the first day of the ninth round matches of Ispahani Mirzapore Tea 8th National Cricket League at the Chittagong Divisional Stadium yesterday.

At stumps, Chittagong all but bowled out Khulna as the visitors ended on 289 for 9 in 92 overs of play.

Barisal left-arm spinner Tariqul Islam picked up 225 wickets as Rajshahi inched to 235 for 5 in 91 overs.

KHULNA-CHITTAGONG

The opening partnership between

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McGrath wants new ball

AFP, Sydney



bowling great strives to taste World Cup glory for the last time, reports said here Sunday.

The 37-year-old paceman was used as first change, behind Brett Lee and Nathan Bracken, through the January-February home tri-series against England and New Zealand.

He was reinstated as spearhead of the Australian attack in the losing Chappell-Hadlee series in New Zealand last month when Lee tore his ankle ligaments in a fielding mishap and was subsequently ruled out of the Caribbean tournament.

Some observers believe Shaun Tait's high-octane pace would be the

ideal like-for-like replacement for Lee, but McGrath feels he would be best suited leading the attack.

"With Brett not being here, it will be interesting to see what we do with our bowling line-up and whether I take the new ball again, or whether we think about Mitch (Mitchell Johnson) or Tait (Shaun Tait) taking the new ball," McGrath told Sydney's Sunday Telegraph.

"I love taking the new ball, obviously that's the way I would prefer to go, but I'll sit down and I'll have a think about the game and which is best suited to the team, as well as talk to Buck (coach John Buchanan) and Ricky and the other guys."

McGrath's metronomic line and length and clever variety has also made him an ideal first change, particularly as he can maintain pressure through the early part of an innings when the pair of five-over power plays (fielding restrictions) are usually employed.

But his aura and big-game reputation could be a key early weapon as he takes aim at continu-

ing his reputation as a World Cup performer.

"At the end of the day, if it means me bowling first change is better for the team, then I'll do that," McGrath told the newspaper.

McGrath begins his fourth World Cup in second spot on the tournament's all-time list of wicket-takers with 45 and needs just 10 more to pass former Pakistani all-rounder Wasim Akram.

Australia's bowling vulnerability in the last 10 overs has become a major concern, with the team in the past year conceding 6.64 runs an over during this phase of the game -- the second worst of any nation.

McGrath has stressed to fellow quicks Stuart Clark, Bracken and young bucks Tait and Johnson the importance of dictating terms to the opposing batsmen and having variety in your bowling as they try to find a way to end this recent worrying trend.

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'Hunters, not hunted'

REUTERS, Kingstown



month as the hunters rather than the prey after losing their number one ranking to South Africa.

Speaking to reporters after the Australians had practised at Arncliffe on Saturday morning, Australia middle order batsman Michael Hussey said it had been disappointing to lose the top spot to South Africa.

The two teams meet in the final group A match in St Kitts on March 24.

"I guess we become the hunters

rather than the hunted," said Hussey, who captained Australia in the absence of the injured Ricky Ponting in their 3-0 whitewash to New Zealand last month.

"We really enjoyed being the number one side in the world and we tried harder and harder to make the gap further and further between the number one and the number two."

"We now have to try to get that number one place back, we have to try and make the gap bigger again."

Australia play a warm-up match against Zimbabwe on Monday followed by a game against England four days later before travelling to St Kitts.

Opener Matthew Hayden and all-rounder Andrew Symonds will not be considered for Monday's match while they recover from a broken toe and torn left arm muscle respectively but Ponting and all-

rounder Michael Clarke played a full part in Saturday's practice.

Ponting had been suffering from a hip injury while Clarke had a sore back.

Hayden walked briskly around the outfield several times and Symonds had a few gentle throw-downs in the nets with a tennis ball.

Hussey said Australia had put the New Zealand defeats behind them and were ready for the challenge of the biggest World Cup yet.

"The Australian team is so meticulous about their preparation," he said. "They are an experienced side who know their own game so well and what they need to do."

"I just want Australia to win, that's all. If that's in the first over or the 50th over, the most important thing is the result."



PHOTO: AFP

HUFF PUFF: Pakistan vice-captain Younis Khan does leg-press exercises in a gym of their team hotel in Port-of-Spain on Saturday.

Chappells for fewer runs

CRICINFO, undated



greatest thinkers of recent times. In a rare programme, Ian Chappell and Greg Chappell came together to talk cricket.

"If you'd asked me last year about 400 being scored I'd have cast some doubts on that. In some ways I hope 500 isn't scored," said Greg. "If that does happen it may not be a good thing for cricket in some ways. It might just be a very one-sided game. But I wouldn't reject the possibility."

"If someone does get 500 there's going to be some bad bowling going

on because that amounts to scoring at 10 runs an over," said Ian, without ruling out the possibility of just such a thing occurring. "With the lesser teams around it might happen."

But Ian believed that there was still plenty the administrators need to do to keep the game healthy and strong. "The most important job for the administrators is to make sure that from a cricket playing point of view the contest between bat and ball is pretty evenly balanced. It is not going to be evenly balanced when bats are getting stronger and boundaries shorter," he said, while raising some important reservations about Twenty20 cricket.

"The important thing with Twenty20 cricket is that it's bringing new people to the game," said Ian. "That's terrific. But if they are only Twenty20 supporters and not cricket supporters then the game is not doing its job properly. If they

come into the game through Twenty20 and then support other types of cricket that would be great for the game."

Greg meanwhile, had a slightly different take on what the real danger with Twenty20 cricket could be. "One-day cricket did bring new people to the game, so you have to assume that Twenty20 can do the same. The biggest danger for Twenty20 is that it will become too popular and eat into the resources of ODI cricket," said Greg. "The reason cricket does well is that the shortest version of the game is on TV all day. There is a lot of time and ways to generate revenue. Other sports are trying to keep the game on TV longer and we're introducing a version that does the opposite. Fifty-over cricket pays for cricket. It allows us the luxury of Test cricket."

Faisal takes six-for

SPORTS REPORTER

Faisal took six wickets while three batsmen missed sure-shot centuries in another action-packed day of the Standard Chartered National School Cricket Championship in the city yesterday.

Maple Leaf defeated Sher-e-Bangla Ideal School by 40 runs in a high-scoring affair at the East End Club ground while Faisal's brilliant spell saw Gulshan Model School through by three wickets against Dr Shahidullah Adarsha Vidyapith at the nearby Dhupkhola Jagannath University ground.

Maple Leaf's Akash hit a 71-ball 97 while his schoolmate Fauzul struck 92 off 68 balls as their school raised 272-10 in 49.5 overs. In reply, Asadur's 94 was not enough as Sher-e-Bangla Ideal were bowled out for 232 in 49.2 overs.

Faisal's six-wicket haul for Gulshan Model was enough to

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